Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- 2 Peter 3:18 -

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

may/june 2014
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When I trim the hedge in my front yard, I find it helpful to put down the trimmers long enough to walk out toward the street. That change in perspective tells me very quickly if the top of the hedge is really as level as I think it is.

Similarly, we at times need to step back from the up-close, day-to-day work of ministry and take a look at the big picture. A change in perspective helps us plot individual data points and see larger trends, a helpful practice in better understanding and evaluating ministry.

The annual report that you hold in your hands is one way of doing that. Together let’s look at membership and financial trends, evangelistic effectiveness, ministry high points, and other data from churches and schools. Are you concerned or encouraged by the picture that emerges?

Allow me this word of caution, however, before we get started: The Georgia-Cumberland Conference is not a business. Many of the most important elements of spiritual growth cannot be captured in data points to be graphed and charted.

More importantly, in the end, the health of this conference is a reflection of the health of each member. So I must ask myself: Am I more Christlike today than I was a year ago? Are the fruits of the Spirit multiplying in my life, or do I sense an uneasy decline in spiritual fruit-bearing? Am I maintaining appearances, “having a form of godliness but denying its power,” or is God working in my heart to bring unprecedented vitality, conviction, and compassion?

Let’s renew our commitment to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever!” (2 Peter 3:18, NKJV).

Ed Wright is president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.
Every Seventh-day Adventist Church starts small. Christian hope and faith first grow in an individual’s heart and are felt and shared in the home; they then take the shape of a community of believers in the local church and become an association of churches that shares financial, legal, and social responsibilities in the form of a conference. This association of churches is just an extension of the ministries of its congregations and individuals. Among other things, it gives the local churches a legal entity that allows them to own and manage property, schools, and other institutions. It also supports a stronger presence in our communities through shared ministry, evangelism, discipleship, and service.

In 2013, the combined effort of churches associated through the Georgia-Cumberland Conference were blessed with continued growth. A total of 1,114 persons joined 202 congregations through baptism or profession of faith. The net growth in members brought the total membership to 37,700, up from 37,070 at the end of 2012. One new church (Augusta Hispanic), two companies (Impact and Ooltewah Hispanic), and five mission groups were organized.

During 2013, the Human Resources Department focused on several initiatives that included employment services for churches and schools and the implementation of training/screening processes for volunteers. Several churches and schools have voted to transition local positions to conference employment, adding approximately 200 new employees. Another important initiative has been to encourage conference institutions to implement a training/screening protocol called Shield the Vulnerable for individuals who work with children and youth. As of December 2013, 1,107 individuals had completed the process.

It’s truly a privilege to support the efforts of so many wonderful people who serve in the territory of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.
The administration, staff, and pastoral team have welcomed me to Georgia-Cumberland with open arms and affirmation.

Last year was a year to get to know the pastors. It opened doors for continued growth and made me aware of the many challenges they face. I hope that pastors know they have an advocate in the conference office who cares deeply about them. I am jealous for their well-being and believe in an open-door policy, where conversations that interest them also interest me.

There is a wealth of experience and a desire to seek continual growth among the pastoral staff here in Georgia-Cumberland. There is also one constant with which we all deal: change. Cultural and societal shifts are not easy to accept, but we all know that change is inevitable. Of course, we are not speaking of biblical change. That is always constant. Finding healthy ways to move our congregations forward is a subject for much prayer and wisdom.

In the past year, I have spent time training new pastors, providing them with a strong foundation that will equip them for many years of ministry. Ministers’ meetings have been intentionally planned as a resource for pastors. The ministerial regional directors hold Pastors Association for Longevity and Service (PALS) meetings monthly in their regions of the conference. We have also had an emphasis on renewal and family life. We must place God first, family second, and work third. This may not sound like the correct order to some, but strong, healthy families are the foundation for stronger, healthier churches.

The ministerial team has also worked on revising the pastoral placement manual. We wanted to modify the process of how we place pastors in churches, while making a better fit for both the pastor and the church. We meet with the church leadership, seeking to understand a little of their history, the challenges and issues they face as a congregation, their future goals, and the pastoral traits they think would help their congregation thrive. We then invite church leaders to meet with pastoral candidates, selected to meet their church profile, in order to establish a good fit.

Another revision includes the policies that govern the establishment of new congregations. The process is for the group of believers to be recognized as a mission group first, then as a company, and then as a formal church. One of several vital steps added to the process of becoming a mission group is to be intentional.
about being “mission-focused.” Each group must establish some type of outreach ministry that incorporates the “growing disciples through shared leadership” platform. I would like to see groups actively reaching out to meet some need within the community where they are seeking to establish a church.

