

## God's Grace

# Early blessing: A testimony by Eric Henderson

My 20 years at Antioch Baptist Church North represent the best times of my life. Under Reverend Alexander's leadership, I have grown tremendously and am a far better man, father and husband than I would be otherwise.

Recently, I discovered just how blessed I am to have God as the head of my life and to have a loving wife and children.

In 2000, doctors discovered my kidneys were failing and I needed a transplant to survive.

You can be on dialysis for 20 years without ever getting a donor. I was on for just 2 years and 11 days before I got my new kidney early in February.

It is logical to focus on the blessing of the transplant itself, but during this state of reflective awe that I am in now – still – I REALLY realize how God blessed me throughout the experience.

Those two years on dialysis felt more like 20 as I struggled through periods of doubt and gnashing of teeth. My wife, Yvonna, saw all sides of me. I think my kids thought everyone's father had a tube coming out of his stomach.

Through it all they stood by me and so I salute them - my wife Yvonna for overcoming with me and my children Rachel, David and Michael, who



Bro. Eric Henderson

handled this far better than I ever could.

Thank you for your prayers and being there for me the way you were. I also must thank the many Antioch friends who rallied around us, bringing enough food that we didn't have to cook for weeks, those who took me to my doctor's appointments because I couldn't drive and the deacons who served our family communion in the privacy of our home. Thanks so much for allowing God to use you.

Most especially, I thank God for seeing fit to end my dialysis on February 10, far sooner than any of us thought to ask.

If you have a testimony you'd like to share about the goodness of God in your life, please e-mail Gracie Bonds Staples at [gstaples@ajc.com](mailto:gstaples@ajc.com)

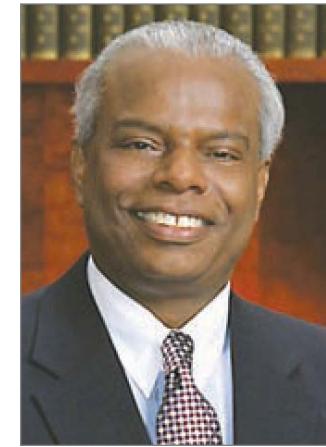
## Clement appointed to Woodruff board

Brother William Clement, a trustee at Antioch Baptist Church North, has been appointed to the Woodruff Arts Center Board of Trustees.

As a trustee, Bro. Clement will help chart the future of the center which was founded in 1968. The Woodruff Arts Center is the parent organization for the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art, 14th Street Playhouse and Young Audiences.

Known as the "heartbeat" of Atlanta's arts community, for 40 years the Woodruff Center has set the arts standard for Atlanta and the Southeast offering a bold variety of performing and visual arts—both traditional and avant-garde.

Bro. Clements is CEO of the Atlanta Life Financial Group.



Bro. William Clement

**The Church at Antioch Newsletter Staff**

**Advisor**  
Sis. Barbara J. Alexander

**Managing Editor**  
Gracie Bonds Staples

**Editor**  
Monica Richardson

**Design Editor**  
Reggie Tolbert

**Writers**  
Betty Jo Cooke  
Vivian Edwards  
Karen S. McKinney  
Olivia Rencher  
Holly Speed  
Eric Stigus

**Photographer**  
Darryl Speed

**The deadline for the August issue contributions is July 14, 2009.**

**540 Kennedy St. NW • Atlanta, GA 30318**  
**404-688-5679 • [www.antiochnorth.org](http://www.antiochnorth.org)**

INSIDE

- 6 What I saw in Africa
- 9 Best Friends Forever
- 10 Meet Dea. Twyman
- 11 Antioch's Men of the Year
- 12 Early Blessing

**Happy Independence Day!**



Connecting People to Christ

# The Church at Antioch

Bible-based, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-led, Mission-bound • Fellowship, Evangelism, Doctrine, Stewardship

July 2009

## Antioch scouts on right path

It was a hot Saturday afternoon, an ideal day for a boy to play hoops, go swimming or to stay indoors and play video games near some cool air conditioning.

But on this day, 11 Boy Scouts from northwest Atlanta sat in the fellowship hall of Antioch Baptist Church North, celebrating their willingness to choose a different path, to be unconventional.

"You can't follow the crowd," said Eagle Scout Jeremy Spikes, 18, an Antioch member. "You have to be your own leader."

