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VOICE

NEW BIRTH

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2004

A Look Back At
2004

Holiday To-Do List
NEW BIRTH STYLE

**Can You Hear
the Babies Crying?**

THE BONDENI EDDIE LONG
MATERNITY HOSPITAL

Wisdom Keys for Holiday Spending

*Bishop Eddie L. Long &
The New Birth Missionary Baptist Church
are proud to announce and celebrate
the divine appointment
of our First Lady
as...*

Elder Vanessa Long

In October 2004, Mrs. Long was elevated to a new level: Bishop Long declared her as a New Birth Elder, pronouncing blessings upon her anointed ministry of healing. Now, Elder Vanessa Long celebrates this new order from God and continues to work within the realm of the places He assigns her. As founder of various New Birth ministries and host of the annual Heart to Heart Women's Conference, she ministers to women from around the globe with a renewed mantle of love, hope and healing.

congratulations Elder Long



Back to the Basics

And God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and he slept and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2: 21-23)

Truth, Not Lies...

We need to examine our lives as men and women. The pain we have in life is the direct result of the breakdown of family. Marriage is an assignment. Two people are to look at one another and recognize who each is in God and understand that they are supposed to build each other in that. But what happens today is that many women wake up every day trying to figure out "what my man should be doing for me." And men, what is really corrupting society is that there are no fathers and mentors. There has to be a patriarch who understands that he must be an example; he must provide leadership and teach. Young people are lost because there is no covering, no wisdom. We, as men, have to come outside of our homes and spread ourselves; these boys and girls need to be touched with truth, not lies.

Men, Take Heed...

■ In the beginning, God fathered man. He mentored man. He taught man before He gave him a woman. We need to do something about mentoring men.

■ In Genesis, it says, "she took its fruit and ate it, and she also gave to her husband and he ate." At this moment, Adam failed to protect his wife. God has lifted us up to protect what has come out of us; when we fail

to do that, we loose a curse. Adam knew what was right, but he didn't speak up, and he didn't do anything about it. Adam was more concerned, at that moment, with keeping harmony with his wife rather than keeping harmony with God. There are times you have to take a stand. You know that you are led by God, and you



The pain we have in life is the direct result of the breakdown of family.

understand what His word says, so you have to stand in that direction. It's a lot of pressure. Men, I charge you today, if you need to read and study anything, it needs to be scripture. To turn this nation around, a man must study the word of God, and say when the scripture is misquoted.

■ Men, we are responsible for standing up and taking our rightful roles...as mentor, father, role models. God is going to hold us accountable. All of the pain going on in society... women have been abused by us, used by us, all of this AIDs stuff... We've got to give an account to God. And the children...we're responsible for wherever they end up. I don't care if it's your child from birth or not. We're responsible.

Women, Listen Up...

■ Ladies, you have more power than hell over the destiny of a man. The devil knew God was going to make woman. He said, "I believe that God is going to make a woman, and if I can fool her, she's got enough power to take him in. I can't do it, so I've gotta go to something more powerful than hell; and if she uses it wrong, she'll curse a man, and if she uses it right, she'll take him up."

■ There is great power in your walk and grace that God has given you, ladies. You are to be a helper—one called to go alongside man and do something that nobody else can do. A man is to bring a woman to her full potential. And you are to do everything possible for your spouse to make him complete in what God said. I'm not telling you not to have a life; I just want you to know what God gave you.

■ If anybody needs help now, men need help. If we ever needed you before—not to be in competition with, or to fight with—we need you now. We're going to prison, committing suicide...can you help a brother with that power you have? With the beauty and the knowledge that you have? Can you understand that part of me is missing? I'm a little crazy and I need somebody that's got more power than hell."

We're going back to the basics. In order for us to talk about nations and kingdoms, there has to come a peace within each of us. God is saying, "I'm serious about men and women lining up with my word." If you line up, healing, deliverance and favor will automatically come—all of those things God has ordained will happen when order hits.

2004 Year In Review

JANUARY

Jan 4

New Birth moved into the 2004 year riding high on the theme “Whatever God Says, Do It.” At Watchnight 2003, and during the first several worship services of the new year, Bishop Long continued with the message of “obedience” (John 4:24). He told the congregation, *“New wine is about to be served, but it is only served when you are obedient—if you are going to go with God in 2004, whatever He says to you, do it!”*



Pastor Monte Campbell during his first worship service at New Birth Memphis, August 15, 2004

Jan 5

Faith Academy’s new headmaster, Jill Smith, came on board. A 28-year veteran of education, Smith brought years of experience in various aspects of education in both private

and public schools in Georgia, Illinois, Florida and Tennessee. *“I had prayed to God to send me to a school that desires to pursue excellence and will be a light to the nation. Faith Academy, with its unlimited potential, will do that.”*—JILL SMITH

Jan 21

“It’s Time For Your Visitation,” ministered by Bishop Long, yielded the best-selling single message of the year, as sold in the Called to Conquer Bookstores.

