

RECONCILE™

Mending Broken Relationships

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—More than a Decade of Help and Hope—

Fall 2010



Sarah Yetman

Gen Next Signs Up

Twenty-two-year-old Sarah Yetman from Carbonear, NL, Canada, felt the call to community service as a volunteer in high school. Now with a Bachelor of Social Work degree, Sarah sets out to help families and provide a voice for vulnerable children. This commitment to serving is typical of her generation. Her greatest joy? "Building relationships with families and connecting them to community resources." Her greatest frustration? "Lack of resources," she replies with a glint in her eye. She is already a leader. Her example has inspired her peers to take up the cause of helping others.



The Office of Reconciliation Ministries (ORM) is an Outreach Ministry of Grace Communion International.

International Meetings Cement Unity



GCI International Conference

From July 21-25 Orlando, Florida was the scene of the 1200-people strong International Conference of Grace Communion International (GCI). GCI is the sponsoring body for *Reconcile* and the Office of Reconciliation

Ministries (ORM).

ORM was well-represented with an ORM resource table, standing-room-only workshops, and a devotional stressing the all-important subject of reconciliation for GCI delegates who hailed from Haiti to Hawaii and Birmingham to Bangladesh. "I received several requests for visits and presentations from both U.S and international church leaders and lay members," commented Curtis May of ORM.

On September 3-5 ORM ally, Connecting and Bonding, an international gathering of ministers' wives, met in Ontario, California, for their 11th annual time of fellowship and instruction. Jean Jackson, an NFL player's wife for 19 years, described living in her "glass house" and urged attendees to "blow the whistle and take time out for yourself." Mary Sutherland, a women's ministry speaker, covered "Seven Habits of Highly Successful Ministers' Wives." In response to three moving personal testimonies, Kathleen Hart, former wives chaplain at Fuller Seminary, sent the ladies home with the injunction to "choose what we are going to surrender to."

The "Friendship Teams" formed at Connecting and Bonding conferences reach around the nation and indeed around the globe. These further the implementation of reconciliation worldwide.

— reported by Curtis May and Trish Clauson



Yen for Diversity: Ladies gathered at Connecting and Bonding meetings exemplify coming together.



Our Readers Respond



Dear Reconcile,
One of the greatest sins of this nation and all nations is indifference. May our hearts be rekindled with compassion in these troubled times. Curtis, I pray that things are well with you and those in the work with you.

*Bob Stringer
Lompoc, CA*

Hello to the Mission:
The work you are doing is of utmost importance. "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

*Leon Rabouine, Sr.
Bronx, NY*

Dear Curtis,
Thank you for your tireless work of reconciliation. Thank you for sending me your newsletter. May God bless your ministry!

*Kimiyo Anceney
Women's Federation for World Peace
South Pasadena, CA*

Dear Mr. May,
Our prayers and support are with you. Thank you for doing the WORK of Reconciliation in Christ.

*Much love,
Los Angeles Congregation
Grace Communion International*



Curtis May, publisher

FROM CURTIS MAY... Politics, Race & Religion

For the last decade or two our nation seems to have escalated divisiveness, disrespect and hate! In my brief time on this earth I've never known it to be so extreme. In a country where the Golden Rule and Christian values are supposed to be highly acclaimed, one wonders how it got so bad. We hear insults hurled from the left and the right. Then there are the extremists on both sides.

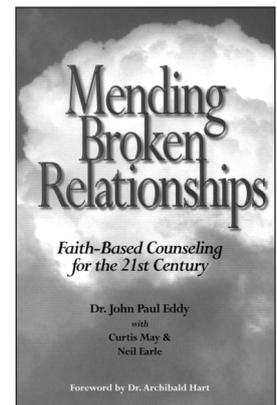
As Christians and reconcilers, what is our responsibility before our Creator? Do we have a voice? Does He instruct us on this topic? I Timothy 2:1-4 is a place to start: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." This applies no matter which political party is in power.

Prayer not only helps us to be humble and to approach issues with a better frame of mind, but it can also help change what is wrong. As the old gospel song tells us, "Prayer changes things." Romans 13:1-2 says, "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted..."