Becoming a leader is the mission of Boy Scout Unit 685, which meets three times a week at the church. Antioch Min. Lester Duncan, director of the Atlanta 5th Ward Boys Association, said the unit is part of Pastor Cameron Alexander's goal of getting children into church programming and keeping them off the streets.

Antioch Baptist Church North will celebrate her pastor's 55 years of preaching and 40 years of pastoring at Antioch on July 18 with a motorcade across Northwest Atlanta.

The commemorative parade, set to begin at 10:00 a.m., will include 50 plus cars, stopping at sites considered important to Rev. Cameron Madison Alexander's professional and pastoral development, including the Morehouse School of Religion, the Interdenominational Theological Seminary, Booker T. Washington High School and the General Missionary Baptist Convention Headquarters.

For more information, watch the church bulletin.

Continued on page 2



Mahalia Marie McKinney, 2, colors her Vacation Bible School Remodel Project. She's one of nearly 100 kids who attended the week-long session.

## "Sign" of the gospel

Pastor Alexander was midway through his Father's Day sermon when his thoughts turned to the woman standing in front of the congregation, moving her hands furiously to his every word.

"I marvel at the signers, making the Gospel audible through their signs," he told the congregation.

Each Sunday, and during Bible study, the 15 men and women of the Antioch sign language ministry work hard to communicate the words and song from the pulpit to those who are deaf. Ministry leaders say only a handful of Antioch's members are deaf, but that doesn't slow the passion or care they put into their work.

Besides, they say, you never know if there are guests or visitors who can't hear and need an interpreter.

Most members of the ministry had never tried sign language until coming to Antioch. They tell similar stories of being mesmerized by interpreters and decide they, too, want

Continued on page 10

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



Dear Brothers & Sisters:

*Happy Independence Day! We recognize that this is the month to celebrate the end of the Revolutionary War and the beginning of America's independence from Great Britain, won in 1776. In celebration, we will stand along the periphery to watch the parades, get ready for family barbeques, visit war memorials, remembering sons and daughters lost in wars, and offer prayers for those still on active duty. Then, there are the fireworks - those multicolored pyrotechnics that light up the sky in a blaze of color and ornamentation. Yes, it is a day worth celebrating – freedom from tyranny and oppression – for some. For others it took another war and the Emancipation Proclamation before freedom could even be uttered, let alone attained.*

*Nevertheless, as God would have it, there is one "Independence Day" that unites every man and woman and is celebrated every day that God allows us to see – the day we accepted Christ and was reborn into a life free from sin. That was true independence. No longer dependent upon external stimuli to be or to become but trusting in God to develop our highest potential. No longer living in fear, but learning how to embrace the world freely and justly though the world may be bound by the dictates of impunity and deception. No longer dependent upon others to determine our worth as a human being but knowing that in Christ, all life is sacred and has value.*

*In Christ, there is hope, peace, love, and joy. Without Him in your life, you are powerless to hold on to these blessed gifts when confronted by life's challenges. The fruit of the Spirit allows you to grow into fruition in the Spirit becoming more patient, compassionate, and faithful to His Word. The fruit of His Spirit, helps us to bear with one another; forgive one another, love one another, be thankful, teach and admonish one another; to sing with grace in our hearts, to let His peace govern our hearts, and to have His Word live in us more abundantly.*

*We call it "being born again." There were no parades or fireworks, no fanfare, except that which was felt in the heart as Christ entered.*

*If the Son, therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.  
John 8:36*

*Happy Independence Day!*

*May God bless you and keep you forever in His care.  
Yours in God's service,*

Rev. C. M. Alexander Pastor

*Continued on from cover: Boy scouts*



*Scouts head for their next adventure.*

The unit does traditional Boy Scouts activities, such as going camping. Most of the money to run the unit comes through donations gathered by Deacon Joseph Beasley. Its most important goal is mentoring the 44 boys in the unit into strong African-American men.

Those lessons were being taught at a special program for the boys in June. Look someone in the eye. Speak up. Get your education.

Scout Quintez Stanley walked to the lectern during the program to talk about some of those lessons he's learned.

"I learned how to be a man and I learned how to respect people," he told the other boys.

Spikes joined the Boy Scouts when he was 11, his curiosity piqued by a close friend who was a member. Through the Scouts, he went camping in South Carolina and earned scholarships to attend Middle Georgia College, where he is studying to become a pilot.

