



Religion

New African American Christian publisher emerges

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

It used to be that the only place you could hear the gospel was in church. But times are changing.

Walk Worthy Press, a company that publishes contemporary Christian fiction aimed at the African American market, is releasing the first of three novels it plans to publish this year. "I'm on a mission," says publisher and founder, Denise Stinson. "That mission is to exalt the name of Jesus through contemporary fiction." Stinson says the primary characters in Walk Worthy Press books "have a heart for God." But just like real Christians, they are not perfect. "Our books are real believers who have real challenges." To that end, readers will find Walk Worthy Press books exploring issues such as adultery, pre-marital sex, and suicide—all the challenges of contemporary life.

Walk Worthy's debut novel, *TEMPTATION*, by Victoria Christopher Murray, is a good example of Stinson's vision. It is the story of a Christian couple, blessed with the best life has to offer, whose lives are changed forever by a betrayal. But, through their trust of and belief in the Word of God, they learn forgiveness and a new kind of love.

TEMPTATION will be followed by *SINGSATION!* By Jacquelyn Thomas in April 2001 and *CHURCHFOLK* by Michele Andrea Bowen in June 2001. Snits, says that the early response she has gotten from both reader and bookstores has been phenomenal. "Walk Worthy Press is filling a need that has been void in the market for far



Publisher Denise L. Stinton, Walk Worthy Press

too long," says one African American bookstore owner. "African American readers want a variety of fiction and stories that impact their personal belief systems in a more positive way." Apparently at least one major

publisher agrees. Warner Books and Walk Worthy Press recently announced a co-publishing agreement, which includes distribution by Warner for Walk Worthy Press books *Temptation*,

AIDS in Africa: a new Holocaust

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

AIDS has become the number-one killer in Africa. The United Nations estimates 24.5 million of the 34.3 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the world live in Africa. 11.5 million sub-Saharan Africans have died of AIDS since the start of the epidemic; 5,500 people die of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa every day. The African AIDS Initiative, an international non-profit organization focused specifically on this crisis, points out HIV/AIDS is reversing gains in life expectancy and economic development in Africa. The epidemic is having an unimaginably devastating affect on the lives of millions of Africans, including millions of African children.

More than five million children have been born HIV-positive in sub-Saharan Africa. Almost four million of those children have already died. Millions more children are being left orphaned when one or both parents die of AIDS, and often are abandoned by extended families and communities who cannot or will not take care of them. 12.1 million child have already lost either their mothers or both parents to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Their numbers are expected to continue to grow dramatically. Many other children are leaving school to care for sick parents and younger siblings even before their parents have passed away.

Many of us have not heard these catastrophic numbers before. Now that we know them, we must do everything we can to change them—and to help the African children,

adults, and communities they represent. On July 13 the International AIDS Conference was held in Durban, South Africa. This was the first time this conference met in Africa, and the location focused attention on the epidemic spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. One of the most powerful speakers at the Durban conference was Nkosi Johnson, an 11-year-old Johannesburg student who spoke directly after South African President Thabo Mbeki and shared his own story.

Nkosi was born HIV-positive and now has full-blown AIDS. Nkosi's mother was forced to leave him in a care center when he was born because she was afraid that if she tried to raise an ill child, her community would guess they were both HIV-positive and turn them away. When Nkosi was two the center where his mother had left him was forced to close for lack of funding. Luckily, Nkosi was safely cared for when center director, Gail Johnson chose to become his adoptive foster mother.

With his "Mommy Gail's" help Nkosi fought local prejudices and enrolled in school in 1997, the same year his natural mother died of AIDS. Gail also helped Nkosi fulfill another dream: creating care centers where other HIV-positive mothers and children can stay together.

The first Nkosi's Haven center opened last year, and their goal is to open five more Nkosi's Havens by the end of next year. Nkosi explained "I was very sick and I get very sad when I think about all the other children and babies that are sick with AIDS." Nkosi also explained he hopes the government will be able to do

more soon to slow the spread of HIV from mothers to children, because he has already personally known too many babies and children who have died from AIDS—"and I don't want babies to die."

Nkosi Johnson shares a brave and wise first-hand perspective of a crisis which sadly affects millions more children like him. Most have not been lucky enough to receive the care and support he has. It is shameful that international attention has ignored this crisis for so long. But it is never too late to right a wrong. Just as Black American voices were heard in the struggle against apartheid, it is critically important we be heard even more loudly and clearly now.

