

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Christian Leadership for Reconciliation

The GLI Institute booklet is the gift of many contributors. Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice constructed the overall methodology, structure and Five Key Questions and Katongole drafted the booklets in 2009, 2010, and 2011. For the 2012 booklet, Scott Schomburg did substantive writing to flesh out each chapter and added significantly to the introductory sections. Other GLI leaders (Davis Kasali, Celestin Musekura, and Wilfred Mlay) contributed Scripture passages for the 2012 booklet. For the 2013 booklet, Gann Herman added “How to Use this Booklet” and Wilfred Mlay provided editing oversight. For 2014, the booklet was edited for multi-year use.

Table of Contents

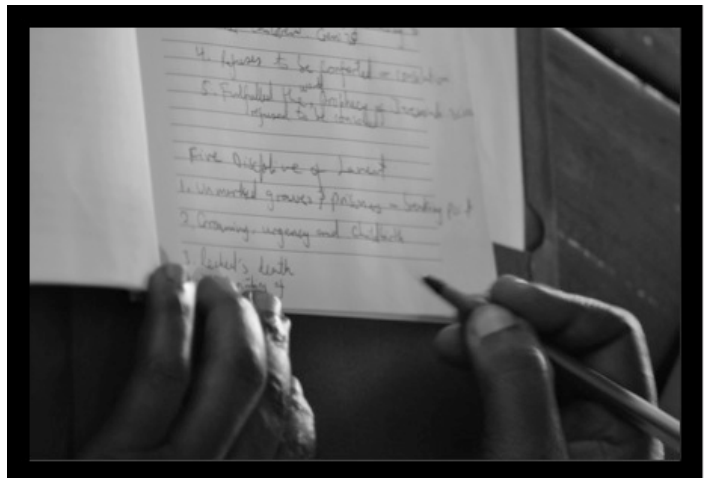
Introduction	4
A Christian Vision for Reconciliation	5
The Great Lakes Initiative Leadership Institute: <i>The Need</i>	8
Methodology: <i>Word Made Flesh</i>	10
The Content: <i>Five Questions</i>	11
Day One: <i>Reconciliation Toward What?</i>	14
Day Two: <i>What Is Going On?</i>	20
Day Three: <i>What Does Hope Look Like?</i>	26
Signs of Hope on Pilgrimage	31
Day Four: <i>What Kind of Leadership?</i>	36
Day Five: <i>Spirituality—Why Bother? Why Me?</i>	42
More Scriptural Reflections for the Kingdom of God	46
The Word Became Flesh: <i>A Call to Reflection</i>	48
How To Use this Booklet	50
For Further Reading and Reflection	52
Great Lakes Initiative Theme Song: <i>‘Til All Things Are Reconciled</i>	54
About the Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation	55

Introduction

Reconciliation comes to us through the *Word that became Flesh*. It surprises us. It whispers to us. It draws us out of death into life. Reconciliation calls us toward one another; it flows through us to enact the love that meets us in the Word of God that *makes all things new*.

This way of life opens us up to a lively Scriptural imagination, where God frees you up to faithfully play with God's Word, to feel God deep in your bones, to reflect God's kingdom with your own hands and feet as you wait for God to light a path for God's people. This invitation to reflection in the midst of struggle is an invitation to imagine the world Jesus is calling us into, to lament and to hope, to live in the freedom of God's Spirit who raised death to life everlasting.

You are invited to read the following reflections on Scripture as part of the conversation that invites you to *reflect* and *act* together, calling out to the *Word that became flesh* for help, hoping to encounter the Holy One in your midst. May God's face shine upon you as you imagine and enact new possibilities in the midst of struggle. May you see the world through the joy, tears, and life of Jesus. May you find God's life in the voice, the touch, the life of another, and may others find God's life in you.



A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

Jesus is God's re-creation of a world stuck in chronic conflict. Christ calls those who follow him to see the world that God has illuminated; a world of new possibilities—a new creation. In the midst of profound uncertainty, Jesus has called us to walk together in our hopes, our fears, and our dreams—hoping for the re-creation of all things.

Christians in the Great Lakes region find their roots in this person, and in the communities who have gathered around this Jesus, the *Word that became flesh*. This movement toward Jesus is wrought with suffering, with struggle, and eventually—it is marked by a new way of life together, a witness to God's relentless love, *one every bit as beautiful as the landscapes that mark the Great Lakes region as one of the most beautiful regions in the world*. This movement is sustained by a vision, one constantly being formed and molded by the life-giving spirit of God that flows through our daily life together. On this journey we are made *clean* by becoming—in Christ—what the world calls *unclean*, by learning how to know and love each other as we hope for the day that God's life will be known through the touch, the voice, the embrace of another.

Christians in the Great Lakes region have been born into a history that makes this vision a constant challenge. And yet, a Christian vision is called upon to *hear the groans around us as the groans of new creation*. The Kingdom of God is crying out to those with *ears to hear and eyes to see*. It is not in the heights—far away from the turbulence. It is in the midst of it all, healing and transforming the world from the inside out, because that is how God entered the world—that is how the *Word became flesh*.

The Great Lakes Initiative has embraced this story, knowing that if it is going to matter at all—if this Love is going to be real, then it must be practical, it must be felt, it must be enacted. Life in the body of Jesus must heal real wounds; it must raise *real* life from *real* death. If the light of Christ is going to be cause for praise, then

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

it must be praise through a healing touch, the embrace of enemies, the welcoming of strangers, and the dropping of our weapons. If any of this is going to matter, it must not only proclaim that *the ways things are is not the way things have to be*. It must be part of the actual life-giving re-creation of space that was once ruled by death. And here is the good news:

The way things are is not the way things have to be.

Indeed, the Kingdom of God is among you.

The Holy Spirit is already doing this work, but in the many contexts of chronic conflict, dividing walls are built thick, sturdy, and intended to last. The walls try to keep us from hearing each other's cry, and each other's joy. The walls try to keep needs from being met, dreams from being shared, and love from being revealed. The walls built to shield us from chronic conflict keep us from truly knowing one another. They only allow us to hear echoes and we are left to struggle alone.

