

EMBRACING CAROLINA WITH THE COMPASSIONATE CALL OF CHRIST

# CAROLINA ACTION



ISSUE 3, 2021

Stories of Hope

**EVANGELISM ISSUE**



**Moving Mountains**  
 Without a doubt  
 both 2020 and 2021  
 have complicated  
 our lives, brought  
 unique challenges, and  
 prompted unmatched  
 uncertainties.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our homes, our workplaces, our churches, our nation, and our entire global community. However, I am so grateful that there is a God in Heaven who has revealed to us

the end of the story—an ending filled with hope and happiness beyond our imagination. Today, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians who have fixed our eyes on another day and another place, we can cherish the scriptural words of hope and assurance that claim, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him,” I Corinthians 2:9, KJV.

At the end of 2019, the Carolina Conference had a total membership of 24,339. With accessions by either baptism,

professions of faith, or transfers, and factoring deaths, missing, and adjusted out, at the end of 2020 our ending membership was at 24,351, reflecting a miniscule gain of only 12 members.

In 2019 we added 873 members by baptisms and professions of faith, but in 2020, kingdom growth was significantly impacted by the pandemic. We praise God that 350 precious hearts were added during that difficult time. As of August of this year we’ve already had 438 baptisms and professions of faith—an increase of 245 from last August. The Holy Spirit is truly working on hearts in the Carolinas!

But...at the end of 2020, the world’s population was at 7.8 billion, and there were 139.9 million births versus 59.2 million deaths. That’s an increase in the world’s population by 80.7 million people. Even with a pandemic, the world’s population is increasing by over 221,000 people every day! How on earth will we reach the whole world with the fulfillment of Jesus words recorded in Matthew 24:14, KJV, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

This is a mountainous challenge. But I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church belongs to God, and as leaders and disciples of Christ, it is our sacred calling to pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit to work miraculously in our churches and make them magnets for lost souls.

Over the past years I’ve read

*Continued on page 13.*



FROM THE  
 PRESIDENT’S PEN

# A Call for HEALTHY CHURCHES

As we examine 2021, there are plenty of issues that cause us concern, but there are also many reasons to rejoice. After experiencing 2020 with all of its restrictions and disappointments, many of us began 2021 with a new hope. While things are still on shaky ground for some, for others those hopes are being realized...and in the best way! That's what makes the Stories of Hope in this issue of the *Carolina Action* so exciting and inspiring.



When we focus on our true purpose, great things can happen. In years past, I remember the popular saying was “find your passion,” but as Harvard Business School Professor Jon Jachimowicz discovered in his research, we need to focus less on what makes us feel passionate, and more on what we truly care about—our purpose. It is obvious that this is happening in our churches in the Carolinas. As of the writing of this article, we are experiencing a gain of 245 baptisms and professions of faith through August of 2021. Praise the Lord!

Our purpose as Christians is to fulfil the command of Christ to make disciples. Part of that happens when

we bring new people to Jesus, but that is only the beginning. My hope for the new year is for our churches to have a purpose to be healthy, disciple-making centers for Christ.

## Healthy churches:

- **Cooperate with the Holy Spirit in establishing meaningful relationships with those attracted to Christ.** We are called to provide opportunities for others to become acquainted with His Word, and then challenge them to become His disciples.
- **Provide training and inspire leadership.** We have pastoral and lay leaders that train the congregation to identify needs in our churches and our communities, clarify goals, gather the necessary resources and implement effective action. They follow Ellen Whites counsel in *Ministry of Healing*, page 143, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. 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.’”
- **Nurture the members** through connective worship, interesting Bible study, supportive friendships, and opportunities for

significant service.

- **Reach the community for Christ.** Healthy churches discover the kinds of people who live in their area and strive to understand their needs so that they can provide outreach programs and activities designed to meet those needs and create a strong public awareness for the church.

As we look to 2022, may your church be a healthy, disciple-making center, and may your connection to Jesus be a compelling reason for someone to connect with Him and His church.