The boys perked up from their occasional fidgeting as Spikes spoke. He knew what they've been hearing about being a Boy Scout. It's all about starting fires and roasting marshmallows. Right? Many nodded their heads in agreement.

Spikes reminded the boys that the Scouts mean so much more. Did you know, he asked, that former President Gerald Ford, famed movie director Steven Spielberg and astronaut Neil Armstrong were Eagle Scouts?

"It can take you to places you can't imagine," he told the boys.

And if you get discouraged...

"Keep faith in God," Spikes told the boys. "You need someone to back you up. God will back you up."

# Antioch's men of the year

Four men of Antioch Baptist Church North were honored June 19 during the annual "Salute to Black Fathers" at Iconium Baptist Church in Atlanta.

The Concerned Black Clergy presents the awards each year to fathers and young men who have made outstanding contributions to their community or who have achieved against the odds.

This year's honorees were:



**Jonathan Michael Thompson, 18**  
*Young Man of the Year*

Ministries: Sunday school, Youth Usher, volunteer at the Antioch Food Bank

He said: I was very excited to receive this honor. I knew that I had been nominated, but I did not think that I'd get it. Thank you, Antioch.



**Eric Branch, 17**  
*Young Man of the Year*

Ministries: Junior Deacon's Board, Security and Youth Leadership Council.

He said: I'm grateful to be honored in this way. I hope I will continue to grow and emulate characteristics of honesty, respect, and impeccable grooming, qualities I admire most in men.



**Zebulon Ellis, 27**  
*Man of the Year*

Ministries: Antioch Adult Choir

He said: What an honor to be deemed worthy of recognition by your peers - those



**Eric Arnell Henderson, 48**  
*Overcoming Man of the Year*

Ministry: Men's Division

He said: Growing up, my siblings and I were never left wondering what our father James

Henderson might think or recommend. He was remarkably consistent and just. He held you responsible; and I always knew I could hear him getting up at 3:15 am, and could trust that I would hear him opening the door coming home at 4:10 pm EVERY DAY. I never wondered where he was, what time he was coming home. If I could be just half the father he was to my sisters and me – I think that would count as a success!

I appreciate the Concerned Black Clergy for this recognition, and hope that my story will help someone somewhere remember that God is more than able – and does in fact hear your prayers. (Please see Bro. Henderson's testimony on Page 12.)

# Meet Deacon Van Twyman...

Dea. Van Twyman has been a member of Antioch for 27 years. He and his wife Cheryl, a Principal at West Manor Elementary School, grew up at Antioch and were baptized and later married by Pastor Cameron Madison Alexander. Here's what he had to share with us recently about his life and ministry at Antioch:

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

**A.** The Deacon's Ministry assists the Pastor in serving the needs of the congregation. I'm able to set a positive example for younger men and show them that part of being a man is not just working and raising a family; it also entails putting God first in your life.

I like Antioch first and fore-

most because I have a Pastor who truly cares about the church, its members and the community but also because Antioch has a strong family environment.

**Q.** What is your favorite Hymn? Why?

**A.** "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah". I like this hymn because it says to me if you put your trust in God, he will guide you, help turn your weakness into strengths, and continuously feed you spiritually.

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

**A.** 2 Chronicles 7:14. Being a Christian is more than just reading and knowing the Bible. It's about recognizing that no Christian is perfect, learning from your mistakes and realizing that maturation



Dea. Van Twyman

is prayer, communication, compromise, respect, and LOVE. As for raising children, I make sure that they understand the importance of putting God first. I tell them that I love them every day. We teach them the importance of family and to appreciate how blessed they are and to give back when they can.

**Q.** What is your profession, your hobbies?

**A.** I'm a Senior Oncology Specialist at Ortho Biotech, a division of Johnson and Johnson. Fishing for bass and crappie is a big hobby of mine.

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

**A.** If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. Stay true to your faith and stand strong in your beliefs.

Continued on from cover: "sign" of the gospel



L-O-V-E

to participate in the ministry to help the church.

"I was fascinated by it all and the way they could communicate," said Sis. Na'Taki Jelks, who joined the ministry in 2002.

Said Sis. Hazel Lynch, who joined the ministry 12 years ago, "It was like I said this is what I wanted to do."