But the Word really *did* become flesh. The body of Jesus *is* breaking down the dividing walls. A world darkened by chronic conflicts is being brought into the light of Christ, where struggle is turned toward life—where we walk together, a common journey always pointing beyond ourselves toward future possibilities—toward the body of Jesus Christ.

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

In the space below, we invite you to read and reflect on the different accounts in the Gospels of Jesus' coming into the world; of the Word becoming flesh. Who is Jesus in these stories, and who is he not? Where is Jesus, and where is he not? What is happening around Jesus? How might we let these stories shape the way we see the world today?

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

The Great Lakes Initiative Leadership Institute: The Need

The hope of reconciliation is difficult work. Challenges are many, and in the midst of chronic conflict, the call to this life that once was heard so clearly can sound distant, drowned out by exhaustion and the everyday confrontations with hardship. In the midst of struggle, space for the deepening of our call through reflection and sharpening our vision is difficult to find.

The Great Lakes Initiative is committed to fostering these spaces. Though we are shaped by the life of Jesus who has broken down the dividing walls, we go back to our home places where walls are alive and strong. Without hearing each other's testimonies, without feeling each other's touch, without our pilgrimage to be together that centers our lives in the body of Christ—our Christian visions can become broken, susceptible to promises of a better world offered to us from the heights that do not need Jesus or point toward his life. At the Leadership Institute, we learn again how to point toward the *Word that became flesh*. We learn again that our lives are connected by the work the Holy Spirit is already doing. We learn again that in the light of Christ we find the hope of the world, the peace of God's unrelenting love for us—the re-creation of a world without walls.

A Christian vision of reconciliation put forth by the Great Lakes Initiative Leadership Institute is nurtured by:

- Christians who are committed to the ongoing training and equipping of others, calling forth the gifts of the community to inspire, form, and support people to become ambassadors of God's movement of hope; that foster a life together that is a witness to *now* being "the acceptable time," *now* being the "day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).
- The Deepening formation, teaching, and content of a biblical vision of reconciliation that inspires and ferments a movement of transformed communities and relationships

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

in the region. This formation of communities is nurtured by each other's witness that Christ is strengthening us to the end, affirming us so that we do not "lack any spiritual gift" in our life together (1 Corinthians 1:4–9).

- Connecting leaders with other leaders on a common journey. Through shared stories and shared learning, we once again gather around Christ, our center—the one in whose Spirit life is raised from the dead (John 11:38–44) and makes dry bones walk again in new life (Ezekiel 37:1–14).
- Working from and sharing a common theological vision and language for the movement, one that is nurtured by stories that illuminate a world made sensible by the *Word Made Flesh*. Our vision for a better world—our vision of what is true, good, and beautiful is centered on the life of Jesus in whom we learn how to worship, pray, and *live* (John 14:5–6).
- Learning together through sharing and creating resources that deepen our call and creatively inspire, form, and support our individual and communal spirituality. Through reading, writing, and reflecting together we give ourselves a better chance to hear Holy Spirit's stirrings in our midst (Acts 4:23–37).'

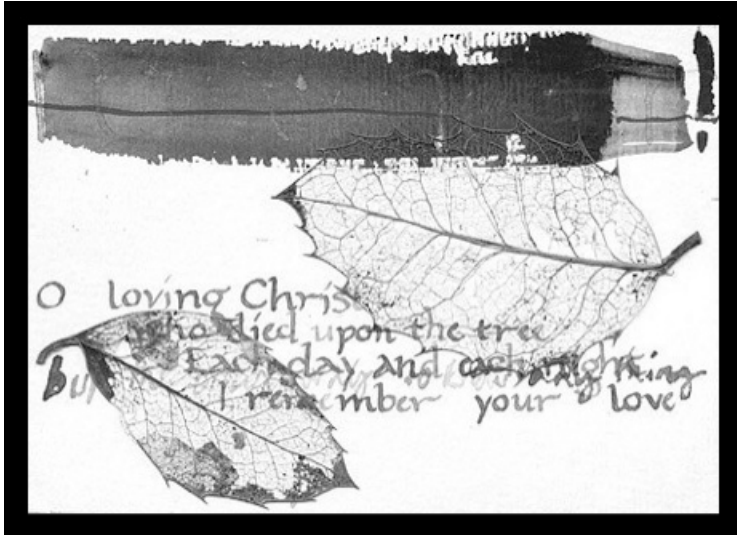
THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

Methodology: *Word Made Flesh*

The Great Lakes Initiative is fostered by a particular methodology, which brings together learning and formation at the Institute in a way that is at once *theological*, *contextual* and *practical*. We have come to refer to this methodology as the *Word Made Flesh* methodology. It is at its core a reflection of our deepest calling to follow Jesus as the source, goal, and purpose of our lives—the way of Jesus that is the way toward God’s reconciliation.

- *Word*: “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). A discussion about reconciliation must begin with Jesus, with God—Reconciliation as God’s gift. Whatever particular challenge is discussed must be framed within the wider story of God’s creation; God’s dealing with humankind through choosing the disadvantaged people of Israel, coming as the marginalized Jew in Jesus of Nazareth, and continuing to keep God’s promise of a *new creation* alive today through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- *Made Flesh*: At a particular time in history the Word became flesh, a Jewish peasant born of Mary in the village of Bethlehem. Among other things, this confirms that history and geography matter. It means we need not only ask, “Who is Jesus?” but also, “Where is Jesus?” and “What is happening around Jesus?” In discussing the various themes and topics, particular attention is paid to context: the historical, geographical, social, cultural, political and religious context in which our theological reflection is placed.
- *Dwelt Among Us*: Christ dwelt among us; we saw, touched, and ate with him. This presses the question: *What does it mean for Jesus to dwell with us here and now? Where is God, today?* Among other things, to ‘dwell’ points to patterns and skills that sustain our lives over the long haul. This *practical* angle of the curriculum engages stories, practices, skills, experiments and examples that help to shape Christian life and imagination.