—by Glen Altermatt  
Evangelism Director



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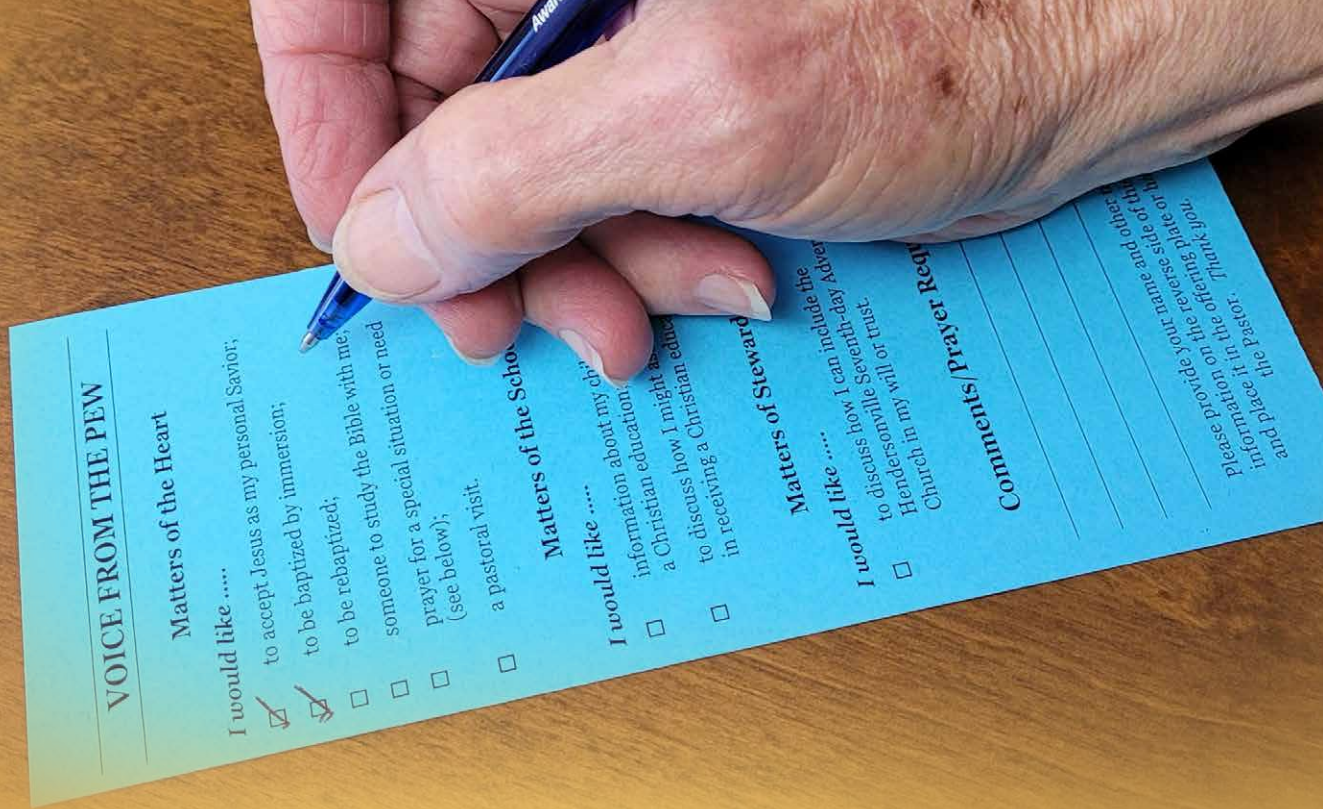
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## CHAIN OF EVANGELISM: Doris' Story

At the Hendersonville Church there are small blue cards available to the congregation to fill out if they have a prayer request, want a membership transfer, etc. One Sabbath, there was a blue card turned in from Doris Haynes. She had checked the box that said, "I want to be baptized."

Pastor David Wright called Doris that following week. He wanted to get to know her a bit, and he asked her if she would be interested in taking Bible studies. She replied, "I've already had Bible studies." Pastor Wright tried to piece together what studies she'd gone through and with what church or denomination. She remembered it was the Amazing Facts Bible Study Guides and said she went through all of them with an individual named Bobby at the Albemarle Church in NC.



Photos contributed

Wright then proceeded to go over the beliefs on the baptismal certificate.

He told her, "I'm going to read through these and you let me know if you agree. The first one 'do you believe in the trinity?' 'Do you believe that Jesus came and died for our sins?' ...all these things. And she said yes. All the way through the health part, the Sabbath, all the way down through... 'Yes'."

Pastor Wright was convinced and asked when she wanted to be baptized. Doris replied, "As soon as possible." He gave her some dates and encouraged her to invite her friends from Albemarle that she had studied with. A few days later the date was set, and Doris was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Wright came to find out that Doris was at the Hendersonville church because her sister, Patty, attended there. During a visit to the Albemarle area,

Patty had taken Doris to the church there. Bobby Dennis, an elder at the Albemarle Church, was leading an interest class following an evangelistic series, and offered to study the Bible with her. Doris continued personal Bible studies and came to know the Lord for herself. She later moved to Hendersonville to be with her sister. The journey to Doris' baptism goes back 30 years when two lay members brought Patty herself into the church for the first time.

Evangelism isn't always just one single event. Oftentimes it's a chain where one event leads to another; one person brings one person to church and then that person brings another. It goes to show how the seeds we sow of evangelism can grow into something bigger when we work together to share His word.

—by Rachel Beaver



View video story

# Patience and Prayer: Elizabeth's Story

It is often said that the hardest place to do evangelism is in your own backyard. It can be difficult when loved ones reject the Lord when we want so badly for them to know the peace and happiness that comes from loving Him.

Such was the case for Israel Mora, pastor of the Kernersville, NC, Adventist church. His mother-in-law, Elizabeth, was born and raised an Adventist, but strayed away as she reached adulthood.

“At the age of 18 when she had my wife, Evie, she really lived a prodigal life,” says Mora. “And for more than 30 years, Elizabeth was not interested in God, interested in religion, or interested in her Adventist faith.”

But Elizabeth had people who loved her—like her mother, Gucci, and her daughter, Evie—praying for her to return to the faith. Sadly, several years ago, Gucci passed away. Elizabeth's family hoped this would soften her heart and she'd come back to God, but it did not. Nothing changed...until the COVID pandemic.

“We believe that God used this very unfortunate moment in our world,” says Mora. Elizabeth started thinking about the time in which she was living. The Holy Spirit was working in Elizabeth's life, and her family felt impressed to pray all the more earnestly for a heart conversion. “As the dandelion shoot announces the coming of spring, a little shoot started to show in the life of Elizabeth,” Mora shared.

In the spring of 2020, Elizabeth called from her home in south Florida to ask Evie, “Honey, where do I return my tithe?” A few months later, Evie asked her mother on a Sabbath morning if she was going to work as usual, to which Elizabeth responded, “No, I've decided to no longer work on the Sabbath.” She shared with Evie that something was happening in her life. Even though she didn't understand what it was, she felt something stirring in her heart.

“When my wife told me about this, she teared up, saying that our prayers were being answered. Elizabeth was making changes in her life that she had not previously made.”

A few weeks later, Elizabeth declared that she loved the Lord and knew the Lord loved her, and she wanted to be baptized. But the churches were still closed. So Evie told her mother to come to Kernersville to be baptized there. In July of 2020, Elizabeth gave her life fully to Christ in the waters of baptism.

