

Christian Book Cover Leads Homeless Man to His Family

A Christian novel is credited for helping a homeless man find his family. After author Kathi Macias finished the manuscript for *Unexpected Christmas Hero*—released in October by New Hope Publishers—photographer and designer Michael Lê was assigned by the publisher to find a homeless man who fit the physical representation of Macias' character.

Lê and his wife, Christine, were in Asheville, N.C., last Christmas when they found a homeless man named Willard Parker who agreed to pose for some photos, said New Hope officials. Parker shared with the couple that he lost his house and lost touch with his daughters and grandchildren. Destitute, Parker told Lê that how he longed to see his daughter, but he had no idea where they were or how that could happen.

When Macias heard the story, she prayed the book's cover would help reunite Parker with his family.

"When he posed for the picture, he told us he was homeless and hoped his photo on the book would help him find his family," Macias said. "It worked! We now know where his two grown daughters and four grandsons, whom he's never met, are, but we need to get them all together for Christmas or as soon as possible. We need transportation money, plus hotel and food and any other expenses. None of the family is able to provide this, so I'm trying to help raise the money to make this long overdue reunion take place."

After *Unexpected Christmas Hero* was published, Parker's 26-year-old daughter, Amber, saw the cover of the novel online. But the mother of Parker's 2-year-old and 5-year-old grandchildren didn't know where to find him. Driving near Asheville, Parker's estranged wife unexpectedly spotted him

walking on a sidewalk and picked him up.

“When I had my picture taken for the book cover, all I wanted was for it to help me get back with my family,” said Parker, who has acute leukemia. “It worked, and I’m really grateful.”

Amber added: “I’m so happy. I can’t wait to be together again. You never know how long you have on this Earth and all he [my dad] wants is his family together.”

After a reunion by phone with his daughters, Amber and Rebecca, Parker is now in Toledo, Ohio, but the sisters are eager to see their father in person.