

RECONCILE™

Mending Broken Relationships

Volume 10/Number 2

—More than a Decade of Help and Hope—

Summer 2008

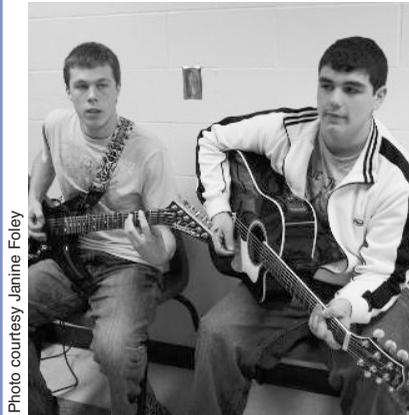


Photo courtesy Janine Foley

Benign Buskers

Duo for Darfur

Teenagers Andrew Rogers and Andrew Button from Old Perlican in Newfoundland, Canada helped spearhead a relief effort for Darfur.

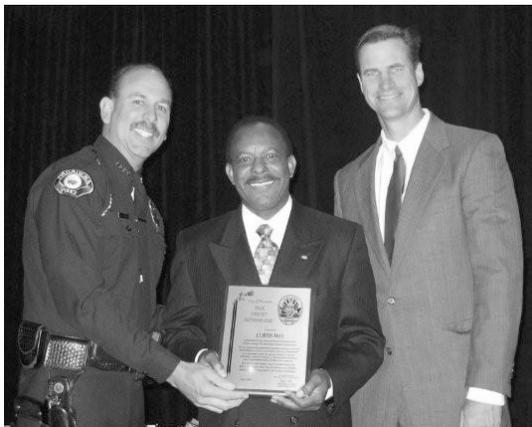
Their class raised more than \$500 in freewill donations in this inspired venture.

Student Council member Evan Aucoin said the program had overwhelming support from Baccalieu Collegiate.



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

ORM Cops Police Award; Wins "Telly"



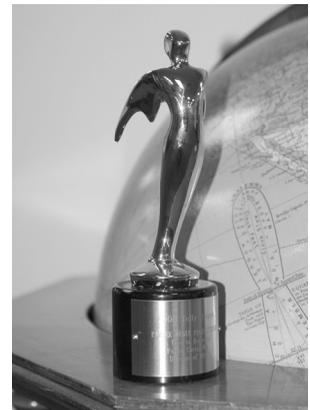
Acting Chief of Police Christopher O. Vicino, Curtis May and Vice-Mayor Steve Haderlein

South Pasadena, CA; The Pasadena, California Police-Community Partnership Award was presented to ORM Director Curtis May at the 37th Annual Police-Citizens Awards Luncheon on May 8, 2008. The Award is given to individuals who

have made major contributions to the city of Pasadena and the Pasadena Police Department. Curtis May was recognized for his role in helping organize "Days of Dialogue" between the community, schools and youthful gangs. With the help of the Western Justice Center, the YWCA and other community agencies, Pastor May was cited for "strengthening the bonds among all races, colors and creeds" and for serving as "an ardent ambassador of good will throughout his career."

Then, on May 12, Pastor May was notified by Parker Media Productions of Arcadia, California that ORM's new promotional DVD titled "A Time to Reconcile" had just won a bronze Telly award. The Tellys are an annual awards competition open to non-network and independent broadcasters. Actor Morgan Freeman was a recent recipient.

Free copies of this DVD are available by contacting ORM (information on page 2.)



"Telly" Award



ORM Director,
Curtis May

FROM THE DIRECTOR...

Pastor Wright and the "Black Church"

I grew up in an all-black Baptist Church in Greensboro, Alabama, from the mid-1940s until 1963. In visiting a number of black churches and speaking in others, I can tell you that any description of the so-called "Black Church" which lumps them all in one basket is suspect.

There are black charismatic churches, as well as liturgical, evangelical, prophetic, apostolic and fundamentalist. The messages often reflect those differences.

The Los Angeles Times ran several articles on March 30, 2008, on Rev. Jeremiah Wright's recent sermons and speeches. In it a black member of the First AME Church in Los Angeles, Kerman Maddox, is quoted as saying, "Wright's messages did not represent mainstream black thought on Sunday morning." He said the common pulpit themes had long been "unity, personal responsibility, loving neighbor and improving your neighborhoods."