Evangelism is the heartbeat of any church. There is good evangelism taking place in many of our churches. Our aim for 2013 was to understand how evangelism could be more effective. In conversations with pastors, I have discovered that there are three questions being asked consistently:

1. How do you connect with unchurched people?
2. How do you awaken passion for evangelism in your church members?
3. Do we have permission to experiment with new forms of evangelism and not be penalized if there is little return?

It is my understanding that failure can make us wiser when we learn from it and endeavor to try something different.

I have seen God’s grace at work in many powerful ways during 2013. I can say without reservation that it has been an honor and privilege to work with such a great team here in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

2013 BY THE NUMBERS

121 Full-time Pastors
- 102 Senior
- 19 Associate

1,114 New Members
- 859 Baptisms
- 255 Professions of Faith

15 Contract and Stipend Pastors

12 Missional/Lay Pastors

6 Chaplains
4 Seminary Students

12 Languages Spoken Each Sabbath Throughout the Conference
The word “blessing” is interesting. Often we equate the word with financial or numerical gain, but what is the truth about being blessed? Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV) says: “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

This report will include some numerical blessing, but the greatest blessings are about the peace, contentment, and happiness evident in our Georgia-Cumberland Conference schools. Here are the “blessings” from the 2013-2014 school year:

**STUDENT-LED EVANGELISM**
Several students from Carman Seventh-day Adventist School in Marietta, Ga., led out as presenters in a local ShareHim weekend series. Marietta Church pastor, Bill Levin, and his pastoral team united with Bev Amlaner and her education team to prepare children to share their blessing about Jesus through spoken word and music.

**STUDENT-LED WEEKS OF PRAYER**
Collegedale Academy (CA) students engaged the Chattanooga-area elementary schools by conducting weeks of prayer. Chris Massengill, CA chaplain, along with the support of faculty and staff, prepared the students who shared the blessing of peace with students at schools like Standifer Gap in Chattanooga, Tenn., and Learning Tree in Dalton, Ga.

**SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIPS**
Conference academies continue to engage in mission service. Destinations in 2013 included Appalachia, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Belize, and Haiti.

**SPIRITUAL RENEWAL**
Every teacher in the conference has been invited to step away from the intensity of duty and to seek one day of spiritual renewal with our Savior.
SCIENCE CURRICULUM
More than $6 million has been invested by the North American Division in an inquiry-based, Creation-centered K-8 science curriculum to be implemented across the conference beginning in 2015.

OUTDOOR SCHOOL
A conference-wide outdoor school program has been initiated to introduce our children to the wonders of the Creator’s design in nature. Through collaboration with Southern Adventist University, this effort utilizes college students as mentors to elementary students under the direction of Jonathan Sumner, Matthew White, and Marty Miller.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES
Professional Learning Communities are teams of educators working together to improve teaching and learning on school campuses and via the Internet. Innovative ideas are being shared through online connections at Collegedale Academy, Georgia-Cumberland Academy, and across the conference. Peachtree City Elementary School, led by Stephen Bralley, is connecting with other educators across the division, and Sharon Garner and Stephanie Heath-Nash have been leading a consortium of schools in the Southern region.

PASSING THE TORCH SCHOLARSHIP
A newly created funding source has been developed for elementary education candidates exclusively from the Georgia-Cumberland Conference who meet specific criteria for eligibility to eventually fill the ranks of quality educators (see page 16).

SMALL SCHOOLS SUPPORT
The continuation of significant special subsidy will ensure the sustainability of our schools with three or less teachers on staff.

It’s clear that blessings abound in the educational ministry of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Continue to support our schools in prayer as we continue on the 180-day evangelistic series of “growing disciples through shared leadership,” also known as Christian education.
CHURCH MINISTRIES
Jerry Fore, general vice president

The Church Ministries Department strives to prepare members for ministry and assist them in attracting people to God’s kingdom. This was demonstrated in 2013 as leaders conducted more than 60 training events and rallies. Church ministries also offers seven regional camp meetings each year in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Korean, and American Sign Language). Like ripples in a lake, the far-reaching results of these events are endless. It’s all about relationship—with Him and with each other.

ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP—Adventist Christian Fellowship has been growing, especially in student leadership and local chapter activity. Student leaders have facilitated activities such as weekly Bible studies, on-campus church services, and campus outreach.

There are still 10 ACF chapters with the possibility of an eleventh in the future at Dalton State College. The current 10 include: ETSU, Emory, GA Tech, GSU, KSU, TTU, UTC, UTK, and UWG.

Conference-wide annual events included the CONNECT Conference and Leadership Reboot.

ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DISASTER RESPONSE—Disaster response training took place in Columbus, Ga., and Murphy, N.C. More than 40 individuals participated in the events.