“Elizabeth's mother did not live to see this transformation,” said Mora. “Gucci prayed and prayed and always believed that her daughter would come back. Like the prodigal story, the father waited for the son and one day the son came back, but not in the life of Gucci. So I believe that on resurrection morning, there will be a lot of surprises. One of those surprises will be Gucci seeing her daughter resurrected with her because her daughter decided to come back.”

—by Rachel Beaver



Photos contributed



View video story



Photos contributed

Nathalie Challenger moved to North Carolina from the Dominican Republic. Her story, like many others, is about how she grew up in the church but drifted away as she began to reach adulthood.

“She said during this time of leaving the church and walking away from God,” says Jeff Crain, Pastor at the Raleigh Church, “she felt empty, hopeless, without purpose, without reason. And, like the prodigal son, she remembered how much better she had it when she was worshipping God and going to church.”



Looking to return to her Adventist roots, Nathalie and her family began looking for a church home. Crain and several others noticed Nathalie engaging with the church’s Facebook page. She liked posts, watched the live services, and then decided to visit the church. It wasn’t long before she sent an email to the church indicating she wanted to be re-baptized.

“So we met with her,” shares Crain. “She told us her story about how she was part of the church and how she walked away and how she wanted to come back home. And I told her ‘Nathalie, that’s the best decision you could ever make is to come back home.’”

Nathalie was re-baptized and is now an active member of the church.

Crain feels the church is in a season of reclaiming. “People are coming back home. People are realizing just what they had when they were at church. There are many stories out there like Nathalie’s.”

“Evangelism works,” he continued, “if you work it. We need to be there to help people and throw a party for them like the prodigal son’s father did.”

—by Rachel Beaver



View video story

## Coming Home: Nathalie’s Story

# The Cold Never Bothered Him: Nicholas' Story

Nicholas had been attending the Henderson, NC, church for about a year and a half. There are many members at Henderson who are immigrants from Jamaica, having come to the U.S. to teach in the public schools. Nicholas was one of them. He admired the Adventist lifestyle he witnessed in the lives of some church members. He decided to make some changes in his own life.

"It was very subtle," says Joe Pieretti, pastor of the Henderson Church. "No one really knew about it. He didn't want any of his friends to publicize the fact that he was trying to make these changes. But he naturally fell in love with healthy eating habits, more Bible study, more prayer time. He was very intentional in making sure what he watched was healthy for him in an emotional and mental way."

Several months later, Nicholas expressed interest in being baptized. This was great news, and the ball started rolling to get things ready. The church had a baptistry, but there was no water heater. Being winter, the water from the hose outside was going to be very cold.

Pieretti reached out to Ministerial Director Haskell Williams,

asking for a water heater. Williams found and ordered one, but it didn't arrive in time. In fact, the severe cold weather froze the water pipes, preventing them from filling up the baptistry at all. The baptism had to be postponed.

But Nicholas had such a genuine desire for baptism that he didn't mind waiting a couple of weeks. Pieretti also warned him several times that the water was going to be very cold, but again, it didn't matter to Nicholas. He was just so excited to be baptized.

The day comes and, sure enough, the water is frigid. Pieretti warned him one more time that the water was icy cold, but Nicholas did not want to wait even another week.

"While he's shivering, I can see the happiness on his face that it's about to happen. As I say 'Amen,' I feel his body dip down and I think 'no no not yet!' I think I even got the order wrong because he was going down so fast. I baptized him and he comes up and he stops shivering for like three seconds. He's like 'Amen'. He got out, and this man was so happy."

To Nicholas, baptism meant more



than just a process to join a church. For him, it was about expressing his immense love for Jesus. And he didn't care how cold the water was.

—by Rachel Beaver



View video story



## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE: Vicente's Story

Last year when COVID began causing churches and businesses to shut down, the Arden Spanish Company, like many churches, questioned how they were going to continue to function. They decided to concentrate their efforts into evangelism by helping the local community.

A member of the Arden Church called the Spanish company's pastor, Rubi Pimentel, and told him that someone he knew was in the hospital. The man's kidneys were shutting down and they gave him only two weeks to live. The patient, Vicente Gonzales, wanted nothing to do with God or the church. So Pimentel and his team offered Vicente assistance with food and rent. They went to his house every week with food and offered to help with anything else Vicente or his family needed.

The two weeks passed by, and although Vicente was still feeling very sick, he was also hopeful. He began to ask questions about Jesus, particularly about His miracles. He was very interested in the story of Nicodemus and how Jesus treated him.

Then, Vicente started to ask about

baptism and felt in his heart that this was a step God was calling him to make. Most of Vicente's family belonged to a different denomination, however they were supportive, seeing how he was finally interested in Jesus.



Photos contributed

“His body couldn't stand for long,” says Pimentel, “but he was adamant that he wanted to do a baptism. We offered a profession of faith based on his

situation, but he was adamant that he wanted a baptism just like the Bible says.”

Vicente also requested to be baptized in a river. “That day, the river was super cold and the current was super strong, to the point where the people that take care of the park recommended not to go in. But he insisted, ‘I need to be baptized.’”

Vicente could not stand for more than five seconds, so two elders helped hold him up. It took at least 30 minutes to take him into the water, but finally, on that Sabbath afternoon of July 18, he gave his life to God. His family from Texas came to support Vicente, and were thrilled to see him finally accept God.

Three days later, Vicente passed away. His family was very grateful to the church because they saw, in three short months, how Vicente's life had changed. He went from being very rude and closed off to accepting Christ. They saw how his life was extended—from two weeks to three months—long enough to give his life to Jesus.

“We are very grateful for the way God uses people to reach out to others,” continued Pimentel. “It was a story that I'll never forget because it impacted my life.”

