

# RECONCILE

Mending Broken Relationships

Volume 8/Number 1

— Commemorating Our First 10 Years of Service —

Winter 2006

## Mission Possible



Pat DeVorss

Pat DeVorss is living proof that racial harmony is alive and well. Pat is a licensed marriage and family therapist from Duarte, CA. She recently returned from an evangelistic trip to Rwanda where she applied some of her skills in human relations. Read her inspiring testimony on page 3.

### rec-on-cile:

1 a: to restore to  
friendship or harmony

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary



The Office of Reconciliation Ministries (ORM) is an Outreach Ministry of the Worldwide Church of God.

## RENEWED DEDICATION IN DALLAS

by Patricia Clauson

**D**allas, TX: "The core of reconciliation is to recognize each other's humanity," said Pasadena Police Chief Bernard K. Melekian at the third Office of Reconciliation Ministries (ORM) Chapter Leader's Conference here on October 22-23.

More than thirty chapter leaders, advisory council members, ministers, wives and supporters gathered here to celebrate ORM's first ten years and plan strategy for the future.

ORM Director Curtis May opened the meetings covering the vital steps to end racial and other forms of oppression. These included intentionality, the deconstruction of past biases, replacement of error with truth, teaching the truth and acceptance of the new equilibrium.

A panorama of flash points in society were addressed. Pastor Richard Parker addressed the need to speak of "people with a disability" rather than "disabled people." New York youth worker Jeff Broadnax touched on tactics for reaching youth in detention. Evelyne O'Callaghan Burkhard, visiting from Ireland, spoke on grief counseling and Pastor Mike Greider addressed denominational reconciliation and revival: "The body of Christ has the responsibility to reconcile."

Advisory council members Cherry Steinwender, John Paul Eddy and Carn Catherwood encouraged attendees to "stay the course" and to remember that there is "only one race, the human race." Four new chapter leaders were inducted. They were Lloyd Briggie from Washington, D.C.; Jeff Broadnax from New York; Charles Adams of Richmond, VA, represented by William Spencer; and William Wells of Denver.



Pasadena Police Chief Melekian speaks in Dallas.

## Our Readers Respond...



Dear Reconcilers,  
For over 50 years I have attended hundreds of special Christian spiritual events with pastors and lay persons with the emphasis on sharing our faith across the world. The October 22-23 ORM Conference was one of the most inspiring I have ever experienced. Let us all keep the fires of reconciliation burning in the hearts of all humans worldwide.

Dr. John Paul Eddy  
Denton, Texas

Hi Curtis,  
The conference was a most powerful experience for me as well. You must be commended for pursuing this hard work with reconciliation on many levels.

Dr. Gail Singleton Taylor  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA

Hi Curtis,  
I realized as never before the practical need for those involved in Reconciliation Ministry to get together, as we did, because we need to encourage one another in the work and grow personally. This was our time of refreshing... We were positioned to move forward, learn more, refine our personal improvement agendas, draw from one another encouragement to continue...

Willard High, Senior Pastor  
Worldwide Church of God  
Chicago South and Southeast

Dear Reconciler,  
I very much enjoyed attending the Police and Youth Community Dialogue event on October 29. I was impressed by the number of police officers present who volunteered their time because they care. Their presence and their willingness to listen to the young people made an impact on the youth, whose comments at the end reflected a softer and more understanding attitude toward the police. I think that if every high school and middle school in the community hosted a similar dialogue in their schools at least once a year, relations would improve dramatically between the police and the youth in our communities. My thanks to Curtis May, Police Chief Bernard Melekian, the Western Justice Center and others for making a difference in our communities by building some bridges to reconciliation and relationships.

Dennis Pelley, Senior Pastor  
New Hope Christian Fellowship  
Pasadena/Eagle Rock, CA



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## FROM THE DIRECTOR...



ORM Director,  
Curtis May

## Stay Tuned...

January 2006 marks the tenth year of ministry for our ORM team and supporters. Without our supporters it would not have been possible. Thank you very much!

As we look back we clearly see the Mighty Hand of God guiding us as we trod new territory and went to places that we never dreamed we would go.

We were taken to such places as Detroit, Dallas, St. Louis, New York, Chicago and many other U.S. destinations, including Alabama (my home state).

We then went international, conducting workshops and meetings in South Africa, Zimbabwe, London, Belfast, Cork (S. Ireland), the Philippines and other places.

Our greatest joy and satisfaction has come from seeing the breakthrough in the lives of many whom we served. Their feedback has been a tremendous source of inspiration to us.

Our opportunities to serve both inside the church and the general public has been extremely broadening and stretching.

