

God's Grace

He healed me

By Sharon Cobey

It was 9:36 on June 16, 2007 the morning the call came.

"Ms. Cobey, I'm sorry to inform you that the tumor was malignant."

I was out walking that morning with my girl friend and her daughter and as those words resonated in my head, there was a sense of calmness about me. Yes, I asked, "Why me?" But I also asked, "Why not me?"

God had blessed me with good health my entire life and that in itself was a blessing.

Prior to my surgery, one of my childhood friends and I went into prayer. We prayed to God to take this disease away from me. And after that prayer, I believed that He would.

As I waited in the pre-op room, I sang over and over again, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" by Rev. Timothy Wright. That song calmed me. I was never fearful or afraid, just anxious for the surgery to be over.

More than a year later, the surgery is over and I'm fine. Not only did God heal me, he gave me friends and family who loved me through this journey. I will forever be grateful to them, for I know that their prayers sustained me and kept me strong through the various tests and chemotherapy treat-



Sis. Sharon Cobey

ments; when a lot of "stuff" was happening to my body.

Although I lost my hair and my fingernails fell off, chemo became my friend, too. Not only did it make me better, I saved a ton of money on hair and nail salon appointments!

As I walked through my valley, I tried to keep a positive attitude, believing my faith in God's healing power was the best medicine for me.

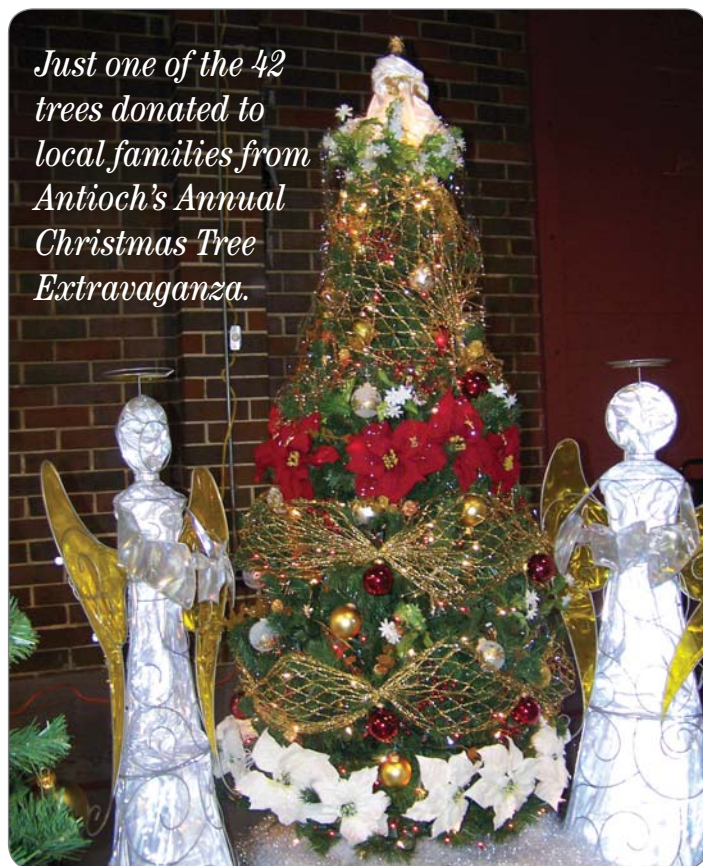
I remembered to live, love and laugh.

I might have had cancer, but cancer did not have me.