In 2013, ACS South Georgia, coordinated by Carolyn Lipscomb, distributed 155,000 pounds of food (at a cost of $20,400) and provided food bags to 16,560 homes. They also provided health screenings for just under 2,000 people (at a cost of $5 per person) at 16 events.
ADVENTURERS AND PATHFINDERS—Adventurers is an ever-expanding part of the Children’s Ministries Department. For the 2013-2014 year, Adventurers had 1,479 registered (up from 1,100 the previous year) and 71 clubs (up from 53). About 1,800 attended the annual Family Fun Day and spent the day playing games, worshiping, strengthening relationships, and learning about Jesus. This year also saw the development of an Adventurer Council Taskforce (ACT) to help plan for the future growth of Adventurers.

Pathfinders also grew exponentially with 2,836 registered (up from 2,400) and 97 clubs (up from 82). Nearly 470 attended the Teen Challenge; 1,750 attended Camporee; and 1,900 plan to attend the International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wis., this August.

LATIN-AMERICAN MINISTRIES—The 2013 Hispanic Camp Meeting drew 1,800 people to hear José Rojas. Additionally, 295 attended the Children’s Ministries Retreat, 305 women attended the Hispanic Women’s Retreat, 32 couples attended the Hispanic Marriage Retreat, 120 men attended the Hispanic Men’s Retreat, six Hispanic Master Guide clubs were organized, and 130 youth participated in the Southern Union Hispanic Youth Congress.

MEN’S MINISTRIES—The 2013 Men’s Retreat featured guest speaker Jorge Torres, chaplain (major) in the US Army. Torres’ theme was “Men of Valor,” and he challenged the men to be the godly leaders that God wants them to be. More than 60 men attended and were blessed by the powerful message, fellowship, and outdoor activities.
PERSONAL AND HEALTH MINISTRIES—In 2013, the Adult Ministries Department, which encompasses many areas, held nine health and personal ministries leadership trainings, 17 health rallies, 6 personal ministries rallies, 6 health workshops, and 6 health community outreach events.

In 2013, more than 1,500 enrolled in Bible Research, an online Bible study resource, and 549 sets of lessons were completed. In total, 17,563 lessons were graded. Mailings included sending out 3,695 DVDs; 2,880 CDs; and 3,790 books.

Last year saw the conference expanding its reach into three new pioneer areas (or areas where there is currently no Adventist presence), and department director, E.W. Dempsey, held five 3 Point Play basketball camps with 160 students participating, learning about the sport and Jesus.

PRAYER MINISTRIES—The 2013 Prayer Conference featured presentations by Jo Ann Davidson, professor at Andrews University, and Peter Neri, a pastor from Las Vegas, Nev. Nearly 200 people attended the spiritually enriching weekend. Prayer ministries coordinator, Mark Piotrowski, also held prayer ministry Sabbaths in four churches around the conference.

PRISON MINISTRIES—The Prison Ministries Department held their annual appreciation event in August 2013. The luncheon was attended by about 65 prison ministry volunteers and their families.

E.W. Dempsey, prison ministries director, also gave seven health presentations to prison groups throughout 2013.
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES—More than 75 teens attended the 2013 High School Retreat, a weekend specifically designed for Adventist students who are not attending Adventist schools. Forty-one young adults attended the LifeGroup training, which disciples them to lead small groups in their home churches. A highlight was the Youth and Young Adult Festival. About 1,800 attended the March event, spending the day in worship and praise.

A significant focus of youth ministries is summer camp. In 2013, 87 staff built relationships with almost 1,300 campers from the United States, as well as internationally! This ministry resulted in 293 baptismal decisions along with more than 900 commitments for Christ.

WOMEN’S AND FAMILY MINISTRIES—Women’s ministries’ goal is to equip, empower, and encourage women of all ages to develop and effectively use their unique, God-given qualities to share Jesus’s love in their area of influence, whether at school, home, or work. Mentoring young teen girls has become a primary focus, and we are encouraged by the growing attendance at the annual teen retreat. Celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year, the God in Shoes Ministry continues to be an effective avenue for churches to reach out to women in their communities.

Family ministries’ goal is to help restore God’s ideal to families by addressing some of today’s issues. Trainings and seminars were offered at various locations throughout the conference, and 100 couples attended the annual Marriage Retreat, reaping the benefits of being intentional about making their relationship better.
Kurt Allen, vice president for finance

I am often asked, “How is the conference doing?” But what people are really asking me is “How is the conference doing financially?” Conference treasurers can be portrayed as downcast people who hang their head low, shaking it slowly back and forth with the weight of impending financial doom. I have chosen to not be that kind of treasurer. I’m happy I can hold my head high and confidently proclaim, “Our conference is abundantly blessed!”