In some cities we have been called upon to conduct meetings on diversity and reconciliation in schools, police departments and other city branches.

As we look ahead we continue to pray for guidance by the Mighty Hand of God. For indeed we realize that it's His ministry and not ours. Stay tuned.



UNIDAD, COMUNIDAD:  
Chapter leaders and advisors at the Dallas conference.

# Reconciling Rwanda: Light for Darkness

by Patricia DeVorss

When a brochure for a 2004 African Enterprise crusade in Kigali, Rwanda was placed in my hands, it looked like a good fit for me. Rwanda was celebrating ten years of peace since the horrendous genocide in which 800,000 people were killed in 100 days. As a trained counselor I hoped I could help a little, though I was deluged with doubts. How could I, a white foreigner, be relevant to people in a different country and culture? I prayed for God's guidance every step of the way.

In our orientation in Rwanda there were about 70 Christians from America, Canada, Australia, and England. Dr. Rhiannon Lloyd, a retired Welsh psychiatrist, told us that the Christian churches in Rwanda were alive and well. She went to Rwanda shortly after the genocide to train Christians to lead healing seminars.

## The Pain-Bearer

Her approach was solidly Biblical. She asked key questions: "Where was God in April, 1994?" "Did God send these troubles?" "Has God abandoned us?" They walked through the consequences of human sin in the Garden of Eden, God's will versus man's, and ended with the Cross, how God is often found in the midst of suffering. Jesus is our sin-bearer and pain-bearer.

Jesus was lifted up as a trans-cultural model. Dr. Lloyd then paired a victim and a perpetrator and asked them to share their stories with each other. They were asked to write them down and then, one by one, nail them to a wooden cross. Then the paper accounts were burned as a symbol of God taking away the pain and hurt. The workshops helped people to forgive and to be relieved of guilt and shame.

Three of us were sent to an Anglican church where the small children became fascinated with the "white mamas" as some of them climbed into my lap and stroked my face and my hair. When I was asked to give my testimony, which included being forgiven for accidentally killing a 10-year-old girl with my car, I was nervous. It is not easy to relive my shame and it was my first time speaking through a translator. An evangelist then spoke on forgiveness, asking people wanting God's forgiveness to step forward. I too stepped forward--one 69-year-old white lady with 20 black Rwandans. Suddenly, the young man on my right dropped on his knees and put his forehead on the concrete floor sobbing loudly. I was startled. No one moved to comfort him. I knelt beside him, laid a hand on his shoulder and began to pray in the spirit. When the evangelist finally prayed for him, I had a slight sensation of warmth and tingling in my hand that lay on my neighbor's shoulder. The man immediately stopped crying and stood up. God had met him. Later, I was told that he was seeking forgiveness for his actions during the genocide.



## "Like hot knives"

Two days later I volunteered to chair a meeting with a group of ladies who had been widowed in the genocide. I asked

the ladies to share their stories. Most had lost all family members. Many were injured, raped and deliberately exposed to AIDS. One told how she was struck on the head and the killers thought she was dead. When she awoke she found herself lying among 400 dead bodies, including her husband and six children.

I asked the women, "Did you ever considered suicide?" Several hands went up. Then I asked, "How many of you are still experiencing nightmares ten years later?" The pastor/translator turned to me with great emotion and said, "We all are." He told me later that as he translated, his memories were like "hot knives" going through him.

## A Caring Touch

At the end, I suggested that all of us from the West would like to give each of them a hug to demonstrate we cared and encouraged them to take that caring in and let it help heal the wounds. We spent the next half hour hugging each other. Some returned again and again, as if they were starved for a caring touch.

I came home realizing that everyone in Rwanda was severely traumatized by the genocide. Traumas are eased when we talk to a caring, comforting person,

(Continued on page 7)



"Land of a thousand hills."  
Scenic Rwanda and native gorilla.



Renaming Division Street: Mayor of Harrisburg, PA, renamed street in honor of ORM workshop.



1999: In San Antonio ORM team members attend 1st International Conference on Reconciliation.



ORM team at Azusa Street Revival anniversary



In to Africa: Curtis and Jannice May with African Enterprise Leaders in Pietermaritzburg, RSA.



Reconcile editors Curtis May and Roger Lippross receive plaque for Black History participation in Pasadena.

# A Decade of Help and Hope

Colleagues such as Najeeba Syeed-Miller of the Western Justice Center Foundation are a wealth of information.



Teens visit Museum of Tolerance. ORM sponsors church teens to L.A. exhibit.



As the war on terror heated up, ORM took an educational tack.