-by Rachel Beaver



View video story



# A Date to Remember:

## Carla's Story

One day, when the Liberty Mission Group was holding a business meeting, Pastor Mark Kent felt an odd impression to make a call for baptism and rebaptism. When he did, out of the corner of his eye, he saw Carla Phillips stand up.

Carla grew up as a Catholic, joined the Baptist church and then drifted between churches and denominations for most of her life, always seeking to know more truth. One day at work, a woman told Carla about the seventh-day Sabbath, a concept she had never heard of before.

The woman began to invite Carla to church, and over to her house for Sabbath afternoon lunches. Carla soon decided she wanted to be a part of the Seventh-day Adventist church. She did Bible studies in her home, and was baptized in 1998 at the Wilson Church.

Carla later got married. This and other life changes caused her to drift away from attending, but she never stopped wanting to be a part of God's church.

"She began to visit different Seventh-day Adventist churches," says Pastor Kent. "Finally at one point,

she prayed 'God, if you want me to come back to church, would you have someone invite me to church?' And that happened in a very strange way,"

Carla had ordered some materials from the Adventist Christian Book Center. One of them was a *Steps to Christ* audiobook. When she got the package, she realized she'd been sent the wrong item. Inside the package was a phone number and she called it. The number was for the pastor of the High Point Adventist Church, who invited her to come and worship with his congregation on Sabbath.

It took her several months to realize that God had answered her prayer. Carla and her husband decided to visit the High Point church. They learned of a church plant in Staley, NC, which they joined since it was very close to where they lived. That group soon merged with the Liberty Mission Group.

Thus it was that upon Pastor Kent's call from the pulpit, Carla decided to be rebaptized. Pastor Kent and the group leaders organizing her baptism proposed the date of November 14 as a potential date. As it turns out, November 14th was the same date she had been baptized at the Wilson

church 22 years ago. She had chosen that day in 1998 because it was the closest Sabbath to her birthday and she wanted to always remember it.

"She said, 'Now I know that God wants me to be baptized,'" says Kent. "She had been struggling with feelings of rejection, knowing that she had left God."

The significance of that date, for her, was God's way of telling Carla that He loved her and that he never forgot her.

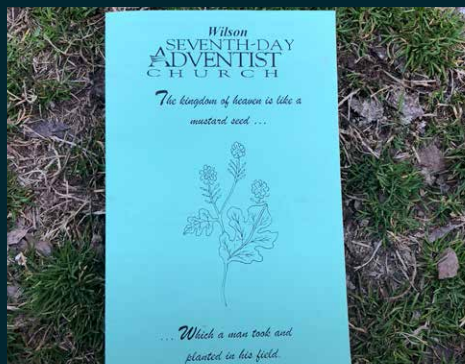
"I'm so thankful that God is a God of details, and he works in ways that we aren't even aware of in that moment."

—by Rachel Beaver



View video story

Photos contributed



# Carolina Evangelism

## YEAR END REPORT

**THE YEAR 2014** was the first time raised over \$1,000,000.00 for evangelism. That has been our goal every year since, and it is not our plan to reduce it till the Lord returns!

**KINGDOM GROWTH**—Through August 2021 we have 438 baptisms and POF. That is a gain of 245 over the same period in 2020.

**FUNDS RAISED**—by the end of September 2021, \$489,865.37 has been raised for evangelism.

**FAITHFUL GIVING**—Tithe in the Carolina Conference is significantly up this year, despite the pandemic.

**EVERY \$1 COUNTS**—Every evangelism dollar goes to fund churches that commit to sowing and reaping for God's kingdom.

### RESULTS YOU CAN MEASURE

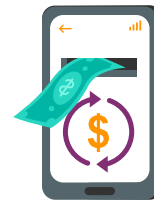
- The Southern Union Field School of Evangelism was conducted in the Greater Greensboro/Tri City, NC area in August. Theology students from Southern Adventist University travelled there to conduct the meetings. Ten churches participated, resulting in 34 baptisms.
- A man attended all but three nights of the meetings conducted by Shari Leader for the Lighthouse Fellowship, and only missed because he was hospitalized. He argues with her on every point, but keeps coming back. Even though he may be a reluctant student, he believes in the message so much he wrote a check for \$500 to help pay for the meetings.
- Eva and her neighbor, Michelle, received a flyer for a series of meetings at the Concord Church. They both attended and loved what they learned. Eva was asked to come on Sabbath to the Enquirers Class and loved it so much. She knew very little English but knew that the message was true. She was baptized earlier this year. Later, Michelle would be baptized as well.



83%

### GETTING INVOLVED

135 out of 168 churches and companies held or will be holding some form of evangelism outreach in 2021. The pandemic doesn't stop the Lord's work!



### ONLINE GIVING

Online giving is up this year! You can give to Carolina Evangelism at [www.carolinadasa.org](http://www.carolinadasa.org). Or through the Carolina Conference app!

### PRAYING FOR GOD'S MIRACULOUS POWER

We need to raise approximately \$510,135 between now and December 31 to celebrate another \$1,000,000 raised for the work of leading lives to Jesus. Please pray with us that God, through the generous hearts of the over 24,000 members in our Carolina family, will help us reach our goal. We're almost there!



# 20 Years of Study: Tommy's Story

Tommy Hill, a retired railroad engineer from Wilmington, NC, had been studying the seventh day Sabbath and was convicted it was the true day of worship. He was resistant to join the Adventist church, however, and 20 years passed by.

At age five, he began attending the Southern Baptist Church. He recalls dedicating his life to the Lord and being baptized very early in life. He grew up and moved to the Charlotte area and, at some point, became interested in Biblical prophecy. Soon after his marriage in 1980 he came across Amazing Facts. He found himself coming home from church on Sunday and being excited to watch the Amazing Facts broadcast.

