

## RELIGION

# Touching People Changing Lives

continued ▲ from Metro

erty it so desperately sought.

The building was paid for in full by the end of 1996, although the road ahead still remained a tedious journey. More than eight years and \$1.5 million later, the church building project rests completed.

"We've come this far by faith. It's been due to the faithfulness of God that we've come to the place we're at now. Through our residency and renovation we've seen tremendous change in our neighborhood," said Strong. "It's our desire to be a blessing to the community, not just a nice looking building. In all the battles we've had to face along the way, we've learned it's not the building that makes the church, it's the people."

Life Change Christian Center has created an array of outreach ministries to help fulfill their mission of "building a strong local church by building families, leaders and servants to advance the kingdom of God by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the peoples in the community, city and the nations to the glory of God."

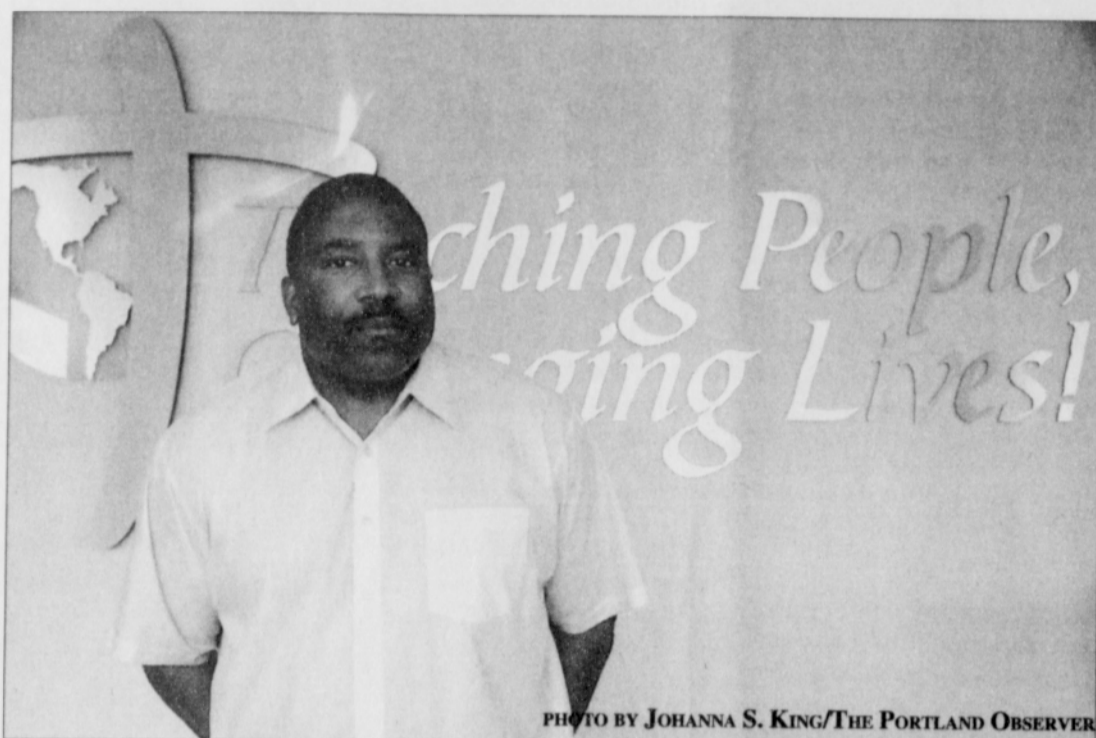


PHOTO BY JOHANNA S. KING/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Senior Pastor Mark Strong welcomes his congregation and guests to the new Life Change Christian Center, 3635 N. Williams.

The church reaches out into the community with programs such as free bread and clothing giveaways on Saturday mornings, monthly visits to the elderly, daily prayer meetings, a strong youth ministry and small-

individualized support groups.

"It's Jesus Christ, not religion that has the power to change and transform individual lives," said Strong. "We're not perfect, far from it in fact, but we're striving to be authentic witnesses of what

it really means to be Christian; like Christ."

Sunday services are held at 10 a.m. and include worship and the word of God. For more information call, 503-288-0479 or visit online at: [www.lifechangecc.org](http://www.lifechangecc.org).

