Dec 21—Annual Christmas Concert—Alpharetta Church, GA

Dec 23-Jan 1—GCC Office Closed

Jan 4—NAD Day of Prayer
Jan 4—Pioneer Outreach Rally—Savannah Church, Pooler, GA
Jan 4—Adventurer Directors’ Council—Cohutta Springs (camp side)
Jan 5—Pathfinder Directors’ Council—Cohutta Springs (camp side)
Jan 8-18—10 Days of Prayer
Jan 17-18—Engage Youth Rally—Bowman Hills Church, TN

Jan 22-25—Southern Union Academy Prayer Conference—Camp Kulaqua
Jan 23-24—Elementary Band and Strings Festival—Georgia-Cumberland Academy
Jan 24-Feb 2—NAD Health Summit—Orlando, FL
Jan 25—Master Guides’ Final Bible Bowl—Duluth Church, GA

Jan 31-Feb 2—High School Retreat—Cohutta Springs Youth Camp
Jan 31-Feb 2—LifeGroup Training Retreat—Cohutta Springs Youth Camp
Feb 1—Leadership Training—Health & Personal Ministries—Douglasville Church, GA

-CONFERENCE EVENTS-

2015 GC Session Music Audition—Dec. 31
The North American Division Music Committee for the 2015 General Conference Session (July 2-11 in San Antonio, TX.) is now accepting applications from musicians/groups desiring to perform at the 2015 General Conference Session. Applications can be downloaded at the 2015 General Conference website at gcsession.org. Click the “Music Application Packet” tab and follow all directions. Applications will be processed through Dec. 31, 2013.

High School Retreat—Jan. 31-Feb. 2
High School Retreat is a great Bible conference event for Adventist students (grades 9-12) who are not attending SDA schools. This event will be held Jan. 31 to Feb. 2, 2014. Prior participants state that this weekend at Cohutta Springs has been life changing. Save $10 per student if you register by Jan. 13. Registration deadline is Monday, Jan. 27. Register online at registration.gccsda.com or contact Alyse at 706-629-7951 (x346) or alyse@gccsda.com.

LifeGroup Retreat for Young Adults—Jan. 31-Feb. 2
Come for the weekend of Jan. 31 to Feb. 2, 2014, to experience LifeGroup training and get involved with what God is doing. Learn how to connect yourself and your peers to Jesus on a weekly basis. Enjoy great food, new friends, and beautiful Cohutta Springs. Cost is $69 and the registration deadline is Monday, Jan. 27. Register online at registration.gccsda.com or contact Alyse at 706-629-7951 (x346) or alyse@gccsda.com.

Children’s Ministries Convention—Feb. 7-9
This year’s theme is “Our Eyes are on You” and will feature guest speaker J.N. Mike Faison, a creative children’s ministries presenter from Savannah, Ga. The convention will be held Feb. 7-9 at Cohutta Springs Conference Center. Register online at registration.gccsda.com; deadline is Jan. 26.

Social Media: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly—Feb. 9
This communication workshop will be presented by Ernest Staats, IT directory for Georgia-Cumberland Academy. The workshop is free and will be held on Feb. 9, from 10:00am to 12:00pm, at the conference office. Register online at registration.gccsda.com

-CHURCH & ORGANIZATION EVENTS-

Evangelism Training—Jan. 18-23 and Feb. 1-8
Evangelistic meetings and training sessions will be held at the Collegedale Church in January and February. The theme is "Come Search with Me: Searching for the Reality of God," and will be presented by Dr. Subodh Pandit. Join us for the training session that will empower and equip you as a lay person to engage the culture and your family and friends and to share the gospel with confidence.

Evangelism Training: Jan. 18-23, 7:00pm-9:00pm
Public Evangelism: Feb. 1-8 (taking Feb. 4 off), 7:00pm-8:30pm

Cohutta Springs Couples’ Dinner—Feb. 16
Come enjoy a night with your sweetheart at this year's couples' dinner. The dinner will be held at Cohutta Springs Conference Center on Feb. 16, from 4:00 to 9:00pm. Cost is $40 per couple. For more information, contact Peggy Hallman at 706-695-0648 or phallman@cohuttasprings.com.

Engagement and Marriage Preparation Weekend—March 14-16
Couples who are planning on getting married this summer or who are seriously considering marriage are invited to attend a special weekend at Southern Adventist University. Couples will learn the secrets to successful marriage, the importance of a spiritual foundation, how to communicate effectively and resolve conflict, and how to deal with unresolved issues from the past. In addition, there will be practical and fun exercises using a well-established curriculum that has benefited hundreds of couples. The presenters will be Barry and Lilly Tryon and Alan and Nicole Parker. The event will take place from March 14-16, 2014 on Southern’s campus. For details, contact the School of Religion at 423-236-2976 or the chaplain’s office at 423-236-2787.
Camp Turnaround—April 4-6

Camp Turnaround is a bereavement camp for children ages 7 -17 who have experienced loss due to divorce, abandonment (foster care), or the death of loved one. The camp will be held April 4-6 at Cohutta Springs Conference Center. For more information, contact Peggy Hallman at 706-695-0648 or phallman@cohuttasprings.com.

Fall 360

360 is the video news magazine of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. This issue features Plum Tasty, a vegan/vegetarian restaurant in Greeneville, Tenn. Check it out!

