OSHKOSH REFLECTIONS
MEMORIES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PATHFINDER CAMPOREE
[find the story on page 12]

september/october 2014
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COVER PHOTO » Fernando Verduzco baptizes Gabriel Maksound from Greeneville, Tenn., during the Southern Union baptisms at the 2014 Forever Faithful International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wis. Photo by Rich Herard.
Northeast Tennessee Camp Meeting | October 3-4, 2014 | Greeneville, TN

MESSAGES
Friday Night
Five Smooth Stones
David as he faced Goliath

Sabbath Morning
You Can Run, But You Can’t Hide
The prayers of Elijah on Mt. Carmel

Sabbath Afternoon
The Sabbath as an Antidote to Stress
Sabbath, rest, boundaries, expectations, etc.

Saturday Night
It’s a Journey Together
God patiently molds and shapes us over time

Visit gccsda.com/events/NETNCampMeeting2014 for more information
The summer of 2014 is now behind us. For some of us, that meant a vacation, with pictures to remind us of special days with family or friends. Others like to travel, either exploring new places or returning to favorite destinations. At the very least, you might remember long summer evenings, outdoor social events, or fresh vegetables from your own garden. Summer can be rewarding in many ways.

This issue of Communiqué features several summer ministry events from around the conference and beyond. Yes, you will want to read the cover story on the Forever Faithful Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wis. And four news stories highlight Vacation Bible School, a critically important ministry in many communities. In addition, this summer more than 70 high-school-aged youth went door-to-door selling truth-filled literature with our Frontline Magabook Ministry. We also regularly celebrate the ministry of Cohutta Springs Youth Camp (which I believe is the best in North America) as a valued summer tradition, where decisions are made for Jesus and for baptism.

Yet behind all of these individual activities, critically important as they are, I want to applaud the many adults who plan these events, and in the process, connect personally with our children and youth. You give countless hours and valuable energy to the task. Some of you spend your own money to “fill in the gaps” and use your own vacation days. The cost is indeed high, but you are modeling and mentoring in the process. You are making an investment that shapes young lives, binds them closer to Jesus and His people, shows them how a Christ-follower really lives, and ultimately redirects them for all eternity. Thank you for investing in our kids! If ever there were a time when we needed to make children, youth, and young adults a priority, it is now.

As you look back over your summer, I hope you see pictures of young people among your memories. Think about seeing those smiling faces next week at church; visualize them around your table, perhaps—either in the kitchen or the backyard. Better yet, dream about seeing those same young faces in heaven. Now that will be rewarding!

“Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9, KJV).

Ed Wright is president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference
“I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1, NKJV).

The Greek word for conscience is suneidesis. It means “to know together with oneself—to be one’s own witness regarding your own conduct—a consciousness of one’s own conduct regarding a moral obligation concerning duty.”

Once while on a Sabbath hike in Guadalupe National Park in Texas, I picked up a small stone and decided to keep it as a souvenir. There wasn’t anything special about it; it was just a nondescript stone. Only after we finished the hike did I notice the sign: “Take nothing but pictures, leave only with memories.” My conscience was pricked because I had taken not only several pictures, but I also had that small stone I had picked up on the trail.

Later during our vacation, we stopped at Petrified Forest National Park. There we were asked to declare any rocks we had in our possession so we would not be accused of collecting any pieces of petrified wood. I declared the stone that I had “stolen” from Guadalupe National Park, and an employee put it in a bag so I would not be accused later of stealing it in Petrified Forest National Park.

By the time we arrived in Colorado at Mesa Verde National Park, my conscience bothered me so badly that I was compelled to return the Guadalupe rock by tossing it out into Mesa Verde National Park.

In all, that little stone went through Carlsbad Caverns, Petrified Forest, and Grand Canyon national parks, Navajo National Monument, Four Corners Monument, and Mesa Verde National Park, where I returned it to the National Park System.

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16, KJV).

Mitch Hazekamp is director of the Stewardship/Trust Services Department

FINANCIAL REPORT

The figures below provide an overview of conference finances as of August 31, 2014. Every member who is cooperating with God in the faithful stewardship of tithes and offerings makes our ministry and outreach possible. Thank you for your faithfulness!

