



THE ENCOURAGER

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

Blast from the Past !

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1894 "A Methodist, Mary Telford Sheffield established a Sunday school for immigrant children in Toronto."

Mary Sheffield's Sunday school for young rascals blossomed over the years. She's a little-known hero, a widow and single parent whose concern for the rascally boys thronging the streets of Victorian Toronto resulted in weekly Bible classes.

A recent excerpt from the October 8th, 2007 Toronto Star, says it best, *"Mary Sheffield has had an impact on this city that far outstrips those early, modest ambitions in 1894."*

Now why would I include a note like this? It seems to me—at least—that one woman's efforts made an impact on the city she lived in. Though perhaps long forgotten by the many—and though the present efforts may even be a far cry from the character and the work at the beginning. Someone noticed. Peter Ramsay told a story at a recent Conference. It was about a boy, who in the aftermath of the storm, was throwing beached starfish back into the ocean. Someone asked him about it—and he told them he was concerned that so many of them would die since they were helpless to save themselves. The response from the observer was "But the beach is literally littered with stranded starfish, surely you can't expect that your little efforts will do much?" The young 'starfish-saviour' stooped to pick up another and to throw it as far from the shore as he could, then he said, "No, but it makes a big difference to them!"

Are our efforts making much of a difference in world where there is so much need? Some of us might be quick to say, "Not much". Perhaps we ought to say, "Not enough!"

Are there not many still perishing in spite of all the efforts that are being made by the 'evangelical' 'fundamental' thousands? The only true answer might be a rather subdued and humble confession, "Yes, it is true." But thank God, here and there, there are those who have heard the truth we bring and they have obeyed from their heart the gospel of God's grace to sinners, and "it makes a big difference" to them!

Make a difference today. And even if Secular History never notices, there may be one or two here or there, and their confession will be, "He / She made a difference for me!" And then in the Presence of our Lord—the whole of the story will be revealed—because He always notices! And then, what will it be to look upon the faces of those we have influenced for Christ?

Truth Outsmarts the Smart Ones

A boy who witnessed a crime was on the witness stand in court. He was approached by the defense attorney who asked, "Did anyone tell you what to say in court?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy.

"I thought so," said the attorney. "Who was it?"

"My Sunday School Teacher, sir."

"And what did he tell you?" the attorney asked accusingly.

"He said that the lawyers would try to get me all tangled up, but if I stuck to the truth, everything would be all right."