Attention Pastors: Prepare-Enrich Marriage Counseling Training/Certification

If you are interested in doing premarital or marital counseling, then you will want to attend a special certified training program on the campus of Southern Adventist University on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2014, at 9:00am. The program uses Prepare-Enrich, which is one of the most extensively used premarital programs in the United States. Just one day of training will enable you to become certified in this valuable program. If you take this course through the Prepare-Enrich website, the cost is $225; however, we are able to offer a live seminar at a price of $175 with an extra $25 discount for pastors and ministry leaders. The $150 cost includes a full resource kit, certification, and other counseling tools. For more information on Prepare-Enrich, visit their website at prepare-enrich.com. For information about the training, please contact Dr. Alan Parker at parker@southern.edu or to register for the Prepare-Enrich training workshop directly, please click here.

Chattanooga Students Selected to Perform on Popular NPR Music Show;
‘From the Top’ Taping Broadcast in Chattanooga on Jan. 23

From the Top, the preeminent showcase for young musicians heard weekly on NPR stations across the country, is coming to the Tivoli Theatre in Chattanooga to tape a radio broadcast on Jan. 23 at 7:00pm. The popular program will feature the amazing performances and captivating personal stories of extraordinary young classical musicians from across the country. This episode is brought to the Tivoli by Southern Adventist University’s WSMC Classical 90.5 FM and is sponsored by Memorial Hospital. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased by calling 423.757.5050 or visiting wsmc.org.

The broadcast taping features several young musicians, five of which are from East Tennessee. The performance will showcase the McCallie School Guitar Quartet, which includes Chattanooga students Drew Shikoh, Matthew Norris, Ralston Hartness, and Griffin Jayne. Also featured will be pianist Mayuki Miyashita, from Maryville, Tenn. In addition to From the Top, the Tivoli event includes performances by the Chattanooga Youth Symphony and Southern’s Symphony Orchestra during a special pre-broadcast performance.

Transformation

I had preached evangelistic campaigns before, but my trip to the Dominican Republic this summer was the most epic campaign of
my life.

Read the story
The group of students and short-term missionaries pose for a photo during their trip to the Dominican Republic, May 9-25, 2013.

I had preached evangelistic campaigns before, but my trip to the Dominican Republic this summer was the most epic campaign of my life. Not only did it give me an opportunity to share the gospel with God’s children in another country and to learn from their culture, it also allowed me to visibly see God working in my life.

Foreign evangelism presents many challenges, particularly if there is a language barrier. I am from Malawi and am not a Spanish speaker. It was amazing to see the power of the gospel changing the lives of people who did not understand my language—through the help of a translator, of course.
I learned a lot from the Dominican people. Church members there are great at organizing small groups composed of people who do not belong to the church. It’s a phenomenal practice because it builds lasting relationships between members and those joining the church. I spoke to one lady who was leading a small group in the area where I was conducting the meetings. She told me she organized a group of 10 members and gave them Bible studies. She was the only Seventh-day Adventist in the group. During the campaign, she visited the members in their homes after the evangelistic meetings for feedback. Almost all of the visitors who came to the meetings belonged to a small group of some kind.

By far, the most remarkable part of my trip was the opportunity to see God working in my life. While traveling there, I started to feel sorry for myself. First, I had never conducted an evangelistic campaign in another country. Second, I did not feel prepared enough to conduct the campaign. And finally, I had never used PowerPoint in an evangelistic series. All of these concerns made me nervous, and I began to question the call to go on the trip.

Some of my fears surfaced one night when I made an appeal for people to raise their hands to accept Christ as their Savior. Not one hand went up. Everyone sat staring at me as though he or she hadn’t heard what I said. I tried other methods of invitation, but the response was the same. I closed the meetings with a prayer, all the while disgruntled and emotionally crushed. As I was meeting with people on their way out the door, an elderly lady approached me and said, “I will accept Christ tomorrow.” My translator and I tried to convince her to accept Christ that night, but she seemed unconvinced. She cooperated only enough to end our conversation, writing down her address and answering a few questions on the decision card. The following night she came and said to me, “I told you yesterday that I would accept Christ today, so I have come. I want to be baptized.” And she was. Words can’t describe the joy this lady had; her face was radiant as the “Sun of Righteousness” shined in her heart. All of my disappointments vanished.

I was also very impressed with our leader, Freddy Fuentes. I remember the day I went to him to pour out my concerns.

“Did God know before you came here that you are not fluent in speech?” he asked.

“Yes,” I answered.

“And He chose you still?” he said.

“Yes!” I said again.

“Then what is your problem?” he asked.

He was always there to encourage when the road got rough. When our minds were clouded with despair and our bodies beaten by exhaustion, he took us to beautiful places to reinvigorate us. He was there when some friends got sick, and I was stunned by his self-sacrificing love. I learned a vital lesson about leadership: If one is called to a leadership position, he or she is called to a function, not a status.

As I studied and shared the sermons, I drew closer to God. And I preached with unusual eloquence, which surprised me and many others. I feel honored God sent me to the Dominican Republic. I went like a dog with his tail between his legs, but I came back excited like a player holding a trophy. The experience has rekindled my passion for evangelism and has renewed my commitment to God. I want to serve Him.
with my whole heart whenever and wherever possible, and I am looking forward to another mission outreach!

Written by Mark O’Dala
Photos contributed

This student earned a Student Evangelist Scholarship through the Education Department. To qualify, students must attend a GCC academy or college and preach a 16- to 18-night evangelistic series.