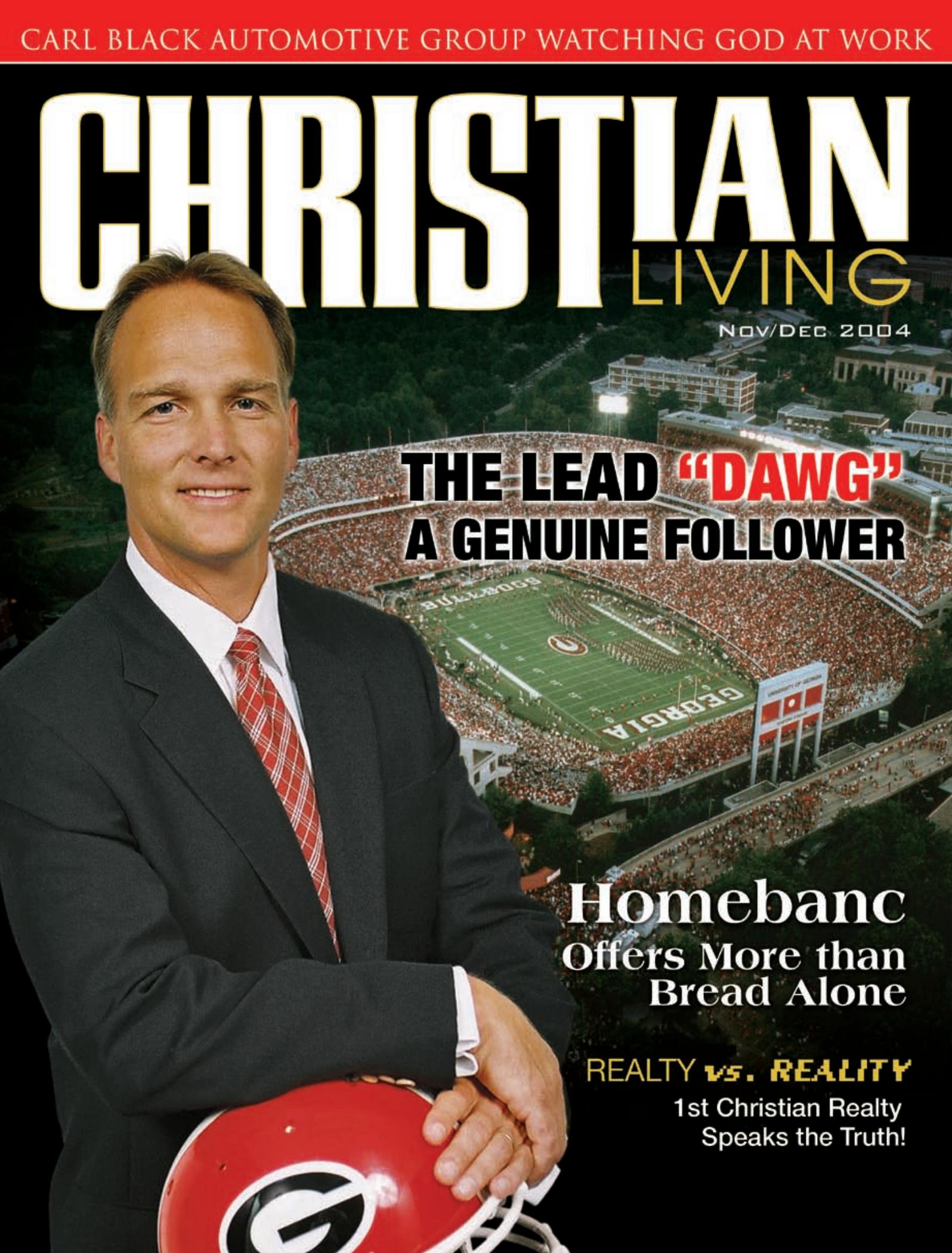


CARL BLACK AUTOMOTIVE GROUP WATCHING GOD AT WORK

CHRISTIAN LIVING

NOV/DEC 2004

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and red patterned tie stands in the foreground, smiling. He is holding a red Georgia Tech football helmet with a white 'G' logo. Behind him is an aerial view of a large stadium at night, filled with spectators. The stadium lights are on, and the field is visible. The text 'THE LEAD "DAWG" A GENUINE FOLLOWER' is overlaid on the stadium image.

THE LEAD "DAWG"
A GENUINE FOLLOWER

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Robin Nelson

Steve & Renee McKenzie of TIH Homes, Inc. show of the Masterson Floor Plan at BridgeMill in Canton. Lot 4718 Listed at \$439,900.

THE BLESSING OF THE BOND-SERVANT

BY LISA A. RICE

The Bible seems to label God’s people in many different ways – believers, Christians, sheep, the flock, the bride, the beloved, children, the chosen, martyrs, and saints. Perhaps the most intriguing label, however, is that of bondservant. Bondservants seem to be the slaves of Christ, those with invisible brandings that signify everlasting devotion to their eternal king. These are the servants of God who have forsaken all compromise and man pleasing and flung their lives in total abandonment into God’s kingdom and will. Such is the attitude of two Atlantans quietly serving God in both secular and sacred arenas.