The ministry offers beginners classes on Wednesdays for people who don't

know any sign language or just know a few words. They teach fingerspelling, greetings, the Lord's Prayer and other religious signs or phrases frequently said during Sunday services. Intermediate classes are for people who understand the basics and want to learn more phrases.

Ministry members occasionally interpret at other churches for special events and at gospel concerts. Each interpreter typically works in a rotation for about 20

to 30 minutes. They typically don't rotate during the sermon, trying not to disturb the flow of the message.

Is it easy keeping up? "Sometimes," said Sis. Shawn Davis, with a giggle. "I'm still learning."

Sis. Davis began taking lessons in 2004 and joined the ministry in 2006. She uses an online dictionary to help her practice before a service. She said serving in the ministry pushes members to know their Bible in order to keep pace with the speaker.

"It's definitely enjoyable, especially when a deaf person gets the message," said Sis. Davis, vice president of the ministry. "It makes you feel good."

Anyone interested in joining the sign language ministry can put a note in the ministry's mailbox inside Antioch's sanctuary.

**ADDED MEMBERS**

**Antioch added 19 members to the family in June, including 7, who were Baptized.**

**The members, listed here with their birth months, are:**

Maureen L. Shedrick, June  
Jatary Hardman, May  
Isaiah Thompson Scott, June  
Shirley Alexander, December  
Natasha Burr, August  
Crystal Bridges, December  
Elizabeth Scott, June - (Antioch John's Creek Mission - Rev. Artis Johnson)

**The following persons received the Right Hand of Fellowship under Antioch for Christian Experience:**

Candace Cowan, March  
Gay Williams, December  
Beatrice Lyde, August  
Jeff Cargile, January  
Damon L. Copeland, January  
Daniel McCoy, June  
Edwinia Chiapa, October  
Andrea Scott, June  
Danielle Huffman, August  
Lynette Singleton, January  
Trudy Wilson, April  
Willie Ellington, December

**Baptism will not be held during July or August but will be combined in September.**

Source: Sis. Bonita Hammond

# Our fellowship

*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

*Matthew 18:20*

Christians cannot grow in isolation. They need the fellowship of kindred souls to learn, to grow, to hear the message that God has just for them. The activities that are planned and the celebrations that are shared, are done so in order that we, as Christians, can grow in grace and understanding of our Lord and Savior and in right relationship with each other and with humankind. Take a look at our ministries and find your place; please note the calendar of events and be sure to be in attendance. If we are to grow like Him, we need to learn about Him in places where He can be found – among those gathered in His name: Worship services, School of the Bible classes, workshops, seminars, Fellowship activities, Stewardship opportunities, Witnessing opportunities, ministries, and auxiliaries.

Antioch is truly blessed. We see it every day in our celebrations; we feel it every time we enter the sanctuary; we hear it through our Music Ministry; we know it in our hearts. Take advantage of these blessings and peruse the calendar on page 4 for opportunities to be in the number to learn and grow.

**Don't miss this great opportunity!**

**Advertise your business or service here in *The Church at Antioch*. For more info, visit the website at [www.antiochnorth.org](http://www.antiochnorth.org)**

# Job outlook bleak but don't give up

Brittni Fleming graduated recently from Fisk University and like many 2009 college graduates she is facing an uphill struggle in this down economy.

Not only does she have to compete with laid off seasoned workers, there are even fewer jobs to go around.

Flemings is not about to give up, however.

"I don't have a job but am hoping to land one in my field," said Fleming, who earned a degree in psychology. "I really would like to work with children and adolescents."

According to a survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the class of 2009 is leaving campus with fewer jobs in hand than their 2008 counterparts.

Although times may be tough,



*Sis. Brittni Fleming*



*Sis. Terika Palmer*

experts say graduates should not give up because employers are still hiring, looking for those who are highly motivated and with a focused interest in their industry.

Terika Palmer, a recent graduate of North Carolina A&T University with a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, landed a job with Honeywell FM & T in Kansas City, Mo.

Palmer said that even for engineers, this isn't the best time to be graduating.

She said, however, she was blessed to have several job offers because "employers are really looking for graduates in all engineering disciplines right now."

## Tips to jumpstart your job search

- Be flexible and focused. Broaden the number of fields you are considering.
- Apply for as many jobs and recruiting opportunities as possible.
- Network as extensively as possible.
- Do an internship.
- Don't panic. The hiring season for college grads is not as compressed as it was in the past and there will be plenty of opportunities to apply for.