By contrast, Rev. Bernard Richardson, dean of the chapel at Howard University, said, "Wright's sermons closely follow the prophetic formula. Taking a biblical text, he analyzes the history and language, highlights and personal pain likely shared by people in the pews, calls out similar injustices in today's society and emphasizes that God always provides. His delivery is often provocative, sometimes even raunchy."

"Wright's messages did not represent mainstream black thought on Sunday morning."

In my experience I think about 90% of the sermons that I've heard fit the mainstream category mentioned by Kerman Maddox. Personal change, commitment to God and fellowman and selfless service are emphasized most in the churches I've attended. I recall that most of the messages we heard helped keep us positively focused with an outlook on bettering the world around us. Occasionally the issues of segregation, racism and difficult times came up. But the messages were dominated by the powerful themes of Martin Luther King, the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Vernon Johns and others: Scripture plus social justice.

My personal prescription as a pastor for over 25 years is to preach the Word, in season and out. "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2). And in preaching the Word good exegesis is essential! "Sound-mindedness" is a biblical mandate, and that keeps us away from the extremes and riveted on Jesus and his healing ministry (2 Timothy 1:7-8). Then and only then will we be able to close the divides among us as Christians and as human beings from all walks of life.



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Our Readers Respond...



Dear Curtis,

It is always good to hear from you and the work that is being done by the Office of Reconciliation. You have my full support as you have had since the genesis of ORM. Please keep up the vital work you are doing.

Eugene Dumas, Executive Director The Center for MultiCultural Communities, Chicago Heights, IL



Hi Curtis,

I just had an opportunity to view the ORM video and all I can say is... Congratulations on a job well done. Very professional and informative.

Pastor George Hart, Christ Community Church, Cincinnati, OH



Dear Neil,

Thanks for copies of *Reconcile*. You are quite a writer and I enjoyed your entire Volume 10, No. 1. I hope we have other occasion to meet.

With warmest appreciation, Judge Dorothy Nelson

"Fighting on Two Fronts"

Tuskegee Airman Reminisces

by Neil Earle and Tom Smith

At age 87 William "Bill" Hicks has a grace-filled demeanor that makes you want to adopt him as your special grandfather.

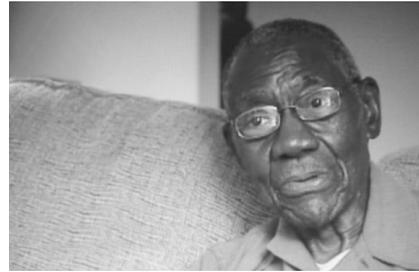
Bill, a deacon with the Worldwide Church of God congregation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a devoted Christian and a grateful father and grandfather. He considers that the best day in his life was when Gertrude Melton dropped into his electronic repair shop. Under the pretense of a 45-minute talk about this young girl's battery and radio cabinet needs, Bill knew he had found his true love. "I had her address because of the repair job," he recalls with fondness, "so that let me ask her to be my secretary, and later my wife."

Four children and ten grandchildren later, it's obvious that family looms as the highlight of his life. It says a lot because William "Bill" Hicks was a mechanic for the 322nd Fighter Group for the U.S. Army Air Force in World War Two, the famed "Tuskegee Airmen" or "Black Birdmen" as their opponents called them.

The Red Tails

Bill's story begins in 1920, born to sharecropper parents in South Carolina who moved to Pittsburgh for greater opportunities and to escape the stifling segregation of Jim Crow America. Bill Hicks was one of those fortunate people who knew what he wanted in life. He enrolled in the Conolly Trade School in Pittsburgh and learned the fine arts of the emerging new powerhouse called radio. "I was working in a factory when I was drafted and sent to Sacramento, California, for six months and then to Lincoln, Nebraska to learn about aircraft maintenance." He scored so high on his tests as an aircraft electrical specialist that his application was marked with the unusual footnote "White Man."

