

# RECONCILE

Mending Broken Relationships

Volume 11 / Number 3

—More than a Decade of Help and Hope—

Fall 2009



*John Hope Franklin*

## Hope Was His Name

Historian and Presidential Medal of Freedom winner John Hope Franklin died on March 25, 2009 at age ninety-four. "John Hope lived through the tragedy of racial oppression that ruled America from most of the twentieth century," reported the Organization of American Historians, of which he was president.

In 1921 he witnessed his father's law office being burned in the murderous Tulsa race riot of 1921, endured the Jim Crow laws of the era and mourned his brother Buck's suicide after being assigned kitchen duties in

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

## Morris Dees Probes Extremism

by Neil Earle

Morris Dees, co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, addressed the National Press Club recently on the state of hate groups. He announced an emerging new threat – extremists joining the military to learn the ways of terror.

Dees is known for holding hate groups and urban terrorists accountable for their violence. By bringing lawsuits to bear, his organization has been able to bankrupt Neo-Nazi and other extremists. "America is changing," he told the audience, "By 2040 America will be 50% non-white. These demographic shifts are feeding fear, hatred and paranoia, especially in a time of a crippled economy."

Dees reported that there are now 926 documented hate groups in the United States (a 54% jump since 2000) and that right-wing politicians are rising to power in Europe where Muslims are becoming numerous in many cities. He criticized popular media figures whose far-out statements ("FEMA is setting up concentration camps") fuel the frustration and rage that help trigger violent acts against members of another ethnic group.

Still, Dees is optimistic that the United States is not about to head back to the days of segregation he witnessed as a Mississippi youth. He had high praise for the FBI, the Justice Department and local and state police. "There are signs of great hope. The last Presidential election saw the unprecedented shattering of glass ceilings. Millions of Americans passed the color line on the way to the ballot box." That is worth remembering.



*Lawyer & Activist Morris Dees*

## Our Readers Respond



Thank you Mr. May and ORM for the newsletters you send me. I share them with my co-workers and utilize the information in the ministry outreach I'm involved within the church I attend. Thanks to Mike Riley, Roger Lippross, Mr. & Mrs. Earle, Michael Morrison. Thank you for the ministry all of you do as God leads.

*David P. King  
Mashpee, MA*

Dear ORM,  
Hope this (donation) will help. Keep up the good work. *Mending Broken Relationships* is the solution to our worldwide crisis in every walk of life.

*God speed and blessings,  
Gene Ferguson  
Hume, VA*

Dear Mr. May,  
Our congregation has pledged to send \$50 per month to your ministry and to pray for you and your staff on a regular basis. Thank you for the newsletter and the updates you provide. If we can assist you in other ways, please let us know.

*Open Hearts Fellowship  
Lexington, SC*

Hi Curtis,  
Good job this year. It's not just anyone who can serve in this way. Thanks for the brief rundown of expenses in your (January) letter. More ministries should take this approach, but many can't because those in charge are making more than they should to serve others.

*All the best,  
Dave Buckley  
Byron Center, MI*

### Office of Reconciliation Ministries Advisory Council Members

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If you would like to know more about reconciliation, be sure to visit our web site:  
[www.ATimeToReconcile.org](http://www.ATimeToReconcile.org)



*Curtis May  
ORM Director*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR...

### "Dream Team's" Second Decade

I thought you'd be interested to take a look behind the scenes as *Reconcile* begins its second decade.

To publish this valuable publication from 1999 to 2009 we have a volunteer staff of three people and a part-time staff of one. They are Neil Earle (Editor), Roger Lippross (Consulting Editor), Mike Riley (Art Direction/Production) and Susan Earle (part-time secretary) and, of course, yours truly as Director.

It takes skills, writing talent, wisdom and creativity to produce a newsletter the quality of *Reconcile* and our other ORM products. We believe that we must uphold the quality to glorify God who is a God of quality. In that regard it is good to note that Editor Neil Earle was honored for co-authorship of a book about his adopted home town called *Duarte*, part of the "Images of America" series. Roger Lippross is a noted publisher, responsible in the 1980s for a magazine of 7 million circulation, while Mike Riley runs a very successful graphic design business. ORM relies greatly on their expertise and dedication.

We also have 27 chapters in 5 countries. Please see the Chapter Leaders map on our website at [ATimeToReconcile.org](http://ATimeToReconcile.org). And we have our Advisory Council. I call all those folks our "Dream Team" because they help roll out such quality material on a "shoestring" operating budget.

Another group of dedicated men and women are the ORM Chapter Leaders. Many Chapter Leaders are full-time pastors, yet they volunteer their time to help "make reconciliation happen" in the trenches. Most of them have been part of this ministry since its inception. I thank God for them on a regular basis.