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© Raja Rc | Dreamstime.com
Fernando Verduzco is the conference’s director for Children’s/Junior Youth Ministries. As such, he also serves as the Pathfinder and Adventurer director for the conference. Fernando has a passion for impacting children with the gospel of Jesus and for training and equipping the adults who work with them.

What do you enjoy most about your job?
What I really enjoy about my job is seeing God’s providence at work—how He impresses ideas, equips the right people, and brings everything together for an event that blesses, empowers, and changes lives.

What is your vision for your ministry?
My vision is that leaders will share a Jesus whom our kids love, respect, and are willing to stand and die for.

How long have you worked here?
I have worked for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference for 14 years. Before I came to the conference office, I was the associate pastor at the Ooltewah (Tenn.) church. I also worked as a pastor for churches in Madison, Athens, Conyers, Milledgeville, and Augusta, all in Georgia.

Before beginning my Master of Divinity degree at Andrews University in 1998, I had another life. In 1988, I graduated with a degree in interior design/architecture from Andrews University and for five years, I worked for a developer in Nevada as a project manager. I worked on office buildings, condos, and many other projects.

But God had other plans. He had three special ladies in California praying for me to go into the ministry. I told them not to pray—money was on my mind, not ministry. I think that without the prayers and God working on my heart, I might not be in the church today.

Tell us about your family and hobbies.
My wife, Jennifer, is a nurse at Skyridge in Cleveland, Tenn. Our daughter, Britney, is a freshman at Southern Adventist University. Our son, Timothy, is a junior at Collegedale Academy.

My hobbies involve making and shopping at yard sales/antique stores/flea markets for illustrations to use in worships, sermons, and talks to illustrate God’s Word. I love graphic design—creating logos, designs, and posters with a Christocentric theme, especially using the cross. I love to read, especially books on how God has transformed lives. I also like to camp, backpack, and see new places, and I love to collect and trade pins with Pathfinders.
SHAREHIM HOMELAND LAY EVANGELISM TRAINING
Teaching How to Be an Effective Lay Evangelistic Speaker

WITH RALPH RINGER
Southern Union director of Church Growth & Evangelism Training

LOCATION
Georgia-Cumberland Conference Office
255 Conference Rd. NE, Calhoun, GA

COST
$25 (includes catered lunch and supper on Sabbath)

REGISTRATION
Pre-registration is required. Registration deadline is October 13.
To register or for more information, call 800-567-1844, ext. 348.

NOVEMBER 7-8 | GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE | CALHOUN, GA

REVERSING DIABETES SEMINAR

with Stephen (MPA, RN) and Karen (RN) Wickham

The Wickhams have been holding reversing diabetes seminars in their community and have been so successful that they received the 2013 Governor’s Volunteer Stars Award for Grundy County. They were also invited to share about their work at the national Together on Diabetes Grantee Summit in Atlanta this past February. You will come away from this seminar with a better understanding of diabetes and how to offer to your community hope that this disease can be reversed.

This training is designed for health professionals and health educators. Pre-registration is required to attend; deadline is October 15. Online registration is available at registration.gccsda.com. Cost is $12 and includes lunch. For more information, call 800-567-1844, ext. 348.

November 1, 2014 • Georgia-Cumberland Conference Office • Calhoun, GA
In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, the conference recently purchased 32 Chromebook laptops to replace the bulky three-ring binders typically used for meetings. The Chromebooks debuted at the Aug. 20, 2014, executive committee meeting.

Roughly 37 members and 19 invitees make up the executive committee. For each meeting, individuals typically receive a notebook with 150 pages of information, ranging from an agenda to a financial report to meeting minutes, according to Laurie Naus, executive committee recording secretary and administrative assistant to the president and vice president for administration. The committee meets six times per year, including an annual year-end meeting, where binders can hold up to 500 pages each, Naus said.

All of that paper adds up and, according to Andrew LaPierre, IT director, conference administration has been talking about ways to go paperless for about a year.

“We chose Chromebooks because they are fast, have good battery life, and zero chance of getting a virus (at least right now),” LaPierre said.

