

# The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

September/October 1988

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## Nevertheless We Must Run Aground

**H**ave you ever put heart and soul into something, prayed over it, worked at it with a good heart because you believed it to be what God wanted, and finally seen it "run aground"?

The story of Paul's voyage as a prisoner across the Adriatic Sea tells how an angel stood beside him and told him not to be afraid (in spite of winds of hurricane force), for God would spare his life and the lives of all with him on board ship. Paul cheered his guards and fellow-passengers with that word, but added, "Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island" (Acts 27:26; NIV).

It would seem that the God who promises to spare all hands might have "done the job right," saved the ship as well, and spared them the ignominy of having to make it to land on the flotsam and jetsam that was left. The fact is He did not, nor does He always spare us.

Heaven is not *here*, it's *There*. If we were given all we wanted here, our hearts would settle for this world rather than the next. God is forever luring us up and away from this one, wooing us to Himself and His still invisible Kingdom where we will certainly find what we so keenly long for.

"Running aground," then, is not "the end of the world." But it helps to make the world a bit less appealing. It may even be God's answer to "Lead us not into temptation"—the temptation complacently to settle for visible things.

## The Great Barrier Reef (Diary Excerpts)

May 3, 1988. We lost May 2 on the International Dateline. Incredible to think of this gigantic vessel (a 747) beating its smooth and steady pathway through a moonlit sky, so many thousands of miles across the Pacific for fifteen hours, unerringly aiming for the pinpoint of Sydney's airport, while inside we sleep and read and pray and eat and watch a movie.

3:45 P.M., Australia time. Cairns, Queensland. Scenery as we flew north from Sydney reminiscent of Ecuador—jungle, deep ravines, mountains, tea and cane plantations, houses on stilts.

Sitting at an outdoor table near an ice cream stand, overlooking beach and sea. Depressing parade of mostly-undressed vacationers of many nationalities. Americans—mostly loud, corny, hilarious—all over the place. What a price we pay for doing as Satan does—going to and fro in the earth! We came to see a little of the Great Barrier Reef, but this means a day of joining the bored.

May 4, 10:00 A.M., aboard the "Quicksilver" motor launch at Port Douglas. "Morning tea" has been served. Now, as we set out toward the reef, a marine biologist tells us that it covers 20,000 square kilometers. Millions of tons of calcium carbonate are laid down each year by the animals which form the reef. The water, she says, is nearly sterile, hence its crystal clarity. To the west of the reef it is six thousand feet deep. Cays are by-products of the reef, which is limestone secreted by polyps. Birds seed the cays, making them stable. Many reef fish establish "harems," but if the male leaves the group one of the females will change sex and take over his job.

The "Quicksilver" ties up to a steel pontoon. Lars and I go out in a boat with a glass-walled

underbelly through which we gaze incredulous at the teeming life of the coral. Oh, the shapes—antlers, flowers, tables, platforms, leaves, fingers, plates, wires, brains. And oh, the colors—of a brilliance and luminosity unimagined before. Parrot fish, so-named because of a strong beak, run at the coral and take a bite out of it. Schools of tiny cleaner fish do their work of removing dead scales, parasites, etc. from the larger ones, which wait quietly in line for their turn, as if at a car-wash.

Huge buffet lunch served—salads, fried chicken, great mountains of fresh prawns and gorgeous tropical fruit.

2:00 P.M. I go snorkeling. Awesome event. The moment I put my face into the water I am in a totally different world (vastly different from the one in which I usually live and breathe, very different, too, from the world of snorkeling off the coast of Massachusetts), a world of utter silence, filled with limpid light and color and swarming movement, fantastic faces, weird designs. A great bouquet of electric-blue flowers meets my eye at once—yes, it is a *coral*. Nearby is a giant clam, its scalloped edges ajar, showing the velvety purple mantle, strange tubes, orifices, a pulsating siphon.

I am surprised to see how casually the fish accept the presence of human beings. They pay almost no attention to us, moving with deliberate speed, majestic instancy, sometimes darting, sometimes confronting you straight in the face with unflinching gaze. Their colors are simply unbelievable—purple and yellow stripes, red spots, zebra stripes, rainbows, fluorescent greens, “random” mixtures. Now and then a glittering “curtain” is drawn across in front of you—a school of small fish that seems to come from nowhere. Suddenly a huge shape moves into my line of vision. A whale, perhaps? No, it is wearing striped shorts. No denizen of this water-world at all, but a portly, white-limbed gentleman, with great pendulous belly hanging like a blimp. I make an abrupt left turn. Far below me, in slow motion, the beginners’ class of scuba divers from the “Quicksilver” appears, a surrealist study in black and white, “moon-walking” on the floor of the sea.

“Have you journeyed all the way to the sources of the sea, / or walked where the Abyss

is deepest?” the Lord asked Job (Job 38:16; JB). No, Lord, I answer. But You have given me a glimpse of that marvelous kingdom, and I echo the psalmist’s praise: “Yahweh, what variety you have created, / arranging everything so wisely! / . . . vast expanse of ocean, / teeming with countless creatures, / creatures large and small, / with the ships going to and fro / and Leviathan whom you made to amuse you” (Ps 104:24-26; JB).

So much for the diary. We went to Australia for speaking engagements in and around Sydney, and from there to Singapore where my brother Dave Howard directs the World Evangelical Fellowship. Audiences in both places were eager and responsive, but I must not fill up the Newsletter with too many reports.

