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CAROLINA

ACTION



ISSUE 3, 2025

EVANGELISM
IN THE
FUTURE

FAITH IN ACTION

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

When did it dawn on us? It was in the fall of 2020 during the height of COVID-19, when life almost seemed to come to a grinding halt. Gary Moyer, Rick Russell, Chad Grundy, and I met at my house as God's called leaders for the Carolina Conference to strategically plan the priorities for the next quinquennial term. As we were sitting in the stillness of my screened-in porch on that crisp October morning, we spent time in earnest prayer for God's direction and discernment to guide our thoughts. It was then that we received the divine insight: How can we focus on discipleship as the companion to our efforts in evangelism?

Among the most familiar passages of scripture are the words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (NKJV).

Since the last quinquennial Carolina Conference Constituency Session in August 2022, the Conference has actively encouraged and funded the distribution and use of *The Discipleship Handbook* in small groups across all 187 churches and companies throughout North and South Carolina. We have also provided our pastors with Tara Vincross's excellent book *Deep Calling*. More recently this year, we've provided pastors and their churches with a newly published book by AdventSource entitled *My Church Family*. These resources have been shared with the prayer-filled hope of following Jesus's final directive on earth to "Go" and to "make disciples."

There are some men who stand

out to me as hallmark champions of faith. One of them was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Born in 1906 into a well-educated family, Bonhoeffer was academically brilliant from the start. He earned a doctorate in theology by age 21. He was a German pastor, theologian, and sadly, he was eventually a martyr. When Adolf Hitler came to power, Bonhoeffer quickly opposed the regime. He openly criticized Hitler as an evil leader for the Nazi movement when most were silent, calling him the "misleader." Eventually, he became involved with a resistance group that plotted against Hitler. This was controversial because it went beyond



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

preaching—it meant complicity in plans to remove him from political power, even supporting an attempt to assassinate Hitler. He was arrested in 1943 and imprisoned for two years. In April 1945, just weeks before the war ended, Bonhoeffer was executed by hanging at Flossenbürg concentration camp. He was just 39.

He is remembered as someone who insisted that faith and ethics couldn't be separated from real-world courage. His life gives credence to the statement made by Tertullian, a North African Christian writer from Carthage (around the late second to early

third century): "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Ellen White paraphrased this same quote in Chapter 2 of *The Great Controversy*.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a number of books that focused on an abiding and faithful walk with Christ. One of those books, written in 1933, was entitled *The Cost of Discipleship*.

One of the key elements that I gleaned from reading this book was his contrast of cheap grace versus costly grace. He criticizes what he calls cheap grace—the idea that forgiveness is automatic, requiring nothing of us, justifying sin without transformation. Costly grace, in contrast, is the gift of God that calls for a changed life, even sacrifice. It's grace that actually costs us something because it cost God everything.

It's sobering to remember that Bonhoeffer himself lived what he wrote. Though *The Cost of Discipleship* was not written as a political manifesto, the book's seriousness about obedience carried an obvious weight in his context of the emerging Nazi regime in Germany. For Bonhoeffer, following Christ was inseparable from resisting evil in real life. He believed comfortable Christianity had become complicit by compromising with injustice.

As we near the soon return of Jesus Christ, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, I believe we need to embrace Bonhoeffer's call to radical discipleship, where he takes Jesus's words of "Follow Me" literally. In our contemporary culture and a lifestyle characterized by overbooked calendars, there is a part of us that desires spirituality without disruption. In *The Cost of Discipleship*, he insists that discipleship isn't some form of abstract belief. Rather, it's obedience—leaving our nets

...continued on page 14.





In Matthew 28, Jesus gives us the exact time of His soon return. He says that “When the Gospel is preached in all the world, then the end will come.” What’s more, Jesus is looking forward to coming and gathering us together and transforming us as He takes us to heaven to live for eternity with Him. To live in eternity, in a world free of all of the pain and problems of this life, together with our loved ones.

As we are looking at the closing of the year 2025 and the division-wide initiative known as Pentecost 2025, we are anticipating growth unlike anything we’ve seen in decades. As exciting as this is, we are still waiting for Jesus to come again, so that means the work continues. We are looking forward to 2026 and curiously seeking God to partner with Him in His plans for us in the year to come.

We desire to see Carolina Conference continue to grow for

Jesus. Every baptism, every profession of faith, every Bible study, every visitor, every member, every person we cross paths with are all children of God. Each number on a spreadsheet is a son or daughter, a brother or sister, and mom or dad, or a friend in Jesus. God wants all of His children saved in the kingdom.

The Carolina Conference is dedicated to “Grow Carolina” in 2026. We have been blessed with evange-

lism funds that we desire to put in the hands of each church to facilitate evangelism in our local communities.

In addition to Pentecost 2025 we also are looking forward to Evangelism Impact taking place January 1-3 at Myrtle Beach. Beyond our regular slate of passionate and inspirational speakers we are adding a training component this year. Choose from breakout sessions designed and planned by our Conference ministry

directors to train you to use evangelistic methods in a variety of ministry areas. We are excited to offer this new training component at Evangelism Impact this year because we believe that everything we do can have its roots in evangelism.