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation



The Content: Five Questions

The Great Lakes Initiative hopes to be the kind of community that trusts in the abundant gifts we have been given to help each other deepen our individual and collective call. We hope to encourage a way of being Christian that reflects the God we worship in Jesus Christ; a God who is reconciling the world to God's self (2 Corinthians 5:18) by meeting us in the middle of our struggle, affliction, and joy.

In the midst of struggle, however, places too often marked by conflict, sickness, and debilitating poverty can often overwhelm us, and still something sustains us in our fragility, vulnerability, and weakness.

Pervasive injustice leaves us with more questions than answers. Yet, there is something holy about asking the right questions. Faithful questions can turn us toward God's life. They can open us up to new possibilities, and light up a world of hope where reconciliation is not only possible, but could surprise us at any moment.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

The curriculum for the Great Lakes Initiative, therefore, revolves around five critical questions. These questions open us up to each other and to new possibilities as we respond in hopes of hearing the Holy Spirit's words for the movement. In these five questions, we hope to turn toward life in the midst of death, toward the new ordering of the things in the Kingdom of God in the midst of the old order that is dying away in Christ.

The five questions are:

1. *Reconciliation Toward What?* This is the question relating to the goal, the end toward which God's movement leads. We invite you through your individual, collective, and ongoing reflection on this question to form a Scriptural imagination of *new creation* (2 Corinthians 5:17)—always pointing to the life of God in Jesus Christ, the source, goal, and purpose of Creation.
2. *What is going on?* This is the question of context, which seeks to get to a clearer and deeper understanding of the specific challenges facing the region. In our attempt to reflect a patient God, the Great Lakes Initiative sees it as a great gift to slow down, and to seek understanding of the different forces that keep the dividing walls up in our varying contexts and communities. Until you can see, you do not know which way is forward, so through this question we invite you to ask the deeper question. People are hungry, but *why*? People are fighting, but *why*? These are difficult questions to answer, and many times they demand that we develop the gift and discipline of lament when the brokenness of the world is too great, and God's promise are difficult to see. This question, maybe most importantly, invites you to pray, "How Long, O Lord?" (Psalm 13).
3. *What does hope look like?* This is the question that engages hopeful models, stories, experiments, initiatives, visions and practical skills that shape and sustain a better future in

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

Africa. This question invites you to be courageous, to put your theological vision to the ground and look for hopeful reflections of God's activity in the world. We invite you, through this question, to be hopeful people—to form a vision, imagination, and capacity for Christian hope (Luke 24:1–12).

4. *What kind of leadership?* This question explores the specific gifts, skills, practices and habits of leadership and patterns of life that sustain hope for the long haul. This question presses you to form a vision, skills and personal manifesto for leadership. Since the Great Lakes Initiative is a movement, we invite you to share your vision of leadership with others in hopes of nurturing a community of servants whose work is a reflection of Christ; the servant Lord (Luke 2:1–20).
5. *Why me and why bother?* This is the question that explores issues of personal vocation, calling and formation. The question highlights practices, rhythms, and life-styles, convictions that sustain leadership even in the face of challenges and obstacles, and invites you to form a deep and lively practical spirituality, which can sustain one's leadership over the long haul.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

DAY ONE: *Reconciliation Toward What?*

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

—Genesis 1:1

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17–20a

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating’ for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.”

—Isaiah 65:17–20

“What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

—Luke 13:18–19

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation



New Creation is about the delight of God (Isaiah 65:17–20). God delights in us. God does not despise God’s creation, or leave it alone. God, from the very beginning, has been intimately involved in this world we have been born into, as particular people in particular places—praising a God who not only sustains us, but also *enjoys* us.

All of creation is groaning. Christ’s reconciling work has the whole world in its view. It is all being re-created. And the closer we get to Christ, the closer we get to each other, the more we catch a glimpse of that light that shows us what *new creation* looks like. This is the common journey we are on together. The ministry of reconciliation is to travel toward Christ, toward the reconciliation of *all things*. It is a pilgrimage, not away from conflict, but into the places of chronic conflict to be signs of life in the midst of death.

Scripture witnesses to the re-creation of all things, and it has something to do with you. You are being called into Christ, to lean up against him by leaning up against each other, to let the re-creation of all things flow through you—so it might pour out into the world through your hands and feet. Reconciliation is not

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

something *out there*, visible so that we can package it in a program, ministry model, or methodology—it is not a picture we can draw of the future so that we may build a world like it. It is always a surprise. It is among us, in unexpected gifts and within unlikely people. It is in the loving of our enemies, in the making clean the unclean, in the mustard seed that begins small and grows strong and nurtures life. The Kingdom of God surprises us. In the midst of our work, reconciliation comes to us like a flash of lightning.

We anticipate future possibilities through Christ's ongoing presence in our life together through the Holy Spirit. We look to the *reconciling of all things* through Jesus—the one who comes to us, surprises us, re-directs us, points us forward, always in the form of unexpected gifts and unlikely people. In a world where the newest strategies for development and peacemaking are always being presented to us, we listen for the voice of Jesus—and we turn toward him, and travel in anticipation that lightning may flash, that we may notice the Kingdom of God among us. This is the way toward the reconciliation of *all things*.

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

We invite you to reflect on the parable of the mustard seed (Luke 13:18–19) alongside the call to the ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:17–20a. How does the parable of the mustard seed help you envision the end goal of reconciliation? If you look to your landscape, what images of the land or of what grows from the land can be a modern day parable of the Kingdom of God? How can these modern day parables help keep the vision of reconciliation always traveling toward the promises of new creation?

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

The journey of reconciliation is not only a question of *where* you are headed, but *how* you are traveling on your way. While we continue to learn to travel faithfully, some *major challenges* to be faced are:

- A purely *spiritual* Gospel that has little to do with the social realities: the challenge of the evacuation gospel, or living on two unconnected planes: the spiritual/social; Jesus/justice.
- A *suspect* Gospel: Christianity as part of the problem of violence, poverty and other social challenges in the region.
- *Distraction* or lack of focus: without a clear sense of the goal, we become frantic: endlessly fire fighting with no clear vision of the ultimate goal or end.