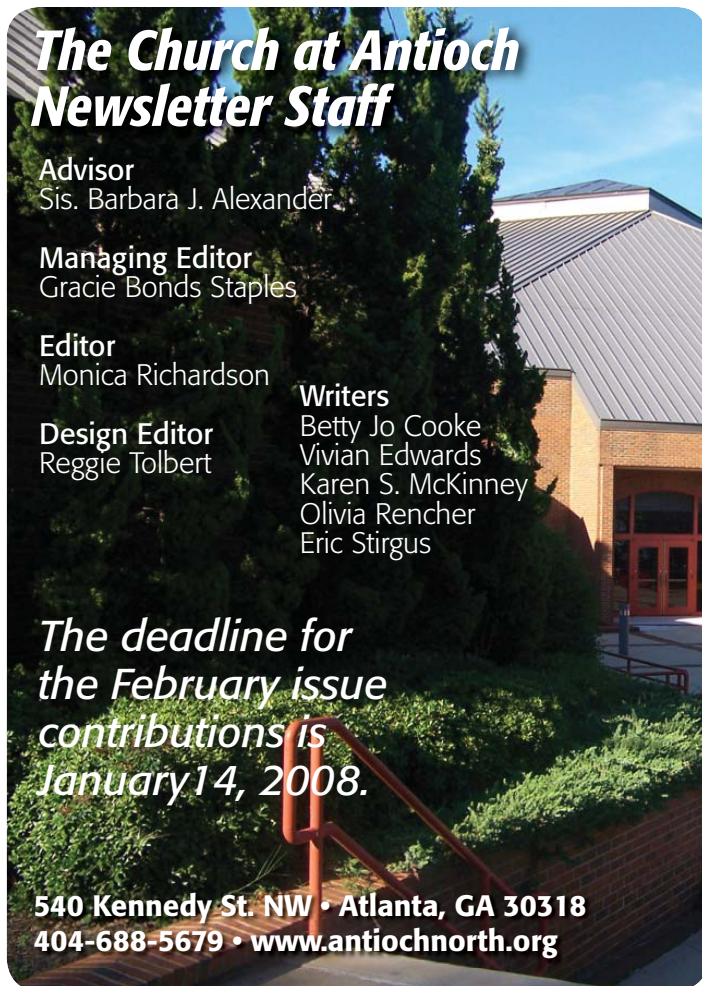
God did.

All I had to do was believe. He showed me over and over again that the battle was not mind, but his, and I'm so grateful.

Editor's Note: If you have a testimony you'd like to share about God's Grace in your life, please email it to Sis. Gracie Staples at gstaples@ajc.com.



Just one of the 42 trees donated to local families from Antioch's Annual Christmas Tree Extravaganza.



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Happy New Year!

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January 2009

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Pastor named to "Walk of fame"

In 2004, a group of civic-minded men and women decided to honor the true history makers, those who fought in the struggle for equality.

Four years later, those same men and women will honor Antioch Baptist Church North's pastor, the Rev. Cameron M. Alexander.

Alexander will be inducted Jan. 24 into the International Civil Rights Hall of Fame located at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. The Walk of Fame is a permanent tribute to the many men and women who walked the extra mile on the long journey to justice.

Pastor Alexander, said Xerona Clayton, creator and project chair, "has been out there so long, doing so much to help make change a reality."

Clayton said that when
Continued on page 2



Antioch youth enjoy a basketball game

Antioch's ballers Church athletic program seeking donations

The month of January means one thing to many of the young people at Antioch Baptist Church North: basketball season.

About 75 children will play in the two leagues in which Antioch participates. Antioch also has about 20 cheerleaders.

Bro. Fred DeVaughn organized the Antioch teams about six years ago as a way to reach out to Antioch's young people.

"The Lord gives you talent," DeVaughn explained. "You're not supposed to put your talent

in the ground,"

But is basketball an appropriate portal to God?

"It's a celebration of life," said DeVaughn, who played pro basketball for the Houston Rockets and in Europe. "It's bringing children to Christ through sport."

Six young people joined the church last season through the basketball program, DeVaughn said.

Others have recognized the program's influence. The Fulton County Parks and

Recreation Department gave Antioch its Outstanding Community/Volunteer Service award last year. DeVaughn is planning the William H. Harding Classic, scheduled for Jan. 3.

Before the kids can play, there are some rules.

One -- they must attend Sunday School. Two -- they must sign a contract promising good behavior. Three -- they must come to practice.

Practice is serious. "Left hand! Left hand!" Bro.

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"Walk of fame"*

Barack Obama became president-elect of the United States Nov. 4, she immediately thought of Pastor Alexander. She said that Alexander was always ready to help, for instance, when the late Civil Rights Leader Martin Luther King Jr. needed it.

"He was fearless," said Clayton. "He was cooperative. He was prepared to meet the challenge."

The walk consists of a 2x2 granite square bordered in bronze on all four sides and will include Pastor Alexander's size 9 footprints, name and birthdates.

Previous inductees include, among others, Rosa Parks, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Lena Horne, Congressman John Lewis, President Bill Clinton, Julian Bond, Sidney Poitier and President Jimmy Carter.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Brothers & Sisters:

As we enter into 2009, we do so with joy and gladness in our hearts for what God has already done for us, collectively and individually, during 2008 and thankful for his protection and preservation as we pass through 2009.

We welcome our Divisional Leaders who will lead us through Vision 2009 with many spirit-filled and exciting events, in spite of the bleak economic forecast. With their help and inspiration, we will be continuously reminded that God's grace is sufficient for us, His children. Therefore, we move beyond the dire forecasts of the world holding to the promises of our God who has not failed us yet.

