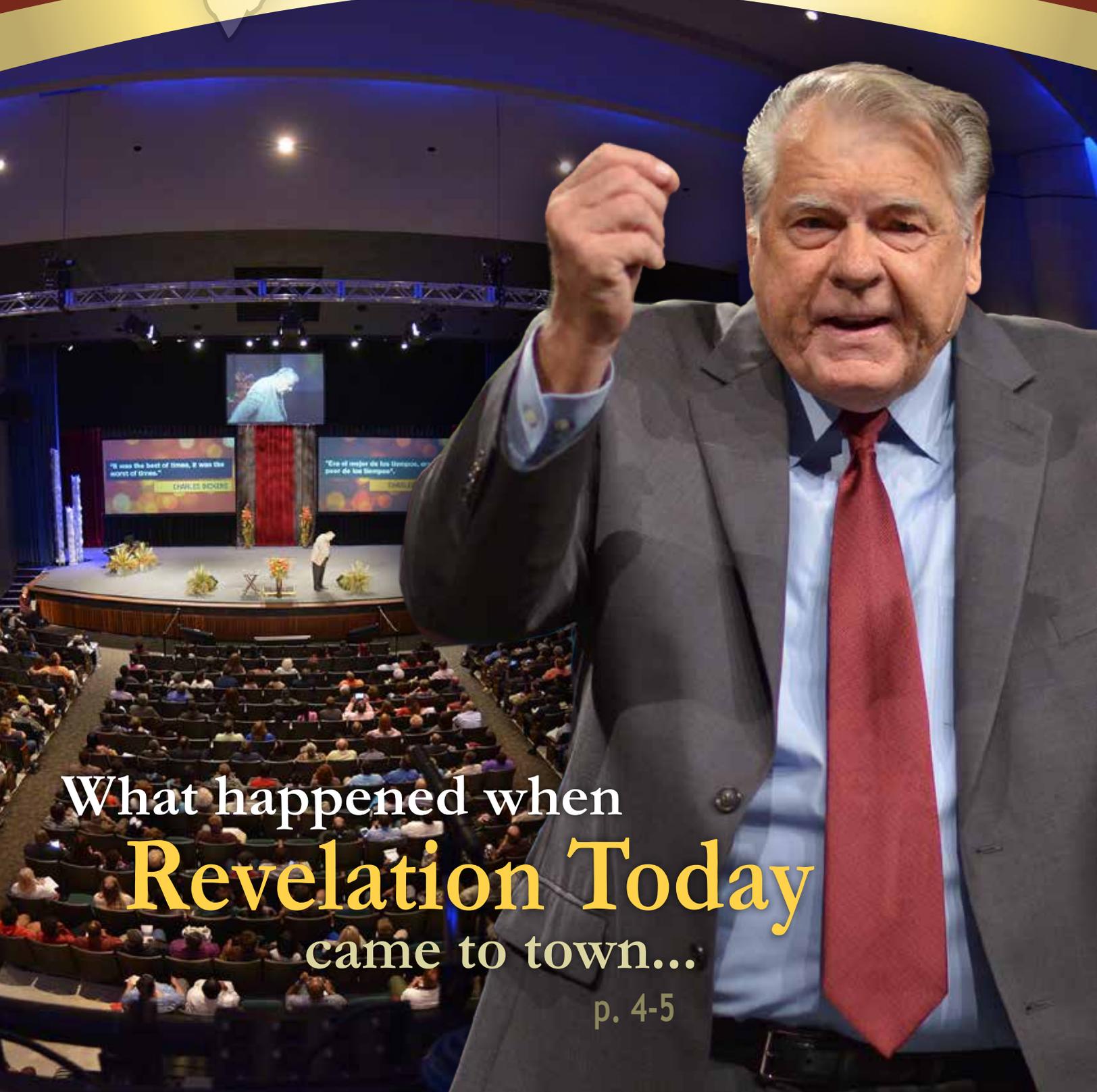


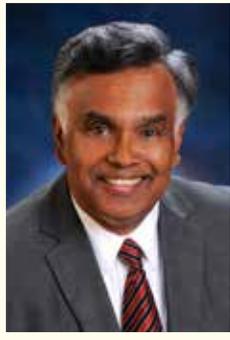
CAROLINA ACTION

ISSUE 1, 2014 EMBRACING CAROLINA WITH THE COMPASSIONATE CALL OF CHRIST



What happened when
Revelation Today
came to town...

p. 4-5



From the President's Pen

by Leslie D. Louis, Carolina Conference President

An Invitation to be a Presidential Prayer Partner

What an incredible promise is packed in the words of 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

It's true that there are many verses of the Bible that are restricted in their context to certain places and events of the time for which they were written. However, many other verses can easily be recognized for and should be considered general precepts of truth that apply to both the time for which they were written and beyond. This is one of those passages.

"IF" – It's just a little, two letter word. Yet it carries such a profound significance.

"MY PEOPLE" – Do you regard yourself as one who truly believes in the Lord Jesus – one who has not only accepted the gift of salvation, but also embraced Jesus as the Lord of your life?

"WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME" – Are you truly grateful to call yourself a Seventh-day Adventist? Do you recognize that to carry this name, you accept a sacred vow that entrusts you to be part of a faithful remnant fellowship who passionately desire to invite others to join that relationship?

This passage of scripture is so clear and so concise. Look at it carefully... Here God requires four things from His people:

- That we humble ourselves
- That we pray
- That we seek His face
- That we turn from our wicked ways

And IF and only IF God's people do these four things, THEN and only THEN, God will do these three things for us:

- He will hear from Heaven
- He will forgive our sins
- He will heal our land

As your servant leader for God's church in the Carolinas, I would like to invite you to join me as a Presidential Prayer Partner. Every month since October, I have been sharing my vision of finding at least 10,000 Presidential Prayer Partners (out of a current membership of almost 22,000 members). Your job would be a very simple one – PRAY!

Every month a Carolina Presidential Prayer Partner will receive the List of Seven, items that we would uplift before the Lord for His blessing and His divine intervention. Keep this list in your Bible, on the refrigerator, in your car or anywhere that you spend time in prayer.