As horrifying as the statistics seem and as far as the epidemic has already spread, there are prevention and treatment programs being put in place in many parts of Africa which bring hope. There are people and organizations already committed to solutions whose work we can support. I will be using this space many more times to continue talking about this modern plague and what we can all do now. Nkosi Johnson says his greatest dream is to continue speaking and educating even more people about HIV/AIDS when-if-he grows up. How many more millions of Nkosis will never grow up if we do not all begin to share his work right now? (Places to learn more include www.unaids.org, the Web site for the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS; www.whitehouse.gov/ONAP, the Web site for the Office of National AIDS Policy; and the African AIDS Initiative's International Office in the United States at 617-496-5998.)

Family struggles with loss

Ophelia Baker

October 9, 1930–August 30, 2000
Memorial Service is Thursday, September 7, 2000 at Caldwell's Colonial Chapel in Portland, Oregon.

Ophelia Baker was born October 9, 1930 to George and Louise Hudson in Cairo, Illinois. She was the third of six children. Ophelia moved to Portland, Oregon in 1944. She worked for many years at American Linen and was last employed by Delta Inn at Hayden Meadows. Solving crossword puzzles, playing bid whist, pinochle and black jack, were just a few of Ophelia's passions. One of her biggest jobs was to supervise her daughter Connie working in the garden. Nothing brought Ophelia more joy than her grandchildren, great grandchildren, and especially 16 month-old twins Keauna and Breauna. Ophelia is survived by daughters Connie L. Brown and

Janet M. Baker of Portland, Sister Tressie Hawkins of Detroit, MI, brother Leroy Hudson of Portland; four grand children; Evonne L. McDonald, Eric P. Keeton, Kyle N. Baker, Diallo B. Keeton, seven great grandchildren, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Ophelia was preceded in death by her daughter Darlene Keeton in 1996.

"She is Just Away"
I cannot say, and I will not say
That she is dead—
With a cheery smile,
And a wave of the hand,
She has wandered
Into an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be,
Since she lingers there.
So think of her faring on, as dear
In the love of There
As the love of Here;
Think of her still



As the same, I say:
She is not dead—
She is just away!
James Whitcomb Riley

It is with sincere and deep appreciation that we thank all of you for your prayers, visits, calls, and many acts of kindness during our time of grief and loss.

May God bless each of you. From the family of Ophelia Baker

Obituary

In Loving Memory

Bobby Joe Moore

Sunrise July 25, 1949
Sunset August 28, 2000

Bobby Joe was the owner and operator of Bobby's Barber and Beauty Shop, located at 26th and NE Alberta in Portland for the last 7 years. He was baptized at Vancouver Ave. 1st Baptist Church under the direction of the late Reverend O.B. Williams. Bobby was raised and educated here in Portland and was a graduate of Lincoln High School. He was preceded in death by his father, Richard Moore in 1980, and by his sister, Shirley Marie Moore in 1989.

Bobby passed away on August 28, 2000 in Pasco, Washington.

Funeral services will be held on September 5, 2000 at 11:00 am, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church in Portland, OR.

Disposition will be held at the Rose City Cemetery.

Bobby Joe Moore leaves to cherish his memory:

Beatrice Moore Mother Portland, OR
Tia Moore Daughter Los Angeles, CA.

Myrlin Spencer Sister Portland, OR
Billy Don Moore Brother Seattle, WA.

Norman J. Moore Brother Seattle, WA.

Annette Moore Sister Portland, OR
Eula Lee Yarborough Aunt Tacoma, WA.

Annie Bagneris Aunt Los Angeles, CA.

And a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

Happy birthday
Gary Washington
from your
friends and family

Celebrate the "Soul of the City!"

with

The Urban League of Portland

Dinner, Wednesday evening
October 4, 2000

wants you to save this date.

You will receive an invitation after Labor Day, but please mark your calendar now for this special occasion! For more information, call the Urban League at (503) 280-2600.

Tickets: \$ 175 each / \$ 1,750 for a table of 10,
\$ 5,000 for Dinner Sponsorship.
Proceeds benefit The Urban League of Portland
and its programs.

The Urban League of Portland, 10 N. Russell Street, Portland, Oregon 97227

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