

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

July / August 1991

ISSN 8756-1336

The Inner Child

On a recent out-of-town weekend Lars and I did what we seldom do at home—watched TV. Again and again, twiddling the dials at random, we came across a man whom I will call JB talking about “the inner child.” We couldn’t seem to “get shut” of that man and that subject. The more I watched, and the more I studied the mesmerized audiences (dressed in those fancy appliqued sweat shirts and warm-up suits) the more antsy I got. They sat with eyes closed, earnestly, *rhapsodically*, listening to the voice and the strains of Dvorak’s “Going Home.”

What was he selling them anyway? I took notes: “the inner child,” “re-parenting” and “championing” were among the buzz-words. Gradually I began to figure out where some of the questions I’d been receiving from readers and radio listeners were coming from—all this business about “working through your anger,” being “creative,” “caring,” “insightful,” and (Oh dear, not this again?) “learning to love yourself.” The vocabulary was JB’s (most of it, however, not original with him). He talked about a Journey to Wholeness which involved Action, Feeling Work, Cognitive Work, and Spiritual Work (this last had to do with Expanded Lifestyle and a Higher Power). He said things like, “You’ve got to get rid of your mother’s and father’s god. You’ve got to say NO—and hey, it’s O.K. to say NO!” He said Therapeutic Change involved Potency, Permission, Protection, and Practice. Well, you couldn’t argue with the list, but do we understand what he does with it? It came down to stuff like: “You don’t *have* a self, so you can’t get out of it! You’ve got to give your child (*i.e.*, your inner child) *new rules*, he’s got to break the old ones, practice saying no. He’s a *wounded* child, he never got his needs met before! But hey, he’s a *wonder* child, the most wonderful child you can imagine, and I’m *here* for you!!! etc”.

P.T. Barnum knew what he was talking about when he said there’s a sucker born every minute. He made money on it and so have thousands before and since. It isn’t difficult to convince insecure people (who isn’t

insecure?) that they’ve been shabbily treated and deserved better. In fact they’ve been *horribly* treated and mistreated, misunderstood, misused, abused. Their families were *dysfunctional* (whose wasn’t? whose parents did a perfect job?). No wonder they can’t feel good about themselves. But here, folks, I can make you see that you’re wonderful, really WONDERFUL. It’s bad to feel bad about yourself, and it’s the fault of all those awful people who wounded you. You can just walk away from them. Let that little child take you by the hand and walk away.

As always, we must hold up whatever the world is saying to the straightedge of Scripture in order to see if it’s crooked. JB’s gospel, by which many will testify to having been helped, is very simple and, I believe, very crooked. The pathway to fulfillment is straight and narrow, and it begins at the Cross where (as in *Pilgrim’s Progress*) Christian drops his burden—the burden of sin, deep-rooted, infectious, malignant, death-dealing sin, the terrible root of all those “bad feelings.” “Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said, with a merry heart, ‘He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death.’ Then he stood still a while to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him, that the sight of the Cross should thus ease him of his burden.”

Surprising it will always be to those who come to that Cross, and foolishness it will always be to those who don’t. Rest by His sorrow, life by His death? Yes. “His purpose in dying for all was that men, while still in life, should cease to live for themselves and should live for him who for their sake died and was raised to life. With us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man... When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world (or a *new act of creation*); the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun” (2 Cor 5:15-17; JBP).

That new order is a far cry from the notion of self-acceptance which has taken hold of the minds of many Christians. *Any message which makes the Cross redundant is anti-Christian*. The original sin, pride, is behind my “poor self-image,” for I felt that I deserved better than I got, which is exactly what Eve felt! So it was pride, not poor self-image, that had to go. If I’m so

beautiful and lovable, what was Jesus doing up there, nailed and crowned with thorns? Why all that hideous suffering for the pure Son of God? Here's why: there was *no other way* to deliver us from the hell of our own proud self-loving selves, no other way out of the bondage of self-pity and self-congratulation. How shall we take our stand beneath the Cross of Jesus and continue to love the selves that put Him there? How survey the wondrous Cross and at the same time pour contempt on all our pride? No. It won't work. Jesus put it simply: If you want to be My disciple, you must leave self behind, take up the cross, and follow Me.

