

# Commeration Service Set

Over 100 years ago, a day - after - Thanksgiving meeting between two Warrenton Baptists became a pivotal event for thousands of North Carolina orphans. On Sunday, March 10, the Warrenton Baptist Church on N. Main Street will commemorate the role of the Rev. C. A. G. Thomas, a former pastor, and Dr. R. D. Fleming, a Warrenton dentist and active Baptist, in providing the impetus for the beginning of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, for which 1985 is the centennial year.



DR. BILL CROUCH

The 1883 meeting between the pastor and Fleming resulted from the latter's failure to make his usual liberal contribution to the annual Thanksgiving Day Offering taken by the Warrenton church for the Masonic Orphanage in Oxford. Pastor Thomas sought an explanation for Fleming's failure to give.

Fleming's response, quoted in "The Mills Home: A History of the Baptist Orphanage Movement in North Carolina 1885-1932," became a rallying cry for Baptists across the state: "I have always given but I am now convinced that I ought to give what I can directly to the support of the orphans of the Baptist brotherhood. The Masons have done and are doing a fine work. They, with the help of the Methodists, are able to do it. The time has come for a Baptist orphanage. I am ready to do my best for it and I feel that God will give us his help in this new and noble work."

Pastor Thomas advised Fleming to write a letter to the "Biblical Recorder," the state's Baptist newspaper, to express his sentiments. In July, 1884, Fleming followed Thomas' advice, and his letter was printed. The letter called for Baptists to begin and support an orphanage "not for Baptist orphans only but...supported and managed by Baptists for the benefit of all orphans." His letter, signed simply "Warrenton," was quickly

followed by other supporting statements, and on Nov. 11, 1885, the first orphan child was taken into the home established in Thomasville.

The work initiated by Dr. Fleming and the Rev. Mr. Thomas now includes 18 facilities caring for 368 children across the state.

Leading the Warrenton Baptist Church's celebration on Sunday will be former pastor Dr. William H. (Bill) Crouch, who has become a second link between the local church and the denomination's Children's Homes across the state. In May, 1984, Dr. Crouch became director of development for Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc., assuming responsibility for all fund-raising efforts, public and church relations, and news media communication. He will speak at the 11 a. m. worship service.

"One Hundred Years of Caring" will be the theme of the anniversary observance. A film during the Sunday School hour at 9:50 a. m. will depict the work of the Children's Homes.

Dr. Gary E. Parker, pastor of the church, noted, "We believe the Christian contribution of Warrenton leaders should be celebrated and affirmed. If not for Warrentonians who cared 100 years ago, many young children of today would be without the love of a Christ-centered community. We invite the public to join us in worship to give thanks for those who cared."

# Elimination Contest Held At John Graham

By BECKY CORBETT

On Monday, Feb. 25, 23 John Graham Middle School students competed in a Spelling Bee elimination contest. The event was held in the school's media center. The purpose of this competition was to select the four top spellers who will represent the school in the Warren County Spelling Bee to be held at Warren County High School on March 7. Each school with grades four through eight will send three participants and one alternate to the county-wide spelling bee.

After intense concentration and effort by all 23 students, the winners in the spell-down were: Stacy Alston, Red Community; Angela Balance, Red Community; Teresa Johnson, Green Community; and Steve Odum, Blue Community.

Principal W. T. Ramey, III welcomed the audience and expressed gratitude to

those guests who gave their time assisting with this selection process.

The judges were: Mrs. Bernadine Balance, Mrs. Louise Hunter, Mrs. Ivoria Terry, and Mrs. Kathy Wilson. The word caller was Mrs. Junell Blaylock, director of Exceptional Programs.

Assisting with seating the contestants were Kenneth Alston and Willie Moore.

A special thank-you goes to Ms. Moli Davis, guidance counselor, who made badges and ribbons for the winners. The competition was coordinated by Mrs. Becky Corbett, eighth-grade language arts teacher.

### More Babies

The annual number of newborns in the U.S. is running at about 3.7 million, up about 16 percent from a decade ago. That number is expected to increase for the next few years as baby-boomers have babies of their own.

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