Our purpose is to help mend broken relationships and conflict whenever we have opportunity. We feel called by God to do so.

Until next time, thank you for your involvement and support.



*Neil Earle (r) wearing his ORM shirt for Duarte book interview.*

*Photo by Ladkyette C. High Jr., Pasadena Star News*

# “Team Building” for a Chapter Leader

by Pamela Harris

**S**t. Louis, MO: Gamaliel was a Jewish leader in the first century who gave wise counsel to his generation. The Gamaliel Foundation is a faith-based organization that provides tools to train and develop effective leaders and staff in the building of peaceful communities. Gamaliel Foundation helped train President Barack Obama as a civic organizer. He worked for the Foundation prior to his entering Harvard Law School. In fact, the very room that I was being trained in was the same room with the same eraser board which President Obama utilized.

## Churches Are Key

Gamaliel affiliates are comprised of churches of all denominations, and not just churches. For our St. Louis area, the Gamaliel affiliate is Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU). MCU initiated a committee named “The Race Table.” Through ORM I was encouraged to work for the healing of the 15 different Places of Conflict and Broken Relationships (from: *Healing America’s Wounds* by John Dawson). Billy Graham stated that “the responsibility (to combat racism) does not lie with the government but the Church.” Racism states that not only am I NOT my brother’s and sister’s keeper, but that they are not even my brothers and my sisters.

While attending Gamaliel Foundation’s week-long Leadership Training, I had an opportunity to be better equipped in healing divisions. The week-long Gamaliel experience revealed to me that I had taken my focus off God and began to minister to me. It was a harrowing experience to face myself but one that I needed.

## “The Nuts and Bolts”

The trainers were all top of the line, top of their game, savvy in teaching and training skills. They kept telling us to “think bigger.” Whenever God is in a thing, it always grows, and it usually grows in a big way. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. started out trying to help with a bus boycott and it took him from a local to a national level. It took him from his local church to the White House.

Moses started out small. He was to “go and tell Pharaoh” that Israel needed a three-day retreat. I don’t think he started out with the real-

ization that it was going to grow into his leading hundreds of thousands of people to a Promised Land, defy a cruel government and that the whole process was going to take over 40 years of his life. Our trainers wanted us to “think bigger” because they know that God thinks big. Also, when “big” finally happens, we humans won’t get overwhelmed.

## “One-on-Ones”

Another lesson for me was team building. I had the “why,” now Leadership Training gave me



*Pamela tracks President Obama*

all the rest. The “why” of it was enhanced, the “who” of it was clarified and the “how” was expounded upon. Teams are vital in whatever ministry God has us working, and it is

equally important to have the team consist of people who have that same fire in the belly for your ministry purpose, mission or goal. We must also understand that team members are not limited just to people from your church.

Team leaders must ensure a close relationship among team members. That is accomplished through One-on-Ones. We were taught to start with ourselves, as always. We ask some mighty relevant questions:

- What is important to me?
- What gets me up in the morning?
- What motive is planted deep in my spirit for changing some evil?
- What is it that I want to accomplish right where I am?
- What is the purpose for me being in a particular job, community, or church?
- How can I best bring my talents to bear on where God has placed me?

Once we’ve answered those type of questions, we begin. We have to sense that people on our team are just as “on fire” for the goal as we are.

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# Cops, Kids and Felix Jones

by Neil Earle

**R**edlands, CA: "I have sixteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. I want them to be able to go to school, to the park or to the store without being threatened or abused or shot at or offered marijuana. That's my passion for this ministry, getting into the community and doing what Christians do best. And it's an uphill battle."

Quiet, soft-spoken Felix Jones of the "Cops and Clergy Network" in the Inland Empire of Southern California east of Los Angeles leads a faith-based initiative that began in November 1998. It is an association between the various police and sheriffs departments, participating churches and community organizations.

The goals are to:

- Connect every minister with policemen in their local community.
- Connect every police officer with at least three pastors within their circle of responsibility.
- Encourage faith communities (churches, temples, mosques) to establish a youth mentoring program in partnership with their local police department.

The intention here is to reduce youthful crime through improved relations between cops and community, to make children safer across their communities. Along the way this initiative creates new opportunities for ministry through mentoring and modeling on an ongoing basis. The circle is completed when some of these youth begin themselves to consider a career in law enforcement or community service.