The benefits will come not only in using less paper but also in saving time. Naus said it used to take her an entire day to assemble the notebooks. Now she can have the electronic documents compiled, uploaded, and ready to view in about an hour.

While executive committee is currently the only one taking advantage of the digital approach, the conference plans to have all eight of its sub-committee meetings going paperless by January 2015.
So many churches exclaim, “We have no young people!” This may be true, but must it be true?

It was Friday of Teen Camp I at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp. I was touching base with a camper who had made a decision to be baptized. Here is his story.

Chase grew up in a non-Christian home. His mom died mysteriously when he was 2 years old, and his dad will not share any details. Across town lives an Adventist family who sends their kids to camp each summer. They also sponsor other kids, like their cousin who happens to live a few doors down from Chase.

Four years ago, the cousin was registered for camp but broke a bone the week before and couldn’t go. The relatives across town who were sponsoring him were trying to decide if they should call for a refund or if they should send someone else instead. Their son mentioned a kid named Chase who lived down the street from his cousin. They all agreed this was the thing to do. Chase went to camp that summer and had the time of his life! While there, he made a decision to accept Christ as his personal Savior. He was invited to come back the following year with “all the guys,” even the cousin he had replaced. That year, he recommitted his life to Christ and decided to be baptized. When he told his dad about his decision, his dad said he could not be baptized. “Please, Dad,” he said. “I want to be baptized!” “No!” his dad replied.

Chase spent a lot of time with his “new family” and attended church with them. The family asked Chase’s dad if he could follow through on his heart’s desire for baptism.

The reluctant consent finally came. I asked Chase if his dad would come to the baptism. He said no; he knew no one would be there. Nevertheless, he was excited.

Sabbath afternoon, everyone gathered by the lake for Chase’s baptism. Included in the group were three families from the Peachtree City (Ga.) church who had driven up to celebrate with and surprise Chase! While Chase had no earthly parents present, his Heavenly Father was smiling upon him through the sponsoring VanEgmond family. “Chase has literally become part of our family,” said Tim and Branndan VanEgmond.

I ask again: Must it be true that we have no young people in our church? Are there young people in your midst who would readily become fully alive in Christ and be a part of your church if you reached out, smiled upon their lives, and asked if they would like to join Pathfinders or attend Cohutta Springs Youth Camp? The answer is simply yes! Just ask Chase.
This year’s Teachers’ Convention was held Aug. 5-6 at Cohutta Springs Conference Center. Approximately 140 elementary teachers attended the convention with 61 secondary teachers joining on Tuesday, bringing the total attendance to 220.

The theme for the training, “Christ’s Method Alone,” was taken from a book published by Philip Samaan, D.Min., professor of religion at Southern Adventist University. Samaan spoke for three hours Wednesday morning on Christ’s methods.

“People are conditioned not to go to people unless there is a problem,” Samaan said. “We are so task-oriented that we forget to be people-oriented.” Samaan then gave teachers three words to remember: inspire, instruct, and transform. “Our ministry is to build up people in Christ,” he said.

Additionally, Jennifer Morrison, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Teacher Education at Newberry College in South Carolina, spoke on the importance of data and assessment. Morrison also gave a presentation on the importance of grades to colleges, students, and teachers; how to make grades relative to learning styles; and how to motivate students.

“Assessment/data collection is a way that we minister to our students,” said Kim Thompson, Georgia-Cumberland Conference associate superintendent of education and convention planner. “The more we know about them and the more we build relationships with them and their families, the more we can minister to them and help them be successful in all areas. In essence, this was what Christ did.