We join you in praying for God to reveal what He desires for you and your community in 2026. Let’s unite and grow Carolina!

—Adam Case, Evangelism Co-Director



Carolina Action is a publication of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

CONTACT: 2701 East W.T. Harris Blvd. • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 44270, Charlotte, N.C., 28215 • P (704) 596-3200, F (704) 596-5775 • www.carolinasda.org

ADMINISTRATION: President, Leslie Louis: llouis@carolinasda.org • VP for Administration/Executive Secretary, Brad Cauley: bcauley@carolinasda.org;

Associate, Deborah Hutchinson • VP for Finance, Rick Russell: rrussell@carolinasda.org; Undertreasurer, Jeff Horn; Associate Treasurer, Norma Sandoval

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ACTION STAFF: Editor/Layout design: Rebecca Carpenter • Assistant Editor: Courtney Herod communication@carolinasda.org

HOW REVELATION SPARKED A Journey to Ministry



For Dylan and Jaycee, the book of Revelation once felt overwhelming, filled with beasts, symbols, and end-time prophecies they didn't understand. But curiosity turned into a spiritual journey that led to a call to ministry.

"I always thought Revelation was scary," Dylan said. "But I was curious. I wanted to know what it really meant."

In high school, Dylan's faith was shaken when a close friend expressed disbelief in God. "I took on that same title," he said. Still, deep questions about origins and purpose lingered. "Even believing in evolution takes faith," Dylan reflected. "And I'd rather put my faith in God."

Around that time, he met Jaycee, who attended a non-denominational church. As their relationship deepened, so did their desire for biblical truth. "We were searching," Jaycee

said. "We wanted to understand what the Bible really said."

Their search led them to a flyer for a six-week Revelation seminar hosted by the Haw River Seventh-day Adventist Church in North Carolina. "That caught our attention," Dylan said.

"We almost didn't go," Jaycee admitted. "But thank God we did."

From the first night, something felt different. "It felt like we already had a family," Dylan said. "Everyone was smiling and wel-



coming. And they looked healthier—we wondered what they were doing differently."

They embraced what they were learning, including the Sabbath. "Switching from Sunday to Saturday was a big change," Dylan said.

Then came a new season: parenthood. With a newborn and life's demands, they drifted from church. "We started going back to our old ways," Dylan admitted. "It was hard to live out the Bible."

But God didn't let go. Their pastor invited Dylan to teach a Sabbath School lesson. "I was nervous," he said. "So I overprepared. I studied for 25 to 30 hours and wrote nearly 6,000 words of notes."

Though uncertain, Dylan taught the lesson. "It probably wasn't great," he

shared. "But the pastor said, 'We need to get you on a rotation.' I thought we agreed on one lesson—not a schedule!"

That opportunity sparked deeper study. "It became a special time of learning, and I started looking forward to it," he said.

Eventually, they sensed a call to ministry, but doors didn't open. "It was frustrating," Jaycee said. "We finally said, 'God, we'll go wherever You want.'"

Soon after, they were invited to share their testimony at the "Welcome to the Family" event for newly baptized Adventists at Nosoca Pines. There, they spoke with the Carolina Conference's joint council.

"They asked about our journey and calling," Dylan said. "And said they would pray."

Later that evening, Elder Haskell Williams, ministerial director, approached them at dinner. "He said, 'I have some news for you.' My stomach dropped," Dylan recalled. "Then he said, 'The committee voted unanimously. We're offering you the sponsorship.' I was stunned. It felt like a dream."

From doubting God to preaching His message, their journey had come full circle.

"We know there will be challenges," Dylan said. "Every time we get closer to Jesus, the enemy pushes back. But we're not turning back. We're blessed to serve."

Jaycee added, "I never imagined I'd be a pastor's wife. But God had a bigger plan."

Now, Dylan and Jaycee are preparing for pastoral ministry, grounded in the Word and committed to making disciples. "The Lord gave us this calling," Dylan said. "We didn't know how or when, but now we do. Our job is clear: go and make disciples."

Scan to view
video



When Rick Russell, treasurer and vice president for finance at the Carolina Conference, agreed to preach an evangelistic series in 2004, he had no idea that his “yes” would plant a seed that would blossom into a church two decades later.

“I didn’t know what I was doing,” Russell recalls. “It was my first time preaching a full public campaign. But I was persuaded by my colleagues, and thankfully, we had the Holy Spirit with us.”

The series took place in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Russell remembers the challenge of standing in front of a few hundred people, calling for decisions, and making appeals. “It was a little intimidating,” he admits. “We were preaching the gospel, but we didn’t know how people were responding on the inside.”

In the pews sat a young man named Zachary McFadden, attending with his mother. At the time, they were

Nader began to see the love of Christ through their lives. “They embraced me with so much love,” she says. “It changed everything.”

