

# RECONCILE™

## Mending Broken Relationships

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—A Decade of Help and Hope —

Winter 2008



*Dr. Diddy Hitchens*

### ACSUS for Good

Outgoing President Diddy Hitchens of the University of Alaska has led the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS) into an admirable position as a forum for international understanding among diplomats, scholars and artists. Under her positive, eclectic approach ACSUS is now preparing to embrace Mexico as well. Viva!



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

## California Governor Praises Mediation Efforts



*California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger*

Pasadena, CA: Speaking recently at the prestigious Ambassador Auditorium, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger paid tribute to the efforts of the Western Justice Center Foundation in reducing inner-city conflict. The Center was celebrating its move into the fourth and final building of its Pasadena campus.

The Governor is a strong advocate of efforts towards reconciliation and peace. Referring to his native Austria in the 1930s, he reminded some 900 people how things can go drastically wrong on the international scene. More positively, he reflected upon the personal satisfaction he derived from serving as Chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in 1990. "I traveled to all of the fifty states and saw the benefits of after-school alternatives for inner-city children. I know such efforts can work."

Mr. Schwarzenegger reminded the audience that no matter how entrenched certain problems seem, caring people can make a difference. He praised the efforts of his wife's mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, in starting the Special Olympics. "The nation of China used to screen out its specially challenged citizens," the Governor stated. "Now they are hosting the Special Olympics." Yes, change is possible! Let's go out and do likewise.



*Elegant 4th building of Western Justice Center (Photo courtesy WJC. All rights reserved.)*



*ORM Director,  
Curtis May*

FROM THE DIRECTOR...

## Thanks to Allies, It's Working!

This issue highlights the work of one of our key partners, the Western Justice Center Foundation. The work of reconciliation continues to advance.

We are pleased to announce the beginning of a new ORM chapter in Peoria, Illinois. It was established in October 2007 and is already "playing in Peoria." Church Pastors Tony Pierce and Cliff Parks share the responsibilities. They had been operating as a great example of reconciliation for several years as they combined their two churches from two different fellowships. In doing so, they crossed boundaries of ethnicity, denomination and culture (including music) and other subtler barriers that often stymie churches and secular groups.

Our hats off to their congregation for being an outpost of Kingdom work.

In my monthly letter for January, I reviewed our ORM Mission Statement to reflect more clearly the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to each other and the human race as the starting point of all true reconciliation.

It is exciting and encouraging to realize that all of humanity is reconciled to God through Christ. The ministry of reconciliation emanates from that relationship (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). Interestingly, there is a term from the Greek language defining the very closest possible relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That word is perichoresis, from peri ("about") and choresis ("dance"), from which we get the word "choreography." So as we dance through the year 2008, let's feel the excitement of the Triune dance of God as we keep in step with the heavenly beat. Our job is to set the example by living the reconciled life and to help others understand and accept the fact that they too have been reconciled through Christ's death (Romans 5:10-11). We no longer have to be alienated in heart and mind.

In seeking to keep step in the great dance, our updated mission statement now reads: "To share the good news that God has reconciled all mankind to Himself through Christ and that we can all get along." Our Vision is: "Love and appreciation for all people. To embrace and cherish diversity." Check out the ORM website, [ATimeToReconcile.org](http://ATimeToReconcile.org), for the complete Mission Statement and Core Values.

We are now entering our thirteenth year as a ministry. Mike Greider, a pastor in West Virginia and a leader in inter-denominationalism, reports, "ORM's concept of building bridges among the body of Christ and among racial groups has become a major focus of our congregations." Marilyn Fall, our chapter leader in Phoenix, tells us: "ORM has an all-encompassing ministry, not only to dialogue about healing wounds from racism, but also to help educate the whole body of Christ."

These are encouraging comments. Thank you for standing with us in our on-going efforts to break down the walls of prejudice, to heal the wounds where they might exist. To God be the glory! Our victories are your victories! Thank you for your loyal support and prayers. We need it as we enter a new exciting year.

### Our Readers Respond...



Dear Curtis,

Recently your wife Jannice shared with me an incident that took place when you accompanied her while she interviewed for Jury duty. She was unable to drive because she had a shoulder problem. You made contact with different people outside on the street—some were homeless. You showed that you cared for them and even fed them. To me this is the greatest example of RECONCILIATION.

You are an asset to the Worldwide Church of God denomination. It is the only one I know of that has a Ministry position for Reconciliation. May you continue to serve the Lord so faithfully.

In His Great Love,  
*Kathleen Hart*  
*Former Student Wives' Chaplain, Fuller Seminary*



*Co-Pastors Tony Pierce and Cliff Parks*

# “Peace Through Mediation—It Works!”

**F**aith-based initiatives is a phrase that has entered the culture.

Some people take it seriously. On October 31, 2007, I had the enjoyable privilege of chatting with one of the champions of social justice in the Los Angeles area.

Senior Judge Dorothy W. Nelson was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals 9th Circuit by President Carter in 1979. This came after a distinguished career in the Southland and serving as Dean of the Law School at the University of Southern California from 1969 to 1979.

