

COMMUNIQUE



December 2009

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Georgia-Cumberland Conference



Prayers for Niki, p. 4

Love Takes Action, p. 12

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High School Retreat

February 5-7, 2010

Cohutta Springs Youth Camp

A place for Adventist students, grades 9-12, not attending Adventist schools to step out of the day-to-day routine and listen to God's voice, relax, and be refreshed. To learn more, contact Georgia-Cumberland Conference Youth Ministries at 1-800-567-1844, ext. 346 or visit www.gccsda.com.



Spring Women's Retreat

March 26-28, 2010

Cohutta Springs Conference Center

Featured speaker Hyveth Williams will explore the theme "Lasting Legacy" at this weekend retreat for women. To learn more, contact Georgia-Cumberland Conference Women's Ministries at 1-800-567-1844, ext. 342 or visit www.gccsda.com



Vision

A passionate commitment to intimacy with God and a firm belief in Christ's imminent return compel each of us to share the everlasting gospel by every possible means.



Cover Photo:

Tim and Niki Knowlton pose for a photo with their son Reid Alexander born Sept. 30. Read Niki's story on page 4.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

One of my favorite Christmas stories is that of the Magi, the wise men of the East, who came looking for the newborn King. Eventually, "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh," Matthew 2:11 NIV.

The fact that they found the Christ-child is in itself amazing. Yet Matthew wastes no time in describing their response—they worshiped Him. Remember, the Ten Commandments prohibited bowing down or worshiping anything but God Himself. By emphasizing this response, in a book written specifically for Jews, Matthew plainly claimed that Jesus the Christ is none other than God. "God with us." Immanuel.

What came next? Their adoration led to a more tangible expression of their worship. They gave gifts befitting a king. After all, if you are looking for a king, you wouldn't think of going without a gift!

Notice the sequence of actions in this single verse. First, they found the Child. Second, they bowed down and worshiped Him. Third, they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts.

That same sequence is important for us today. First, find Jesus. No, He isn't hiding. But this world is full of distractions and detours. Don't give up. Don't be diverted.

Second, worship Jesus. Recognize Him for who He is, our Creator, our Lord, our King of Kings. Worship is simply "loving God back." Yet true worship never takes place just in our minds. It finds tangible expression.

Third, give to Jesus. The Magi's giving was as much an act of worship as was their bowing. Worship springs from a grateful heart—not a fearful, guilt-ridden, worried heart. When we have found Him, and have worshiped Him, then we are naturally prompted to give—of ourselves and our treasure.

Giving in that sequence is an act of worship. Outside that sequence, giving may be the result of pressure, manipulation, even pride. Nearing this year-end, I ask myself, "What more can I give Him?"

Indeed, you can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.

May your heartfelt love prompt every gift you give this Christmas.

Yours . . . and His,

ED WRIGHT
CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Prayers for Niki

Imagine waking up in the hospital. You can't speak. You can't move. You missed your birthday. You have become a mom! And you're told you've slept through the last five weeks of your life! There are no words to describe my feelings when I awoke. The whole experience has



been simply overwhelming," These are the words of Niki Knowlton, Atlanta Adventist Academy (AAA) Choir Teacher.

Melodie Reid, Niki's aunt, posted the following description on Facebook under the group Prayers for Niki, which has 3,443 members.

"Niki turned 28 years of age Sept 10. She is married to Tim, AAA math and drama teacher, and is the daughter of Gayle and Gary Moore, sister to Jerica and Travis. On Sept. 7, when she was 25 and a half weeks pregnant, Niki was admitted to ICU with pneumonia. On Sept. 11, she had to be intubated and put on a ventilator. Though the tests came back negative, it is still believed that the pneumonia was caused by the H1N1 virus (swine flu). She was subsequently diagnosed with ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome). On Sept. 30, at 28 weeks

gestation, Niki very unexpectedly gave birth in her ICU room, to Reid Alexander, weighing 2 lbs 8 oz and measuring 14 inches long. On Oct. 7, Niki received a tracheostomy because she had outlived the healthy time limit for the endo-

tracheal tube. Praise God, Niki left ICU on Oct. 13, five weeks and one day after being admitted. She was discharged from the hospital Oct. 23. She has visited and held her precious baby boy in the NICU. Please don't stop the prayers, they both still have a long way to go! This group is for prayers and words of encouragement for Niki, Reid, Tim, and the entire family."

Here is what Niki has to say about the experience:

Why do you think this happened?

I don't think God caused my sickness, but I do think He allowed it for His purposes. Not long before I got sick, I had been feeling somewhat spiritually bored. I felt as though I was just going through the motions and needed a boost. I spent some time with God and had

asked Him to strengthen my faith and use me. I suspected He'd send me someone to help or a special project, but never in my wildest dreams did I expect this. Not only has God strengthened my faith in prayer and in His healing power, but He has restored the faith of so many of my friends and family as well as several people I don't even know, people who heard my story and lifted me up in prayer. God has an amazing ability to make something beautiful out of the ugliest of circumstances.

What have you learned?

I've learned that when you let go and allow God full reign in your life, He works miracles and changes lives. When you are at your weakest point, He becomes your strength. I've had so many obstacles the last few weeks and I know it is God that has given me the strength to recuperate as fast as I have, both emotionally and physically. I've also realized the treasure that is our church family. Words cannot describe how much their support has meant to me. God extends His love through those around us and I used to take that for granted.

Share how you felt learning about the Facebook group (over 3,000 people joined) that was started for you—Prayers for Niki.

I can honestly say I've never been so humbled, thankful, and overwhelmed in my life. To think that there are thousands of people around the world praying for me and my family has been a huge comfort and blessing. It has shown me how powerful prayer is and has given me a unique opportunity to

share my testimony with others. What's even more amazing to me is that a large number of the group's members I have never even met! That just goes to show how the family of God works. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. I'm just so happy that my situation has blessed so many other people. This experience has truly been surreal. Praise God for His healing power, His answers to our prayers and His ability to make the worst of situations beautiful. This has truly been both the worst and best experience of my life.

How has this impacted you personally?

