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FREE

## Knee-ding Jesus

### QB Tim Tebow's faith generates Internet buzz, praise, criticism

By Lori Arnold

OCEANSIDE — For nearly three decades San Diego Chargers chaplain Shawn Mitchell—the longest tenured team pastor in the National Football League—has taken a knee with some of the game's most prominent Christian players.

But none of the holy huddles drew as much attention as the Nov. 27 home game against the Denver Broncos. Days after the Chargers lost the game to their divisional rivals, *USA Today* ran a photo of Mitchell on his knees with players from both teams. Holding the chaplain's right hand was Denver quarterback Tim Tebow, whose every move was being captured by the national media. The game against the Chargers was the fourth straight win for the Broncos with Tebow as starting quarterback in what became an eventual six-game winning streak.

"This is the first time in my nearly 30 years of being a chaplain that it's made it to this degree of coverage," said Mitchell, senior pastor of New Venture Christian Fellowship, an Oceanside megachurch. "I've never seen more media in the midst

of our prayer circle. It's what God is using."

Since mid-October when Tebow was named starting quarterback for Denver, gridiron miracles have been the stuff of legend. And, at the end of each game, regardless of the outcome, Tebow dropped to his knee in prayer, a pose that has been replicated thousands of times online in a practice known as "Tebowing."

Tebow mania has manifested itself well beyond the normal fan base, with a recent Zillow poll showing that the quarterback topped the list of celebrities the public would most like to have as a neighbor. He received more votes than Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux, Jennifer Lopez, and Beyoncé and Jay-Z.

"I can't be more excited with what's happening with that Bronco," Mitchell said of the 24-year-old rookie quarterback. "I don't think there's been this much excitement about the things of God since 9/11."

"It's silly, it's fun," Mitchell said of the hype. "Here's a guy that needs our prayers. He's got a huge target on his back."



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW VENTURE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Following the Nov. 27 NFL game between the San Diego Chargers and Denver Broncos, players and coaches of faith gather for a post-game prayer led by Chargers' chaplain Shawn Mitchell. Such prayers have been a common occurrence throughout the NFL for many years, but only this season have received media attention because of the hype surrounding Tim Tebow and his open display of his faith.

Even with the Broncos' poor showing in the second-round playoff game against the New England Patriots, which ended their fairytale season, Tebow is expected to remain in the limelight as his viability as a long-term quarterback in the NFL is scrutinized. Team of-

officials said Tebow, whose record was 8-5, including one playoff win, will return to training camp as the starting quarterback although they will seek out others through free agency and the draft.

Since being drafted by Denver in 2010, after winning two national

championships and a Heisman Trophy with the University of Florida Gators, Tebow has been the target of persistent naysaying by football insiders who insist his exceptional rushing skills can't overcome his

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### Dead Sea Scroll exhibit visits La Mesa church

LA MESA — Students at Calvary Chapel of La Mesa's Christian school and members of the church were recently treated to a rare exhibit of Dead Sea Scrolls.

Pastor David Riley made ar-

rangements with Professor Scott Moffett of Biola University to share pristine facsimiles of the historic documents. They were on view in December and January.

Among the documents on display

were a 24-foot scroll of the book of Isaiah, a commentary on the book of Habakkuk, and a legal document called "Order of the Community."

Moffett also provided a lecture on the scroll's significance.

## No room at the inn

### Victim of homeless killing spree couldn't get apartment

By Lori Arnold

Marie Middaugh woke up just before midnight to go to the bathroom, a fairly routine practice for a woman of retirement age. For whatever reason this night, though, she tapped lightly on the door of a spare room her grown son would occasionally use and said, "Oh, Jimmy."

"I don't know why I did that," she said of the gesture.

Jimmy Middaugh did not hear his mother's tap because he was miles away sleeping under a freeway overpass as he had been doing for months while he waited for an apartment to become available.

Her son died without the comfort or safety of that apartment.

Jimmy was victim number two in an Orange County serial killing case that took the lives of four homeless men before a suspect was arrested Jan. 13.

According to officials, Jimmy was stabbed 50 times during the early morning hours of Dec. 28. He was found on a trail in Anaheim not

far from the Highway 91 underpass he routinely used for his nighttime shelter.

"I wonder now if that was the time his soul left him," Marie said of her love tap on the door.

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Lloyd "Jimmy" Middaugh, 42, was described by his family as a "gentle giant" who was mentally slow. He grew up in Imperial Beach, where his grandfather served as a pastor at Good Tidings and Encanto Assembly of God churches. Preaching was a family legacy with uncles on both sides of the family in the ministry.

"We come from a very strong Christian background," Marie, herself a 65-year-old widow, said.

Jimmy accepted Christ as a teenager but lost his way as he struggled with hyperactivity and a bipolar disorder.

At age 18, while living with his family in the coastal neighborhood of South San Diego County, he

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**JIMMY...**

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was arrested and convicted on one count of lewd and lascivious acts on a child under 14. The charges stemmed from him having sex with a 13-year-old.

Although Marie knew her son was wrong and that there were consequences for his crime, she was also sure her son didn't fully grasp what had transpired.

"He realized he was doing wrong because he wasn't married, it was not the age difference," his mom said. "It wasn't something he even realized."

Although he received no jail time for the encounter, he was placed on parole and ordered to register as a sex offender. After the conviction, Jimmy began using drugs, and crimes related to their use landed him in prison for several months.

Six years ago, Marie relocated to Seal Beach to take care of her ailing mother. Jimmy followed her north and in recent years he appeared to be getting his life together, as his mother carefully monitored his every move in hopes of him being able to get his own place.