continued on page 28 [see TEACHERS]
Rendezvous Garden

MARRIAGE RETREAT

October 31 through November 2, 2014
Callaway Gardens
Pine Mountain, Georgia

with
Jorge + Evelyn Torres
Back by popular demand

and musician Chad Mutchler

LEARN MORE + REGISTER ONLINE
gccsda.com/events/marriageretreat14
registration deadline is September 30
God does amazing things through Pathfinders at International Camporees! Five years ago, our son chose to give his life in baptism at Oshkosh. His younger brother witnessed that and followed in his footsteps at this camporee. The day of his baptism, my niece told me of her decision to start baptismal studies. In 1985, at the first NAD Pathfinder Camporee (Camp Hale), my husband, who at the time was a non-Adventist, made a connection with God that has since led him to join the Adventist church and lead out in Pathfinders for the past 19 years. This is just the work God has done in one family. Every camporee we meet some of our former Pathfinders who are now leading their own Pathfinder clubs, and they tell us how much this ministry blessed their lives. Until the Pathfinder camporee in heaven, we will continue bringing Pathfinders!
As the director of a club in an area where there are very few Adventists, I feel it’s important to take my Pathfinders to the International Pathfinder Camporee at Oshkosh for them to see that there is a big Adventist family with whom they can connect. Going to Oshkosh also provides fond memories as they continue through life. In fact, one of my church friends told me that her son was relating stories of his trip to the Pathfinder Camporee in Pennsylvania several years ago! Going to Oshkosh gives our kids a chance to have fun without being connected to the Internet, smart phones, or television. Not once while there did I hear, “Oh, I’m missing my ______ TV program.” I pray that taking my Pathfinders to Oshkosh will encourage them to stay active in the church and that maybe someday, they will be a Pathfinder leader and can also take a child to Oshkosh.
We were blessed to go to Oshkosh! Our favorite parts were the evening meetings and pin trading! Being able to meet kids from all over the world was amazing, as well. There should be a leader patch that says “I survived Oshkosh,” though. Ha ha!

For our club, going to Oshkosh International Camporee is never an option; it’s merely a question of what time we’ll leave and what transportation we’ll use. It is a “must experience” for Cherokee Pathfinders! The kids and staff see a little bit of heaven and meet friends from all over the world whom they will spend eternity with. During both of the last two International Camporee trips, we had a club member get baptized. This is a testimony to all of us about the spiritual decisions that are being made there. Witnessing this spiritual experience has far-reaching effects as Pathfinders come home and share with their relatives, parents, classmates, and neighbors. The spiritual experience continues and touches lives beyond the fireworks on Saturday night. We cannot measure how many hearts are changed due to this EPIC Camporee event!
The All Nations Titans set out for the International Pathfinder Camporee on Sunday, Aug. 10. An hour into our trip, the bus blew a tire, and our driver got lost, taking us eight hours in the wrong direction. Truly the devil was doing his best to discourage our group, but to no avail.

We finally arrived, and as we looked out at the enormous crowd of 47,000 Pathfinders, our director pointed our thoughts to the Bible, where John said he saw a number which no man could number. What a day that will be when the redeemed stand together to experience the biggest and best Camporee ever!
Summer camp impacts more than the lives of the youth who attend; it also changes the staff who work there. Take Jonathan Montes, associate/youth pastor at the Calhoun (Ga.) church, for instance. Long before becoming a pastor, Montes spent 10 summers (1992-2001) working at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

“In reality, [camp] is where my call to ministry started; I just didn’t know it,” Montes said. “I didn’t see camp as ministry, when that’s exactly what it was. It was a ministry to the kids and even to each other. I tell people all the time [that] ‘if it weren’t for summer camp, I wouldn’t be a pastor.’ If I hadn’t worked at summer camp, I would not have met the people I’ve met or had the friends I still have today, who are my closest friends. To me, the bond wasn’t camp itself, but it was the spiritual aspect of it. My closest friends had the same common denominator of God. We all met at summer camp, and we all had the same goals.”

Montes also met his wife, Alana (Hunt), at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp. Now married for 13 years, they have a daughter, Kailya, and a son, Jonah.

Montes attributes his love of ministry to Fred Fuller, pastor and then director of Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

“Pastor Fred was a pastor, but he was so down-to-earth. He had so much love for the people he worked with, for the kids. He had so much joy. I had never seen a pastor in that light, until working with Pastor Fred.”