My sickness has impacted me in every facet of my life: physically, financially, emotionally, and spiritually. Physically, I am extremely weak and have had to re-learn how to do almost everything. Opening my pill bottles, bathing, using the restroom, walking, climbing stairs and many other basic daily activities have become a challenge. I lost about 40 pounds while in the hospital and my body has changed drastically. Financially, you can imagine the bills we've incurred as well as the hit we've taken because I cannot currently work. Emotionally, I have run the entire gamut of feelings. I've cried with happiness so many times, just from the pure joy and realization that I am here and able to live another day. I've been frustrated by the apparent slowness of my recovery and yet I've laughed over my clumsiness. I have also grown to appreciate my family and my husband more than ever. Both sides of our family have grown closer and

there is a new appreciation of our time together. I feel that my sickness has impacted me the most spiritually. I have come to truly appreciate my family, friends, health



temperature and breathe on his own before we can take him home, regardless of the date.

What are you doing now as you recover (physical therapy and such)?

I have a home health nurse visiting twice a week just to check on me. I also have a physical therapist come two days a week. We mainly focus on strengthening my legs and stretching my ankle muscles. When I first came home I relied on my family, my walker and my wheelchair to get around, but lately I've been able to walk for short periods and need their help less. As a music teacher, I spend some time during the day practicing piano and working on my voice. I was given a tracheotomy (a breathing hole in the neck) while in the hospital and the hole is still healing, making it hard to speak or sing. I cannot wait for the day when I can truly sing again. I still am very weak, but am getting stronger each day.

How long will the healing take?

The doctors told me that it will probably be a whole year before I recover completely. Some days I feel like I can do anything and other days I feel I can barely move. I've been praying a lot for patience and trying to remember to take everything one day at a time.

Tamara Wolcott Fisher

and life in a way I never have before. The blessings of God have always been abundant in my life, but now I notice them everywhere and find myself thanking Him constantly. God truly strengthened my faith as I requested.

How did you feel when you learned about Reid?

I was completely overwhelmed. It was very hard for me to conceptualize that he was mine, because I had no recollection of the birth. He was also so early and I was worried for his health. When I finally got to see him at 12 days old, I cannot begin to describe the feelings that overtook me. So much love and awe at what God had created through me. He was so tiny and perfect. For the first time, I had a small inkling of how much God loves us.

When does Reid come home?

Most premature babies go home around their original due date. Reid's due date was December 23, so we expect to have a great Christmas gift this year. However, he must be able to feed from a bottle, regulate his own body

COHUTTA SPRINGS YOUTH CAMP

During this time of the year, I stop and reflect on the blessings of 2009 and prayerfully start laying plans for 2010. Conference-wide reports year-to-date show one out of three people joining our church are teens or young adults. Do we wish it were higher? Yes, but 33% isn't bad when statistical data indicates young people are much less likely to respond to the Lord after the age of 12. Here is a potpourri of camp, youth, and young adult news:

COHUTTA SPRINGS YOUTH CAMP:

- We successfully passed our re-accreditation with the American Camping Association. It is nice to know that our camp is among the professionally-operated programs available to parents.
- Due to economic challenges everyone is facing, camp fees will not be raised for 2010. Even though we remain well below the national average, summer camp will strive to help families participate.
- Instead of printing 25,000 brochures and mailing them, we will mail a colorful postcard to each constituent home to direct you to the stunning new website and inform you of the date online registration will open. Look for the postcard in your mailbox in January.

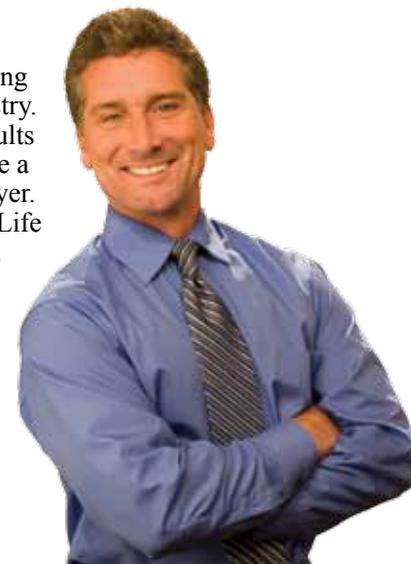
YOUTH:

- Feb. 5-7 will be the annual High School Retreat at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp. Many of our youth don't attend Adventist schools. This weekend is a conference-wide effort to reach out to them and let them know that they are valued and loved by their church.
- On March 27 we have our conference-wide "all call" for our youth and young adults to gather for a Sabbath of worship and fellowship. The Youth/Young Adult Festival will be at the Church at Liberty Square in Cartersville, Ga.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES:

- We have started a Young Adult Council to focus on this important segment of our church. God is leading us to empower young adults and train them for Life Group ministry. Life Groups are small groups of young adults reaching out to their peers. They meet once a week for community, Bible study, and prayer. Young adults interested in experiencing a Life Group can come to Cohutta Springs Youth Camp Feb. 5-7 to learn how to facilitate and lead a Life Group.

ROB LANG
YOUTH MINISTRIES
DIRECTOR



EVANGELISM UPDATES

Read the latest news on what is taking place regarding evangelism here in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

- Rob Snider reports from the Rome/Cedartown, Ga., district: "Finished our series *Cure for the Crisis*, which was a joint effort of both churches. From that we have five good Bible studies going. We are also doing a *Revelation of Hope* series in Cedartown Heights (a retirement community) on Friday evenings and there are several folks who have been very receptive of the new truths they are discovering. Also, we had a community food give-away in Cedartown in which we worked with about seven to eight other churches to feed over 7000 folks. The event was held at Turner Street Park, and people were lined up as far as the eye could see to get food. It was a little chaotic, but it was a lot of fun. It made the front page of the Cedartown paper."
- Darron Boyd (Battlefield, Ga., pastor) was in the Philippines Nov. 8-24 doing 15 lectures and five sermons for a Mini-Festival of the Laity in Ifugao where he was a student missionary 17 to 18 years ago. The local Mountain Provinces Mission has requested Darron to come twice; now to do a lay
- training event and then for a reaping meeting in May 2010.
- Ed Santana, Maryville, Tenn., pastor, is using his varied gifts in this way: Each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon he coordinates a P.E. program for the church school. He is currently holding a Bible Seminar at the local community college.
- John Strickland shares a couple of great ideas from Conyers: 1) Laymen's Evangelism, using nine different speakers, each taking turns presenting Mark Finley's messages. This will yield five baptisms at the Conyers church. 2) Building Bridges teams are trained to go door-to-door, praying with their neighbors. The same teams return every two weeks, building bridges of spiritual friendship and seeing God answer prayers.
- Several churches are using the *Living With Hope* series: Calhoun with Phil White, Blairsville with David Wright, and Lakeview with young adult leader CJ Cousins. The "Table Talk" format provides an immediate relational foundation.