## CALENDAR

### July Events

ACE Meeting  
Holiday - Independence Day  
SCAN Bible Study  
Rev. Terry Ladd's Installation, First Baptist Church - Chattanooga, TN  
Overnight visit to Chattanooga  
Installation Service  
UCAN Fellowship, "A Night Out With the Pastor"  
55/40 Pastor's Parade/Motorcade  
GMBC Congress of Christian Ed.  
55/40 "A White Tie Event", Hosted by Hank Stewart  
Men's Division Culm., Celeb./Torch Passing Ceremony  
Southeast Region YPD Conf.

|                 |                    |              |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Thurs., July 2  | 6:30pm             |              |
| Fri., July 3    |                    |              |
| Sat., July 11   | 11am               | Rms. 11-12   |
| Sat., July 11   | Leave Atlanta, 8am |              |
| Sun., July 12   | 4pm                |              |
| Fri., July 17   | 7pm                | 590 Building |
| Sat., July 18   |                    |              |
| M-F, July 20-24 |                    | Albany, GA   |
| Fri., July 24   | 7pm                | Hilton Hotel |
| Sun., July 26   | 8am/11am           | Sanctuary    |
| July 30-Aug. 1  |                    |              |

### August Events

55/40 Celebration, 40th Pastoral Anniversary Celebration  
ACE Meeting  
Trash to Treasure/Marketplace  
Rev. Ronald Terry - Building Dedication  
New Fellowship Baptist Church

|                |           |              |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Sun., Aug. 2   | 7:45/11am | Sanctuary    |
| Thurs., Aug. 6 | 6:30pm    |              |
| Sat., Aug. 22  | 9am-2pm   | 590 Building |
| Sun., Aug. 23  |           | Macon, GA    |

School of the Bible classes are held every Wednesday, 6:15pm - 7pm  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting – every Wednesday, 7pm

The Good Grief Ministry meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:30pm for families in bereavement.

# Best friends forever

They were mere babies when they fell into the embrace of Antioch Baptist Church North, daughters of men and women who loved God, who would teach them to do the same.

It didn't take long for Kelly Cogburn, Alexia Doward, Nia Oates, Andrea Trimble and Ja'Necia Williams to discover each other and when they did their circle was unbreakable.

More than a decade has passed since the five of them first met. Indeed, those once giggly little girls have grown into mature young ladies, debutantes, and best friends forever.

When we caught up with a few of them recently, they talked about the ties that bind them – a love for Christ and each other and what the future holds for each of them.

Although heading off to college will mean going their separate ways in August, they're each headed in the same direction, en route to a



Pictured clockwise from top center: Alexia, Nia, Andrea, Ja'Necia and Kelly

bright future.

They described their departure as bittersweet.

Nia, daughter of Vincent and Shawn Oates and a graduate from the International

August 21, 2009  
*Cannongate Golf*  
Heron Bay Course  
5100 Heron Bay Boulevard  
Locust Grove, GA 30248

2nd Annual  
*cm*  
Golf Classic

Come and enjoy a day on the greens!

To benefit Antioch Urban Ministries, Inc.

For more information, please contact Dea. Benny Williams at 404-527-5786.

Baccalaureate Program of Campbell High School, will head to Howard University on scholarship.

Andrea, daughter of Deacon Jerome and Sis. Trimble, heads to Savannah State University; Ja'Necia, has an academic scholarship to Alabama State University; And Kelly, daughter of Rev. Kenneth and Sis. Tracey Cogburn, will join Nia at Howard University.

It won't be the first time distance has separated the friends. They attended different high schools, even lived in different neighborhoods.

Just weeks separate them now from that new chapter in their lives but it will take far more than miles to sever their friendship.

"We will only be a prayer away from each other," said Alexia. "And of course, there's always Facebook and cell phones to keep us connected."

# “Lord, I believe: help my unbelief”

On the day set aside to honor fathers and remember the death and resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, dozens of men joined the Rev. Cameron Alexander at the altar to cry out for their children.

It was a moving demonstration of faith on Father's Day Sunday similar to that portrayed by the father in Mark 9:24: "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe: help my unbelief."

In this story, it is the father who brings his son to Jesus to be healed.

"This father knew where Jesus was," said Pastor Alexander. "Fathers ought to know where help is."