We ended 2008 in much worship and celebration. The Christmas Tree Gala was phenomenal, and we were blessed to have decorated and donated 42 trees to families in need. Throughout the membership, we collected over 800 toys for the Children's Christmas Gathering. Our final Baptism and Right Hand of Fellowship welcomed 32 Added Members to the Body of Christ. At our Candlelight Communion Service, a total of 211 Added Members for 2008 participated in the Pinning Ceremony and the Litany of Commitment. Connecting the dots . . . to Freedom, a very moving and inspirational Civil Rights series, brought home to many the painstaking efforts of great men and women who put on the full armor of God and did battle with injustice in America for all Americans. As our ancestors prayerfully awaited news of their freedom, as dramatized in the Watch Night Freedom Dramatization, so did we, and closed out the old and embraced the new on our knees.

Continuing throughout the year is our series, "Let's Go to Heaven Together." We encourage all members to attend the Wednesday Prayer Service to learn more about the spiritual support available to sustain us on our Christian journey.

The year has begun as inspirationally and energetically as it has ended. In January, Dr. A. Louis Patterson will be conducting our Stewardship Conference; the First Seven Words of Christ will be presented by the ministers of Antioch; a Pre-Inaugural Ball will be held to celebrate the inauguration of the first African American and 44th President of the United States, President-elect Barack Obama; a special Inaugural Prayer and Watch Service will be held in the 590 Building so that we can share the excitement of this historic moment; and AUMI will present the Dreaming Out Loud commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I invite you to take full advantage of all the opportunities that are provided for your cultural, personal, and spiritual enrichment so that as you travel your journey to heaven, you will be assured as to who you are and whose you are in Christ . . . and be strengthened.

May God continue to bless you and keep you forever in his care. Happy New Year!

In God's service,

Rev. C. M. Alexander

Don't miss this great opportunity!
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Starting the New Year off right—Get involved

You come every Sunday and take your seat on the same pew with many of the same members.

You offer them a hardy greeting and participate in the devotion.

Your routine hasn't changed in years.

Maybe it's time that it should.

Maybe you should ask yourself this question: How am I contributing to the Lord's kingdom building at my church? Besides the people on my pew, do I know other

members?

God has called all of us to a life of service. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Therefore, commit thy works, thy time unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established."

Volunteer opportunities abound at Antioch Baptist Church North, where there are dozens of ministries to join.

If you enjoy singing you might want to consider joining the Music Ministry, which includes the Anthem & Acappella and Adult choirs, Note



Members fellowship in the Northex after worship service

Singers, and Verse Speakers, Hand bells, and the Youth MADD for Christ Choir.

Or maybe you're a people person or writer or both. The visitor's, sign language, church newsletter or usher's ministry

might be right for you.

For more information, contact the church office.

No matter what your talent may be, let 2009 be the year you lend your talents to the Lord.

Meet Deacon Nesby Cain...

Deacon Nesby Cain, Sr. can be found on the front seat in the Deacon's Corner. In that second as you walk by, he has the unique gift of making you feel uplifted by his hearty handshake, smile, and kind words. If you don't sit on that side of the church and get to pass by him, you will still have a merry heart after you hear his melodious voice leading a hymn or blending in with the Male Quartet.

Q: What do you most like about serving in the Deacon's Ministry, and what excites you about being a member of Antioch?

A: I can be more support to my Pastor. I also enjoy the fellowship with the brethren and helping others to understand God's Word. My Pastor gives me an opportunity to exercise my skills. Antioch, with the Pastor's leadership believes in helping others in every way.

Everyone has something to do at Antioch.

Q: What is your favorite hymn, and how did you develop your love for music?

A: My favorite hymn is "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" because I believe if I continue to love everybody and do the will of God, He will guide me in the way I should go.

Q: What is your favorite scripture, and what advice do you have for maturing as a Christian?

A: I Corinthians, Chapter 13, the way of love. To mature as a Christian, you must pray, asking God to open up the meaning of His Word as you study it and to lead you in whatever you do. You must make God first in your life because in John 15:5 Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing. Combine faith and works; one without the other is no good.



Deacon Nesby Cain

Let Jesus lead you, and you'll get where you're trying to go.

Q: What are your children's names, and what advice do you have for raising children?

A: My wife's name is Ritha, and we are blessed with four sons: Clifford Earl, Myron Lewis, Michael, and Nesby L. Cain, Jr. My wife and I adhered to Proverbs 22:6; it is the parents' responsibility to train their children and to lead them to

develop a taste for the things of God. Administer love and discipline, trust and belief.

