

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

January / February 1983

Give Them Parking Space but Let Them Starve to Death

Another moral threshold was crossed last April when a tiny baby boy, at the specific request of his parents and with the sanction of the Supreme Court of Indiana, was starved to death in a hospital. "Infant Doe" (he was not allowed the usual recognition of being human by being named), born with Down's syndrome and a malfunctioning esophagus (the latter could have been corrected with surgery), died, as the *Washington Post* (April 18) stated, "not because he couldn't sustain life without a million dollars worth of medical machinery, but because no one fed him." For six days the nurses in that Bloomington hospital went about their usual routines of bathing and changing and feeding all the newborns except one. They bathed and changed Baby Doe but they never gave him a bottle. Over his crib was a notice, DO NOT FEED. Several couples came forward, begging to be allowed to adopt him. They were turned down.

What went on in that little box during those six terrible days and nights? We turn our imagination away. It's unthinkable. But if I were to think about it, and put down on paper what my mind saw, I would be accused of playing on people's feelings, and of making infanticide (yes, *infanticide*—call it what it is) an "emotional issue." Let me suppose at least that the baby cried—quite loudly (at first). One report says that he was placed in a room alone, lest his crying disturb others (others, perhaps, who were capable

of helping him).

Joseph Sobran in his column in the Los Angeles Times Syndicate on April 20 suggested that "opposition to infanticide will soon be deplored as the dogma of a few religious sects who want to impose their views on everyone else." The language sounds sickeningly familiar.

There has been a conspicuous silence from those who usually raise shrill protest when other human rights are violated—the rights of smokers, homosexuals, and criminals are often as loudly insisted upon as those of children, women, and the handicapped.

The handicapped? What on earth is happening when a society is so careful to provide premium parking spaces to make things easier for them, but sees no smallest inconsistency when one of them who happens to be too young to scream, "For God's sake, feed me!" is quietly murdered? It is in the name of humanity, humaneness, compassion, and freedom that these things occur, but never is it acknowledged that the real reasons are comfort and convenience, that is, simple selfishness. "Abortion not only prefers comfort, convenience, or advantage of the pregnant woman to the very life of her unborn child, a fundamentally good thing, but seeks to deny that the life ever existed. In this sense it is a radical denial not only of the worth of a specific life but of the essential goodness of life itself and the Providential ordering of its procreation" (R.V. Young, "Taking Choice Seriously," *The Human Life Review*, Vol. VIII, no. 3).

But weren't we talking about infanticide and haven't we now switched to abortion? The premises on which abortion is justified are fundamentally the same on which infanticide is seen as civilized and acceptable. What Hitler used to call

eugenics is now called "quality of life," never mind whether the life in question happens to be the mother's or the child's. Death, according to three doctors who put the issue out into the open in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1973, is now considered an option in the "treatment" of infants; in other words, a mortuary may now replace the nursery. One cannot help thinking of the antiseptic "shower rooms" of the Third Reich, where the unwanted were "treated" to death. Nor can one forget the words of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Can any Christian argue that the smallest and most defenceless are, by virtue merely of being too small and too defenceless, *not* His brethren? ●

What Is Happening?

What on earth is happening? I asked on page one. The answer is plain, I'm afraid, in Romans 1 and 2. Men render truth dumb and inoperative by their wickedness. They refuse to acknowledge God or to thank Him for what He is or does. They become fatuous in their argumentations. Behind a facade of wisdom they become fools. They give up God. They forfeit the truth of God and accept a lie. They overflow with insolent pride; their minds teem with diabolical invention. They recognize no obligations to honor, lose all natural affection, and have no use for mercy. They do not hesitate to give their thorough approval to others who do the same. (Rom 1:18-2:5 JBP)

Can we condemn them without subjecting ourselves to the same standard of judgment by which we condemn? Of course we can't. Judgment must be *righteous judgment* (John 7:24), based on the Word of God.