Learning Goal: We invite you to form a lively imagination that is at once theological and practical that displays reconciliation not only as God's gift and promise to the world, but that reconciliation in its social, personal, political, economic and spiritual dimensions is what Christianity is about, or ought to be about.

We invite you to:

- Reflect on the movement of reconciliation in Scripture, from Creation (Genesis 1:1) to New Creation (Revelation 21). *What imagery is present in both stories? Where is God? What is God doing with God's body, and how does that influence the use of our own bodies to reflect the God we worship? What is happening around God? How does this relate to the parable of the mustard seed?*

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

- Reflect on ‘shalom’—the promise and reality of this new creation: a holistic picture of flourishing. Shalom is the hope of the prophets: enemies reconciled, injustices righted, hurts healed, fears calmed and communities prospering. God’s mission is to bring the whole of creation into harmony; peace with God. *What does it look like to flourish in the Kingdom of God that is like a mustard seed? What does flourishing look like in the new creation (Revelation 21)? If the ministry of reconciliation is to be a sign of life in the midst of conflict, what might that look like for you?*
- Share your imagination with others. Let the imagination of others nurture your own vision to enact the kingdom of God in the midst of chronic conflict. What does it mean to not escape conflict, but to turn toward life with people in the midst of chronic conflict? Let your imagination about the big picture be nurtured by good questions while engaging Scripture and modern day parables of the kingdom of God.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

DAY TWO: *What Is Going On?*

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17–20a

“But Hannah answered, ‘No, my Lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.’”

—1 Samuel 1:15–16

“A voice is heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

—Matthew 2:18

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

—Luke 13:34

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation



God laments. Holy Scripture does not witness to a distant God, but one who struggles with us, who is intimately involved in our weeping. Hannah is in the midst of struggle—and she goes to the Lord. God is involved with the social outcast, the barren wife ridiculed by her rival, the downtrodden. Hannah feels pain deep in her bones, and in that feeling there is a meeting. God is felt deep in her bones, in her troubled weeping.

Rachel's weeping surrounds the coming of the Lord into the world, the anticipation of the turbulence that will surround his Advent. Matthew's picture of Christ's birth is a horrific scene. Violence has exposed itself as the power of death. Rachel's weeping signals life and hope. Rachel's weeping is the sign of a God who has freely bound God's self up in the mess of every day life. Herod is met with a threat that he may lose his whole kingdom, one built

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

and sustained by the powers of death. You may be able to imagine Herod weeping on his throne, but his weeping turned to violence. Rachel's weeping, on the other hand, comes from below, from the experience of true suffering and true yearning for God to hold true to God's good promises. This is the weeping that gives birth to life, *the groans of new creation*.

New creation is new life found in the body of Jesus Christ, the hope that has now joined Jew and Gentile to walk together toward reconciliation, to enact the kingdom of God, to make love *real* among *real* people with *real* suffering. And yet, the body of Christ weeps over the groans of creation—ones coming from the ongoing creation of enemies, more injustice; more hunger. Followers of Jesus lament because Jesus laments. We are always praying for *eyes to see and ears to hear*, that we may look at each other and the world through Jesus' own tears.

Notice the imagery. In this Luke passage, Jesus has just described the throne of worldly power as the throne of the fox—a predator. And then he weeps over Jerusalem, desiring to gather his people in like a hen gathers her chicks. Jesus laments, not as a predator, but as a vulnerable hen. To lament with Jesus is to lament from a place of risk, of vulnerability, without worldly power that promises quick fixes. Instead, Jesus' laments are the groans of new creation—calling forth God's promises to *reconcile all things*.

In Jesus' imagery of the hen you can hear echoes of the mustard seed. "What is the kingdom of God like?" It is like a mustard seed, and it is like a hen that gathers her brood under her wings. This is what it looks like to groan for new creation—to witness to God's unrelenting love for God's creation. The kingdom of God surprises us. It comes to us in unexpected gifts in the midst of chronic conflict. Who would turn to an image of the helpless hen to comfort people in the midst of conflict? In the ministry of reconciliation, we lament with our mother hen, Jesus. We lament with the psalmist, "How long, O Lord?" We lament because we walk together in the body of Christ, where Jesus laments with us. In the lament of Jesus we find life in the midst of chronic conflict.

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

We invite you to reflect on the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17–20a) alongside the lament of Jesus (Luke 13:34). What are some modern images of Jesus that reflect the Luke passage where Jesus refers to himself as a hen that is vulnerable to the fox? What does this say about God? How can we use these images to make sense out of our own particular contexts? How do we look for Jesus, and maybe imitate Jesus, as the brood looking for her mother hen?

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

The gift and discipline of lament is not only a question of *lamenting only*, but also *what it is you are lamenting, who you lament with, and how you lament*. While we continue to learn to travel faithfully, some *major challenges* to be avoided are:

- *Numbness*: without taking time to see, name and lament the brokenness in our midst, it is easy to become numb or uncaring.
- *Despair*: accepting that the way things are is the way things have to be, or the way things will *always* be.
- *Survival*: lowering one's horizon and expectation to what is possible – thus settling for personal survival and wellbeing.

Learning goal: to engage lament as both a gift and discipline, which allows one to see, name, and stand within the brokenness in a way that does not lead to numbness or despair but energizes and gives birth to hope.

- We invite you to explore the *biblical* notion of lament as both a gift and a discipline. In the Bible lament is a gift, because lament and hope go hand in hand: there is no hopeful future without lament. Possible resources for the biblical notion of lament include the books of Lamentations, Joel, Psalms, and the Gospels.
- Learn to describe social challenges within the cultural, historical, social and political context. First, describe what is going on. What do you see? Who do you see? What are people saying around you? Where are the cries coming from? Can you hear them? Second, what societal conditions are

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

making these social ills flourish? What does this say about how we imagine each other? What does this say about how we imagine the world? What does this say about how we imagine God?