What would happen in Carolina if 10,000 people prayed every day each month for seven things that impact God's work in this part of His vineyard? Think about that – seven things that would be uplifted at least 300,000 before the Lord every month! That's truly power-packed prayer by God's people!

To see the List of Seven for this month, simply go to the Carolina Conference website, and click on the Generous Living link. Fill out a simple response form on that page



to join the Presidential Partner team. If you don't have access to e-mail or the Internet, simply call my secretary, Babette Crofford, at the Conference office (704-596-3200) and she'll be happy to get you on the list to receive my monthly prayer list.

Ellen White, God's special messenger, penned these beautiful words for you and me under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Heaven is full of blessings, and it is our privilege to claim the rich promises of God for our individual selves. We need to seek the Lord day and night that we may know just what steps to take and just what we ought to do." *My Life Today*, page 62.

May God bless us as His people as we commit ourselves to truly being a people of prayer!

Your servant leader in Christ,

Leslie D. Louis, President

Society of Adventist Communicators

Ron Quick Receives Lifetime Achievement Award at Annual Communication Convention

The Society of Adventist Communicators convention features awards for “best in class” projects and recognition for communication leaders. The convention convened in Salt Lake City from October 24-26, 2013.

“Each year at our convention, awards are given out recognizing excellence in the field of communication,” says George Johnson Jr., SAC executive director.

Nominations for awards are received by a specific date and then reviewed by a committee of communication professionals.

The Lifetime Achievement award is designed for a professional who has worked in communication for at least 25 years and has made a substantial contribution to the field.

Ron Quick, Carolina Conference communication director, received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades of dedicated, mission-driven service as an army medical

photographer, newspaperman, literature evangelist, publishing director and church communication leader.

Ron’s creativity and desire to remain on the cutting edge has brought him many awards throughout his career. In all of his accomplishments, he has exceeded duty and surpassed expectations, raising the standard for communication within the worldwide Adventist church.

Ron, though a lover of culture and travel, is ultimately a lover of people. Throughout his life, he has relished the time spent getting to know those whom he wanted to represent—those whose unique stories, whether in writing or in photo, he wanted to share. Many an inspiring story would not have been told without his dedication and hard work.



Ron’s career at the Conference has been spent doing interviews, producing video reports, photographing events, writing and editing stories and producing a myriad of publications. In developing reports for ShareHim and others, Ron has traveled the world. He is pictured above during production in Irian Jaya, Indonesia.

“Quickly speaking, thank you,” Quick says as he accepted the award amid a standing ovation. Quick plans to retire in July of this year.

— by Heidi Baumgartner, SAC vice president for communication. Photos at award banquet by Gerry Chudleigh.



Former Intern at MPA Wins Student Award

Southern Adventist University student Rebecca Anderson received the Student Award. The student award is designed to recognize students who have demonstrated excellence not only in the classroom, but on-the-job as well. Anderson is a proactive student who pursued two internships in religious (at Mount Pisgah Academy) and corporate communication. She plans to work for the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tenn. “I encourage all students to pursue internships,” Anderson said in her acceptance speech.

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When Revelation Today



Charlotte’s metropolitan Owens Auditorium rang with gospel song and forceful preaching of God’s Word from October 11 through November 9. More than two years of planning between It Is Written, the South Atlantic and Carolina Conferences and 3 Angels Broadcasting Network culminated in an evangelistic outreach to the population of the greater Charlotte area in which more than 100 individuals committed their lives to Jesus Christ and united with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

How did it happen? It began with a burden and a dream in 2010. Minner Labrador, who was then pastoring the Charlotte Sharon church, approached then-president of the Carolina Conference, Jim Davidson, with a burning desire to reach the most populous city between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, GA. A brainstorming session surfaced the name John Bradshaw, recently appointed speaker/director of It Is Written.

This was to be an outreach from ALL of the Adventists of Charlotte to ALL the people of Charlotte. Leaders of the Carolina and South Atlantic Conferences invited their churches and pastors to the table for planning.

It Is Written staff—John Bradshaw (speaker/director) and Yves Monnier (evangelism director)—traveled to Charlotte to listen, share and plan.

Two waves of tens of thousands cards were mailed with an invitation to study God’s Word, and nearly 400 responded. The ministers, realizing the enormity of preparation, decided to meet the first Thursday of each month for planning and coordination. Teachers from the SALT program (Soul-winning And Leadership Training Institute) at Southern Adventist University led in lay training dozens of members for following up interests and giving Bible studies.

A rally at Charlotte Central Spanish Church kicked off the New Year 2013 as John Bradshaw rallied some 600 “troops.” Congregations all around town shifted into high gear, praying for their families, neighbors and friends; responding to Bible study requests; holding felt need seminars.

Two teams of student literature evangelists from Georgia-Cumberland and Ouachita Hills College arrived in May and took Gospel books to hundreds of thousands of homes in the Charlotte area, along with invitations to hear John Bradshaw come October.

Anticipation mounted in each of the churches as autumn drew near. Pastors and lay-leaders were now meeting weekly for prayer and direction. Then the shoe dropped...

Yves broke the shocking news that John Bradshaw had been diagnosed with cancer of the tongue. “Of the tongue...?” How much more directly than by hitting him through his instrument of speech? We were shocked. It felt as if the wind had been sucked out of the room. I remember saying, “This has taken us by surprise, but it hasn’t caught God off-guard.”

The lesson we should have already learned was about to be repeated—the Message is larger than the man. There had been other changes, but God had seen us through. The Carolina Conference had a new president, but the plans went forward. The pastor who initiated Charlotte 4 Christ was called elsewhere, but the progress continued. Now the speaker was not able to speak... and the presentation would proceed. My wife, Cindy, suggested, “Why not ask Ron Halvorsen?”

Ron Halvorsen (who had “been trying to retire for ten years”) was sitting in a boat on the Crystal River fishing



Sending God's message from Charlotte, NC, to the world!