Only July 26, 2014, Fuller was the keynote speaker for Montes’ ordination at the Calhoun church. Montes’ friends, family, the local church, and conference officials gathered to celebrate and affirm God’s calling on his life and to encourage him to press on in his journey in ministry.
Josh and Brittany Woods (left) hold their daughter, Adelyn, while grandpa Jeff Cinquemani, associate pastor at the Florida Hospital Church, dedicates her to the Lord and asks for His guidance in her life.

“I wanted to become a pastor because people invested time, effort, and money into me, and it changed the trajectory in my life,” said Josh Woods. “I thought if I could do that for others, that would be awesome, because I want to give back what’s been given to me.”

Woods attributes his decision to go into the ministry to his experience at Georgia-Cumberland Academy (Calhoun, Ga.) and the spiritual mentors he found there.

“I wanted to become a pastor because people invested time, effort, and money into me, ... I want to give back what’s been given to me.”

Woods and his wife, Brittany, and their daughter, Adelyn, currently live in south Georgia, where Woods serves as pastor of the Oglethorpe and Warner Robins churches. He especially enjoys “preaching the word, building real, authentic, Christ-centered relationships, and hanging out with young adults and kids.”

On Aug. 8, his churches came together for a very special service that included not only Woods’ ordination but also a baby dedication for Adelyn.

For the keynote address, Woods chose one of his spiritual mentors from his days at GCA, Don Keele, Jr. In his sermon, Keele challenged Woods to be a good shepherd, just like Jesus.
“Have you ever thought about going to seminary or studying theology? You manage to weave theology into your papers somehow, so maybe you should consider that.”

This was the question one of Michaela Lawrence Jeffery’s professors asked her during her graduate studies. She thought it odd, as she was attending a public university at the time.

“It’s the kind of question a pastor would ask you, or an Adventist, or at least a fellow believer,” Lawrence Jeffery said.

But it made her think about what she was doing with her life. Her goal was to be an English literature teacher, but she soon realized her calling was in ministry. She recognized that God was working through the talents He gave her in her local church. Before she knew it, she found herself at seminary.

“When I started seminary, I was all in,” she said. “I was ready to tackle whatever this all meant.”

While at the seminary, a professor introduced her to Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF).

“At that point in time, I didn’t know anything existed in terms of spiritual support for [Adventist] students in public universities,” Lawrence Jeffery said.

When an opening for an ACF director was available at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, she applied, got the job, and has been serving there for the past five years.

“I suppose it was a perfect fit,” she said. “There is so much from my background that has helped me be ready for this space.”

On Aug. 30, the Knoxville Adventist community, along with ACF students from other campuses, came together to affirm Lawrence Jeffery’s call to ministry in a commissioning service. Her father, lead pastor at Toronto West church in Ontario, Canada, was the keynote speaker.

“Today is full of a mix of things,” Lawrence Jeffery said. “There’s a sense of affirmation of what God has called me to and anticipation of ‘what happens next.’”
Based on Hebrews 10:37, the theme for this year's Hispanic Camp Meeting was “He Who Is Coming Will Come.”

Settled under a big tent at Cohutta Springs, approximately 1,600 people gathered to worship and remember Adventist heritage. The main feature of the program was the reenactment of Adventist history, where actors portrayed pioneers like William Miller, Joseph Bates, Hiram Edson, Samuel Snow, Rachel Oakes, and Ellen G. Harmon (later Ellen G. White). Each actor told his or her story from a first-person perspective in the 1800s. The whole weekend was packed with excellent acting, choral music, and congregational hymns, resulting in a celebration that will stay in our hearts for years to come.
It was another awesome summer for Frontline Magabook Ministries. Nearly 70 young people took to the streets of Knoxville, Tenn., Atlanta, Ga., and Warner Robins, Ga., as literature evangelists. Several of them shared powerful experiences:

Peyton McIntyre | Atlanta, Ga.
It was a normal day of canvassing businesses in the morning, and I really didn’t feel like talking to anyone that day. As I started out the day, it seemed like everyone I talked to didn’t seem interested. Every time, they would shut me down right away. I prayed and asked God to send a blessing. Then I walked into a business and canvassed a guy. Of course, he wasn’t interested. But just as I was about to walk out the door, I remembered how my leaders told me to always ask if there was anyone else I could talk to. When I did, he brought out the owner of the business. I showed him all of our message, health, and kids’ books, and he ended up getting all of them, which was 13 books!

