

SERVANT



ELISABETH ELLIOT

**HOW ONE WOMAN'S
NEXT STEP LIVING
IS STILL SHAPING LIVES**

MARK MAXWELL

POWER FOR LIVING

THE CHOICE

**HOW REVISITING
TWO OF THE FIRST
WORDS WE LEARNED
CAN CHANGE US**



In the name of Jesus

WHAT HAS GOD BEEN TEACHING YOU LATELY?

In our Innerview (p. 10), Ellen Vaughn tells the astonishing story of Elisabeth Elliot's incarnational ministry among those who killed her husband. For her, the power to walk in unconditional obedience came from considering Jesus' thorns and the enormous resources of love and forgiveness found in his name.

Lately I've been feeling anew the emphasis Jesus put on praying in his name. Four thoughts come to mind.

In the name of Jesus, we are promised *access to the throne room* of the universe. Jesus told us to pray to the Father, in his name. In John 14, Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me." His name is the key to our access.

In the name of Jesus, we are promised *authority in Heaven*. We learn in Hebrews that Jesus is our advocate, interceding on our behalf with the Father. "Therefore, let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and grace to help us in our time of need" (4:16). We approach God with Jesus as our advocate.

In the name of Jesus, we are promised *authority on earth*. In John 14:14 Jesus said, "You may ask for anything in my name, and I will do it." This is not "name it and claim it" theology. We pray so that the Father may be glorified in the Son (v.13). Jesus said we will do even greater things than he has done, because he is going to the Father and is sending a helper, the Holy Spirit. As a result of his life, death

and resurrection—his completed work on earth—all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

In the name of Jesus, we are promised *abiding fruit*. Jesus said we are like branches nourished only when connected to the vine. He challenged us, his disciples, to abide in him, the true vine, so that our lives will be fruitful, that fruit will last. When we choose to walk and work in the name of Jesus, we walk the way of the cross, but the resources we need for each step are ours. And whatever comes, he will walk with us.


Hope, purpose, power—life in all its fullness—is in the name that is above every other name.

Hope, purpose, power—life in all its fullness—is in the name that is above every other name.

One of Elisabeth's Elliot's prayers went like this: "Teach me, in all of today's work and trouble and joy, to respond with honest praise, simple trust, and instant obedience, that my life may be in truth a living sacrifice, by the power of your Holy Spirit and in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, my Master and my all. Amen."

May we renew our commitment to live and pray with confidence in the name of Jesus, not just throwing in his name out of religious habit, or skipping through to "Amen" to save time. Let's come to the Father in the name of Jesus, the one God calls "his beloved Son," and the one we call "Lord."

After reading this issue, I pray you'll determine to take the next step of obedience with him, the one who offers us his enormous resources to do the work to which he has called us.

In Jesus' name,
Mark 



@markmaxwell 

Mark is President of Prairie. His appearance on The Flourishing Culture podcast has been ranked #1. Listen at www.bcwinstitute.org/podcast (search for Maxwell).



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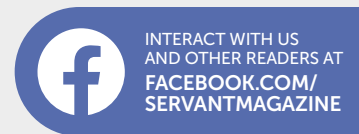
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the Choice

NANCY LEIGH DEMOSS

*The deluxe models have it.
But it's definitely not in the basic package.
Or so we think.*

A Vermont farmer was sitting on the porch with his wife of forty-eight years, just beginning to realize what a great partner she had been. He turned to her and said, “You’ve been such a wonderful woman that there are times I can hardly keep from telling you!”

In virtually every language, “thank you” is part of Vocabulary 101. But there’s a world of difference between saying “thank you”—and actually having a thankful heart.

Where does gratitude rank on your list of Christian virtues?

In an arsenal that’s supposed to include mountain-moving faith, radical obedience, and second-mile self-denial, for many, *gratitude* feels like an optional add-on. Nice if you can get it, but not all that critical to making life run the way it should.

If in our mind there’s an A, B, and C of Christian character traits, gratitude likely rattles down to one of those lower rungs—down there with hospitality and going to church Sunday night. Gratitude may appear on the deluxe models, but it’s definitely not in the basic package. We think.

LIFE WITHOUT IT

And yet. Gratitude is far more significant than its lightweight reputation would suggest. It is in reality a much weightier, powerful, necessary component to our Christian life.

Try, for example, to sustain persevering faith—without gratitude—and your faith will eventually forget the whole point of its faithfulness, hardening into a practice of religion that’s hollow and ineffective.

*A shroud of doubt
and confusion
wrapped itself
around my mind.*

Try being a person who exudes and exhibits Christian love—without gratitude—and over time your love will crash on the rocks of disappointment and disillusionment.

Try sacrificially giving of yourself—without the offering being accompanied by gratitude—and you’ll find every ounce

of joy drained dry by a martyr complex.

As British pastor John Henry Jowett once said, “Every virtue divorced from thankfulness is maimed and limps along the spiritual road.”

True gratitude is one of the chief ways that God infuses joy and resilience into the daily struggle of life.

I believe few things are more becoming in a child of God than a grateful spirit. By the same token, there is probably nothing that makes a person more *unattractive* than the absence of a grateful spirit.

I have learned that in every circumstance, I can choose to respond in one of two ways: I can *whine* or I can *worship*.

