

IT'S GOING TO BE A PORCH when Boyd Adcock, Steve Poovey, Haywood Hamilton and Dacote Whitaker are done.



TROUBLE-SHOOTER Wayne Honeycutt listens intently as construction volunteer Dacote Whitaker seeks advice.

Volunteers Pull Together And A New Church Goes Up

BY SUSAN USHER

They were everywhere, swarming, 150-plus volunteers with sweat rolling down their faces and tools gripped in their fists. And they were smiling.

A church was going up, and hundreds of Baptist men, women and teen-agers from across North Carolina and from South Carolina and Georgia were helping to make it happen.

They came alone or with groups of 12 to 15 people from the same church. A self-employed electrical contractor who closed his business for two weeks, a lawyer and a doctor who took time out from their practices. Employees who used vacation time to go on mission.

In all, pastors and/or members representing 30 to 40 congregations were helping to raise Brunswick County's youngest Baptist church, the 160-member strong South Brunswick Islands. Some came for several days, others for several weeks to share whatever skill or talent they had. They spent their own time, their own money, and left work of their own undone.

"Nobody can put into words how the Lord blesses you for doing something like this," said Arnold Flowers, who with his sons Scott, 13, and Jeremy, 12, was part of a 15-member work team from Love Memorial in Goldsboro. Flowers traveled to Brazil last year with a church-building team from Love Memorial, but this was their first mission project as a family.

Joe Padgett, a printer from Charlotte, couldn't agree more.

"I don't do this for a living," he said, taking a break from cutting strips of insulation batting. "I just love to do it."

The target date for general completion is June 27, when the church expects to baptize new affiliates in the baptismal pool.

The first of its kind in the state, the project reflects the inspiration, experiences, and year-long planning of three men: South Brunswick Islands pastor Jack Hancox of Oak Island, a retired missionary; Wayne Honeycutt of Dallas, N.C., church



SCOTT FLOWERS drives a nail under the watchful eye of his dad, Arnold.

builder for the North Carolina Baptist Men; and Cameron Norris of Riegelwood, a lay renewal coordinator who led a workshop here and "fell in love" with the congregation.

"Cameron's an organizer and I'm a builder. We've worked together before and we both know a lot of

people," said Honeycutt.

All three men have been involved in church-building efforts stateside and abroad. But nothing on the scale of this 50- by 150-foot steel-framed structure.

While other denominations have experience in mass production tech-

niques, this is a first for the North Carolina Baptist Men. As the Baptist State Convention's church builder, Honeycutt typically spends six to eight months finishing a single church with the help of several work teams, not three weeks.

"The State (Baptist Convention) is watching us," said Norris. "It's their dream to be able to do it."

Planning for the project began approximately a year ago, with plenty of both prayer and coordinating to bring the right people on site at the right time, with materials waiting.

"The stuff is here and the people are here. It's just a matter of bringing it together," said Hancox. "It's an exciting thing."

Norris recited a litany of activity: "Monday a week ago we had a team that wanted to come in early, so we put in the steel structure and the floor."

Then came the plywood and studs for the exterior walls. By Friday morning, workers were setting insulation, sheetrock, electrical conduit and ductwork into place.

But that was just a part of the picture.

The teams concentrated here these few weeks have been building a church in more ways than one.

Teams of teen-agers and their adult leaders held Backyard Bible Clubs, witnessed through music and puppetry in campgrounds and on the beach. Teams of adults from the host church and from Georgia and South Carolina churches canvassed door-to-door, trying to identify households where members do not attend church.

This week Three Forks Baptist Church in Taylorsville has rented six beach houses for a group of 45, including teams of brick masons whose goal is to get their work done by Wednesday so they play a round or two of golf before heading home.

The teams reconnect to share meals served three times a day under a huge blue and gold striped tent with sawdust floor. The food is prepared and served by still more volunteers, working out of the same North Carolina Baptist Men's disaster van that served Hurricane Andrew victims in Florida and Hurricane Hugo victims in South Carolina. Suppers are special, typically provided by a church from a neighboring county, and one night, by the new church's sponsor, Antioch Baptist of Bolivia.

"We're excited about what we're doing," said Norris. "We want local

pastors and people to know we're not after their members. We're trying to reach the unchurched. We understand there are approximately 5,000 people between these two rivers (Lockwood Folly and Shallotte) who fit that description."

The mission-oriented congregation has outgrown its temporary quarters on Holden Beach Road and is anxiously awaiting the dedication of its new home on Mt. Pisgah Church Road.

"It's not going to be anything luxurious; it will be spartan, to be used for many different things," said Hancox. "For example, we built this with steel with the intent of it becoming a designated hurricane shelter. We know it will qualify."

Next summer, when Norris and Honeycutt team again to build a church for a growing Chinese Baptist congregation in Charlotte, you can count on this: South Brunswick Islands Baptist will be sending a

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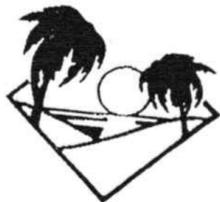
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