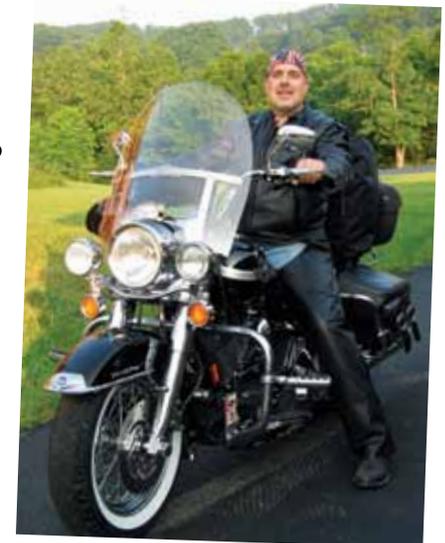
Each One Reach One
SOUTHERN UNION

TREASURY

It had already been a long, hot day of riding in the desert-like conditions of South Dakota. As we were filling our gas tanks for the last stretch of riding for the day, two bikers from St. Louis rolled in to the same gas station. In our conversation we found that they were on their way to Wyoming for a steak and beer that evening. The very next day, they would head back to St. Louis, a distance of about 1,200 miles each way! You may ask if there is any steak and beer in Wyoming worth riding a motorcycle 1,200 miles each way in just two days. The answer is no. For these two motorcycle riders, it was all about the joy of the journey.

Those of us who ride motorcycles understand that it is, indeed, all about the journey. So, how about your journey? Is there any joy in it? We all are on a spiritual journey. As Christians, we believe that eternity begins the day that we choose Jesus. With Jesus as our riding Partner, our journey will be full of joy. God has promised us that in our journey with Him, we will not lack anything, including joy. So let's seek to experience the joy of this journey!

"The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything," Deuteronomy 2:7.



KURT ALLEN
VICE PRESIDENT FOR
FINANCE/TREASURER

FINANCIAL GROWTH: Vice President for Finance/Treasurer Kurt Allen provides the following overview of conference finances as of Oct. 31, 2009. Every member of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference who is cooperating with God in the faithful stewardship of tithes and offerings makes our ministry and outreach possible.

	2009 (44 weeks)	2008 (43 weeks)	GAIN	%
Tithe	\$30,397,111	\$30,036,598	\$360,513	1.20
Conference Ministries	403,185	391,707	11,478	2.93
Local Church Giving	18,331,972	17,154,438	1,177,534	6.86
World Church Giving	787,899	795,411	-7,512	-1.10

Leon Smith Ordained

The Grandview Church in Austell, Ga., celebrated the ordination of Leon Smith on Oct. 10. The special guest speaker was Smith's mentor from seminary, Clifford Jones. Jones spoke of the Apostle John and how God sent him to preach truth, urging Smith to never stray from God's Word. Conference officers presented Smith with a tailor-fit baptismal robe, and the local congregation presented him with a new vestment.

After the service, when asked to comment on the significance of the day's events, Smith recalled the day he told his dad he was going to become a minister. "He told me, 'Son, you couldn't have chosen a better vocation,'" shared Smith. "This is a very solemn occasion for me and this is one of the momentous times in my life, one of the most meaningful next to my marriage. This day, for me, marks the beginning of new commitment into a deeper level of understanding of ministry and relationship with God."

"When I was young, my parents didn't have the money to send me to college to study theology," said Smith. "I got into a deep depression, left home and tried to make life on my own studying electronics and telecommunication. I was in that field for awhile, but



Leon Smith and his wife Marcia celebrate his ordination at the Grandview Adventist Church in Austell, Ga.

the calling of God arrested me and I couldn't just say 'no' and put it off any longer. So I was constrained by God to go into ministry. The last thing that turned me around was a broken radio. As I was considering how I was going to support my family if I were in school, the Lord interrupted my thoughts with a broken radio that, in crystal clear tones, said 'Those whom I sendeth, I sustaineth,'" shared Smith.

Brian Young

Churches Retreat to Northeast Tennessee

The Northeast Tennessee Church Retreat had a full turnout with people attending from as far away as Virginia and North Carolina. This year, over 300 people attended the Sept. 25-26 event, around 35 of whom were youth. Attendees could choose to stay in a lodge room, cabin, RV space, or camp site.

The retreat's theme was "The God of the Old Testament as you do not Know Him." Over the weekend, key interactions between God and different men of the Bible were carefully analyzed in an attempt to see God as He really is and how the Bible shows Him to be.

The main speaker, Jiri Moskala, professor of Old Testament exegesis and theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, focused on Jonah, Job, and Moses in the first three meetings, looking at their experiences to understand God's involvement with man. The final meeting, entitled "The God of Judgment," focused on God's purpose for the judgment and how we, as Christians, should look forward to it.

The church service offered an interactive children's story that even surprised the adults. Conner Presnell, the most recently baptized member of the Mountain City, Tenn., Church, volunteered to be the test subject. As Harley Roth, pastor of the McMinnville and Spencer churches in Tenn., squirted special ink on Presnell's clean



During the children's story, Harley Roth, pastor of the McMinnville and Spencer churches, uses a fire extinguisher to demonstrate God's saving grace.

white shirt, he compared it to sin that could not be removed. Pulling out a fire extinguisher, he sprayed Presnell, and the ink disappeared. He compared this to God's saving grace. Roth added, "When we recognize the depth of sin, we also should understand that the greater our sin, the greater our Savior. God is always greater than our sin."

Sabbath afternoon provided several opportunities for those attending. In addition to another meeting, people could also take part in the "Jam Session," where individuals could play instruments and sing together.

Held at The Oaks Retreat Center near Greeneville, Tenn., the camp meeting had a very rustic feel, surrounded by a beautiful mountain setting, all the way down to the lodge itself, which features great pine logs at the entrance.

Nick Clark

Love Takes Action

The Atlanta Belvedere Church held a “Love in Action Family Life Gospel Explosion” Sept. 5-26, 2009. With an emphasis on building relationships within the church and community through family ministries, Shaun Brooks, associate pastor, led out in the nightly meetings.