And I really do mean it. No, there is never enough money for everything, but God has blessed us with enough resources to meet our needs and even many of our wants. You, the members of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, make this a great conference for ministry. Without you, none of what we do would be possible. There would be no faithful churches in our communities and no great schools for our children. There would be no great conference center to visit for a retreat in nature. Essentially, there would be no ministry. Any financial report would be incomplete without saying thank you to each of you for your faithful stewardship and support of this conference. Proverbs 11:25 (MSG) says, “The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped,” so I know God is also blessing you abundantly!

In 2013, our faithful members returned $43 million in tithe (a 5.39 percent increase) to support the ministries of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference and the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. We ended the year with an operating gain of more than $700,000. Our ministry operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. And every day it costs us $117,432 to operate the ministries of our conference.

Our operating reserves required by North American Division policy exceeded the minimum requirement by 54 days at year-end. Praise God!

You have undoubtedly picked up my theme that as a people and a church, we are abundantly blessed. In closing I want to share this passage in Ephesians 1:7-10 from The Message Bible: “Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah ... we’re a free people…. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in the plans He took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ...”

Let us keep faithful and complete the work that has been entrusted to us!
USE OF TITHE DOLLARS

Programs and Departments — 19.3%

North American Division — 16%

Administration — 3.6%

Southern Union — 9%

Education — 15.3%

Defined Benefit Retirement — 10.6%

Pastors — 26.2%

OPERATING GAIN/LOSS

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$934,420

-$2,576,869

-$1,059,162

$696,637

$2,363,318

$1,046,780

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We could see the newborn elk calf, its ears twitching, as it nursed for the first time. We were fortunate to have arrived shortly after the birth. The umbilical cord could still be seen protruding from the attentive mother.

It happened while we were camping near Cherokee, N.C. Our destination that day was Cataloochee, where we had previously seen elk. We traveled on to Cove Creek Road, which seemed like the end of the earth. Navigating the winding, gravel road was a teeth-chattering, heart-stopping adventure by itself.

A volunteer from the Elk Bugle Corps was fulfilling his duties as steward in watching over the newborn calf and its first-time mother. He shared the history of #97 (the number tag in the mother elk’s ear) and other interesting facts about the 8-year-old female. Elk #97 had been psychologically wounded. She’d been severely traumatized when she was chased by a pack of dogs and had suffered what the volunteer described as the animal version of post-traumatic stress syndrome. She’d become a loner and did not relate well with others in her group.

We rejoiced along with the “elk man” as we witnessed the newborn calf nursing from its formerly traumatized mother. He was hopeful that she, having experienced her maternal instincts, would reconnect and bond with the rest of the elk herd.

Having witnessed such an event fresh from the creative hand of God, we marveled at His ability to heal and to give life. Praise God for the concerted efforts of park rangers and volunteers who have given themselves for the betterment of animal kind.

“And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth every kind of animal—livestock, small animals, and wildlife.’ And so it was... And God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:24-25).

Mitch Hazekamp is director of the Stewardship/Trust Services Department

### FINANCIAL REPORT

The figures below provide an overview of conference finances as of March 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!

|                      | 2014 (13 weeks) | 2013 (13 weeks) | Gain/Loss | %  
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|-----
| Tithe                | $8,906,066      | $8,788,789      | $117,277  | 1.33 |
| Conference Ministries| $119,284        | $117,905        | $1,379    | 1.17 |
| Local Church Giving  | $6,691,007      | $6,258,005      | $433,002  | 6.92 |
| World Church Giving  | $219,628        | $216,084        | $3,544    | 1.64 |
These days, it’s difficult to do much of anything without technology. As IT director, Andrew is an integral part of the ministry of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. We asked him to help us learn a little more about what keeps his life’s batteries charged, both in and out of the office.

Tell us about your role at the conference.
I’m responsible for the design, installation, and management of the network infrastructure, servers, and computers. I handle these for the conference office, Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Collegedale and Decatur ABCs, and the Home Health Education Service (HHES) office that works with the magabook and literature evangelist programs.

IT has approximately 18 physical servers and 12 virtual servers across all sites, along with 80-plus desktops and laptops.

I’m also the Help Desk for all office personnel, as well as pastors and teachers who do not have a local Help Desk department.

What do you enjoy most about your job?
My favorite part is getting new equipment to build and set up. I also really like to help people. It makes me happy to see large projects finished and working smoothly.

I’m also pretty happy with the amount of redundancy and backups we have been able to put in place over the last few years. There is still room for improvement, but I guess that’s what keeps me going.

What’s your vision for the conference IT Department?
I’d like for the conference to be able to better support our schools’ technological infrastructure. Many of the smaller schools don’t have the resources to design and install a stable system that works for them, and I’d like us to be able to provide that.

How long have you worked here, and what did you do prior to that?
I started working right after I graduated from Southern Adventist University, so I’ve worked at the conference since January 2007 and have been IT director since 2009.