George MacDonald writes, "Right gladly would He free them from their misery, but He knows only one way: He will teach them to be like himself, meek and lowly, bearing with gladness the yoke of His Father's will. This is the one, the only right, the only possible way of freeing them from their sin, the cause of their unrest."

A Cheerful Word for Mothers at Home

Brenda Sawyer of Twinsburg, Ohio says that the effect of my book, *Let Me Be a Woman*, read when she was single, was "like that of seeing a beloved face unexpectedly in a room full of strangers.... While I was not struggling with my 'identity' and femininity, I found it confusing and perplexing that the Church seemed to be so defensive and apologetic toward the feminist movement. Some of my Christian college professors had been outspoken feminists, and I was beginning to feel rather alone and outdated.

"Today I am married and the mother of four precious gifts from God. I can't think of another career more challenging and satisfying than to pour my energies into the daily task of making order out of chaos, music out of noise, communication out of babble, purposefulness out of purposelessness, pointing chubby little wayward feet gently toward the Path, lighting ignorance with knowledge and confusion with understanding.

"Of course I am aware that ultimately it is God who does these things, and I pray I am not being blasphemous in any way, but it awes me to know that in some way the work that I do is so close to His heart." Surely the Father does not think it blasphemous, for it is He who has given mothers their lovely task, allowing them to cooperate with Him in shaping the destiny of some of His loved children.

And a Word to Older Women

Another letter: "I am a former career woman turned stay-at-home mother of three, ages three, two, and six months. Please encourage the 'older woman' to teach the younger to be what Titus 2:3-5 teaches. How I would love to have an older woman knowingly smile at me in church and say, 'You are doing a good job,' or some other word of encouragement."

You Husbands, Now...

Wouldn't you love to have your wife *mother* your children full-time? Wouldn't it be lovely to come home to a not-so-harried lady, a cleaner house, a real meal, and children who know they matter that much? I often receive letters from women who *long* to stay home but whose husbands insist on their working for money. The writer of the above letter asks me to encourage men to advocate their wives' being at home. "Every day I praise God for a husband of character who provides financially. Please encourage young men to study hard and be able to support families in preparation for marriage." A good word, to which I'd like to add my own plea for consideration of this possibility. Perhaps you hadn't done much praying—the financial need seemed so unarguable. Perhaps God is waiting to show you a different way, a way which will very likely call for changes, some of them sacrificial, but the rewards will be great.

Tempted to Talk

Some of us talk too much. The Lord reminded me of my own tendency to "pop off" about things, to open my mouth when it should remain closed, to speak from a desire for sympathy or praise or to be seen in a favorable light, to comment on things about which no comment

Up to 100 copies of an article may be made for private distribution but not for resale. Please cite full credit as given below. For permission to make more than 100 copies of an article, please write to the Newsletter.

© Copyright 1991 by Elisabeth Elliot Gren

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter is published six times a year by Servant Publications. Donations to the newsletter are tax-deductible and should be sent to: The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, P.O. Box 7711, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

whatsoever (from *me!*) is called for. Kay's translation of Psalm 141:3 is, "Place, O Lord, a sentry over my mouth. Keep guard over the door of my lips." This is often my prayer. I had never noticed the connection between that prayer and an unusual one found in verse 5, "Let a righteous man smite me in mercy, and reprove me; oil for the head never may my head refuse." Kay's note on this: "He had asked, in verse 2, that his prayer might be established as incense, daily incense, before God. This could be only if his lips and heart were pure. Therefore he goes on to ask that he may both resist the tempting offers of prosperous wickedness, and may welcome reproof from a righteous man, as fragrant, cheering, oil, which would strengthen him to continue in patient prayer for his enemies."

Frederick Temple wrote: "Every temptation that we meet in the path of duty is another chance of filling our souls with the power of Heaven."

Did You Score?

A mother told me that's what teenagers are asking each other on Mondays in school. Anyone who is known to have a boyfriend or girlfriend is expected to "do it." Her daughter is looked upon as weird because she doesn't. Her answer to those who do: "I can be like you anytime I want to be, but you can never again be like me." This mother has taken it upon herself to distribute to several hundred parents my little booklet (for 10-16 year-olds), *Sex is a Lot More Than Fun*. It gives good reasons for cherishing that once-in-a-lifetime gift called virginity. You can have a sample copy for \$1.50 (12-24 copies \$1.00 each), from us, **NOT FROM THE NEWSLETTER**. Just write to BOOKLETS, 10 Strawberry Cove, Magnolia, MA 01930.

