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# Charity & Children

*The historic publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, first to tell the story for 135 years.*



@bchfamily

November 2022

Issue 11

Volume 135

## This Christmas, brothers dream of best gift ever

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

**T**he three brothers timidly stepped through the front door of the cottage. They were carrying only a few personal items, and the clothes they were wearing were tattered and dirty.

"It was the saddest thing," remembers Broyhill Home cottage mom Betty Porter. "The boys' shirts, pants, and underwear, all had to be thrown away."

It took some time for the boys to adjust. A few months passed before the siblings understood there were three meals a day, fresh laundered clothes, and crisp, clean sheets regularly placed on their beds. It took even longer for their fears to fade and for dreams about a better future to fill their minds and hearts.

Hunger and physical and emotional neglect are traumatic. Waking up every morning to the same dire circumstances drains every ounce

of hope and is long-lasting. No child should have to suffer such a plight.

Two and a half years have passed, Robert age 12, Reggie age nine, and Ralph age seven, are flourishing in Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) care. Robert loves to fish. Reggie is a Lego master. Ralph tags along with the older two being mischievous sometimes.

The three brothers were among the thousands of boys and girls living in North Carolina at any given time who need a home and a loving Christian family to care for them. Being in BCH's care was only a temporary plan. The long-term goal for the boys was to have a family they could call their own and a mom and dad who would love, care, and protect them. Now, the boys' dream looms on the horizon. This Christmas, they will experience the best gift ever. *(Continued on page 3.)*



In December, look for our brand new

### *Holiday Gift Catalog!*

The catalog is a new way for you to share hope this season with children, special needs adults, expectant mothers, aging adults, and all those Baptist Children's Homes serves. There are **more than 40 gift items** to choose from starting at \$10—every item meets a vital need!

Look for the catalog insert in the December edition of *Charity & Children* and also online.



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**ON MISSION** *together*  
NC Baptists Annual Meeting | Nov. 7-8, 2022

Baptist Children's Homes team members look forward to:

- Talking to you about EVERY CHILD Foster & Adopt
- Sharing how to participate in the Annual Offering
- Presenting career opportunities with our ministry
- Discussing how you and your church can be involved



# Teaching money-wise lessons

By **Michael C. Blackwell**, President/CEO  
(Chief Encouragement Officer)

**A** wise old philosopher summed up the money dilemma pretty well when he said, “There’s too much month at the end of the money.”

Nothing raises the anxiety level quicker than disputes over money and the spending of it. While money is not the root of all evil, the lack, need, and greed of it has caused people to do evil things.

Money is nice. It pays the bills, buys groceries, and puts gas in the car. Money builds houses, clothes children, and finances vacations. Money also causes family arguments.

For instance, I’m always surprised at how much money it takes to keep our two grandchildren in clothes. Why do Gabriella and Sam always need new shoes and a couple of pair of jeans? Catherine gently reminds me that shoe fashions change *monthly* along with the weather and warm shoes and keeping up with the *ever-changing* trends are a must.

Then I remember that while at Carolina, I wouldn’t be caught dead without a pair of Bass Weejuns or a Madras shirt. No matter if I only had a few dollars. I would rather not date than not wear the “right” clothes. *And most of the time I didn’t do either.*

We don’t take money seriously enough. Humanity was not made for money; money was made for humanity. And a part of humanity’s money belongs to God. That’s good money management. My first regular job was in the fifth grade. I delivered newspapers twice a week and made three dollars. Thirty cents of that went to my church. I have not been without regular employment since then, and I still believe that a penny out of every dime I earn belongs to God.

Good family budgeting tries to instill that ideal in all family members. The best family budgeting of all says that another tenth should be saved. That leaves eighty cents out of every dollar for taxes, bills, house payments, grocer-

ies, clothing, and entertainment.

The key to success in all of this is keeping lines of communication open so that a budget is established and maintained. Money has a way of slipping through your fingers, and unless there is a disciplined effort to make your money work for you, rather than vice-versa, it will be gone before you know it.

Some children believe that parents have a magic faucet that spews out money endlessly. To dispel this myth, give your child an allowance. Then teach him or her to manage it so that some money remains for special things. Children must also understand that when their allowance runs out, there will be no more money until the next payday.

Budgets need to itemize rather than generalize. Examples of essentials are insurance, taxes, medical expenses, clothing, food, transportation, education, etc. Essentials come first. The real test of good budgeting is how you spend what’s left after the bills are paid. That’s called discretionary income and includes such things as vacations, recreations, and one of our favorite past times—eating out.

Why not give the 10-10-80 rule a chance in your house? Give the first ten percent of your income back to God, save ten percent, and live on the remaining 80 percent. It will work wonders for your family.

Baptist Children’s Homes alumnus, Dr. Ted Chandler’s recent publication *Money-Wise Language Coaching* addresses the need to teach children and teens good money spending decision making. He says that being money wise means being conscious of the consequences of today’s money decisions. What are the consequences if money is saved verses spent? How does saving affect today, one year from now, five years in the future, or 10 years from now?

Once a child is taught the “why” of good decision making, it can be practiced. The child learns to stop and think, “Should I purchase this trendy shirt or wait until I can afford a quality item that is better made, timeless, and will last longer?”

Teens also need to ask themselves: “Am I spending this money out of boredom?” “How long will I feel the emotional high of a little bit of ‘retail therapy’?” If spending is out of boredom, then one can be assured that the emotional high will be quickly fleeting. As parents and money mentors, the best way to teach money-wise lessons is to make sure we are modeling sound, financial decision making behaviors ourselves.

Remember that a key to a good budget is for all the family to communicate openly about how money is earned, how it is to be spent, bring satisfaction to every family member, and be used for the glory of God.



#### Mission:

sharing hope . . . changing lives

#### Vision:

To provide the highest quality of Christian services to children, adults and families in a caring culture of measurable excellence

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# Trustees embrace new strategic plan, hear updates

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

**O**n September 20, The Board of Trustees of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) gathered for their biannual meeting in the sanctuary of Mills Home Baptist Church in Thomasville.

"This day was a gift," said BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. "I greatly depend on the counsel of this exceptional body of leaders."

"Nothing takes the place of being able to look them eye to eye as we discuss what comes next for this vibrant, growing ministry."