Came to Town



when he got the call. His response was, "Can't you get someone better? I'm 75 years old!" But he felt God's call and accepted the challenge.

There was not a pause or a halt in the process, just a little detour as Ron revised and developed new sermons and Palmer Halvorsen spent hundreds of hours updating the graphics to broadcast quality. Friends of It Is Written, like Maynard and Ellie LeBrun and Leroy and Edna Dockham, drove across the country to assist.

During rehearsal the night before opening night, everything was set up, including the cameras and broadcast equipment from 3ABN, ready to spread Revelation Today across the continent and beyond via satellite and internet streaming. Pastor Mendinghall led all the volunteers in a prayer of dedication and beseeching God to bring people to the meeting.

And they came! Opening night saw over 1,300 people filling the seats. Night by night, they listened to questions answered by John Bradshaw (by recorded video), songs by Charles Haugabrooks and messages of hope by Ron Halvorsen. While attendance varied between 550 and 1,500, interests came consistently. The water in the baptistries was

kept busy night by night. Pastors Bryan Aalborg and David Graham (Charlotte Sharon), Marvin McLean (Gastonia Ephesus), Julio Flores (Central Spanish), Ezra Mendinghall (Northeast), Casey Ricks (Trinity), Ryan Ashlock (University City), Christopher Whitaker (Pageland and Rock Hill New Life), David Smith (Berean) and Tom Mills (Monroe) raised their hands in prayer as candidate after candidate was plunged beneath the waters of baptism. At last count, 104 individuals had joined one of the area congregations, with over a dozen more planning for baptism by the holidays. And beyond those, 30-40 strong interests remained to be followed up. And we have yet to hear reports from the dozens of churches and hundreds of homes that hosted local Revelation Today neighborhood downlinks.

There were many wonderful stories of conversion. Sierra Hernandez approached the Bible School desk concerned about missing the baptism. She had heard Ron's presentation and was convicted but was upset that she had a pre-arranged trip to Mexico City on the date of the announced baptism. She was assured that there would be additional opportunities

once she returned. Sierra and her husband, David, didn't miss a meeting. On their trip they watched the sermons via internet streaming with David's mother in Mexico. They were beaming as they were baptized on the last Sabbath morning.

During the course of the seminar friendships were developed with many members of the staff in Ovens Auditorium. They provided dedicated service night by night and several were touched by the seeds of truth and kindness sown in their hearts.

The churches of Charlotte saw God's Spirit move on the hearts of hundreds, and they are convinced that it was because of the close harmony and cooperation of all of the pastors, leaders and members across the Charlotte metropolitan area. And as Georgia Dixon, outreach coordinator of the Berean church, said, "We've got to keep this going."

Amen!

—Haskell Williams, Conference Evangelism Director. Photos by Ken Ford, Ron Quick and Becky Carpenter.

The Revelation Today series with Ron Halvorsen is currently being re-broadcast on 3ABN and Hope Channel. Check listings for times.

A Special Agape Feast

When was the last time you attended an Agape Feast? The Arden church recently hosted one of the loveliest Agape Feasts I've ever experienced on Sabbath, August 10, in the Arden Community Center. Dr. Eli Rojas, senior pastor, thought it would be a good time for our members to share and connect with each other in a special way; a time to reflect our mutual love and goodwill toward each other. History tells us that an Agape Feast is "a meal shared among early Christians as a symbol of love" and "a gathering intended to promote goodwill among the participants." My favorite definition is "a symbolic meal eaten with others as a sign of mutual love and fellowship." With such beautiful definitions, is it any wonder that all those who attended were richly blessed?

Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ and His disciples shared a similar experience. They also shared the loving cup and broken bread. We can assume they sang hymns and read from the Scriptures, as it is our practice. While all this is quite beautiful and has special significance, I find that personally what touches me are the testimonies shared by our church members. These stories of faith are meaningful because they 'bond us' to the story teller. By publicly sharing their individual stories, they are teaching us something about our Creator, Jesus Christ, and what He has done for them in their lives.

The reflections of the table candles mingled with the sweet, soft music not only intensified the beauty of the moment, but reconnected us with our heavenly Father. It certainly made me think of having this feast in heaven with Jesus. It made me long for that special occasion. I wonder what 'reflections' we will share in God's kingdom?

— By Penina Braister-Sturgis



Photo by Ron Quick

Pastors/Evangelists Attend Annual Event

The first week of December is the Southern Union Evangelism Council. This annual event takes place in Daytona Beach, FL. Haskell Williams, conference ministerial director, took

several Carolina pastor/evangelists to this evangelistic training event. The pastors pose for a picture with Ron Halvorsen. Also in the photo is Ralph Ringer, third from left, Southern Union organizer of the Evangelism Council.

—by Ron Quick

- **New Year's Resolution to GAIN ::** Losing a few pounds is probably on your list of resolutions in 2014. But this year, why not resolve to GAIN? Gain a friend for the kingdom, that is! Start by visiting or calling a former or inactive member. Reconnecting with someone who is lonely or feeling disenfranchised can make a difference...perhaps an eternal difference! So go ahead and lose those pounds, but don't lose the chance to show someone you still care. Reconnect today!

Conference Vice-President Certified as Ziglar Legacy Trainer

In the summer of 1986, while searching for direction and fulfillment in his life, Gary Moyer accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord after listening to a cassette tape of the testimony of motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar. God eventually led Gary into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and then into full-time ministry. Gary has been listening to and reading Zig Ziglar's materials, which are based on biblical values, ever since then, sharing with others the life-changing principles that have had such a positive influence in his life.



Photo by Ron Quick

In November of 2013, Gary received certification as a Ziglar Legacy Trainer. He will be incorporating keynote speeches and seminars on personal development, winning relationships, and goals as part of his ministry. Churches can use these seminars to minister to their members, as well as a way of reaching out to their communities and acquainting them with your congregation. Business owners can also benefit by taking advantage of these character building presentations for employee development. Please contact Gary at gmoyer@carolinasda.com

for more information if your church or business would like to take advantage of this new ministry opportunity to help grow your people.