FEBRUARY

Feb 1

The Rites of Passage (ROP) program began. This year, the six-month youth discipleship program included 55 youth who accomplished the following highlights:

- Raised funds to visit Universal Studios Orlando
- Raised funds to make a donation to the church for the Covenant Connection Partnership Program
- Adopted the Traditions Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Lithonia

(made visits twice a month)

- Participated in physical training on Saturday mornings
 - Presented Bishop Long with a business plan for the youth center
- The goal of ROP is to equip teenagers with the skills they’ll need to conquer the world for the Kingdom of Christ through knowledge of the scriptures and walking in obedience to God’s word. This year’s program culminated with a formal ball held in the Ruby Grant Multi-Purpose Room on July 6. Next year, ROP will begin in January.

Feb 14

The Never-ending Love Sweetheart Ball was held at Samson’s Health & Fitness Center, featuring live entertainment, dancing and dinner. *“We came up with the theme ‘Never-ending Love’ because we wanted couples to have the understanding that when they are together it should be forever, and the love that they share with each other should never die. When the DJ played a love song and all the couples got up and danced and held each other close, you could see the love and compassion that they*

shared...some couples' love was rekindled that very night."—MINISTER SHEILA ALDRIDGE.

Feb 16

The Stewardship Ministry held a Senior Empowerment Workshop for senior homeowners in DeKalb County. Through this workshop, property exemptions were prepared and other information and resources were made available to seniors.

Feb 19

The Gospel Heritage Foundation presented Bishop Long with the Gospel Heritage Award at its 2004 Awards Banquet and Concert Gala held at New Birth.

Feb 24

Bishop Neil Ellis held a two-day encounter, addressing the "Extraordinary People" of New Birth. His messages were titled "A Make Good Year," and "God Is On My Side." BISHOP ELLIS: *"You are everything else but ordinary. You are an extraordinary people. You need to make up in your mind, 'I'm extraordinary. Everywhere I go, I'm extraordinary. If ordinary people want to hang out with me, they gotta change. But they can't suck me down. I am anointed to live an extraordinary life.'"*

Feb 25

"The Passion of the Christ," actor Mel Gibson's critically acclaimed movie about the last 12 hours of Jesus' life, was released, creating media frenzy and a major buzz in Hollywood. The movie was released on Ash Wednesday, pulling in more than \$20 million at the box office. It ranked as the fifth biggest Wednesday opening of all time, according to a CNN

report. BISHOP LONG: *"Very rarely am I speechless after seeing a movie...It took my breath away...It's a very daring attempt and very biblically accurate. It's not Hollywood. The script was already written."*

Feb 28

The Stewardship Ministry offered Volunteer Income Tax Assistance



Graduates of the Counseling Ministry's "More Than A Conqueror" (MTAC) program, June 29, 2004

(VITA)—free income tax preparation sponsored by the IRS and professional tax consultants, on Feb 28 and Mar 6. *"The VITA program allowed us to save people some money because this is a professional service that is free. We offered electronic filing also. We're looking forward to helping more people through this program at tax time next year."*—DOREEN CARTER, DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP

MARCH

Early March

New Birth's Adopt-a-Block outreach began with nearly 300 congregation members going out to private residences, apartment complexes, shelters, nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living and daycare facilities, orphanages, parks, schools and wherever necessary to meet the communities at their need and build relationships. Volunteers hit the streets with food, clothing, school supplies, paint, brooms, personal hygiene

items, and information on health issues such as allergies, cancer and HIV/AIDS prevention. Adopt-a-Block outreach continued every month throughout the rest of the year. *"Our goal is that communities get used to seeing us around so that we may help them as much as we can in as many areas as we can."*—TANGIE GRAY, CHIEF MINISTRY OFFICER

Mar 11-13

"Single, But Not Alone" was the theme of the 2nd annual Singles Conference held at New Birth. Messages from the conference created this year's best-selling series sold in the Called to Conquer bookstores. Providing a forum for single adults that addressed the variety of needs and concerns unique to the single population, the singles conference touched on finance, health, relationships and spiritual guidance. Our very own Bishop Long hosted the conference, which included guest speakers Dr. Myles Munroe, Dr. Cynthia Hale, Bishop Noel Jones, Dr. Wanda Turner, Pastor Jamal Bryant, and motivational speaker Les Brown. Gospel recording artist Fred Hammond & Radical for Christ performed live in concert.

Mar 14

New Birth extended an invitation to all members to join the Covenant Connection Partnership. This in-house partnership allows members to assist our Bishop in the goal to pay off Cathedral debt, build a New Birth Day Care, build a Senior Citizen Center, benefit our plant churches, and support other major initiatives set forth during this year.

2004 Year In Review

Mar 19

Happy 10th anniversary, Faith Academy! New Birth's school of excellence held a 10th anniversary gala in the Ruby Grant Multi-Purpose Room, celebrating with an evening of dinner and smooth jazz as the Academy revisited its fond memories and successes of the past 10 years.