“So Tommy was convinced of the seventh day Sabbath and all the other fundamental beliefs,” says Scottie Deal, pastor of the Concord, NC, church. “However, after being convicted, Tommy expressed anger toward God.”

For 20 years, Tommy struggled with conviction. He couldn't understand how a church that he loved so much could be wrong. He finally surrendered and decided he was going to find an Adventist church.

Just down the road from his house was the Concord Church. He called the church and talked to an elder.

“The first thing out of his mouth was ‘I'm a Southern Baptist and I want to transfer my membership to the Concord Seventh-day Adventist Church,’” says Deal.

The elder established a relation-

ship with Tommy and invited him to join the Enquirer's Bible study class. Before the COVID shutdown, he came to every class every week and soon expressed his strong desire to join the church.

Deal offered Tommy a choice between baptism or profession of faith (if he felt that his first baptism was still relevant to him). He said, “No, I want to start fresh.”

At long last—along with his friend, Eva, from the Enquirer's class—Tommy was baptized.

“Tommy studied for 20 years,” Deal shares. “[He] admitted that he was upset with the Lord, so this was a high day for him.”

Tommy had been witnessing to his family, particularly his wife and daughter, but naturally they have not been as accepting of the message because it is new to them. But on the day of his baptism, they were there to support him in his decision.

Some people can go through Bible studies and decide to join the church quickly. Others, like Tommy, need much longer for the Holy Spirit to work on their hearts. But thankfully, we serve a patient and loving God who will welcome us with open arms, no matter how angry we were, or how long it took before we accepted Him.

—by Rachel Beaver



Photos contributed



View video story

# Signs from the Lord: Lighthouse Adventist Fellowship

**S**hari Leader, an member of the Lighthouse Adventist Fellowship, was in the middle of preaching an evangelistic series in 2020 when COVID-19 began to take a turn for the worse. There were several attendees who were really benefiting from the series, so Leader was determined to finish the series, eventually resorting to using Zoom. She did another series in the fall when it seemed like things were beginning to go back to normal, but the infection numbers rose again during the holiday season.

“In January, I was concerned about whether we should do it again. I had the money to do it, but I didn’t have money to waste,” says Leader. “I can’t see the future. So, I took it to the Lord.”

Leader prayed and asked God to show her whether or not she was to do the series. That very afternoon, Leader received a call from a woman who had received a brochure for the previous series but hadn’t been able to attend. She wanted to know if they were going to do it again.

“Sometimes we think that the Lord tells us stuff because it’s what we want to hear. So I asked the Lord again. ‘Okay, Lord. I know I’m being a pest, but I need to know for

sure. Did You tell me to do this? Or am I twisting what you told me?’ That very afternoon, I got a second phone call.”

The second call came from Arizona. A woman had contacted the caller to inquire on behalf of her brother, who wanted to attend an evangelistic series. The problem was, the brother lived in Raleigh, NC, not Arizona. So, they contacted Shari to see if she was planning a series there.

This was it—the confirmation Shari needed to move forward with the series.

The venue was reserved, and brochures ordered from Seminars Unlimited in Texas. Two weeks before opening night Shari received word they were in the middle of a freak ice storm.

With no answers or options, Shari once again put everything in God’s hands. The following Monday—the day the brochures were scheduled to hit the local post offices—Shari got a call from Carl Johnson, president of Seminars Unlimited. He told her that the post offices were closed, and he had been trying to find a way to get the brochures to Shari, but it was going to cost an extra \$4000. Shari didn’t have the money and was ready to forget the brochures altogether.

But God was not surprised. Knowing how important these brochures were, Johnson rented a Penske truck, loaded up all the brochures, and drove straight through—all the way to Raleigh. He then went to every post office and talked to every postmaster, explaining the situation, and showing that the postage was already paid. Every one of the postmasters accepted the brochures, and they were out in the mail the next day.

To top it all off, the governor of North Carolina lifted a lot of the COVID restrictions on the very day the series was supposed to start. In fact, the lift went into effect one hour before the series was scheduled.

Shari’s testimony is a beautiful reminder that God is always in control, and He’ll always make a way if we put our trust in Him.

—by Rachel Beaver



View video story



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Continued from page 2.

two books about facing mountainous challenges; Tod Bolsinger's book, *Canoeing the Mountains*, which focuses on how Christian leaders can navigate their way through a rapidly changing world, and John Eldredge's book, "Moving Mountains," which speaks of praying with passion, confidence and authority. The words of Jesus from Matthew 17:20 (KJV) serve as the impetus behind the message of these books, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Consider this mountainous miracle: for the third time in the history of the Carolinas we exceeded our goal of \$1 million for evangelism. It happened in 2014, in 2019, and again in 2020, even without the benefit of our largest evangelism-funding event, our annual camp meeting at Lake Junaluska! We praise Him for bringing the resources we need to reach every heart possible for Heaven.

Yes, faith can indeed move mountains of challenges. For over five years, we have earnestly prayed and dedicated our labors towards the goal of 1000+ souls won in the Carolinas per year. Although we have not celebrated that milestone yet, I pray that we will soon surpass it through God's Spirit. The closing moments of Earth's history are nearly upon us, and I am fully convicted that Holy Spirit-led and Holy Spirit-blessed evangelism will give us a front-row seat to Heaven's power, the same power experienced by the early church.

Yes, some will argue that today's world is much different than back then, and people are more difficult to reach. But I believe the task assigned

to them was no less easy. The apostles of Jesus were called to be Christ's global witnesses. They were arrested for preaching the gospel. They were beaten, jailed and martyred for their passionate witness. Yet a mere few weeks spanned Jesus' ascension (and His promise to send His disciples the power of the Holy Spirit) to the day the High Priest stated in Acts 5:28, "You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Just a few weeks for the church to grow and spread like wildfire, from an upper room of prayer to every living room in Jerusalem!