Southern Union SEEDS

Church Planting and Growth Summit

Sharing God's Passion for Your City

May 9-10, 2014

Raleigh SDA Church
4805 Dillard Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27606

Registration Required: www.carolinasda.org

Presenters:

Walter Allred
Church Planting Coordinator
Indiana Conference

Brad Cauley
Church Planting Coordinator
Carolina Conference

Tom Evans
SEEDS Director/NADEI Assoc. Dir.
Church Planting/Coaching

Roger Hernandez
Ministerial/Evangelism Dir.
Southern Union

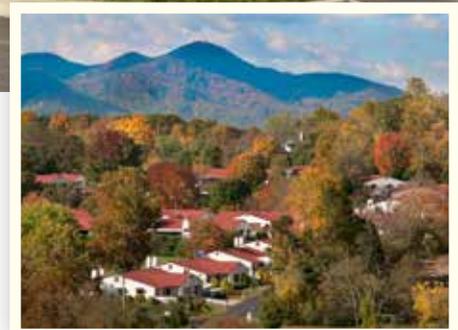
Rod & Donna Willey
Church Planters
Illinois Conference

Simon Martin
Church Planter
Southern England Conf.



PISGAH VALLEY

A Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Community



Pisgah Valley Retirement Community is a licensed Continuing Care Retirement Community (“CCRC”) nestled in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Located just 10 miles from Asheville, the Community is in the cradle of the Blue Ridge. The community offers individuals 55 and older a full continuum of care—an integrated system that allows residents to move from one level of care to the next without the inconvenience of leaving the campus. This continuum includes:

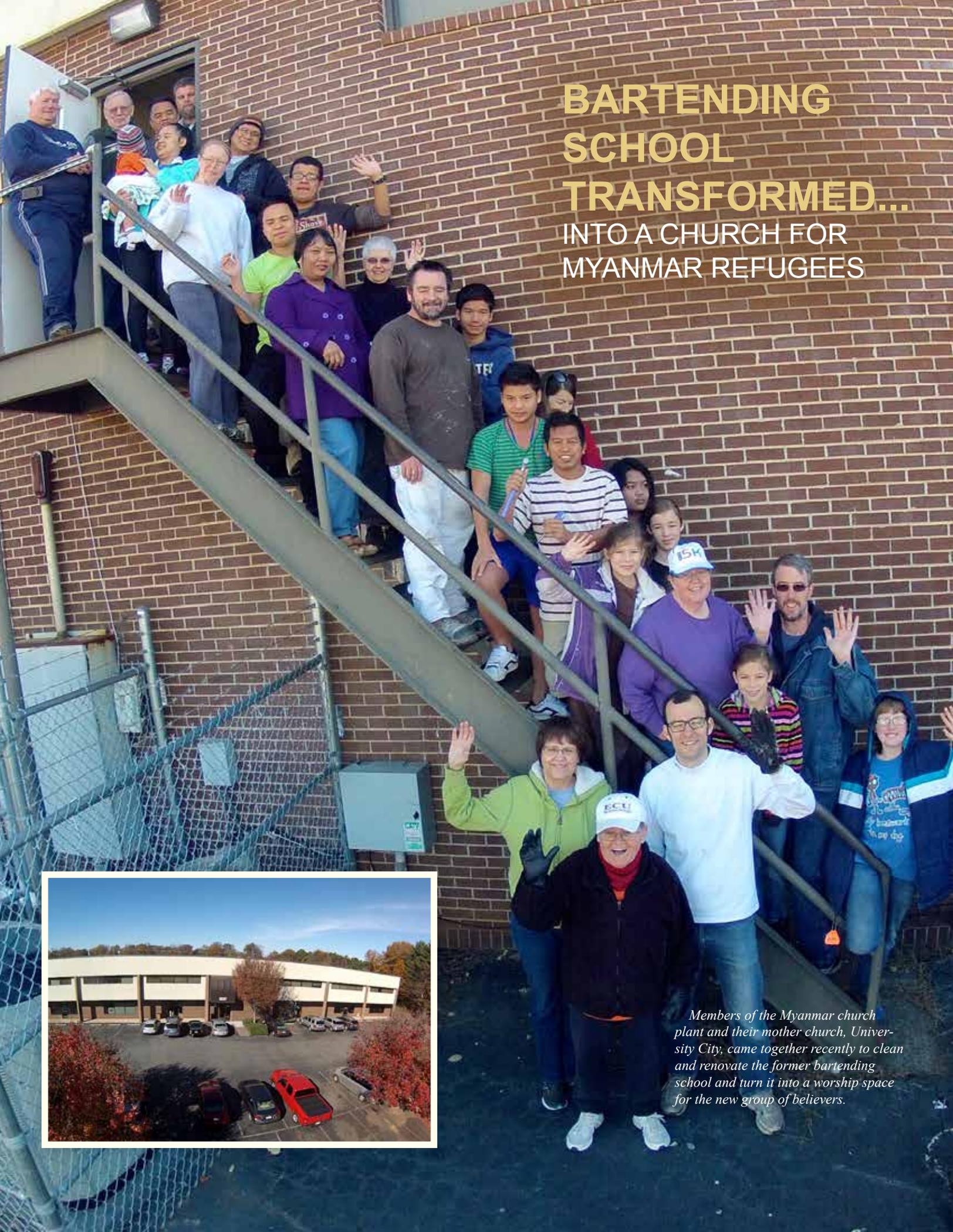
- 72 condominiums for an independent living lifestyle
- A 24-bed assisted living facility
- A new 118-bed, 67,000 square-foot skilled nursing and rehab facility
- A 6,000 square-foot wellness center with a therapy pool, Jacuzzi, dry sauna and strength-training and cardio equipment

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BARTENDING SCHOOL TRANSFORMED... INTO A CHURCH FOR MYANMAR REFUGEES



Members of the Myanmar church plant and their mother church, University City, came together recently to clean and renovate the former bartending school and turn it into a worship space for the new group of believers.



