

RELIGION

Statewide Religious Group Installs Board Leadership

Portland Parks and Recreation Director Charles Jordan was installed Feb. 4 as president of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Board of Directors.

Jordan, who is a member of Bethel AME Church in Portland, will lead the statewide association in its pursuit of unity and justice through theological education and dialogue, public policy advocacy and community ministry programs. He will lead the 43-member Board of Directors made up of denominational leaders and others from across the state.

Jordan was elected by the Board to

serve as leader during 1999 as it begins implementation of a strategic plan following a two-year process of listening and evaluating programs, services and organization. Jordan has enjoyed a long history in public service, stemming back to his appointment in 1974 as a city commissioner to his current role as respected leader of the city's Parks and Recreation department.

At first, Jordan said he was surprised to be elected to the Board of mostly clergy and people in full-time ministry. "When I was approached about becoming president,

I had to think and pray on whether or not to accept," Jordan said. "We've got some exciting things ahead. In this process of strategic planning, we've paused to take a look at who we were when we started, who we are now and who we should be in the years ahead."

The "we" Jordan refers to includes 16 Christian denominations including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies from across the state which represent more than 1,200 congregations. In 1973 the Oregon Council of Churches and the Portland Council of Churches—

whose combined efforts date back to 1917—merged as Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Since that time, EMO has been involved in public policy advocacy on a variety of issues including securing food stamps, supporting farm workers, and raising the minimum wage, and has offered community ministry programs including the NE Emergency Food Program (in inner-NE Portland), the Parent Mentor Program which matches women in recovery with mentors who support them in parenting, Shared Housing and Old Town Clinic.

Jordan said he is looking forward

to his year at the helm. "Churches have the potential of providing a strong leadership role," Jordan said. "I truly believe that we have a leadership void in this country, it's not accidental but by design to give church the chance to move to the forefront, 'be not conformed, but be transformed.'"

Also inducted into Board leadership as president-elect was Lori Lee Brocker, General Counsel and Director of Government Affairs for Oregon Newspapers, Inc. Brocker served as Associate pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, New York, before attending New York

Law School and then serving as an associate at Davis Write Tremaine. She is a noted expert in church-state and clergy privilege issues and previously served on EMO's Board of Directors.

Other executive members of the Board include Immediate Past President The Rev. Stephen Schneider, of Grace Memorial Episcopal Church in northeast Portland, Secretary Mary Jo Tully, Chancellor of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, and Treasurer Tim Volpert of Davis Wright Tremaine.

Guitarist Tim Bowman and Others

Are Making Jazz Feel At Home In The Gospel Arena

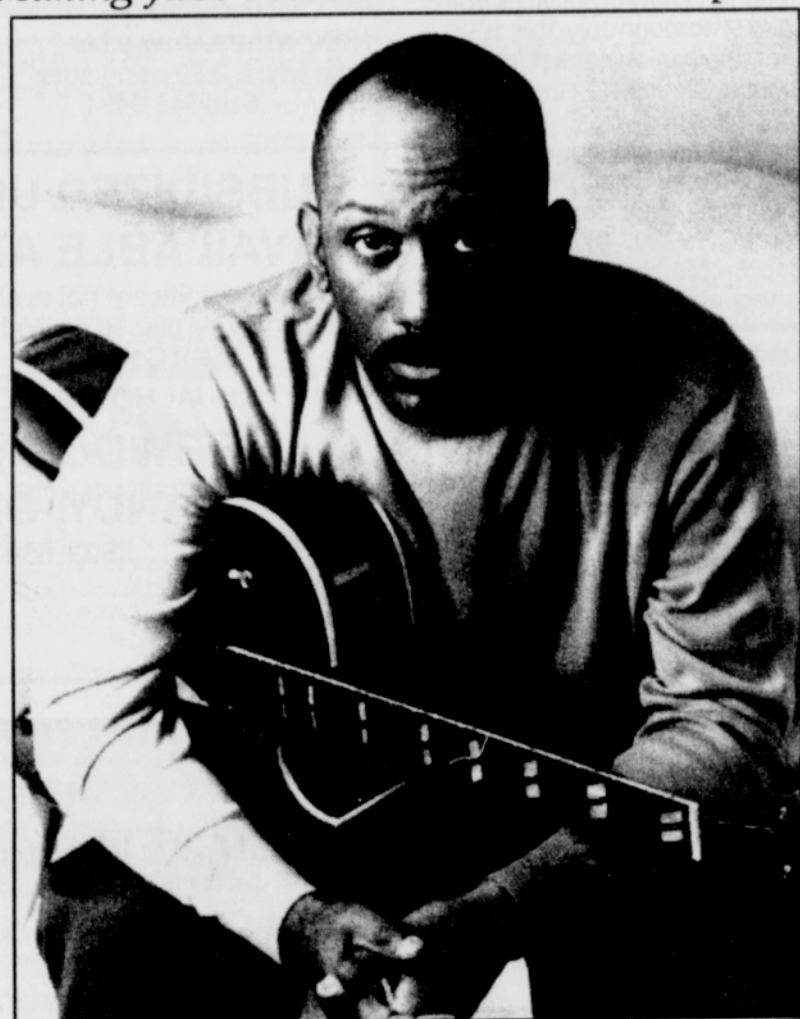
Gospel star Vickie Winans' brother Tim Bowman and other smooth jazz musicians are leading a new revolution in gospel music. First Kirk Franklin brought the funk, now an alluring array of secular and gospel artists are bringing the bebop to Bible-based music and it's catching on. Guitarist Tim Bowman recently released his second smooth jazz gospel album, *paradise* (InSync Music) which debuted at #28 on Gospel Today magazine's Top 40 album chart. While the album is being played on the country's leading smooth jazz stations, the unique matter is that the record is also gaining play on gospel stations that play harder, more traditional gospel styles of music.