And I can’t worship without giving thanks. It just isn’t possible.

On the other hand, when we give in to whining, we end up on a destructive slide that ultimately leads to bitterness and broken relationships. The consequences of an ungrateful spirit are not as readily seen as those of a contagious disease. But they are no less deadly. Western civilization has fallen prey to an epidemic of ingratitude. Like a poisonous vapor, this subtle sin is polluting our lives, our homes, our churches, and our culture.

A grateful man or woman will be a breath of fresh air in a world contaminated by bitterness and discontentment. And the person whose gratitude is a by-product and

a response to the redeeming grace of God will showcase the heart of the gospel in a way that is winsome and compelling.

Life hurts. It could be a difficult child, a lingering sin habit, maybe something as life altering as a long, drawn out divorce. We too often choose to find our solace in these two plaintive words: “Why me?”

We say, “I’m trying to accept what’s happening. I’m learning to live with it. But gratitude? Are you saying I’m supposed to *like* being here?”

I promise you that if all I had to share with you were some sweet platitudes about thankfulness I wouldn’t even try to respond to real-life statements like these.

But true, Christ-centered, grace-motivated gratitude fits everywhere, even in life’s most desperate moments. Even when there are no “answers,” it gives hope.

BROKEN QUESTIONS

Scottish preacher George Matheson began losing his eyesight in late adolescence and by age 20 was totally blind. As a result, his fiancée broke off their engagement. Broken-hearted, he wrestled with unanswered questions. Yet ultimately he came to the place where he could say:

*My circumstances
didn't change.
But he changed me
in the midst of them.*

“My God...I have thanked you a thousand times for my roses but never once for my thorn. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed to you by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.”

There are countless others who endure the worst and still come up thankful. Not unscarred, not unmoved, but still spotting reasons for hope and promise. They seem to know that the only thing more debilitating than what they are going through would be going through it ungratefully.

I recall a season in my own life when I was deeply disappointed by a significant personal loss. For about 18 months, I gave in to resentment and self-pity. A shroud of doubt and confusion wrapped itself

around my mind, until I hardly knew what (or if) I believed about truths I had long held and cherished.

HARDWOOD HEALING

I can tell you when and where the healing process started. On a hardwood floor in a mountain cabin, I finally cried out, “Lord, I still don’t understand why you allowed this. I don’t know if I will ever understand. But I know that you are good, and whatever you do is for my good and your glory. So by faith I choose to give you thanks.”

The sense of sadness and loss did not immediately vanish. But as I surrendered my wounds and my will to him, choosing to trust and thank him, I began to experience release from the oppressive heaviness. He began to restore, renew, and rebuild my spirit, transforming my loss into something of great spiritual value. Over time.

That healing and release began when I said, “Lord, I’m willing to thank you for trusting me with this experience, even if you never tell me why.” No, my circumstances didn’t change. But he changed me in the midst of them.

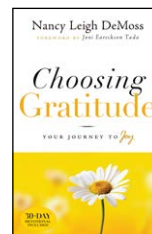
The choice before you and me today is: Do we only give glory to God for the part of our life that’s going the way we want? Or do we worship him, trust him, and give him thanks, just because he is God—regardless of the dark, painful, incomprehensible places we encounter in our journey?

I have learned along the way that, *anything that makes me need God is* (ultimately, in the truest sense) *a blessing*.

To give thanks “in all things” may not change your situation. But it will put you in the only possible position for experiencing everything God desires for you throughout this hard stretch of life.

And—beyond the tiny piece of horizon you can see from this momentary time and place—God’s glory and grace will be seen even more brightly, as a result of your willingness to say with the psalmist: “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1).

That’s the promise of gratitude. ☞



For your copy of this inspiring book, see **Page 08**.



the heist

3 Good Reasons

After being robbed in London, the Puritan preacher Matthew Henry wrote: “Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my [money], they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”

What a perspective! The person who has chosen to make gratitude his or her mind-set and lifestyle can view anything—*anything!*—through the eyes of thankfulness. The whole world looks different when we do.

But in the ongoing struggle of daily life, why choose gratitude over ingratitude? For starters, here are three good reasons.

1. GRATITUDE IS A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE.

The Psalms are filled with exhortations like “thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous deeds to the children of men.”

The “attitude of gratitude” is a command and expectation of God.

2. GRATITUDE DRAWS US CLOSE.

Psalm 100:4 says, “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.” Thanksgiving puts us in God’s living room, paving the way to his presence.

3. GRATITUDE IS A SURE PATH TO PEACE.

Are you facing chaotic, unsettled situations? There is peace waiting for you just beyond the doors of deliberate gratitude. God’s peace is one of the many blessings that live on the other side of gratitude.

Training pastoral musicians

Dr. Mark Jonah is the Director of Prairie's *Music & Worship Arts* and *Digital Media* programs. He spoke with *Servant* about life, work, and worship.

YOU HAVE AN ECLECTIC TASTE IN MUSIC. WHAT'S ON YOUR PLAYLIST LATELY?

It depends whether I'm looking for something to accompany me at work or just listening to the music. I appreciate the work of Andrew Peterson, Steve Bell, and Keith and Kristen Getty. I also enjoy classical music and the Spotify playlist "New Classical." Holly Cole, Jack Johnson, Queen, and whatever my students record, of course.