Q: What is your profession, your hobbies, your gifts?

A: My profession is a little of most common things. My hobbies include traveling and writing cards or prayer and encouragement to people.

Q: Do you have words of wisdom that you have lived by that may help someone else?

A: Always let God lead your life because God made us for Himself; always walk in the newness of life. Before speaking, think twice, and speak once. Adhere to Ephesians 4:15, and always speak the truth in love that it may grow up in you in all things. Most importantly, keep Ephesians 5:1-2 and John 13:34-35 in your heart to guide your actions and love one another.

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ADDED MEMBERS

Antioch added **32** members to the family, including 14, who were Baptized. The members, listed with their birth month, are:

- Yolanda Trimier, April
- LaShannon Brown, April
- Christopher Brown, July
- Donald Coleman, October
- Shawl Pryor II, December
- David Henderson, September
- Monique Moore, March
- Ciscely Ramseur, September
- Kamryn Stargell, January
- Gregory Curtis, May
- Carol Roberts, April
- Ijah S. Williams, January
- Safiya Lyn, August
- Ricky Dudley, June

The following persons received the Right Hand of Fellowship under Christian Experience

- Kevin J. Carraby, February
- Pearla Holmes, December
- Allen Jones, April
- Denisha Brown, February
- Shatoya Elisha Young, October
- Malaika Syphertt, August
- Andrea Taylor, May
- Denine Toney-Jones, August
- Deanna Reid, May
- Kendra Durham, May
- Lauren Best, January
- Barbara Sanford, February
- Gloria Futch, December
- Charles W. Bell, September
- Jequetta Byrd, May
- Martha Ann Walker, October
- TeSharrie Swift, June

Eunice Gray, Member Lakewood Mission

Bible Quiz

The Miracles of Jesus

Here's a brief, ten-question quiz on some of the miraculous deeds of Jesus, as reported by the four evangelists. Do you know the details?

1. What and where was Jesus' first miracle?
2. Where did Jesus get the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude, according to John?
3. How did the two blind men whom he cured address Jesus?
 - A. "Sire"
 - B. "O Lord"
 - C. "Thou son of David"
 - D. "Mr. Messiah"
4. Was it the son or the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, that Jesus raised from the dead?
5. To whom did Jesus command, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," and where did this miracle take place?
6. Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Then he healed...?
7. When Jesus told Simon to let his net into the lake, the fisherman snared an abundance of fish. What two unfortunate events followed?
8. At what time did Jesus heal the son of "a certain nobleman" of Capernaum?
 - A. at the seventh hour
 - B. at the twelfth hour
 - C. at eventide
 - D. at noon plus a half
9. Of what did Jesus cure Simon's wife's mother at Capernaum?
 - A. leprosy
 - B. fever
 - C. crippled leg
 - E. crippled arm
10. The Jews were angered by the curing of the invalid at Bethesda because...?

Answers below.

The Church At Antioch is looking for you! Proud of the job you do or want to nominate your sister or brother in Christ to be featured in an upcoming issue of The Church At Antioch? E-mail your story idea to Sis. Gracie Staples at gstaples@ajc.com.

1. Changing water into wine at a marriage ceremony in Cana. (John 2:3-11); 2. From a lad. (John 6:9); 3. C (Matthew 9:27-30); 4. The daughter (Mark 5:22-23, 35-43); 5. The son of a widow, in Nain (Luke 7:11-14); 6. The servant of the centurion (Luke 7:2-10); 7. First the net broke; then Simon and his partners managed to get the fish aboard two ships and the two began to sink. (Luke 5:4-7); 8. A. (John 4:52-53); 9. B (Mark 1:30-31); 10. It was done on the Sabbath. (John 5:2-16)

Bible Quiz Answers:

More than a greeter

The Visitors Ministry at Antioch Baptist Church North was the brainchild of a very active church member, Sis. Brenda Wilson.

It was Wilson who realized that visitors needed more than the assistance and programs that Antioch's ushers provided. She believed every visitor to the church should be treated as if he or she were Jesus Christ himself.

She still does. And since 1988, the Visitors Ministry has been laboring under that philosophy.

When the ministry started, Wilson was one of five members serving. The others were Sisters Cheryl Tolbert, Anita Truitt, Carol Bradford and Shirley Brantley.

"Brenda remained our leader until circumstances required her to relocate North Carolina," said Sis. Berdell Smith, president of the ministry.

Two of the original members, Carol Bradford and Shirley Brantley, remain active in the ministry.