With the buildup to the campaign Conrad Cort helped train the members in preparing to witness to family and friends while Alleen Morris, head of the prayer team, conducted a prayer seminar about interceding and knowing God. Her team prayed faithfully throughout the series and reported great breakthroughs in their intercessions.

A team of four Bible workers and four volunteer workers



The Young Citizens Association booth offered financial counsel for those attending the financial expo.

headed by Valerie Robinson were instrumental in going door-to-door and contacting visitors and former church members. The entire church conducted a “Sneaker Sabbath”

and went out immediately after the church service to hand out handbills and invitations to community friends.

On opening night there were 25 table leaders headed by Denise Francis and Sharon Sonlin who welcomed visitors while fostering conversation.

For the nightly meetings a different award was provided to various civic leaders as well as outstanding workers in the church. On the first Sabbath, the church had the privilege of awarding Gwen Keyes Fleming, District Attorney for Dekalb County, with a personally engraved copy of *The Great Controversy*. Denton Rhone, senior pastor, went on nightly to award several individuals who serve the church as well as in the community at large.

Each Sunday a different expo was planned to directly impact the needs of the community. On Sept. 6, a health expo headed by Loretta Scarlet provided on-site help to the community. Several individuals learned how to make nutritious choices through eating healthy foods, exercising, and using the power of water. The crowd took advantage of free screenings and information to help make people aware of health resources in their community.

On Sept. 13, a financial expo was hosted. Specialists in HUD homes were on hand to answer questions about purchasing a home and financing. The Young Citizens Association provided counseling services for young people, while the

Society for Financial Awareness assisted first-time home buyers and those wanting to improve their credit scores.

On Sept. 20, a Social Services expo took place that included the Georgia Department of Labor, Dekalb Community Crisis Services, Partnership for Community Action, Grady Rape Crisis, and Peachcare Insurance for Children. These groups taught participants interviewing skills and job networking. Some were given information about how to receive help with food, utilities, and rent. Those who came were invited to the nightly meetings.

After all three expos concluded, there had been a total of approximately 300 visitors from the community who were assisted.

During the nightly services, Brooks sought to highlight the love of God in relationships through family life presentations. The nightly meetings were informative and calculated to stimulate discussions. To prepare the congregation for the presentation, a drama team headed by Roxanne Thomas and Delray Smith brought comical yet thoughtful skits that served as ice-breakers. After speaking for half an hour, Brooks would then allow the table leaders 10 minutes of discussion time with the visitors and members. They would seek to find practical ways of applying the message to their



Small groups were given time to discuss what the pastor had spoken about at each of the Belvedere Church's meetings.

personal situation and then the table leaders would often lead in prayer for specific needs.

The children's ministries department headed by Claudette Hendrix provided child care under the term “Kids Camp.” The children enjoyed arts and crafts, reading Bible Stories, and watching Bible programs. This allowed parents who might not have been able to attend a time to enjoy an hour and a half without the kids.

To close off the Love in Action Campaign, the social committee hosted a Love in Action picnic and fun day on the church grounds. There was plenty of fun, food and fellowship for all.

At the close of the meetings, 15 people were baptized and others received Bible studies. A greater awareness of the church's presence in the community was felt as several people have been calling members of the campaign team asking when these beneficial resources would be available again.

Winston Armstrong

Savannah First Church Reaps Results from Revelation Series

The Savannah First Church celebrated the completion of a five-week Revelation seminar, Sabbath, Oct. 17. A banquet was held in honor of all who attended and certificates were given to all who completed the series.

In addition to the main series in the church sanctuary, which was presented by Mark Piotrowski, pastor of the Savannah First Church, there was a parallel children's Revelation seminar held entitled "Nutritionville Super Kids!" The children's seminar was led by Mike Faison, elder, Savannah First Church. Three children made

decisions for God because of this series, two of whom were baptized amongst the 11 adults who have been baptized thus far.

Savannah Church members are rejoicing about the increase that the Lord has given, and there is an intentional follow-up discipleship program being offered at the church twice a week. Alyssa Foll, assistant pastor of the Savannah First Church, played a significant role in the follow-up and personal visitation during the series. The church family is praying for more people to make their stand for Jesus as they are grounded in His Word.

Mark Piotrowski



Mark Piotrowski (center), pastor of the Savannah First Church, and Alyssa Foll (right), assistant pastor of the Savannah First Church, welcome four new members to church.

GCA Hosts Technology Workshop

Georgia-Cumberland Academy (GCA) held its fourth annual Technology workshop for 7th-10th grade students Nov. 1-2. During this two-day workshop, students gained hands-on experience with computers, software, and video production.

Guest speakers taught students how to use Photoshop and take great digital photos.

Students put together a GCA newscast, learned about teleprompters, green-screens, using Adobe After Effects and Premiere Pro CS3.

They gained valuable experience that included taking apart a computer and putting it back together, setting up a Windows 2008 server and creating file shares, and joining computers to a Microsoft Network. The students



Students at the GCA technology workshop learn how to take apart and reassemble a computer.

learned the basics of networking and how to keep a computer virus-free.

Each participant received a two gigabyte thumb drive full of training materials and free software.

Ernest Staats

Dalton Hispanic Church Reaches Out to "Mexico Chiquito"

The Dalton Hispanic Church began a Mission Group in an area called "Mexico Chiquito" (small Mexico). There are 115 mobile homes housing approximately 500 people, most of whom are from Mexico.

The church recently began reaching out to the area with the health message. Two Adventist physicians, Lee Whitaker and Pablo Balboa, started visiting the first and third Sundays of the month providing free consultations for the

families.

Church members even held a children's ministry event every Sabbath afternoon and conducted a family focused seminar every Friday evening for one month.

The church's efforts have had a good response from the neighborhood. People have even asked for spiritual guidance. The church plans to hold weekends of evangelism beginning Nov. 14 and 15 at 7 p.m.

Manuel V. Mendizabal

Samaritan Center Spearheads Ooltewah Home Makeover

Since April, the Samaritan Center has partnered with 14 other agencies, businesses, and organizations to help Barbara Strickland, a local elderly woman who is raising her grandkids and great-grandkids, get a new home. "Since my husband died in 2006, I'd had trouble keeping up the place," says Barbara. "My roof leaked, our home wasn't insulated, and parts of it were literally falling off."

Especially because Barbara's three-year-old great-grandson has

a heart condition, Sharon Smith-Hensley, the Director of Social Services at the Samaritan Center, felt it was imperative that the family's living conditions change. That's where it all began.