Suite 221, on the second floor at 5337 Albemarle Road, will never be the same. What was once a bartending school was transformed into a church. Just beneath suite 221 on the first floor, things really start “hopping” at night. That space is home to a night club. But in spite of these unique circumstances, this is the ideal location for the new Myanmar International Seventh-day Adventist church. Why? Because the building happens to be right next door to the apartment complex that is home to many Adventist Myanmar refugees.

The plight of Adventist Myanmar refugees in Charlotte first came to the attention of Mike Alvarez, a member of the Sharon church in Charlotte, when one of the refugees showed up for Sabbath worship during the winter wearing flip flops. Mike investigated and discovered there was a need for a ministry to the refugee population. Alvarez shared the idea to folks at the University City church who were preparing to launch the Fort Mill church plant. They immediately responded and began laying plans for a second church plant. So the Fort Mill church plant planted a church before they themselves had even been planted!

The United States grants humanitarian protection, on a limited basis, to refugees from several countries. One such group is the Karen refugees from Burma, now called Myanmar. Because of attacks on their villages many of the Burmese fled to refugee camps in Thailand. There are roughly nine main refugee camps on the boarder inside Thailand. Seventh-day Adventists are permitted to run

schools in these camps. It is the refugees that grew up in the Adventist-run schools that have ended up in Charlotte.

It just so happened that Richard Hambley and his family recently moved back to Charlotte and was looking for a church home. They heard about the upcoming Fort Mill launch and considered joining that group, but when they heard about the needs with the Burmese they jumped right in.

Since most all the Myanmar refugees live in an apartment complex off Albemarle Road, they began with having the worship service in one of those apartments. Since the apartment is only temporary it was necessary to find the right location for a church. After Hambley, now the leader of the church plant, explained to the proprietor of the building next door what the space would be used for, they were able to acquire the conveniently-located former bartending school for half the going rate.

University City Pastor Ryan Ashlock reports that, “There’s a huge population of Burmese refugees living in Charlotte, and more are coming to the area. So the potential for growth and outreach is huge.” He also states, “Not only will it be a church, but it will also be a community center. There will be a Care-Closet plus opportunity for job training.”

“Most of the refugees have not even driven an automobile,” Hambley explains. “Presently we’re giving them driving lessons.”

Additional plans for this new Uni-

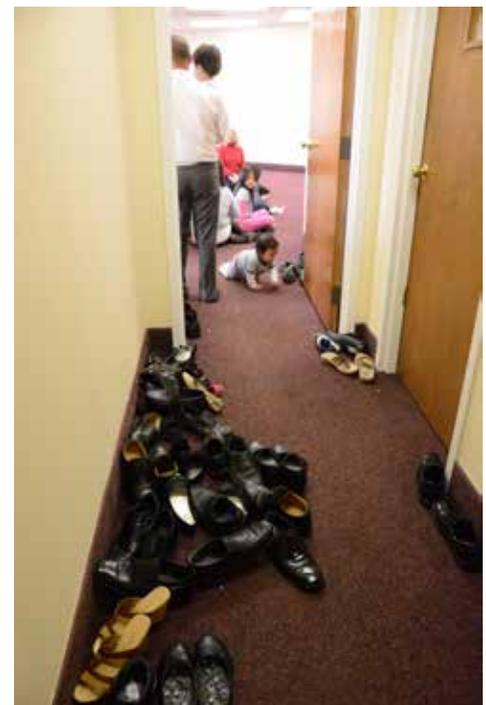
versity City Church plant are; English classes, how to ride a bus, filling out medical forms for children and many other basic parts of living in a new country.

“When the United Nations brings them over,” Hambley explains, “they have eight months. After that they’ve got to fend for themselves.”

The Myanmar church plant is the fourth plant for the University City church. Their other church plants are in Huntersville, NC, Fort Mill, SC, and a Swahili church plant.

Pastor Ashlock proudly reports, “A space that was once used to train bartenders to serve alcohol will now be used for a church to train people to share the message of Jesus Christ.”

—by Ron Quick



Photos contributed



For Vacation Bible School, the Thomasville, NC, church took their boys and girls on a trip to a Nazarene Bakery—without leaving their fellowship hall!

Members transformed the room into the “Bread of Life Bakery,” and on each of the five nights they explored what it was like to make bread 2000 years ago. They talked about breads from different parts of the world—

tortillas from Mexico, pretzels from Germany, naan from India, etc. Then, during snack time, they would eat the type of bread they had learned about.

During devotional time each night, Pastor Steve Bietz presented stories from the Bible that talked about bread; such as the ravens bringing bread to Elijah and the boy whose lunch fed 5000 people.

Each child was given an apron and a chef hat to remember their VBS experience. A total of 30 children came each night, with 10 of them from the community.

This time together showed the boys and girls that Jesus is the best bread of all; for He is the Bread of Life.

— by Steve Bietz



Let's Move Day

The Myrtle Beach church hosted Let's Move Day on Sunday, September 22, from 2pm to 4pm. It was a free, fun event for the community, geared to fight the problem of obesity, especially among young children. There were 28 kids who registered and 10 stations for them to rotate through. Stations included an obstacle course, jump rope, relay races, frisbee golf, hula hoops, basketball, soccer and circuit training. After completing each station, kids received a backpack of things to help them continue on their journey to a healthy lifestyle, and certification of completion and fitness. Of the 28, 15 were from the community. Their parents participated in a cooking/nutrition class which included ideas for healthy lunches and snacks presented by dieticians, samples and a booklet of recipes and nutritional information. It was a wonderful, “moving” day!

Buildings Reaching Community-Wide

Across the Carolinas several Adventist churches have built Family-Life centers or Community Service Centers. Call them whatever you will but these building additions have worked well for the local church.

The Arden, Hendersonville, Kernersville, Raleigh, Westminster and other churches that have included such an addition have seen significant blessings as a result. Not only have they provided a wonderful space for their church family activities, but they've been able to reach out to their

community in a much bigger way.

