

The Safety Net

National Church Growth Research Center

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Silas Shotwell, Regional Director

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"Edna Mae"

Dear ones,

It hardly seems possible that it was four years ago this morning that Edna Mae went to be with the Lord. I've said before that the longest I was ever away from her in forty-four years was four days. So four years seems incredible.

I've learned so much more about heaven since she has been there. I am eager some day to join her.

I've been blessed in so many ways by old friends, new friends, and a very fulfilling work. I don't know what I'd do here without Meagan. All my children and grandchildren have been a blessing to me in recent days.

But I can't honestly say that I miss Edna Mae any less. Her smile, her warmth, and her faith continue to be my inspiration. I know she influenced most of you too.

In recent days I've lost several friends: Bill Pile, James Kennedy, John Fisk, and Kathryn Davidson. Each was special to me in their own way. I'm getting old enough that I have as many loved ones on the other side of the river as on this side. That is more of a joy to me than a sorrow.

In the Hood River area we are in the midst of harvest time. We've had exceptional weather this Spring and Summer and the pear harvest is the best in many years. The quantity, quality, and even the price of the fruit is as high as it has ever been. The Lord is harvesting some beautiful souls as well.

But since this is the anniversary of Edna Mae's glorification, I want to share some personal thoughts about her. I wish I could share some thoughts *from* her. She did quite a bit of writing in daily journals. But, in her down to earth way, she wrote more about small events of the day than great theological issues. She was always concerned about people, and her hands were always busy, either cooking or sewing. So she wrote a lot about what she was working on.

She also wrote about the things she was frustrated over. She was concerned about people's petty jealousies, their unnecessary feuds, and their focus on the things of this world. Her prayers were sentence prayers about the need for patience, for peace, and for the necessities of life. Her faith was wrapped up in her home and in her church. That's where she truly practiced her Christianity. She left the sermons and the articles to me. With her spiritual depth, I truly wish she had written more about the deeper things of God. She certainly knew them. But writing about them was just not her style.

She had lots and lots of favorite readings. None more important to her than *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers. One of her favorite readings from him was on this day, October 1. I want to share it with you. Little did she know that on this very day she would finally leave the valley and ascend the highest

mountain of all.

THE PLACE OF EXALTATION
by Oswald Chambers

October 1.

“...Jesus took...them up on a high mountain apart by themselves...” (Mark 9:2)

We have all experienced times of exaltation on the mountain, when we have seen things from God’s perspective and have wanted to stay there. But God will never allow us to stay there. The true test of our spiritual life is in exhibiting the power to descend from the mountain. If we only have the power to go up, something is wrong. It is a wonderful thing to be on the mountain with God, but a person only gets there so that he may later go down and lift up the demon-possessed people in the valley (see Mark 9:14-18). We are not made for the mountains, for sunrises, or for the other beautiful attractions in life—these are simply intended to be moments of inspiration. We are made for the valley and the ordinary things of life, and that is where we have to prove our stamina and strength. Yet our spiritual selfishness always wants repeated moments on the mountain. We feel that we could talk and live like perfect angels, if we could only stay on the mountaintop. Those times of exaltation are exceptional and they have their meaning in our life with God, but we must beware to prevent our spiritual selfishness from wanting to make them the only time.

We are inclined to think that everything that happens is to be turned into useful teaching. In actual fact it is to be turned into something better than teaching, namely, character. The mountaintop is not meant to teach us anything, it is meant to make us something. There is a terrible trap in always asking, ‘What’s the use of this experience?’

We can never measure spiritual matters in that way. The moments on the mountaintop are rare moments, and they are meant for something in God’s purpose.

Edna Mae’s constant view was the mountain. She gazed at Mt. Hood from her sewing room. She looked at it as she washed dishes in the kitchen. Her chair was by the biggest picture window in our home, facing toward the mountain. She called it “her” mountain.

But her life was spent laboring lovingly in the valley. In the simple and mundane. And she loved it. Now her time of exaltation has come.

The rest of us are to keep serving in the valley, as God wills.

In Christ’s love,
Silas