It just goes to show that even if you have a bad day, God can always turn it around, as long as you trust in Him and know that He will provide.

Obed Garcia | Atlanta, Ga.
It was a Tuesday morning. The day had started off well, and I was motivated! But then things started to go bad. I was getting no books out, not even donations. I became discouraged but kept pushing on.

Soon it was almost time for lunch, and all I had given out were two books. Next Corey dropped me off at an industrial area. At the first building, employees were walking out to the parking lot, so I canvassed them. Out of the six people I talked to, only one gave me a donation. As I made my way along, all of the other businesses were rejections. I was so discouraged. The next industry looked empty; only one truck was in the parking lot. So I decided to skip it, but then something told me to go back.

I went inside and saw a man who looked very annoyed. I canvassed him, but I could tell by the way he looked that he wasn’t going to get anything from me. When I

continued on page 26 [see MAGABOOK]
S’MORE CAMP
(Single Moms of Real Excellence)

October 24-26, 2014
Cohutta Springs (camp side)
Crandall, Ga

Free family weekend for single moms and their kids

For more information or to register, contact Donna Crandall at 800-567-1844 ext. 342 or dcrandall@gccsda.com
Registration deadline is October 16.
Ogdren Road Youth Lead Successful VBS

by Sierra Wendt | photo contributed

On July 21-25, the Ogden Road (Tenn.) church held their first-ever, completely youth-led Vacation Bible School. Abner Cienfuegos and Sierra Wendt, both 18 years old, co-led the effort and organized the 15 other younger teenage volunteers. From decorating and planning activities to participating in the nightly space-themed skit and leading groups of young children to the different VBS stations, these teenagers allowed Jesus to shine through their actions.

On Thursday evening, which was themed “God Is Our Rescuer,” the children and staff alike enjoyed a visit from firefighters at the local fire department. They lectured on fire safety, gave prizes, and even allowed the children to test out the fire hose on the truck.

To top off the week, the children who came to VBS were invited to come to church on Sabbath for a special program. The staff led the worship service, taking up the offering, sharing platform duties, using their musical talents in special music, and preaching.

“I am grateful for my church and how the leaders were willing to let us youth lead out,” said Cienfuegos, who preached on the significance of salvation.

Truly God blessed through the guidance and discipleship of the church leaders and through the willingness and energy of the youth!

“It was incredible to see teenagers on fire for God and genuinely taking an active part in church outreach,” said staff helper Natalie Hamilton.
Sometimes as grown-ups working with children and young people at church, it’s easy to wonder if what we do has an impact on any of their lives.

This year during our “Weird Animals” Vacation Bible School at the North Atlanta (Ga.) Hispanic church, God demonstrated the power He has to turn a seed planted in a kid’s young heart into something beautiful.

A couple of months before VBS, we began contacting visitors from previous years’ events, inviting them to this year’s program. One of the mailed invitations went to the house of Daisy Casillas, a 15-year-old young lady who had attended our VBS for several years—since she was 10 years old. Daisy contacted us after receiving the invitation and said she wanted to continue to experience the wonderful feeling that VBS had given her in the past, but now she wanted to be part of it as a crew leader.

We gladly accepted her request, and Daisy served as one of our staff. She also brought her little sister to the program.

VBS ran June 23-28, and we had 90 kids attending, with 45 of them being members of the surrounding community. We were also blessed with 65 volunteers.

We saw the hand of God in many different ways: the amount of donations given, encouragement we received, the various

continued on page 28 [see ATLANTA VBS]
The kids of Johnson City, Tenn., were able to experience God’s love in a far-out way this year! Our VBS idea came from Investigation Station: Galactic Quest. This was a fun and engaging program that focused on learning about God’s love through space, science, and exploration. With more than 40 kids in attendance and 52 volunteers, we consider this year to be a success!

The VBS ministry at the Johnson City church has had many fun and engaging VBS programs in the past, but this year we were excited about the program created by the North American Division. Galactic Quest had excellent songs, stories, science tidbits, and games for us to use!

