



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 14, 2023

Author Elizabeth Sherrill Passes at Age 95

During the month Elizabeth Sherrill died — May 2023 — *The Hiding Place*, the book she co-authored with her husband, John, ranked 41st out of the top 100 Christian books of all time. [She died at age 95](#). That book, which the Sherrills published in 1971, has so far sold more than 50 million copies and is still going strong.

Jeff Crosby, president and CEO of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA), said that the Sherrills' publishing company, Chosen Books, "dramatically elevated the profile and impact of Christian publishing."

[Added Crosby:](#)

Elizabeth's gifts as a manuscript stylist, editor, and publisher were enormous. She knew how to tell a story with power and with an economy of words, and the books she touched were brought to a mass market audience.

One of the gifts Crosby omitted was Elizabeth and her husband's uncanny knack for finding stories that needed to be told. Initially, they wanted to find stories that met just two criteria: they would be interesting, and they would be helpful.

Once, for example, she and John were visiting friends in Boston and happened to see a headline in the newspaper that said, "Man Buried Alive." They interrupted their vacation, headed over to the hospital to which the man had been taken, and convinced him to let them tell his story.

That resulted in an article that appeared in *Guideposts*. Said John: "The story found us. And what a story it was! To this day it is one of the most astonishing experiences of God's guidance we have ever encountered."

They learned of a Pentecostal preacher in New York City who was successfully bringing violent gang members to faith in Christ. That led to their writing David Wilkerson's story in *The Cross and the Switchblade*. It sold 11 million copies in the first 10 years.

They learned about a Dutch Christian named Andrew van der Bijl who was smuggling Bibles into communist countries and wrote Brother Andrew's story in *God's Smuggler*, which has sold over 10 million copies.

Elizabeth heard Corrie ten Boom talk about losing her family in Nazi concentration camps and coming through the ordeal because of her faith. The rest, as they say, is history.

Elizabeth was surprised by Christ. She harbored serious doubts — "mountains of intellectual objections" is the way she put it. But when she and John decided — look into the charismatic movement and its emphasis on speaking in tongues, "the floodgate opened," said John. He began speaking in



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John & Elizabeth Sherrill



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tongues: “The syllables were all there, ready-formed for my use, more abundant than my earthly lips and tongue could give shape to.”

Elizabeth had a similar experience later, receiving, as she expressed it, “a spontaneous outpouring of a heavenly language” and speaking in a “fluent and beautiful prayer language.”

And this from authors who had used the English language to write books about faith in others that have sold in the millions. The book *They Speak With Other Tongues* has sold more than two-and-a-half million copies.

When Elizabeth came to Christ she wrote:

For the first time in my life I began to read the Bible. A new world opened before me! A loving God, visions of strength and joy beyond my wildest hopes....

I can accept myself—delight in myself—because, the Bible tells me, God made me for Himself, and can use all the particulars of my history for good.

The journey of Elizabeth Sherrill and her husband continues to reveal itself to others waiting to be brought into His kingdom through their books.



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