Many are equipped with industrial-strength kitchens, including generators to be used in emergency power outages. They provide space for cooking schools, health seminars, family events, socials and other activities that were not possible in the original church or fellowship hall. Each church has had to make a significant effort and sacrifice to undertake such a large project, but to a one they feel it was worth it.

In the case of both the Greenville, NC, and Summerville, SC, churches, their community centers have also provided a wonderful venue to host an old-fashioned camp meeting! The Carolina Conference holds Eastern Carolina camp meeting in Greenville North and the Lowcountry camp meeting in Summerville, SC, (pictured left) each year.

— by Ron Quick



Photo by Ron Quick

Photo by Billy Davis



Exciting things are happening at the Wilmington, NC, Adventist school this year.

One of those things was a special visit they had this Fall. Rookie Davis, a Minor League pitcher for the New York Yankees, stopped by to spend time with the students.

It was a beautiful morning when Rookie and his father, Billy, arrived. The visit began in the multi-purpose room, where Becky Anderson, the principal/teacher, introduced Rookie to the students. He then began to

tell about himself and meet each student one by one. But the only thing on the children's minds was, "Let's play baseball!"

Rookie and Billy (a baseball instructor) helped each student with their batting stance, then divided the students into two teams. He pitched to both teams, giving each student multiple chances to play. It's not very often you have a Yankees pitcher pitch for P.E.!

The students, Rookie, Billy and the school staff had a great time. Even a stranger walking by the school during the game caught the enthusiasm and was cheering as he passed. He didn't even know who he was cheering for!

When the game ended everyone went back inside where Rookie and the students chatted together,



and he gave them each one of his baseball cards. He encouraged them to do what they most enjoy when they grow up and always follow God.

Rookie's relationship with the school doesn't end there. They are staying in contact and look forward to another visit in the future. Maybe one day soon, the school will go on a field trip to watch Rookie pitch, perhaps in the big leagues.

—by Jim Anderson
(For more pictures, check out their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wilmingtonadventistschool.)



Photo by Becky Anderson

Photo by Becky Carpenter



Fletcher Church Remains on the Cutting Edge with Marriage Seminar

"Are you mad about marriage, or just plain mad?," said seminar host Mike Tucker to the 100-plus attendees of the Mad About Marriage seminar held November 8-9, 2013, at the Lelia Patterson Center.

Mike and his wife, Gayle, take this marriage ministry on the road each year with seminar dates in

cities around the country. Mike is the speaker/director of Faith for Today, and he and Gayle host the television program, Lifestyle Magazine, which is shown on cable and satellite networks all over the United States. In the Mad About Marriage Seminars, Mike and Gayle examine some of the issues that can derail marriages. They draw on current research and the expertise of a variety of scholars, authors and psychologists to find solutions

to the problems. And they do it in a personal, thought-provoking yet humorous way, putting you off your guard just enough to make it sink in and make a difference.

Among other tips and techniques to wade through marriage mishaps, the seminar teaches participants how to deal with the four negative patterns of communication: "Escalation (an argument begins with a small issue, but increases in

intensity and negativity, with each partner upping the ante); Invalidation (a pattern in which one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other); Negative Interpretation (when one partner interprets what the other person says or does more negatively than it was intended); and Avoidance and Withdrawal (when one partner fails to deal with difficult issues by avoiding the discussion or withdrawing altogether.)"

"If you're married, engaged, dating or thinking of dating, you need to hear this seminar," said one attendee. "My husband and I thought what we were fighting about was unique to us. Turns out every couple deals with the same kinds of issues, and there are proven ways to deal with them. It's so refreshing to finally have the tools we need to make real changes in the way we communicate."

Learn more at www.madabout-marriage.com.

—by Becky Carpenter

GENEROUS LIVING

ALL OF ME IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM



Moments of Decision

by S. Joseph Kidder

As I entered the church I was visiting, a man carrying an armload of papers greeted me. He shook my hand while complaining to another man about some church business that should not have been discussed in my presence. In a nervous attempt to make me feel welcome, he said, "It was nice to meet you. You'll like our church. It's a very friendly place."

When I entered the sanctuary, a woman stood up to give the announcements and said, "We do not have potluck today as the bulletin mentioned. Sorry, we had to cancel it." A man interrupted her by saying, "No, we moved it to the park." Another person shouted, "That is not a good idea since it is going to rain." Finally, the pastor came to the front and made it clear that the potluck had been rescheduled. This back-and-forth exchange took several minutes, but it felt like an eternity.

I was so embarrassed that I wanted to crawl under the pew. I prayed that there were no visitors. As a seasoned church member, I said in my heart, "I will never come back here." Imagine how a visitor would have felt.

Encounters of the right kind

When a person talks to a member of your church, calls on the tele-

phone, receives a brochure in the mail, or drives into your parking lot, this could be a moment of decision. A moment of decision is any occasion in which a person comes in contact with and forms an impression of your church. This impression in an individual's mind is generalized to your entire church. The end result of the contact is a feeling positive or negative—about your church.

Think like a guest

To understand a new person's experience, you need to think like an outsider. Let us look at eight key moments of decision that are faced by newcomers to the church. For each one, rate your church as it is now, then compare it to what should happen when a guest visits your church.

1. Driving up to the church building. Is the landscaping around your church well kept and the parking lot nicely paved and clear of debris? Are the exterior walls and windows of the building attractive? Are there parking spaces clearly saved for guests?

2. Walking up to the front door. Are there warm and friendly people greeting guests *before* they enter the building? Is the entrance clearly marked? Does it present an inviting look which says, "Please come in?"

3. Entering the building. Are the sounds that guests hear upon entering the building uplifting? Is there a pleasant odor? Does the decor seem attractive and welcoming? Are the directional signs easily visible? Are there people available to answer questions and give assistance?

4. Meeting friendly people. Are church members outgoing and approachable? Do they express an attitude of acceptance to newcomers? Is there a comfortable and authentic friendliness?

5. Experiencing ministries and services. Is the child care area clean,

bright, and open? Are the restrooms clean and free of unpleasant odors? Are classrooms nicely decorated?