"At first I wanted to pursue a grant to get the family's home repaired," says Smith-Hensley, the Director of Social Services at the Samaritan Center, "but after the home was surveyed, we were told it was irreparable." That's when Sharon came up with Plan B: going after another grant that helps families with irreparable homes upgrade their living conditions with a used trailer.

Since that discovery, the family began a journey with the Center that led them to clean up their property, demolish their dilapidated home, and clean up their "new"



The before and after photos show the dramatic difference that was made for the Strickland's home and life.

double-wide mobile home. On Oct. 26, the completed home was revealed to them "Extreme Home Makeover" style.

"One, two, three... Move that truck!" everyone shouted together, and the Samaritan Center's truck rolled out of the way to reveal their new house, lying on the same lot where their old one had been before.

Normally helping people get a new home is not one of the services offered by the Samaritan Center. However, while helping this family with other items such as Thanksgiving food boxes and Christmas toys over the years, the case workers at the Samaritan Center came to understand the depth of this family's need.

Only through partnering with the following agencies, businesses, and the family's church was the Stricklands' new home made possible: THDA (Tennessee Housing Development Agency Emergency Repair Program for the Elderly), Relative Caregivers, Ooltewah United Methodist Church, City Disposal, Chattanooga Pest Control, Chattanooga State Ahead Program, Hampton Inn, Steve Casteel Construction, Sam Bostic Dirt and Gravel, Murmaid Mattress Company, Woodlee Appliance, Scott's Furniture, Ace Hardware of Ooltewah, Ooltewah Nursery, many volunteers, and some anonymous donors.



Sharon Smith, Samaritan Center caseworker, tickles 3-year-old Bredyn's feet as he sits on his new bed.

The Samaritan Center coordinated the efforts of all agencies, contributed a significant number of volunteer hours, and also shared some of the project's expenses. Although the home has now been presented, the project isn't over.

"It's not just about getting the family a new home," says Sharon. "It's about giving them the building blocks they need to build a new life." Accordingly, the Samaritan Center and Ooltewah United Methodist Church will be following up in various mentoring capacities to help the Stricklands take on their new responsibilities of school and home in the months to come.

The Samaritan Center, located in Ooltewah, Tenn., is a nonprofit social services agency that provides emergency assistance for Eastern Hamilton County.

Angela Baerg

Pioneers Needed for Outreach

If you drove from Hart County in northeast Georgia to the Atlantic Ocean, you would not find a single Georgia-Cumberland Conference Seventh-day Adventist Church. The same would be true driving from Clay County (on the Alabama line in west Georgia) to the Atlantic Ocean. Either way, this is a distance of over 300 miles including 13 counties.

People in Georgia-Cumberland Conference have made progress spreading the gospel in pioneer areas, or areas where there is not an established Adventist church or company. The percentage of pioneer counties has dropped from 77% to 49% over the last 15 years. However, it would take over 30 years to reach all the remaining counties if it were to continue at that rate.

But, there is encouragement that the efforts in pioneer areas are working.

After discovering the Sabbath through Georgia-Cumberland Conference's Bible Research lessons, one woman stood up Sunday morning in her church and asked the pastor why he was teaching inaccuracies about the Lord's Day. Now, after two difficult years, she is scheduled to be baptized soon.

In Bainbridge, Ga., twelve people finished the Bible Research lessons and were baptized. Due to the diligent work of two pastors, Sam Ball and Mike Adams, along with involved laymen, the congregation grew. They recently gained company status and are reaching out into surrounding pioneer areas.

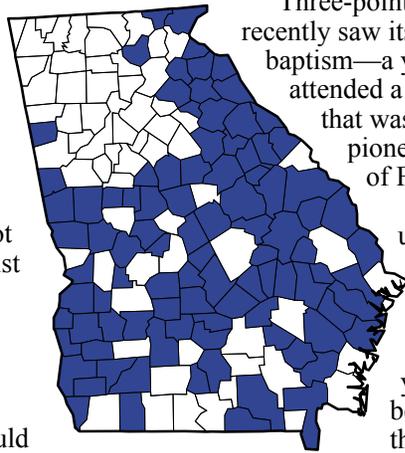
Three-point Play Ministries recently saw its first youth baptism—a young man who attended a basketball camp that was held in the pioneer outreach area of Folkston, Ga.

Jesus has given us the challenge. We see the problem. We have a plan. But we need help. If you would like to become involved in the excitement of reaching into new territories, please pray about it.

On Jan. 16, 2010, Georgia-

Cumberland Conference is hosting a lay evangelism rally at the Chattanooga First Church. There will be good music and inspirational testimonies to motivate church members to get involved in evangelism. Even if you are unable to attend, call Georgia-Cumberland Conference Pioneer Outreach Ministries to find out how you can get personally involved.

E.W. Dempsey



The counties in blue are Pioneer Outreach areas where there is not an established Adventist church or company.

Lakeland School Week of Prayer

Jeff Cinquemani, associate pastor at the Florida Hospital Church in Orlando, Fla., gave an inspiring Week of Prayer at Lakeland, Ga., Adventist School Oct. 26-29. The theme was "Diving In—Getting Into the Kingdom of God."

One fourth-grader, Ashlyn, wrote for the school's newspaper, "He told us stories and one of his stories was funny... He played the guitar. He taught us new songs. It

was fun, fun, fun, and fun!! He taught us two chapters from the Bible."

Jeff Brown



Jeff Cinquemani sings songs with students at Lakeland Adventist School during their Week of Prayer.

Submitted by Jeff Brown

Students Rake Leaves for Jesus

The Tri-City Adventist School in Gray, Tenn., grades pre-k to eight, decided to do random acts of kindness to show others Christ's love. They call this Community Christian Outreach (CCO).

In October, students went to a community home to rake leaves. While enjoying the fresh air and sunlight, they had a chance to share God's love with neighbors in the area. What joy they had helping someone in need and sharing their love of God to those around them.

Jennifer Colburn



Students at the Tri-City Adventist School had fun raking leaves for a neighbor in the community.

Jennifer Colburn

Kingsport Burns Mortgage

In 1974, less than 50 members were faced with the reality that their church in Kingsport, Tenn., was being condemned by the city to expand one of its high schools. The Lord guided in their search process, and new property was secured in 1976.