Our biggest challenge was creating a decorated sanctuary that embodied outer space, as well as a rocket control panel. Nikki Firestine, VBS decorator, imagined and produced a 12-foot-high rocket for our church’s stage, as well as an 8-foot-high outer space backdrop complete with suspended glow-in-the-dark planets. Other decorating items included a life-size astronaut, a “Mars” landscape, a life-size lunar module, and a vortex tunnel complete with black lights.

The kids had a marvelous time, and the staff were rumored to have had a fun time, too! One of the most exciting parts of the week was the memorization of the “Captain’s Log” (memory verse) each night. By the end of the week, it was quite a spectacle to watch all 47 kids recite these spectacular verses with enthusiastic motions. We feel confident God was honored throughout the week. Praise Him in all His wonder!
“You want to do what? Next week? No way! You need to plan ahead for such programs.”

Becky had called me, the Whitwell mission group treasurer, stating that she and Geraldine wanted to have a VBS and needed the church to help them buy some materials. I asked when they wanted to do this. “Starting next Monday,” Becky replied.

This was on Wednesday afternoon, leaving less than a week to get everything organized.

“How will you even get the materials that fast? And besides, we have no children coming to church now, and you will have no time to advertise. Where are the kids coming from, and how many are you going to plan for?”

“Twenty-four!” was her reply.

“How ridiculous!” I said.

They needed to send for the materials that day in order for them to arrive in time. As a retired pastor, my experience had taught me that you have to plan for this kind of program, and I knew there was every chance it would flop and we’d simply end up spending money on a lot of stuff that would eventually be lying around the church. Reluctantly, I gave in.

“...We have no children coming to church now, and you will have no time to advertise. Where are the kids coming from, and how many are you going to plan for?”

A few members agreed to volunteer for what would be our church’s first-ever VBS. On Monday evening, July 20, just before we were to begin, Becky got a phone call saying her sister was in the intensive care unit and was not expected to live. She left immediately, leaving Geraldine, her assistant, and the rest of us holding the bag.

When 5 p.m. came, not a child showed up. I didn’t know whether to feel bad, relieved, or just to say, “I told you so!” But 10 minutes later, a van drove up and nine kids with

continued on page 28 [see WHITWELL VBS]
closed, he told me to step into his office and asked me if I had change for $100. I told him I didn’t, so he told me to just take the $100. I couldn’t believe it! I showed him Man of Peace, and when he saw the book, he asked if they were Christian books. I told him they were, and I told him about the Bible Story company. He said he grew up with those books. After he told me that, I showed him The Great Controversy and Lessons of Love and told him he could keep all four.

I stayed and talked to him for a bit, and he shared his testimony with me. He said he’d grown up in the church but he’d left and started doing drugs. His marriage was falling apart, and he was not in a good place in his life. But then he’d started going to counseling with his wife, and they both started going to church and studying the Bible. He said it was a huge blessing from God. I told him about how I’d initially wanted to skip visiting the business, and he said it was the Holy Spirit who had told me to go back. He prayed with me and became the encouragement I needed to finish the day! What a divine appointment!

One day I was canvassing downtown businesses. My day had been going all right, but I knew it could be better, so I continued trusting in the Lord, knowing that He would come through and help me.

I came across a dental office and walked in, not knowing exactly what to expect. I canvassed the woman at the front desk, and she said she’d show them to the dentist in the back. At that moment, I knew the only thing left for me to do was to pray!

I found a seat and saw a Bible on the waiting room table, so I grabbed it and turned to Deut. 11:24, which promises “Every place where you set your foot will be yours” (NIV). I placed my faith in that promise and claimed this dentist office as mine and that God would help me place books there. I didn’t know how many, but I certainly was depending on God to sell something there!

The dentist came out and asked the golden question every canvasser loves to hear: “So how much for these six books?” My eyes lit up as I told him that he could have them for $80! He and the lady at the front desk, who turned out to be his daughter, chose six books for themselves and for the people that would come into the office.

