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Oldest retired missionary
Floy Jacob dies at age 101

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WEST POINT, Miss. (BP)--Floy Jacob, 101, the oldest retired Southern Baptist foreign missionary, died of heart failure Aug. 14.

Appointed a missionary in 1922, Mrs. Jacob worked in China for 18 years. She directed a kindergarten, was acting principal of a girl's school and worked as a general evangelist in China's Shandong province.

On her way to China, Mrs. Jacob, the former Floy Wright, married missionary Robert Jacob in Yokohama, Japan. They met while both were studying in Louisville, Ky. He had gone to China two years earlier to study Chinese.

The Jacobs based much of their work in Pingdu, China, where legendary Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon had lived and worked for several years. Each year Southern Baptists give millions of dollars to world missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

In 1940 Mrs. Jacob and her four children were forced to evacuate China because of fighting there during World War II. Her husband stayed in China but in 1941 was taken to a Japanese internment camp. He was released in 1943.

The Jacobs were reappointed to Hawaii in 1952 but Jacob died a few months later in 1953. Mrs. Jacob retired in 1956 but continued to speak about missions in churches and at mission conferences well into her 80s.

A native of Simpson County, Ky., she attended Woman's Missionary Union Training School, now part of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. She also attended Georgetown (Ky.) College and George Peabody College for Teachers, now part of Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

She is survived by her four daughters, 12 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Physical condition, he says,
may limit spiritual activity

By Frank Wm. White

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A person's physical condition often determines what he can do with spiritual or mental gifts, but many Christians are too lazy to maintain their bodies, according to a Southern Baptist fitness specialist.

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Tommy Yessick, coordinator of the program services section in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department, led an early morning stretching and conditioning program during the Sunday School Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, July 25-Aug. 1.

Yessick said overweight persons and those in physically poor condition are evident at Ridgecrest as at any Baptist gathering.

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board, which has responsibility for insuring Southern Baptist ministers, has identified ministers as one of the most unhealthy groups in the nation, Yessick said.

The Annuity Board, the church recreation department, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Cooper Clinic in Dallas have attempted to enroll Baptist ministers in a fitness plan with limited success.

But, Yessick said, Baptist ministers are not alone in their flabbiness, lack of conditioning and unwillingness to deal with it.

People can control 53 percent of the physical factors that impact their quality of life by paying attention to exercise, eating, stress and relaxation, Yessick said.

"Only 47 percent of physical condition is attributed to environment, health care and heredity -- things you can't change," Yessick said.

He provides a spiritual perspective to physical conditioning for people who say they try to be Christ-like. Christ walked everywhere he went and one day walked 50 miles and on another occasion walked 120 miles in three days, Yessick pointed out.

"He had to have been physically fit to do the things he did. Remember, Christ grew up working in a carpenter's shop that didn't have Skill saws," Yessick said.

Although many people put off physical conditioning with the idea of doing it later, Yessick said they may not have a chance later.

Cardiovascular disease begins early. Men in the 35-45 age group likely will never realize they have a problem. In that age group, the most common indication of heart disease is death, Yessick said. "You may not get warning signs or a second chance."

But, the good news is simple efforts can delay the effects of cardiovascular disease, Yessick said.

"If you can't do anything else -- walk," he said. "Walk a minimum of three times a week for 30-45 minutes. Four or five times a week would be better."

Next, Yessick suggests modifying diet. "Nobody needs to go on a diet. They need to change their diet. After you go on a diet, you go back to the old way of doing things. You need to change your eating habits and exercise to control weight."

Most Americans aren't willing to maintain a program to keep physically fit, Yessick said. Consequently, the United States ranks high in colon cancer, heart attacks, diabetes, obesity and other problems related to excessive fat intake, improper diet and lack of exercise.

"We're in a quick-fix society and lack the discipline for exercise and proper diet," he said.

But, Yessick said, without physical conditioning, Christians will have a hard time doing other things.

"It's a shame we don't have the endurance to do our daily tasks and then have energy left over to do anything else," he said.

"If we are spiritually fit and mentally fit but we have no physical strength, what can we do with it?" he asked.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Musical created in writer's
time of personal grieving

By Frank Wm. White

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--As Billie Pate has listened to her own musical performed this summer, she has recalled anew the pain that preceded writing the work.

"It seems the most significant things I have written have been born in pain," said Pate, associate director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school division, after the performance of "Break the Glory Free" during a Sunday school leadership conference in July.

"Break the Glory Free" is being performed this summer at Sunday school, church music and Jericho missions conferences. The Sunday school conference was the third presentation when Pate had been present.

"It was about six months after my father died in July 1989 when they asked me to write this. I said I couldn't do it ... I just didn't have the heart for it," she recalled.

But after she and Bob Dean, senior editorial and curriculum specialist at the board, began searching the Bible for significant breakthrough events to use and as she began to write, "the words began to flow and it filled a void I had," she said.

