

# Central Texas church touches lives of children, families in Macedonia

June 6, 2008

PRIDDY—Their church building may be small and unassuming, but the members of Priddy Baptist Church are making a powerful impact on children living in the ghetto of Skopje, Macedonia.

A few years ago, [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) field personnel Darrell and Kathy Smith spoke at Priddy Baptist Church, about 25 miles east of Brownwood.

The Smiths told the congregation about their ministry in Macedonia—the languages, culture, ethnicities and the needs. The Smiths, who have served with CBF since 1996, have been involved in environmental sustainability projects and ministering to children and families living in poverty.

Priddy Baptist Church—which has about 30 members and half that number in average attendance—was moved by the stories of the children living in poverty in Macedonia. A few months later, the church invited the Smiths to speak again.

Kindergarten provides a free education to children in the ghettos of Skopje, Macedonia.

“When we were invited back, the church wanted to know more about the kindergarten project,” Smith said. “The kindergarten had touched the heart of this church and given them a vision for where God was working.”

In Macedonia, there are no state-sponsored kindergartens or preschool programs, but children still are required to pass a test before they can start first grade. The kindergarten started by the Smiths and CBF field personnel Arville and Shelia Earl provides a free education to children living in the ghettos of Skopje, who otherwise might not have access to education.

In addition to their annual contributions to missions, Priddy Baptist members gave \$17,000 last year to support the kindergarten in Skopje, and they have pledged to do the same again this year.

“We are a very small church, and contact and support for this project gives us a sense of contributing to a cause outside and greater than ourselves,” Pastor Butch Pesch said.

“We love the Smiths and the Earls and are thrilled to have a small part in what God is doing in Macedonia.”

The church’s funds have provided educational opportunities for 40 children, paying for the expenses of the kindergarten for half the year—utilities and rent, plus backpacks and school supplies.

“Just as hope came into the world as a small child, so hope has come to the families of the kindergarten through the efforts of a small church,” Mrs. Smith said. “Though they might never meet each other, Priddy Baptist has changed the lives of these children and their families. Only God knows how these seeds of hope that have been planted will sprout and grow.”