But it was her faith that cemented her interest in social justice and sympathy for the disadvantaged. Just after World War Two, Dorothy Nelson was the youthful leader of a boys’ club for underprivileged eight-year-olds. “I found when I complained to authorities about their special needs (health, food and parental inadequacies) I was told that ‘the law says this; the law says that.’ I decided that lawyers appeared to have the inside edge.” This led to the San Pedro native enrolling at UCLA Law School to begin training “to serve other people.”

To her shock, she found that she, an African-American male and another lady in her freshman class were barred from joining their school’s professional organization. The reason? “We don’t take women or blacks.”

This was America before the landmark “Brown vs. Board of Education” Supreme Court case in 1954. As Judge Nelson remembers: “That’s when our class president stood up and led the 72 members of our class in a protest action to leave the professional fraternity and start our own. Well, was I ever impressed.”

Her class president was a member of the Baha’i faith, a religion that takes seriously the concepts of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, of gender equality and the resolution of disputes through mediation. The “Golden Rule,” in other words. Since that time, this granddaughter of Church of England priests has been a catalyst for leavening her legal practice and teaching with workable principles of peacemaking.

“I remember teaching a class on legal reform at USC and injecting principles of mediation into the class. A fellow faculty member won-



*Editor Neil Earle (left) with Judge Dorothy Nelson*

dered what I was up to,” says the judge, a twinkle in her eye. “As interim dean in 1967 I helped establish a dispute resolution center in our law school—a first in the nation. I believe mediation is a viable alternative to litigation, something much

more in vogue now with the courts so choked and crowded.”

The young academic moved on to establish the Western Center on Law and Poverty in conjunction with UCLA and Loyola Law School; the Chicano Law Center; the Center for Preventative Law and other agencies. Dorothy W. Nelson takes seriously the words of a mentor, former Chief Justice Warren Burger: “Litigation is fine for some cases, but to think it is appropriate for all cases is a mistake.” He added: “Our adversarial system is too costly, too inefficient, too painful and too destructive for a civilized society.”

In 1985, noticing some abandoned bungalows not far from her court offices in West Pasadena, the idea for the Western Justice Center was born. The strategy was to hire skilled teachers and mentors to institute and model human relations training, police-community mediation and dialogue, and violence prevention. Hands-on workshop experiences for children and families in a neutral setting are provided. The model took off. In 2006 Western Justice Center provided this training to more than 9,000 children, parents and teachers.

This is reconciliation with a capital “R.”

—Neil Earle

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

[www.ATimeToReconcile.org](http://www.ATimeToReconcile.org)

# Stopping Crime: A Little Child Can Lead

“Let’s hire more police!” This is often heard when gang violence and urban crime is on the rise. “But that’s not enough,” says Leigh Sniffen, ORM Chapter Leader in Memphis, Tennessee and former mediator for the Los Angeles Dispute Resolution Center. “When you facilitate dialogue between children and hostile groups you get a jump start on the situation.” Leigh and her husband Paul have worked for years with youth in the Los Angeles area. They see the value of simple-sounding techniques advanced in such modules as “Ouch the Egg,” where children learn to be sensitive to the feelings of others.

In 2006 Leigh was part of a program that taught “knowing the consequences of my actions” to more than 9,000 children and parents. Such small steps sow the seeds of true reconciliation.



Children in structured workshops can learn the principles of peace and reconciliation at the elementary level.

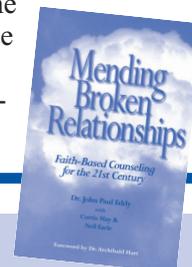
(See The Parable of Herbie below.)

Photo courtesy Western Justice Center. All Rights Reserved.

## ORM BOOK GARNERS PRAISE

This is a wonderful book. I have worked as a secular counselor and burnt [myself] out because I never felt like I could make a difference. Another wall I ran into was church and state. I am so inspired by this book because it is faith-based... I truly believe in Christian Counseling because no other can heal the brokenness of a wounded person. Only the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can reach the very root of the brokenness and reveal the truth and reveal the lies and the programming we believe in our inner core of our brokenness. I was once one of those broken people and the grace of God and Christian-based counseling saved me from destruction. I applaud all of you who wrote this book. — J.H. Colorado

*Mending Broken Relationships* can be ordered by mail for a suggested donation of \$18.00 (includes shipping) or by credit card at our website, [ATimeToReconcile.org](http://ATimeToReconcile.org).



## The Parable of Herbie

Dorothy W. Nelson likes to cite living case histories of conflict resolution in action. Fourth-grader Herbie was a young African-American she coached through a workshop. The case revolved around a student who received an “F” in school, thinking she deserved a “C.” The children divided up into Council For, Council Against, and a Mediation Panel. Their challenge? Resolve the issue without a free-for-all. Once the process began charges and counter-charges flew.

“My teacher is a racist.”

“No. You sleep in class.”

“That’s because she doesn’t get breakfast.”

“Oh! So what’s the real problem?”

“The PTA needs to know the kids are coming to school without breakfast.”

The class hugged each other. Herbie never forgot. Next time Judge Nelson saw him, he escorted his older brother to the courthouse saying, “That’s my building and yours too.”



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