Mar 19-21

The Missions Ministry joined forces with eight other Atlanta-area churches to host "African American Churches YOUnited to Impact Nations," the first United Churches Missions Conference of its kind. Held at Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Ga., the conference was designed to ignite the passion for world missions in the African American church by motivating, equipping and deploying its members for global ministry. *"The biggest joy of the conference was working with all the other churches. It's a rare thing to have one black church focusing on and talking about missions, but to have eight come together was just a miracle. It was a collective victory."*—MINISTER RICHARD COLEMAN, DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Mar 27

More than 6,000 participants lined the streets to participate in the second annual Heart to Heart 5K Run/Walk, the fundraiser founded by our First Lady, Elder Vanessa Long. The theme was "More Than Just a Walk... Healing." This year, rather than survival kits, \$20,000 was donated to the Sister's Network cancer organization to provide resources and services to women with the disease. Some

sponsors for the walk included Coca Cola, Wachovia, The Mall at Stonecrest, Chick-fil-A, V-103, Publix, the DeKalb Medical Center, C'est Bon Cajun Restaurant, the DeKalb County Police Department and a host of others.

Mar 28

Bishop Long was so inspired by the tenacity of one 5K Run/Walk participant that he based his entire message—titled "This Is The One"—on her triumphant spirit. Arlilia Thomas-Taylor is the woman who previously suffered a debilitating stroke, but who nonetheless, courageously completed the walk. The Television Ministry's broadcast of Arlilia's story in May elicited the highest viewer response [calls to the prayer lines] in the history of the Prayer Ministry.

APRIL

Apr 3

The Prayer Ministry held an all-night prayer vigil in the chapel in preparation for Resurrection Sunday.

Apr 10-11

New Birth extended an open invitation to all Lithonia residents to its annual Easter Community Outreach Day, held Saturday, April 10 at two locations: Downtown Lithonia at Lucius Sanders Parks and Recreation Center and also in Downtown Atlanta at the Georgia Dome. The outreach featured fun for all ages, including free food, haircuts, medical screenings, senior activities, puppetry arts, drama, children's games, music and much more. The annual Resurrection Sunday worship service was held at the Georgia Dome.

Apr 22-24

The 2004 Nation of Jesus Men's Conference had a sea of attendees on their feet, jumping in unison, shouting "Blessed," "Blessed," "Blessed." The conference—titled "Obedience + Discipline = Honor"—included such guests as Dr. Tony Evans, Bishop



Easter outreach in the community, April 10, 2004

Courtney McBath, Psalmist Marvin Sapp, Pastor Andre Landers, Pastor Terrell Murphy and others.

MAY

May 2

The Prayer Ministry stood up for the "prayer in schools" agenda as they led some members of the New Birth congregation in a silent walk around Lithonia Middle School and Lithonia High School to intercede for the students and teachers.

May 9

The New Birth Counseling Ministry celebrated the one-year anniversary of its Spirit Controlled Sexuality (SCS) support group. SCS was developed to provide a caring environment of safety and confidentiality for individuals who wanted help with the struggle of same sex attraction. Since its inception, SCS has been a disciple to more than 10 men and women who wanted to leave the homosexuality life style. One participant quoted, *"The class has given me enormous encouragement that our*

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heavenly Father has heard my prayers. I recommend others who are struggling to experience the love and understanding of this group." James Pennyman, J.B. Bailey, and Allayne Turner served as facilitators.

May 12

Happy 51st Birthday, Bishop Long!!

May 16 & 18

The New Birth Total Praise Choir performed live on Black Entertainment Television's "Lift Every Voice & Sing" Sunday morning program, May 16. Featured artists included Vanessa Bell-Armstrong, Ted Wynn of Ted & Shari, William Murphy, Darwin Hobbs and others. This telecast also included in-depth, behind-the-scenes interviews, live concert footage and world pre-



Worshippers at New Birth Richmond's first service, June 20, 2004

miere videos. On May 18, the Total Praise Choir also performed live at the Conquer 2004 International Summit, held at the Georgia International Convention Center.

May 29

New Birth celebrated Memorial Day with the 2nd annual Family and Friends Festival, held outside on the New Birth campus. Members from the church and the community came out to enjoy family, fun, food, games, rides, face painting and more. During the holiday weekend, New Birth also celebrated its 20th anniversary. The

church released a souvenir book—titled "Ecclesia—A Called Out People: Celebrating 20 Years of Excellence"—filled with photos, dialogue and other memories capturing the journey from vintage New Birth to present day.

JUNE

Early-Mid June

Bishop Eddie L. Long and the New Birth Television Ministry received news of being winners of the prestigious Emmy for the special edition of TAKING AUTHORITY broadcast: "The New Face of Homelessness." This is the first time in the history of the Southeast Regional Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) that a church won such an award. Executive Producer Bishop Eddie L. Long, Senior Director of Television Jaffa Breedlove, Lead Producer Vanessa Russell and Non-Linear Editor Victor V. Hogan II won the Emmy Award for excellence in Public Affairs programming.

"Domestic Violence: Loving You to Death," another outstanding special edition of the TAKING AUTHORITY broadcast, was also nominated for the Emmy. Nominees included: Executive Producer Bishop Eddie L. Long, Senior Director of Television Jaffa Breedlove, Lead Producer Vanessa Russell and Non-Linear Editor Wayne Joyner.