What are some of your interests outside of work or computers?
I love spending time with my wife, Sheyla (incidentally, she also works for the conference in the Human Resources Department), and with our many cats and her dog, Simon. And when I’m not tinkering with technology or testing out the latest Android app, I enjoy camping and backpacking, growing fruits and vegetables, reconciling my bank statements, and building with LEGO®.

Since you brought up apps, tell us one you couldn’t live without.
I guess if I had to choose just one, it would be Feedly. I subscribe to a number of technology-related websites, and Feedly brings it all together for me.

ANDREW LAPIERRE

Q+A
The Georgia-Cumberland Conference has accepted the invitation to be involved in Kingdom growth in China—and because of this support, four new pioneer teams were sent to unreached areas of a province in China. This particular province is located in Southeast China, has a population of more than 45 million, and is one of the poorest provinces in China.

Along with the economy, the Adventist Church in this province has struggled. For example, in the capital city, with its population of more than 5 million, we have only two churches. The larger one is government-owned and has an average of 130 worshippers each Sabbath. One of our pioneer teams has been placed in this city. Since in this entire province there are only three ordained pastors, one can see why the addition of four teams is such a blessing. These teams have been called and trained to focus specifically on sharing the gospel!

Our Adventist brothers and sisters are working on building a church that can also be used as a training center. This is much-needed, since our members in this province do not have a proper place where they can join together to receive training or worship. In fact, at recent area training meetings, the conditions were so pathetic that most of the 100 present had to sleep on the floor, and each gender had to share a single toilet.

Committed members (pictured) are laboring to cut the costs of building a church/training center. Families, three generations together, have been working side-by-side. Though mostly poor farmers, they have raised nearly $300,000 and are praying for another $400,000. (Unfortunately, building costs in China are extremely high.) If members of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference can help defray these costs, the work of spreading the gospel in this part of China will benefit greatly.

Above all, your prayers for Kingdom growth in China are needed. Please pray for the safety of our members, that they may have a hungering and thirsting for God, and for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit across this huge country. Also pray that those in leadership positions across China will be given an extra portion of wisdom and grace.
Two years ago, I had the amazing opportunity to travel to Haiti on a mission trip with the Collegedale Church. I met many new faces, not only in my group of 40-plus mission trip members, but also at the numerous orphanages where we ministered. What originally seemed like such a long trip was over in a flash, and life was soon back to its normal, busy schedule. However, it was not the last time I would visit.

This past spring break, God blessed me with another opportunity to visit Haiti! This trip’s team included approximately 20 people, consisting mostly of students from my school, along with a few parents, two dentists, and pastors William Hurtado and Wolf Jedamski.

After enduring traffic, layovers, and missing bags, we arrived in Haiti on Friday, Feb. 28. Surprisingly, the smell of diesel, sewer, and trash hit me with the same force that it had the last time I stepped onto Haitian soil. Haiti had not seemed to have changed much.

I could not wait to reunite with some of the translators I had journeyed with before. It is an amazing feeling to gain a relationship with someone from another country; it is an indescribable feeling to see that same person two years later. Jean Renard, better known as Youpee, was ecstatic to see me again. As we settled into our housing that night, I tried to imagine what it would be like to see some of the orphans I had met on my last visit. Would they even remember me?

Sure enough, the orphans were jumping up and down to see me. Even though I could not vocally communicate with them, I felt an even deeper connection with the children than I had with some of my own friends!

God used us to brighten the lives of those children, who had been through so much hurt and terror. The amount of satisfaction from seeing just one orphan smile is impossible to measure.
Boys and girls, ages 7-18, can come to camp. Cohutta Springs’ rules for acceptance and participation are the same for everyone, without regard to race, color, creed or national origin. Many campers have enjoyed Cohutta Springs since it was chartered in 1980.

Cohutta Springs Youth Camp is located on 800 acres of North Georgia mountains in Crandall, Ga. A crystal-clear mountain stream feeds the tranquil water of the 50-acre lake.
Approximately 350 ladies took a few days to relax and reflect on Christ and His love during the women’s spring retreat, held March 14-16 at the Cohutta Springs Conference Center. The theme, “If the Shoe Fits,” was based on Ephesians 5:2 (ESV), which says to “walk in love, as Christ loved us.” Hyveth Williams was this year’s speaker for the adult women. Williams is a professor of homiletics at Andrews University’s theological seminary in Michigan.

June Heath, retreat attendee, said the event was incredibly spiritual and uplifting. “I just had to tell you how much I enjoyed the wonderful retreat,” she wrote. “The blessing of coming together and not only enjoying the company of other women, but having such a spiritual time—I don’t know how you manage to get such a terrific program together, but they are always so Spirit-filled. I truly felt like I was on holy ground.”