The Bible says the boy suffered most of his life so you don't get the impression, he said, that this father was absent from his son's life. He was not sending alimony. He was there.

"I had a there father," said Pastor Alexander. "He was there in the morning. He was there in the evening."

The father in the Scripture, he said, was there and he took his son to Jesus just as fathers today should take their children to Jesus.

The man arrived with his sick son just as Jesus and three of his disciples were returning from the Mount of Configuration, a pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry.

But when Jesus arrives the father tells him that the disciples were unable to heal his son. Can you do anything, he asks?

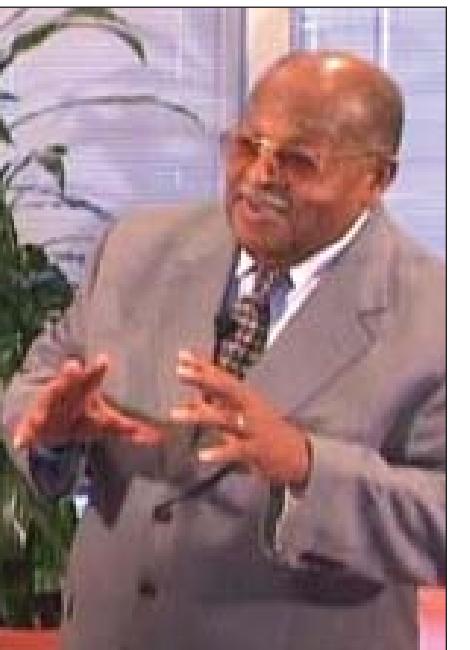
Jesus, Alexander said, turned the question around.

"The question is not can I do anything," he said, "but do you believe?"

The father answered and said: "I believe but help my unbelief."

Pastor Alexander said that while the two might seem incompatible, it is possible to believe our heavenly Father is

*"This father knew where Jesus was."*



Pastor Alexander gets his point across.

looking over us but have doubt when the mortgage is due or your son or daughter needs tuition but the money isn't in your budget.

"Nobody in here has perfect faith," he said to Amens from the congregation. "Every now and then I get on my knees and ask God to help me with my doubt."

And so it was in this story.

"The lesson we can take from this," he said, "is Jesus can work with imperfect faith."

## Letter from the Editor

Three things I hope you'll take to heart as you read this issue of The Church at Antioch.

First, this is Gracie Bonds Staples a ministry for you and about you and I mean that in the strictest sense. It means I hope you feel an ownership and that you will be among the eyes and ears we count on to tell your stories.

Maybe you know someone who recently received a job promotion or is busy ministering to the least, less and the lost outside our church walls. Maybe that someone is you.

Tell us. We want to share it with the rest of the congregation.

Second, if you enjoy writing or taking photographs, join us. There are no meetings to attend - just deadlines to get copy and photos in to be edited.

Third, a few months ago we started a column called God's Grace. The idea was to provide a place for you to share testimonies of the goodness of God in your life. If you have a testimony or know someone who does, please let me know ([gstaples@ajc.com](mailto:gstaples@ajc.com)).

I know I mentioned three things but let me add just one more.

It's been my pleasure serving you in this capacity and I appreciate very much the positive – always positive – feedback you've shared. For some that would be enough but we want to get better and we need you to make that happen.

Please, weigh these things in your heart and come join us.



Gracie Bonds Staples

# ELM STREET TOWNHOMES

## Brand New Luxury Townhomes

From \$200,000

Just Minutes From Downtown,  
Clark Atlanta University System,  
Morehouse and Spelman  
2 Stories

2-3 Bedrooms, 2 1/2 Baths  
Hardwood On Main Level  
Carpeted Bedrooms, Garden Tub  
Gas Log Fireplace  
Deluxe Kitchen, Refrigerator  
Dishwasher, Stove  
Granite Countertops  
Washer and Dryer  
Private Detached Double Garage



C. Eric Alexander  
404.761.1222 Ext. 14  
404.849.7529

[www.bjarealty.com](http://www.bjarealty.com) • [bjarealty@hotmail.com](mailto:bjarealty@hotmail.com)  
Developed by Bethursday Development Corporation

Located at 516 Elm Street  
Atlanta, GA 30318

Kennedy St.(off of Northside Dr.)  
and Elm Street

**FINANCING =  
OVER \$70,000  
IN GRANTS AVAILABLE  
TO QUALIFIED  
FIRST TIME BUYERS**



Serving The Entire Metro Area

**404.761.1222**

**Barbara J.  
Alexander  
Realty Company, Inc.**

Barbara J. Alexander  
404.761.1222 Ext. 15  
404.312.7912



# What I saw in Africa changed my thinking

Poverty across the world is something we should never underestimate.