The Jim Elliot School

I've received word of a Christian school named for my first husband, grades 6-10, scheduled to open in September 1991 in Denver. Their statement: "We believe that no young person should be taken 'captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.'" Interested? Call Terry Hanna 773-6283 or Suzanne Haley 394-2016.

Recommended Reading

Donna Otto: *All in Good Time* (Thomas Nelson). Clear explanations of how to get yourself together—your time, your money, your house, your prayer life. Donna knows what she's talking about and knows how to show you, even includes pictures of the inside of her closets and drawers!

Oops from Lars

"Shall we take you off the list?" is negative and we heard from readers. I agree. Forms will now say "May we keep you on the list?"—and we do want to. Please do return cards for non-interruption of Newsletter service.

Prayer Requests

- For Kurdish refugees.
- For COMMISSION '91, a large gathering of international students in Nairobi in December to present God's call to the world mission of the Church. I am to give several seminars and a session on "The Cost of Commitment."
- I need your prayers for the above talks and for all speaking engagements, also for God's direction as to the YES or NO to invitations. That's always a hard one.
- For Christian parents wrestling with decisions about their children's education; the fears aroused by what's happening in public and sometimes in Christian schools; the strong pressures of the world on their children's minds. Lord, give them the wisdom You promised to those who ask. Give them trust that You are ABLE TO KEEP that which they have committed to You.

Interview with Walter

My two grandsons, Walter and Jim, were with us in April. I asked Walter to tell us something of his views on homeschooling. He's about to complete eighth grade.

Q. Why do you like homeschooling?

A. First, I am able to spend more time at home with my parents. Second, I learn things I'm specifically interested in, for example, I picked physics. I'm studying Newton's law and writing a paper on why I don't believe in UFO's.

Q. But your mother has never studied physics. How are you doing this?

- A. I get books from the library and from the public school warehouse. People in our church also help me.
- Q. How much time per day do you spend on studies?
- A. About three and a half to four hours.
- Q. Do you take exams?
- A. Yes. SAT's, which are graded by the Saddleback Christian Academy. That's a group of homeschoolers. I could also take them at the public schools if I wanted to.
- Q. Do you have any special tutoring?
- A. Tuesdays I go to a friend's house and his mom teaches us algebra. Friday he comes to our house and my mom tutors us in English. I think it really helps to have a tutor for some eighth grade stuff—not before.

- Q. Are you making good grades?
- A. Average in algebra. Above average in reading, vocabulary, word comprehension, science, history, and geography.

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 July - October 1991

July 30 Cullowhee, NC; Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, Leonard H. Bullock, (404) 244-0740.

August 2, 3 Riverside, CA; California Baptist Guild, Frances Anderson, (714) 689-5771.

August 9 North Easton, MA; Easton Foursquare Church.

September 4, 5 Bolivar, MO; Southwest Baptist University, Dr. Frost, (417) 326-5281.

September 13 Lancaster, PA; no details yet.

September 14 Baltimore, MD; women's meeting and luncheon, radio rally, Joel Freeman, (301) 525-3500.

September 21, 22 Brooklyn, NY; The Brooklyn Tabernacle, (718) 783-0942.

September 27, 28 Ozark Conferences; Mary Siemens, (501) 666-3266.

October 1 Atlanta, GA; First Baptist Church, day seminar, Mrs. Jane Barnard, (404) 460-8802.

October 12 Charleston, SC; St. Philip's Church, (803) 722-7734.

October 14 Mableton, GA; Westside Baptist, Gloria James, (404) 948-0121.

October 15 South Sioux City, NE; details later.

Correction: The plastic model of an unborn baby mentioned in the May/June Newsletter costs \$1.50 for one. Twenty-five and more, 30 cents each. Add \$2.00 (\$3.50 Canadian) to *each* order for postage and handling.

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

Servant Ministries, Inc.
Post Office Box 7711
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 14
Ann Arbor, MI