In 2014, Nader was baptized, nearly a decade after attending that original prophecy seminar. Her new life in Christ quickly translated into service, and she eventually became the director of evangelism for the Shannon church group.

Fast forward to February 2025.

Russell was scheduled to visit Shannon, North Carolina, to formally organize a growing Spanish-speaking group into a full-fledged church. When he arrived, he saw a familiar face—

Zachary McFadden. Then,

he saw Nader, now recognized as the spiritual matriarch of the group. What he didn’t yet know was the full-circle moment God had orchestrated.

McFadden had long prayed for the opportunity to thank Pastor Russell,

me strongly. I needed to hear this. And I needed to share how humbled I was.”

For McFadden, the moment was confirmation of God’s leading. For Russell, it was a revelation of how the Holy Spirit had been working behind the scenes for twenty years. “I never knew,” Russell said. “To find out, two decades later, that your first hesitant sermon helped plant a church...it’s almost too much to take in.”

The Shannon church now stands as a living testimony of God’s providence. What began with one simple step of obedience grew through years of quiet discipleship and personal investment.

“We had no idea what God was doing,” Nader reflects. “There were so many moving parts. But now we see it. It was the Holy Spirit all along.”

For Russell, McFadden, Nader, and the members of the Shannon church, this story is more than a memory...it’s a miracle. “Only the Lord could write a story like this,” Russell says. “It’s humbling to see what God can do when we simply say ‘yes.’”



FROM A SEED TO A CHURCH

visiting several churches, including the Fayetteville Adventist Church. When they heard about the prophecy seminar, they were curious.

“The Bible just started making sense,” McFadden remembers. “It was practical, it was relevant, and it spoke to what I was experiencing in life. I fell in love with Jesus all over again.” McFadden was baptized at the conclusion of the series, though Russell never knew the impact his preaching had made.

Sitting elsewhere in the audience that same year was Marilyn Nader. Though she didn’t make a decision at the time, the messages planted a spiritual longing in her heart. “That prophecy seminar was the beginning for me,” she says. “That’s when everything started to make sense.”

Several years later, Nader reconnected with McFadden and his mother, Cathy. She had no idea they had all attended the same 2004 series. McFadden offered to study the Bible with her, and through that process,

the man whose preaching had led to his baptism all those years ago. “There were three things I had been praying for consistently,” McFadden shared. “One of them was to be able to see Pastor Russell again and thank him in person.”

That moment came unexpectedly. As they sat down at a table together, McFadden said, “Do you remember that evangelistic series you preached in Fayetteville in 2004?”

“I’ll never forget it,” Russell replied. “It was my first one.”

With emotion, McFadden shared how that series led him to Christ, then to Bible studies with Nader, and ultimately helped lay the foundation for a church plant that had now grown to more than 60 members.

Russell was overwhelmed. “It was a struggle in my heart to decide whether I should share what I was feeling,” he said. “But God impressed



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video



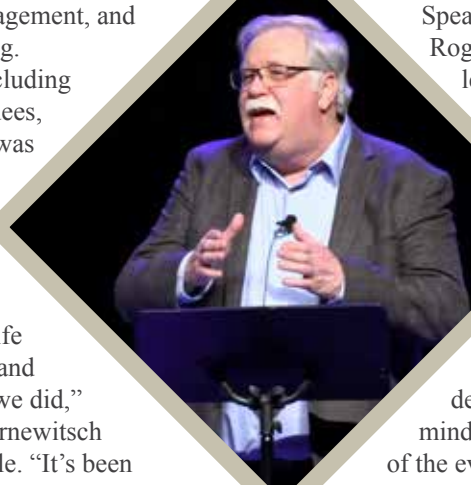
Equipping Carolina Members FOR MISSION

Evangelism Impact, hosted by the Carolina Conference, continues to inspire and mobilize pastors, lay members, and ministry leaders in their shared mission to reach communities with the message of Jesus' love and soon return. Held annually for the past decade, the event has become the largest gathering of Seventh-day Adventist members in the Carolina Conference, drawing attendees from across the region for a weekend of spiritual growth, encouragement, and practical training.

For many, including first-time attendees, the experience was both empowering and spiritually enriching. "This was the first time my wife and I attended, and we are so glad we did," shared Ryan Turnewitsch from Fayetteville. "It's been a blessing to build relationships with fellow pastors and leaders from around the conference. We've discovered valuable new ministry materials we can use in our local church, and we leave encouraged and inspired."

Breakout sessions and presentations covered a wide range of topics, from community services to Bible school planning and member mobilization. "I've been learning powerful things from amazing presenters," said Henderson and Wake Forest Pastor Ilcias Vargas. "The tools I'm taking home will help me both personally and in ministry. I'm especially energized by what I've learned about empowering members to be actively involved in evangelism."

Speakers such as Roger Halvorsen, left, and Roger



Hernandez, right, reminded participants of the event's purpose.