"They are both strong, Chris-

tian women and are truly anchors of the ministry," said Smith.

Smith said the Visitors Ministry, sometimes referred to as the ministry at large, is responsible for welcoming members and guests to Antioch, greeting them in love and the name of Jesus Christ. They answer questions and provide direction to visitors upon their entrance to the church. So far in 2008, they have welcomed more than 2,243 visitors to Antioch.

The mission of the ministry is in the spirit of being Bible-based; their motto is taken from Ephesians 2:19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

Currently, 33 members -- 28 females and 5 males -- volunteer with the ministry. Members interested in joining the ministry must have a desire and commitment to stewardship.

Smith said members, always attired in black, consider



Members of Antioch's Visitors Ministry

themselves family, taking care of the needs of the congregation. In addition to distributing programs and other items, they support the women of Ruth's Place, providing toiletries and other items as needed.

"This year, after hearing that the ladies of Ruth's Place were in need of clothing, we held a clothing drive for them," said Smith. "We collected clothing,

shoes, handbags, towels and some household items."

Smith said the ministry may be taking their hospitality one step further. They are considering holding a brief reception after each service to answer visitors' questions and give them a chance to meet the Rev. Cameron Alexander.

Whatever they do, you can bet it will be done with a smile.

Nicolette Williams named Lady of Distinction

Nicolette Williams is a lady of distinction, literally.

Williams, a junior at Mundy Mills High School, has been selected to become a member of Lady of Distinction, an organization whose mission it is to instill social graces in young women, while increasing their self-worth.

At a young age, Nicolette always strived for academic excellence and to become closer

to Jesus Christ.

Not only is she involved in many school programs, she is an active member of Antioch Baptist Church North. She is a member of the youth dancers and basketball team. A regular participant in the Congress of Christian Education, she recently won second place in the Youth Bible jeopardy event.

At school, she is a member

of the National Honor Society, the Elite Scholars, the Future Business Leaders of America and the varsity basketball team. She has maintained a 3.8 grade-point average throughout her school years.

Nicolette is the daughter of Phyllis and Robbie Williams and the granddaughter of Gwen Williams.



Nicolette Williams

Antioch youth speak on Obama

What does President-elect Barack Obama's election mean?



Janetta Hill

Nia Oates

Brandis Rencher

April Simmons

Osiris Stephenson

Omari Washington

For many of us, the election of Barack Obama to president of the United States signaled the healing of a long-festering wound in the nation's psyche: slavery's legacy would no longer prevent African-Americans from fully participating in society as equals.

In that sense Obama's victory isn't just historic simply because he's the first African American to become president, it's historic because he represented hope to every child of color, particularly black children.

The impact of his election can already be seen in our children. Many are reading the newspaper more. Some are blogging more. Others are

watching every news show they can. They seem to have a renewed thirst for knowledge. And so we asked them recently what Obama's election means to them. Here's what they had to say:

I feel with Barack Obama being elected President that no matter what your color you are capable to do anything of doing anything that you desire.

— Janetta Hill

The election of Barack Obama has been the basis for my motivation to elevate my standards for myself but also for my peers. Barack Obama's election has not only changed

the way in which I see the world but has changed the way I perceive what I can become in this world. His message of hope and change has removed fears and doubts and created opportunity and promise for many Americans.

— Nia Oates

The election of President Elect Obama sends the phenomenal message that with proper preparation, determination and a great mental attitude, great things are possible.

— Brandis Rencher

Barack Obama is now the President. The change we need we will hopefully get.

— April Simmons

Barack Obama being elected helps to restore Americas' credibility to the rest of the world. It is an indication of America's potential to look beyond race. So to me Barack Obama is more than a black president he's a man that can make CHANGE happen!!!!

— Osiris Stephenson

I feel that Barack Obama becoming President is a sign that America is slowly coming to its senses. America needs change and Barack Obama will bring change!

— Omari Washington

2009 MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Antioch Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Book Scholarship
 Rochelle H. Lamar – Liberty University
 Anthony Spann – Tennessee State University
 Alliea Stokes Anderson – Emory University
 Erin Walton – Florida State University

Sherri Spann Memorial Scholarship
 Shanta Holiday – Kennesaw State University
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Sharon Wright Willis Memorial Scholarship
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 Brittany Warner – Valdosta State University

Antioch Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Book Scholarship
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 Anika Clarkson – University of Phoenix
 Danielle M. Newson, Morehouse School of Medicine
 Jourdan A. Mott – Lawson State Community College

Cain Memorial Scholarship
 Brittini D. Fleming – Fisk University
 Autumn Glencamp – South Carolina State University
 Jacquelyn N. Ross – Howard University
 Ashley Smalls – Howard University

William "Bill" Harding Memorial Scholarship
 Chinique Hardison – Valdosta State University
 Whittnee D. McCormick – Valdosta State University
 Angela Palmer – Savannah State University

Antioch's own ACE

In 1993, under the direction of Sister Barbara J. Alexander, a group of Antioch entrepreneurs were commissioned to come together, and carry out yet another of Rev. Alexander's many visions for the church. That vision was to identify entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs within the congregation to serve the church and surrounding community.