June 19

Bishop Eddie L. Long and the Total Praise Choir released their long-awaited debut of the "Spirit & Truth" CD in May. Just one month following its release, the CD hit the No. 1 position on Billboard Magazine's Gospel

Chart for the week ending June 19. Also, in September, it was announced to the congregation that the Spirit & Truth CD received six Stellar Award nominations for the year 2005!!

June 20

New Birth Richmond—the second official New Birth church plant—held its first worship service at the Regal Theater in Glen Allen, VA, with Pastor Vincent Harrison at the helm.

Approximately 150 people attended the first service. The Fishers of Men evangelism team hit the streets of Richmond prior to the first service.

"Our experience went from the norm of going door-to-door to making a rest-stop at a Texaco gas station. At the gas station, we saw how people were just coming and going. We began to witness to the people and pass out literature about New Birth Richmond. As our conversations went deeper they began to share with us. One guy on a bike accepted Jesus Christ in his life."—ALECIA WASHINGTON, NEW BIRTH MEMBER/FISHERS OF MEN

June 29

The Counseling Ministry's "More Than A Conqueror" program held a graduation and celebration for students who completed a full year's commitment towards personal and emotional development through the "Discovering Me & Breakthrough" class. This curriculum is one of the various support groups and classes offered on Tuesday nights designed to promote emotional edification for personal change. Linda Murchison and Dr. Eno Ikoku serve as lead facilitators of the group.

2004 Year In Review

JULY

July 4

This year's Fourth of July celebration welcomed more than 15,000 people from the community and the New Birth church family to the New Birth campus for spectacular fireworks, food on the grill, amusement park-fun and live entertainment featuring comedian Andrew Ford, MC Young Dirty, and musical guests 5 Men On A Stool and Ron James & the Designated Driver Jazz Trio. *"This year, the fireworks show was choreographed to music, which made it even more spectacular than last year. In fact, it was reported as being one of the best in the country. That was very exciting to us because it is very important to Bishop Long that we provide quality, first-class events for the people."*—ELDER FLORETTA SINGLETERRY, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

July 11

Internationally renowned health and nutrition expert Dr. Ted Broer picked up where Bishop Long left off earlier in the year, delivering an informative, life-saving, bible-based message on maximum health. DR. BROER: *"God's laws are the same yesterday, today and forever. They'll never change. God wants you to be blessed. He wants you to prosper. He wants you to leave behind disease, sickness and poverty, and have all that He has for you to do and be."*

AUGUST

Early Aug

Called to Conquer Bookstore was honored with a Gold Record from

EMI Gospel for being the highest selling store in the nation for the Gold-selling CD "I Need You Now" by recording artist Smokie Norful.

Bishop T.D. Jakes addresses New Birth for Bishop Long's 17th Pastoral Anniversary service, August 22, 2004



Mid-Aug

Bishop's book "Gladiator" was released.

Aug 15

The third New Birth church plant—New Birth Memphis—opened its doors with Pastor Monte Campbell at the helm. Approximately 900 people attended the first service: 125 joined as new members, 3 people gave their lives to Christ, and 30 people came forward for Christian Experience. The Fishers of Men evangelism team was on hand to support every aspect of the service, including set-up, sound, finance, parking lot, greeters, ushers, new members, logistics, administration and salvation.

Aug 22

Bishop Long celebrated his 17th pastoral anniversary with guest speaker Bishop T.D. Jakes. Bishop Jakes warned the New Birth congregation against "allowing external circumstances to break into [their] private peace." BISHOP JAKES: *"The Titanic went down not because it wasn't well constructed, but because things on the outside got in.... I want to speak to you that you do not allow*

the things going on in your job, and in your neighborhood, and in your community, and with your friends to invade and disrupt your peace because ultimately other peoples' problems are so contagious that if you would allow them to get inside of you it will disrupt what would have been, and what should have been a very peaceful life, and you'll die not simply because you weren't well built but because you allowed that thing that was on the outside to get in."

Aug 28

New Birth stepped in on various fronts to assist New Birth Inner City Church (NBIC) with its Dixie Hill Community Block Party outreach. About 600 people attended the event, and there were 32 decisions for Christ. More than 600 box lunches were distributed, and over 60 people received hair care from the volunteer barbers and hairstylists. Lots of men, women, boys and girls took advantage of the clothes provided in the clothing closet, and job seekers listened in on the Employment Job Readiness Seminar. Gifts donated by various companies were raffled off and more than 80 individuals received medical screenings. Prior to the event, the Prayer Ministry covered the grounds, and the Fishers of Men evangelism team and the College Ministry hit the neighborhoods with door-knocker bags and invitations to the event.

Aug 28

The Counseling Ministry's Victorious Living Substance Abuse group held its annual "Behind Enemy Lines" drug and alcohol seminar. The Victorious

2004 Year In Review

Living group continues to be one of the Christ-centered resources to the community for families who deal with the effects of substance abuse and co-dependency. Jesse Lee and Reggie Barlow are lead facilitators.