- Share your stories. Your story can reveal so much. Learn how to tell your story to someone else, and analyze it. What is your history? How were you taught to understand the world? Where are you from? What do the groans of creation look like in your own home place? The more you are able to share, listen, and share again your stories, the more changes we give each other to understand our world through the life of Jesus.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

DAY THREE: *What Does Hope Look Like?*

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17–20a

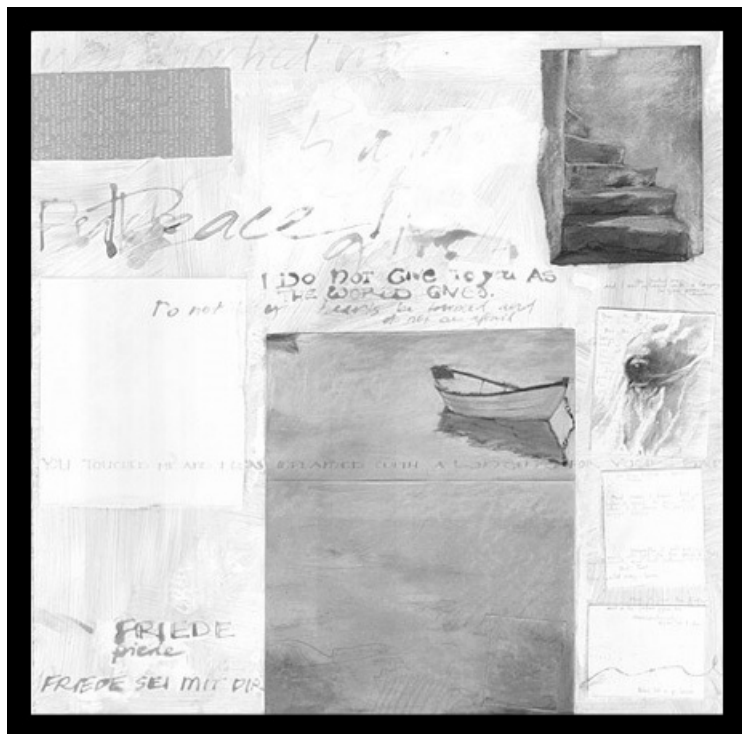
“O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord God to these bones; I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

—Ezekiel 37:4–6

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

—Romans 8:38–39

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation



The Great Lakes Initiative is full of people whose stories have been joined together by the Holy Spirit. They are stories of lament and stories of hope, ones that testify to a God who looks out over dry bones with compassion—that testify to a God who is life in the midst of death, and who—from time to time, even makes dry bones live again. In a valley full of death, God’s reconciliation still moves forward.

And in Ezekiel’s vision, in the stirring of bones and in the breath of God we hear echoes of the Christ who has called us into himself to be ambassadors of Christ’s reconciliation. In Christ, we are called to give life to dry bones with our touch, to speak true words of hope that breath life into those around us who are trapped by hardship. In Christ’s own body we find the strength to speak life, to be life, and to see life around us—even in deepest of

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

valleys with the driest of bones.

And unlike Ezekiel, we do not travel alone into valleys; we do not have to look for signs of hope on our own. In Christ's body we walk together. We are joined together through faith. In Christ's body we find out that nothing,

not death, though there will be dying

not rulers, though they will make martyrs

not history, though it will bring catastrophe

not powers, though they wield death daily

nothing can separate us from *true* life inside Christ's own body—where his love becomes our love for one another. On this journey together, on pilgrimage, we may find out just how much we love one another. We may be surprised by God's relentless love, by hope, and hopefulness at its most bare looks like praise. Hope looks like a life of *praise*. Hope looks like a God who is life in the midst of death. Praise God.

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

We invite you to reflect on the passage from Ezekiel on the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37) alongside the ministry of reconciliation passage (2 Corinthians 5:17–20a) and the Romans passage (Romans 8:38–39). What images come to mind? When you think of the dry bones, what do you think about in your own context? Can you think of stories when life has broken into situations that felt hopeless? What would it look like to find hope in valleys of dry bones? Can your touch be the touch of life?

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

Challenges facing communities not grounded in hope could be:

- *Despair:* Remember the posture of the asker in the Mark passage. He was turned toward Jesus, addressing his Lord with questions that opened up the root of all the commandments: *to love*. If we lose sight of Jesus' body, of the movement of God's reconciliation, we can often despair at the scale of suffering we see all around us. Hope can feel like betrayal.
- *Transference:* communities and individuals who have been constant victims pass on victimization and violence:
- *Shallow visions of hope:* "They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, 'Peace, Peace,' when there is no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14).

Learning goal: to share and build up practical models of hope, which are signs and manifestations of the Movement of Hope in the Great Lakes region.

- Engage biblical examples of hope. *What is different about it than other pictures of hope you have seen? What is similar?* The biblical journey is the form and story of what God's movement of hope really looks like.
- Share life stories, models, experiments and initiatives that display Christian hope. *How is 'hope' different from Christian hope?*
- Highlight examples of leaders, skills and practices of leaders who lead into hope. Christian leadership for reconciliation in times of turbulence is as much about *doing* as it is about inspiring and leading hope.

Signs of Hope on Pilgrimage

On pilgrimage we are joined together to seek God, hoping God will make sense out of our lives. We hope for God to redirect our distorted perspectives and rightly order our lives in the life of Jesus. It is a pilgrimage, because pilgrimage is the movement of God. God moves toward us. Our journey, at its best, is an imitation of the journey of God to be with us in the *Word that became flesh* as we move toward Jesus.

Still, it is a season of chronic conflicts in our various contexts, to varying degrees. Life competes with the powers of death, a cycle that only seems to speed up or slow down, but never stops. In the midst of this, turning toward life means joining together with your sisters and brothers in faith and trust in God whose promises shape our dreams and free us from our fears.