The book of Acts tells us exactly what they did to move their mountain in chapter 2, verses 42-47. "They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

We currently have 168 Seventh-day Adventist churches and companies and 38 organized groups comprising the sisterhood of God's family in the Carolina Conference. Our churches, companies and groups don't need more methods to grow. They need the power of the Holy Spirit. The early church in the days of the apostles didn't grow because of innovative programs or talents. They grew by prayer and the Holy Spirit and willing feet on the ground.

Won't God do the same for us today? What if our churches prayed with the same passion as the apostles did? Our highest priority is not to argue the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines or masks or social distancing (or every other silly distraction of the devil), but to seek a deeper spiritual walk with Christ and an outpouring of His Holy Spirit.

Ellen White shares her passionate vision for revival, "A revival need be

expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God's Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the Word, but when the Spirit's power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect," *Selected Messages*, Book I, page 121.

I believe in these three missional initiatives: (1) a genuine revival of Godliness, both individually and as church communities; (2) passionate evangelistic preaching of the everlasting gospel to reach the lost; and (3) discipleship of every believer of Jesus. These are essential in the growth of God's church, and the fulfillment of His calling to you and me.

I invite you to join me in praying like never before—every day—in the remaining months of 2021 and the coming year of 2022. Pray for the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit to shower His church with soul-winning power and fervor, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:23. Pray that each one will reach at least one heart for Heaven this year, and every year, till we are safely home with our Savior.

The past two years may have been unprecedented for us, but they certainly were not for God. Let's never forget that it is God who can move every mountainous obstacle and bring every lost lamb back into the fold of His loving arms.

Your servant leader,



Leslie Louis  
Carolina Conference President

## Carolina Obituaries

**BLACK**, Marylouise Breedlove, 95, born Nov. 29, 1925, in Princeton, WV, died Aug. 26, 2021, in Hendersonville, NC. Mary Lou and her husband, John, moved to Fletcher, NC, in 1949, with their daughter, Cookie. She taught business classes at Fletcher Academy, and was the executive secretary to the president of Stencil Aero Engineering and office manager for Dr. Jack Powell in Asheville, NC. She collected many books, loved to travel, was passionate about genealogy and ancestry research, and was a member of Colonial Dames and Daughters of the American Revolution. She was a member of the Fletcher Church for over 70 years. Marylou is preceded in death by her parents, Hugh Lloyd and Eva Gladys Breedlove; and her husband of 66 years, John E. Black. She is survived by a daughter, Nena Louise (Cookie) Black Zeman (Daniel), of Ridgefield, CT; two brothers, Hugh Breedlove, Jr. of Charleston, WV, and James Breedlove, of Collegedale, TN; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

**BROWNING**, Edgar Raymond, 87, born Sept. 10, 1933, in Topeka, KS, died July 29, 2021, in Hendersonville, NC. He was the son of Ralph Edgar Browning and Lois Vena Bullock Lewis. He attended Walla Walla College, Union College, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Religion, and Andrews University where he received a Master of Arts in Teaching in the field of math. Edgar began his career in the role of combination pastor/teacher in an Adventist church and school in Texas. In more than 50 years teaching in the Seventh-day Adventist school system he taught in Texas, Oklahoma, California, Iowa, Colorado, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Missouri. Edgar loved music and served as church pianist and organist for many years. For a few years there were two organs (his instrument of choice), a piano, and various other instruments in his home including recorders, clarinets, a coronet and a musical saw which he learned to play from his father. Several of his teaching assignments included serving as choir and band director. He was proud to tell people that his father was a minister, and often accompanied his father on the piano for church music. Later, it was his joy to perform music with his wife and children. He particularly enjoyed organ/piano duets with his son, Tim. His love for children was shown as he and his wife, Etha, opened their home to many “foster” children in need of their loving care. He is preceded in death by his first wife, Shirley Riggan Browning; two sisters, Shirley Browning Kharns and Doris Browning Sanders; a brother, Howard Browning; a son, Leonard Cooney; and one granddaughter. Edgar is survived by his loving wife of 46 years, Etha Rae Harris Browning; four daughters, Laura Hetterle (Lonnie) of Denver, CO, Robin Fosler (Steve) of Como, CO, Bar-

bara Lawson (Gary) of Wenatchee, WA, Carol Cosaert (Carl) of Walla Walla, WA; three sons, Jonathan Cooney (Tabitha) of Cleveland, TX, Roy Edgar (Kristen) Browning of Spokane, WA, Timothy Browning (Rebecca) of Hendersonville, NC; 24 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and a host of other family, foster children and students who loved him dearly.

**DAVIDSON**, Trevor, 95, born Feb. 15, 1926, in Belfast, Ireland, died Aug. 20, 2021, in Hendersonville, NC. Trevor graduated from Newbold College, England, and immigrated to London, Ontario, in 1951. In 1952, Trevor married Marie in London, Ontario. In 1957, they immigrated to Loma Linda, CA, where Trevor worked for Loma Linda University Medical Center as the Technical Director of Nuclear Medicine. Trevor was an avid coin collector and a recognized authority on British Maundy Coins. He was a man who demonstrated his faith through his life and actions. Trevor and Marie moved to Fletcher Park Inn in 1992. Preceding Trevor in death are his parents, Thomas and Anne; siblings, Francis (Bert), Thomas (Tom), Hugh, Harold, and Edwin. Surviving Trevor are his wife of 69 years, Marie; three sons, John, of Webster, NY; Peter (Linda), of Bismarck, ND; Michael (Karen), of Loma Linda, CA; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren (with one more due this month.)

