

Paris church knows broadcasting high school football is ministry in Texas_100404

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By George Henson

Staff Writer

PARIS—Cable television viewers in Paris know the call-letters “FBC-TV” stand for First Baptist Church. But each fall, they represent the Foot Ball Channel.

The church has had a local cable channel since 1985, and it started broadcasting local high school football games about 10 years ago.

“We do it as a public service to the community,” said Travis Jackson, director of media and public relations for the church. But he admits it also raises the church’s level of visibility in the community.

Volunteer
videographer
Reed Bass
shoots a high
school
football
game for
broadcast on
First Baptist
Church of
Paris' cable
television
station.

“It serves to get a lot of people to the channel that might not ever know it was there otherwise,” he pointed out. The church also has aired a health talk show and a local business talk show as a part of its programming in the past.

An all-volunteer crew tapes the football games. Paris has two high schools, Paris High School and North Lamar High School, and the church films the home game with the greatest appeal, making sure to keep the number of games for each team even.

“We’re fortunate enough to have a real nice mobile production unit that is all logoed up with the church’s logo, and our crew has their t-shirts” so there is no escaping the fact that First Baptist Church is broadcasting the local high school gridgers on television, Jackson said.

“It lets the people here know that we’re not just a bunch of stuffed-shirts at that church downtown,” he said.

The church doesn’t even accept sponsorships for the football games

“except for maybe a free meal for the crew at a local restaurant,” Jackson said.

Jackson started out as a volunteer member of the crew eight years ago, but in January 2001, he felt God leading him to make media ministry his full-time vocation. In May of that year, the position opened up at his church.

“God gave me an opportunity to serve here, and I’m very grateful for that,” he said.

Jackson has attended several conferences dealing with church-run television ministries, and First Baptist Church in Paris generally is the smallest congregation represented.

“This kind of ministry is a lot of work, but it’s a lot of fun, too,” he said. “There’s just so much potential with this type of ministry for churches.”

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