Special to the weekend was God in Shoes celebrating its 10-year anniversary. This vibrant ministry—for women by women—has expanded and now has a presence at other conference, union, and division events.

A growing part of the spring retreat is the teen girls’ event. This year’s speaker, Jaela Cornejo, an adjunct professor at Andrews University and Griggs University, has a passion for youth. During the retreat, she spoke to approximately 50 teen girls about becoming better connected with God.
Josh Barrow, member of the Collegedale Church, has always been passionate about serving the Lord and studying science. At some universities, these two goals might seem incompatible, but at Southern Adventist University, Josh has been able to pursue both.

A physics and math major, Barrow chose Southern because he wanted to study with professors who shared his faith so they could converse meaningfully about a variety of topics. From telling jokes and having tea in the office of one professor to engaging in deep, one-on-one, spiritual conversations with others, Barrow’s relationships with his professors have exceeded his expectations.

“I wanted to be able to talk about religion in a very open way with those around me,” he said. “At Southern, I can have scientific honesty and be able to frame the conclusions in ways that do not negatively impact my faith.”

Barrow knew he would learn a lot about his professional field in college, but he had no idea how many professional opportunities he would encounter. Not long into his studies at Southern, Professor Ray Hefferlin, Ph.D., recognized that Barrow was a hard-working, academically gifted student and offered him a job as a research assistant. Barrow jumped at the opportunity to examine, among many topics, the behavior of triatomic molecules and the patterns they exhibit as they emit light when they are excited. He was thrilled to get to participate in this research, which could potentially help astronomers trace the history of stars.

To top it all off, Hefferlin invited Barrow to travel with him to The International Advances in Applied Physics and Materials Science Congress and Exhibition Conference 2014 in Turkey, where Hefferlin was presenting. Barrow even got a chance to present some of the material himself at The International Conference on Spectral Line Shapes 2014 in Tullahoma, Tenn.

“At other universities, research students just get marching orders and go off to be bees for the larger scheme of the hive,” Barrow said.

continued on page 27 [see FAITH & SCIENCE]
This is a fraction of our testimony about the exceptional way we came to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Prayer is the most-determining factor for which path our lives take. We were daily in prayer asking for the Lord’s direction in our lives. My husband, Doug, grew up Baptist, and I grew up Pentecostal. As children, our home lives were very separate from our church lives. The only time God was discussed or taught was at church. But as parents, God revealed to us our responsibility (Deut. 6:7). We were members of a local Missionary Baptist church. The people were nice. The activities were nice. But we wanted more of God in our lives. God revealed the concept of family worship to us. We hungered daily to spend time with Him in His Word and in prayer as a family. Our two small children attended public school, and I was debating the idea of homeschooling them. We prayed about this for several months, and I began homeschooling them the following fall. In time, this would lead us to a completely different way of life.

Finding the Book
One day, we stopped by a used bookstore. I really like used bookstores because I can find nice books to supplement the children’s curriculum at discounted prices. I had no idea I would find a book that would completely change our path. The first floor of the store was orderly, with books displayed nicely. I decided to look downstairs in the “bargain basement.” It was completely overwhelming. No order. No displays. Just a sea of books in boxes on tables. Normally, I would have returned back upstairs. It was too disorderly for my liking, but I did a quick walk through anyway. A big blue book drew my interest. I picked it up. It had beautiful, colorful illustrations, an easy-to-read question and answer format, and the topics were applicable to our family. The book was titled *Bible Readings for the Home*. I purchased it. All the way home, I scanned through the book telling Doug what was in it. We were so excited that we had our first study that night before bed. Instead of starting at the beginning, we began in Part 8-The Law of God and studied through Part 9-The Sabbath. We were already
in the process of teaching our children the Ten Commandments, and as we studied, we realized that the fourth commandment is almost never acknowledged. But God hadn’t erased it; man had changed it. Even the children realized early in the study how our church didn’t acknowledge the Sabbath, but it was very plain to them in God’s Word. After the big revelation, we began keeping Sabbath at home. As time passed, we desired to worship with fellow Sabbath-keepers.

Finding the Church
As a member of the chaplain corps at our local hospital, Doug received a directory of local churches, listing all the denominations, a summary of their beliefs, and contact information. We curiously read through all of the beliefs, and Doug laughed when he got to the Seventh-day Adventists. He jokingly informed me that I was a Seventh-day Adventist and just didn’t know it (the reason was because a year prior, God had begun to transform our diet. Meat was on its way out, and more whole grains and vegetables were on our table. Initially, that hadn’t been popular with Doug or our oldest son). In the directory, we found the address for the local Seventh-day Adventist church. We drove by one day to make sure it was really there. We found there was a Community Center run by the church. One Tuesday, Doug got up enough nerve to go to the Community Center. The people were very friendly, and he asked for information about the church. The ladies readily gave him material, which he brought home. We prayed for three more weeks, just to make sure it was Spirit-led. Finally, one Friday evening at family worship, we told the children we would be going to church the next morning.

