

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

November/December 1989

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European Diary

Sitting in the third-floor guest room of Kees and Toos Rosies' old house in Heverlee, Belgium last June, I was trembling a little as I tried to finish preparing for the first talk of our European trip. Nervousness because of having to speak has not much plagued me, but I had been pondering for several days a statement I had read:

"Only the man who has died to himself and risen in the charity of the Holy Spirit can be present to others and bring them salvation."

It was to be an interesting trip, touching six countries, but I prayed that it would be not merely that. Many of you prayed for me, too, and I want to thank you, from my heart. Second Corinthians 11:1 came true, I think: "You also must help us by prayer so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted to us in answer to many prayers." We were conscious of the Lord's accompanying presence all the way, and of His supply of what we did not have and could not do.

Of course I can't give you a day-by-day account, just a few vignettes. A croissant breakfast for Flemish-speaking women at the Belgian Evangelical Mission (the one my parents were working under when I was born in Brussels). Toos, an exuberant Dutch mother of four whom we had met two years ago in Holland, was my (*superb*) translator. An afternoon meeting by translation into French, and dinner with former director of the Belgian Bible Institute, George Winston, with whom I more or less grew up (we used to sing duets together and our parents thought we'd make a great match!), whom I had not seen for forty-one years. There were several opportunities to speak in English to interna-

tional groups before we went on to:

Black Forest Academy in Germany. There was a minute or so of tenseness as we boarded the train when I managed (I've no idea *how*) to fall between the train and the platform but caught myself by the elbows on step and edge. Kees, however, lunged to save me, and fell right to the tracks. A couple of months earlier a student had done the same thing and lost both legs. Neither Kees nor I was injured in the slightest (thank you again for praying—the angels were alert), but I did put a teensy hole in a good skirt.

Oh, the cleanliness, order, and efficiency of Germany—it did my soul much good. Crisp, impeccable linen on the breakfast table. Gleaming windows. Scrubbed floors. Nary a gum wrapper in the streets of Kandern. It was cherry season in the Forest, and near our pension we were allowed to pick as many as we could eat there (not to be carried home). The (mostly American) students of the Academy were open and surprisingly receptive. Grade school children stood in line to hug me and even the high school boys came to hear me talk about Passion and Purity. The junior high kids—so bright, polite, and sweet—prepared excellent questions to ask me.

Dear Erna Martens, one of those indispensable salt-of-the-earth single women (she had arranged much of our tour), sent us off on the train to Vienna supplied with fresh rolls, ham, pastries, fruit, fruitjuice and chocolate bars—and money to eat in the dining car. A superfluity of kindnesses.

The train took us from Basel to Vienna through the Tyrol. Spectacularly beautiful day, velvet meadows (with wild flowers bedight), sleek taupe-colored cows with melodious bells, neat villages, each with its red-and-white-spired church on a pinnacle; houses and hay fields at altitudes you wouldn't believe (old men peacefully turning hay with pitchforks); great gray crags and glistening snow peaks on all sides, and

everywhere cleanliness and flowers and sunshine (Heaven will be like that, won't it!).

Vienna. What can one say of such a fascinating city? Won't try. Many meetings there, some by German translation, some in English (e.g. a lunchtime group comprising many nationalities at the UN). Heidi Van Dam of Operation Mobilisation was our organizer there, Barbara Silvis our hostess. To the Vienna Symphony one evening—flashing bows, rhythmically bending bodies, and the most marvelous little conductor, an engine of energy, pumping, swaying, jumping up and down, and ceaselessly smiling, as he conducted (O bliss!) Mozart.

On June 15, boat to Budapest. Our first glimpse of Eastern Europe as we passed Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. Lovely old buildings, a great stone lion; a Hungarian city on our right, ugly modern hi-rises. On the wharf in Budapest stood Anna Marie Kool, a young Dutch woman, smiling and holding up a copy of my book, *Through Gates*. She was, for us as for others, "broken bread and poured-out wine," another of those indispensables whom we quickly came to love. She tried to teach us a bit of Hungarian (I can still say *Isten aldjón*, God bless you), and was our constant servant. An old lady in a wheel chair told me she had prayed for me in 1956; another offered me a chocolate bar ("Please accept this gift from one who has prayed for you"); yet another sang to me (in Hungarian) the Aaronic blessing. What would that do to you? A pastor had us to his house for a little supper of cold pork, bread, and tea. "I thought I would hear from you a missionary success story," he said. "Instead I heard a message much more important to us here" (I had spoken from 2 Tim 1:12). And how shall I tell you of Sara and Dora and Kornel, Krista and Sandor and others? I can't. But they are people who have found their way into my heart and my prayers.

Back to Vienna (we watched people waltz and we ate lunch in the Vienna Woods); more meetings in Eisenstadt and Linz, accompanied by my German translator, an American named Jo Neukirchner, married to an Austrian. We "clicked" at once, it seemed. As we drove along the Danube she got out a hymn book and asked me to sing old gospel songs such as "Loved with Everlasting Love" and "Out of My Bondage." When

we came to a robbers' castle, although I was wearing my "speaking dress," I put on my walking shoes and we climbed the steep hill, then bought cheese and rolls in the little village of Wachau, sat at an outdoor table in lovely vineyard country.

In Salzburg (a wonderful chunk of the Old World with church bells and cobblestones and castles and monasteries and things), a young couple expecting their first child told me they would not forget my talk on the Christian family. Visited Hitler's hideaway, Berchtesgaden—and lost our camera with the one exposed film we'd taken. Drove on to Winterthur, Switzerland for a women's meeting in a casino. En route back to Vienna Lars (by the most astonishing linguistic gyrations—he understands much more German than I do, since his mother tongue is Norwegian) found us a little lunch place way up a most unlikely-looking dirt road. We sat on a deck in sunshine—singing birds, towering mountains, fir trees, a plate of potatoes and wurst. Drove over Albergpass—clouds, tundra, free-range cattle, and the same cold, wet freshness of the high Andes of Ecuador; great, thick, feathery firs, pale slashes of scree, and steel braces to prevent snowslides from blocking roads.

