

*It isn't easy work. It is manual labor, but not without benefits. Ask any of the volunteers and they'll*

*say they are doing...*



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Carolyn Josey, left, and Loretta Littlejohn prepare lunch for more than 100 church volunteers. Josey said she won't cook for a week after she returns home to Birmingham, Ala. Below, Mary Wilson uses a power saw to cut boards. In the past, women were not allowed to use power tools. Now, the project coordinator says women are some of the best carpenters.

# God's Work

**By Mike Kluck**  
**Staff Writer**

Two weeks ago Mary Wilson knew only two things about Nebraska — it had a good football team and the Southern Baptist New Covenant Church in Lincoln needed a place to worship.

Wilson had never met the congregation of New Covenant, but that didn't stop her from volunteering to make a trip to Lincoln and help start building a church for them.

For the last two weeks, Wilson has been getting up before 5:30 a.m. every morning to go to the construction site at 6000 S. 84th St.

The 100 plus volunteers eat breakfast and, after a morning prayer service, begin their work for the day around 7 a.m.

Throughout the day, Wilson, a 68-year-old retired school teacher and grandmother from Blacksburg, Va., will carry wood, hammering nails and, her favorite, running the electric saw.

Although the work is hard for Wilson and the other volunteers, it is still rewarding.

After lunch and dinner around 6 p.m., they will

finally quit for the day around 8 p.m. Then they are bussed to Union College where they will spend the night and get ready to return to the location the next morning to start again.

But for Wilson and the other volunteers, who have spent \$300 of their own money and used vacation time to make the missionary trip, building a church is more enjoyable than taking the standard vacation.

"This is the best way to spend money," said Wilson, who made her first missionary trip last summer. "I could go to Disney World but I would get frustrated. I would much rather pay and come here and do this."

"This is God's work because we are doing something for somebody else without any thought and we don't expect anything in return."

Wilson, a former member of Brookwood Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., said she learned about the missionary trip through Brookwood.

Members of the Brookwood congregation have spent the last 16 summers choosing and building a church for a congregation, who would otherwise be unable to have the financial support to complete the project.



Project coordinator Lawrence Corley has been on all 16 trips along with many other members of the congregation. He said although New Covenant will still have to pay about \$900,000 for costs of the church, the work of the volunteers will save the congregation labor costs.

The new church is being built on 25 acres and will provide worship and Sunday school space for approximately 400 people. The new church will be a 14,900 square foot one level sanctuary with a two level educational building.

Approximately 65 members of the Brookwood congregation have been at the site during the first 12 day period. They have been joined by 25 members of the First Baptist Church in Eustis, Fla., members from the Firestone Road Baptist Church in North Canton, Ohio, and First Baptist Church in Prattville, Ala.

By Saturday they hope to have the frame and the roof on the church so they can begin electrical wiring and other indoor work.

From June 3 to August 24, over 600 volunteers from at least 34 Southern Baptist Churches including 10 in Birmingham will participate in the construction of New Covenant's Church. Corley, a Birmingham,