

## **A Life That Was Touched through VBS**

It was 1943. The war was at its peak with the outcome far from settled. Even though DuPont had provided Dad an opportunity to make a contribution to the war effort through the defense plant, he had grown weary of working for wages and his heart had drawn him back to his roots in Western Oklahoma. I was six years old, barely tall enough to see over the tallest cotton stalks, but the whole family, mom, my brother, and two sisters pulled cotton wherever we could find a job. I never thought of it as work, it was just a job that we all had to do to make it through the winter. Mom probably made me a little sack out of feed sacks, I don't remember. I do remember pulling 200 lbs one day. If such records were kept it would probably have set a record for a 6 year-old. But that was far from the most important thing that happened that year.

A neighbor, Clarence Killingsworth felt a need to have a Vacation Bible School in an abandoned school house that served as a community center. In those days there was a family on about every quarter section, so there were quite a few kids in a 2-3 square mile area. This was to be my first contact with anything that related to the church, or God. My parents were good, hard-working, moral people but had not been involved with a church.

I don't remember a lot about the VBS, but one thing stands out. Mrs. Killingsworth taught my class. There were no fancy trappings like they have today. I don't remember if we even had Kool-aid, but I do remember the teacher telling us about God and about how we could talk to Him in prayer. She shared about her husband's illness and how they had prayed for his recovery and God had answered their prayers. She spoke about God in a personal way that suggested that even kids could know and love him.

Out of that VBS effort it was recognized that the community needed an ongoing teaching and worship opportunity, so a Union Sunday School was organized. We had no pastor. Occasionally a preacher would come by to preach. I remember a Methodist preacher named Rev. Powers, who came from a nearby church to share the gospel. That was about the first time that I understood that I needed a Savior and that there was a heaven and a hell. I quickly decided which place I wanted to go. But it was several years later, when I was twelve, that I understood that it wasn't enough to just be a good boy, that Christ had died for me, he had paid the price for my sins. So one night, in a country church revival I surrendered my life to Christ.

I often look back and wonder, "What if Mr. Killingsworth had not been obedient to the Spirit leading him to start that first VBS at Sunny Point." Now, 70 years later, I'm still a fan of VBS. I've been visiting some areas of town where most folks never get a visit from a church. Most of these children never have a Bible story read to them or see their parents read the Bible and pray. I'm remembering that were it not for a vision a country farmer had, life might have taken a different turn for me. So would you join me in sacrificing some time and effort so you can be used of God in making the Good News available to some children and their parents? Pray and go. Touch young lives. And don't forget to pray for the teachers and workers. It is easy to see it as a job that they get through. Pray that they will see each child as a treasure in God's sight, and worthy of their best efforts and prayers.