6. Meeting ushers and entering the sanctuary. Do ushers smile and express a friendly attitude? Is the atmosphere of the worship area vibrant and happy? Is there room to sit without being unduly crowded? Are guests welcomed graciously and treated with respect?

7. Participating in the worship service. Is the order of the worship service easy to follow? Are the songs easy for the newcomers to sing? Are the words of the songs available? Do guests feel at ease and comfortable? Do guests find a friendly atmosphere upon leaving the worship area? Are they greeted in positive ways by people around them? Are they invited to a refreshment table to talk and meet others?

8. Contact follow-up. Do guests receive a personal contact within 48 hours of their first visit to your church? Are they invited back? Do you surprise guests with an extra measure of service like a book or a basket of goodies? Are guests put on your mailing list for appropriate future contact? Do they receive a church newsletter describing ministries they might find interesting? Do members call and extend a personal invitation to special events?

What do guests see, experience, and feel from these moments of decision in your church? As you think of what you can do to create a positive experience for your guests, do everything with excellence. Spend many hours in prayer, so that people who come to your church will experience the presence of God.

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Arden Member Receives State Education Award

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC-DPI) has selected Sharon Lewis as recipient of the State Instructional Management Coordinator (IMC) of the Year Award. Sharon was nominated and selected to represent the Western Regional IMC's at the state level, where she received this award and a standing ovation at the presentation luncheon in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Instructional Management Coordinators provide curriculum management and instructional support to Career and Technical teachers; they organize and implement state-mandated secured assessments and provide data analysis for local administrators and CTE teachers to use as a tool for improving teacher instruction and student performance. Sharon is well known statewide for her workshops on classroom management and creative teaching ideas. For many years, she was state trainer for all newly hired IMCs. Her philosophy of education is to "train students (and teachers) to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of others."

Sharon, a graduate of Union College, is a member of the Arden Seventh-day Adventist Church. She currently works with sixty middle school and high school teachers. Arden congratulates her on this recognition.



Photo contributed

Romance at the Ranch

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A Renewed Commitment to Marriage

It was a sea of beautiful brides and adoring husbands as 23 couples renewed their wedding vows in the Charlotte Spanish Church on September 29, 2013. This recommitment to marriage came at the end of an inspiring and restorative "Family Week" presented by Dr. Antonieta Silva from Venezuela. She presented current and important topics centered around family issues. Several miracles took place as a result of these meetings. Some couples who had serious family issues were reconciled.

One couple who attended the entire week won a 4-day Florida vacation for the whole family! The Charlotte Spanish church prays that God will keep His blessing upon every renewed couple. — by Julio Flores



Photo contributed



Sleeping Bags, Diapers and Dresses

On most Thursday mornings you will find at least six committee members from the North Anderson, SC, church making sleeping mats for the homeless from ordinary plastic grocery bags. It takes approximately 500-700 bags to make one 6'x3' mat. To date, the group has made 23 mats. The committee has also made 73 baby diapers in all sizes, colors and prints to send to foreign countries. They also plan to make pillow slip dresses for girls in Haiti. The committee goal is to have fun, but most of all to let people know that Jesus loves them.

If you are interested in making any of these items, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Betty Jean Clarke, 3551 Highway 81, North Anderson, SC, 29621

Remodeling Project Brings Community Together

The Spanish church of Greenville, SC, had a good problem. Their congregation was growing and they needed to remodel the church interior to reflect the growth.

So Edward and Rosendo Torres Leiva, two church leaders with expertise in construction, got the project rolling. "It was a shame that the house where we meet God was untidy," said Edward. "It was necessary to make a change, because beautifying the church gives our members more encouragement to meet and bring others in."

After talking with the pastor and church board, a plan was formed to execute the demolition and remodeling. Not only church members, but also members of the community and area businesses who had a good relationship with



Before



After

the church decided to donate materials and free time. For two weeks, members and visitors worked side by side, singing, laughing and making the hard work a joy.

With the help of God, the church was able to complete a job that would have been long and costly with a fraction of the time and money. The end result was not only a beautiful building, but also a more united church. "This was a way for members who may not be involved in a church program to participate in reaching the community," Edward said. "Many times I have received blessings because I put God and His work first. I have seen the blessings fall like the Bible says, 'until it overflows.' You never lose when you work for God."

— by Nelson A. Fernandez, Jr. Photos by Rosendo Torres.



Sabbath evening, December 14, 2013, churches in Upstate South Carolina were treated to a one-of-a-kind event.

A musical Christmas program brought together various churches in the area in celebration of the season. "At first, the idea was to have our district churches come together,"

said Sarah Fernandez, coordinator of the event. "But then the idea evolved to include all the churches in the area." The invitation was extended to churches in both the Carolina and the South Atlantic Conference.

In the end, over 200 members from area congregations—Anderson, Clemson, Greenville, Pickens, Salem, Spartanburg and Westminster—packed the host church, Clemson, for a night of singing, instruments, skits and stories.

There was even a gospel choir from the Baptist church that rents the building on Sundays.

"We want this to be a bridge-

building event in our community," said Nelson Fernandez, host pastor of the Clemson and Greenville Spanish churches. "Next year, the idea is to pass the torch to another Adventist church that would like to host the event, so that everyone can support the service and help foster a sense of community among our churches."

—by Nelson A. Fernandez, Jr.



Carolina Obituaries

LOPANIK, MABEL, 88, born Nov. 8, 1925, in Plymouth, PA, died Jan. 1, 2014, in Hendersonville, NC. Mabel was a homemaker and served in the hospitality ministry and as a deaconess for the Fletcher church. She was preceded in death by her husband, John, and is survived by five children, Robert Lopanik (Linda) of Charleston, SC, Bruce Lopanik (Darlene) of Mendham, NJ, Jon Scott Lopanik of Hendersonville, NC, Mary Lopanik of Sparta, NJ, and Robyn Luliano (Tom) of Greenville, TN; seven grandchildren, Donald Ingram, Nicole Tailefert, Lindsey Literati, Christopher Lopanik, Andrew Lopanik, Bethany Luliano and Timothy Luliano; and five great-grandchildren.

