

Methodists Prepare Bicentennial Celebration

By LOUISE WRIGHT

The people called Methodists are celebrating the bicentennial of Methodism in America this year. On Christmas Eve in 1784, a group of 60 Methodist ministers gathered at the Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, Md. to found the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

From that meeting has grown the 9.5 million member United Methodist Church, as well as several other Methodist-Westleyan

denominations. Four of these denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Free Methodist Church and the Christian Methodist Church are joining in the bicentennial celebration.

The theme of the celebration is "Methodism For Two Centuries: Proclaiming Grace and Freedom."

Each local church has been asked to name a bicentennial chairman and committee

Jeannette Byrd of the St. Paul's United Methodist Church has been named the chairman of the Asheville district's 71 churches.

A big celebration at the general conference of the United Methodist Church to be held in Baltimore in May will launch the national observance and celebrations will be held in local churches throughout the nation over a nine-month period ending on Covenant Sunday in Jan. A planning session was held

last week to have a district wide Pan-Methodist observance in Asheville during the month of May. The planning session was held at the Berry Temple United Methodist Church on College St. in Asheville.

Many churches are now conducting special studies on the lives of John Wesley and Bishop Francis Asbury, a pioneer circuit rider who preached in Western North Carolina in the 19th Century. Hymns written by Wesley are

being featured in many Sunday morning worship services. The Weaverville United Methodist Church is devoting an entire quarter's study to the church's history on Sunday mornings and evenings. The Black Mountain Church women presented a drama telling of the first women missionaries sent out by the church.

Other programs include short skits for Church School, class studies of Methodist heritage, trips to the World

Methodist Museum at Lake Junaluska and programs designed to emphasize the importance of each church maintaining a written history.

District-wide observances will be held on Heritage Sunday, April 29, Aldersgate Sunday, May 20 and Community Service Week, Oct. 21 through 28.

Mars Hill Sets Visitation Day

The final Spring Visitation for prospective students and their parents will be held at Mars Hill College on April 14.

Students and their parents can take part in a full day of activities at the school, including meeting with faculty members from every department and members of the school's athletic programs and the school's financial aid director.

The program will begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration held in the lobby of Blackwell Hall. There will be a buffet luncheon, free to touring students. Parents and guests will be charged \$2.

During the afternoon, parents will meet with the college's administrators while students meet with faculty members and admission counselors.

Limited overnight accommodations are available on-campus Friday night for students traveling long distances to attend the session. Reservations for both the on-campus accommodations and Saturday buffet are necessary.

For more information, or to make reservations, call the Office of Admissions at 689-1201.

County Unemployment Shows Decline

Madison County joblessness reported statewide during the month. In releasing the February figures, ESC chairman Glenn Jernigan reported that the figures represented the highest employment level in February in 15 years.

The decreased lowered the county's jobless rate to 7.6 percent and matched the half-percent decrease in

ESC figures released last week stated that 7,430 county residents are currently employed.

Madison's 7.6 percent joblessness was the lowest among neighboring WNC counties. Buncombe County reported a 7.8 percent unemployment figure for the month. Both Yancey and

Haywood counties reported double-digit joblessness in February with rates of 12.7 and 14.9 percent respectively.

Orange County reported the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 3.6 percent while Swain County reported the state's highest unemployment figures, with 26.7 percent of the work force unable to find jobs.

UNCA To Host Anti-Nuclear Fair

The University of North Carolina at Asheville will host an anti-nuclear rally and information fair on the campus quadrangle Friday from noon until 4 p.m.

The event, sponsored by the UNCA Student Government Association, will feature live music, speakers, voter

registration and information booths staffed by representatives of WNC groups working to prevent nuclear war.

Among the groups participating in the rally will be the Ecumenical Peacemakers, Physicians for Social Responsibility, the

Swannanoa Valley Peace Fellowship and Educators for Social Responsibility.

Dr. Phillip Bennett, a philosopher with the State University of N.Y. will present a talk entitled, "Morality and Nuclear Annihilation."

Also speaking will be UNCA

philosophy professor Dr. Anthony Coyne, who will present an address on "The Right to Self Defense."

Musical entertainment will be provided by the band "One Straw" and A.D. Anderson.

For more information on the event, contact Cathy Guthrie at 258-6587.

Calendar Of Church Events

Revival Services Begin

Revival services will begin on April 8 at the North Fork Baptist Church in Big Pine. Services will begin each night at 7 p.m. The Rev. David Allman will be the guest speaker. Pastor Rev. Bruce Buckner invites everyone to attend these services.

Saturday Night Singing

The first Saturday night singing will be held at the Hopewell Baptist Church on April 7 at 7 p.m. The Rev. Ralph McDevitt invites all singers and listeners to attend the service. Special singers will include the youth choir from the Freeman Gap Community Church.

SEEDS FROM THE SOWER

By Michael A. Guido, Metter, Georgia

A man was asked, "Why didn't you get an honorable discharge?" "Because of furlong," he explained. "I went too fur" and I stayed too long."

There are many who go too far from the Lord and who stay too long. David did. But he was not happy. He prayed in Psalm 51:12, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."

No believer can be happy in sin, for in his sinfulness he is backslidden. Backslidden believers do not lose God's salvation, but they do lose the joy of His salvation, and they need to be restored. But only God can do the restoring.

Restoration is that act of God's grace whereby a

backslidden believer is brought back to the place of close-linked fellowship in which he began, and the time as well as the transgression of backsliding blotted out.

But before there can be restoration, there must be repentance. And when there is repentance, it is always followed by restoration and rejoicing.

This prayer of the Psalmist should be the prayer of every unhappy Christian. The sour pickle is a poor recommendation for a candy shop. So it is with the Christian who has lost the joy of God's salvation. What kind of a recommendation are you?

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Putting Things In Order

In this age of medicare, social security and homes for the aged, sometimes people forget an important part of growing old — tranquility!

Yes, tranquility and peace are just as important in growing old gracefully as is sufficient insurance or all the other means with which we show our concern for the elderly.

Have you ever noticed that old people have a knack of putting things in order? In fact, they need everything tidy, neat and sure. Certainly their greatest need is for peace and security — but this can come only when they are at peace with God!

If we want to reap the harvest of friendship with God in our old age, then we must cultivate our relation with Him — when we are young and able. Regular church attendance and worship is your assurance of peace and tranquility during your own gentle lengthening years. It will be a heaven-sent reward and one which you cannot, will not, want to miss.

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