The first challenge was to come up with a name for the auxiliary and so after much deliberation, they settled on the name Antioch Council of Entrepreneurs, better known as ACE was chosen,' said Helen Burgess, the ministry's co-coordinator.

Burgess said the name depicted not only who they were but what they wanted to accomplish.

The group then established our mission statement: "To strive to build our businesses as we build the church. To enrich the lives of business owners within the church by providing sound Christian doctrine, business develop-

ment, encouragement and support of one another, and to enhance our God-given talents and abilities as we serve the Lord through Christian fellowship." That mission, Burgess said, hasn't changed.

As members sought to humble themselves for use by God, they accomplished much. They hosted workshops on personal finance, home buying, and business start-ups. They joined the health ministry in conducting health expos and business expos. And they created the ACE Business Directory, a listing of business and professional services offered by Antioch North members.

"We are blessed to have a pastor that is not only a visionary but also supports and encourages his congregational families and friends to support the businesses in the church," said Burgess. "He challenged us 'to keep God's presence at the center of all business decisions and transactions and to never forget to be about God's business in ministering to the least, the less, and the lost.'"

Some of the original members of ACE are still in business and some have moved on, said Burgess. Still, she said, the need still exists for all Antioch entrepreneurs to come together and network, support each other and share ideas and make themselves available to serve Antioch families.

As the ministry transitions into 2009, Burgess said she hopes ACE members will adopt president-elect Barack Obama's theme of renewing America's promise, by renewing ACE.

"We invite all entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, and executive professionals willing to share their expertise and support to help renew the spirit of Antioch Council of Entrepreneurs," said Burgess. The pastor has appointed Brother Shawl Pryor and Sister Helen Burgess as ACE's 2009 Co-Coordinators and Sister Barbara J. Alexander as Advisor.

"We have an exciting agenda planned for 2009 and we would like for you to be a part of that plan."

Continued from cover: Antioch's ballers



Players and supporters in a prayer circle during practice.

DeVaughn yelled over the noise of other children dribbling during a practice in the 590 Building one recent Monday.

A group of about one dozen teenagers run from one end of the court to the free throw line.

They touch the floor and run back to their original spots. The kids run to the half-court, touch the floor and run back to their original spots.

A younger group of children practice their free throw shoot-

ing at the other end.

"Yes," says Dr. Stephanie Smith Greene as her 8-year-old son Kare swishes a free throw.

Sis. Greene credits basketball with teaching her son discipline, self-control and helping

to build his self-esteem.

"He's matured into his own little man," she said.

Asked if he's a better shooter or dribbler, Kare thought about his answer for a few seconds.

"Both," he said.

Bro. DeVaughn believes one of his best players is 14-year-old Courtney Carter.

"She is going to be a big baller," he said.

She's 5-foot-10 and has a smooth post-up game.

"I love to play basketball, so anywhere I can do it I can," she said.

Bro. DeVaughn said his greatest concern is that some parents cannot afford the \$40 uniform fee for their children. Any donations are welcome.

Born to be leaders and singers

You might say the choir coordinators of Antioch Baptist Church North -- Dianne T. Williams and Diana Smith -- were born leaders and singers.

Dianne T. Williams grew up in the neighboring community and has attended Antioch all of her life. As a child she participated in Easter plays and other events at the church. She also sang with the youth choir, under the direction of

Sis. Betty Harris.

Diana Smith joined Antioch under the leadership of the Rev. D.T. George. At the age of 3, she began humming tunes as the choir sang. She joined the Refuge Church of God and Christ in Manhattan with her aunt after her parents moved to New York. That was where her singing career started, when she joined the choir that her mother directed.

Together Williams and Smith -- appointed co-coordinators by the Rev. Cameron Alexander -- have brought experience and a passion for singing to Antioch, serving for almost two decades.

Williams and Smith have always worked together as a team, coordinating the choirs that sing each week, setting up special events and providing administrative support for

the Music Ministry.