Those next steps were laid out for trustees during the meeting on September 20 as Blackwell and his executive team introduced BCH's new strategic plan entitled EMBRACE: Enthusiastically Managing Both Results And Compassionate Enterprises.

"It is my belief and that of the Strategic Planning Committee that we are entering a new era, one that demands more," as penned by Blackwell in the plan's introduction. "This is not the time to be ordinary or meet the status quo. This is the time to rise upward and be extraordinary."

Trustees unanimously adopted EMBRACE as well as the 2022-2023 BCH operating budget. As the nonprofit has grown through its merger with Christian Adoption Services and expansion of its EVERY CHILD Foster & Adoption Ministry, a partnership with NC Baptists, the operating budget has also grown in order to keep up with the increasing needs of children, families, and individuals.

"We are trusting God as we meet our financial goals," said Blackwell.

Trustees also heard a presentation and update on EVERY CHILD by Mark Smith, church liaison for the foster/adopt initiative. Blake Ragsdale,



Above, Mark Smith, church liaison for foster/adopt, gives an update on the EVERY CHILD initiative at the Board of Trustees meeting on September 20 at Mills Home in Thomasville. Right, BCH team members greet trustee Marcia Heckman, left, as Board members tour The Mill: Coffee & Community (see page 8).

BCH Director of Communications, shared this year's Annual Offering video featuring The Cooks, a BCH foster/adopt family who have fostered nineteen children in four years and adopted three.

The full board meets twice per year in January and September.



# Boys to permanently move to farm before Christmas

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

(Continued from page 1.)

**E**dward and Sara have a large farm where they raise livestock and grow organic crops. They have an orchard, a cannery, and are candle makers. Most importantly, the couple are believers and have a great heart for children.

Choosing to become foster parents was just the first step for Edward and Sara. They quickly knew after meeting the brothers that they not only wanted to foster the boys, but they wanted to adopt them. The couple has no birth children and desire to share what they have with Robert, Reggie, and Ralph.

Sara sends pictures of the animals, the farm,

the house where they live, and the bedrooms the boys will call their own. Betty takes every photo sent and puts them into an album.

Sara and Edward have video chats with the boys, each one getting to know the other better. This Thanksgiving, the boys will have a three-day visit. Robert has located some great fishing locations nearby using Google, Reggie is debating which Lego creation he is bringing with him to share with Sara and Edward, and Ralph is intent on personally meeting each of the animals.

The boys are excited about their new home and Betty is excited for them. "These boys have gone through so much. They are precious and deserve to grow up free of fear and heartache."

Robert recently pulled Betty aside. He was concerned she would not understand his happiness in leaving her to live with Sara and Edward. "We have a great life here," he assured Betty. "I love you and I will miss you and our life here at Broyhill Home." Betty smiles at the memory.

Plans are being made for the boys to permanently move to the farm in December, in time for Christmas. The youngest, Ralph, was concerned if he and his brothers would receive presents. He told Sara that Reggie really wanted a Lego White House set with 3,000 pieces this year. Sara assured him that they would have presents, not disclosing particulars. But she said, "The greatest gift this Christmas, will be that we are family."



# Children are depending on you to answer the call

By **Brenda B. Gray**, Executive Vice President, Development & Communications

**W**ill you answer the call or will you let it go to voice mail?

On November 11th, Baptist Children's Homes will celebrate its 137th birthday. One hundred and thirty-seven years ago precious boys and girls across our state were orphaned with few options. God called John H. Mills to open The Baptist Orphanage in Thomasville. Mills turned to the church. Since our beginnings, we have known the answer to the dark plight of our children and those so desperately in need is the church living out the Gospel as expressed in James 1:27.

Through the years, you, the church has answered the call. Through the years, you, the church has enabled us to be there for thousands of children and families. Thousands of children have found refuge and thousands of families have found hope. They have learned that hope has a name and His name is Jesus. They have learned that hope has hands and feet, your hands and your feet. Your hands to hold them and your feet to walk this journey with them.

Each time we wipe away tears, prepare a warm nutritious meal, clap loudly at a birthday party, help with homework or a special art or craft project, bake their favorite chocolate chip cookies, hold their hand to keep them safe, fold our hands and bow our heads as we teach them to pray, we do so offering hope. Each time you make it possible, each time your hands touch, your hands bring hope and healing. Without you saying "YES!" when God calls you to be a part of this ministry, we could not be here.

Each time we walk this journey with them, you are there. You run with them on the ball field. You walk with them through the woods and teach them of God's creation. And on days when they cannot run or walk emotionally, you pick them up and carry them. Thank you!

Thank you for answering God's calling on your heart to care for those we serve. Thank you for being an extension of God's love. Our Annual Offering theme this year is "God is calling." Just as we rest on the promise that the Lord will never forsake us, our children can be confident that North Carolina Baptists will not let that call go to voice mail. Our children can rest on the promise that North Carolina Baptists will never let them down. And we never let them forget how much you care for them through your many faithful prayers and acts of kindness and love.

**Thank you!**

The promise of God's presence in our lives is one of the most powerful promises we hold true.

God seeks us because God so loves us. He

actively seeks us and loves us passionately. It is this presence that we claim by promise. God's presence comes to us just as surely as it came to the people of Israel and to the early Christians.

Eighty percent of those who come to us are unchurched. They are desperately in need of hope and desperately in need of God's presence in their lives. We are a mission field!

It is important for our children to experience God's presence! It is important they realize that they are precious to God. It is important they know they are not on their journey to hope and healing alone. It is important they know they can depend on you to be on this journey with them through your prayers and support.

**God is calling.**

Children like six-year-old Tim are depending on you to answer. He was abandoned in the mall.

**God is calling.**

Children like Elle are depending on you to answer. Elle was abducted to be used for sex trafficking.

**God is calling.**

Children like Kevin, Jeff, and Alex are depending on you to answer. They were discovered living in their car with their Dad in the mountains in the middle of winter. Dad had a severe drug addiction.

**God is calling.**

Sibling groups not wanting to be separated are depending on you to answer. A sibling group of children ages 14, 11, and 10 have been waiting to be adopted. Over the years, they have watched their friends be placed with forever families while continuing to wait.

**God is calling.**

Young girls like Abigail are depending on you to answer. Abigail found herself sitting in an abortion clinic. She ran out of the abortion clinic. Abi chose life for her baby.