We invite you to notice *who* you are traveling with today on pilgrimage. Look around you. There are many stories, all longing for communion with God, with you, on pilgrimage. Notice what you have, and what you do not have. On pilgrimage you travel with nothing, all illusions of security are aside. You are sojourning to find God together, to feel God deep in your own body. Your goal for pilgrimage is nothing short of meeting God face to face, as your companion and your destiny.

On pilgrimage you do all of this, not in hopes of escaping from the world, but to travel hoping to find the light of Christ on God's beloved earth. It is on earth that we travel, joined together hoping to meet Jesus, the Holy One. You are traveling to a site that the Great Lakes Initiative has found to be a sign of hope, always coming out of deep individual and communal lament. Hope and Lament are companions on your journey with you as you travel together, hoping to be received by no other than Jesus himself in each other's embrace.

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

Key questions on the pilgrimage:

What's going on? What is the landscape (of pain and lament) on which the sign of hope is located?

What are the underlying challenges to life, peace on this landscape?

What is the story behind the sign of hope?

What inspired the leader? How did she/he start?

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What keeps her/him going?

How is this a sign of hope? For whom?

What is the most impressive/striking/inspiring insight of the day?

How does this speak to your own context? Your leadership?

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How does this speak to who God is calling you to be?

What are the key takeaways?

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DAY FOUR: *What Kind of Leadership?*

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17–20a

“Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried.”

—Ruth 1:15–17

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as your-self.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

—Mark 12:30–31

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‘Reconciliation’ is a word that can lose its meaning, even in a group that is so committed to its vision. It is in need of flesh, of concreteness, of practical steps that illuminate what hoping for reconciliation looks like from the ground up, in the day-to-day. The Great Lakes Initiative is committed to being a community of practitioners whose lives point beyond ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in moving us toward reconciliation, toward Jesus. Jesus is not a leader who has given us a plan on how to be reconciled. Jesus is something much more beautiful than that, something much more fitting for a God whose love is without limits.

Indeed, Jesus *is* reconciliation.

Leadership inside the body of Jesus is to witness to *this* life that is *true* life, to stand in the light of Christ and be led with our lives pointed toward Jesus.

It is a witness, because it is always listening for a voice beyond itself—it is listening to the Holy Spirit, that power of God that

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

blows as it wills. It is not subject to any worldly power, or model, or style. As leaders, the Great Lakes Initiative hopes to engage Scripture in hopes of meeting Jesus—the Holy One we might follow, and in so doing, be a healing light in our communities.

The question posed to Jesus in the Mark passage (Mark 12:30–31), about the greatest commandment, is in essence a question about leadership. *How should I worship God rightly, Jesus?* Notice the posture of the one asking the question. He is already exposing himself as a leader. His body is positioned toward Jesus, not the world. You can picture this person, attentive, ready to learn from her Lord. And his question is about his body. How do I use my hands and feet to reflect the God I worship? How does my thinking *and* my doing matter?

And Jesus told him to *love*.

Let your reflection turn you toward love. Let your action be a display of love. Let your prayer be a yearning for love. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give us a love too full for us to carry on our own, a love that must be poured out, and received, and then poured out again.

As a leader, one central way of loving will be to *know* who your neighbors are. Who are you thinking of when you say ‘we’? Ruth is a courageous leader for us to follow as we walk together toward Jesus who re-imagines the ‘we’ for us. The only thing keeping Ruth attached to Naomi is love. There is no other reason for her to continue. Naomi’s life is suffering. Israel’s life is suffering. There is nothing for Ruth except the person and the God she loves. She knows she is getting herself into potential trouble. She does not know if she will be met with love or with rejection as she travels with Naomi. But love keeps her from turning back. Her commitment is one echoed today throughout the many stories of committed leadership we find in the Great Lakes region. Consistently committing one’s self to a particular people in a particular place is a calling, and Ruth is a powerful conversation partner. She shows us that there is a connection much deeper than nature—it is *love*.

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

We invite you to reflect on the ministry of reconciliation passage (2 Corinthians 5:17–20a) alongside the Ruth passage (Ruth 1:15–17) and the Mark (Mark 12:30–31) passage. In light of the Ruth and Mark passage, what does reconciliation look like for leadership? Is Ruth a leader here? If so, how? What situations can you think of when you have pointed to Christ in a faithful way as a leader, and how can you continue to reflect on those stories that build you up in the body of Christ? In reading the entire Ruth story, what are small steps you already are, or could, embody Ruth's way of being a leader?

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

Defining leadership and living it out is especially important for a Christian who worships a Lord who was servant to all. If being a leader is to look like Christ, then a theological imagination is especially important to be able to maintain a faithful way of leading over the long haul. Along the way, some of the major challenges might be:

- *Prideful posture:* As a leader who hopes to be a witness to God's activity on earth, you may be especially susceptible to pride. People love what you do. People want to support you and lift you up as a shining example in your community. This can rightly be cause for humility, but can also foster feelings of pride that turn us away from Christ to focus on ourselves.
- *Ambition:* Often leaders can become too focused on their own dreams, and force projects on to communities and peoples who may not be ready. Being a leader for God's ministry of reconciliation means learning appropriate times to have urgency, and when to have patience. It is important to reflect on what it means for a leader to be Christian, and to believe it is the Holy Spirit ahead of us that actually does the work.
- *Discouragement:* With such passion for change, and for God's reconciling movement, any sense of shortcoming can be devastating for a leader. Being a leader is to make yourself vulnerable to pushback, and is to be challenged to foster and find spaces where you can continue to find courage.

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Learning goals: to form and support a Scriptural imagination for leadership that embodies the *Word Made Flesh* methodology. This way of leadership keeps the big picture in view while engaging the particulars, holding lament and hope together as gifts and disciplines of the Christian life together.

- Reflect theologically on leadership. How does what we do with our bodies reflect the God we worship? How do the words we speak reflect truthfulness? How do my leadership habits show fidelity to Christ?
- Engage your context, and how your leadership might take particular shape given the challenge of your community and specific social ills that are most powerful in your setting. Who are your neighbors? What walls have been built and how could you begin to make room for them to come down?
- Share your leadership vision with other leaders. Make room for leaders you trust to continue to speak into your life, to build you up in the body of Christ toward reconciliation.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

DAY FIVE: *Spirituality—Why Bother? Why Me?*

God's message is contained in Jars of Clay:

“Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.”