A highlight was A.C. Green's visit in January of 2004



Reconcile reaches out as did President Bush to America's Muslims.



Two pillars of ORM: Ministers Carn Catherwood and John Paul Eddy.

Pasadena Police Chief Melekian (l) with Pasadena youth and Curtis May (r).



# The “How To’s” of Reconciliation

Perhaps the most common question asked of ORM is, How do I go about organizing community dialogues or workshops in my city or town? Here are some strategies that have worked over the years:

1. Become known as an advocate for reconciliation in your community. Think long-term. Sow seeds. Start small. Host lit tables or booths at local events such as “Diversity Days.” The first step is becoming known.
2. Attend town council or city hall meetings. Get to know the “movers and shakers” on these issues.
3. Let your local pastor or ORM chapter leader know what you are doing. They can back you up with manpower and resources when issues arise.
4. Check the local library or high school for a Calendar of Events. Some groups are crying out for Black History Month/Cinco de Mayo/MLK Day speakers. Let them know you can provide them with help on this matter.
5. Volunteer for local cable TV or community access programs on the subject of diversity. Some church congregations are unique in their multi-cultural flavor. Selected members can share their stories on their background in race and other matters.
6. Don’t try to do too much all at once. Start small.  
The Western Justice Center facilitators offer simple effective guidelines revolving around Respect, Listening and Confidentiality. The last builds trust. They also advise – Limit group members to 10-12 – Appoint competent facilitators – Express views in a respectful manner – Only one member speaks at a time – Jot down notes if you want to comment – Allow others to finish – Remind all of the Confidentiality Pledge – Respect everyone’s right to speak.
7. In public meetings try to mix both plenary and small-group sessions. Tactfully let speakers know the time limit. Keep to the schedule.
8. Don’t over do the religious aspect. Some of the best agencies for this kind of work are secular, public institutions. Respect their points of view. Brochures or flyers can tactfully cover the church aspect of the workshop.
9. Don’t overdo the musical portion. “Neutral” taped music at the beginning works well. If you must, send them home with an inclusive song

such as “We Shall Overcome.” Give participants the full schedule in advance. Be aware of Interfaith concerns. Hold refreshments down to a minimum to avoid cost overruns.

10. Be aware of community and church-related resources. Many of them are either free or inexpensive. Libraries, schools and town halls are important here. ORM offers videos, DVDs, booklets and a full fledged book, *Mending Broken Relationships*. Many of these resources are available through **ATimeToReconcile.org**.

—Neil Earle

## Heritage Talks Help Healing

by Pamela Harris

St. Louis (MO). The New Covenant of Jesus Christ takes God out of the pages of a book and brings him to life. It takes him out of the intellect and places him into the human heart. We no longer obey him because He commands us to. Rather, we love him because we choose to.



Pamela Harris

Those are the foundational principles behind our series of “Heritage Talks” I felt compelled to organize here in our local church area. Twice a month, after church, two brethren take 15 minutes each to share their backgrounds with the congregation. We did this as a means of maintaining our diversity and developing that personal, intimate relationship God wants us to have.

We realized that, like most churches, we don’t know each other in that personal way the Bible prizes: “Love one another... By this will all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

David Bauman and I began these talks on July 24, 2005. Of the two speakers we strive to have one white, one black, one male, one female. Each speaker discusses their immediate family background, where they grew up, how their family or neighborhood molded them, and then leaves time for Q&A.

This has worked well. Many members have requested that I put them on the list. Most expressed how they were able to identify with at least some of the things each speaker said. Overall, Heritage Talks have helped promote a deeper understanding among our different ethnic groups. It may be laying the foundation for a deeper ministry of reconciliation for the greater St. Louis community.

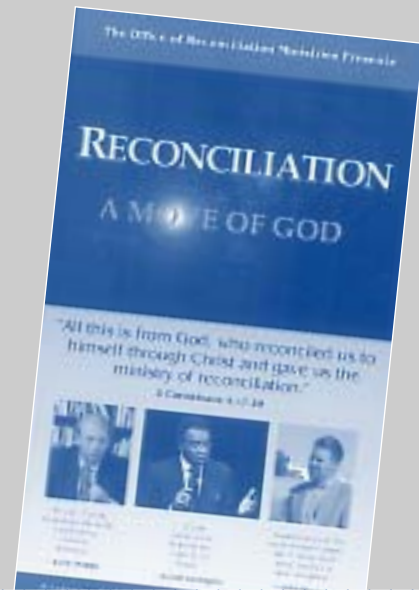
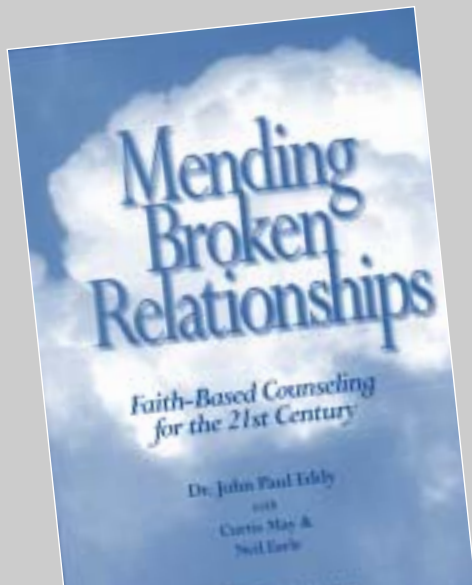
**Rwanda** (continued from page 3)