The groundbreaking took place in 1977 and the church opened in April 1978. After 32 years and refinancing numerous times to accomplish additional work at the church, the members of the Kingsport Church are relieved to



From left: Michael Lombardo, church pastor; Carol Solomon, charter member; Robert Crowder, church elder; Carol Crowder, church treasurer; David Holt, head elder; Mitch Hazekamp, Conference Trust Services director/Association secretary; Bonnie Fletcher, Evelyn Powers, and Hobart Bowery, all charter members.

finally have their mortgage behind them.

Michael Lombardo

Bristol Church Creates Outreach Film

The Bristol, Tenn., Church averages 60 to 65 attendees on a given Sabbath but, though their numbers may seem small, they had a big dream.

The little church realized the fruit of their big dream when they were able to watch "Washed Away" for the first time during their church service just before it made its debut at Southern Adventist University on Nov. 7.

The movie focuses on a



Zach Gray (left), assistant professor of animation at Southern, and Leif Ramsey, Southern's production company assistant, share comments at the "Washed Away" movie premiere.

possible experience of a small town Southerner who finds new meaning in life when faced with a tragedy.

Scott Begley, pastor of the Bristol church, says, "The purpose of the film was to connect with people in our community and draw them into our church—and especially to introduce the book *Steps to Christ*—that they would be attracted

to it and see the effect it would have in their lives."

Bethany Clark

Men Gather for Spiritual Retreat

The annual Georgia-Cumberland Conference Men's Congress met in the new Camp Lodge at Cohutta Springs in mid-October. Homer Trecartin, director of planning for the General Conference's Office of Adventist Mission, presented the Sabbath morning message, which gave unique perspective on the role of the inn keeper in the story of the good Samaritan.

"After the service, a group of guys got together and talked about topics that are close to our hearts. I had an opportunity to share with my brothers in Christ, what ways I could be a better husband, a better father and a better man," said Carlos Lopez, Pikeville, Tenn.

"I'll take back the calling to serve people, whether it's here or somewhere around the world, to serve wherever I am," says Jeff Kendall, Cleveland, Tenn.

The afternoon was spent enjoying nature while hiking, taking a leisurely pontoon boat ride, or on the team-building ropes course.

"You should come to the men's retreat for several reasons. The first is that no man is an island," says Scott Annis, lay pastor for the Questview church in Lawrenceville, Ga. "Hebrews 10:25 says we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and that includes assembling ourselves as men—getting together and sharing the issues that men have and giving God an opportunity to work in your life in a different way than working through the family setting or the normal church setting. This is a



A group of men tackle the ropes course at the retreat.

great place to come aside and spend some time with God. The sessions are planned with enough time in between that you can spend some time in solitary prayer, and search in your heart and rededicate your life to God. It's a very powerful experience and it's a very wonderful experience... I've been here four years in a row and God has always been afoot amongst the Men's Congress, and is always touching hearts and always leading them into a closer relationship with God. If you pass up this opportunity, then you pass up an opportunity to walk beside the Savior, so I'd encourage you to come."

Brian Young

Summerville Fall Fest Draws Crowd

The Summerville, Ga., Church held its first annual October Fall Fest as an outreach to the community Oct. 25. This small church of less than 50 members advertised in the newspaper, handed out flyers at Wal-mart, and prayed for a successful turn out.



Submitted by Jenni Lane

More than 150 people from the Summerville community came to the church's first Fall Fest.

"Lord, send us enough but not more than we can handle!" was the prayer of Jenni Lane, the Social Committee/Personal Ministry leader. She was hoping for 30-40 children with their parents. That's what she thought they could handle. The Lord blessed beyond expectations and over 150 came to their Fall Fest!

The activities included face painting, cupcake decorating, sack and egg races, a goat petting area, and a pumpkin decorating contest. The evening concluded with a campfire and short spiritual story. There was a welcome table set up with free literature, church brochures, and a way for people to sign up to be contacted when other events are planned in their area.

The goal of the outreach was to reach people the way Jesus did. "The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

By the end of the evening the children felt right at home and loved. This was obvious as neighborhood children leaned their heads on a church member's shoulder in trust and confidence.

One member told of a mother who asked her what church the group represented and went on to enthusiastically say, "Well, I have no excuse for not coming to church. I live right around the corner from the church. I have no excuse!"

Church members hope to see her with her children at church in the coming weeks.

This non-threatening outreach was a wonderful way to reach the community and show the love of Jesus. It was a success beyond what was expected and the Lord knew how much the organizers could handle. It was great fun and a success in winning the confidence and friendship of people in the community. Summerville plans to do this outreach annually, making friends for Jesus!

Jenni Lane

Collegedale Academy Featured on "What's Right with our Schools"

WDEF Channel 12 News of Chattanooga, Tenn., came to Collegedale Academy in Collegedale, Tenn., Oct. 15 to record a special feature of "What's Right with our Schools." The idea was given to WDEF by someone who had attended "The King and I," performed by Collegedale Academy and A.W. Spalding students on Sept. 29, 30, and Oct. 4 and 5. The individual contacting WDEF was amazed at the performance and could not believe that students this age could put on such a production, especially just six weeks into the school year. "The King and I" performances drew more than 1,800 attendees during the four showings. Collegedale Academy's own orchestra provided live accompaniment for the entire show.

While this performance was the catalyst for the visit from WDEF, it was the diversity of CA's overall music program that was featured. For the last several years, Collegedale Academy has

received special recognition from the Tennessee Music Education Association at both the East Tennessee Concert Festival and the State Concert Festival.

The choral program at the academy, which features three choirs, is currently featured in, "A Chorus of Excellence: Championship Choirs," in the winter issue of Chattanooga's *City Scope Magazine*.

WDEF's chief photojournalist David Moore, said, "This school has got to be the best kept secret in Chattanooga." After putting the feature together, the news staff at WDEF concurred with Moore, and as reporter Joe Legge put it, "It is time to let the secret out of the bag." The three-minute feature showed footage of the choirs and orchestra and comments from four students and two teachers. The feature can be viewed by going to WDEF.com and clicking on the "What's Right" banner.

Matt Nafie



Submitted by Matt Nafie

Collegedale Academy's orchestra and choir prepare to perform Beethoven's Choral Fantasy.

Couples Gain Courageous Hearts

With the theme “Courageous Hearts,” the 2009 Georgia-Cumberland Conference Marriage Retreat drew approximately 40 couples for a weekend of learning, soul-searching, and pampering at the WinShape Retreat Center in Rome, Ga.