—2 Corinthians 4:6–12

The one thing needful: Extravagant mercy and extravagant devotion go hand-in-hand

(Luke 10: *The Good Samaritan*)

Getting God's love into our bones:

“One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.”

—Psalm 27:4–5

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

Light flows through clay jars like the Spirit of God flows through us. We mediate God's care, God's love, and God's light to each other. In our speaking, we pray the Holy Spirit would speak Holy words. In our touch, we pray the Holy Spirit would bring life. In our walking together, we pray the Holy Spirit of life would chart our path; that we might lean against one another to keep our footing. In clay jars God affirms God's love for the stuff of the earth, for us. God is reconciling the world, and it has something to do with us before we are able to understand that. You are a clay jar. You are created, and God's message is in you, flows through you out into the world. It is you, because *you* are an affirmation of God's care for the world, for God's unrelenting mercy and devotion. It is you, because the Holy Spirit's life is already flowing through you. It is you, because you have decided that all of that is not only real, it is *beautiful*. In your being astonished by God's world, you are already witnessing to God's ministry of reconciliation.

The light of Jesus is the space where our broken lives are invited into Jesus' own life. In the light of Jesus we do not only see the Israelite and Samaritan as neighbors in the Good Samaritan story, we see the problem with a road to Jericho that leaves people in the ditch. Jesus exposes the evil in the world, and Jesus consumes it with new possibilities in the midst of struggle. In the light of Jesus we are free to expand the 'we' in which we understand the question: *who is your neighbor?* We are free to love, for God's love has been given to us; God's clay jars.

The journey of reconciliation is dependent upon Jesus' body to bring us into his life and to nudge us toward God's peace in contexts of chronic conflict. We are invited to feel God's love deep in our bones, and in our collective worship of a God who reconciles all things, we are joined together in a new way—toward new creation. May your neighbor always find in you the presence of God's love, and may you always see Christ in the unexpected gifts of new neighbors.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

We invite you to reflect on these Scripture passages above. Describe times in which you were able to feel God deeply in your bones? If you cannot remember, Can you try to think of the kind of situation or experience in which you might expect to feel God's presence in your own body? What does it look like to be astonished by God's world? What about the Good Samaritan story? Which characters felt God's presence? And who do you find yourself to be in the story? How would you answer the question: Who is your neighbor?

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

“Why me?” is a question about calling. In discerning our calling, we are often confronted with the following challenges:

- *Shyness*: Who am I to lead? Feeling inadequate or exempting oneself because one is not an expert: “Anyone in Christ ...” (2 Corinthians 5:17–20a)
- *Hopelessness*: carrying on even when there are no immediate results
- *Burn out*: overextension, overwork.

Learning goals: to construct practical leadership patterns and personal spirituality.

- *Take time* to listen and to share stories of individual calls to leadership and ministry of the participants—which must include a discussion of role models and personal influences.
- *Write out* and share your dreams. What is the dream/vision that God is writing in your life? Where do you feel called to serve and how?
- *Form your individual leadership patterns*. Leadership patterns are different from models. Patterns set forms of behavior, styles of leadership, etc. that are about a formation process—a process of becoming that is tied to living into our lives as God’s creatures made in the image of God. If the image of God makes us free, in what ways do your patterns of leadership point people to the Word Made Flesh?
- *Highlight practices* and disciplines for a personal spirituality and growth.
- Formulate a ‘*personal leadership manifesto*’

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

**More Scriptural Reflections for
the Kingdom of God**

Imagine the days before the 2nd Pentecost (Acts 2:1–14). The disciples had just witnessed the suffering and death of their Lord—Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of Israel’s hopes and dreams. They had their own plans of how the world was going to change. Jesus had come. The suffering of their people would surely come to an end.

Genocide. Sickness. Colonization. Debilitating poverty.

Jesus would heal the world. Jesus would overthrow the powers of violence and death. Jesus would mean peace.

And then Jesus was put on a cross.

And then they waited.

And then they lost hope. These were turbulent times.

And in their despair, he appeared to them again. How can this be?

Jesus was alive.

He had been raised, and through their doubt they came to see his scars as proof. Their suffering Messiah was with them again. Their Lord had come back to save their people. And so they gathered around him, as they always did, because that is what followers of Jesus do. They wait for him, gather around him, listen to him, worship like him, pray like him, and *live* like him. And for forty days Jesus gave his final teaching, he told them what this whole thing has been about from the beginning:

It is all about the Kingdom of God. It is about love. It is about you.

But they are tired. They have been born, like you, into a world they did not choose, holding onto the promises of God. They rightly press the question: “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

There is exhaustion in their voice. They have known this

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

Jesus long enough to know he is anything but predictable. There is something wild about him. He tells fishermen to let go of their nets, the source of their sustenance. He tells tax collectors to put down their money. He heals with mud, with spit, and even more—he does it all on the Sabbath. He faces the devil and turns down the chance to rule all the kingdoms of the world. They know this God cannot be tamed, but they are learning to trust him. And so in their hoping, they ask him: “Is now the time, Lord?”

And he tells them to wait. Just wait in Jerusalem. He sees the genocide. He sees the effects of colonization. He sees the conflict, the bloodshed. He sees the hunger. He hears all the cries. He feels these turbulent times more deeply than they are able. He meets the very powers of death face to face.

Jesus tells them to pray, for they are about to receive what they need. They are about to receive something more powerful than money, more powerful than the sword. They are about to receive that which finds its power, not in might, but in its source—in steadfast, unrelenting, *Love*. They are about to receive the Holy Spirit, who will guide them, who will raise them from the dead. Just, wait. The Kingdom of God is here, and as the Holy Spirit holds their hand they will enact that Kingdom everywhere they go.

Even in these times of turbulence, they will be like a mustard seed, and their life will mean healing, transformation, and love for a world crying out.