## Living Parables

"In essence, we save lives," says Dr. Jones. He offers the parable of a young man we can call Sammy. Sammy was a 23-year-old who was arrested for "recycling" iron, ATT materials and even manhole covers. He was charged with a felony. Felix Jones heard about the case, wrote the Riverside District Attorney and bargained with him for a "work furlough" program run by Cops and Clergy. With the help of counselors and the efforts of Gateway to Unity's food-distribution network, Sammy was kept busy. "He is assigned a whole series of jobs and this keeps him out of trouble," says Dr. Jones.

Felix Jones is from Louisiana, where he enlisted for a four-year hitch in the United States Marines. In the 1960s he worked on some of

their early database systems before assignment to Hawaii. It was there, in 1967, that he first felt a call to ministry and by 1974 he was looking after churches in the Southern California area. Along the way he picked up an M.B.A. and completed his educational quest earning a double Doctorate in Philosophy and Theology from the Center for Biblical Research. Still, he credits the help of a whole team of people to keep Cops and Clergy running effectively. One of them is Redlands Chief of Police James Bueermann. Another is his sister-in-law, a California Baptist Sociology graduate who manages the Gateway to Unity, Good Citizenship program.

## Real Life Nurturing

Dr. Jones breathes biblical realism. "When I had seven children I took the responsibility to take them to church. I couldn't just drop them off and abandon them," he says with his soft-spoken



*Felix Jones*

fervency. "Too often, the churches in their zeal let youth pastors do all the training, and there are some wonderfully gifted youth ministers. But in Deuteronomy 5 it is the responsibility of the parents to train and raise their children."

Felix Jones knows that children are not a federal or state or church responsibility. Effective citizenship is learned in the home. He has a sense of limitations. "My refuge is in the Lord. Young kids are naive and will do risky things because they see no risk. They need all the help they can get, especially where parents are not around. But we can't take over in total. I say to parents and agencies, 'If we are stepping on your toes, let us know'."

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# Life Clubs: Six Years Building Bridges

by Geoff Sole

**H**atfield, Herts. U.K.: Six years ago a group of British Christians were inspired to reach out to the next generation. The answer? Life Clubs – speech and activities clubs with four goals:

- to assist churches in helping people develop spiritually so that they can help make new disciples.
- to help build reliable leaders who can teach and preach more competently.
- to help bring life, unity, fellowship, enjoyment and encouragement to local congregations.
- to benefit people in their professional and personal lives by improving their communication and life skills.

A typical Life Club meeting opens with a prayer and a scripture. This is followed by a Business section, an Achievements section, a Networking section and a Table Topics section. In the second half, after refreshments, members give speeches. Several people over 80 years old have given speeches, and the youngest speaker so far was just seven when he gave a speech about the planets!

## Practical Training

Speakers are challenged through stimulating rounds of Table Topics with discussion questions from the war in Afghanistan to where Cain got his wife. There are junior and senior speech

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## Cops, Kids and Felix Jones

Promoting good behavior on school buses, working to rehabilitate prison releasees, setting up life-skills training programs, providing safe havens for endangered youth, mediating between law enforcement and young offenders—the list is long. Dr. Jones knows that so much more needs to be done.

In 2002 the National Crime Prevention Council listed Cops and Clergy as one of only six organizations in the United States to receive a community-oriented policing services grant. CCN is striving to fulfill its purpose statement to “bring together spiritual and civil authorities for the common good and safety of our children, congregations and communities.” For more information contact [www.copsandclergy.org](http://www.copsandclergy.org).

levels, so that no one feels excluded. Speeches last from about five to seven minutes and can be one of 30 types, including “Add Humor,” “Get the Facts,” “Inspire,” “Practical Demonstration,” and “Theatrical Presentation.” What is most rewarding is how this idea has spread internationally to other congregations of our denomination, Grace Communion International. There are now clubs in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Nigeria and South Africa.

“Practical training and experience in how to speak before an audience of any size is helpful in the work and study environments as well as assisting the pulpit,” said ORM Chapter Leader in the UK and Africa, James Henderson.

Fellowship is warm and hearty and attendees are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors. Life Clubs have finished six years of productive training and the future looks bright.



### Life Clubs:

1. Mohlakeng, South Africa
2. Watford, U.K.
3. Lagos, Nigeria
4. Paris, France
5. Houten, Netherlands

# Healing Our Cities: The Power of Intentionality

by Bernadette Vanwormer

Memphis, TN: My “aha moment” in the war on racism was the week we took steps forward and backward at our Common Ground workshop based on events that had taken place in our lives. I had read ahead the days before this particular meeting and my response was an emotional one, because racism is a huge heart issue of mine. It tears at my heart. Once again I am face to face with the fact of how racism has held back people for no other reason than they are not “like us.” I have experienced the affects of racism in a very limited way. I too experienced ridicule and condemnation *unjustly* from an unhealthy relationship I was in most of my adult life. This ridicule and condemnation had a profound effect on me and the choices I made in my life. I believe racism has the potential to have an equally profound effect on those who experience it day in and day out all of their lives.



