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Treasures Among Us

Edna Martin

Edna grew up in a large family of 16 children, eight boys and two girls older than she and four girls and one boy younger than she. Some of her earliest memories are of Billy, a little brother who died when he was 9 days old, the only child her parents lost. She was five years old at the time.

Her mom became a Christian when she was a young girl and always took her children to church. Later, Edna's dad hauled lots of people to church with his big truck, yet he never became a Christian. Her family always took care of preachers who came to do gospel meetings. Her mom was instrumental in the group that started the Current View Church of Christ, and Edna says, "The church house was full when I was a kid."

The Current View congregation helped lots of young preachers get started in their careers. The congregation couldn't afford to pay a full-time preacher, and the students needed experience preaching. It worked out well for them and for the congregation. She was 16-17 years old when she was baptized into Christ by one of her brothers. It was in the Current River in the spring, so the water was pretty cold. Several others were baptized that same day.

Most of the time, she walked to school. That involved climbing over fences, so her dad built a school bus in 1939 for the kids to ride. She rode the bus till she graduated high school, and the family rode in the bus for years.

Her parents had a store that the kids took care of when their parents were not there. Her dad sold ice, which

came in 300-pound blocks, from which they chipped off the amount of ice their customers requested.

Her dad put her brothers to work when they were young. One brother worked at Maulden Air Base, and her oldest brother became an electrician. One sister and one brother went to Morrilton, Arkansas to Harding (before it was moved to Searcy) for one year. Edna worked from the time she was little. She remembers peeling peaches all day long and having blistered fingers by the end of the day.

Work and education were intermingled for her. Just after finishing the 8th grade, she went to St. Louis and worked at a boarding house. She served three meals each day and made lunches for the men to take to work with them. She cleaned the three-story house, cooked, washed dishes, and did laundry. She worked seven days a week but did have a little time off in the afternoons. Her pay was \$6 per day, plus her board. Even though she was living in the city, she never felt unsafe. When she needed to go anywhere, she walked to most places.

After her 9th grade year, she worked at a cafeteria on Washington Avenue. She made pastries and cooked breakfast foods. When she was at home during high school, she was responsible for making lots of bread. She would make a soft dough the night before; in the morning, she made it into a stiff dough. Her mom would make the dough into cinnamon rolls and other goodies. High school wasn't a straight three-year time period for her. Between her sophomore and junior years, she went to St. Louis and got a job at Bell Telephone. One interesting call she handled was Harry Truman when he was a senator. She didn't like the headset she had to wear on that job, so she quit and went back home for her junior year in high school. She then went back to St. Louis and was hired at a naval ordnance plant to do electric soldering. She was a "Rosie, the Riveter" lady during the war. When she interviewed with the ordnance company, they said they wouldn't hire her if she planned to go back to school; so she promised not to quit. She kept her promise, but the war ended just three

weeks before it was time for her to go back to school—and she no longer had a job.

Elvis Martin (who would eventually become her husband) was a friend of her brothers. He was 16 when his family moved to Missouri from Michigan. They didn't date each other for a while. Once when Edna was at the river with her younger sisters, Elvis and his brother were up on the hill. She just wanted him to go away so that the girls could continue with their swimming and bathing.

Eventually, they began dating. When Edna lived in St. Louis, Elvis would come to see her. He was in Kansas City at the time, but he soon went to the war. While he was overseas, he wrote to her almost every day. By the time they got to her, she would get several letters at a time. Before he came home, she decided to marry him. Edna was finishing her last year of high school.

When she was in high school, her family's home burned to the ground. That was on February 9. They had nothing—no furniture, no household goods, no clothing. Her dad fixed up two chicken houses for some of the girls to sleep in until he could build a new house. The whole family helped with the new rock house, and it is still standing today.

Now that she didn't have a "home," Elvis couldn't come and see her—so they decided to get married because, as she said, "I had nowhere to live. That's why we got married." All her clothes had burned in the fire, so Elvis bought her wedding dress and a ring. They drove an old dump truck to Corning, Arkansas, and got married on February 19, 1946, just ten days after the fire. She finished high school in May after they were married.

They lived with his family until they got a bed and a stove and moved into in a farm house her dad had rented. Her mom's wedding gift to them was 11 hens. Later, she and Elvis bought the farm and lived there until they moved to Rolla in 2009. Her brother-in-law loaned her \$500, which she paid off monthly. They had been married 68 years when Elvis passed away in March, 2014.

The first Sunday after the wedding, she got up and went to church. Elvis didn't want her to go, but after a few weeks, he saw how much it meant to her. During this time, she worked the night shift, and her sister took care of her children, Mike and Joan. The other kids would tease Mike and say, "Your dad isn't a Christian." When Elvis was eventually baptized, Mike went back to the other children and said, "He's a Christian now!"

After they retired, she and Elvis cleaned the church building, mowed the grass, took care of songbooks, prepared communion and did general maintenance. Elvis also led singing, and she taught children's Bible classes. She always made sure to read the Bible to her class. One of the girls tried to read the Bible to her sister

but said, "I just can't read it like you do." So Edna got her a Bible story book to read to her sister.

She and Elvis also bought glasses for people who needed them and did whatever they could to help others. Elvis became close friends with a chiropractor who was not a member of the church, and he soon became a Christian. Edna really likes the third chapter of Malachi because it talks about how God will take care of you. She loves to sing church songs and still sings at the local nursing homes nearly every Monday evening. She is a wonderful example of love and devotion—to God, to family and to the church—and a real Treasure Among Us.

NOTE: *This is the 14th in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.*

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INTRODUCING

A New Feature in Sunrise

The following is the first of several anticipated pieces featuring women who serve in the mission field. Their husbands routinely are the visible faces of their work, but the women who serve side by side with them are vital to the success of their efforts to spread the gospel. This will not be a monthly feature; there will be a piece about once every 2-3 months. Enjoy reading their stories and learning a bit about their lives in service to God and the church.