That experience taught me that if we claim God’s promises without doubting, that His word will be fulfilled. He may not always do it in the way we expect Him to, but God will always fulfill His word! This is one of the many faith-building experiences God gave me this summer. Trust in God, and He will come through for you. Take Him at His word, for He is faithful!
DEEP

November 7-9, 2014 » Teen Prayer Conference » Greeneville, TN

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He assessed [people’s] most basic needs then bade them come follow. We have the same opportunity and calling for our children. If they are hungry or can’t read, how can we take them on the journey to know Christ as their best friend if we don’t know them first and meet those needs?”

During the convention, several educators were also recognized for their years of service, including Mark Sargeant, who has served 40 years, and Marleen Young, who has served 31 years.

A hand-stitched quilt served as the unique background for the stage. The quilt was made up of hands reaching toward the cross of Jesus. Each teacher had previously taken a hand and asked their students to create a design that represented their classroom.

“The quilt project was started last year with every teacher’s handprint—all 122 of them—decorated with their children's names on it,” Thompson said. “It was to symbolize the new vision statement: ‘Leading children to Christ through loving, learning, and living.' Beth Stone, art teacher at Collegedale Adventist Middle School and Collegedale Academy, was the original idea creator, and fellow teacher Judy Brittingham, from the Ooltewah area, was the creative force behind the implementation of the project.”

professionals who donated their time and expertise to give seminars to the parents, and the families who came to our church and heard about Jesus for the first time. But one of the most amazing testimonies came on Thursday night. A play that evening portrayed how our sins are brought to the cross and Jesus takes them and puts them away.

During the play, Daisy felt a call from God—something she had never experienced before. Afterward she approached us with tears in her eyes to share what was going on in her heart. As we listened, we understood that something very special was happening. Orlando Gonzalez, pastor, joined us and prayed for Daisy, and she accepted Jesus into her heart. It was one of the most beautiful and rewarding experiences we have ever had while serving in children's ministries.

We don’t know what God has in mind for Daisy and her family, but one thing is for sure: All the hard work, stress, obstacles, and anything else we have to face in our field is worth it—because a difference is being made in a young person’s life, and the Lord will make miracles happen.

The majority of the children who came are not currently members at any church. Now we are wondering just how to follow up on this great opportunity with only 10 regular church members—two in their 50s and the majority of us in our 70s and 80s. Nevertheless, we are excited in knowing God has even more plans not yet revealed for us! And I think God is still teaching the doubting Thomases like me.
LA LUCHA DE TODO HOMBRE

con orador Michael Carducci

OCTUBRE 3–5, 2014

LUGAR
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visite la página web
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Or call 800-567-1844, ext. 340
OCTOBER
3    Day of Prayer and Fasting
3-4  Northeast Tennessee Camp Meeting (see page 3)  The Oaks, Greeneville, TN
3-5  Hispanic Men’s Retreat (see page 29)  Unicoi State Park, Helen, GA
4    Personal Ministries Rally  Graysville Church, TN
10-12 ACF Student Leader Reboot  Cohutta Springs
11   Prayer Ministry Day  Auburn Church, GA
17-19 Men’s Retreat (see page 30)  Cohutta Springs (camp side)
18   Health Rally  Jamestown Church, TN
24-26 Single Moms’ and Kids’ Retreat (see page 21)  Cohutta Springs
31-Nov 2 Marriage Retreat (see page 11)  Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA
31-Nov 2 Pathfinder Teen Challenge  Cohutta Springs

NOVEMBER
1    How to Conduct a Reversing Diabetes Seminar (see page 7)  Conference Office
7-8  ShareHim Homeland Lay Evangelism Training (see page 7)  Conference Office
7-9  Teen Prayer Conference (see page 27)  The Oaks, Greeneville, TN
7-9  Makeover: Hispanic Youth Rally  Cohutta Springs Conference Center

DECEMBER
6    Health Rally  Waycross Church, GA

OFFERING SCHEDULE

OCTOBER
04 Local Church Budget
11 NAD/World Budget/Voice of Prophecy
18 Local Church Budget
25 Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministries

NOVEMBER
01 Local Church Budget
08 World Budget/Annual Sacrifice
15 Local Church Budget
22 Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministries
29 NAD Evangelism
-New dates-

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