*Bernadette Vanwormer*

## My Journey

Two years ago I began a journey with the help of a dear friend of mine, named Kareem J. Vance. He is black, age 31, from Mississippi (a country boy), and he is my personal trainer. We began working out three times a week for one hour each time. When you have one-on-one conversations with someone for one hour, three times a week, week in and week out, there are not many topics you don't end up discussing. So racism was discussed. I told him I did not see it. So Kareem gave me “homework.” He told me to look and observe certain things. He told me to watch certain movies. It was a lot like we do in Common Ground, but with Kareem, it was my life. I was observing things, actions and events in my day-to-day life. It was **me** driving down the streets of Memphis, Tennessee; it was **me** watching the daily news; it was **me** paying closer attention to the conversations I was a part of, as well as conversations I overheard.

During this same two years I went on two trips. One was called the Urban Plunge and the other the Justice Tour, both offered through Hope Church. The Urban Plunge took me to downtown Memphis for three days and two nights. We spent the nights at Streets Ministries located on Vance Avenue. We visited many ministries that help the homeless and hopeless in Memphis. We learned about their plight and we participated in a panel discussion. With the Justice Tour

we traveled to Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, Alabama for three packed days of learning about the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s.

As a result of these two trips I have come face to face with the atrocities we Americans placed upon those of a different race. The unspeakable treatment of a people brought over here on slave ships, held captive against their will and separated from their loved ones, forever erasing their family tree for most of them.

## The Undercurrent

I have learned that racism existed when I was a child. I used to believe it did not. Gone are my thoughts: “What is the deal down here in the South? Why can't we all just get along? Why, up in the North there is no racism. What is going on down here?” Oh, how wrong I was. How blind and unaware I was.

So then, what is my conclusion?

Racism is alive and well in Shelby County, Tennessee, and in our country as a whole. No, there are no men walking around with white robes over their heads. Today it is much more hidden and therefore, in some ways, much more dangerous. But make no mistake, racism runs underneath all we do and say. I hear it in the words people use and I see it in the choices people make as to where they will live, work and worship. I observe it in my white friend who states his opinion as to the most a black woman could aspire to, now age 60 and a housekeeper and that if racism did not exist she could have become a school teacher. Why did he not state a lawyer, like him?

I hear it in Kareem's voice as he expresses his uneasiness because he believes people are looking at us with disapproval as we have lunch together in a Memphis deli, because he is black and I am white. I hear it in my girlfriend's words as she tells me that the sales clerks are watching us as we shop because she is black and I am white and they find it odd and suspicious that we are shopping together. I hear it from my girlfriend again as we drive down Kirby Parkway and Quail Hollow and she says that this is my side of town. If she drove through this part of town and went around the block more than once someone would call the cops.

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## Hope Was His Name

World War II. Buck had been a school principal.

A Harvard grad, Franklin's 1947 classic, *From Slavery to Freedom*, placed slavery at the heart of the American experience. His focus on the African connection in a time of white dominance in the field of history made him a pioneer of the present "America as part of world history" theme.

Almost a matching bookend to Franklin, historian Kenneth Stampff passed away on July 10, 2009, just short of his 97th birthday. In *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (1956) he ripped apart any notions of slavery as a "benign" institution. The OAH reported, "It freed the next generation to approach the study of slavery in entirely new ways." The work of Franklin and Stampff helped shape the intellectual consensus that undergirded the progressive civil rights legislation of the 1960s and 1970s.

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## Team Building

Otherwise, when things begin to get sticky, your team will desert you just like the twelve disciples forsook Jesus. You and your Team must be so attuned to each other and the ministry purpose, mission or goal, so that even if they desert you, you know you can get them back on board.

You must know each person on your team at a deep level. You know they would go through tough situations with you to attain the goal. The goal must be clear, explicit and inclusive, such as the restaurant boycotts of the 1960s. The team will have to be straight-forward, truthful and deliberate in strategizing practical steps.

## "Go and Do"

This is hard work, but here in St. Louis, a group of clergy (male and female) of diverse ethnicities and denominations has come together to discuss racism and practical steps on how we can eradicate it. Martin Luther King's generation took us so very far. I am glad to represent ORM at "The Race Table" and partner with MCU to work for societal change. As a reconciler, I desire to help people come into a oneness of self (so many broken people), a oneness with Jesus Christ (so many who don't know him) and a oneness with other people, crossing all barriers and building bridges. Knowing how racially diverse the first Christian church was, I know change must occur in St. Louis, a racially polarized city.