Coupled with Baptist training from the pulpit and classrooms at Antioch, Williams and Smith have been able to mesh their education and work experiences with a love for serving God and working effectively along with some of the finest musicians and choir members they say they have ever known.

Meet Dianne Williams



Sis. Dianne Williams

Williams grew up at Antioch under the guidance of individuals such as Roselle Wright, Ethel Grier and Charlotte Kemp.

Her interest in people and personalities developed as she watched them serve as role models for the young people at Antioch. They helped to coach and shape Williams into a future leader at Antioch.

Her love of singing and music was like a family tradition. Her brothers and sisters sang with major groups around the Atlanta area and it was a favorite pastime for her as well. She has sung with school choirs and other groups since elementary school.

Williams was also among Antioch members to participate in the Atlanta Super Choir, which traveled to Europe to represent the city of Atlanta at the Montreaux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. While there, Williams and others sang background for numerous recording artists including Ashford and Simpson, Andrea Crouch, and the Mighty Clouds of Joy. Dianne was married at Antioch to Charlie Williams. They have two daughters -- Nicholai and Kasia.

Meet Diana Smith



Sis. Diana Smith

Smith's motto is to "never be a follower; always be a leader."

After moving back to Atlanta, she joined Antioch and became a member of what was known then as Choir No. 1 and No. 2.

As time passed and Pastor Alexander arrived at Antioch, he organized many auxiliaries, including

a young missionary group (26-49 Mission in Action), which was formed out of the General Missionary Baptist Convention. Pastor Alexander appointed Smith president of the group.

When Pastor Alexander's vision was to combine some of our choirs, Smith's vision was to take a break from leadership. Pastor Alexander, however, had another plan. He wanted Smith to work with Dianne Williams and Deacon William Harding who was the Music Ministry advisor. Eventually Pastor Alexander appointed Smith as co-coordinator of the Music Ministry.

Diana, a member of Antioch for 50 years, is married to Jasper Smith. They have two daughters, Cynthia Smith-Winins and Stephanie Smith-Greene, and three grandchildren.

From King to Obama—Local activists connect the dots

Andrew Young: Hold to God's hand

He began with a familiar passage from the sixth chapter of Matthew: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."

It was half past 8 a.m. on December 14 and Andrew Young, the former ambassador to the United Nations and top aide to the late Martin Luther King Jr., had come to connect the dots - not as one presiding over a rally but a preacher rightly dividing the word to his flock.

He was the second of five ministers invited by Pastor Cameron Alexander to help Antioch and her guests remember those who helped African-Americans cross the bridge to freedom and to acknowledge the sacrifices made on their behalf.

"We want to have a better idea where we came from, how we got here and what we must do to go forward," Alexander said.

Young traced King's footsteps from Atlanta to a Birmingham jail, where he was unjustly held for tax evasion to the streets of Harlem, where a deranged African American woman stabbed him, to Atlanta again, where he was arrested, chained and held for driving with an Alabama license.

He talked about the Poor People's Campaign and community organizing that would help shape President-elect Barack Obama.



Rev. Andrew Young

Young said he was skeptical about whites' willingness to elect someone named Obama. And while others asked if he were black enough, he thanked God Obama wasn't black enough.

However, there was something else, Young said, that bothered him. He said he couldn't imagine a brother that good-looking not having baggage.

Then connecting the dots, he recounted what he called Obama's had complicated history. His white mother was 18 when she gave birth to him; his black father, a Muslim from Kenya, left him; he then went with his mother to Indonesia, where she married a "Chinaman" so he has two Chinese half sisters raised in an Islamic community.

"One of the great problems we have today is how we're going to get along with China and Islam," said Young to applause. "The Lord has his stuff together and when we need a man, He will create one."

Like Paul captured the spir-

it of Jesus Christ, Young said Obama has captured the spirit of King by wanting to work for the poor and by being an intellectual giant.

"We have got to find a way to develop a mindset that we see in (Obama)," he said, "a seriousness of purpose."



Congressman John Lewis: "Get in the way"

Congressman John Lewis took a back seat to the Rev. John Lewis recently as he preached, "Finding a Way to get in the Way."

It was Sunday, Dec. 21, Lewis' 40th wedding anniversary, and he had come to Antioch Baptist Church North to connect the dots.

He took his text from Matthew 10:34 - "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

For most of his life, Rev. Lewis has sought "to turn things upside down to get them right side up." His journey began, he said, in Alabama where, he used "to preach to the chickens" on land his family owns on the outskirts of Troy. When he wasn't preaching, he listened to radio broadcasts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and news of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which inspired him to join the fight for civil rights.