**God is calling.**

Children like Joseph are depending on you to answer. Joseph, as a baby was left in a burning house. His burns were severe, but now as a six-year-old he lives with loving cottage parents in one of our cottages.

**God is calling.**

Children wanting

a forever family are depending on you to answer. Ashely had been through numerous placements. She was told repeatedly that this time it would be different. This beautiful 16-year-old was adopted by one of our foster families last year.

**God is calling.**

Children like Lecianne are depending on you to answer. Lecianne's father was sentenced to prison for abusing her and then he committed suicide. Six months later her mother died.

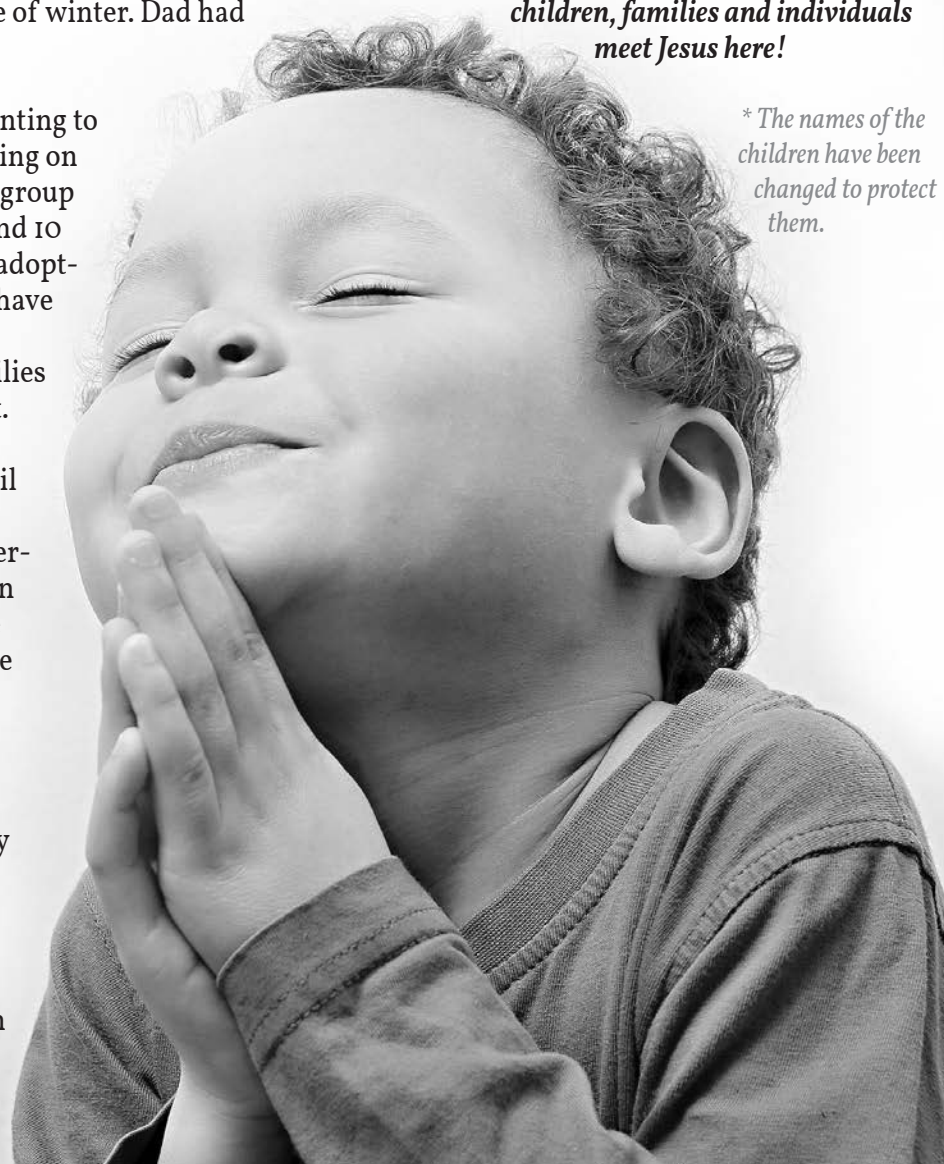
No child should ever experience the trauma these children have been through. Every Child should be loved and cherished.

God calls us to reach, to touch, to journey with the message of hope, love, forgiveness and grace. Pray earnestly to know his will concerning your gift. The need has never been greater! Thousands upon thousands of children, families, and individuals are depending on you. Your gift could be the difference. Your "widow's mite" truly matters!

**God is calling. Please, please, please continue to answer!**

Thanks to your faithful support: **Love** happens here, **hope** happens here, **healing** happens here, **laughter** happens here, **grace** happens here, **children, families and individuals meet Jesus here!**

*\* The names of the children have been changed to protect them.*





# *“Can I have lights on my Christmas tree?”*

This was Tommy's response to “Ms. Betty,” his Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) cottage mother who asked him what he wanted for Christmas.

Betty and Will, who have cared for hundreds of children as BCH cottage parents, suspected that past Christmases for Tommy and little brother Joey were anything but “Merry.”

Like so many other BCH boys and girls, Tommy and Joey were removed from their family for their safety. The family home was deteriorating and unsafe. There was never food to fill their hungry bellies. **There was no electricity. The boys lived in literal, as well as figurative, darkness until coming to live at Will and Betty's BCH cottage.**

As the cottage parents and all the boys started decorating their BCH cottage's enormous Christmas tree, Betty had a special surprise for Tommy and Joey—a small tree for the brothers' bedroom that they could decorate. Overjoyed, the boys strung as many lights as their tree could hold!

**Through Christmas sponsors—like you—Tommy and Joey experienced the light of Christmas! In addition, your gifts made it possible for the brothers to learn about the true light of hope—Jesus Christ.**

You can make a gift that changes a child's life by becoming a Christmas sponsor. **And your gift will be matched dollar for dollar through our \$250,000 challenge gift.** Your sponsorship will impact children's lives twice as much!

***Thank you for bringing the light of hope to NC children like Tommy and Joey.***

***Change a child's life this Christmas! Use the enclosed envelope to mail a check. You can also give online at [bchfamily.org/givenow](http://bchfamily.org/givenow) or by scanning the code.***



## ***I want to share the light of hope with children!***

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☐ Contact me with information on how to prepare a Christian Will    ☐ I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate plans.