That change must come through the churches. Churches must model the same things that Jesus modeled while walking the earth, and we must model all of it, not just some or a part. With a love for God and people and a passion for reconciliation ministries, I must now "go and do..." knowing its OK to "think big"!

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## Healing Our Cities

Too often, opportunities are denied people just because of their race. People are looked down upon just because of their race. People are steered away from living in certain zip codes, just because of their race. People are charged more for some goods and services, because of their race.

## What is Inside?

So now I have come to these last seven weeks. And here we are. For me, Common Ground has shown me that I am on the right track, that my choice to be intentional about making new friends who are not of my race is the best choice I have made in a very long time. That I am the one, who has been blessed these past two years. As Michael Smith, one of the members in our group, has often stated, it all goes back to "What is inside? What is in here makes the difference." I could not agree with him more. I am made up of soul and spirit, and the Holy Spirit has come to abide in me. In my walk in this life, being intentional about making a difference is powered by my love of people. This love comes from the love I have received from my Most High God and the Holy Spirit he has sent to dwell in me. He has forgiven me so much that his grace cannot be measured. What we have "in here" is what gives us the power to move in a direction that will change things.

Be the "change" you wish to see! I encourage us all to move toward erasing racism so that it will no longer tear at the very fabric of our country. I encourage you to take that first step. Introduce yourself to someone new, who does not look like you. As Helen Keller so wonderfully put it, "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but I still can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do."

*Common Ground is an action group based in Memphis, TN.*

# Civil Rights Veteran Is Still Fighting

by Pamela Harris

Rev. Joseph Ellwanger is a Lutheran minister, now retired, who took an active role in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was the only white pastor included in Dr. King's early strategy meetings at the Gaston Motel in 1963 and was one of the few white southern ministers involved in civil rights work. Rev. Ellwanger worked with Dr. King to plan the Birmingham demonstrations. On the Sunday when the 16th Street Church was bombed, Ellwanger was giving a service in his church a mile down the road. Denise McNair, one of the children who died in the bombing, was the daughter of one of his parishioners and Rev. Ellwanger spoke at the funeral.

Dr. King included him in a group with about fifteen black pastors that met with President Lyndon B. Johnson after the Selma to Montgomery march. Rev. Ellwanger is best known for organizing and leading a group of seventy-two white Alabamans who wanted to openly support voting rights in a march to the Dallas County Courthouse in Selma, Alabama, on March

6, 1965, one day before the "Bloody Sunday" march that paved the way for the Voting Rights Act.

On Nov. 14, 2008, Rev. Joseph Ellwanger received the Fred L. Shuttlesworth Leadership Award from the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, of which he was president in the 1960s.

At the Gamaliel Conference in St. Louis, Rev. Ellwanger shared with us some of his firsthand experiences of those days, including his participation in the marches on Washington to institute as a national holiday Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday after he was assassinated. I was able to share with him that I also marched on Washington during those times, to which he exclaimed, "Good! Keep on fighting!"

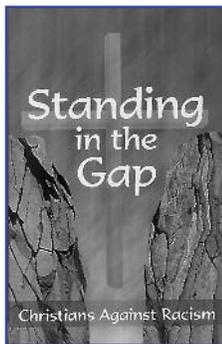
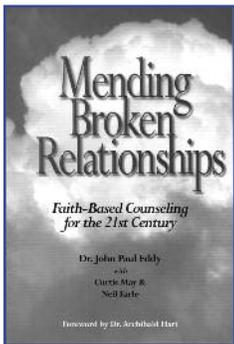


Rev. Joseph Ellwanger  
with St. Louis Chapter  
Leader Pam Harris

**Greetings from the Canary Islands,** I would like to order the *Mending Broken Relationships* book. Please let me know how much is the book and how I can go about ordering it. God bless you abundantly. Thank you for the wonderful work you do to bring reconciliation into the whole world. We are all one in God. He loves us all.

Isabel Medina, Canary Islands, Spain

## ORM Products Available



Two for the price of one! We have received a fresh printing of our ORM book, *Mending Broken Relationships: Faith-Based Counseling for*

*the 21st Century*. We are offering copies of the book, plus a booklet entitled *Standing in the Gap* for a suggested donation of \$18 (includes shipping costs). This is a real deal. Both are solid, meaty discussions of the nuts and bolts of personal and community healing and have proven popular and helpful with study groups and individual ministries. Please mail your request, along with a check or money order to ORM at the address on the right.



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