## Lord of Her Lovelife

“I have been married for six weeks,” writes a reader, “and I look back to about a year and a half ago when I read *Passion and Purity* for the fourth time. This time was different—I kept from resisting your words in this book. I thought, ‘Yes, I will bring my lovelife into submission under God’s authority!’ I began to pray to God for His will. I was not dating anyone, but I was praying fervently for one man I knew—not with my usual attitude of lust, but with an attitude of wanting God’s will in *his* life, whether it be me or not. I made no advances or hints but left the relationship totally in God’s hand if He desired it. What a joy it is to say, ‘God have Your way and Your complete timing in my life.’

“*Passion and Purity* changed my whole idea that ‘I deserved someone’ into ‘God’s grace is all I need.’ I married the man I had been praying for. And I see the great value in starting out our relationship under God’s authority. We have both grown to know Him so much this year. I shared *Passion and Purity* with a good friend.

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She began to pray and leave her lovelife up to God. This resulted in a break-up, but soon after God brought a very godly man into her life. They will soon be married.

"I am not saying, 'Just follow the *Passion and Purity* formula and you will find yourself married.' I am saying being in submission to God far outdoes any joy given by chasing our own whims."

A young man who had read the same book writes, "God taught me that preparing for marriage is not so much a matter of finding the right person as it is becoming the right person. I began concentrating on my relationship with Christ and waiting on the Lord for His woman for me and His timing. It was quite a relief to me to realize that I didn't have to date my entire Christian campus and use the process of elimination to find the right one! Not long after I had laid my desires on the altar, God brought into my life a wonderful young lady and we'll be married soon."

## Recycling Discarded Babies

The abortion business thrives on what is called "freedom of choice." The tiny baby-shaped thing in a woman's womb is a mere bit of tissue, not human but disposable, like a Kleenex. If, however, it turns out that that same collection of cells is usable, commercially or medically, it becomes highly human. Now that medical procedures have been developed for the implantation of bone marrow, brains, and other organs from aborted babies for the treatment of disease, we are asked to ignore the glaring contradiction. Will Christians too ignore it? "The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action" (Dn 11:32; RSV).

### Prayer

This simple formula for prayer was sent by my nephew Gene Howard, just returning from mission work in Nepal.

**Present** my requests.

**Relinquish** my desires.

**Accept** His answers.

**Yield** my life.

## When Do I Tell Him?

A young woman who gave her virginity away to the wrong person asks when she should reveal this to a man she is dating. This is what I told her:

It seems to me that this need not be a subject of conversation on the first or even on the tenth date. A great deal depends on the man, and what you think his expectations of you are. The most important thing for you now, with every man, is to behave like a responsible Christian woman. This will be a lonely road in today's society (as it was in yesterday's), and I should think especially in a place like your Ivy League college.

Being a responsible Christian woman means not fooling around *at all*. No kisses, no situations where you might be persuaded to indulge in any sort of steamy contact, and certainly no going into anybody's bedroom for any reason. These refusals will raise questions in his mind. Here is your opportunity to say, "I'm not that kind of girl. I wish I could say I've never been that kind, but I'm a Christian now, Jesus Christ is Lord of my life and of my love, and this is how it's going to be from here on in." He will then know that you have a "past," but he need not know the details. If he's shocked, he may back off. On the other hand, he may find you are just the woman he's been hoping still exists.

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## "Gateway to Joy"

That's what I've entitled the new radio program for which Back to the Bible has invited me to speak. This fifteen minute daily program will begin airing on October 3, 1988. If you wish to hear Gateway to Joy in your area, simply contact your local radio station manager and encourage him to get in touch with Back to the Bible's in-house radio agency: Good Life Associates, P.O. Box 81803, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501 or call (402)474-6440.

## Prayer Requests

1. For God's help with a new video series to be recorded in September;
2. For His guidance about the daily radio program which has been asked for;
3. For part-time secretarial help of "executive" quality. A typist is available to me, but it would be a great boon to have someone who sees what needs to be done and does it. Sometimes, like Peter, I feel as though I'm drowning. Perhaps the Lord's outstretched hand would come in the form of a human helper;
4. For those who face hard decisions about the care of aging parents and other relatives.

## 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 September/ November 1988

**September 2, 3** Montreal, Quebec; Seminaire Baptiste Evangelique, (514) 337-2555.

**September 8** Langhorne, PA; Philadelphia College of Bible, (215) 752-5800.

**September 26** Dallas, TX; Dallas Prayer Ministry, Mrs. Meletio, (214) 956-8915.

**September 27** Dallas, TX; Green Acres Baptist Church.

**September 28** Dallas, TX; Dallas Christian Leadership, Marlee Hinckley, (214) 363-9352.

**September 29** Dallas, TX; Youth Specialities, Tic Long, (619) 440-2333.

**September 30** Bismarck, ND; Steer Inc., (701) 258-4911.

**October 10, 11** Greenville, SC; Second Presbyterian Church, (803) 271-8340.

**October 11, 12** Roswell, GA; Fellowship Bible Church, (404) 992-4952.

**October 14, 15** Loudonville, NY; Rev. Curt Morgan, (518) 436-9601.

**November 3** Edina, MN; Grace Church, (612) 926-1884.

**November 5** Philadelphia, PA; singles conference, Mike Cavanaugh, (716) 582-2790.

**November 11, 12** Willowdale, Ontario; Ontario Bible College, (416) 226-6380.

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