African-Americans desperately wanted to serve their country, but racism was endemic. Finally, the U.S. Congress overcame heavy lobbying to call into being a special group of pilots and air crew from the black population. Resistance was fierce. The War Department set up stringent requirements for flight experience and levels of education



William Hicks, Tuskegee Airman, relaxes at home.

that they expected would be debilitating. The policy backfired as qualified applicants poured in, one of them Bill Hicks. "I was sent to Illinois and then to just

outside Detroit for a group called the 100th Fighter Squadron. There are three squadrons to a group, so Captain Benjamin Davis was called back from North Africa to head up the 99th Squadron in Alabama."

Davis was the son of the first black West Point graduate. He rejected "scientific" reports that Negroes might jeopardize the war effort!

Bill Hicks remembers the famous moment when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt asked to be taken up in a plane flown by a black pilot to combat the pervasive prejudice. "The G-Men assigned to her apparently called the President to protest," Bill remembers, "but he just said my wife is a strong-minded woman; let her go."

Reality Trumps Legend

In spite of official harassment, Colonel Davis gathered three squadrons near Tuskegee Institute to form the 322nd Fighter Group. Bill Hicks was sent to the European Theatre in January, 1944, and he ended up north of Foggia on the Adriatic, servicing and repairing the planes that were escorting bombers over the Alps into Hitler's Europe.

He recalls his proudest moment in the war: "We were told there were no parts for our planes because of a strike back in the U.S. But I took units out of a P-51 back to my tent. I worked it over on my bench until I knew it was ready to fly. When our unit of seven planes returned from their mission, the plane I had repaired was in the lead. That made me feel good."

The 322nd statistics are impressive: 15,000 sorties, 1500 missions, 109 Nazi air

(Continued on page 4)

A Nation's Reach for Healing



Inset: P.M. Stephen Harper. Chief Fontaine in Canadian Parliament.

Ottawa, Ont; "I reach out to all Canadians today in a spirit of reconciliation," declared Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

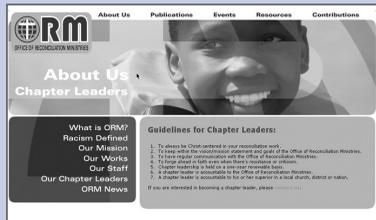
In a dramatic and unprecedented action, Canada's Prime Minister formally apologized on June 11, 2008 to the nation's aboriginal peoples for abuses and neglect of children taken to residential schools once run by the country's lead-

ing denominations at the government's request.

"While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools," said Mr. Harper, "these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children."

Overall, the apology in the Canadian parliament seemed to strike a chord with most Canadians. Father Raymond J. deSouza pleaded that "the staff of residential schools should not be universally stained with the crimes of the worst offenders." Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine, a victim himself, said the apology marked a "new dawn" in race relations.

(Reprinted from National Post.)



If you would like to know more about reconciliation, be sure to visit our web site:

www.ATimeToReconcile.org

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craft shot down, successfully engaging three jet aircraft over Berlin, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses. Of the 445 deployed overseas, 150 lost their lives. "It is true that bomber pilots would request us as escort," says Bill.

The Good Years

War over, Bill Hicks studied TV engineering at Chicago's American TV Institute. When children came along, this wiry veteran jokes that he would get sicker than his wife. Nerves. "She was such a good, good wife," Bill remembers.

Before this time his wife was getting interested in the radio voice of Herbert W. Armstrong. "He had a good message," says Bill. "I was attracted by his stress on good diet."

Bill and Gertrude's successful children include a chemist, a pipe-fitting engineer, a dress-shop worker and a county office man-

ager. "Every one of them is involved in God's Work and that makes me so happy."

"We are proud to have Deacon Bill as a pillar in our congregation and our community," says his pastor, Tom Smith. "The pervasive racism Bill Hicks experienced hasn't come close to shaking his faith in God or man, in spite of hearing Martin Luther King once called 'Martin Lucifer King' from his own church pulpit."

Advises Bill, "Honestly, the best thing to do about race prejudice is to put your head down and plough through it. Don't listen to everything and let it get to you." He has a word for black youngsters today: "Don't allow all those 'isms' to stop you. We could have given up. In World War Two we fought on two fronts—one over there, and one back home."

Interviewed on WQED Pittsburgh, Bill Hicks reveals his trademark humor. "It feels fantastic to finally be a celebrity," he chuckles, and you want to laugh along with him.