**FLERL**, Frieda Beatrice, 92, born April 1, 1929, near Chattanooga, TN, died June 19, 2021, in Hendersonville, NC. In 1964, Frieda and her late husband moved from Chattanooga, TN, to Fletcher, NC, in order for their four children to attend an Adventist school while living at home. Frieda taught nursing at the Fletcher Hospital School of Nursing, worked as a nurse at Park Ridge Hospital (AdventHealth Hendersonville), and retired from working in the ICU stepdown unit at the same hospital. In her retirement years Frieda was an active member of the Fletcher Church, volunteering for several years in the Community Services Thrift Store. Frieda was the youngest of four siblings, who all preceded her in death. She was also preceded in death by James, her husband, and eldest child, James E. Flerl, Jr. Surviving are her children, Judy Flerl, Bill Flerl, and Frieda Jean Kubis; her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

**HANSCOM**, Dr. Alfred Carleton, 95, born Feb. 17, 1926, in Rochester, NH, died July 1, 2021, in Flat Rock, NC. He was the son of the late Victor H. and Charlotte A. (Tauber) Hanscom. He spent his childhood in the town of Chatham, nestled in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and graduated with high honors from Fryeburg Academy in 1943. He served as an Army surgical tech in World War II, from early 1945 until Oct. 1946 in both the Pacific and Atlantic theaters. Following his return, he graduated from Atlantic Union College in 1949 and earned a medical degree from Loma Linda University in 1953. On

Nov. 22, 1951, he was married to Julianne Weaver. Over the next five decades, they lived in New Hampshire, California, Michigan, Tennessee, and North Carolina. He was board-certified in family practice, anesthesiology, internal medicine, and emergency medicine, and cared for countless numbers of patients during his nearly 50 years of practice. He was a skilled diagnostician and was well known for spending the time needed for each patient. He was a prolific reader, an adventurous traveler, and a remarkable conversationalist. Even with advanced age, his intellectual curiosity never dimmed. He was a lifelong and dedicated member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a strict vegetarian for his entire 95 years. His wife died in 2007 after 56 years of marriage. In addition to her and his parents, he was predeceased by both of his brothers, S. Gordon Hanscom, and Lieut. Argyle E. Hanscom (who was killed in World War II). He is survived by four children, Dr. David A. Hanscom (Barbara Yohai) of Oakland, CA, Alan C. Hanscom of Salem, MA, Robert B. Hanscom (Diane) of Andover, MA, and Carol Hanscom Haney (Thomas) of Fletcher, NC; nine grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

**KEPLER**, Dorothy Virginia (Parker), 91, born Feb. 25, 1930, in Bunnell, FL, died May 13, 2021, in Fairview, NC. Dorothy grew up in Florida, the second of three children of Carl Parker and Ida (Mosby) Parker. While attending Southern Missionary College, Dorothy met C. Burton (Burt) Keppler, and they married on Aug. 17, 1950. Dorothy graduated in 1951 from Florida Sanitarium and Hospital School of Nursing, then worked as a nurse to support Burt while he finished his nursing degree. The couple welcomed a daughter, Brenda, on Oct. 24, 1952, and Susan on Jan. 5, 1954. In 1955, they moved to Bolivia and worked as medical missionaries. Dorothy was often pressed into physician roles when nobody else was available. She frequently administered anesthesia and performed countless deliveries, including many classified as high-risk, in facilities that ranged from clinics to dirt-floored huts. In 1959, the family returned to the United States. Dorothy supported the family until Burt received his medical degree from Loma Linda University. They moved to Greenville, SC, where Burt opened a medical practice. Dorothy served as administrator, accountant, nurse and receptionist. On June 29, 1968, they had another daughter, Karen, and on Dec. 9, 1969, their fourth and final child, Benjamin, was born. In 1984, the family moved to Western North Carolina where Burt founded Park Ridge Anesthesiology. Dorothy and Burt again served on multiple short-term medical missionary assignments in diverse locations such as Mexico, Panama, Thailand, the Solomon Islands and Guam.

**LONGLEY**, Jean Kenny, 85, died Aug. 17, 2021, in Waynesville, NC. She was a member

of the Mount Pisgah Academy Church. A native of Miami, FL, she was the daughter of the late Levon and Iola Ezell Kenny. Jean followed in the footsteps of her mother, working as both owner and administrator of Silver Bluff Village, then added Silver Bluff skilled nursing, Arrowhead Cove assisted living, the Bluffs independent living, and on-site child day care. She was appointed by N.C. Governor Jim Hunt to the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. She retired in 1998, leaving her daughter, Lisa, with the support of the entire family, to continue the excellent care standards she established. Jean enjoyed traveling, cooking, entertaining and loving her grandchildren whom she called "her girls." She is preceded in death by her parents and brother, Don Kenny. Jean is survived by her husband of 64 years, Max B. Longley; three daughters, Lisa Leatherwood (Bob) of Waynesville, NC, Jodi Pierce (Guy) of High Point, NC, and Lia Clemens (Neal) of McKinney, TX; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

**MERZ**, George C., 80, born Jan. 11, 1940, in Cleveland, OH, died March 10, 2020, in Hendersonville, NC. He retired after 20 years of service in the U.S. Navy as a master chief, and served in multiple active campaigns. He then earned his Master of Science in nutrition from Andrews University and worked as a registered dietician until he retired. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, John Merz. He is survived by his wife of almost 42 years, Nancy Fulfer Merz; a daughter, Elsie Merz (Larry) Hodnett; a son, Robert Merz; two sisters, Laurel Hixson and Barbara Gonzalez; one granddaughter; and numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