Last of all was a trip to Czechoslovakia. You can figure out why I can't tell you much of that memorable visit. It is disquieting to see TV monitors on the corners of buildings, and police in unexpected places. Things are very precarious there for Christians, but I was allowed to speak in small churches and meet with eager young people, one of whom asked me for names of foreign missionaries they might pray for and write to. Joni Tada was there not long before on an "official" visit, no holds barred, and the impact of her testimony, they told me, was enormous.

I confess that I had been apprehensive about

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going to Europe. It was too long away from home (oh the work that piles up!), too many places and languages (I spoke by translation into five), too little information about what would be expected of me in some of them (in one the average was almost five talks per day). But I kept thinking of Amy Carmichael's verse when she sailed for Japan: "When He putteth forth His sheep, *He goeth before.*" As always, God was better than all my fears. He went before. He prepared the way and He prepared us, and showed us every day how great is His faithfulness. *Why do I ever fear?*

The Effectual Fervent Prayer of a Mother

"Thou sentest Thine hand from above, and drewest my soul out of that profound darkness—my mother, that faithful one, weeping to Thee for me, more than mothers weep the bodily deaths of their children. For she, by that faith and spirit which she had from Thee, discerned the death wherein I lay, and Thou heardest her, O Lord; Thou heardest her, and despisedst not her tears, when streaming down, they watered the ground under her eyes [he alludes here to that devout manner of the Eastern ancients, who used to lie flat on their faces in prayer] in every place where she prayed; yea Thou heardest her . . . Thine ears were towards her heart. O Thou God omnipotent, who so caredst for every one of us, as if Thou carest for him only; and so for all, as if they were but one!"

(Confessions of St. Augustine)

Note from Lars

The first time you heard from me it was, I trust, a lowkeyed appeal for financial support and you responded. I've said thank you twice—for *not* having to ask. Let me thank you again.

Being married to E.E. has its rewards and many enjoyable and amusing moments—as when someone asks, "How are you, Mr. Elliot?" Sometimes I say, "I'm Mr. Elliot III, but we're the Grens in private." My wife once got a card that began "Dear Ms. Elliot or whoever's wife you are now." I got a letter addressed to Dr. Addison Leitch %

Lars Gren. Add of course was E.E.'s husband #2 who died in '73. Never responded to that letter. I did have a dream once where I saw Add in the lobby of a hotel and he said to me "How's it going, son?" I had no reply.

It's the rewards that bring me to my purpose. My reward is meeting a lot of you at different places where E. speaks, and helping her overall work. Doing this took me to Hungary in June. There I was introduced to an unusual man who told me of the amazing changes in the country. Freedom of movement, freedom to bring Christian books in, and now freedom to print Christian books in Hungary. This man is a publisher who has a team of translators who have been working for this opportunity. He has *Shadow of the Almighty* and *Through Gates of Splendor* ready to go to print. You guessed it: funds are needed. He wants to print 10,000 copies for \$20,000. You may ask how much profit will he make? I said he was unusual. Cost of production will be \$2 per book and they will be sold for \$1. The average wage in Hungary is \$100 per month and a person needs more than one job to make it. They have already printed books by George Mueller, John Stott, Joni Eareckson Tada and others.

Christians in Hungary are *hungry*—for good solid books. My publisher friend asked what I might give him, so I'm offering you a chance to be a part of this project as I will be. If you'd like to make a tax deductible contribution, make your check payable to: Grace Church (be sure to mark it "Hungarian Printing Project") and mail it to: Grace Church, Attn: Bob Kingsbury, 3021 Blume Dr., Los Alamitos, CA 90720. **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHECK TO THE NEWSLETTER.**

Last week a lady suggested that my wife should write about me. I said that since my wife always seems to write about husbands who are dead I'd just as soon stay out of print for awhile. Anyway I do enjoy hearing stories about #1 and #2.

E. mentioned my glaucoma in a past letter. I want to thank you for your prayers and notes. Laser surgery was done on my left eye and it appears that it will help lower the pressure as it did in the right one. So I thank God and continue taking my 10 drops and 2 squirts of jell in my eyes per day. Thank you for your response.

Little Colleen

Last April Valerie found her two-year-old (now three) Colleen unconscious on the bathroom floor. A CAT scan and EEG revealed no abnormalities, but she had three more seizures. Epilepsy is the diagnosis, a form halfway between Grand Mal and Petit Mal. Her neurologist has said that in her case it is possible that she will outgrow this, perhaps between five and seven years of age. Of course we pray for healing, and would ask you to join us. She is on phenobarbitol, which controls the seizures but causes mild hyperactivity, a trial at times to the family.

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.

Travel Schedule November 1989/ January 1990

November 4 Charlotte, NC; Glad Tidings radio ministry banquet, (704)536-7062.

November 7 S. Hamilton, MA; Gordon-Conwell Seminary, pastors and wives workshop, (617)468-7111.

November 10 Quakertown, PA; Crisis Pregnancy Center, (215)538-3180.

November 11 Princeton, NJ; Presbyterian Church, (609)987-1166 or 799-1269.

November 18 Nashua, NH; women's breakfast, Vilma Zuliani, (603)883-5192.

December 28 Philadelphia, PA; Campus Crusade for Christ, (413)733-8100.

December 29, 30 Hamilton, Ontario; Student Mission Advance, (416)523-0682.

January 29-February 1 Kerrville, TX; Laity Lodge, women's retreat, (512)896-2505.

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