Pate recounted how she wrote "Touch Life," a book of poetry, soon after she left the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union staff in Birmingham, Ala., and her 22-year-old niece suffered permanent brain damage in an auto accident. That work was dedicated to her niece.

Then, "Til Millions Know," a song written for the 8.5 by '85 Sunday school enrollment campaign and later selected for the Baptist Hymnal 1991 edition, was written after a time of personal illness.

"There is a reason for significant work coming from pain," Pate said. "You become more reflective at times like that. You look inside yourself to examine your values."

Pate's brother and two sisters have had opportunities to see the musical with her at the Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center. "The saddest thing for me is that my mother couldn't be here and share the experience," she said.

Pate's mother is 83 and lives in Kingsport, Tenn. She has been ill for more than seven years and requires 24-hour care. Pate, her brother and sisters each take turns spending weekends with their mother.

Pate initially wrote "Break the Glory Free" as a single song to help introduce the Sunday school "Breakthrough" enrollment theme for 1990-95. After the song was presented in planning meetings with state Sunday school directors, someone suggested it as the anchor for a musical, she said.

Pate and Dean outlined about 20 important Bible events as breakthrough for the redemption story. They continued to narrow those down to write the musical.

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"The words would come to me at odd times. I would have thoughts on the way to work and have to hurry in to write them down or they would be lost," she said.

Dennis Goskie, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, N.M., said "Break the Glory Free" can be "as creative as you want to be. The theme is very strong, the music is good and it has a strong biblical message." Goskie's 90-voice choir has presented the musical three times this summer at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Mark Blankenship, director of the board's Genevox Music Group which published the musical, said while "Break the Glory Free" is a work of a general nature, it could be used at Easter.

Don Wyrzten, a well-known composer, musician and organist at Brentwood Baptist Church near Nashville, arranged the music. Songs were written by Mark Blankenship of the Sunday School Board's church music department and former board employees Dennis Allen and David Danner. Dramatic narratives were written by Ragan Courtney.

Although Pate wrote the words for the musical, the songwriters had freedom to make changes to fit their tunes, she said.

"We were concerned that it wouldn't fit together ... that it would be just a jumble of songs strung together," Pate said. She credits Wyrzten with providing musical unity that makes the work flow.

Three songs from the musical, "Alleluia, They Dance and Sing," "Love Has Won the Victory" and "Sweet Spirit of Love," have been released as single songs.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Anderson gives Baptists
legacy of plan for growth

By Frank Wm. White

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--In the past 15 years, Andy Anderson has helped at least 2,300 Southern Baptist churches work a systematic plan for Sunday school growth and add as many as 100,000 new members to Southern Baptist Sunday school rolls each year.

Anderson developed the "Sunday School Growth Spiral" from what he saw as the shortcomings of his "Action" enrollment plan which landed him at the Sunday School Board in 1975.

Anderson, growth consultant at the board with primary responsibility for the Growth Spiral, led his final conference sessions before retiring as a board employee during the Sunday School Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, July 25-Aug. 1.

As pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Fort Myers, Fla., for 20 years before coming to the board, Anderson developed the Action enrollment plan. He was hired to implement that plan in churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

"The Action plan focused on enrollment. When churches enrolled 100, 50 or even 25 new members, they didn't know what to do with them. They had never enrolled that many before," Anderson recalled.

Pastors didn't realize they needed to start new units and train workers to deal with the growth, Anderson said.

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Anderson encouraged churches to follow the classic Flake formula of Sunday school growth based on building enrollment, discovering prospects, enlarging the organization, providing additional workers, training workers, providing space and making contacts.

Because the Flake formula was based on abstract principles, many pastors did not know how to enact the principles, Anderson said.

He developed the Growth Spiral as a simple, mathematical formula that shows the relationship between each of the principles.

The spiral provides a formula for Sunday school units, workers, worker training, space and contacts needed to achieve specific goals for Sunday school attendance, worship service attendance, offerings and baptisms.

Anderson receives reports from many of the churches which he has initiated into the Growth Spiral process. From those reports, he has recorded enrollment growths of 100,000 per year.

Many other churches are using the Growth Spiral that have been trained through enrollment-training clinics, Great Commission "Breakthrough" or through state convention training. "I don't have any idea how many churches are actually using the spiral," he said.

After retiring, Anderson plans to continue training churches. He will spend 40 days per year leading Growth Spiral conferences for the Sunday School Board. He also has contracted with the Alabama and Tennessee state conventions to enroll 500 churches in each state in the Growth Spiral.

While the Growth Spiral has been identified with Anderson for 15 years, it also will continue as a national project of the board's Sunday school division, said Harry Piland, division director.

"Anything that has been as successful in so many churches as the Growth Spiral won't just fade away. It will continue," Piland said.

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