

THE ENCOURAGER

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Help for Sunday School Teachers— Dedicated to those who take the Word of Life to Children Everywhere

RR 1 S-4 Box 408
Port McNicoll, ON L0K 1R0

P 705-534-4465
F 705-534-9958

Email: 1sharpie@rogers.com

See The ENCOURAGER Online
at www.gospelhall.org

INFLUENCE

Around the year 1900 the glad tidings of the gospel reached a small town called Arnstein, ON—a small village of farmers, loggers and store keepers, having a total population of about 300. This is the area I grew up in.



My mother was raised in a denomination which preached that Heaven was gained by “good works”. My father was fully acquainted with the gospel, being the youngest of 9 children who all attended one of the three Sunday Schools held by the local assembly of believers.

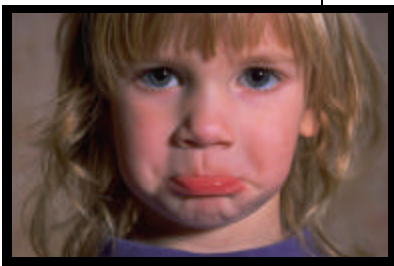
I am the youngest of four children (all boys) and the reality of God’s salvation never entered our home until just before the birth of the third son. It was at this point that my parents both sought out God’s salvation and became the recipients of eternal life through faith in Christ (they would have been in their early 30’s).

My upbringing was the best that a child could dream of, but the presence of God’s Word in my home was limited. Sunday morning we would read the Bible after breakfast. Before going to bed a Bible story book would often be read to us, but **talking about God and the Bible was what my Sunday School teachers did.** They took a very keen interest in my soul and were very diligent and faithful in presenting to me, not only my sin and Christ as the Saviour, but also many things about God, who He is and the things He has done and can still do. What those teachers instilled in my mind and soul as a child is invaluable and was the basis and beginning of my search for “God’s way of Salvation”.

One teacher will always stand out in my mind, for this and numerous other reasons. Each Sunday as the class was ended and we were receiving our Sunday School work papers, to be completed for next week, she would say, “I’ll see you next week, that is if the Lord doesn’t come and take all the believers up to heaven”.

This statement never became routine or common to me; it began to work in my young soul. It was thoughts of the Lord’s coming that would often cross my mind when someone wasn’t in a certain place when they said they would be or when the house was empty, even though the family vehicles were in the driveway.

INFLUENCE—CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO



IDTH WEAWLY THAD, WEAWY ID IZ !

A Navy Commander began teaching Sunday School for young children. One Sunday, the Preacher asked one of the Commander’s 4-year old students what she had learned that day.

“Well,” she said, “I learned all about the ten commanders. Isn’t it sad that they’re always broke?”

So—if we sometimes think that the little ones need an ‘interpreter’ so we can figure out what they are saying, let us not forget that they need to understand what we are talking about too!

INFLUENCE

(CONTINUED)

On these occasions I would be found, riding my bike at a rapid pace down the country road to my grandmother's place to see if she was home, for if she was I knew that "the Lord had not yet come and I hadn't been left behind".

The assembly in Arnstein has been blessed over the years with godly elders, who had a sincere care for the "little flock" as well as those who were without Christ. Being an assembly that has commended at least eight workers to labour in the gospel, its focus has always been on "reaching the lost". With such a focus and desire they were able to see that there was a family of four boys, the older ones in their teens and none of them saved, but seemingly showing some interest. The assembly began to pray and plan for gospel meetings in the month of March, 1981. The focus was the souls of those four brothers. With this all unknown to me, I began to be stirred in my own soul about my sin, eternity, the coming of the Lord and how I could be ready if He should come. With a solid foundation laid by two Sunday School teachers, the prayer of a godly grandmother, and the exercise of a gospel-minded assembly, God took up a dealing with my 8 year old soul. This working of God with me included sleepless nights, dreams of His coming and me being left behind, an awareness of my sin and a struggle as to "How can I be saved?" and "What does it really mean to believe?".

It was a cold wintry Sunday night in Arnstein and the Gospel Hall was filled as usual. I was sitting between my parents about 5 rows from the front and the second seat in. The first speaker had finished,

and I hadn't heard a word he said. All I could think of was "I want to be saved, but I don't know how." At ten minutes to 8 o'clock, the second speaker was speaking on John 3:16 and Revelation 20:15; the two "Whosevers". In front of me on the wall was a text about 3 feet by 4 feet, it was John 3:16. The preacher spoke about how we can only be one of the two "Whosever's", either the one that has eternal life [and their name is written in the book of life because they believe that Jesus died for their sins] or the other whose name is not in the book of life [and will never be in heaven but as an "unbeliever" they must spend eternity in the lake of fire]. That night looking at that text on the wall, and listening to the words of the preacher, the word "whosoever" in the text seemed huge to me. I realized then and there, I could be that "whosoever" and I have my name written in the book of life, if I simply "believed" - (to take God at His "Word") that Jesus died for me. God can't lie, He can't change and His Word is always faithful; therefore if God said it, I can believe it. I did that night and by His amazing grace I have become the possessor of eternal life since February 2, 1981.

After the last hymn was sung and I had explained to dad why I was crying, we got up to go out and there—coming towards us, against the flow of people, was my Sunday School teacher. Kneeling down in front of me she said with a smile and tears in her eyes, "You got saved tonight didn't you?" How did she know? Eternity only knows, but when you are so taken up with reaching souls with the gospel and constantly praying for them, and your prayer



request is fulfilled, the joy is not only in the presence of the angels of God but also in the hearts of those that care and pray. I am grateful for the Sunday School teachers I had. I am thankful for their faithfulness, prayer life, tenderness, godliness and interest in just one soul — mine!

Well, it was only February and though the gospel series was to start in March, one of the four brothers had already been saved. The series began and before the month ended my oldest brother was also saved. Twelve years later, just after I had been involved in my first gospel series, in Arnstein, brother number three was saved. I have one more brother, next to me in age, who as of yet has not professed to be saved. Please pray for his soul. He comes to the gospel meetings and is favourable to the message but only God knows why he is still outside the fold. I know that the God of all mercy and grace can reach him too, just like He has the rest of the family.

This is my story of God's grace to an 8 year old boy and **the eternal value of the work of Sunday School teachers**. If it wasn't for their care I don't know where I would be today. They truly have an awesome work and responsibility in shaping and moulding young lives in relation to eternity in the light of the Word of God

As of July 2005, I have been commended to the full-time work of the Lord. This comes 5 years after being involved in a new work and being a part of planting an assembly in Brampton, Ontario. In order to fulfill His service He has given me a life's partner, Lois Tait, whose support, labour, help and spiritual strength have been a true benefit in our service for Him. Lord willing, we plan to marry on July 3, 2006. *Byrne Foreshew*

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