He knew even then that people of faith "must be headlights, not tail lights."

As a student at Fisk University, he joined the lunch counter sit-ins. As a theology student at



Congressman John Lewis

American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, TN, he made the journey with Freedom Riders through the Jim Crow South to try to force adherence to the Supreme Court ruling outlawing segregation in interstate public transportation facilities.

Despite being beaten almost to death at a Greyhound Bus Station in Montgomery, AL, Lewis stayed "in the way" helping to found and serving as Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. He was only 23 when he helped plan the historic March on Washington in August 1963.

"Dr. King was the tenth speaker that day; I was number six," he said.

In 1964, Lewis coordinated the Mississippi Freedom Summer and even after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Bill and Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize, the struggle continued, Lewis said.

In March 1965, he helped organize the historic march from Selma to Montgomery to bring attention to the need for voting rights in Alabama, where state troopers hit Lewis so hard that his skull was fractured.

That day, which became known as "Bloody Sunday" attracted national attention to the movement and helped facilitate the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Lewis said that the same feet that walked across Selma walked in to vote for Obama on November 4 because the president-elect has the ability to get in the way.

"We need to stay in the way," he said. "Only the grace of God can make us stand up."

Joseph Lowery: God cares for 'good crazy'

The Rev. Lowery, the granddaddy of the dots, mixed humor with wisdom, spoke truth to power and admonished Antioch Baptist Church North to be "good crazy," during its 11:00 a.m. worship service December 28.

Based on the fourth book of Proverbs, the 87-year-old civil rights icon outlined why George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and President-elect Barack Obama should be considered the "four" fathers of our nation.

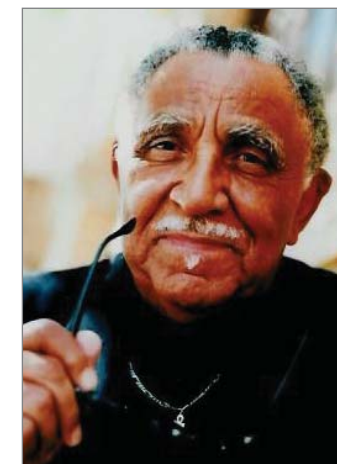
George Washington didn't do a whole lot, Lowery said, but Washington is due respect because he was the first father of our country.

Abraham Lincoln, he said, is the second father. Despite some controversy concerning his motives, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed slaves

Lowery said that when he stands on the capitol steps to deliver the inaugural prayer on January 20, he won't see just the Lincoln Memorial on the mall.

"I'm going to see a profile of a young Georgia preacher ... saying, 'I have a dream,'" he said.

History books may not recognize him as such but the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. is the third father of our nation, Lowery said, noting that the nomination of Barack Obama in Denver came ironically on the same day that King made his speech 40 years ago, and



Rev. Joseph Lowery

the celebration of King's birthday is the day before Obama will be sworn in.

The convergence of those events, Lowery said is evidence of God's presence in the recent election.

"I know you're sophisticated, and you don't think God gets in our business, but that's what Christmas is all about—God so loved the world.... He sent Jesus to get in our business," he said.

Lowery said that the convergence of so many facts and factors worked in Obama's favor.

"The Democrats can take credit," he said, "but it wasn't the Democratic Party that did it; it was God."

Lowery said that even though the color of power has changed, the character of the struggle must be constant. "Don't ever let the power of the black community be based any place other than where people hang on to what thus saith the Lord," he said. "It's the moral ingredient of our

movement that gave us power. It was faith, not fear. It was righteousness, not politics, and the third father of our nation told us that."

It was the fourth father, Barack Obama, Lowery said who recognized that he represented the Joshua Generation and Lowery, C.T. Vivian and John Lewis are the Moses Generation, the foundation on which he and others stand.

"He had reverence for the past and a vision for the future," Lowery said of the president-elect. "One is no good without the other."

He said the idea of a black president was "good crazy," in the same way Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego were crazy to let themselves be put in the fiery furnace; in the same way Harriet Tubman was for running up and down the railroad to free slaves.

In neither case did harm come because, Lowery said, God is able to take care of good crazy.



The Rev. C. T. Vivian set the stage for what would come. He spoke Nov. 23, the first of five civil rights leaders invited by Pastor Alexander to connect the dots between our faith, the movement, the late Martin Luther King and president-elect Barack Obama.

Next dot connector: The Rev. Jesse Jackson, date to be announced.