As a reconciled people, God has entrusted the Christian Church with the message and ministry of reconciliation. Paul asserts that this ministry is in fact a partnership with the reconciling God known to us in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit who is making all things new (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:1). This year we will explore two ministries of reconciliation theologically with a view to equipping and encouraging each other as ministers who lead their people to engage in these restorative and healing ministries: racial reconciliation and creation care.

“Racial prejudice and hatred are not only bad politics; they are heresy. They constitute a de facto rejection of the gospel.”
Dean Richard B. Hays, Divinity magazine, Spring 2015

Theological Reflection

Theological Reflection within Field Education has been defined as “reflection upon lived, embodied experiences in ministry that seeks to make sense of practice and form reflectors in habits for competent ministry.” In this way, while there are many potential methods that address this definition’s concerns, most can be broken down into something like inductive method, “What?, “So what?, “Now what?” These often become reflective questions like:

- What’s going on here? What are the relevant facts?
- What should I be paying attention to that I may be missing?
- How might others in the community see or experience this?
- How does the Bible speak to this? Our Christian theology?
- What’s at stake for the community in this?
- What are some ways forward? Who in our community might offer helpful counsel?
- What kind of leadership might this require of me?

The November peer reflection groups will provide the opportunity to practice this form of reflection in two ways.

A. Entering the Conversation

1. Read chapters 1 and 3 in *Brimming with God*. Chapter 1 explores theological reflection within field education placements. Chapter 3, “To Give or Not to Give,” is an actual ministry case inviting us to consider race, dignity, compassion and community. The

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1 Barbara Blodgett and Matthew Floding, eds., *Brimming with God: Reflecting Theologically on Cases in Ministry*, p. 4. Several books are on closed reserve in the library. You may purchase your own copy at: wipfandstock.com
2 See attached appendix on leadership elements from Floding, “Fostering a Mentoring Environment,” in Reflective Practice (2012) 272-81.
chapter consists of the ministerial case and two different approaches to reflection on that case.

a. First, write a 500 word reflection on the case (not a critique of the two reflections) using the method above or another suggested in *Brimming with God’s 22 examples*. If your birthday is January—March write from the perspective of the field education student; April—June from Gregory’s perspective; July—September from Pastor Williams’ or another pastoral staff member’s perspective; October—December from a fellow student’s perspective reading this case.

**B. Providing Contextual Leadership**

1. Read your context for ministry.³ Discuss with your supervisor-mentor:
   a. What signs do you see in our context that may be an invitation or call to racial reconciliation?
   b. What opportunities are there for our community to be a sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom of God with respect to racial reconciliation?
   c. What are the challenges to engaging racial reconciliation in our particular context?
   d. What gives you hope in this context?
   e. Which scriptures, what theology, what spiritual resources encourage you personally to live into this calling with this community?
   f. What kind of leadership does it require?

2. Second, in a 250 word summary, integrate the fruit of your conversation into your own statement of commitment to racial reconciliation and how you can further your own preparation for ministerial leadership that engages in racial reconciliation.

**C. Prayerful Response**

Prayer is always an appropriate response to an experience of God or reflecting on God’s work in our and other’s lives and in the world.

Write a prayer at the end of your reflection, to respond in a focused way, to an insight you gained through your theological reflection. If possible, write your prayer in the ancient form of the collect (pronounced with stress on the first syllable). The basic form looks like this:

**Invocation:** The Latin, invocare, means to call upon. Some examples are “Lord, God Almighty,” “Gracious Heavenly Father,” “Christ our friend,” “Spirit of wisdom,” or, “God our refuge.”

**Declaration:** After the invocation, the prayer names a quality of the One it has just invoked. For example, if your collect begins “God our refuge,” the declaration might be, “you are a shelter in the storms of life.”

³ For an instructive and amazing story of racial reconciliation that is deeply rooted in our Durham context see Osha Gray Davidson’s *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South.*
**Petition:** This request should follow logically from the attribute(s) of God declared. If the collect, to this point is, “God our refuge, you are a shelter in the storms of life.” The petition might be, “Protect and preserve _________ and her children as they seek more permanent shelter.”

**Anticipated result:** This usually is a continuation of the petition, For example, “Protect and preserve _________ and her children as they seek more permanent shelter, *that they may experience your sheltering care and have courage to weather their current storm.*”

**Doxological conclusion and affirmation:** It might simply be “through Christ our Lord. Amen.” It may be with an outpouring of praise, “We ask this through your son, our savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.” Still others continue the collect’s theme. In the example above the doxology might be, “*We ask this through Jesus Christ, who endured all storms for our sake. Amen.*”

**God our refuge,**
*You are a shelter in the storms of life.*

Protect and preserve _________ and her children as they seek more permanent shelter, *that they may experience your sheltering care and have courage to weather their current storm.*

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who endured all storms for our sake. Amen.
*Leadership Elements*

The measure of leadership is not the quality of the head, but the tone of the body. The signs of outstanding leadership appear primarily among the followers.

Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art*

- **Organizational Leadership**: Able to clearly describe collective goals so that each member understands any initiative’s purpose and direction and is empowered to determine what to do and why. The leader is skillful in strategic planning and developing clear action plans in collaboration with key stakeholders.

- **Public Leadership**: Able to interact with, speak to, and provide leadership in the broader, non-congregational community.

- **Collaborative and Connected Leadership**: Able to cultivate congregations and ministries committed to God’s work in the world by encouraging, equipping, empowering and celebrating members and their accomplishments. The leader is committed to be connected with peers and mentors for personal support and guidance, and seeks out multi-church/ministry partnerships.

- **Reconciling Leadership**: Able to effectively engage and resolve conflict and to reconcile conflicting parties.

- **Resourced Leadership**: Able to integrate Scripture, theology and tradition, local history and personal stories in addressing ongoing leadership challenges with pastoral imagination.

- **Learning Leadership**: Able to persistently engage in ongoing formal and informal learning through reading, writing, reflecting and conferencing with colleagues and peers. Capable of a self and social-awareness that benefits from feedback.

- **Sacred and Sustainable Leadership**: Able to engage in practices through a Rule of Life that grounds leadership in a deep spiritual rootedness that is life-giving, “like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season…”