



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

A tribute to Miss Edna Weir, 1937—2003.



Miss Edna Weir

Given by Rev. Ivan Foster at her funeral service in Bethel Free Presbyterian Church, 12th May 2003.

"I truly count it a privilege to pay this tribute to Edna and to exalt the grace of God in her life. Edna was a dear Christian, beloved of many, especially in this area of our land. I must state that anything I say about Edna will, in truth, fall far short of an adequate tribute to her labours in the cause of Christ, the main reason for that being that few know the full extent of her labours for Christ, and the degree of dedication and love that reigned in her heart.

Edna was converted when she was 17 under the ministry of Rev. Tom Butler in Darling Street Methodist Church, Enniskillen. She was immediately involved in Sunday School work both in Lisbellaw Methodist Church and in Gola Methodist Hall. She felt the call of God to prepare herself for the work of God and attended Emmaus Bible College in Hollywood in the mid-sixties.

Upon returning home to Lisbellaw, she joined Lisbellaw Free Presbyterian Church. It was typical of Edna that once she saw an issue that required her to take a stand for the Saviour, then she, irrespective of the price that had to be paid or the reproach borne, would obey her Saviour. She felt that there was a departure from the old ways of the gospel taking place and that she should stand with those who were resisting such trends and seeking to preach the old gospel message.

It was about 1971 that she took charge of the children's work in our Lisbellaw church. She, along with her faithful helper, her sister Barbara, diligently rounded up the children of the area and brought them to the meetings. Many of you here today were among those she reached. It was in the mid-70s apparently on the way to the opening of Coragarry Free Presbyterian Church, when a bus party travelled up from Bethel, that I asked Edna if she would consider taking on the work of a full-time evangelist in the congregation. As a result of her readiness to take on the work, at very little remuneration it should be said, Bethel Children's Crusade was born.

Soon she was labouring in Bethel, Lisbellaw, Tresna and Springfield children's meetings. For a period, Edna even found time to teach part-time in our school in Kilskeery before a bout of ill-health required her to leave that task aside. The work amongst the children did not entail merely preparing diligently for the actual meetings and getting the children to the meetings. No, Edna was, in truth, a real pastor to the children and to their parents, especially those who perhaps attended no church.

Edna was a wonderfully unique person. She was gentle and loving but had an ability to persuade the most difficult people to her way of thinking, really without them knowing that they had been persuaded to change their mind! She was a living example of one who followed the counsel of the Saviour when He said: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," Matthew 10:16.



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Edna's secret was that she was utterly surrendered to the will of Her Master. She was a living example of the outworking of Paul's exhortation. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:11. She cared for nothing except the souls of those children God brought under her charge and the work of God. She was an utterly selfless labourer in the Lord's vineyard. That labour was not limited to the children as many a Christian, who at some time passed through stormy waters, will readily tell you. Edna was on hand to assist and counsel any tried and troubled soul.

The death of Edna Weir was in circumstances that summed up her life and service. Her final illness was most likely brought on by her persisting in her labours amongst her various children's meetings even though she was suffering from flu. This exacerbated the problem and finally she developed other complications which her system was unable to cope with. She went to be with the Lord on the day of the annual picnic for all the children from the various meetings, an event which marked the end of another year's activity. This year, it marks also the end of a life of unstinting service amongst boys and girls in particular and the flock of God in general. She was of the spirit of Paul who said. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," Acts 20:24.

To actually classify Edna is a little difficult. To me, she was a Phebe of whom we read in Romans 16: 1-2. "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also," Romans 16:1-2.

But she was also a Deborah, one who was a mother in Israel but whose presence and fellowship strengthened Barak in the battle, Judges 4:8. Edna was a fearless soldier for the Lord Jesus. Edna's shoes will be hard to fill though He Who raised her up can and will replace the one He has taken to Himself. As one of her co-workers said to me last night, Joshua followed Moses and God will have His replacement for Edna.

In many ways, for us of her generation, Edna will never be away, for her works do follow her and her testimony and example live on amongst us.

We bless God for the privilege of knowing her and labouring alongside her for a season. To her family, her sisters Primrose, Barbara and Margaret, her brothers-in-law, Kenneth and Frank, all the nephews and nieces and grand-nephews and grand-nieces, we offer our sincere Christian sympathies and assure you of our prayers. We grieve with you for Edna, a sister beloved, but rejoice that for her it is absent from the body, present with the Lord.

We do not say goodbye to Edna but only "Good night", or as Edna would have said it; "Nighty, night." We, who are obedient to the gospel she proclaimed and who are saved by the Saviour she served, shall see her in the morning."

(For a tape of the funeral services, contact Rev. John Gray, Tel. 028 6632 4164)