"There is a reason for Evangelism Impact," said Haskell Williams, ministerial director. "It's about our common mission, a desire to see God's work go forward. The Church exists to evangelize, and this gather-

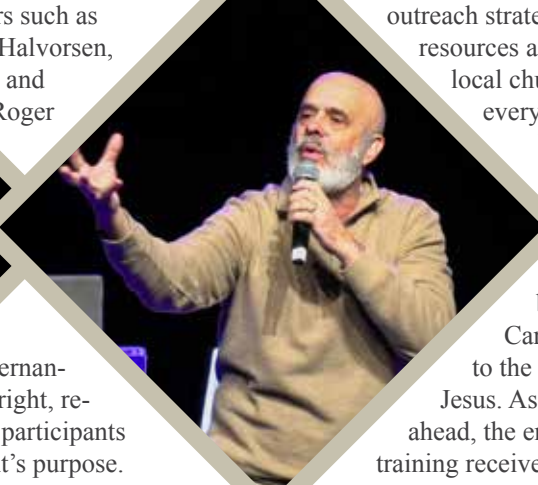
ing equips us to do just that."

Leaders from administration, ministerial and evangelism contributed to a unified call to mission. Attendees appreciated the holistic approach, which combined training, worship, networking, and spiritual renewal.

Various church ministries set up booths to offer resources to attendees. AdventSource is one ministry leadership platform offering tools for pastors, elders, and ministry teams.

From discipleship materials to outreach strategies, these resources aim to strengthen local church ministries at every level.

Now in its 10th year, Evangelism Impact continues to grow as members across the Carolinas respond to the call to share Jesus. As churches look ahead, the enthusiasm and training received will continue to bear fruit in homes, neighborhoods, and communities across the conference.



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Begin the new year with inspiration and training at
Evangelism Impact 2026, hosted by the Carolina Conference.

GROW CAROLINA: TOGETHER IN MINISTRY

EVANGELISM IMPACT 2026

JANUARY 1-3 • MYRTLE BEACH, SC



REGISTER AT WWW.CAROLINASDA.ORG

Participants are responsible for their own hotel reservations. Sabbath lunch is included; all other meals are on your own.



The event runs Thursday evening, at 7:00 p.m., through Saturday night.

Workshops on Youth, Personal Ministries, Family Life, Evangelism, and more.

Be inspired, equipped, and motivated to share Jesus in your community!





400+

PEOPLE BAPTIZED
across Carolina Conference
churches in the past year.



100+

**LOCAL EVANGELISTIC
SERIES HELD**
in North and South
Carolina combined.



FROM 2022-2025

13

CHURCHES LAUNCHED
Interest lists and follow-up
ministries for new contacts



Community & Compassion Ministries

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Food distribution and
health clinics...



opened doors for
Bible studies in

15+
Communities

HOMELESS MINISTRY



Homeless ministry teams
from local churches...



partnered with
shelters and gave
**food and
clothing**

DISASTER RESPONSE

Disaster response
volunteers...



followed up with
prayer and literature
after hurricanes
and floods



LOCAL CHURCH GROWTH



FAST-GROWING METRO AREAS

Churches are continuing to
be planted, and are
especially growing in our
metropolitan areas.



INCREASED MEMBERSHIP

- Intentional Discipleship
- Strong Engagement
- New Member Growth



RECLAIMED MEMBERS

- Return through:
- Personal Visits
 - Small group invitations
 - Follow-Up Ministries



"I have swept away your
offenses like a cloud...
Return to me, for I have
redeemed you."
Isaiah 44:22 (NIV)



CREATIVE OUTREACH IDEAS

- **Community Care Sabbath:** Offer practical services like free health checks, family photos, or job-skills help after church. It shows the community that the church cares about real needs, not just attendance.
- **Table Gatherings (Home-Based Meetups):** Host small, casual dinners in members' homes or meetups in cafés. People often feel safer connecting in a relaxed setting before stepping into the church building.
- **Purpose Discovery Workshops:** Run short workshops on topics like purpose, stress, parenting, or faith in daily life. These events draw people who are seeking guidance and help them see the church as relevant to real-life issues.

TRAINING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Evangelistic Series

Every pastor in the conference is encouraged to hold at least one evangelistic series per year.



Digital Training

Pastors and church leaders are learning how to use digital tools for evangelism.



Personal Ministries Training

Church pastors are trained annually in how to mentor new Bible study leaders and follow-up teams.



District-Level Coaching

District-level evangelism coaching is helping pastors and lay teams set realistic goals and build sustainable cycles for outreach.



Sabbath School Training

Sabbath School training equips members with biblical understanding and the relational tools needed to effectively share Christ with others.



Bilingual Events

Bilingual events such as Evangelism Impact are closing the cultural gaps and uniting our churches for service.



YOUTH-LED OUTREACH



Preaching Series

Children as young as seven years old are preaching the Gospel.



Literature Distribution

High school and college students participated in the Magabook Program across both states.

CHILDREN REACHED



1,200+
children reached



through VBS programs
in 2025 alone.