Bowman recruited Grammy-nominated jazz saxophonist Angella Christie and instrumental duo Allen & Allen. Kirk Whalum, who has toured with Whitney Houston and produced an armful of secular jazz albums, recently released his first gospel album *The Gospel According To Jazz Volume 1* (Warner Brothers).

The album was nominated for a Stellar Award and because of Whalum's stature and respect in the secular music industry, brought a lot of attention to gospel jazz. Whalum is so pleased with the warm response from gospel enthusiasts that he is planning to record another gospel album later this year.

While there are now a handful of horn-blowers to serve the gospel audience, Bowman is the only prominent guitarist in the gospel field right now. After a decade of playing for the Grammy winning gospel group, The Winans, Bowman released his first album *Love Joy Peace* (InSync Music) in 1997.

The album was a bona fide hit, peaking at #19 on the prestigious Gavin smooth jazz charts and spawning four smash radio hits. His new album *Paradise* (InSync



Tim Bowman

Music) has already produced four big hits including the upbeat "Free," a remake of Angie & Debbie Winans' "Light of Love." And the Quiet storm-styled "The Only One" and "I'll Never Forget."

Many critics of gospel jazz complain that since there are no lyrics to the music, there is nothing to distinguish it from other jazz. "That's the miracle," Whalum has said. "You are able to go through a pair of ears and connect to a soul that's sensitive to that which is spiritual. You are able to communicate on a higher level." Bowman agrees and is happy that gospel jazz is developing an audience. "We've been playing this kind of music in the church for years before there was a format called smooth jazz," he recently told the Philadelphia Daily News. "Now that there's a market for it, I consider it a blessing to have what we've been doing come out in the mainstream."

State Religious Bodies To Partner For Interfaith Advocacy Day

A new partnership among religious-based service organizations in Oregon will have its day at the Capitol March 9. Organizers from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Catholic Charities, Jewish Family and Child Service, The Jewish Federation of Portland, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon, Lutheran Family Service and the William Temple House are inviting people of faith from across the state to take part in the joint Interfaith Advocacy Day.

The day-long event will begin at First Presbyterian Church in Salem and includes sessions on theological reflection on advocacy and the role of the faith community in public policy, policy briefings on focus issues and how to affect change through advocacy, and the chance for individuals to meet individually with their legislators. Ecumenical

Ministries of Oregon Executive Director David Leslie said, "Our power as a community of faith lies in our collaboration in bringing about morally just change." Presenters at the event include some of the state's leading advocates and religious leaders, including: the Rev. D. LeRoy Haynes, Jr., of Allen Temple CME Church, the Rev. Jim Mosier, director of Community Youth Development, Inc., the Rev. Patricia Ross of First Congregational Church, Portland and Rabbi Joseph Wolf of Havurah Shalom.

The Interfaith Advocacy Day begins at 8:30 a.m. in Salem and will conclude at 4 p.m. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend the Interfaith Advocacy Day. Cost is \$10, which includes lunch and all materials. To register or for information, call Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon at (503) 221-1054.

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