“I enjoy being able to get away for a weekend with my wife. It’s great,” says Richard Morman of Cleveland, Tenn., “I really enjoy the food. I also enjoy the spiritual emphasis and being able to network with



Approximately 40 couples attended the marriage retreat this year.

different Christians and couples and socialize. It’s a really nice atmosphere.”

Rebecca Brooks

ACF Students Camp in Smokies

Twenty-four young adults from the University of Georgia (UGA), the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) joined forces at Deep Creek, a Smoky Mountain campground in North Carolina, for

an Adventist Christian Fellowship campout Oct. 30, 2009.

Though Sabbath rains entered a few tents, the group counts their time together a success.

During the last CONNECT Conference, students realized the value in meeting with students from other schools, and months later they explored the idea of camping together. After several phone calls, emails, and discussions, the weekend became a reality.

Students led out in all the activities from food preparation and worships to the Saturday afternoon hike. The group sang together, prayed together, held up the tarp together—and now everyone is more connected.

Michaela Lawrence



A few of those at the Adventist Christian Fellowship campout take a picture together by a waterfall.

Grandfather and Granddaughter Participate in Triathlon

Andrews, N.C., resident Carl Hartman, 78, completed the Cohutta Springs triathlon on Oct. 4. The event included a half-mile swim, an 18-mile bike ride, and a four-mile run. His time was two hours, 59 minutes.

Hartman’s 19-year-old granddaughter, Beth Hartman, also completed in the event. She left her granddad in the dust by clocking a time of 1:29:27, which is about half her granddad’s time. This time gave her second place in the women’s section, 19 and under. She is a sophomore at Southern Adventist University.

Granddad Hartman received a first place trophy in the over 70 category as the only participant in that age category. The next oldest entry was 13 years younger at 65.

Hartman, who will turn 79 in December, was asked, “Why did you push your body to be part of such a strenuous activity?”

He replied, “I take seriously what the Bible says about our bodies being the temple of God and that God wants to dwell in them (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

He was also asked, “How do you stay in condition?”

“I set my goal,” he said, “to follow nine health rules, summarized best in a simple acrostic, A NEW START, which stands for attitude, nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in Divine Power.”

The triathlon has been an



Beth Hartman, 19, a sophomore at Southern Adventist University and her grandfather Carl Hartman, 78, of Andrews, NC, completed the Cohutta Springs triathlon. Carl Hartman was the oldest participant.

annual event for 26 years. This year’s program attracted about 325 participants and is coordinated by Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tenn. Its primary sponsor is Sunbelt snacks and cereals.

Adventists across the nation provide programs each year that encourage a healthier lifestyle. Seventh-day Adventists have been singled out as some of the longest living people in the world, with a life span advantage of seven to ten years longer than the average American.

Hartman expressed gratitude to Sunbelt and Southern Adventist University for providing this triathlon. He said, “It motivates our church members to glorify God by getting fit and staying fit.”

Carl Hartman



Many people are reaping the benefits of improved health by participating in InStep for Life. The conference goal is to reach a million miles by June 2010, in time for the General Conference Session in Atlanta. InStep for Life was designed to get Adventists started on an exercise program that will continue throughout their lifetime. Exercise is not cumulative—you must do it on a regular basis. The excuse we hear most often is, “I just don’t have time to exercise.” As we approach a new year, let’s make exercise a priority and be willing to give up some other activities that do not pay the dividends that exercise pays those who consistently make time for it.

Below is a list of the churches that have sent in reports through third quarter 2009. Our total now stands at 99,996 miles. A big “thank you” goes to each one that participated and made this report possible.

Becky Campbell, Health Ministries Secretary

Church	Number of Participants	Total Miles
Adairsville	5	844
Adventist Retired Workers of Collegedale	15	6,941
Apison	70	6,500
Athens, GA	7	4,136
Atlanta Belvedere	46	3,954
Atlanta Metro	15	4,986
Brunswick	2	613
Calhoun	1	423
Camden	1	838
Cohutta	13	6,907
Columbus	7	828
Conference Office (not reported at their church)	11	2,850
Dalton	24	4,765
Ellijay	13	7,046+

Fayette	106	8,733
Graysville	4	1,193
Kingsport	11	643
Loganville	35	9,305
Mountain City	9	1,114
Murphy	20	5,001
Ooltewah	8	1,657
Ringgold	26	2,718
Roan Mountain	7	2,666
Rome	8	2,697
Rossville	13	3,274
Smoky Mountain	4	424
Summerville	8	4,859
Tifton	3	331
Valdosta	3	446
Waycross	14	905

COHUTTA SPRINGS

“Winter is coming...Do you know what that means for Cohutta? Slower business and RENOVATIONS! Even though 2009 was not as busy as record-breaking 2008, Cohutta Springs was visited by many individuals, groups, churches, campers, Pathfinder clubs, businesses, weddings, and family reunions. Cohutta’s team is now getting ready to spend the next few months making the facility even more beautiful and convenient. Here’s what is coming up:

DINING ROOM RENOVATION: After renovating the motel rooms and the lodge, it is time to finish the work and give the dining hall more splendor. We are hoping to start in December.

CHALETS 1 & 2: For those who remember, the two chalets on camp side were built 12 years ago by the Cohutta Springs Development Associates (CSDA) organization. It is time to give them a fresh new look.

FENCES: After the electric company cut some of the trees, the Cohutta team decided to keep cleaning the front entrance and replace the fence. Since then, a generous donor gave what it takes to replace the rest of the fences throughout the entire property.



Chalets 1 and 2 were built 12 years ago and are in need of renovations.



Renovation of the dining room may begin in December.

Cohutta Springs is so blessed to have Dave Hallman and his maintenance team coordinate so many projects. Thank you also to CSDA and to the conference who planned and put aside money over the years that allows Cohutta to keep improving.

You may have heard that we have downsized the horse program. Indeed, the necessary steps were taken to reduce costs and face this economic downturn. However, the horse program is still a strong feature of Cohutta. So,

bring your family or your church group and enjoy a wonderful horseback ride on some lovely trails.

Again, thank you for believing in and supporting the ministry of Cohutta...a place for you to rest, reconnect, and rediscover the Source.