but in Rwanda few can bear to listen because the remembrance is so painful. Christian after Christian told me that God was the only answer to heal their pain, to help the victims forgive and the perpetrators to repent.

Please pray that God will heal the people of Rwanda.



Left: Genocide widows. Their faces tell a story.  
Above: Hopeful faces, Rwanda's future.



**SPECIAL OFFER!**

The book *Mending Broken Relationships*, the video *Reconciliation – A Move of God* and the booklet *Standing in the Gap* are yours for just

**\$18.00**

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You may also order by phone: Call 1-626-304-6160.

For Credit Card purchases visit our website: [ATimeToReconcile.org](http://ATimeToReconcile.org)

# “POINTS OF VIEW” IN PASADENA

PASADENA, CA. “Offering an Olive Branch” was the headline in the *Pasadena Star News* after the city’s first Day of Dialogue at All Saint’s Church on Saturday, June 25. The Worldwide Church of God (WCG)’s Office of Reconciliation Ministries helped spearhead this pioneering effort in tandem with such community



*Najeeba Syeed-Miller addresses group.*

agencies as the Pasadena Police Department, the Western Justice Center Foundation, the YWCA, Latino Forum, and the local NAACP.

The dialogue was convened at the request of Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melekian. A main purpose was to “establish trust between the community and the police,” stated Najeeba Syeed-Miller, Executive Director of the Western Justice Center, who provided trained facilitators to work with the nearly 200 people in attendance.

## Power of Apology

“Eighty percent of complaints about police misconduct are about perceived attitudes and misunderstandings,” Chief Melekian stated. “Mediation beats investigation every time.” On June 25 the Chief continued the theme of offering an apology for any police overreaction. “No officer leaves for duty in the morning wanting to be involved in an incident that will scar his reputation and cost his city millions of dollars in legal costs.” The first Day of Dialogue allowed both sides to be heard. LA County Sheriff’s Deputy Todd Deeds told attendees he shot an African-American man in February, 2000, after a car chase. The suspect fired five rounds before being wounded in the abdomen. “I knew he was trying to kill me...I was scared,” Deeds confessed to the attentive audience.

Then Durrell Brown, an African-American church elder from Glendora WCG gave testimony of being “checked out” by police with drawn guns and no explanation given. “Once I was pulled over on the freeway for ‘passing too many cars’,” Durrell added as many ethnic participants nodded in agreement.

The frankness and exchange of views was refreshing. “I know many of my white brothers and sisters do not see why these meetings are necessary. I know people think we are simply harping on the past, but

people must understand where we are today—why African-American mothers worry doubly when sons get their driver’s license,” commented Curtis May.

## Youth and Police

These comments set up the second conference in the series relating to Youth-Police issues, a festering issue in many large cities. At the October 29 event city youth had major roles in determining the issues to be addressed. Police and young people worked hard together in recruiting attendees.

“This was a rich experience of generations coming together,” said a dispute resolution specialist. “There was sharing and listening from the heart as well as the head.” Police chose to attend in street clothes and allowed youth to feel they could express their true feelings. “We want to be treated more as young adults than little kids,” was a typical comment from the young people.

Curtis May mused, “We may be creating a model that could be used in other communities.”

## And We Shall Overcome...

It was only fitting that the first Day of Dialogue in Pasadena ended with a rousing singing of the great Civil Rights hymn “We Shall Overcome.”

This is because reconcilers, dealers in human relationships, sometimes need all the inspiration they can get. The road often seems lonely and uphill. So we’ll let the words of Martin Luther King bring a fitting end to this tenth year commemoration of the Worldwide Church of God’s Office of Reconciliation Ministries:

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”

God speed that day!



*ORM Director, Curtis May (r) with NAACP leader Joe Brown (l).*