SEPTEMBER

Sept 7

Bishop T.D. Jakes returns to New Birth with a special message inspired from his book *He-Motions*. Bishop Jakes spoke to the heart of men and the women who love them.

Sept 12-15

The Spirit & Truth conference took on an international agenda with the theme "Speaking to Nations... Changing the World." Speakers from various parts of the world included Pastor Brian Tamaki of Destiny Churches International in New Zealand; Bishop Neil Ellis of Mount Tabor Baptist Church in the Bahamas; Prophetess Juanita Bynum-Weeks of Global Destiny Christian Community in the USA; Bishop Tudor Bismark of Jabula New Life Ministries in Zimbabwe; Pastor Jesse Curney III of New Mercies Christian Church in the USA, Pastor Ray McCauley of Rhema Church in South Africa, and a host of other dynamic men and women of God.

Sept 17

Several New Birth musical talents won Gospel Choice Awards at the 10th annual Atlanta Gospel Choice Awards ceremony. These include: Nova 4 Jehovah; Darwin Hobbs; and the New Birth Total Praise Choir and Choir Director.

OCTOBER

Oct 2

Happy Birthday First Lady!!

Oct 3

The beginning of the fourth quarter set the stage for 2005 as Bishop Long declared our First Lady to be Elder Vanessa Long during worship service. BISHOP LONG: *"There have been times that even on New Year's Eve I didn't know where God was taking us, but right now, today, I know the direction we're going in 2005. Get ready. Nothing is normal anymore."*

Oct 14-17

Our First Lady, Elder Vanessa Long, hosted the 2004 Heart to Heart women's conference in Savannah, GA. The conference—carrying the theme "Equipped, Empowered, Restored... Now Live!!!"—featured our very own Bishop Eddie L. Long, along with guest speakers Bishop Darrell Hines, Pastor Andre Landers, Pastor A.R. Bernard, Pastor Pamela Hines, Minister Sheila Aldridge, Minister Lisa Bolden, Ms. Valorie Burton, Ms. Barbara Harris, and many others. Musical guest was Atlanta's own Sha' Simpson.

—RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY LAGERIS BELL, VIKKI CONWELL, GAYLE MANNING, NORMA STANLEY, ANGELA P. MOORE—THORPE, AND LISA LOVE WHITTINGTON.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

New Birth's Holiday "To-Do's"...A checklist to help you stay focused on what's most important this Holiday season.

Help Hosea feed and clothe the Homeless (Nov. 24, 25).

Abolish the sadness of children whose parents are incarcerated. Be an Angel.

Pick up Angel Tree forms in the vestibule.

Purchase gifts for these children. Attach labels to gifts and bring to church by Dec. 5.

Yield to the spirit of giving.

Build and encourage souls. Many become depressed this time of year. Especially inmates.

Increase your prayer life, and ask God how, when and to whom you should give.

Raise money for the Bondeni Eddie Long Maternity Hospital in Africa. Bring the donation to the church.

Take food to the Family Life Center (Dec 11) and

Help feed families and distribute Angel Tree Gifts (10:00 a.m.–4:00 pm).

Don't let one child at New Birth be without a gift. Check with Gift Tree Ministry to see if any single parents need help providing gifts for their children.

Artwork is on sale in the bookstore. Purchase one. Proceeds help raise money for world missions.

Yield to the spirit of giving.

Join with the rest of the church in paying off church debt by Dec 31.

Express love and appreciation to others and extinguish any negativity.

Stockpile and collect used cell phones. Place phones in the bin located in the vestibule. Proceeds will help missions around the world.

Use talent, finances, resources, and contacts to help somebody else.

Send a donation or go on the mission trip to Mexico to help build churches (Nov. 20-27).

...and don't forget—Yield to the spirit of giving. Happy Birthday Jesus!

Can You Hear the Babies Crying?

BY VANESSA BURKE

Having walked 20 kilometers in dust and heat, the mother was exhausted, mainly from the weight of the baby, for it was near term, but also from the normal aches and pains of being pregnant, not to mention the soreness of her feet from such a long walk, at such a slow pace, in the scorching Kenyan sun. Just ahead, she could see the hospital where she hoped to be admitted. She had heard rumors about the grueling wait in a long line of women at the door, hoping to get one of the 22 beds available. The sight of the hospital was comforting, and then again, it wasn't, because she had also heard the women in her village in Nakuru talking. They said that it was very unlikely that both she and the baby would come home—alive. As these hopeless thoughts attempted a coup of her spirit, the baby kicked. Who knows? He could be Kenya's President one day—if he lived. She pressed forward with the strength she had left and with all the hope she could muster...

Such a scene is quite typical in Nakuru, Kenya, the country's fourth largest city with a population over 360,000, who share these startling statistics with the rest of Africa: 75% of the residents live in just one room, usually shared; only 3.1% own homes; and less than 10% have indoor kitchens, toilets, bathrooms, running water or electricity. Add to this the fact that one in 13 African women will die during childbirth compared to one in 8000 for the United States. The African childbirth statistic won't be changed overnight, but one person has stepped forward to be a catalyst: Bishop Eddie L. Long.