THE QUEEN HAS AN ALBUM OUT?

Okay, now you're getting silly. But you may be right. It seems like everyone has an album out these days. [Laughs]

WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALIZE YOU WANTED TO BE INVOLVED IN MUSIC?

My sister took piano lessons, so I wanted to. When she stopped, I wanted to stop. Thankfully, my parents wouldn't allow it, so I continued with lessons. By high school, I decided I wanted to study music and use it in the local church.

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THE STUDENTS YOU TEACH?

Their passion for serving God. Their pursuit of excellence in music. We encourage them to pursue their musicianship. It is a delight



In the classroom: "It is a delight to watch their eyes open to the scope and possibilities of serving the church."

speaks to the role of worship leader as "pastoral musician." I believe this is a helpful distinction for students as they consider their part in church ministry.

IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR JOB THAT SCARES YOU?

In some ways, worship ministry appears to be a young person's activity. As I get older, I want to be relevant in my teaching and aware of what is happening on the worship ministry landscape.

WHAT HAS GOD BEEN DRIVING HOME LATELY?

I've been giving a lot of thought to what it means to be a follower of Jesus. A follower follows. That may not seem like a brilliant statement, but as I consider what it means for me to be a follower of Jesus Christ, it leads me to think about things like how I respond to what happens in my life.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR A YOUNG PERSON ENTERING MINISTRY?

Maintain and pursue your relationship with God. Keep practicing your craft. Keep reading and learning. Surround yourself with a team; take others with you on your ministry journey. You don't have to be the best at every part of your job—surround yourself with people who are better than you. And take time to relax and have activities you enjoy. ❧

“...we have given music the great responsibility of carrying the weight of the [church] service.”

WHAT WERE YOU UP TO BEFORE YOU CAME TO PRAIRIE IN 2016?

For about 25 years, I worked in music ministry in local churches in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick. Then I taught at LeTourneau University in Texas for six years. My work visa was expiring, so we returned to Canada, hoping to teach in the areas of music and worship ministry. Those opportunities are rare in Canada, so I was delighted when a position opened up at Prairie.

to watch their eyes open to the scope and possibilities of serving the church.

WHAT CONCERNS YOU ABOUT MUSIC AND THE CHURCH?

"Music" and "worship" have become synonyms in our vocabulary, placing huge pressure on worship leaders. Music has become the place in the service where "worship" happens and we have given music the great responsibility of carrying the weight of the service. In her book *The Worship Architect*, Constance Cherry



MAKE THE INVESTMENT OF A LIFETIME

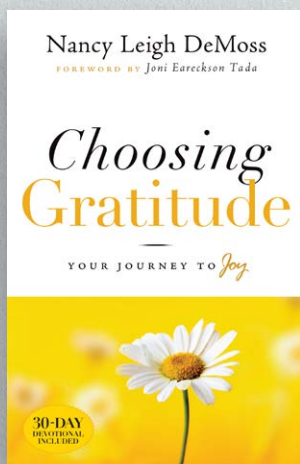
In the late forties, Elisabeth Elliot attended Prairie. Elisabeth’s schooling was made very accessible through many friends who sacrificially gave so that students could affordably prepare for a lifetime of service. Who could have dreamed of the global impact their investment would have?

Prairie still invests heavily in students by awarding numerous scholarships and bursaries. On page 14 you’ll meet Mikaela (Nursing), Tim (Ministry) and Sneha (Music). They were able to benefit from twelve different scholarship funds, helping them launch more affordably into God’s calling for their lives. Your investment will have exponential yields—not only in a student today, but in those they will reach tomorrow.

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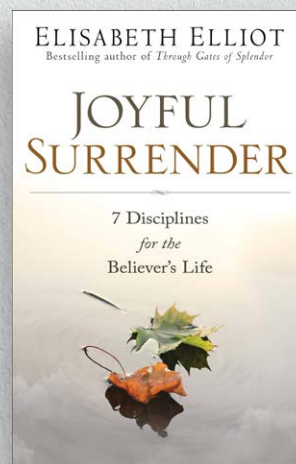
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CHOOSING GRATITUDE:
YOUR JOURNEY TO JOY
Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Is the gratitude that flows out of your life as abundant as the grace that flows into it? What if we moved beyond an occasional “thank you” to cultivate a lifestyle of appreciating God’s goodness every day of our life—despite the circumstances? Open

these pages and explore the biblical and practical aspects of how gratitude makes life, even with all its bumps and bruises, truly abundant.



JOYFUL SURRENDER:
7 DISCIPLINES FOR THE BELIEVER’S LIFE
Elisabeth Elliot

Through personal stories and insightful observations, Elisabeth helps us discover the freedom and happiness of divine surrender. In this classic, she shows us how to overcome anxiety, trust God in trial and hardship, change poor habits and

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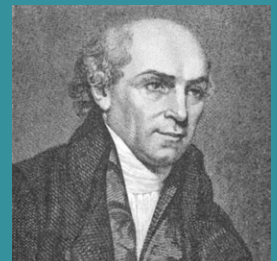
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THE GOOD REPORT



SIGN LANGUAGE.