MITCHELL, PAUL JACKSON, 70, born Apr. 22, 1942, in Burke County, NC, died Mar. 11, 2013, in Morganton, NC. He was preceded in death by three brothers, Walter, Dan Jr. and Clyde Mitchell; and two sisters, Dorothy Mitchell and Hazel Detter. Paul was a member of the Morganton church. He was a former employee of Drexel-Heritage Furnishing Company and retired from Western Carolina Center. He owned and operated Laurel Carpet sales for over 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Shirlee Swain Mitchell; three children, Cynthia Vande Vere (David) of Frederick, MD, Christopher Lynn Mitchell of Las Vegas, NV, and Michael Todd Mitchell of Morganton, NC; two grandsons, Steven and Ryan Vande Vere; and a sister, Nita Rector.

MOSHER, CARLTON R., 79, born April 5, 1934, in Fremont, MI, died July 21, 2013, in Kannapolis, NC. Carlton was a master builder for over 50 years. He was a

member of the Concord church and served as a deacon and elder. Surviving is his wife of 58 years, Shirley Lichte Mosher; three brothers, Gilbert Mosher (Cynthia), James Mosher (Sherra) of Muskegon, MI, Marvin Mosher (Wendy) of Salisbury, NC, and Paula Tarbox of Concord, NC; two sons, Michael Mosher of MI and Mark Mosher of Salisbury, NC; one daughter, Kimberly Ingram of Salisbury, NC; six grandchildren, Jason Mosher, Leah Baker, Christie A., Courtney M., Sean M., and Micaela Mosher, all of MI; and six great-grandchildren.

STREET, CAROLYN NIXON, 62, born Aug. 7, 1951, died Dec. 17, 2013, in Morganton, NC. She was a co-owner and operator of James C. Street Construction Company. Carolyn was a member of the Morganton church. She was preceded in death by her first husband, William Pulliman; two children, Ronald Pulliman and Kenneth Pulliman; and one grandchild, Robert Shaw. Surviving are her husband, James Street; children, James Howell, Shelia Street, James Street, Crystal Merritt, Kristy Cook and Misty Teague; one brother, Donald Nixon; five sisters, Tammy Sports, Jeannie Nixon, Teresa Nixon, Tina Nixon, and Wilma Bare; her step-mother, Agnes Nixon; four grandchildren, Justin Cooley, Khristopher Bryson, Christopher Street, Kerri Howell; and two great-grandchildren.

VOGT, WILLIAM (BILL), 92, born in Davy, WV, died Dec. 14, 2013, in Hendersonville, NC. In 1944, he became employed by the Review and Herald, working the first 20 years in the composing room. He spent the next 20 years in the production office where he served as assistant superintendent and associate superintendent. Bill and his

wife, June, moved to Hendersonville, where he attended the Fletcher church. Bill is preceded in death by three brothers; John Floyd, Carl and Robert. Surviving are his wife of 70 years, June Vogt, of Hendersonville, NC; and two sisters, Pauline Templeman of Hendersonville, NC, and Shirley Schmachtenberg (Dick) of Leonardtown, MD.

WHISLER, LONA, 84, of Morganton, NC, died Dec. 2, 2013. She grew up on a farm near Mansfield, OH, moved to Florida to work and later located to North Carolina where she worked in accounting and payroll. She was a well-loved and active member of the Morganton church.

Carolina Conference Calendar

February

Photography Workshop (With Photojournalist Billy Weeks)

--- February 2. Register at www.carolinasda.org. Fee \$15.00.

Strings and Band Music Festival --- Feb. 6-7. Mount Pisgah Academy.

Singles Retreat --- Feb. 7-9. NPR.

Speaker: Andrea Hicks from the NAD. For singles age 35 and older. Call 704.596.3200.

Romance at the Ranch --- Feb. 14-16.

NPR. Enjoy a romantic and fun-filled weekend at the ranch, "Hawaiian Style." Register at www.carolinasda.org.

Hispanic Romance at the Ranch

--- Feb. 21-23. NPR. Register at www.carolinasda.org.

VBS Workshop --- Feb. 23. Carolina Conference Office.

March

Pathfinder Workbee --- March 14-16. NPR.

Children's Ministries/SS Workshop

--- Mar. 23. Spartanburg, SC, Church.

Alive Youth Rally --- Mar. 28-30.

Spartanburg, SC, Church. Register at www.alivesc.com

April

Carolina Conference Music Festival --- April. 3-4. MPA.

Silver Creek, Laurel, Table Rock, Morganton and Oakridge School Reunion --- April 4-6. Silver Creek Adventist School.

Adventurer Fun Day --- April 4-6. NPR

Women's Spring Retreat --- April 11-13. Gatlinburg, TN.

For an online version of this calendar, visit the Carolina Conference web site at www.carolinasda.org.

Train Up a Child

Sonia Fiol, the director of the Sharon Church Y.A.C. (Youth in Action for Christ), seated, far left, invited the youth from the Charlotte Korean Church, under the direction of Jane Ha Yon, standing second row left, to join them each Saturday afternoon from 4:30 to 5:30 for baptismal study classes taught by Sharon Church Head Elder Ellie Green, seated second from left. Following each Bible study, the youth join together for the Y.A.C. program of music, Bible games and worship homilies. The overseeing elder of the Y.A.C. ministry in the Sharon Church is Yalanda Williams, seated,



Photo contributed

far right. She and the other leaders organize a youth supper each week followed by an evening activity somewhere in Charlotte, such as ice skating, roller skating and laser tag.

We praise God for leaders who educate and model God's word, training our youth to work and fellowship together as one while preparing them to enter God's service.

— by Sonia Fiol

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This documentary that aired on PBS clearly credits Ellen White for creating the "Blueprint" for Adventist education, which includes not only academics, but also physical, spiritual, and vocational instruction. It gives the impression that while Adventist schools maintain a traditional approach to education, they are also a modern breath of fresh air compared to mainstream education.

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