Located just 100 miles northwest of Nairobi, Nakuru is hometown to Dr. Benson Karanja, president of Beulah Heights Bible College in Atlanta. He grew up spending a lot of time at a

cultural center near Nakuru's Bondeni Maternity Hospital. "At that time," says Karanja, "It [the hospital] was funded by the city of Nakuru. It was one of the better clinics, but with the economy in Kenya deteriorating in the last 20 years, the government no longer supported it. Private companies started building private hospitals where middle class and upper class people started sending their people. So, Bondeni was left for people who could not afford anything."

But everyone didn't give up on the needy, according to Karanja. Some people donated money, built (unfinished) buildings and supplied the hospital with beds. However, many rooms were not used for lack of medical equipment. In fact, out of 200 rooms in Bondeni, only 22 have beds and medical supplies. Mothers who

make it to the hospital are allowed in these 22 rooms on a "next-in-line" basis. Because of the serious lack of medical equipment and supplies—for instance, the nearest ultrasound machine is 100 miles away—a large percentage of maternal and infant deaths occur. This fact can be changed, with help.

"About five years ago, we were having lunch with Bishop Long," says Karanja. "He had returned from Kenya, and I said to him, 'I understand you were in Kenya the previous year, but I don't think you know what Kenya is all about. I would like you to go back there.' He said, 'Make it happen.'" Three years later, the largest group of African-Americans ever to visit Kenya at one time descended upon the Nairobi area.

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Can You Hear the Babies Crying? [con't. from page 17]

Karanja connected Bishop Long with the Mayor of Nakuru and others, who took Bishop Long to Bondeni.

Says Karanja, "Bishop Long was so overwhelmed and so touched by what he saw there. At that time it was late in the afternoon in Kenya, and he started making plans. I said, 'Bishop we are seven hours ahead. In the U.S. now it is about three in the morning.'" Karanja says that during Bishop Long's visit in the hospital, tears began to form on his face. "He walked in places and said, 'My closet is bigger than this. What can I do?'" Karanja says that after Long visited Nakuru and the hospital, the mayor and council members felt his heart. They were inspired to change the name of the hospital, and so the entire municipal council of Nakuru met, and the new name became Bondeni Eddie Long Maternity Hospital.

Considering himself as a resource and a connector, Karanja likens his role to that of Andrew the disciple. When it was time to feed the multitude that had come to hear Jesus speak, Andrew informed Jesus that there was a boy there with five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus took that information and performed a miracle for the people, feeding thousands of them. In the Bondeni case, Karanja has provided the information by making connections, and Bishop Long is making certain that the bread and fish are supplied.

Now, for the miracle...

The BELL (Bishop Eddie L. Long) Foundation has undertaken a campaign to ship four, 14,000-pound containers with \$1 million worth of medical supplies to Bondeni. Each shipment, which will include a 40-foot container full of medical supplies worth \$250,000, will cost about \$10,000 to ship. Such a feat is no problem for Project Coordinator

Georgette Peterson; her passion for the project is more than apparent. "This is so big," says Peterson. "Bigger than what it appears to be on the surface."

Peterson was among the 90 people from New Birth who visited Kenya

Karanja says that during Bishop Long's visit in the hospital, tears began to form on his face. "He walked in places and said, 'My closet is bigger than this. What can I do?'"

with Bishop Long and subsequently visited Bondeni. With a 19-year background in maternal medicine, she was struck by the conditions of the hospital. "How do they deliver babies with nothing?" she wondered. Immediately, Peterson developed a passion for helping the situation. She knew there was a way to get medical supplies to Bondeni, and she was determined to find out. She did, however, realize that she could not do it alone.

Upon arriving back in Atlanta, Peterson prayed that God would send the resources and people she needed. Bishop Long had sounded the alarm. He had rolled the massive ball—the heaviness of the mothers and babies who arrived at Bondeni, but who did not leave—to the top of the hill for all to see. Peterson now had the task of gathering enough force for its descent, which, with enough momentum, would eventually shatter it, so that strong healthy babies and mothers are the norm in Nakuru.

Soon after Peterson's prayer, she met a government official from Nakuru,

city councilor Sabina Owiti, who "happened" to be in Atlanta. Peterson knew that it was a direct answer to her prayer. Peterson's passion quickly spread to Councilor Owiti, and she has been a key contact for the project. Owiti and others in Nakuru realize the dramatic change that is upon them. "I have already involved the Nakuru Business Association, which comprises all the business people in Nakuru," says Owiti. She is overjoyed that excitement over the project has grown in Nakuru, and everyone—churches, people in the community, the government and the media—wants to be involved.

Peterson's first fundraising idea for the medical shipments to Bondeni came to fruition on Friday, August 27, 2004 at the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta. The fundraiser's theme, "Something great for something good," describes Peterson's fervor. The elegant evening full of African savoir faire was hosted by the BELL Foundation and included a reception; a tour of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum; and a live auction of paintings and African clothing. Sponsors included Imerin Pharmaceuticals, Northside Hospital, BridgeWell Realty, Jerome Edmondson, Dr. Cathryn Parkman and others.

