

Man of Many Names

Roy Hopkins doesn't shy from responsibility, be it to his Lord, family or Hereford community.

by *Sara Gugelmeyer*

Roy Hopkins is not afraid to be busy. In addition to being a committed husband to his wife and a father to four sons, he is the pastor at two middle Tennessee churches, oversees his family's purebred Hereford operation and works a full-time job as business manager for Jacobs Technology Inc. As if he wasn't busy enough, he and his wife volunteer as advisors for the Tennessee Junior Polled Hereford Association.

His Hereford habit started first. "I grew up on a farm and that was the first thing I've done," Roy says. "I've been doing that all my life."

He explains that his grandfather always had Herefords, but it was he who turned the operation registered. "When I was about 16, we got some registered Hereford heifers and a bull," Roy says.

He adds, "My love of Herefords came from spending time with my dad and grandpa. We worked together on the farm and now I want to share that with my family." That's why, when the eldest of Roy's boys, Zachary, started fourth grade and was old enough to show, he and Kim were very supportive. Now, Zachary, 21, is still involved in the business, even though he is away at college during the week. Jordan, 18,

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Nathan, 16, and Ethan, 13, are all active in showing Herefords.

"We really like the Herefords," Roy says. "We've worked to improve our herd over the years. We bring in different genetics to improve it."

In fact, with all of Roy's commitments, his sons handle much of the work on the farm. Currently there are about 50 cows and 15 replacement heifers on the Hopkins Ranch of Herefords, Winchester, Tenn. Bulls and heifers are sold private treaty. Zachary has learned to artificially inseminate, so the ranch utilizes that method of improving genetics as well as a small amount of embryo transfer (ET).

While raising cattle and kids is certainly fulfilling, Roy says he has always been strong in his Christian faith and grew up in the Methodist Church. In fact, for more than 15

years, Roy has been sharing God's word, first as a lay speaker.

Roy started as a certified lay speaker. In the United Methodist Church, one can become a certified lay speaker by attending lay-speaking school. He or she is then able to lead the Sunday service at churches throughout the area whenever a minister is away.

Roy served various United Methodist Churches as a lay speaker for nearly six years. "It was enjoyable; I got to meet a lot of different people," he says. "Most of the places I went were smaller churches, and I was traveling all over the country, but basically in middle Tennessee. Everybody was always friendly."

All that changed when he filled in at the Friendship United Methodist Church in Moore County, Tenn. He filled in for

just four weeks, but Roy felt God calling him for more. "It's one of those things when the Lord calls you, you go," he says. "I kind of resisted a little; I was just going to fill in. I thought that was enough. I didn't want to pastor full time, instead wanting to continue working and farming. But He just kept calling me to do more for Him so I relented."

Only six months after becoming the full-time pastor at Friendship United Methodist Church, Roy took on another challenge. He was asked to also become the full-time pastor at Marble Hill Methodist Church, which is also in Moore County.

The services are staggered so Roy can give the sermon at both. Friendship meets at 9 a.m. with Sunday school after, and Marble Hill meets at 11 a.m. with Sunday school before.

Although Roy was apprehensive about being a full-time pastor at just one church, now he serves two and still manages to do everything else as well. "As it turns out I am still doing my job and still farming after 10 years, and it's definitely fulfilling and rewarding," he says. "I know it's what I am supposed to be doing."

It's only possible thanks to help from his family, Roy says. All sons attend services at both churches, with Kim and Zachary leading a Sunday school for the little kids at Marble Hill.

"We always go everywhere together," Roy explains. "Zachary is 21 but still comes home from college every weekend and goes to church with us."

Roy admits, though, his busy schedule can be a struggle at times. "The boys do most of the farming," he says. "They are making hay, building fence and other jobs. My wife does a lot of the support work at church,



Despite his busy schedule, Roy says he could never give up his Hereford-raising lifestyle.

checking in on people, plus running errands for the churches and farm. She is such a blessing to me. Kim keeps us all straight and takes such wonderful care of us all. I couldn't do all three jobs without the strong family that I have."

That is similar to the members of Roy's congregations. "The churches I am involved in are smaller, rural churches. They are a super supportive and loving group of people. They make my responsibilities as pastor easy with all of the support and encouragement they show me and my family," he says.

When asked if he would cut back on his demanding lifestyle, Roy says he doesn't see that happening anytime soon. "I've got to do what God calls me to do, and that's pastor. I can't give that up, I know that's what He wants. The farm and raising Herefords, that's my lifestyle. That's what I know and I just can't see myself not doing those two things. In addition, the Lord has blessed me with a great job, and with four boys that all have college aspirations, I need to keep my job. Right now, I know this is where I need to be." **HW**



Roy says he couldn't do what he does without tremendous support and help from his family. Pictured (l to r) are: Zachary, Jordan, Ethan, Nathan, Kim and Roy.