



THE ENCOURAGER

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

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**Heaven and
Earth shall
pass away,
but My
Words shall
not pass
away.**

Matthew 24:35

Fifty Years—Every Friday Night !



Persistence

The days of cramming ninety or a hundred Sunday School children into a tiny portable building to sing and hear Bible Stories in St. Marys are long gone, but the memories remain.

More two hundred people gathered at the community centre to reminisce about the early days of the St Marys Gospel Hall during a 50th anniversary celebration.

"We just thought this would be a good way to keep in touch with some of the children—adults now— who came to the children's meetings" said one who himself had a forty-one year association with it all dating back to his own attendance at the meetings.

He said he remembers the little fifteen foot by twenty-five foot wood siding building on Jones Street with the large heater in the middle and no washroom, and the old yellow schoolbus that criss-crossed the community to pick up children for the Friday night meetings at "George's" as the little portable hall was called.

George Patterson was one of the founders of the work in 1951, along with Hugh Garnham.

Both men attended the celebration and shared some of their own memories of the children's meetings with several generations of attendees who gathered in the community centre. The wind in the trees, the rain drumming on the tin roof and the cold that permeated the portable building were just a few of the memories associated with the original Jones Street building before it was replaced by a permanent one in 1978.

The fiftieth anniversary celebration featured singing, reminiscing with old friends, a personal testimony, messages and memories shared by Hugh Garnham, George Patterson and Glen Woodside— followed by a roast beef dinner for a crowd of about 275 of those who had attended over the years.— *this information was selected from a newspaper article in the St Marys Independent written by Mike Beitz — staff reporter.*

In those earlier years, one of the students—even was rewarded for 10 years of perfect attendance every Friday night. Some of us thought we had put in a good effort when we ran Children's Meetings for 26 weeks. Imagine year in and year out. The use of the land for the first few years was loaned by a property owner whose family and extended family attended regularly. Then when they wished to purchase the land—he had such respect for the workers that he sold it to them for \$1.

More than 500 invitations to the event were sent out . There was a lot of planning and diligent seaching involved. One London ON man, even said, "That was fifty years ago. How did you ever find me?"

YOU GOTTA HAVE SHOES



There is an old story about a mother who walked in on her six year old son and found him sobbing. "What's the matter?" she asked. "I've just figured out how to tie my shoes." She responded, "Well, that's wonderful!"

Being a wise mother and realizing that sometimes accomplishment is mingled with doubt, she said, You're growing up, but why are you crying?"

"Because" he said, "now I'll have to do it every day for the rest of my life."