

# Swept off your Feet

## Beyond Worship-as-Usual

Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

### CHAPTER 25

## Tebowing—A Cogent Counter-Stigma

With 2:44 left in the game, the Denver Broncos overcame a 15-0 deficit against the Miami Dolphins. Denver's 24-year old quarterback Tim Tebow led his professional football team in a dramatic overtime victory. During the celebration, he took a knee and bowed his head in the trademark pose, which he coined as quarterback for the University of Florida.

This gesture has sparked a global phenomenon branding itself as “tebowing” in everyday parlance. As was his custom during the post-game interview, Tim Tebow boldly thanked his “Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” adding, “I am so thankful for the platform God has given me.”

Some credit the popularity of tebowing with a Facebook post by Jared Kleinstein. Following the Broncos' win over the Dolphins in 2011, Kleinstein posed with five other fans—all tebowing. After receiving enthusiastic support from Facebook friends, he established a website featuring pictures of individuals and groups tebowing from all over the world.<sup>1</sup>

Following Tebow's playoff victory against the Steelers in stunning fashion, Mayor Ravenstahl of Pittsburgh made the headlines by tebowing as part of a bet with Mayor Hancock of Denver. Before the year

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<sup>1</sup> tebowing.com (accessed 2-14-12)

was over, the Global Language Monitor (GLM) acknowledged tebowing as an official word in the national lexicon. GLM defined tebowing as, “the act of ‘taking a knee’ in prayerful reflection in the midst of an athletic activity”.<sup>2</sup> Better reflecting its street usage, the Urban Dictionary defines tebowing as, “To get down on a knee and start praying, even if everyone else around you is doing something completely different.”<sup>3</sup>

American missionaries Robert and Pamela Tebow named their son Timothy, which means honoring God. The word Tebow comes from the Latin “Te” meaning “you” and “bow” comes from the Old English “bugan” meaning, “to bend or to bow down”. Tim Tebow's name literally means honoring God you bow down.

According to “tebowing.com”, people all over the world are appearing in tebowing photo ops. Wherever they find themselves, some bow with respect and others in jest. At the first annual NFL Honors Ceremony February 4, 2012, host Alec Baldwin attempted to “Tebow”, which prompted Tim to jump on stage and adjust Baldwin's pose. Tim Tebow received the GMC Never Say Never award. In his acceptance speech, he asserted, “I guess you really never can say never” because “Alec Baldwin is up here praying, so that's pretty cool.” Tim Tebow has made bowing in public more socially acceptable, at least in the western world.

Before his birth, Tim's mother Pamela suffered a life-threatening infection. Drugs administered to treat dysentery and rouse her from a coma caused a severe placental abruption. Physicians in the Philippines recommended an abortion to protect her life. With heroic faith and deep conviction, she refused. Doctors predicted a stillbirth, which obviously did not occur.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.languagemonitor.com/?s=tebowing> (accessed 2-14-12)

<sup>3</sup> [Urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com) (accessed 2-14-12)

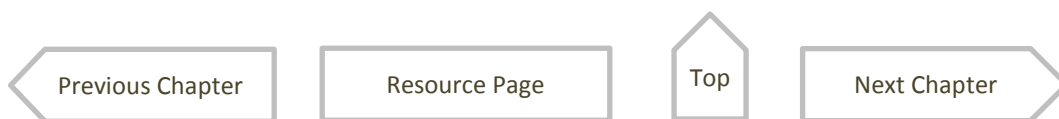
## Worship and Evangelism Team up with Potent Synergy

Tim Tebow became the first collegiate sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy. He led the University of Florida to two national football championships between 2006 and 2009. During the 2009 BCS Championship Game, John 3:16 appeared in the black antiglare under Tebow's eyes. During the next 24 hours, this Bible verse generated over 90 million hits on Google's search engine representing the most extensive proclamation of the gospel by one person in a single day.

The NFL prohibits players from wearing messages in their eye-black. Nonetheless, in the first playoff game of his career, Tebow led the Denver Broncos in yet another record-setting come-from-behind victory. With Nielsen's television ratings peaking at 31.6, Tebow passed for 316 yards, averaging exactly 31.6 yards per completion against the Steelers who possessed the ball for 31 minutes and 6 seconds.<sup>4</sup> With so many 3-16 stats speaking louder than words, Tebow's deeds confirmed a game-time commercial sponsored by Focus on the Family, which featured children reciting John 3:16. According to media reports, this occasion triggered over 100 million Google hits searching for what some call "the gospel in a nutshell".<sup>5</sup> Speaking to an inquisitive Pharisee named Nicodemus, Jesus said,

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

John 3:16 NAS



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<sup>4</sup> According to Wikipedia and various media reports [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Tebow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Tebow) (accessed 2-9-12)

<sup>5</sup> According to Fr. Jonathan Morris on Fox News January 16, 2012