STRATEGIC PLANNING



CONFERENCE-WIDE EVANGELISM THEMES

This year Carolina Conference churches united under the Pentecost 2025 initiative rolled out by the General Conference. Every church held some type of outreach.



HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Medical professionals from around the Conference volunteered their expertise during free clinics to help those with little or no access to healthcare.



FAMILY & YOUTH OUTREACH

Through Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs and other youth evangelism efforts, young people are winning their peers to the Kingdom.



EVANGELISM GROWTH & REPORTING

The Conference has made evangelism a top priority in the year 2025, even more than previous years. We are opening every avenue to bring new lives to Christ.



Redeemed by Truth

HOW THE PATHS OF TWO COUPLES ENTERTWINED ON THEIR WAY TO REDEMPTION

Two couples, once trapped in addiction, violence, and despair, are now vibrant members of the Forest City Seventh-day Adventist Church in North Carolina—living proof of God’s power to restore and transform. Through divine appointments, Bible study, and a shared hunger for truth, Cliff and Angela Ivey and Jordan and Stephanie Hayes have not only found new life in Christ, but have also led each other toward the everlasting gospel.

Cliff Ivey’s early life was marred by abuse and street life. He began using methamphetamines at age twelve and soon spiraled into crime, anger, and hopelessness. “I didn’t have love for people. I didn’t have love for myself,” Cliff shared. He met Angela while still deep in addiction, eventually drawing her into the same destructive lifestyle. Angela, already struggling with alcoholism and marijuana use, found herself compromising convictions just to stay close to him. “I lost custody of my son twice,” she said. “But my mother never stopped praying for me.”

While Cliff served time in prison for identity theft, Angela remained faithful, remembering who he was before the drugs. After his release, she urged him to attend church. “I didn’t believe in God,” Cliff admitted, “but I loved my wife enough to go.” Slowly, the Holy Spirit began softening his heart.

Around this time, Cliff began working with Jordan Hayes. Jordan, too, carried a past filled with pain. From age eight, he had been on antipsychotic medication, and later battled addiction to pain pills, alcohol, and heroin. After years of self-destruction and tragic family loss, including the deaths of both parents and a step-mother, Jordan heard God’s voice say, “It’s going to be alright.” That mo-

ment began his journey back to hope. Cliff was on fire for Jesus, and Jordan noticed. “I wanted what he had,” Jordan said.

The two began



Cliff



Angela



frequent conversations about Scripture—often disagreeing but committed to studying the Bible independently to seek answers. It was Jordan who first introduced Cliff to the Sabbath truth and the health message. Though he wasn’t ready to embrace it yet himself, Jordan shared a video called *The Blueprint* by Ivor Myers, which deeply convicted Cliff. Soon, both men were watching Walter Veith’s Total Onslaught series with their wives, and the Sabbath truth took root.

Stephanie Hayes, Jordan’s wife, had also faced her own darkness. Pressured to have an abortion at sixteen, she instead chose life for her child after hearing God say, “Thou shalt not kill.” Her early years were shaped



Stephanie



Jordan



by domestic abuse, addiction, and a violent marriage that ended with her in the hospital. She eventually met Jordan at a bike rally—an encounter that began a rollercoaster relationship grounded in mutual brokenness but ultimately guided by grace.

As both couples began to embrace Adventist beliefs, they sought a church home. Reluctantly, Jordan and Stephanie walked into the Forest City Church, where Pastor Tim Sheridan met them with open arms. Soon after, Cliff and Angela followed. “Cliff had so many questions,” Sheridan recalled. “We spent hours after prayer meetings digging into Scripture.” Both couples began Bible studies with Sheridan and were baptized within months.

Angela reflected on the transformation: “The man I married and the man standing here today are two completely different people.” She described her baptism in the Adventist Church as the first time it felt “real.” Cliff added, “Jesus took my heart of stone and made it flesh. I love people now.”

Today, the Iveys and Hayeses continue growing in faith and sharing their testimony. From late-night Bible discussions to Sabbath fellowship, their lives are deeply rooted in Christ. “Everything we went through brought us to this point,” Cliff said. “I wouldn’t change any of it, because it took every detail for me to find Jesus.”



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Romance at the Ranch 2026



Amour

Αγάπη

Kärlek

Amore

Liebe

любовь

Kjaerlighed

Miłość

אהבה

प्यार

حب

Láska

사랑

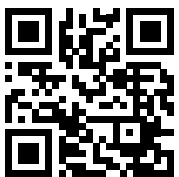


Couples Retreat

February 13-15

Nosoca Pines Ranch

Special Presenters
**Steve and Tamara
Conway**



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www.carolinasda.org



When the idea was introduced—an evangelistic series led entirely by children—some church members were uncertain. Vacation Bible School? Certainly. But preaching, giving altar calls, and sharing Bible truths?

“I was hesitant,” said Pastor Domingo Paulino of the Bluffton and Hardeeville Spanish Churches. “They’re great for songs and crafts, but how could they preach an entire message?”

But the Holy Spirit had greater plans.