The full Bible has been translated into American Sign Language 13 years ahead of the initially projected completion date. The project took Deaf Missions and 53 translators 38 years to complete. It is available at deafmissions.com



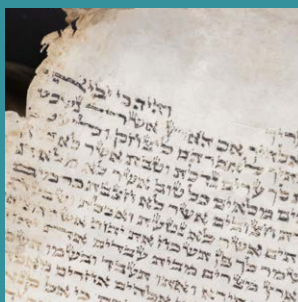
BOOSTING HOPE.

According to a UK poll conducted for the Bible Society, reading the Bible during the pandemic has eased anxiety about the future. Among 1,123 Christians who attend church at least monthly, 33 percent said the practice improved their mental health; 42 percent said it boosted their hope in God. Most said reading the Bible has allowed their beliefs and mental health to remain strong. 35 percent reported an increase in Bible reading since last March.



HIDDEN TREASURE.

In a massive national operation to pre-empt cave looters, archaeologists and volunteers are retrieving dozens of scroll fragments believed to have been hidden in the Judean desert during the Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire in AD 66-73. About 80 kilometers of caves have been surveyed so far using drones and rappelling techniques. First discovered in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls are the oldest known copies of the Bible.



SILVER LINING.

Due to lockdowns during Covid, Prairie Bible College's Prison Bible Encounter Program, which teaches the Bible to federal inmates, has lost face-to-face access to its students. But there's a silver lining. Though Canada's inmates cannot access the Internet, interest is being expressed in streaming content directly into cells by CCTV. Trouble is, they can't stream solely to cells of students enrolled in classes; so it will be necessary to stream to all cells. Program director Gord Allert says, "We're okay with that."

QUOTEABLE

ABOUT AMY CARMICHAEL 1867-1951

"She showed me the shape of godliness. For a time, I suppose, I thought she must have been perfect, and that was good enough for me. As I grew up I knew she could not have been perfect, and that was better, for it meant that I might possibly walk in her footsteps. If we demand perfect models we will have, except for the Son of Man Himself, nothing at all."

—Elisabeth Elliot

WILLIAM CAREY 1761-1834

"There are grave difficulties on every hand, and more are looming ahead. Therefore, we must go forward."

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS 1948-2020

"I can criticize someone's acts without devaluing the person. And we're losing that distinction....We have to get back to...seeing that the university is really fulfilling its role in preparing us...for meeting people who are not like us by teaching us to listen respectfully to those with whom we disagree in the sure knowledge that they will listen respectfully to our views....Today the West is no longer a Christian culture, it's a media-driven culture, and we are in one of the supreme shame cultures of all time. That's what viral social media do to you. You get it wrong, that's it. You are shamed for life. Shame cultures don't have space for forgiveness... [this] is unbelievably dangerous. Forgiveness essentially tells us that we are not held captive by the past....What is the substitute for forgiveness? It is forgetfulness...the trouble is that now anything recorded on the Internet is there forever. We have abandoned forgetfulness so we had better jolly well get back forgiveness."

! NOW YOU KNOW

Human blood travels about 12,000 miles per day.

Thrombocyte

Deaths from natural disasters are less than half what they were 100 years ago.

Factfulness: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world—and why things are better than you think.

The heart of a blue whale is about the size of a VW Beetle.

Guinness World Records

The modern carousel evolved out of training games for medieval knights.

Smithsonian Magazine

Since 2000 the proportion of the world population living in extreme poverty was cut in half.

Factfulness.

ELLEN VAUGHN

Six years after one of the most admired and misunderstood missionaries of the 20th century died, her story is finding a new generation, many of whom are weary of the notion that everyone is “awesome” and “amazing,” weary of the smallness of big-screen anti-heroes. Elisabeth Elliot never set out to be a hero, only to be obedient. Her healthy willingness to die, if God willed, drew her to the jungles of Ecuador with the love of her life, Jim Elliot, whose dream it was to preach the gospel to a tribe so violent toward outsiders that they were called Aucas—the savages. After months of dropping gifts from a plane and shouting greetings, Jim and four companions set up camp and radioed back the welcome news of peaceful contact with the tribe. Two days later a search party found all five dead, their bodies pierced by spears.

To tell Elisabeth’s story, Ellen Vaughn waded through decades worth of journals and interviews, then produced a stunning authorized biography. Ellen spoke to Servant from her home in northern Virginia.

BECOMING ELISABETH ELLIOT

SERVANT: GROWING UP, WHAT DID YOU KNOW ABOUT ELISABETH?

ELLEN: Like many my age I grew up hearing about the brave missionaries martyred in Ecuador in 1956. And how this woman took her toddler Valerie, her Bible, journal, and snakebite kit, and went to live with those who killed her husband. I heard her speak several times. She was a severe, intimidating person. I admired her greatly, but wasn’t sure I liked her—until I read her journals and met a flesh and blood person with a sense of the absurd who actually made me laugh out loud.

HOW DID IT FEEL TO BE CHOSEN TO WRITE HER AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY?

I was grateful and surprised, but I also carried a weight of stewardship. Writing a book like this makes you determine that you should burn your journals. [Laughs.] How many of us would want our junior high journals opened for others to peruse? In later years, she writes, “I pity the poor biographer who has to pick through all this.” And I’m saying, “Here I am! Why did you do this to me?” But God used Elisabeth’s life to minister to my life.