"There is no doubt at all that he will 'render to every man according to his works,' and that means eternal life to those who, in patiently doing good, aim at the unseen. . . . It also means anger and wrath for those who rebel against God's plan of life. . . . But there is glory and honor and peace for every worker on the side of good." (Romans 2:6-10 JBP) ●

New Zealand Trip

Last August, Lars and I spent three weeks in that indescribably beautiful little country of New Zealand. I was speaking for the Church Missionary Society's "Spring Schools," one in Hamilton on the north island for four days, another in Christchurch on the south island. It was spring-time, of course. New Zealand is at about the same latitude south that Massachusetts is north, so the seasons are the reverse of ours, and everything was in glorious bloom. Thousands upon thousands of newborn lambs capered and gamboled in the pastures (called paddocks there). We missed witnessing the birth of one of them by about thirty seconds. It was just staggering up onto its little rubber hoofs. The ewe was busy cleaning it.

We've seen the Rockies and the Andes and the Alps. We've been to Wales and Norway and Ecuador and Peru, Hawaii and a few other places, but we agreed we'd seen nothing to beat New Zealand. Such miles and miles of lush velvet green pastureland, such sweeping plains, such rank upon rank of awesome snowcapped jagged peaks, such pearly smooth sheets of turquoise glacial lakes. We traveled for six days after the speaking part was finished, having hired a small Japanese car (a Daihatsu!). From Christchurch we drove west into a beautiful forest, through the Rakaia Gorge, across the Canterbury Plains, and up into the high brown grass country similar to the moors and Highlands of Scotland, then into the Southern Alps. Flew in a small plane around the highest peak, Mt. Cook, and over three or four glaciers (pronounced "glassyuh" by the natives), then down over the Haast Pass to the Tasman Sea. Drove to Queenstown, Lake Te Anau, and a fjord improperly named Milford Sound (we were taught the difference between a fjord and a sound) where we took a boat trip through towering mountains

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to the sea. A little crested penguin obliged us by waddling primly up a rock very near the boat, and two seals yawned with ennui to see another crowd of tourists. On the west coast we picked up driftwood on a lonely wild beach, gathered ferns in a very wet jungle (rainfall is 300 inches per year in that section), and climbed over rocks to the foot of Fox Glacier.

Ah, but the people! What dear, lovely people we met. Warm, responsive, hospitable, and we did not feel apologetic for being American (except when our fellow travelers on the fjord boat began to play loud country music on a tape recorder and square dance on the decks).

One woman, a missionary from East Africa, told me she had been saved just nine months at the time of the death of the five men in Ecuador. The testimony of Jim Elliot had a powerful effect in her life. Three times she had put in writing her willingness to be a missionary. Then she came across Jim's note in a diary, "Ananias was not slain for not giving, but for not giving what he said he'd given." That word was a link in the chain of her actually going to Africa. ●

Response from a seminar a few months ago in New Jersey:

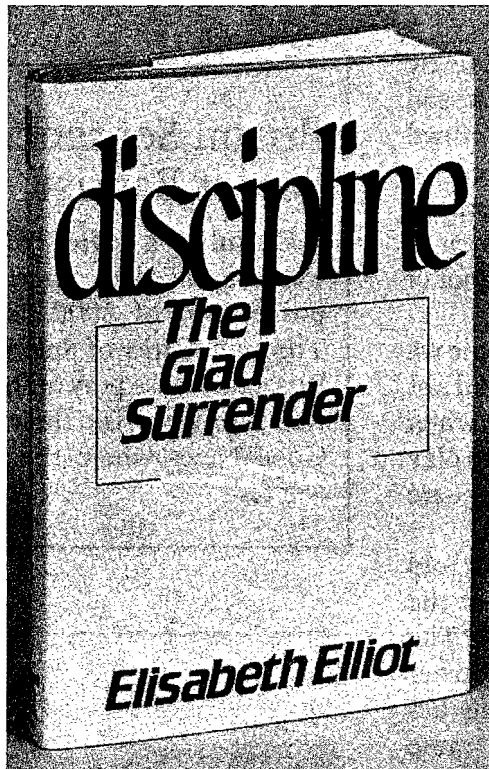
"Wish I could say thank you, but I can't. Oh gosh—thank you for *that*? You talked about forgiveness, and my mother, my sister, my neighbor are all sitting there looking at me. All through your talk, they're looking at me. They knew why I needed that talk! My husband is a gambler and am I *bitter*! Bitter, resentful, anxious—all the things you talked about! I'm telling you, God had a funnel from your mouth to my ear. I couldn't believe it. Who told you, I'm saying to myself, who told you about me and my husband? I was taking notes, and I put a box around that word forgiveness. That's for my sister, I said, that's not for me. She's the one that needs that! But it's really for me. God's telling me it's for me. And to think my neighbor gave me the ticket for this seminar for a birthday present. What kind of a friend is that? A *birthday* present! But thanks, Elisabeth."

Prison Sentence for Soviet Baptist

On July 8 a Soviet Baptist, Vasili Pali, 54, was sentenced to three years in prison for possession of 3000 copies of my book, *Through Gates of Splendor*, translated into Russian. Please pray for him and many others like him who risk their lives to spread the Good News where the Good News is not wanted.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for those who are fighting for the lives of millions of unborn and now newborn children—by lobbying, by legislation, by writing and teaching and serving in hospitals, or in any other way. Remember that prayer is a powerful weapon, too.
- Pray for Christian fathers. Theirs is a position of God-given power and authority, often poorly understood, poorly lived. Pray that they may be true *priests* in their homes, standing ready for sacrifice. Pray that they may not goad their children to resentment (Ephesians 6:4 NEB).
- Pray for wisdom, courage, and humility for President Reagan, that he may be a leader who helps our country toward the path of righteousness; that he may not be pressured to abandon principles for pragmatism (e.g., what is right for what offers an instant "solution").
- Pray that I may never speak or write without remembering that "there is no question of our being qualified in ourselves—we cannot claim anything as our own, the qualification comes from God" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6 NEB).



Special Offer

Discipline The Glad Surrender

Elisabeth Elliot points the way to a joyous life of obedience. She explains what Christian commitment really is and how each individual can achieve that commitment. The subject is personal discipline, based on obedience to a loving and sovereign Master, touching on such practices as praying and fasting, the discipline of the mind, the feelings, the body, and of one's time, work, and possessions.

Special price to newsletter readers: \$8.00 (Publisher's retail price \$8.95)

Other Books and Tapes by Elisabeth Elliot

(To order, fill in order form on enclosed card)

Through Gates of Splendor—the story of how Jim Elliot and five other missionaries were killed by Auca Indians in the jungles of Ecuador. \$3.50

Love Has a Price Tag—essays based on Elisabeth Elliot's recent experiences as wife, mother, widow, missionary, and teacher. \$4.95

These Strange Ashes—the story of Elisabeth Elliot's first year as a missionary. Touches on the question of suffering and loss. \$4.95

The Jim Elliot Story—includes Jim's voice, telling a witch doctor story. (tape) \$5.00

Videotape

A seven-part series on denial, forgiveness, relinquishment, pruning, acceptance, exchange, guidance. Available by calling toll-free 1-800-647-2284, or writing Video Dynamics, P.O. Box 20330, Jackson, Mississippi 39209.

Travel Schedule: January-March 1983

Jan. 21-22 Northwest Singles' Conference, Hinson Memorial Baptist Church, Portland, Oregon.

Jan. 27-29 Oklahoma University Baptist Student Union Conference, Norman, Oklahoma.

Feb. 11-12 Trinitarian Congregational Church Seminar, Wayland, Massachusetts.

Feb. 22-24 Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas, Texas.

March 10-12 The Word of God Christian community, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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