In March, the Bluffton Church in South Carolina was one of numerous churches around the Conference that launched a bold initiative: a week-long evangelistic series led by children ages five to 14. Centered around the theme *Luz en mi Ciudad*—“A Light in My Town”—the children preached, sang, and led each program.

Excitement quickly grew as children embraced their roles with enthusiasm. “They were very excited and willing to serve God,” said parent

April Perez.

April’s son, Daniel, one of the young preachers, was among the first to volunteer. Though his sermon remained a “surprise,” his family supported him through prayer and worship, helping him grow closer to Jesus.



Parents played a vital role. “Ninety-nine percent of the training came from the parents,” Said Perez. “All we asked was that families pray and practice daily.”

Night after night, the children stood confidently behind the pulpit, sharing messages of hope, truth, and Jesus’ soon return. The youngest was five;

the oldest, 14.

What moved many was the sincerity in each child’s voice. “They believed what they were saying,” a member noted.

The impact spread beyond the church. Families engaged, visitors stayed, and leaders recognized the spiritual growth happening.

For Daniel and others, the experience was life-changing. “Yes, I’ll preach again,” he said. “Whenever they ask me to.”

Parents now dream bigger dreams, not only for careers, but for mission. “My son wants to be a pilot,” another mother, Eldiney Perez, shared. “I pray he travels the world serving the Lord.”

The children’s series reminded the church of a powerful truth: when young people are empowered, they don’t just participate—they lead. And when they lead, the church is renewed.

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LITTLE EVANGELISTS GOD’S YOUNG WARRIORS

In an inspiring display of youthful faith and leadership, middle and high school students at Adventist Christian Academy (ACA) Raleigh recently preached a full evangelistic series, drawing guests from across the community, opening doors for Bible studies, and leading classmates and even adults to decisions for baptism.

The idea began to take shape in July 2024 when the Carolina Conference launched its Pentecost 2025 initiative. Ross Knight, pastor of the Raleigh Church, recalled, “We wanted to give our young people a chance to lead. Not just be involved, but actually lead.” After prayer and discussion, the vision was clear: ACA Raleigh students would preach their own evangelistic series.

The project came to life through the collaboration of teachers and staff, including Crystal Thigpen, eighth-grade teacher, who had previously

witnessed student-led evangelism during her training. “When I started teaching Bible, I remembered how middle schoolers in Michigan would do evangelistic meetings each spring,” she said. “So I pitched the



idea to our principal, Lisa Trawick, and she immediately said, ‘That’s an awesome idea.’”

Though they had talked about it for

a while, the timing finally felt right. With Pentecost 2025 on the horizon, Knight, Trawick, and Thigpen began preparing students, forming a preaching class where students practiced, critiqued each other, and studied in depth. Weekly sessions were held in classrooms and the church sanctuary.

“All of the students volunteered,” Pastor Knight emphasized. “They weren’t forced. They stepped forward because they felt called.”

Among them was Daryl McNeil, an eighth-grade student, who preached alongside a friend. “I was excited to give the people a spiritual message,” he said. Christian Rojas, a tenth-grader, shared from the platform, “Make sure you’re on the right path. Follow God. Let Him take control of your life.”

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video



I've always joked that someday I want a pair of glasses powered by artificial intelligence that can put a bubble over someone's head reminding me of their name. For someone like me who meets a lot of people but doesn't always remember names instantly, that would be a dream come true. And as funny as that idea sounds, technology like that isn't nearly as far away as it once seemed.

Another moment recently reminded me just how powerful and personal technology can become. I attended a church meeting conducted entirely in Spanish. Normally, I would have picked up only a little of what was being shared, but this time I had something new: Apple's live translation. Sitting in a room full of Spanish-speaking leaders, I was able to understand what was being said in real time. It didn't replace relationship; it enabled it. I walked away deeply grateful because technology allowed ministry to happen in a way that simply wasn't possible for me before.

These moments have reminded me that we are living in a time when technology can truly serve the mission of the Church. If we use it wisely and prayerfully, it can help us reach people we've never been able to reach.

Imagine a future where evangelism touches every corner of life. Smart glasses display scripture just when someone needs it. Drones deliver Bibles into remote regions. AI-powered Bible study tools answer spiritual questions in any language. Virtual reality brings *The Great Con-*

trovery narrative to life. Sermons are translated instantly across continents, and digital mission fields flourish inside gaming platforms, metaverse churches, and social media spaces. Some evangelists preach to pews; others preach to kitchens, living rooms, and airport lounges around the world. This is not science fiction. It has already begun.

The world is changing fast, and the Church has an incredible opportunity. Technology is not the enemy of the gospel. When used well, it becomes one of its greatest allies, carrying the message farther, faster, and more

That kind of evangelism can begin today. A simple text message with a verse or prayer can open doors to meaningful conversations. A short testimony recorded on a smartphone can encourage someone or spark faith online. Even a phone set on a music stand can livestream Sabbath School or an evening devotional and include a heartfelt invitation to join in person. QR codes on small cards can quietly extend an invitation to Bible studies or church events. Sharing digital literature, whether a sermon, a GLOW tract, or a devotional link, can be just as intentional and prayerful as

going door to door. AI-assisted Bible study tools can help seekers explore their questions privately and safely before ever stepping into a church building. And every digital interaction can lead people back to real-life relationships, a warm welcome, a shared meal, or a moment of prayer.