It felt very strange that next day. It was a beautiful morning, and many people were mowing their lawns and having yard sales—and here we were going to church!

We went through the series fairly quickly; it was fascinating to us. We were captivated by Bible prophecy and the truths that were being revealed to us. Oh, how thankful we were! When we completed our Bible studies, the pastor visited us. We shared a portion of our testimony with him and discussed joining the church. A few months later, we joyously joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To God be the glory! That decision wasn’t very popular with our extended family. It’s a decision we made with open hearts and open minds. We allowed the Holy Spirit to freely lead us, even when we were out of our comfort zone. We are still ridiculed for our decision, but we praise God that we followed His lead and made the change. What a difference a book can make in someone’s life!

The GCC Home Health Education Service (HHES) began its official capacity in January 2014 and held its first board meeting in March. The conference is working with three other conferences—Kentucky/Tennessee, Carolina, and Gulf States—for the work of sharing God’s love through literature evangelism.

Last year GCC made thousands of contacts and had 60 baptisms through the work of HHES. Tim Leffew, publishing director, is grateful for the conference and its continued support of the literature work.
BE A STUDENT LITERATURE EVANGELIST!

MAKE NEW FRIENDS // SPEND 10 WEEKS WITNESSING TOGETHER // EARN SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

MAY 25–AUGUST 3
Summer Program

AUGUST 3–15
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Contact ReNeita Samuel at 615-516-4681 or frontlinemagabooks@gccsda.com
Approximately 100 local residents plus local news station Channel 8 turned out for Get Healthy, Knoxville!, a plant-based dinner and health seminar, at the Knoxville First Church on March 16, 2014.

Melody Prettyman was the featured guest for the March meeting. Prettyman is a regularly featured cooking expert on the Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) and co-host of a weekly radio program called Focus on Healthy Foods.

Many who attended the event said how much they enjoyed it and how much they learned.

The event was sponsored by Get Healthy, Knoxville!, InStep for Life Health Ministries, and the Knoxville First Seventh-day Adventist Church to encourage community residents to live healthier lives through exercise, plenty of sunshine, spiritual growth, and a vegetarian, plant-based, whole-foods diet.

Kimberly Crider, director of Get Healthy, Knoxville!, said the monthly meeting aims to not only be educational and informative but also to serve as an outreach.

“The majority of attendees aren’t members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and are wanting to learn new ways to be healthy and eat the best way possible,” Crider said. “While we had several new faces in the crowd, we had many of the ‘regulars’ who come out every month. We’re developing relationships with them and letting them know we really care about their health. Through their interest in the health message, we hope to introduce them to Jesus.”

Watch the 30-second news segment online at tinyurl.com/KnoxvilleHealthEvent

[FAITH & SCIENCE] continued from page 23

“Somewhere else, I would never even be able to think about presenting at a conference.”

In addition to his work and academic studies, Barrow took part in another special event at Southern—the chance to go on a six-week archaeological dig with Michael Hasel, Ph.D., in the Holy Land. After digging during the week at their site, Khirbet Qeiyafa, on weekends he got to see many other significant sights. Ringing in the Sabbath at the Western Wall was an especially moving spiritual experience that he will never forget. All in all, Barrow’s time at Southern has surpassed his hopes. In a world that tries to exclude God from science, he has loved being in an environment that keeps an open mind and a heart full of praise.

“In science, we search for beauty and for truth,” he said. “It is rewarding to discover more about our Creator by studying the patterns that He has set up in nature.”
A new outreach called RISE Sports Program is beginning throughout the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

“We wanted an on-going sports evangelism program that we could offer at local churches or schools year round,” said EW Dempsey, personal evangelism director.

RISE stands for “Reaping in Sports Evangelism” and aims to have churches or schools host an 8- to 12-week intramural program offering basketball, soccer, or volleyball.

“This is an exciting opportunity,” said Dempsey, who has already held training sessions at six locations this year.

During the training, Dempsey shares factors that will help make the program a success.

“To get the most impact, you would want to offer RISE off season,” Dempsey said. He also recommends selecting and targeting a specific age group (say, kids 8 and under or teens) and then finding someone to direct the program and people who are able and willing to coach.

Dempsey’s know-how and skill draw from his passion for sports and, more importantly, his experience as a coach. He previously coached in the public school system, and for the past 10 years, has been offering a successful outreach called 3 Point Play, where each summer, he travels throughout the conference territory offering basketball camps. During camps, kids learn how to be better basketball players and Dempsey has an open opportunity to share the love of Jesus with them through drawing spiritual applications both on and off the court.