WHAT WAS YOUR APPROACH?

I wanted to be faithful to this remarkable story and give glory to God, not to my preconceptions about who I thought she was. There are two temptations for the biographer. To do an exposé and reveal salacious details, or—always a popular option in Christian writing—you can present a whitewashed, triumphal story where everyone comes to Christ in the end. My guiding principle was to “tell the truth in love.” The Bible is full of very flawed individuals whose stories are there to show us the grace of God at work in ordinary human beings.

JONI EARECKSON TADA SAID THE TIMING COULDN’T BE BETTER BECAUSE OUR SOULS CRAVE AN AUTHENTIC WITNESS.

This is a time when we long for authentic heroes. We tend to think they will have lived near perfect lives. But people who are absolutely, radically *for* Christ still struggle ‘til the end of the journey. If we put our hopes in role models and they disappoint, we can become jaded. Many heroes have fallen and statues have toppled. None is perfect. Christ himself is the one we emulate. But

stories like Elisabeth’s are worthwhile because we see human beings who strove after Christ, who lived a long obedience in the same direction.

ARE YOU HEARING FROM YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE TAKEN WITH THIS STORY?

Yes. That is very gratifying. I wanted to write for those who don’t know the story, for millennials tired of religion but looking for authentic faith in Jesus. I’m hearing from people who feel they can relate to her journey because it’s like their own. I’ve talked with readers who have little faith perspective and an almost automatic

“We long for authentic heroes. We tend to think they will have lived near perfect lives. But people who are absolutely, radically for Christ still struggle ‘til the end.”

distrust of missionaries, but they respect a woman who went and lived among an indigenous people group after they killed her husband. That tends to grab one’s attention.

"I could say glibly to these terrified women, 'God will protect us.' But I have no guarantee that he will! He did not protect Jim... That in no way shakes my trust."

HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN PEOPLE SAY, "WHAT BUSINESS DO CHRISTIANS HAVE FOISTING THEIR BELIEFS ON ANOTHER CULTURE?"

The Aucas, properly called the Waodani, lived naked deep in the Amazon jungle. They speared to death anyone who infringed on their land and killed each other off with impunity. They had a 70% homicide rate. Seven out of ten of them died by spearing because they had no other means of conflict resolution. Whole family groups were wiped out by retribution and vengeance killings. It was a terrifying cycle of violence. These missionaries figured that every human on the planet should have the opportunity to hear

"I was helped very practically by her motto, 'Do the next thing.'"

about Jesus Christ, that it is a fundamental human right. If one decides to say yes or no, that's a matter of one's autonomy. That was respected. After being widowed, Elisabeth prayed her unlikely prayer, "Oh, Lord, if there's anything you want me to do about the Waodoni, I'm available." I love that prayer. I think I should pray it every day—"I'm available, Lord, for whatever you want." When Elisabeth, her daughter, and her colleague, missionary Rachel Saint, went to live among the Waodoni in an incarnational kind of work, they couldn't speak the language. They weren't there summarizing the five points of Calvinism. They were living the love and forgiveness of Jesus. The Waodoni saw that, in fact, Jesus had been speared for them so they could live in a new way, "walk a new trail," as they put it, and many chose to do so.

ELISABETH WROTE, "TEACH ME TO NEVER LET THE JOY OF WHAT HAS BEEN PALE THE JOY OF WHAT IS."

Every day that quote is in my brain. She did have a way with language and so many of her quotes just nail it. Like, "When a thing is a duty, in my mind I substitute that it's God's will and the dangers surrounding it are irrelevant." I love the clarity of that and the sense of wild abandon. If this is God's will, full steam ahead. I'm not here to defend her choices. I wrote the story as it happened.

I think Betty felt that so many evangelicals want a formula: these five men were killed, so this number of Waodani would come to faith, this many mission recruits would rise up to take their places, let's just gloss over any inconvenient failures, and pass the plate. In the end, she gave that to God. She was often asked if the men's mission was a "success." To her, the only measure of any human action came down to obedience.

BLOW UPS AMONG MISSIONARIES ARE RARELY ABOUT DOCTRINE, BUT ABOUT RELATIONSHIP. YOU PAINT ANOTHER DEDICATED MISSIONARY, RACHEL SAINT, AS LESS THAN A SAINT.

It was no secret—Rachel and Betty were both stubborn, strong women who loved God and, for whatever reason, they simply could not work together. Elisabeth was so aware of the irony; the whole world is poised waiting for this glorious inroad into the Waodani and the two principal characters can't get along. I was only given one of Rachel's journals. I spent a week with Steve Saint, whose father Nate was one of the five. And Nate Saint's oldest daughter was so appreciative of the way I had painted her aunt Rachel. I wanted to be as judicious as I could be and simply quote from those who had a fairly objective view of the story.

WHAT WERE A FEW LESSONS YOU TOOK FROM ELISABETH'S JOURNALS?