Your life, too, will mean praise to a Lord who has not left you alone. Your life will be re-created.

You will participate in the *new creation*.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

The Word Became Flesh: *A Call to Reflection*

It is first century Palestine. There have been whispers of a woman, Mary, who has been visited by angels. She is pregnant, and there are rumors. How could this be? Mary has proclaimed that the coming of this One will mean the lifting up of the lowly, the healing of the brokenhearted, and the making straight of all the crooked paths. How could this be? The news deeply stirred the fears of King Herod. More of his soldiers were in the streets. The King's destructive power was being exposed. King Herod was also preparing for the Lord, in a much different way than Mary. There was a moment of intense anticipation.

What will happen? Where will it happen? How will it happen?

If the Lord is coming, Herod was convinced he would need his most powerful army to resist God's power.

And then—quietly, Mary gives birth to Jesus, far away from the thrones of worldly power. No army. No protection from weapons; just vulnerable, weak Jesus.

And yet, this hope—it is making your world, for a moment, *more* turbulent. The worldly powers have heard of the advent of this one who has given suffering peoples a new hope; that the world is about to be re-created. Peace has entered our chronic conflicts, and conflict resists Jesus' vision of a new world.

Jesus' body is a light that teaches us how to see. It exposes the old order—the violence, disease, and poverty. It exposes the roots of the chronic conflicts. The birth of Jesus was a turbulent time in history. King Herod showed the roots of his worldly power when Jesus was born. Infants were killed. People were not images of God's love, but *tools* for the expansion of Herod's kingdom; and Herod's kingdom meant suffering for the poor. It was clear from the beginning—the peace of Christ and the peace of King Herod could not co-exist. One of them had to go, for the peace of Christ is something entirely new. The Peace of Christ is hope at its core, it cannot leave an inch of this world unchanged—it is love at its

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

deepest possible level. The Peace of Christ is the reconciling of *all things*.

And yet, those who follow him find the conflicts have not ceased. Tears still need to be wiped. Hope still needs to be restored. And so we witness to the *Word that became flesh*, hoping that in our life together, our touch, our healing of real wounds of real people, that the Kingdom of God will be enacted in our midst—that our lives will be a witness to the Peace of Christ in the midst of conflict, that the day of salvation is now.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

How to Use This Booklet

This Great Lakes Initiative Leadership Institute Booklet, published in conjunction with the Annual Leadership Institute, is designed to be useful in at least three ways:

- 1) For those who attend the Institute, the booklet is rich in Scriptural passages to study during times of personal devotion and reflection through-out the Institute week.
- 2) The booklet is also suitable for use with small groups. Leaders who want to share what they have learned at the Institute with their family members, Bible study groups, congregations, organizational or diocesan leaders will find questions to write about or think about for all those settings. There are Scriptures to ponder with these questions, which guide you to discern God's calling on your life and to read the signs of the times as you seek God's voice.
- 3) And there are also messages here to be preached.

In order to make the fullest possible use of the Booklet, take time to understand what the Institute leaders and booklet authors mean when they speak of how important it is to understand that the *Word was made Flesh and Dwelt among us*. The everlasting God, in the person of His son Jesus the Christ, entered into our contexts, lived a human life in a human body, and still lives among us today by His Spirit. This booklet can help you explore what that means for you, where you live, in the midst of your laments and hopes.

The questions for each day of the week are the key to understanding the GLI Institute's teaching on reconciliation. As you ponder these questions and explore them with others, listen for the call of God on your life. What is God doing in your context to bring into being His new creation? What is God asking you to do as His ambassador for reconciliation? What laments can you

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

name, what signs of hope do you see? Where do you find strength to continue with the ministry of reconciliation despite all that discourages and delays you?

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

For Further Reading and Reflection

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A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

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- Vanier, Jean and Stanley Hauerwas. *Living Gently in a Violent World: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness* (Resources for Reconciliation). Intervarsity Press Books, 2008.
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*These are all representative titles. Any and all titles by authors above are recommended.

THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

'Til All Things Are Reconciled

Rebecca Mosley, Josephine Munyeli

African Traditional Hymn

Adagio

Piano

We your peo - ple sing your prai - ses as to ge - ther we are sent to re -
Bon Ber - ger ton peu - ple 'a do - re. Ic - i en Mis - sion pour toi, à tra -

Pno.

veal your new cre - a - tion in the sha - dows of la - ment. Give us
vers les la - men - ta - tions vient la nou - velle - cré - a - tion. Gui - de

Pno.

cou - rage for the jour - ney, Shep-herd Je - sus be our guide; Help us
nous sur ce voy - a - ge, et nous au - rons la Pas - sion, Le cou -

Pno.

lead with hope and pas - sion 'til all things are re - con - ciled.
rage et l'e - spér - an - ce pour la ré - con - ci - lia - tion.

A Christian Vision for Reconciliation

***About the Duke Divinity School Center
for Reconciliation***

Our Mandate

Established in 2005, the Center's mission flows from the Apostle Paul's affirmation in 2 Corinthians 5 that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," and that "the message of reconciliation has been entrusted to us."

In many ways and for many reasons, the Christian community has not taken up this challenge. In response, the Center seeks to form and strengthen transformative Christian leadership for reconciliation.

Our Mission

Rooted in a Christian vision of God's mission, the Center for Reconciliation advances God's mission of reconciliation in a divided world by cultivating new leaders, communicating wisdom and hope, and connecting in outreach to strengthen leadership.

For More Information, please contact us at:

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THE GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

The Great Lakes Initiative is a community of restless Christian leaders seeking to embody God's vision of reconciliation and to inspire, form and support other leaders in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa through community, formation and learning shaped by biblically inspired content and methodologies. The Great Lakes Initiative is a partnership of Duke Divinity School's Center for Reconciliation with African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries, Mennonite Central Committee, and World Vision.

Many thanks to Stephanie Gehring of Duke Divinity School for allowing us to include images of her paintings throughout this booklet. To see more of Stephanie's artwork and her website: www.stephaniegehring.com.