# Ridge Road ministry continues to yield a harvest

By **Michael C. Blackwell**, Publisher

**Editor's Note:** It's hard to know the full impact of one's ministry. Few will see how lives are truly changed this side of Heaven. Dr. Blackwell shares, for the glory of God, the bounty of a ministry that planted deep seeds and continues to produce a rich harvest.

**T**hey came from five states—50 of them—for a time of hugs, tears, songs, stories, and deep sharing. They were “my kids,”—now 70 years old—members of my college and youth ministry in the magical years of 1970-1974.

The place was Ridge Road Baptist Church (RRBC) in the North Carolina capital city of Raleigh. I was fresh out of seminary and as an eager 28-year old, accepted a call to become the church's Associate Pastor and Minister of Youth/Education (and other duties as assigned).

I started with a “blank slate”—no real job description. My salary was \$6,000 a year. We lived in a duplex about the size of a large cardboard box. My wife was two months away from having our first child, Julie Renee Blackwell. Michael, Jr. would come along in 1973, also born at Rex Hospital in Raleigh.

I remember having one of those middle-of-the-night “light bulb” moments: Meredith College and N. C. State University were just a stone's throw from the church. So, I wrote as many of the incoming Freshmen as I had addresses for and invited them to Ridge Road. Men from the church picked up the guys at a central N. C. State location and a bus from Meredith brought the girls.

That August Sunday ministry launch in 1970, there was a delightful surprise when scores of college students from State and Meredith came. Thus, began a delightful (and historic) ministry that, in many ways, continues to this very day.

Fast forward to September 18, 2022. I was Guest Preacher at Ridge Road. College and youth from those 1970-74 years came back—Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia.

Six of those who went into ministry assisted with the day's service. Two of them—upon their own retirement—served as Interim Pastor at Ridge Road. I was introduced as a “Super Hero”



Fifty members of the Ridge Road Baptist Church college and youth ministry directed by Dr. Michael C. Blackwell during 1970-1974 gathered for an unprecedented reunion on September 18. Blackwell's ministry forged the way for innovative college ministries pulling NC State and Meredith students. Pictured below, the ministry introduced to Baptist life such things as a weekly coffee house christened Tranquility Base.

by Pam Sloan Annas, in 1970 a 15-year old tenth grader—now a member of the Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) Board of Trustees and my Council of Advisors.



opportunities still available. To a person, they all pointed to those RRBC years as pivotal in their personal and professional development.

Take a look at the picture above. I love these “kids.” I invested in them. I listened, encouraged, counseled, laughed, performed weddings, ordained several, attended funerals, and learned

so much from them—youth in junior and high school and eager learners in college.

We paired college students and church youth. I also assigned each college student a Watchcare family. All these decades later, several of those relationships are still firmly in place.

College students and church youth traveled the two Carolinas as members of The King's Players drama group. A coffee house ministry was begun for non-church youth—attracting over 200 on opening night.

Who knows whether there will be another Reunion like there was on 9/18/22. I do know that we will stay in touch. Those four years at Ridge Road “marked” me to this very day. What I have sought to do for almost 40 years as BCH president, had its beginnings at Ridge Road Church (followed by a lovely seven-year pastorate at First Baptist, Carthage NC).

Positive, redemptive, fun relationships are more important than ever. Invest in others. Never give up on pouring yourself into ministry. Encourage, bless, and empower. I can't guarantee this type of reunion this side of eternity, but I can boldly tell you that ministry always returns a harvest. For me, I'm glad that a part of me will always reside at 2011 Ridge Road in Raleigh, NC, 27607.



# Hopper calls on churches to give children a home

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

**A**ndrew Hopper, lead pastor of Mercy Hill Church in Greensboro, believes that adoption/foster care is gospel driven.

“Our vision at Mercy Hill is for families and individuals to provide gospel-driven care for vulnerable children through four lanes: adoption, foster care, support for foster care families, and advocacy for children as a guardian ad litem.”

Hopper was a recent guest of Dr. Michael C. Blackwell’s podcast *“It’s a family matter”* and shared how Mercy Hill Church is partnering with Baptist Children’s Homes to reach their goal to have 200 adoptive and foster care families in their church by 2025.

Andrew and his wife Anna have an adopted special needs child and three birth children. His commitment to adoption and fostering comes from his and Anna’s belief that “the Bible leads the charge.” They felt “drawn” by what Scripture called them to do. He said it was why he is boldly leading Mercy Hill to reach their goal.

“Our church began to think about what it looks like to be a people who promote building families the way God builds His: through adoption,” Hopper says. “God began to wreck our heart as a church for this ministry in a new way. Today, there are more than 50 families in our church who have adopted.”

Hopper preached a series of sermons to launch the adoption/foster care emphasis entitled “Chosen” (Hopper’s sermons are available at [www.every-child.org/pastors](http://www.every-child.org/pastors)) to give Mercy Hill members the “theology of adoption.”

“When people get it, something sparks,” Hopper attests. “You can’t be a Christian without fully understanding adoption. It started there, and then God began birthing a vision to see these 200 families raised up from the sidelines to the front line.”

Andrew asserts that foster care goes hand



Andrew Hopper is the lead pastor of Mercy Hill Church in Greensboro. He and his wife Anna have four children. The Hoppers led in the planting of Mercy Hill in 2012 and have seen it grow to a multi-campus church.

in hand in ministry. “Christians build families through adoptions but are part of restoring families through foster care. The first goal of Christian fostering is to see God move and bring salvation to a family—to see them spiritually and emotionally brought back together.”

Whether fostering or planning to adopt, the family needs the church’s support. Hopper says there needs to be those who are “rope holders.” The term is borrowed from the unique relationship between William Cary and Andrew Fuller. Cary told Fuller that if he would “hold the rope,” he would go to the foreign mission field. For 20 years, Fuller raised prayer support and money for Cary’s ministry. “We borrow the term. What

our families are willing to do through adoption and foster care compels others to help. We must be willing to ‘hold the rope’ for them.”

Five years ago, Anna and Andrew adopted their daughter Faith Ann. The couple was called by the adoption agency and told they were a match for a birth mom. They listened as they learned the baby would have special needs and had a 99 percent

chance of having down syndrome.