Again, if Scripture is our guide, we will think twice before hurling insults, epithets and downright mean barbs at our leaders or leadership candidates, regardless of how much we may disagree with them. Attacks hardly ever resolve conflicts. They only make them worse. We know this because ORM spends much of its time resolving conflict. Romans 13:8 tells us, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law." We all indeed owe God and each other the debt of love.

So the next time you become angry at political leaders or authorities, try to ask yourself what it means to pay the debt of love. Honor and respect are biblical mandates ORM tries to inculcate (1 Peter 2:17).

Our ORM flagship book Mending Broken Relationships outlines the "how to" of reconciliation. To order, visit our website: www.ATimeToReconcile.org



RECONCILE

Mending Broken Relationships



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Richard Mouw: The Case for Civility

In the run-up to the November elections in the United States one could hear all manner of debate pouring out of the “viral media” – the blogs, cable tv, talk shows, the usual suspects.

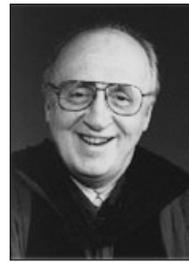
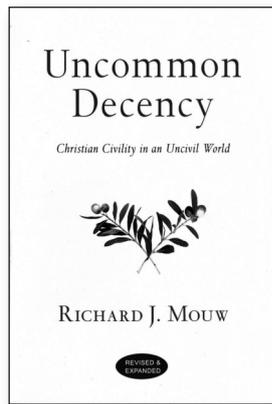
Nowadays one can tune the radio dial and hear that President Obama is a secret terrorist, twirl again to learn that former Vice President Richard Cheney helped plan the terror attacks on September 11, 2001.

In such an atmosphere Richard Mouw, President of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, revised and reissued his 1992 essay *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*. “Civility,” writes Mouw, “is public politeness. It means that we display tact, moderation, refinement and good manners toward people who are different from us.” He could have added that the word is related to “civilize” or “civics,” not to mention “civilization” itself. One trigger for incivility is the crusading spirit, says Mouw. “Crusaders are people who think the cause they are fighting for is so important that they must use all means at their disposal to win.” He adds: “Some Christians seem to be unmoved by a plea for honest understanding. They don’t appear to care whether they are fair in characterizing the view of their opponents.”

Biblical Realism

Mouw allows there is something in human nature that has a bent toward the negative. But this is where real Christianity should shine. Mouw cites Titus 3:2 saying “to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show courtesy to everyone,” to honor everyone (1 Peter 2:17). The author documents how the church has often been a citadel of incivility. He does oppose “convictionless civility.” All Christians will have convictions, Mouw admits, but even when speaking directly about them, biblical standards of “gentleness and reverence” must apply (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Uncommon Decency cites cases. The author



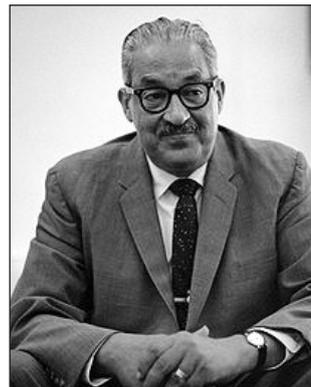
Richard Mouw

reports on one lady who was an outspoken anti-abortion advocate until her own daughter was pregnant as the result of a brutal rape. “Her all-or-nothing rhetoric had been a substitute for an honest wrestling with the issues.” Nor is Mouw warm to the idea of super-patriotism. Patriotism is one thing, but “no country should ever be encouraged to actually think of itself in Best Nation terms. Nationalism and super-patriotism are forms of idolatry.”

This is a hard-hitting little book. Readers of *Reconcile* will resonate with its core ideas. “Reverence toward others is not an attitude that has been highly prized in the Christian community,” adds Mouw, a respected voice for Christian faith. The case for civility badly needs restating in 2010.

— Neil Earle

A Play For Our Time



Thurgood Marshall

Do you ever wonder if Shakespeare got it wrong? Perhaps it is not the evil that men do that lives after them (from Julius Caesar) but the good. Consider Justice Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993), for example.

