

## Faith in the midst of persecution

Madison Park offers Voice of the Martyrs conference

REBECCA SEXTON

CONTRIBUTOR

Russel Stendal has been shot at and kidnapped, but that did not stop him from sharing the gospel.

"He is one of the most amazing men I have ever met," said recording artist Amy Shreve.

Stendal will be one of those speaking at the 'Bound With Them' Regional Conference for Voice of the Martyrs is this weekend in Anderson at the Madison Park Church of God. The conference is Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Stendal lives in Columbia where he flies across the country dropping Bibles, Christian literature and solar-powered radios on parachutes to the guerrillas.

"He has some absolutely amazing stories," Shreve said. "He's been shot at. He was kidnapped for many months, but in the midst of it he was able to witness to these guerillas."

Shreve estimated hundreds, maybe thousands, of the guerillas have come to know the Lord.

---

*"The list (of people being helped) is endless. They have a really wonderful network to be able to help Christians who have been persecuted."*

*- Amy Shreve*

---

The other four international speakers at the conference will bring awareness of the persecuted church through personal testimonies, scripture and current information. They will also share how they feel God calls Christians to act in response to this persecution. The other speakers will include Steven Khoury from Israel, Hormoz Shariat from Iran, Daniel Scot from Pakistan and Robert Brock from various nations. Shreve will lead the music and worship.

"Voice of the Martyrs does such a good job because



Stephen Khoury is a speaker slated to appear at the conference from Israel.

photograph courtesy of Voice of the Martyrs

they bring an awareness of what's going on in the world to our brothers and sisters," Shreve said. She has been leading worship at the conferences for the past three years. "They let us know what's going on and who we can pray for effectively."

The conference is free, but organizers will take an offering.

"When you support Voice of the Martyrs, you are also supporting and helping send money to the families of victims, or to help train widows vocationally so that they can support their children," Shreve said. "The list (of people being helped) is endless. They have a really wonderful network to be able to help Christians who have been persecuted."

The conference travels around the nation. Some people have driven over 500 miles to attend a Voice of the Martyrs Conference.

"Our facilities are often used for regional meetings of this kind," said Jim Lyon, pastor of Madison Park Church. "We are very thankful for that."

Lyon said their church building along Interstate 69 was envisioned to be a kind of community and conference center, and the church is always glad to welcome groups like Voice of the Martyrs.

Voice of the Martyrs is a non-profit organization that assists the persecuted church worldwide since 1967, according to its website. The organization's five main purposes are to encourage and to empower, to give relief, to equip local Christians, to undertake projects of encouragement and to emphasize the fellowship of all believers. Its ministry is centered on Hebrews 13:3, which says "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

---

### In-Depth Coverage:

For more information about the conference or Voice of the Martyrs visit: [persecution.com](http://persecution.com)

---

## Tobias edges out in local race

Engineer ousts incumbent Cornelious

LUCAS SWEITZER

LOCAL EDITOR

Rodney Tobias was elected to the Madison-Grant United Schools' Board of Trustees last Tuesday, in the first district-wide election for school board the school system has ever had. Tobias won by just 18 votes, 1,366-1,348.

Tobias ran against incumbent Tammy Cornelious, and although Cornelious beat Tobias in Grant County 900-817, Madison County heavily supported Tobias 549-448.

"I didn't watch the results as they were coming in," Tobias said. "I didn't want to watch it happen, I just wanted to know when it was for sure."

Although Cornelious was favored to win the election, a recent controversy brought her seat into a more competitive light. Cornelious and the other board members came under harsh criticism last year from a community action group called Madison-Grant Community Actively Responding to Education (M.G.C.A.R.E.S.) for voting to shut down Liberty Elementary School at the end of last school year. Cornelious and fellow trustee Amy Covington both chose not to vote on the issue, and the school closing passed with a vote of 5-0.

The Chronicle-Tribune reported that Cornelious said she believes Tobias will do a good job on the board, and wishes him the best of luck.

M.G.C.A.R.E.S. members claimed they planned on attempting to replace more of the school board, but failed to produce an opponent to run against school board president Carl Chambers. Tobias said he wasn't specifically sought out by M.G.C.A.R.E.S. to assume office, and wouldn't stand for any special interest, except for that of the taxpayer.

"Not everyone knows what all the money (in