OLIVIER LEMAITRE
COHUTTA SPRINGS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PRAYER MINISTRIES

Sabbath, Jan. 2, 2010, is designated as a day of prayer throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What a privilege to enter 2010 with new opportunities, new energy, and new plans by setting aside this day for prayer.

What will this year hold? From where do we draw our inspiration and our strength? How much time do we have to complete our work? The answer to all these questions is found in our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the brink of 2010, I would like to challenge you, your family and your church family to get it right from the start. Do you desire a deep experience with our Lord working in and through your life? Are you tired of the status quo in your personal walk with Christ? Have you settled for a mediocre experience and sense that you are missing something significant? My appeal is direct from my heart to yours: Make Jesus first in the beginning of the coming new year and keep Him first throughout. You will be amazed to see what He does.

**On the brink of 2010,
I would like to challenge
you, your family and your
church family to get it right
from the start.**

If your church has not made any special arrangements for Jan. 2, talk to your pastor and others about making this Sabbath a special day of prayer. Maybe a special communion service with intentional time set aside for prayer and intercession would work well for your church. Or perhaps you could have the church form group prayers at different “prayer stations” around your facility during your program that Sabbath. Another way would be to have a Week of Prayer either the last week of the year right up to the first Sabbath or just make it from New Year’s eve through to January 2—but make it special, make it intentional, interesting and innovative—so that all will be refreshed and revived.

“We must be much in prayer if we would make progress in the divine life. When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed. How often was the voice of intercession heard in the chamber, in the barn, in the orchard, or the grove. Frequently, we spent hours in earnest prayer, two or three together claiming the promise; often the sound of weeping was heard and then the voice of thanksgiving and the song of praise. Now the day of God is nearer than when we first believed, and we should be more earnest, more zealous, and fervent than in those early days. Our perils are greater now than then. Souls are more hardened. We need now to be imbued with the spirit of Christ, and we should not rest until we receive it,” (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 161-162).

May Jesus help us get it right from the start as we move into 2010!

MARK PIOTROWSKI
PRAYER MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

CALENDAR

DEC.	4-6	Homeland Lay Evangelism Training, COLUMBUS, GA.
	4-6	Pathfinder Teen Leadership Training, COHUTTA SPRINGS
	5	Prayer Ministries
	5	GCC/SAC Evangelism Rally, ATLANTA BEREAN CHURCH
	5	Stenbakken Christmas Program, ALPHARETTA, GA.
	20	Handel’s Messiah Sing-Along, CHATTANOOGA FIRST CHURCH
	25	Christmas
JAN.	1	New Year’s Day
	9	Pioneer Outreach Ministries, BAINBRIDGE, GA.
	9	Adventurer Director Council, COHUTTA SPRINGS
	10	Pathfinder Director Council, Cohutta Springs
	11	Elementary Band Festival Deadline
	15-16	Hispanic Children’s Ministries Convention, ATLANTA, GA.
	15-17	Pathfinder Teen Backpack Trip, COHUTTA SPRINGS
	15-17	Pathfinder Teen Trip, CUMBERLAND ISLAND, GA.
	16	Prayer Ministry Day, CARTERSVILLE, GA.
	16	Lay Evangelism Rally, CHATTANOOGA FIRST CHURCH
	17-19	Winter Minister’s Meeting, COHUTTA SPRINGS
	19-20	Young in Ministry, COHUTTA SPRINGS
	23	Leadership Training—Health/Personal Ministry, MACON, GA.
	29-30	Hispanic Lay Evangelism Festival, TOCCOA, GA.
	29-Feb. 7	Health Summit, ORLANDO, FLA.
	29-31	Children’s Ministries Convention, COHUTTA SPRINGS
	30	Leadership Training—Health/Personal Ministry, TIFTON, GA.

**To learn more about these events,
visit the Conference Calendar at www.gccsda.com.**

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- The decay of Adventist youth ministry and possible solutions
- Living spiritual priorities in an overcommitted and overextended world

STEWARDSHIP & THE GIFT OF BLOOD

It was Friday, Sept. 11, 2009. My wife, Vivian, and I were traveling on Highway 411 through Madisonville, Tenn., when we noticed a blood bank set up in a parking lot. She suggested that we could give, and I made a quick right into the parking area.

Giving blood has been something that we have done regularly in the past, but we have neglected to give for a while. So, we did the drill and answered all the questions relating to our past medical history, present physical condition, and our lifestyle choices. A small prick of the finger gives enough blood for a sampling to be examined. After all the preliminaries are covered the nurse inserts the needle and the life giving blood flows freely into the container. It is cherished blood to be used during someone's surgery or in an emergency to save a life.

If giving human blood can save a person's life in an emergency, the apostle Paul declares of Jesus, "much more then, being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9). He further clarifies that we are "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). We have "redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). He has "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20).

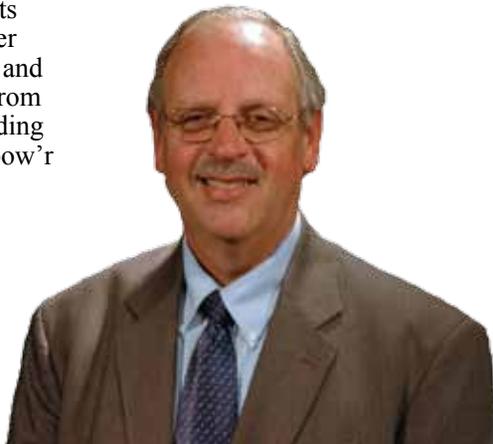
Shedding blood is a recurring theme throughout Revelation. John depicts Jesus Christ as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (13:8). He emphasizes that Christ has "washed us from our sins in His own blood" (1:5). The redeemed are pictured with washed robes made white in the "blood of the Lamb." They have overcome the dragon by the "blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony..." (7:14; 12:11).

The writer of Hebrews also has much to add about this topic. The "blood of Christ," he says, purges "your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (9:14). He declares there is no remission "without shedding of blood" (9:22).

Peter declared that we are not redeemed by "corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

In 1899 Lewis E. Jones wrote the words to a popular hymn that represents this wonderful theme very well: "Power in the Blood." He asked a very crucial and eternal question: "Would you be free from the burden of sin?" He offers a resounding answer: "There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood."

MITCH HAZEKAMP
CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENT/
STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR



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Prayer Conference
February 19-21, 2010
Cohutta Springs Conference Center

SPEAKERS:
JERRY & JANET PAGE
MARTI SCHNEIDER

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