God is the Rock who does not change regardless of what I can see. What matters is my trust and obedience to him in what he calls me to do each day. I was helped very practically by her motto, "Do the next thing." That has been very helpful in allaying anxiety about what the future holds. I also have a much more robust sense of joy than I used to have. It has no relationship to whether I'm having a good day or a bad day. It has to do with the presence of Christ and it's overwhelmingly liberating.

TELL US ABOUT MINCAYE (PICTURED BELOW).

You would have loved him. He was a young man in 1956 when he owned one of those killing spears that killed Jim Elliot and Nate Saint. And here I am in the middle of the Amazon jungle with knee-

high boots and pith helmet, laughing with grey-haired, 90-year-old Mincaye while he carves me a spear as a gift. He was once fueled by hatred, fear, and ven-

Mincaye with Ellen, July 2019: *He said, "We killed them, not knowing. We didn't live thoughtfully then—now we know. Now we think about God. We will not spear anymore."*

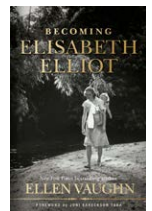


Elisabeth with daughter Val and two Waodani women: *She would later write, "Her husband killed mine, and I love her."*

geance. Now he's a brother in Christ, his face overwhelmingly marked by the Holy Spirit. You could poke at him and he'd poke back at you and laugh and laugh. He was way too much fun.

IMAGINE HIM AND JIM ELLIOT BEING REUNITED.

[Laughs.] "Hey brother, come on in." ❧



For more on this interview, additional photos, and interaction, visit and like [facebook.com/servantmagazine](https://www.facebook.com/servantmagazine)



"If we ever needed prayer—it's now!" So began a desperate email from missionary Margo Hoffmann to friends and supporters in the spring of 2020. Without warning, a terrible darkness had descended and there seemed to be nowhere else to turn.

Margo and her husband Randy had met in their mid-30s when both were single and focused on sharing Christ in the Muslim world. Randy graduated from Prairie Bible College in 1983 and in 1994 he and Margo were married and began ministry in Canada. They were training others in outreach and discipling Muslim background believers on the west coast of BC when Covid-19 struck.

All of the adults in their communal home soon contracted the virus. Most were very sick, including the Hoffmann's 20-year-old son Tristan. Having a milder case, Margo was caring for the others when she called an ambulance for a housemate who was having trouble breathing. It was the 31st of March.

When paramedics arrived, Margo asked them to check her husband as well since he had been suffering from a bad cold. Finding Randy's oxygen level down to 75%, the medics rushed him to the ambulance instead of the housemate, and with a quick "I love you," he was gone.

At the hospital the critically ill patient was admitted to the ICU and immediately placed on a ventilator while multiple tubes and supports kept his body functioning. Shortly afterward, his kidneys shut down and the doctor informed Margo that, while Randy's lung condition gave him a 30-50% chance of surviving, his kidney failure moved the survival rate to only 20%. Realizing that she might never see her husband again, Margo cried out to God for a miracle.

REALIZING SHE MIGHT NEVER SEE HER HUSBAND AGAIN, MARGO CRIED OUT TO GOD FOR A MIRACLE.

The next morning she spent exhausting hours on the phone updating family on Randy's situation and then sent out an urgent request for prayer. "*The doctor is not God,*" she wrote to friends. "*God defies predictions and percentages and we continue to pray for complete healing for Randy. You are like the men breaking through the roof to*

lower their friend down to Jesus, the great healer. You are carrying him to the Lord through your prayers."

The ropes were many. People everywhere alerted their prayer chains and Randy was being lifted up 24/7 by a network of praying friends as well as strangers in countries too numerous to mention. Margo would eventually count over 2,000 supportive emails in her in-box besides countless phone calls, texts and letters of concern. Over the weeks, practical love and support poured in as friends and neighbors brought food, made deliveries, and offered encouragement.

But as Easter approached, Randy's struggles increased. Breathing on his own became impossible and it became necessary

for him to be sedated, totally dependent on a ventilator. A blood clot straddled both lungs and the kidneys showed no sign that they would recover. Through it all, Margo was unable to be at Randy's side. Finally the hospital made it possible for her to connect with him through FaceTime, even though he was in a coma. Knowing

CARRIED

BY
PAT
MASSEY

there was no one but the Lord who could save her husband, she clung in hope to the resurrected and life-giving Savior.

That trust would not be in vain. By mid-April the clot began gradually dissolving and after several tries, Randy was finally able to come out of sedation without stress on his breathing or heart rate. There was concern that being intubated for so long could permanently damage his vocal cords, so a tracheostomy was performed and a breathing tube inserted. Respiratory issues swung back and forth, but Margo was comforted to learn that this was a typical pattern for patients in the ICU where her husband had been fighting for his life for weeks.

On a warm day in late April, Margo finally saw Randy sitting in a chair with eyes open and a smile of recognition on his face. Though the days were still an emotional roller coaster for Margo, for the first time, the doctor felt it was possible that he might actually recover. Seeing her husband awake and off the ventilator cheered her, but she knew Randy was in pain and suffering from pneumonia. Watching him try to cough through the tracheostomy was almost more than she could bear. His nurse reminded her how far Randy had come and pointed out how other nurses

were stopping by his window to witness the miracle that was taking place.