Steve and Renee McKenzie don’t see their home building as a business, but rather a ministry. Though Steve, owner of T.I.H. Homes, has been

responsible for the construction of over five hundred homes of excellence since 1983, his heart has always been foremost into community and church outreach programs. “God prompted us to start a business with more ministry components than P & L components,” says Steve of TIH Homes.

Making it Plain

Steve’s wife, Renee, came up with an idea that would make their faith clear in their business. “We wanted to have an excellent final quality assurance program that included a buyer orientation at closing. Here, we would give out gift bags that included a leather-bound NIV Study Bible with their names embossed on it.” Renee handles the selection process with customers, the warranties, buyer introduction and buyer re-walk, and quality assurance. Her idea was implemented, and the surprise has been much appreciated by TIH customers for years. This was only the first of many ways the McKenzies would make their God known to their community.

Getting Consecrated and Commissioned

Started in 1997, TIH Homes builds single family residential homes, town homes and office condominiums in the Cherokee and Cobb County areas, as well as places like Newnan and various Paulding County sites. No matter where the McKenzies are working, they've never ceased to see God's hand directing their steps. "When it came time to step out into TIH Homes, God Had to kick us out of the building company where we worked, like He did the children of Israel. It was tough on us, but He got us focused and ready to leave. We took hold of the hem of his garment, trusted, and looked to him as open vessels that wanted to serve, and he just kept pouring into our lives... We've prayed the Prayer of Jabez every day, and it's exciting to see how the faithfulness of God has brought us forward."

Yielding Missionary Hearts

Not only has God prospered the business, but also He's opened wide the doors of missionary service. Steve and Renee pick up women struggling with various life issues for church each Sunday. "We've watched God change lives," says Renee. "And we want to be just as faithful in return. I told the Lord, 'You keep giving me one person, and I'll keep going.' He has, and I have, and now we've grown again." The McKenzies are also involved with Bud's Bicycles, a program for giving bikes, gifts, and food to underprivileged kids at Christmas and throughout the year, as well as several Animal Rescue Programs and a general

The business and ministry of TIH Homes is based on Matthew 25:31-46.

community ministry that helps those with various needs. Steve and Renee go to West Virginia once a year for a home mission project, and recently they've helped build a church that is the first Bible school in Swaziland, Africa. Their animal ministry involves finding foster care and placements for stray or abandoned animals.

Steve and Renee attend Mount Paran Church in Marietta, with Pastor Mark Walker, where they're involved in the bicycle program, the Marietta Project Outreach, the missions department, and a special ministry that gives hands-on help to those who aren't in a position to help themselves. In addition, the McKenzies are "Hope Ministers" who help people in crisis and those that need inner healing. The couple is quick to point out that unless they had received God's healing for their own issues, they would never have the authority and ability to bring others into their freedom. "We're living proof that God is real," says Renee. "Having gone through many trials ourselves and seeing God's hand at work gives us the ability to impart hope to others." Steve, Renee, and their daughter Shannon have seen many miracles through the years and witnessed the transforming power of restored hope.

It was Renee's life-tested hope that one Florida woman sorely needed last month. "She doesn't just bring home stray animals," laughs Steve. "She brings home people, too." Apparently a woman and her daughter had driven up to Georgia to get away from the hurricanes for a few days and was at a gas station with two cats and a dog and no place to stay. Renee brought the whole gang home and put them up in the bonus room for over a week. "They ended up blessing us more than we blessed them," admits Steve. "God is so good."

Doing the Work of the Kingdom

The business and ministry of TIH Homes is based on Matthew 25:31-46, and Steve encourages all who are seeking God's will to study it. "God doesn't want us wringing our hands and wondering what to do. It's a no-brainer," says Steve. "We're to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit those in prison – whether they're in an emotional or physical prison... And He doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called. Be an open vessel, and God will show you His glory."

Renee believes that the key to ministry is staying in an attitude of availability before God. "You always have to be ready because

you never know what God will need you to do, whether it's talk to someone, love on someone, give something, or help someone out in crisis." Steve calls these "divine appointments" and he also looks for them in stores, gas stations, and work sites. It's stepping out that enables God to move, believe the McKenzies, even though fear will try to stop everything. "We're not afraid of fear," says Renee. "It just means you're growing and being stretched." Steve adds, "Faith moves God and fear moves Satan."

Watching the Miracles Flow

Steve and Renee have seen hundreds of times where God has provided necessities for those they've ministered to and even imparted to them unique skills to fill a need. For example, when Steve and a group of workers went to Swaziland, none of them knew how to lay block. Yet, they were given the knowledge and grace to lay it, and the team built a church in eight days. "We didn't have the talent," says Steve, "or the experience. But God just did it through us. This church was so awesome – metal corrugated steel panels and the whole works."

As much as the McKenzies love missions, counseling, and rescues of all types, their biggest mission field is still their work. "We're all about ministry, not building homes and making money," says Steve. "God brings all kinds of people to us, and we pray through situations as we're building their houses. People can't believe they have a builder that will pray with them. It's our largest mission field of all."

Not only have hundreds of beautiful homes been built, but more importantly, hundreds of lives have been radically touched by the ministry of two of God's most precious bondservants who live and preach what their business is named – TIH – "Trust in Him."

To learn more about TIH Homes, visit www.tihhomes.com or call 678.331.8490. See our ad on page 63.