At the fundraiser, artist Roederick Vines dedicated a life-sized, original painting called "New Birth" to the project. "My inspiration came from Georgette's intensity," says Vines. Describing the masterpiece that took him eight hours to complete, Vines says that the 100 faces within the painting are "still with us in spirit and represent those lost during pregnancy or birth." So that others may enjoy the painting and be inspired to help, lithographs of "New Birth" are now available for sale.

Thanks to the passion Peterson is

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Would You Know if You Were Depressed?

DR. KENNETH HARPER explains the fundamental, medical aspects of this all too common condition.

Depression. We all have preconceived thoughts about it. Many people believe depression is a sign of weakness. However, it is important to remember that depression is a disease.

Being diagnosed with depression does not mean that your faith in God is any less than if you are diagnosed with any other disease. Seeking medical attention for depression or any other disease does not mean that you are any less a Christian, and will not prevent divine intervention.

Depression means more than having temporary feelings of sadness. It is common to feel down after difficult life events. However, to be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must last for more than two weeks. To meet the “textbook” diagnosis of depression, one of the following or both must be present: sadness/hopelessness or loss of interest or pleasure in most of your daily activities. In addition to these

symptoms, you must experience at least four of the following other symptoms:

- Problems concentrating
- Poor memory
- Difficulty making decisions
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping habits
- A loss of interest in things you once enjoyed
- Difficulty going to work or taking care of your daily responsibilities
- Feelings of guilt and hopelessness. It is common for depression to make you wonder if life is worth living.
- Slow thoughts and speech, or no speech
- Preoccupation with thoughts of death or suicide
- Complaints (such as headache) with no physical cause
- Weight gain or weight-loss
- Sleeping too much

Symptoms of depression may vary tremendously from person to person. Many people have very mild cases. These people can function on a day-to-day basis. However, with



severe cases of depression, many people require hospitalization. Depression may also be short-term or have a chronic long-term course. The symptoms of depression often reoccur. The risk of having another episode of depression increases with each additional episode.

In the genes?

There are many factors that can contribute to depression. These include chemical, genetic, environmental and emotional factors. The brain uses many chemicals, called neurotransmitters, to function properly. If these chemicals are not in proper balance, depression can occur. There is also a genetic predisposition for depression. If your mother, father or sibling has been diagnosed with depression, your risk of developing it is up to three times greater than the gener-
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Being diagnosed with depression does not mean that your faith in God is any less than if you are diagnosed with any other disease.

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al population. Environmental factors also contribute to depression.

Certain medical conditions, such as hypothyroidism, as well as certain medications, can cause depression. Other environmental factors that can contribute to depression include chronic stressors, such as poverty or long-term illnesses, and social stressors such as divorce or illness/death of a loved one.

Getting help

The treatment of depression will vary based on the individual. Professional counseling and medications are the most common forms of treatment. For many people with depression, both counseling and medications are used. The most common medications used today help the body to regulate the use of the neurotransmitters (chemicals) mentioned earlier. Professional counseling not only helps to develop coping mechanisms, but can help individuals identify the underlying cause of depression. This can help reduce the chance of recurrence and shorten the episode of depression.

If you feel you are suffering from depression, it is important to contact your physician and discuss treatment options. Also, if you know someone that you feel is depressed, encourage him or her to seek professional help. A preoccupation with suicide increases the importance of prompt medical attention. Avoiding the use of alcohol or illegal drugs, getting regular exercise, obtaining social support from friends and family, getting enough sleep, and eating a balanced diet can help in the treatment of depression.

Dr. Kenneth Harper is Medical Director for Trinity Health Care and a member of the Dekalb Technical College Foundation Board. He currently practices at Hillandale Medical Building in Lithonia, 678.418.2120.

Light to lead the way through:

- > Psalm 27
- > Psalm 34: 1-2
- > Romans 8:31
- > Jonah 2:2
- > Psalm 145:18
- > Psalm 55:22
- > Philippians 4: 6-7
- > Psalm 34: 17-19
- > Isaiah 41:10
- > 2 Samuel 22:17-20
- > Isaiah 43:2
- > Psalm 50:15
- > 2 Corinthians 4:8-10

did you know?

- Depression is currently the fourth leading cause of disability in the world.
- Although depression affects twice as many females than males, any age, race, or socioeconomic background can be affected.
- The National Mental Health Association estimates that approximately 19 million Americans suffer from depression.



Wisdom Keys for Holiday Spending

DOREEN CARTER gives smart tips to carry you through the holidays and into financial freedom.

> CONTROL

- The first step to financial freedom is to be in control of your emotions.
- Don't be compulsive.
- Develop a plan; write down your goals.
- Prevent overspending by creating a gift list and sticking to it.
- Trim your list. Beware of overspending to please man.

> THINK

- Before you commit to spending money, cash or credit, think about how it will affect your previous financial obligations.
- A simple rule of thumb—"Always think twice before you buy."
- Write down everyone you currently owe and how much.

> CERTAINTY

- Do not assume—make sure you know where the resources are coming from to pay for this expenditure.
- You must know whom you owe

and when the payment is due (Proverbs 3:27-28).