As we look toward the future, we must remember that technology is a tool, not the mission. Nothing replaces the warmth of a handshake at the church door or the power of praying for someone face to face.

No livestream can match the joy of seeing a person step into the baptismal tank. Technology can amplify our message, but only the Holy Spirit brings transformation.

So let's dream boldly and build faithfully. Let's empower our churches to use whatever they have—smartphones, stories, scripture, and above all, the Spirit of God. The future of evangelism isn't waiting somewhere in the distance. It's already here.

Let's step into it—together.

—Adam Case, Evangelism Co-director



personally than ever before. But the reality is that most of our members aren't living in that future yet. Some churches lack media teams or digital budgets. Many faithful members are still figuring out how to join a group text. And that's perfectly okay, because future-focused evangelism is not just about high-tech tools; it's about high-touch mission. It's about people reaching people with the love of Jesus, using whatever tools they already have.

Stepping Into the FUTURE OF EVANGELISM—TOGETHER

JOYFULLY HIS: THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE OF KATHY RUSSELL

"It is my desire, my resolve, my pledge that I want to spend my life giving to our children, letting them know Jesus."

With hearts full of sorrow yet overflowing with gratitude for a life well lived, we celebrate the memory of Kathy Russell, beloved Children's Ministries Director for the Carolina Conference



10 years as a teacher in the Potomac and Chesapeake Conferences before serving in Carolina. She also found time to be the music teacher at Cornerstone Adventist Academy in Charlotte.

At camp meetings and events, Kathy led the children's and music programs, taught Sabbath School workshops, and poured her soul into every program she touched.

Perhaps one of Kathy's most far-reaching ministries was **Kathy's**



to know and love Jesus.

On June 1, 2024, Kathy was commissioned to the Gospel Ministry in Stuart Auditorium at Lake Junaluska—a recognition of the pastoral care she had long been providing to the children of this territory. As she stood before her colleagues, family, and friends, she made her pledge: *"I want to spend my life giving to our children, letting them know Jesus."* And that she did—faithfully, joyfully, and wholeheartedly.



of Seventh-day Adventists. Kathy fell asleep in Jesus on Tuesday, July 15 after a life given in service to God.

Kathy joined the Carolina Conference on May 1, 2007, and for nearly two decades, she led the Children's Ministries department with passion, creativity, and unwavering dedication. To those who worked alongside her, Kathy wasn't simply a department director, she was the Children's Pastor for the entire Conference. Her ministry was marked by deep spiritual leadership, tireless effort, and a heart abundant with love for Jesus and the children He treasures.

Kathy sang her first solo at the age of five and never stopped using her gifts to glorify God. While she initially pursued a career in nursing, God called her instead to music and education. With degrees in Music Education and a Master of Education in Music, Kathy spent

Kids

StoryTime,

a podcast that shares character-building, Christ-centered stories with children around the world. To date, her podcast has had over 750,000 downloads and continues to impact lives globally. Yet for Kathy, the joy wasn't in the numbers—it was in the smile of a child who recognized "Miss Kathy" and knew they were loved.

Kathy and her husband Rick, who serves the Conference as Vice President for Finance, shared a partnership rooted in faith, calling, and deep affection. They adopted their son Bradley from Ukraine in 2002 and their daughter Grace from China in 2008. Kathy cherished motherhood, raising her children

Kathy Russell was a woman of gentleness and grace, of wisdom and strength, of compassion and conviction. She was deeply

loved and will be deeply missed. But her legacy lives on in every child who came to know Jesus because of her, in every song sung with joy, in every Sabbath School inspired by her training, and in every heart touched by her love.

We grieve, but we do not grieve without hope. Because Kathy knew Jesus, and she made Him known. And one glorious day soon, the same Jesus she taught so many children to love will call her name—and she will rise, radiant and whole, to meet her Savior face to face.

"Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matthew 25:21)

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

behind, taking up the cross, and walking in step with Jesus—fulfilling the Gospel commission to make disciples by teaching them to observe all things that Jesus has commanded us. While Bonhoeffer's personal context led him into moral and civic dilemmas, our focus is not on political resistance, but on Christ-centered obedience that transforms hearts, communities, and lives for the kingdom.

As we continue our journey of faithful discipleship, may we sing the words of that well-known hymn with heartfelt sincerity, conviction, and commitment:

*All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.
Refrain:
I surrender all,*

Continued from page 2.