“They told us to take a couple of days and then let them know our decision,” Hopper recounts. “I called my dad and explained what was happening. I told him they’ve asked us to pray about it. He said, ‘Man, what’s there to pray about?’”

Hopper believes Faith Ann impacts others around her, especially church members and his three other children.

“Both our children and church witness what God does through this beautiful child,” Hopper says. “We’re trusting God—we put ourselves into this and push back fear. And God is busy putting back into our family through Faith Ann. My kids see what it looks like to bring the most vulnerable into our home and are learning about the gospel in a different way.”

The 40-year-old Florida native who gave his heart to Jesus as a boy in the parking lot of the Middleburg Winn-Dixie grocery store believes the answer is the church. “I’ve done the numbers. It would be great for one or two churches, or BCH, to take care of all the hurting children in the state, but it is going to take more. Doing this together, we truly could see the day when there are more families who are licensed in the more than 4,000 North Carolina Baptist churches to adopt and foster than there are kids waiting for a home.”

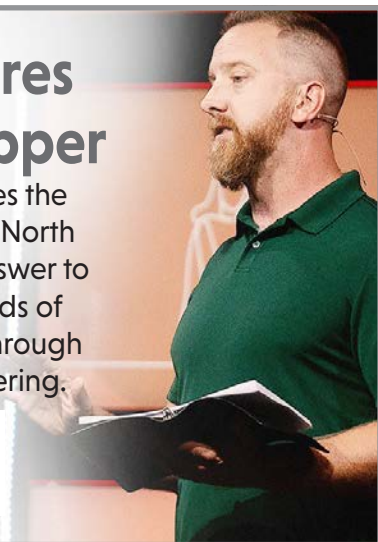
It is a gospel-driven vision.

## New podcast features Pastor Andrew Hopper

Listen to Dr. Blackwell as he discusses the biblical truths of adoption and how North Carolina Baptist churches are the answer to providing thousands of children a home through adoption and fostering.



Scan the QR code





# The Mill: Coffee & Community opens to the public

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

At Baptist Children's Homes (BCH), something new is brewing – *literally*. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Monday, October 24, BCH introduced its new public coffee shop — The Mill: Coffee & Community. It is a fitting name for the new shop as it is located at Mills Home, the nonprofit's oldest location and home for its statewide headquarters in Thomasville. "The idea is to have people come to The Mill and be on our campus because this is about community. The idea of 'community' is what we want to emphasize," said BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. "We are Thomasville's oldest continuing business, and we have watched our city continue to grow throughout the decades."

A staple of Thomasville since its founding in 1885, BCH serves children who have often been removed from their families' custody for their safety. Throughout the decades, BCH has expanded its services throughout the Thomasville area and beyond. The nonprofit operates in more than 35 North Carolina communities, locations in South Carolina, and in Guatemala serving indigenous children. BCH now offers services to intellectually/developmentally disabled adults, single mothers, community families, and the aging population. Last year, BCH impacted more than 156,000 lives.

"Thank you for the help you provide for our community. What this campus and what these folks at Baptist Children's Homes do for our community is amazing," said Keith Tobin, President of the Thomasville Chamber of Commerce. Tobin, Thomasville mayor Raleigh York, other local dignitaries and community friends attended the ribbon-cutting event

"The Mill is exciting because it not only serves this campus, but it serves our citizens as well," continued Tobin.

Utilizing the former Robert Idol Child Care Center, whose Weekday Education classes for community children have been folded into the Fleshman-Pratt Education Center across



Above, surrounded by local dignitaries, community friends, and Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) team members, BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell leads a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Monday, October 24 for The Mill Coffee & Community. The new coffee shop, located at Mills home in Thomasville, and its spacious outdoor playground, offers opportunities for community groups—such as Bible study groups and home school groups—to gather. Below, The Mill manager Charlotte Edwards, left, and assistant manager Kristin Allmon, right, take an order from Shannon Fulp, Program Coordinator for BCH's Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Ministry.



campus, The Mill provides indoor and outdoor seating as well as access to an expansive, fully-fenced children's playground perfect for families. Blackwell sees the spacious outdoor area as a perfect place for home school groups, Bible study groups and

ing up here to have a place to work," said Keith Henry, BCH Chief Operating Officer. "We want it to be a place where some of our intellectually/developmentally disabled adults come to learn job skills."

The Mill's public grand opening was Tuesday, October 25. Its hours are Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In addition to its coffee menu, The Mill offers pastries and other assorted locally baked goodies.

stay-at-home families.

"Being that we are Baptist Children's Homes, it was vital that we have a component for boys and girls," explained Blackwell. "It is about providing an experience that can be enjoyed by adults and children alike."

As with all of its endeavors, BCH sees The Mill as an extension of its services.

"We want to have some of the children grow-



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HOURS: MON-FRI 6:30AM TO 3PM | SAT 8:30AM TO 2PM  
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# Alumni mourn Maultsby's and Richardson's passing — Former high school sweethearts reconnect

By **Lib Johnson** (336) 299-7412 [libsjohnson@triad.rr.com](mailto:libsjohnson@triad.rr.com)

**W**e are very sad to report the death of **Wallace B. Maultsby**, Alumni president 1994-1996. In the Great Depression year of 1933, Wally's mother sent him to live at Mills Home (MH), then called the Baptist Orphanage of North Carolina. As Wallace said, "I went from a family of five to five-hundred and fifty brothers and sisters." He thrived greatly at MH under the care of his beloved "Mama Bess" Carter and graduated in 1944. After the war, Wally attended Guilford College in Greensboro where he was an outstanding athlete in baseball, basketball, track, and football, receiving the Senior Athlete of the Year Award for the Class of 1950. He was later inducted into the Guilford College Sports Hall of Fame. He was married for 64 years to his college sweetheart **Virginia** who always contributed her beautiful voice to our Homecoming choir.

Wally worked as a terminal manager for McLean Trucking Company for 35 years in Winston-Salem. After retirement, he worked part time at Long Creek Golf Club where he could shoot a score "in the 80s into his 80s." An active member of Maple Springs United Methodist Church, he was the long-serving president of his Sunday school class. He was a devoted Christian who expressed his faith through acts of service such as volunteering at the church's food pantry and baking hundreds of "Wally pound cakes" for folks who needed help or sympathy.