> COMMITMENT

- Be a person of integrity.
- Let your yes be yes and your no be no.
- Pay everyone you owe, even if you feel like you don't or should not have to.
- Don't commit or make promises to buy gifts—no matter how inexpensive—that you had not previously planned to purchase or that you cannot afford to buy.

> ACCOUNTABILITY

- Know the current status of your finances.
- Reconcile your accounts.
- Write down every transaction, especially when you use money from your checking or saving accounts.

> PLAN

- Save...now! Even during the holidays. No amount is too little. When you look back on this holiday season, it will feel good to remember that you didn't just spend; you saved too.

■ Create or add to the following:

- Establish a cash reserve fund of a minimum of one month's expenses.
- Establish an emergency fund to be used for unexpected expenditures.
- Establish a fund to be used for wants or desires.
- Whatever you spend, let it be what you planned to spend, so you'll be less likely to be compulsive.
- Establish a debt elimination plan. Now, during the holidays, is as good a time as any. It will keep you focused at a time that can be very distracting otherwise.

> PRIORITY

- Prioritize your spending. Ask yourself, "Is it a need or a want?"
- Holiday spending is a want, not a need. Check yourself daily to keep focused before you spend.
- Write your priorities to keep your goals clear in your mind. Write the vision and make it plain (Habakkuk 2:2).

Before You Write that Check...

The federal Check 21 Act is now in effect

If you're a check-writer, and you've utilized the "float" system—especially during this time of year when spending is up—you'll want to think twice before you pull out your pen. Here's yet another reason to be sure you don't spend money that you don't have. The Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act (Check 21) is now effective, as of Oct 28. This act enables checks to clear much faster, eliminating "float," or the time that lapses from when you write the check and when it is actually cashed. This law also does away with your ability to get back your original paper checks. To learn more about Check 21, visit FederalReserve.gov.

Credit Smarts

As you work to improve your credit, making a few simple but smart decisions can put you in a better financial position. Get a jump-start on the New Year by putting the wheels in motion now. Keep these tips in mind:

- If you are not trying to open up any new debt, don't get pre-occupied with your credit score. Concentrate instead on improving your payment history, which will, in turn, increase your score. "Many people get hung up in credit scores. It's a smoke screen," Carter says. "Forget the scores for now and just find out what's actually in your report. For example, is it accurate?"
- If you have credit cards you are not using with 0 balances, leave them open. These open accounts with 0 balances offset some of the bad stuff. As for the cards with balances, take them one at a time and work toward paying them down, concentrating on the ones with the highest interest first.
- Instead of going to different lenders and having them pull your credit, order your credit report for yourself. Georgia State law allows you two free credit reports a year. Call the following credit bureaus to request your report:
 - **Equifax:** 800.685.1111
 - **Experian:** 888.397.3742
 - **TransUnion:** 800.888.4213

Doreen Carter is a financial specialist and Director of Stewardship at New Birth.



Can You Hear the Babies Crying? [con't. from page 18]

spreading, along with huge organizational efforts from Wayne Killingbeck of New Birth Marketing and the coordinating skills of Minister Richard Coleman and Vicky Skelton of New Birth Missions, shipments to Bondeni have already begun. The supplies come from MedShare International, a company that collects unused medical supplies from hospitals who would otherwise throw them away. As long as an organization pays shipping costs, MedShare is willing to ship supplies where needed.

Here's to Healthy Nakuru Babies

"I think my calling is to continue connecting people of the US, especially African-Americans, to where they came from," says Karanja. "I saw that in Bishop Long's eyes and the people who went with me. It's like children going back home. I saw the youth from New Birth singing together with the youth from Kenya; you would

never know who was from where."

Karanja, who has held many roles at Beulah Heights, from student, to janitor, to vice president of student services, to executive vice president and now President, the whole experience of the Bondeni project has been rewarding. When he received a call from Peterson, he simply connected her to the right people. "Just to see someone like Georgette getting that kind of passion," says Karanja. "Nothing could stop her. She has no position or title at New Birth, but she felt that God said, "Do it."

Says Karanja, "Bishop Long is larger than New Birth, and Georgia. His calling is higher than what we can see as people. There is no way we can contain him around here. God is using him to make changes." The very fact that Bishop Long's name is now on the hospital, says Karanja, "has motivated people here and on the other side [Kenya] too."

According to Karanja, Kenyan people of prestige who can make things happen have been moved by Long, like the mayor of Nakuru, cabinet members and the former president.

According to New Birth's Missions Department, plans are currently underway for sending a medical missions team to Nakuru in 2005. Karanja is excited about going back with Bishop Long and looks forward to seeing all the Bondeni rooms filled with beds and adequate supplies. To those who invest in this cause, one of generational impact, he says, "Thanks for joining Bishop Long to invest—not in buildings, not in beds—but in saving lives." Karanja says there is someone in heaven clapping, saying thank you.

To contribute to the Bondeni Eddie Long Maternity Hospital project, contact Minister Richard Coleman (770.696.9697) or Vicky Skelton (770.696.9624) of New Birth Mission



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