*I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.*

Your servant leader,

Leslie Louis
Carolina Conference President

Carolina Obituaries

ALBARELLI, CAROLYN LOU

BISCHOFF, 80, born April 21, 1945, in Richmond, V.A., died August 23, 2025, in Largo, F.L. She was a member of the Fletcher Church. Albarelli expressed her artistic talents through photography, cosmetology, and floral design. She was preceded in death by her brother, Fred Bischoff. She is survived by her brother, Tom Bischoff, of California; sons, Damien and David (Vicky), both of Largo, FL.

BUTLER, RICHARD ALLEN II, 58, born November 10, 1966, in Fort Lauderdale, FL, died June 19, 2025, in Fayetteville, NC. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1985 as a motor transport operator and deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. In 1992, he completed the Special Forces Assessment and Selection and graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course as a Special Forces communications sergeant. He served in Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), and was assigned to SFO-DAs 396 and 394, ODB 390, and ODC 330. He retired from active duty in 2009 after 24 years of service and continued working as a Department of Defense civilian in the United States Army Special Operations Command. He was a member of the Fayetteville Church for over 20 years and was active in the Pathfinders youth group. Survivors include his children, Autumn Hicks (Stephen), Ricky Butler (Courtney), and Kayleigh Butler (Nicholas); grandchildren, Serena,

Kieran, Luka, Theodore, and Beatrice; siblings, Wendy Butler, Danielle Church (Joe), Yvette Butler, Daryl Butler (Debbie), and Michael Butler; and several nieces, nephews, extended family, and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Karen Elaine Gielinski and Richard Allen Butler.

HOLLIFIELD, JOHN, 77, born October 19, 1947, in McDowell County, NC, died September 12, 2025, in Charlotte, NC. He was a member of the Conference church in Charlotte. He awaits the call of the Life-giver at Turkey Cove Cemetery near Marion, NC.

RUSSELL, KATHY SUE (POTS), 65, born April 10, 1959, in Takoma



Park, M.D., died July 15, 2025, in Charlotte, N.C. Russell joined the Carolina Conference in 2007 and served nearly 20 years as children's ministries director. Prior to that role, she taught in seven schools across the Potomac, Chesapeake, and Carolina Conferences. She held degrees in music education and a Master of Education in music. Her ministry extended across classrooms, churches, and camp meetings, where she led children's programs and music ministries. She conducted Sabbath School training across the Carolinas and developed resources to support local church leaders. In 2024, she was commissioned to gospel ministry at Lake Junaluska in recognition of

her years of pastoral service to children. Russell was also the creator and voice of Kathy's Kids StoryTime, a podcast sharing Christ-centered, character-building stories with children around the world. Her work reached thousands of listeners and continued to grow. She is survived by her husband, Rick, vice president for finance at the Carolina Conference; son, Bradley (Lesley); daughter, Grace; and grandson, Julian. She was preceded in death by her parents. Russell dedicated her life to helping children know and love Jesus. Her legacy lives on in the lives she touched, the songs she taught, and the stories she told.

Conference Calendar

JANUARY

- 1-3 – Evangelism Impact. Myrtle Beach, SC.
- 4-5 – Ministerial Workers Meeting. Myrtle Beach, SC.
- 10 – Pathfinder Council. NPR.
- 11 – Adventurer Council.
- 24 – Hispanic Children's Ministries Event.

FEBRUARY

- 4-5 – MPA Homeleave Break.
- 13-15 – Romance at the Ranch (English). NPR.
- 19 – Romance at the Ranch (Hispanic). NPR.
- 26 – ACS Disaster Relief Workshop.
- 28 – MPA Carolina Music Festival.

MARCH

- 7 – Pathfinder Work Bee. NPR.

MORE EVENTS AT
WWW.CAROLINASDA.ORG

A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE CAROLINA ACTION

With this issue, we mark the final chapter of *Carolina Action* in its printed form. This closes a rich tradition that has served the Carolina Conference family since the 1980s. The magazine was first launched under the leadership of Ron Quick, former Communication Director, and it has been a trusted source of stories, inspiration, and updates from our churches, schools, and ministries. Its legacy is an important part of the history of our conference.

As we move forward, our mission stays the same. We will continue sharing what God is doing in the Carolinas. The

way we share those stories will now become faster, more accessible, and more cost-effective. In today's digital world, printed magazines require significant resources to produce. By transitioning away from print, we can ensure that God's resources are used in the most effective way.

Beginning now, we will deliver news through our refreshed digital platforms:

- **News Blog:** www.carolinaaction.org
- **Email Updates:** More frequent stories, announcements, and event coverage
- **Social Media:** Real time news, photos, and video from around the

Conference

This shift allows us to share stories as they happen and reach our members more quickly and widely.

We want to thank everyone who has contributed to *Carolina Action* through the years: editors, writers, photographers, pastors, ministries, and members who have shared their testimonies and supported this publication. You have helped preserve a beautiful record of God's work in our territory for nearly four decades.

The format is changing, but the story continues. We invite you to join us as we begin this new digital chapter of communication, connection, and mission.

—Becky Carpenter, Carolina Action Editor

The Carolina Action

Carolina Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists

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