## Wash that Dirty Laundry!

Our serious issues require a national wake-up call

BY REV. MARK KELLEY

Legendary entertainer Bill Cosby stirred up the black establishment with his critical comments on the low educational attainment and speech (including the use of the "n" word) with some of today's black youth. He has also railed against the elevation of blacks that commit crimes and go to prison to the status of celebrity political prisoners. Moreover, he objects to the violence of embittered black men against their female partners.

Cosby believes these and other black shortcomings are sadly indicative of a lack of appreciation for the sacrifices of the civil rights movement.

The black detractors of Mr. Cosby know the criticisms he makes are valid, but are only angry with him for saying it where white folks could hear it. He broke the first of the unspoken commandments of black Americans: "Thou shalt not criticize thy people in the earshot of whites." Are we really so naive as to believe that not only whites, but the whole world are unaware of our shortcomings?

Well, frankly, I am very glad somebody other than those of us relegated to the lunatic biblically conservative, "right wing" fringe has had the gall to speak up! While

I am not sure whether he is a Christian or not or what his political party affiliation is, to hear the truth from the lips of someone of the stature of Bill Cosby in our community is absolutely exhilarating! Yes, it makes us look bad; yes, it airs our dirty laundry. But our dirty laundry represents some very serious issues in our community that required the kind of national wake-up call that Mr. Cosby has brought by breaking the unspoken commandment.



Rev. Mark Kelley

Incredibly, in far too many instances, it is not the protection of unity that motivates this commandment today. It is not embarrassing shame that our problems exist either. If it were truly shame for this reason, all levels of black society would pull together and labor intensively to wash our dirty laundry. However, embarrassing shame is involved as it concerns how Bill Cosby's public criticisms have ex-

posed the failures of our recognized leadership's strategy of portraying our people as perpetual victims of endless, white conspiracies to oppress us, in order to get more from them these past 40 years.

We have dirty laundry such as it is today because the relative few in the black establishment who have profited from the victim strategy are disconnected from the God of the Bible. It was He who opened the doors for our advancement

**We have dirty laundry...because the relative few in the black establishment who have profited from the victim strategy are disconnected from the God of the Bible.**

through the civil rights movement; it is He who is now quite displeased we pushed Him to the back-ground even as we corrupt His Word to lay false moral grounds for our self-serving strategy of deceit.

We have dirty laundry such as it is today because the relative few in the black establishment who have profited from the victim strategy are disconnected from the God of the Bible.

Driven by covetousness and greed, many of the movers and shakers of the black establishment nationwide have focused on political clout, economic empowerment, educational achievement and social acceptance. Black religion has been a very vocal team player. However, the weightier matters of the spirit, morality and character of the race have been largely left for personal tastes or addressed superficially as self-evident in our survival as victims.

The result is that now, in every facet of black society, we view all of life through the deceitful prism of victimization. So children under achieve in school and it's not their fault because white run governments have not provided enough resources. Our teens degrade each other in speech and have low self-esteem because of racism. Those found guilty of crimes are celebrated because bully white authorities conspired against them. Black on black violence is an outcome of poverty and hopelessness created by white indifference. And on and on.

Rev. Robert Kelley is the founder and president of Open Door Communication Ministries, Inc. and pastor of St. Mark Baptist Church, 103 N.E. Morris.

### Jefferson Grad Remembered

**Terrol R. Johnson**

Funeral services were held Monday, Aug. 16, 2004, in Life Change Christian Center, 3624 N. Vancouver Ave., for Terrol R. Johnson, who died Aug. 10 at age 56.

Mr. Johnson was born May 14, 1948, in Shreveport, La. He moved to Portland in 1955 and graduated from Jefferson High School. He served in the Army. He was a program administrator for Lifeworks NW for several years. In 1989, he married Molly Sheafe.

Survivors include his wife; daughter, Demetria Peterson; son, Terrol R. Jr.; stepsons, Michael Denton, Matthew Denton and Geoffrey Denton; sister, Debra Battle, Chantina Johnson and Charlotte Johnson; brothers, Lorenzo and Kelvin; and eight grandchildren.

Arrangements by Caldwell's Colonial Chapel.

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"The Just Shall Live  
By Faith" Romans 1:17