**MURPHY**, Jean Kathryn Sunderland, 94, was born Oct. 8, 1926, in Takoma Park, MD, died Aug. 13, 2021, in East Flat Rock, NC. Jean was raised and schooled in Takoma Park and graduated from Takoma Academy in 1944. She attended both Emmanuel Missionary College (Andrews University) and Washington Missionary College (Washington Adventist University). During her senior year in academy she met Harvey Wright Murphy and they married on April 27, 1947. Jean moved to Harvey's home town of Wilson, NC, where they had three children. Later she attended Atlantic Christian College (Barton) and graduated in 1963 with a music major in organ performance. She was a substitute organist in most Sunday churches in Wilson, NC, as well as being the music director in the Adventist Church. She also was in Pathfinder leadership and directed children's choirs. She became an outstanding English Handbell director from the early 1980's until she had to retire due to Parkinson's disease in her late 80s. She traveled around the world serving in short term missions. After Harvey died in 1993, Jean moved to live with her daughter Joan and family in Fletcher, NC. She volunteered with the gift shop at Park Ridge Hospital and became

manager there for a number of years. She was preceded in death by her parents, Janet Morris and Clyde Mills Sunderland; her husband, Harvey; and her sister, Phyllis Sunderland Show. She is survived by her children: Joan Murphy Taylor, S. Blair Murphy (Diane) and Lynn Murphy Ortega; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; a brother-in-law; nieces and nephews; and many devoted friends.

**NELSON**, Ray Aiden, 78, born Oct. 7, 1942, in Hamilton, Bermuda, died Aug. 7, 2021. He was the oldest son of four children of missionary parents Carlyle A. and Thelma (Ray) Nelson. Ray graduated from Atlantic Union College (B.A.) in 1964; Andrews University Seminary (M.Div.) in 1968; and Loma Linda School of Public Health (M.S.P.H.) in 1973. Ray met Valerie Kay Schneider in 1970 in New York City while both were assisting with the music at a series of meetings. They were married Sunday, Aug. 1, 1971. Ray passed away six days after celebrating 50 years of marriage with Valerie. Ray and Val were a pastoral team for over 50 years in California, Connecticut, Vermont, Maine and Maryland. Ray's passion for recovery ministry led him to develop an addiction recovery program that he continued to champion through his retirement. Preceding him in death are his parents Carlyle A. and Thelma (Ray) Nelson, and his younger brother, Carlyle Arthur Nelson. Surviving are his wife, Valerie (Schneider), of Fletcher, NC; one son, Vaughan Nelson (Nadine) of Lincoln, NE; two daughters, Renita Saliba (Glenn) of Clarendon Hills, IL, and Vanessa Hupp (Steve) of Bensalem PA; a brother, Harland Nelson (Frances) of Grovetown, GA; a sister, Meredith Silvers (Roger) of Manheim PA; four grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

**PRENIER**, Barbara Jean Heartsill Manges, 94, born Dec. 15, 1926, in Greenwood, AR, died July 22, 2021, in Flat Rock, NC. She was a member of the Fletcher Church. Barbara was a devoted mother and grandmother. After retiring from secretarial work, she especially enjoyed caring for babies of working parents. Barbara ensured that her daughters receive Seventh-day Adventist education and set an example of healthful living. After the death of Paul, her husband, she moved to Fletcher Park Inn, Hendersonville, NC, at the age of 74. She found family and blossomed there. She loved being with her church family. While living at Fletcher Park Inn she met and married Gordon Prenier. Gordon was involved in mission work and wanted to share some of the Maranatha projects he was involved in, so the couple traveled extensively. A highlight was visiting a church Gorgon pastored in the Cayman Islands. Barbara was preceded in death by her parents, Harris B. and Grace Bassett Heartsill; her husband of 49 years, Paul Manges; and her second husband, Gordon Prenier. She is survived by three daughters, Mary Edwards

(Bruce) of Washington, PA, Paula Means (Wayne Flannigan) of Bakerstown, PA, and Linda Williams of Blude Ridge, GA; three stepdaughters, Gloria Pfeiffer (Dallas) of OR, Betty Smith of CA, and Carol Peden (Roger) of Tryon, NC; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

**THOMAS**, Jean Ena Evadne, 89, was born on Sept. 27, 1932, in Manchester Village to Florence Butcher and Alfred Thomas, who were villagers of Manchester Village, Corentyne, Bernice, and Guyana S.A. Jean grew up in Manchester Village and attended Manchester Primary School. After graduation, Jean pursued careers in several areas including dressmaking, teaching, professional singing, and international cuisine. Jean was very famous for her fried rice and chicken-in-the-ruff [sic] skills while she worked at the Penguin International Hotel in New Amsterdam, Bernice, and Guyana. She was preceded in death by four siblings; Lydia Macculum, Buzzett Thomas, Syll Sandy, and Baby Skestte. Jean is survived by eight children, Clephane Burgess, Hazel Harris, and with husband Edward David: Conrad David, Amanda Campbell, Phillip David, Deyonne Goldson, Regnah Williams, and Odo David; three siblings, Waveney Ainsworth, Gerald Thomas and Othille Joseph; three sons-in-law; four daughters-in-law; 29 grandchildren and 47 great-grandchildren.

**Notice: Date change of  
Carolina Conference Session.**

*The Quinquennial Carolina  
Conference Session has been postponed  
from August of 2021 to August of 2022.*

**Carolina Conference Calendar**

**Subject to cancellations.**

**See [www.carolinasda.org](http://www.carolinasda.org) for COVID-19  
calendar updates.**

**NOVEMBER**

**Impact Youth Rally— 5-6.** MPA

**Coming Together: Live— 10-14.**

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**DECEMBER**

**Ministerial Spouses' Retreat— 10-12.** Nosoca Pines Ranch.

**MAGABOOK - Winter Student Program— 12-Jan 6.** Learn more at [www.carolinamagabooks.org](http://www.carolinamagabooks.org).

MORE EVENTS AT [WWW.CAROLINASDA.ORG](http://WWW.CAROLINASDA.ORG)

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