

REPORT OF THE PASTOR - 1991.

" Top Priority " is the name we give to the most important concerns we have. When we give something top priority we push other things aside and concentrate our time and energy on that task. Here at Duke Memorial our purpose is clear, we have stated it in concise terms. It is: disciple making, disciple nurturing, disciple sending, <sup>THAT</sup> is our main business. ~~That is our top priority.~~ We believe that our future rests with the recovery of a strong commitment to faithful discipleship within this local church.

There is evidence aplenty that we are ~~taking that call seriously~~ ~~and~~ seeking to be faithful disciples. Indeed I believe we have good cause to celebrate today. The strategy of strengthening and expanding ministries that respond to real needs is already paying dividends. Increasing numbers of children and youth in Sunday School and worship are clear signs of hope. Wherever you look you will be encouraged by signs of growth - in our music program for all ages; our youth programs; our childrens ministries; the U.M.W.; the campaign for renewal; Habitat for Humanity; weekly opportunities for spiritual growth as well as Sunday School classes. Visitors and newcomers who come seeking a church that provides dynamic ministries, possesses a vital spiritual life, and genuinely cares for people. I am grateful to God as I reflect on the achievements of this past year. Yet I am firmly convinced that we have only just begun. If we are to continue to build faithful disciples there is much more to be done. Lyle Shaller, in one of his books, encourages the churches to experiment with such ideas as - Sunday morning breakfasts for building fellowship, having two or three morning worship services designed to meet different faith needs, creating classes to minister to groups such as newly weds, singled-agains, those interested in social issues, etc. The bottom line, of course, is that we must continue to assert that disciple-making, disciple-nurturing, disciple-sending, is our main business. ?

The achievements fo the past year are due in large measure to a staff who have bonded into a ministry team and seek - in St Paul's word's - to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. It pleases me immensely, as I reflect on the work of the past year, to commend all the leaders - Council-on-Ministry members, teachers, choir members, small group leaders, Habitat-for-Humanity workers, treasurers, secretaries, folders, and a host of others. We must not underestimate the cumulative effect of ~~the~~ the work that has been done and the vital part these actions play in the shaping of faith and Christian discipleship. A genuine spirit of love spilled over in all directions.

I believe that we have much for which to give thanks to God. He has blessed us all the way. We have much to do. We have many new challenges to meet. May God help us in every circumstance to hold firmly to our top priority - to be a church that is making disciples, nurturing disciples, and sending disciples.