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Karen Ashcraft



West Africa

I remarried my first husband, Steven Ashcraft, in 2010. He was a missionary in West Africa, living full time in Tamale, Ghana. Now he spends about half of the year in West Africa, and I usually go with him for a month each year. I had no formal training for the mission field. It was a decision based on faith and my love for my husband.

Before going to Africa, I did not have to learn a new language in depth. I did learn a few words in Dagbani and Twi in order to greet people in northern and southern Ghana. There are 70 different languages in Ghana alone, making it impossible to learn all of them.

To communicate effectively in West Africa, it is important to partner with a local person who knows English and the regional language.

The cultures in Ghana and Togo focus on family. Funerals are one of the most important events in their culture—more important than weddings and births. Funerals last for three days with months of preparation; and most people in the village, city, or town attend. Greeting each other is also very important in their culture. It is important to take the time to greet each person that you know. Otherwise, you run the risk offending them.

The West African people, especially the women, have an entrepreneurial spirit that goes along with a strong will to survive. Women make and sell anything and everything in order to support their families. Some have booths in their front yards or in the town; others carry their goods on their heads in large buckets to sell to people on the streets, whether they are in cars or walking.



When I am with Steven in West Africa, our time is spent traveling to Bible colleges and going door-to-door asking people if they want to study the bible. We are not in a place long enough for me to work with the local women in the church. In the future, I do hope to do more with the women in the church.

Since I am in West Africa for only a month each year, I only deal with inconveniences for a short time—washing clothes by hand, intermittent electricity, eating chicken – and rice most days – and water wherever you go. Steven and I are constantly traveling on treacherous roadways with dangerous drivers; this makes me the most nervous since medical care is not available like it is the United States.

The most rewarding part of being in the mission field is seeing the church grow. You cannot pluck everyone out of poverty and sickness, but you can teach them the truth so they can know they will have the most important thing of all – eternal life in a heavenly home with Jesus – where there is no poverty and sickness.

I have been privileged to see many conversions, two of which are especially memorable. One was a woman who was terrified of water and had to walk to the ocean. During her baptism, large waves were rolling over her. Initially, her expression was full of fright. However, she came up from the water with a smile from ear to ear. The other was my own baptism in Kumasi, Ghana. My life has forever changed; the truth for which I searched was found.

One of the biggest surprises to me was learning that there are people in this world who do not know about Jesus. Life in the mission field has changed me, first because now I truly know and understand how God has blessed my life. The second way serving in the mission field has changed me is learning from others how to approach people to teach them about what the Bible says. Now I can also approach and teach people about Jesus.

In addition to mission work changing our lives, other family members have been impacted as well. My daughters get nervous when I travel to West Africa. We stay in touch with weekly phone calls and social media (Facebook) when internet is available. In addition, I spend many days apart from Steven when he is in West Africa and I am stateside. This separation has taught us to be thankful and blessed for the days we are together. For a young woman preparing to enter the mission field with her family, my advice to her would be these things.

- Before you travel to a new country, learn some of the language and customs of the people.
- Be open to experience new things.
- Understand the meaning of culture shock because you may experience it.
- Bring a few things from home that give you comfort, and
- Communicate what you are experiencing with your family or others.

NOTE: *Karen and her husband, Steven, are missionaries who are partially supported by the Rolla Church of Christ.*

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For a long time

It had seemed to me that life was

About to begin—real life

But there was always some obstacle in the way,

Something to be got through first,

Some unfinished business;

Time to be served,

A debt to be paid.

Then life would begin.

At last it dawned on me that those obstacles

Were my life.

B. Howland

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If Jesus Came to Your House

*Would you have to change your clothes
before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines,
and put the Bibles where they'd been?
Would you hide your worldly music
and put some hymn book out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in,
or would you rush about?
And wonder if the Savior
spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing
the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying
the things you always say?
Or would life for you continue
as it does from day to day?
Would you take Jesus with you
everywhere you go?
Or would you maybe change your plans
for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him
meet your closest friends?
Or would you hope they stay away
until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him
stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief
when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know,
the things that you would do,
If Jesus came to your house
to spend some time with you.*

Author Unknown

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Only a Woman

An unknown writer under the title, "Only a Woman" wrote, "Long ago and far away in a land of riches and might, there lived a woman, a Hebrew slave, bound...to the needs of Egypt. As she sat apart on a summer's night with the hungry babe at her breast, she looked into the stars in the midnight sky and prayed to her God.

*O, God of my fathers, my body is bruised with the lash of fury and scorn...and my hands are sore...and my heart is heavy...for these, my people, O Lord. Were I but a prophet, a leader, a man...I would work that our people be free. **But...I am only a woman!***

And the hot salt tears dropped softly on the small new face...of Moses.

Author Unknown

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We Are Never Alone

"Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."



Jesus had just said that God knows every sparrow individually. Amazing! This God of ours, this Creator of ours knows everything that is going on in His world, and knows everyone in His world, regardless of where we are in the world. Not only does He know everyone, but He knows our names, our likes, our dislikes, our struggles, our joys, if we bump into a door, how much we paid for groceries this week ~ everything. He is with us where ever we go. There is no place we can go that he is not there.

We are never alone.

Katheryn Haddad, Arizona

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Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by Kathy Webber and Evelyn Waite, members of the Rolla Church of Christ. If you would like your sisters in Christ or your relatives, friends, co-workers or neighbors to receive it, you can share your copy with them. If they would like to receive it, please send their email addresses to evelynwa@fidmail.com. *Sunrise* may also be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserve.org>. Once there, click on Resources, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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