After a month in hospital, Randy was moved to a regular ward. Knowing how uncomfortable it was for him to sit up, Margo did her best to distract him by visiting, praying with him, and playing worship music. She struggled to understand as Randy tried to communicate by moving his lips, but both ended up frustrated. Sometimes it was hard to be strong and Margo was so grateful for God's people who came alongside to love and encourage.

"Even if Randy's kidney function returns," the doctor explained, "he will still likely require several more months of dialysis." But on the 5th of May, not only did the kidneys kick in, but no more dialysis was needed. Margo gave thanks for all those faithful prayers. Next thing she knew, Randy started talking, his voice clear and strong as he shared his faith with the nurses and doctors. When Margo and some friends who had prayed together on the phone every night heard Randy pray for them, it was hard to hold back the tears.

With progress came impatience and the restless invalid began to campaign urgently to go home "right now!" Knowing he was still very weak after six weeks in bed, it was all Margo could do to get him to wait until he was stronger.

Then, on May 13, after being in an induced coma for three weeks and forty-four days in hospital, Randy was finally discharged to a standing ovation from the medical staff.

Recovery at home was slow but steady and the more he understood how desperate the battle had been, the more grateful he became for the wonderful caregivers and the army of prayer warriors who had fought for him in the midst of impossible odds.

"I never questioned why it happened to me," Randy said later. "Why should we be exempt just because we're Christians? God met me in a deep way in this near-death experience and used it to encourage others by showing them what he could do and how he is our strength even in the hardest of times."

Before his illness, Randy had been planning to study in Chicago toward a Doctorate in Missions to further his ministry



Randy and Margo Hoffmann: "After a three-week induced coma and forty-four days in hospital, a miracle and a standing ovation."

to Muslim background believers. But in a strange upside to the limitations of Covid, he was able to begin his studies online.

As others in the household were recovering, Margo continued to deal with the emotional toll that the whole experience had exacted. At the same time, there was a

"WE DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MANY WERE WATCHING TO SEE HOW WE WOULD RESPOND TO THIS TRIAL."

growing sense of gratitude for the gifts that had been revealed in those difficult days: the power of prayer, the impact of Randy's healing on those who prayed, and the way God had sustained her through it all.

"We live in an Iranian community," says Margo, "and we didn't realize how many of them were watching to see how we would respond to this trial. In their culture, people in crisis either panic or freeze up in their grief. When they saw how we trusted God in spite of our sadness, and even continued to help others in need, they were touched and we had many opportunities to share the gospel."

In the darkness of their journey, Randy and Margo had been carried on the mighty wings of loving intercession and the power of God. Life and ministry would go on, but with a new appreciation for the Body of Christ and a rich story to tell of a good God who is accomplishing his purposes even in our pain. ❧

Meet the Students

Prairie has more than 17,000 alumni. Here are a few stories from the latest batch.



Worship Arts graduate **Sneha Reddy** recently reached the semi-finals in the International Song-writing Competition for her song, “But Now I Know.” The competition is judged by Coldplay, Kari Jobe and other industry leaders. Sneha says, “I left New Delhi, India, to study music at Prairie. At first I struggled to adjust to a new culture. Scared and knowing nothing about music theory, I went to see Mark Jonah, my professor, and told him I didn’t understand a thing he taught that day. Mark smiled and said, ‘Don’t panic yet.’ He listened and was with me every step of the way. Mark has become a mentor/parent figure in my life. Now, every time I’m faced with a difficult situation, I tell myself, ‘Sneha, don’t panic yet.’ With God’s help, I try all possible options in front of me and we find a solution.

“Denis Baptista, who teaches songwriting, still connects with me to help me navigate my path as a songwriter. He is a gifted musician and writer, a great inspiration and friend for life.

“In my culture being vulnerable is a sign of weakness. But my Old Testament classes with Carmen Imes changed me. I was trying to write a song that required me to share my story. I was struggling. Carmen said, ‘Only when we are vulnerable can we be relatable.’ I will carry that wisdom with me for life.

“The biblical courses strengthened my faith and ignited a passion to forever be a student of the word of God. Prairie taught me the importance of building and maintaining meaningful friendships. Most of all, I learned to trust God even when nothing around me makes sense and to rely on him when nothing is in my control.”



Four years ago **Tim Blais** of Edmonton, Alberta, came to Prairie to grow in faith and develop the musical abilities God gave him. He didn’t expect to meet a girl name Tylo. Two years ago he started a band called The Difference, but restrictions limited their travel. “God has been teaching me about the importance of prayer,” says Tim, “this integral part of the Christian faith and our relationship with God. I have been intentionally spending more time in prayer, communing with the God who loves me.” Speaking of love, this past year Tim married his best friend, Tylo. “They don’t call it Bridal College for nothing,” he laughs. “With the busyness of school and other extra-curricular tasks I’ve taken on, it is so rewarding to come home to a strong, supportive and godly wife who encourages me every step of the way. In May I plan on graduating from Prairie with a Bachelor of Arts in Ministry.”