Jerry Fore, general vice president and head of church ministries, recognizes the value and beauty of pairing sports and evangelism.

“Sports are an effective avenue to reach young people,” Fore said. “Through this RISE program, we can introduce them to spiritual values.”

RISE programs are set to start this year and into 2015. If you or your church/school are interested in learning more about RISE, contact E.W. Dempsey’s office at 706-629-7951, ext. 348.
SUMMER VEGETABLE RATATOUILLE
Recipe by Rani | www.allrecipes.com

INGREDIENTS
2 onions, sliced into thin rings
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 medium eggplant, cubed
2 zucchini, cubed
2 medium yellow squash, cubed
2 green bell peppers, seeded and cubed
1 yellow bell pepper, diced
1 chopped red bell pepper
4 roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped
1/2 cup olive oil
1 bay leaf
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
4 sprigs fresh thyme
salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS
1. Heat 1 1/2 tablespoons of the oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook until soft.

2. In a large skillet, heat 1 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil and sauté the zucchini in batches until slightly browned on all sides. Remove the zucchini and place in the pot with the onions and garlic.

3. Sauté all of the remaining vegetables one batch at a time, adding 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil to the skillet each time you add a new set of vegetables. Once each batch has been sautéed, add them to the large pot as in step 2.

4. Season with salt and pepper. Add the bay leaf and thyme and cover the pot. Cook over medium heat for 15 to 20 minutes.

5. Add the chopped tomatoes and parsley to the large pot, then cook another 10-15 minutes. Stir occasionally.

6. Remove the bay leaf and adjust seasoning to taste.

Try pairing with a green salad and French bread for a delicious summertime meal.
PLUG IN TO THE SOURCE

CAMP MEETING 2014

May 17-18  Korean Camp Meeting  Crandall, Ga
May 21-24  Collegedale Camp Meeting  Collegedale, Tn
June 5-7  Olde Time Camp Meeting  Deer Lodge, Tn
August 6-10  Deaf Fellowship Camp Meeting  Crandall, Ga
August 22-24  Hispanic Camp Meeting  Crandall, Ga
October 3-4  Northeast Tennessee Camp Meeting  Greeneville, Tn

to learn more, visit gccsda.com/campmeeting
# CONFERENCE EVENTS

## MAY
- **16-17** Korean Camp Meeting
  - Cohutta Springs Conference Center
- **21-24** Collegedale Camp Meeting
  - Southern Adventist University
- **31** Health Rally
  - Ogden Road Church, Tn

## JUNE
- **5-7** Olde Time Camp Meeting
  - Meister Memorial, Deer Lodge, Tn
- **8** Hispanic Messy Day
  - Georgia-Cumberland Deer Lodge, Tn
- **14** Stewardship Sabbath
  - Coalfield Church, Oliver Springs, Tn
- **21** Health Rally
  - Graysville Church, Tn
- **21** Stewardship Sabbath
  - Ellijay Church, Ga
- **21** LEAD Evangelism Training
  - Knoxville Grace Church, Tn
- **28** Prayer Ministry Day
  - North Knoxville Church, Tn
- **28** Stewardship Sabbath
  - Dalton Church, Ga

## JULY
- **5** Worldwide Day of Prayer: Reaping God’s Harvest
  - Knoxville Adventist School, Tn
- **18** LEAD Evangelism Training
  - Warner Robins Church, Ga
- **19** Stewardship Sabbath
  - Calhoun Church, Ga
- **19** Will Clinic
  - Cartersville Church, Ga
- **20** Will Clinic
  - Adairsville Church, Ga
- **21** Will Clinic
  - Rossville Church, Ga
- **22** Will Clinic
  - Lookout Mountain Church, Rising Fawn, Ga
- **23** Will Clinic
  - Blairsville Church, Ga
- **24** Will Clinic
  - Chatsworth Church, Ga
- **25** Will Clinic
  - Newport Church, Tn
- **26** Stewardship Sabbath
  - Smoky Mountain Church, Sevierville, Tn
- **26** Stewardship Sabbath
  - Dalton Church, Ga
- **27** Will Clinic

## OFFERING SCHEDULE

### JUNE
- **07** Local Church Budget
- **14** Multilingual Ministries/Chaplaincy Ministries
- **21** Local Church Budget
- **28** Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministries

### JULY
- **05** Local Church Budget
- **12** Women’s Ministries
- **19** Local Church Budget
- **26** Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministries
Race to Victory Lane
Olde Time Camp Meeting with John Earnhardt

June 5-7, 2014
Meister Memorial Church Outdoor Pavilion
Deer Lodge, Tennessee

Learn more at gccsda.com/events/oldetimecm14