Wally was predeceased by his wife **Virginia**, his daughter **Charlene**, and his son **Wallace Jr.** He is survived by his daughter **Janie** and his three grandchildren. A service will be held a later time. Friends can send condolences to Janie at 210 Park Blvd., Winston-Salem, NC, 27127.

We are saddened also to learn of the death of **Waldron Richardson** on

August 29. Waldron was the son of **Van and Willie Mae Richardson** who both worked on the MH campus for a few years, then the Kennedy Home campus, then back to Mills Home. Waldron was a scrub orphan from birth until he graduated from Thomasville High School (THS) in 1963. A most excellent student at THS, positioned second or third in his class, he continued with his education and graduated from North Carolina State. Sometime between high school graduation and returning to Thomasville, Waldron served his country in the Vietnam era. He then settled down in Thomasville and lived a quiet life. He is survived by his sister **Julia Lee McClenahan**. Condolences will reach Julia Lee at 1967 Valley Rd., Annapolis, MD, 29401.

Folks were happy to learn that **Johnny Shields** agreed this year to serve on the Alumni Council. He is already busy trying to help with repair efforts at the Mitchell Museum. Johnny entered MH in 1952 with siblings **Woody, Sandra Faye, and Clara Sue**. He graduated in 1961. He found life on campus to be interesting and challenging as he split his time between working on the farm and playing all the campus sports that he could. He not only played basketball for MH, he played basketball and football for THS. In the summers, spending time with his friends in the valley was one of his favorite things to do. He still has a fondness for **Ms. Leonard**, the dietitian, when he was at the Durham Cottage. John faithfully attends Homecoming each year. Most of his adult years have been spent in Burlington where he reared two offspring and now enjoys spending time with his two grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He spent his work career in the textile industry.

Alumni who use Facebook have enjoyed witnessing the reunion of "Harry and Marie." Someone told us that **Harry Walls** asked **John Paul**

**"Dusty" Jenkins** to help him locate his old high school sweetheart, **Marie Damphouse Gipson**. Dusty was able to locate Marie and she and Harry are now together. It is interesting that Harry and Marie both lived in Asheville before entering MH. Harry entered in 1959 with siblings **Nathan** (now deceased) and **Harold** and he left in 1968. Marie entered in 1965 with sister **Paulette** (now deceased) and lived there until 1969. They went on to their separate lives with Marie marrying and having a son and Harry entering the U.S. Army. He also married and had a daughter. Harry has a fond remembrance of **Mr. Abernathy** as houseparent at the **Watson** and Marie has the same for the **Steeles** who were house parents at **Huffman Cottage**. Harry's fondest memories include time spent on the ball field, in the swimming pool and gym, and especially in "the Valley." Marie cherishes time with the ponies and time spent in the kitchen at the Huffman. We all agree, it has been interesting observing this reunion of two old friends.

Many alumni will remember **Walter Vaughan** who entered MH in 1969 with his siblings **Jack and Donna**. He liked MH because he felt houseparents **Mrs. and Mrs. Stevens** went the extra mile to show their love for him. He also fondly remembers that at Christmas time, he was allowed to list three things he wished to receive for Christmas. Thinking he would receive one of the three, he was thrilled that Santa brought him all three wishes. After leaving MH, Walter married **Dorothea** and reared two offspring who in turn produced six grandchildren. Still a working citizen, Walter is a self-employed insurance agent in Asheboro.

Thanks also to **Becky Griffin Stutts** for her update sheet. Becky came to MH from Charlotte in 1969 with siblings **Linda, Jeff, and Paulette** (deceased). After leaving MH

in 1976, she married **Jimmy R. Stutts** and reared a family of three who in turn produced 10 grandchildren. Jimmy and Becky enjoy time with grandchildren now that Jimmy is retired and she is semi-retired. She has special memories of **Ted and Judy Griffin**, her cottage parents, because they treated the girls in their cottage just as they would their own. Becky enjoys the fellowship when she returns for Homecoming.

**Dwight E. Millsaps** is very well known to many MH alumni and he drew a very nice number of them to the Homecoming worship service in 2016 when he did such a great job as the speaker for the service. Retired now from AT & T, he continues pastoring in a Southern Baptist church. Dwight and his sister **Freida** entered MH in 1964 and he left in 1966. A large part of his time on campus he was involved in all sports. He played basketball and baseball for MH and he played also on THS teams. He and his wife **Missy** have two children, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild. **Mrs. Bonnie Ensley** was his favorite campus worker.

It seems quite a few alumni and former workers wish to make arrangements to have their ashes placed in the new Columbarium the Alumni Association has had installed at God's Acre. Those who are interested in inquiring about this should contact **Sharon DeHart Stiles**, 1588 Elkhart Circle, Gastonia, NC, 28054, [sharondstiles51@yahoo.com](mailto:sharondstiles51@yahoo.com) or 704-685-2443. Those interested in donating toward the upkeep of the Columbarium and surrounding property can send a donation to **Treasurer Flora Hicks Patton**, 6429 Sisk Carter Rd., Rockwell, NC, 28136.



Lib Johnson was a resident of Mills Home from 1946 to 1957. Johnson began writing the Mills Home alumni column in 1992.



## Making News Every Day Around the State



Mills Home in Thomasville

### Friends of Children sees 400 people

Approximately 400 NC Baptists came to Friends of Children on Saturday, September 24. The one-day missions opportunity allows volunteers to see the BCH ministry up close.



BCH Council of Advisors

### Advisors meet, visit new coffee shop

The Council of Advisors met with BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell on October 25. It was the same day Mills Home's new coffee shop—The Mill—opened in Thomasville.



Christian Adoption Services

### Banquet features adoptive families

Families who have adopted through BCH's Christian Adoption Services shared their stories at the Rocky Mount Benefit Banquet. The event surpassed its fundraising goal.



Camp Duncan in Aberdeen

### Volunteers tackle wilderness projects

Camp Duncan held their Friends of Children on Saturday, September 17. NC Baptist volunteers of all ages came out to the wilderness property and helped with a number of projects.



Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte | EVERY CHILD Foster & Adopt Ministry

### Families undergo family foster training at Charlotte church

A total of 13 families are going through EVERY CHILD Foster & Adopt training at Hickory Grove Baptist. EVERY CHILD is a partnership between BCH and NC Baptists. BCH comes alongside NC Baptist churches and couples from their congregations who want to provide a home to boys and girls among the approximately 16,000 in the NC foster care system. Visit [every-child.org](http://every-child.org).



Good Shepherd Ministries in Guatemala

### Mission team leads Bible school

A mission team from Fellowship of Wildwood Baptist in St. Lewis, MO led a Bible school program in a community school near BCH's Good Shepherd Ministries in Guatemala.



Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro

### Praise Symphony hosts benefit

The Piedmont Praise Symphony, a 35-piece orchestra, performed on October 16 at Lawndale Baptist. They collected a love offering to benefit Baptist Children's Homes.



Pine Grove Baptist Church in Franklin

### Church rallies for its annual offering

BCH's Lewis Smith received an \$11,100 offering from Pine Grove Baptist. Members Debbie and Ervin Keener promote BCH every week through the church's "Every Sunday Offering."

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[www.kennedyhome.org](http://www.kennedyhome.org)
- Odum Home**  
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433  
[www.odumhome.org](http://www.odumhome.org)
- Cameron Boys Camp**  
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034  
[www.cameronboyscamp.org](http://www.cameronboyscamp.org)
- Camp Duncan for Girls**  
Brad Gearhart, Dir., 910-944-3077  
[www.campduncanNC.org](http://www.campduncanNC.org)
- Family Foster Care**  
Bob McCleary, 828-627-9254  
[www.bchfostercare.org](http://www.bchfostercare.org)
- Christian Adoption Services**  
Kevin Qualls, Dir., 704-847-0038  
[www.christianadopt.org](http://www.christianadopt.org)
- Weekday Education**  
Brooke Child, Dir., 336-474-1201
- Tucker Greater Vision Ministry**  
Sara Becker, Mgr., 336-687-6384
- HOMEbase** at W. Carolina University  
Jim Dean, Dir., 828-293-4660
- Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities**  
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259  
[www.hereismyhome.org](http://www.hereismyhome.org)
- NC Baptist Aging Ministry**  
Sandy Gregory, Dir., 336-474-1221  
[www.ncbam.org](http://www.ncbam.org)
- Good Shepherd Children's Home** in Guatemala  
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# #3641



# Beach retreat time to share laughter and memories — Alumni recount growing up on Kinston campus

By **John Thompson**, 104 Village Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jthompson117@ec.rr.com

**D**onna Duty writes to share about a trip she and some friends made recently: “A group that included **Debbie Stallings Lassiter**, **Patsy Hensley Lovejoy**, **Debbie McCormick Caulder**, Debbie Caulder’s friend, **Ellen**, and myself took a trip to Savannah. On the way we stopped in South Carolina at BUC-EE’S. If you have never been to one, it is an experience for sure! They have good clothing, gifts, food, etc. We arrived at our beautiful B&B sometime mid afternoon on Friday. We unpacked and then headed out for a delicious dinner at a nearby Chili’s restaurant. After dinner on Friday, we went back to the house to rest and relax from our trip and spent the evening fellowshiping and telling funny stories of our Kennedy Home (KH) days. We laughed and shared our funny stories and memories of wonderful times spent together as children.

“Saturday morning after breakfast, we headed to the beautiful Savannah waterfront where we purchased tickets to ride the Georgia Queen riverboat which included lunch and a tour of the waterfront. Of course the first priority after boarding was to EAT! They had a delicious buffet lunch which included fried chicken, shrimp and grits, sweet potatoes, creamed potatoes, green beans, mac and cheese, and dessert featuring banana pudding and peach cobbler. It was all you could eat, so most of us went back for seconds. After we ate, the boat left the dock and we enjoyed a nice tour of the Savannah waterfront which showed businesses along the waterfront, an old fort, huge barges that held shipping containers, and beautiful old buildings. After the tour, we did a little shopping along the waterfront. On the way back to our house, we stopped at Publix and got sandwiches for dinner. After dinner, we watched a movie together.

“Sunday morning we headed to the waterfront again. But this time,

we purchased tickets to ride the trolley for a great tour of most of the downtown area. We purchased an all day pass and got on and off when we wanted. Our first stop was to have lunch at Paula Deen’s restaurant called “The Lady and Sons.” This is the restaurant that she and her sons opened in Savannah. We had another good Southern meal of fried chicken and sides. We all agreed that the food on the riverboat was much better! Once we got back on the trolley after lunch, we saw some beautiful historic homes, beautiful squares and parks along the way. There were beautiful, large oak trees with Spanish moss hanging from their the branches. We also saw monuments in the squares. Our trolley tour guides were fun, friendly, and knowledgeable of the city. They did a great job explaining historic details about houses and buildings, etc. We ordered pizza for dinner and took it back to the house to eat. I treated everyone to fudge popsicles from Publix! We watched a few movies together.

“Monday morning, we packed up and headed home. The trip was fine and we shared KH stories and laughed. God blessed us with great weather. We had so much fun and agreed we would all take another trip together in the future.”

The Alumni Fall Beach Retreat at Indian Beach was great and all had fun! A huge “thank you” goes to the KH office and **Chris Allebaugh**. He helped in many ways. We charged everyone \$30 to attend. This included two nights and three days at the beach with all meals included. We were blessed on the land of the “sound” side and in the “ocean” on the beach side. Through the years many people have gone to the cottage and made changes and kept things up-to-date. The cottage can sleep large groups. There is a boy’s side with bunk beds and a girl’s side with bunk beds. There are also rooms for houseparents, life guards, etc. All of us love to go there.

In the summer months, children

and residents from all BCH’s residential programs take turns staying for a week at a time. This is a great time to have good Christian fellowship.

I want to share a little about this year’s retreat and **Debbie Caulder** took real good notes for me to use. Debbie, her husband **Gary**, and I (along with other helping hands) prepared the meals. When everyone left on Sunday, the cottage was left “spic and span.” Everyone did a good job cleaning. Debbie, Gary, and I were allowed to go down one extra night to take all the food and begin preparing the meals early on Friday morning. We really appreciated this. When we got there, we met a new friend named **Stacy** who provided us with fresh fish and crab legs.