Mikaela Bender is a farm girl from Bentley, Alberta. “Family and friends attended Prairie and spoke so highly of it,” she says, “I had to see what all the hype was about.” Mikaela wanted to be a nurse. “What better way to learn nursing than in a Christian environment that equips you to love others by loving Jesus in the workplace?” Despite all the restrictions of the past year, she says, “I have seen and experienced God’s faithfulness in this season. Prairie was one of the only colleges in Alberta where I could go through all our classes, labs and clinicals in person, without interruption. God has been protecting and guiding us through this whole time. Being surrounded by community is a huge blessing. God is teaching me to be faithful and intentional in the opportunities he is giving me right now, rather than being caught up in waiting around for my dreams to come true.”



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All in the family

I ASKED MY 4-YEAR-OLD GRANDSON FOR THE HIGHLIGHT OF HIS DAY. HE SAID, "GROWING TOBACCO." WHERE HE HEARD THIS, I'LL NEVER KNOW.

Here are other *unfiltered* thoughts from children: Jeanie said, "People are composed of girls and boys, also men and women. Boys are an awful bother. They want everything they see except soap." Reminds me of the thief who stole 30 bars of soap. Forgive me, but he made a *clean* getaway.

A five-year-old was peeking into a baby carriage and saw twins. He said, "There's the baby—and there's the...co-baby."

Second-grade students were learning how magnets work, how they can pick up nails and other bits of iron. Their teacher stopped and asked, "Now, I want you to guess. My name begins with the letter 'M,' and I pick things up. What am I?" A little boy in the front said, "You're a mother."

A teenager was enjoying cotton candy at a fair. A kid squinted at him, then came over and offered some free ad-

vice. "My mommy said you shouldn't eat insulation."

"Does anyone know what a pasture is?" a fourth grade teacher asked. A hand shot up, and a student said, "He's the guy at church!" A classmate corrected him, "No. The guy at church isn't a pasture. He's called a miniature."

Kids get mixed up about church history too. One wrote in an essay, "Martin Luther had a dream. He went to Washington and recited his Sermon on the Monument. Later, he nailed 95 Protestants in the Watergate Scandal."

Kids help us laugh, don't they?

In early January of 2020, I read an article: "20 Things That Bring Me Joy." Here are ten that made the list:

Amid the turbulence, the hurts and loss, joy came from a surprising source.

Hugs. Coffee with friends. Our annual missions trip to Mexico. Dinner and a movie with friends. Our block barbecue. Tickets to an NHL hockey game. Live concerts. Spending time with happy people. Swimming with the grandkids. Church.

As you know, Covid hit a month later, rendering most of these activities obsolete, bringing heartache, and, at the very least inconveniencing the most convenient

culture ever. What once brought us joy became impossible. Will we ever again take for granted a carful of friends, a jam-packed concert, an airplane conversation with a stranger, seeing a person's entire face? And yet, amid the turbulence, the hurts and loss, joy was found.

a visible reminder of the grace God showed in adopting each of us into *his* family.

Paul wrote to the church in Rome, "So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.'"

This heavenly Father is our caregiver, comforting us when we're confused, holding us when we're horrified. He's not concerned with where we came from, what we've done in the past. As surely as these three have been given new names, so have we. They are legally entitled to all the rights and privileges of biological children—all the love and piggy back rides and fridge visits of home—just as we are as permanent members of the family of God.

Grace. God continues to lavish it on us all. And we pass it along.

As I just did when my grandson said, "Grandpa, you're bald. You look *very* extinguished." ❧

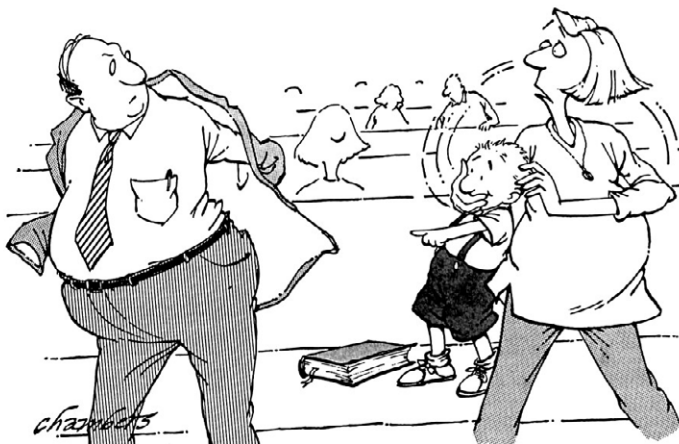
Phil Callaway is a Prairie alumnus and the author of *Laugh Like A Kid Again* (Harvest House). Visit him at philcallaway.com



Phil and Ezra Callaway: After mountains of red tape, countless hours of travel, and sleepless nights, an unexpected blessing.

For us, it came from an unexpected source.

After mountains of red tape, countless hours of travel, and sleepless nights, our children adopted three of the cutest kids in world history, two of them after their mother's tragic death. They were four and five. They couldn't get enough of us—live and on FaceTime. Soon it hit me: their presence is



"Mommy, look! He's gonna have a baby too!"



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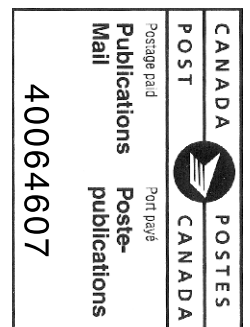
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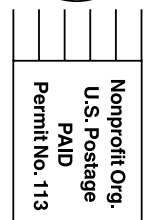


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