

Couple serves Salvation Army as team

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The Salvation Army's new headquarters for the Eastern Michigan Division building at 18130 Northland Drive in southern Southfield.

THE CENTER WAS dedicated in February. It opened a preschool day care program in June and held a day camp this summer. A food services vocational training center is scheduled to begin in the fall. During the Christmas season, the Southfield corps will offer seasonal assistance in the form of food, toys and clothing distribution.

Other programs the corps may offer based on community needs include counseling, senior citizen activities and educational classes on money management, parenting and literacy.

"The church is probably the most crucial part of this," said McComb. "While the rest of the center is expected to draw people from south Oakland and part of Wayne County, we expect most of our congregation will come from Southfield."

The chapel, which will be the center of worship for the evangelical Christian Salvation Army denomination,

is waiting for its congregation.

"As we find people who are interested in finding a church, my wife and I will set up Bible study classes where we can get to know people on a one-to-one basis. We'll look for people to host the classes in their homes. Then we'll bring all the Bible classes together for the first worship service. Services will then be held every Sunday."

BETH MCCOMB'S parents were officers in the Salvation Army so it was natural for her to follow in their footsteps. She attended Elmhurst College in Illinois and then began the Salvation Army two-year officer training program at the corps school in Chicago.

In the meantime, Tom McComb was heading toward a bachelor's degree in math and computer science at the University of Illinois, helping put himself through school playing classical tuba with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra. He began to lose interest in his field of study.

"I kind of ran into a dead end as I was looking for jobs," he said. "I began to despair a little. Then a friend of mine invited me to go to a Salvation Army worship service and I found the Lord."

Tom joined the Army as a lay person and was teaching computer services at the Army headquarters in Chicago when he met Beth, who was a student.

Tom soon entered the training program and Beth went on to graduate and become an officer in the corps.

THEY FELL IN LOVE and wanted to get married and that created somewhat of a problem. An army officer is not permitted to marry anyone but another officer.

"That's because officers work as a ministerial team," he said. "We're moved about a lot and it would be difficult if one partner was outside the corps."

"First we planned to wait until I finished my training to get married," said McComb, "but it was too difficult. So she resigned and I stopped my training for a year to get organized and get married. We got married on Nov. 24, 1989."

"We got the best out of it," he continued. At their own request they were appointed to serve as lay pastors for a corps in Omaha, Neb. for six months.

Soon after that he went back into officer training and after he graduated she got her rank back.

Each served out of the country during their officer field training — he in Zimbabwe, a country just north of South Africa, and she in the Philippines.

"The people in Zimbabwe were wonderful and it was an experience to reach out to different cultures."

ONE OF HIS EXPERIENCES there was to give sympathy and emotional support to a Zimbabwe woman who was a lay person with the Salvation Army. "She was married to a man who wasn't a Christian and he practiced polygamy as do other men in that country."

"She was his third wife and he married a fourth, one who was younger and prettier. When a wife is no longer in favor, the man gives her a hut where she and the children live, but he no longer gives financial support. She was feeling very badly. The Salvation Army was there to support her."



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Lt. Thomas McComb sits in the chapel of the Salvation Army center in Southfield which he soon hopes to fill with worshippers.

Police to back prosecutor on porn

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"is committed to cooperating with the prosecutor and his efforts" and that they will "aggressively investigate" any complaints.

To date, the city has received no complaints, he said, but has received several calls from managers and owners of the 14 video stores in town concerned they might have something illegal on their shelves. Lauboff said his department plans to meet and talk with any store owners who have a concern, and answer any questions from others.

The city will continue to investigate anything which is "obviously" obscene, such as pornographic tapes involving children, Lauboff said.

"It's necessary for law enforcement to be sure of what they're doing when they go out and investigate these complaints," he added.

The law defines anything that meets all of the following criteria as "obscene":

- That the average individual, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.

- That the material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
- That the material depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct.

BIRMINGHAM ATTORNEY John Ronayne, who teaches media law at the Detroit College of Law and is

considered a First Amendment expert, said the problem with obscenity laws is defining "obscene."

"The application of obscenity laws is just very unwieldy. (Michigan's obscenity law) doesn't tell you with any degree of practical precision that a given videotape is obscene."

"Sending a letter telling (store owners) to get their obscene tapes off the shelves provides little practical guidance."

Ultimately, Ronayne said, an obscenity charge as it applies to videotapes will wind up in court, with a jury watching the movie and deciding whether it is obscene or not.

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