Debbie and I went out to get the corn meal to cook the fish and bought some very tasty shrimp from the Captain’s Kitchen food truck at Indian Beach. During the weekend, we did not turn on the television because we just talked, played games, walked along the beach. There were many “old tales” recounted about KH life.

You should have heard all the singing. Watch on KH alumni Facebook page. We had some great devotional times together with everyone sharing and participating.

**Billy Smithwick** recounted being at Canady Cottage with **Mr. and Mrs. Moore** as houseparents. Mr. Moore made the statement one time that he couldn’t ever die because he was the only one who knew where all the KH water lines were. Billy told about one time at the beach cottage in the summer, the boys were very hard to get out of the bed. The life guard went upstairs and sprayed them all with whipping cream. They jumped out of their bed, got dressed, and came downstairs to breakfast in a hurry.

We walked along the beach at 7:05 a.m. to take pictures of the sunrise. We all went on the sound-side deck late in the afternoons to take pictures of everyone while the sun set.

**Mary Etheridge Feige** (‘83-‘89) recently wrote: “Here it is 2022 and I’m just so happy to be at the Beach Cottage with other KH brothers and sisters. It’s really nice to be able to join the group. I do really wish some of my 1983-1989 brothers and sisters would come join us. It’s pretty cool to remember and see in your mind the different faces of people from times gone by. It’s funny how you don’t realize how much you will love those years. If I had it all to do over again, I think I would of taken more pictures and would of gotten to know my fellow brothers and sisters better. My grandmother told me as a child that you will meet a lot of people in your life that will become the “leaves on your tree.” But there will be a few that will become the “roots.” I found some of those “roots” for my tree while I was at KH—and some of them don’t even know that they helped me become a better person and a better mother. One of the beach cottage trips I had about six years ago meant so much to me. My youngest son was just getting ready to get his driver’s license. He worked hard to buy a truck and fix it up until he could drive it with his license.

“Well, while momma was here at the beach cottage, he took his truck out one night. I got a call. He was pulled over. My KH brothers and sisters told me to take his keys, be stern, and stick to it. I did and things went well. He knew what he did was wrong.

“That day I learned a lot. I learned how to be calm and more understanding with my boys. It takes an army to raise them right. I so thank you KH brothers and sisters for standing with me.”

I’ll be turning 80 next September. I must be getting old. If you are in the Havelock area, drop by to visit. I even

have a spare bed you can use. Love ya!—jt.

John Thompson served at Kennedy Home from 1972-1977. Today, he enjoys an active retirement.





# Celebrate the extraordinary

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

There is a well-known saying in our culture that “Good is the enemy of great.” If one can attain good, one has arrived; he can move on to the next chore or another task; he can seek a different accomplishment. There is nothing at all *bad* about *good*. And yet there is something inspiring about those who move beyond to something *better*, even *extraordinary*.

On October 10, organizers held the 49th World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off in Half Moon Bay, south of San Francisco. Earlier in the year, Travis Gienger put pumpkin seeds in the ground for this year’s crop in his home state of Minnesota, dreaming of being a contender. His aspirations drove him beyond big. As he said, “Minnesota has a great midyear, but spring in our parts is really, really tough. So to [produce a prize-winning pumpkin] in Minnesota, it just shouldn’t happen. It’s like winning the Tour de France on a big wheel. You know, you can only hope, but it worked.” The horticulture teacher made the 35-hour drive from his home with his enormous gourd to compete in the event. And he did much more than compete: Travis Gienger’s pumpkin set a new U.S. record for the heaviest pumpkin, weighing in at 2,560 pounds. **Extraordinary!**

This goes to show that thinking *big* can yield huge dividends. In fact, Tom Peters, best known for his book *In Search of Excellence*, believes individuals can and should distinguish themselves by thinking *big* and striving for accomplishments *beyond* the ordinary.

Peters recounts the story of a college graduate who distinguished himself in the art of resume building by highlighting the exceptional. He wanted, you see, for his accomplishments to stand apart from the pile of resumes potential employers would receive from outstanding hopefuls. The young man took stock of his posi-

tives. Grade point average? Outstanding. Organizations and leadership roles on campus? Above average. They were good. These accolades, however, were too much like other graduating seniors seeking their first jobs. What’s a young man to do? He took what some might consider a whimsical accomplishment and placed it at the top of his resume. In his tenure as an undergrad fraternity member, he participated in a giant fundraiser that highlighted a *bigger than big* cookie. *He and his team created an impressive 2,000 pound chocolate chip cookie.* Why not place that at the top of his achievements, he wondered? And it worked. That cookie grabbed the attention of his future employer; he secured his first job, coming in first amidst a huge field of contenders. **Extraordinary!**

In my adopted hometown of Lexington, the annual Barbecue Festival this past weekend featured a pig-themed sand sculpture that drew big crowds. Eight days before the festival began, sculptors assembled materials and helpers at the designated site to construct a 50-ton sand masterpiece that would astonish passersby from far and wide. Ordinarily, one would find sand sculptures at the beach and the created castles would stand proud until the surf came in and carried them away. In land-locked Lexington, the gigantic artwork will stand for weeks after its creation through all kinds of weather. It is difficult to believe the beautiful creation is made entirely of compacted sand, and it is a testimony to the artists that something so lovely is made from such a common medium. The *big* display in uptown Lexington is, year after year... **Extraordinary!**

Big thinking and huge plans truly create



tremendous outcomes, *taking the ordinary and super-sizing it.*

As Jesus followers, we are perhaps used to the extraordinary; our God is, after all, awesome, and it is sometimes too easy to forget the amazing power that brought incredible love to all of us. Thanksgiving will make way for Advent soon, and this season of anticipation will give way to the big celebration of love gifted to all who trust in the name of the Lord. The season engenders not an ordinary hope but a big hope: A Savior comes to restore creation to the Creator, the coming of a love so great as to be incomprehensible to the mind of man. A God-sized love John writes about in his gospel: “For God so loved the world [you and me] that He sent His only begotten son [Jesus the Christ] that whosoever [again, you and me] believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (3:16).

Indeed, our awesome God planned and fulfilled the miraculous event that guarantees abundant life in Jesus. **Extraordinary!**



Edminson encourages others through the Good News of Jesus. Invite him to speak at your church or for your organization. You can email him at [wjedminson@bchfamily.org](mailto:wjedminson@bchfamily.org).



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