I learned that for myself first hand recently.

During a trip to Nairobi and other parts of the Third World



*Monica Richardson with Mama Sarah Obama (the step-grandmother of the president; she raised Barack's father.)*

country of Kenya in June I stared poverty in the face of men, women and children.

It was poverty like I had never seen before. Poverty I honestly couldn't comprehend. Poverty I would see on

television and consider extreme but that I now know is real and not that uncommon at all.

I also saw beauty and hope.

As a journalist, I know I have been blessed in my career with opportunities that some only dream of having. The chance to travel to Kenya, to participate in the journalism fellowship sponsored by the International Reporting Project and John Hopkins University, was just one more. It was a life-changing experience that helped me put what's really important in life into perspective.

I came away more thankful for the freedoms and wealth we enjoy in America. I realized that the great work Antioch Baptist Church North does through its international mission is so critical. When the church sends mosquito nets to Africa, we are saving lives literally. I learned that any help we can provide collectively and as individuals can really go a long way.

All in all, it's important for us all to never forget how



*Monica Richardson, editor of The Church at Antioch, with a group of school children of parents with HIV/AIDS in Kibera, Kenya, one of the world's largest slums. Some of the children are orphans and there were about 40 of them in a one-room makeshift school that had no electricity or water but the teachers were amazingly dedicated to their cause.*

blessed we are. As a result of my trip, I am looking for people who will help me send donations of soap to the slums of Kibera. It seems like a simple thing but soap will help save lives by reducing the spread of disease. I hope you will help me in this cause.

I also urge you to support Antioch's missions both locally and internationally. There's nothing like knowing and

believing that you have the power to help save or change a life. Antioch is doing that. I'm just thankful the Lord led me here so that I can be part of that greater mission.

*\*To see photos from the trip, visit <http://m2.pepcast.com/mrichardson/Album1> or to help Monica with the soap donation, e-mail [mrich1970@yahoo.com](mailto:mrich1970@yahoo.com).*

# Vacation Bible School: an xtreme makeover

"Who are we? Who are we? Women and girls. Men and boys. Oh, yes, yes, yes! Who love to go to V-B-S!"

If you have attended even one night of Vacation Bible School at Antioch Baptist Church North recently, you are familiar with this closing competitive yell started many

years ago by Mother Gladys Phillips

As in past years, the boisterous competition expressed participants' enthusiasm for studying God's word.

And as in years past, classes were held for every age and stage on this Christian journey, allowing members time to

study more in-depth selected Scripture, ask questions and experience the Word come to life.

This year's theme, "Xtreme Spiritual Makeover—Jesus the Master Builder," focused on four Bible personalities in need of the total reformation that characterizes the popu-

lar television show.

Instead of a group of decorators, painters, and carpenters moving in to re-decorate a house, however, the classes emphasized a total transformation from the inside out by the Master Builder, Jesus Christ.

# Another year of good food, fun and fellowship

Food, fun and fellowship again marked the annual Pastor's Anniversary Cookout at Bessie Branham Park.

This year's picnic, held June 6, honored Rev. Cameron Alexander's 55 years of preaching the Gospel and 40 years as pastor of Antioch Baptist Church North.

Hundreds of Antioch members turned out to help celebrate.

For Angela Davis, it was hard not to miss who wasn't there.

"The food is good as always and I really enjoy the fellowship," said Sis. Davis. "There is one difference that I must point out – I did have a moment right around the time for the watermelon cutting. I really began to miss Deacon Harding. I always think of him and the picnic was one of Deacon Harding's favorite events."

Still, Davis and the others did exactly what Dea. Harding would've wanted: they enjoyed the time with Pastor Alexander and with each other.

"I am enjoying the company of people that I usually do not see," said Sis. Audrey Cooper.

And those she was meeting for the first time.

"I actually met Lisa Borders and talked about her plans for the future, so that was a special treat," said Sis. Cooper.

Even the clowns, James and Fannie Brownlee, enjoyed the festivities.

"We are glad to be invited back again this year," said Bro. Brownlee.