Marie said she and her son often had long talks about being careful to avoid circumstances that would violate the state's child predator laws and cause him to be sent back to jail. He was living in transitional housing and looking forward to getting his own apartment, which he could afford with his state disability checks.



Then, last year, Jimmy made another mistake.

After a mandated group meeting with fellow sex offenders, he went out to lunch with one of his peers, a parole

infractor that resulted in more jail time. By the time he was released seven months later, his spot in the transitional housing was long gone.

Marie had a spare room her son could use, but she lived in a retirement community in Seal Beach where residents had to be 55 to reside. His sister's house was off limits because she had minor children. He tried finding apartments at least 2,000 feet away from schools and parks, as required by Jessica's Law, but was unable to find vacancies.

"There are very few places that are in compliance with that law," she said.

Jimmy tried to secure housing through his parole office but had no success.

"He had done everything he was supposed to," she said. "He had no violations except for having lunch with someone."

With few housing choices available to him, Jimmy decided to spend the days with his mother at her apartment, then each night she reluctantly drove him to the bus stop where he would head out for the 91 underpass.

"We chose for him to be on the streets," she said, her voice revealing the soft resignation of someone who had just lost her last resort. "He didn't have any other options. It wasn't something he wanted to do."

After the first victim, James MacGillivray, a 53-year-old homeless man, was killed in Placentia on Dec. 20, Marie and her son discussed the dangers of life on the street.

"You've got to be very careful," she told her son.

He wasn't worried. At 6-feet, 4-inches tall and 300-plus pounds, Jimmy said he was big enough to take care of himself.

"Where I sleep I'll hear him," he told her. "Don't worry about it.



Lloyd "Jimmy" Middaugh, plays with his mother's dog, Muffin, in a photo taken last year. Middaugh was one of four homeless men murdered in Orange County in December and January.

Besides when I'm out there, I don't sleep well."

The day before he was killed, Jimmy told his mother he thought he had a lead on a shelter for that night. It fell through.

"He really thought he was going to have this chance," his grieving mother said. "He said, 'again, I've been cheated out of getting a place.' I told him to hang in there, that God's in control. He said, 'Yes, mom, God's in control.'"



Marie knew something was amiss when her son failed to call her the following morning. He always called her at 7 a.m. to let her know he was OK and ready for her to come get him. She would pick him up and take him back to her apartment where he spent time with her poodle, Muffin and took an interest in her elderly neighbors, helping them to string Christmas lights and planting a flower garden for one of his mother's friends. Some, she said, called him a teddy bear.

Countless calls to Jimmy's cell phone that morning went unanswered. By 9 a.m. she called his parole office saying something was wrong. One of the officers checked

on the GPS tracker he was wearing. It was not tracking. He was also convinced there was a problem. Marie called one of her two daughters, Karen Olsen, sharing her concern. Olsen told her she had just driven past a crime scene near the 91 Freeway and Tustin Avenue.

"That's where Jim sleeps," his mother said told Olsen. "We knew it was him."

While Olsen's husband, Brad, raced to the scene to try to get some details, a detective arrived at Marie's home, confirming her fears.

"None of these men deserved to die like they did," Marie said, recalling her trepidation with letting him go that night.

"After I dropped him off, I wanted to turn my car around and come back and say, 'You are not going to stay on the streets tonight.' But I was afraid he would go back to prison," his mother said. "He didn't want that. He wanted off of parole."

Weeks later his mother admits to having difficulty comprehending how the killer could have taken down a man of his size. In arraignment videos, the 23-year-old suspect, Itzcoatl Ocampo, a former Marine, appeared to be slender.

"This is horrendous," she said.

"This is awful, but I believe God is in control. I believe that God allowed this to happen, even though I don't understand his reasoning."



In the midst of the grief, Marie said her family has grown closer as they have seen the Lord's grace at work. Everyone they've had to deal with in connection with Jimmy's murder was a Christian—the detective, victim's advocate and mortuary personnel.

"It's just like God lined people up for us," she said. "There were prayers going out all over for the killer to be caught and for God to give wisdom to law enforcement and for things that were dark to be exposed."

She said she believes those prayers were swiftly heeded with the suspect's arrest. Officers have said their investigation determined the suspect was not finished with his spree when he was arrested.

In addition to Ocampo's capture, Marie said she has been monitoring the local news more closely and noticed several other arrests had been made in other pending murder cases.

On Jan. 18, in an unrelated case, the Los Angeles District Attorney's office announced that charges were filed against two gang members in a 2008 mass killing of five people in a homeless encampment. After the charges were filed against the two men—already in jail on unrelated cases—Long Beach Police Department Chief Jim McDonnell stressed that the case was drug related and the victims were not targeted because of homelessness.

"I just believe it was the prayer to release the hidden stuff and to expose it," she said. "God sent his angels out to help expose this."

She believes God has also sent several "sweet confirmations" that Jimmy is finally at rest with Jesus. Several days after he was killed, his brother-in-law Brad Olsen approached Marie with the Scripture verse John 14:1-4.

Weeks later, Olsen ran up to his mother-in-law relaying a Word he received from the Lord.

"I know where he is," Olsen said excitedly. "Jimmy went from under a bridge to a mansion."

*A memorial service for Jimmy will be held 11 a.m. Feb. 18—two days after his birthday—at Full Gospel Church, 9611 E. Alondra Blvd. in Bellflower. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations in Jimmy's name to the Orange County Rescue Mission.*

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