

Report for Gardner Hall

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Itzam Gomez



Some of the young people in Odessa, Texas

Hectic Summer

This summer has been hectic! I have been to three camps and a gospel meeting with Bible classes designed primarily for young people. The camps are individual projects and have no ties with churches. Churches have no business getting involved in anything that might include recreation, but individuals and families often organize different events to provide opportunities for Bible study, prayer and time together with others.

The first camp was our New Jersey FC Camp the week of July 4th. We had 185 campers and staff, a little down from past years, but an excellent week of study, prayer and time together. One young man, Itzam Gomez, was baptized. Itzam has had a rough upbringing in the inner city with many of the tragedies often associated with that culture. However, he is determined to turn his life around with Christ's help. He is a natural leader and all of his peers look up to him. He lives in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. and Antoine Hollaway is helping him.

The second camp was the Alabama leadership camp for boys run by Scott Richardson and Leon Mauldin. I sometimes feel the need to get back to my Alabama roots and this camp gives me a good chance to do that every year and share time with godly people.

The third camp was Joe Work's SOL camp in the Pocono Mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania. Apart from the joy of spending time with so many good teenagers, I shared a room with Simon Harris, Gary Henry and Don Bunting. Jeff and Scott Smelser were across the hall. What a privilege to spend time with these men! When thinking of blessings received I think not only of the Bible study, prayer and singing, led so ably by Stephen Rouse, but also the hearty laughter from the unpredictable, but completely clean humor. Picture to the right gives a hint.

The meeting was with the Spanish-speaking church in Odessa, Texas. I've become close to brethren there and also in the sister city of Midland. We had Bible studies every morning with a group of about 15-20 young people, then services in the evening with the whole congregation. I am thrilled to see the efforts of the young people, especially a group of young ladies who continually organize activities for their peers. Wayne Partain, who spent many years in Odessa, has returned with his wife Faye after spending a few years in South Carolina. The brethren are thrilled to have him back.

Local News

Now that summer is almost over, we're glad to have more time to dedicate to our "normal" routine in New Jersey and New York City.

Two very young men have been baptized in the West Harlem congregation. We tried to put both off as long as we could because of their age, but when they became desperate we baptized them into Christ. Both have the potential to be leaders. Others in both West Harlem and Fair Lawn are struggling spiritually and need prayers.

I am so thankful to work with some of the most diligent and dedicated fellow workers— men like Tim Bunting, Roger Polanco, Caleb Churchill, German Ortiz and others. Young leaders like Bill Sanchez and Beto Guerrero are irreplaceable. Please pray for all of us.