Thurgood Marshall was the young legal advocate in one of the most momentous court cases of our time – the 1954 “Brown versus the Board of Education” ruling that became key to ending racial segregation in the United States. Veteran actor Lawrence Fishburne sold out theatres across the United States this year with his one-man portrayal of the canny, straight-talking, down-home judge who was known to sit down with local sheriffs. After cards and whiskey he’d disarm them with, “Now what we gonna do about this?”

Marshall went on to become the first African-American to wear the robes of a Supreme Court justice and whose legacy reminds us that things can always change for the better.

ORM Workshops Draw Hundreds

The summer of 2010 proved busy for the Office of Reconciliation Ministries (ORM).

On May 20-21 ORM Director Curtis May cast the vision before some 40 pastors and leaders at Shepherd Community Church in South Holland, Illinois. A big-screen presentation entitled "Africa and the Bible" detailed when and how the gospel of Jesus Christ was delivered to the African continent – not to a slave culture in America but to Africans in their homeland. Archaeologists show evidence of worshippers of the Triune God from artifacts uncovered across Africa. These predate the slave trade.

Chapter Leaders Sam Butler and Willard High presented on "Ally Building" and a unified approach to overcoming "Internalized Racism" (the kind you don't know you have). Those in attendance included Eugene Dumas, Executive Director for the Center for Multicultural



Curtis May with Sam Butler & Willard High

Ministries. The friendly setting allowed attendees to express their feelings without fear of accusation, retaliation or misunderstanding. "This can be attributed to the focus the local church places on reconciliation and the fact that Chicago was one of the first areas to host an ORM gathering back in 1997," Willard High summarized.

"Choices and Perceptions"

On August 7-8 the scene shifted to the Omni Dallas Hotel Park West in Texas. Pastors Tom Pickett, Arnold Clauson, and Bob Persky joined Curtis May to host 150 attendees for an energetic, eye-opening, encouraging seminar on reconciliation. The most common response was, "Wow, this is more than I thought."

"There were times during the planning phase when we encountered a stumbling block, but God encouraged us with a new blessing every time," said Chapter Leader Tom Pickett at the opening. "We think he must have something special planned for this conference."

And did God deliver! Each day's activities were begun with lively praise and worship led by Barry and Tammy Ford and special music by the Unity of Faith fellowship choir on Saturday. Mr. John Connors, a successful CEO from the

Northeast, got down to business with his message, "Reconciliation: The Barriers We Face." Employers must keep a balance between the shareholder, the employee and the customer – a difficult task, he reminded us. Correct metrics need to be used and meaningful standards applied. Positive business practices can reverse the corporate misbehavior all too prevalent today.

The afternoons were devoted to workshops on topics such as *Community in Conflict* (Police Chief Steve Myers); *Preserving Families Through Reconciliation* (Linda Frederickson, Licensed Professional Counselor); *Racism in our Society* (Cherry Steinwender, Co-Executive Director for the Center for the Healing of Racism); *Church, Community and Education* (Pastor Sultan Cole); *The Church and Racial Segregation* (Pastors Cliff Parks and Tony Pierce). Pastors Parks and Pierce offered real-life examples of how diverse congregations had put aside their differences to serve their community.

Sunday, August 8, participants were dazzled by Evelyne O'Callaghan Burkhard from Cork, Ireland. She explained that the choices we make flow from basic needs, external control or our total behavior. We must make new choices, set goals, and then go on to make better choices. Curtis May explained biblical reconciliation: "After making a choice, leadership must come." This involves sincere intentionality, sensitivity and sacrifice and balancing empowerment with interdependence. John Connors concluded by reminding us how much labels and expectations affect our decisions.

The last morning session was highlighted with Pastor Bob Persky's installation as a new ORM chapter leader. This makes 27 around the world, all forging ahead in Christ's ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

— reporting by Willard High and Craig and Joyce Cameron



Pastor Bob Persky's installation as a new ORM chapter leader.

Photo by Ryan Dure