



2022 Leadership Institute

June 06 – 10, 2022 3pm-5:30pm EAT

*“Christian Leadership for Reconciliation:
Tackling Ideological and Identity Conflicts”*

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface with a grid of 25 participants. The participants are arranged in a 5x5 grid. The control bar at the bottom includes the following elements from left to right: Unmute, Start Video, Security, Participants (74), Chat (6), Share Screen, Pause/Stop Recording, Breakout Rooms, Interpretation, Reactions, Apps, Whiteboards, and a red Leave button. The top of the interface shows a recording status and a View button. The participants' names and some details are visible below their video thumbnails.

Participant Name	Participant Name	Participant Name	Participant Name	Participant Name
Kanini	Oswald Rukundo	Infinix HOT 10 Lite	Odea Gideon Patrick	WILLY-FRED
Hezron Masitsa (Faith to Action Network)	Graciella Ntahiraja	Tekalign S. Demissie (Ethiopia)	Desalegn Abebe Ethiopia	Etienne NDAYEGAMIYE
Yotam Enes	iPhone	Pamela Modong Wurube	3.Augustin	Victor Nsilima
Jean Bosco Mutebutsi	John Rich-Tanzania	Gloria Nyampinga	Martin Kwigeza	Muhereza Liberty
Yusef-A	3635308672	SARAH KUMBI	KWIZERA Eric	NYIRAMANA Cecile (Rwanda)

The 11th GLI Leadership Institute 2022 Report

Background and Introduction

Each year, the Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) gathers together a community of Christian leaders at GLI's Leadership Institute to intentionally focus on the creation of a "new we." This "new we" is intergenerational, inter-confessional and an embodiment of hopeful people who understand that there is no reconciliation without conversion into a new state of being where the old allegiances of nation, ethnicity, race, gender and caste give way to a new communal identity in Christ, as outlined in Galatians 3:28.

Unlike during the in-person gatherings that bring together restless catalytic leaders from the seven GLI focus countries of Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania, and beyond the Great Lakes region to be in a space for transformation, the virtual gathering excludes *rest*, only providing for reflection and renewal.

Overview

A congregation of 111 (a hundred and eleven) participants representing 13 (thirteen) nationalities gathered at the 11th Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) Leadership Institute held online for a second year running, since COVID-19 happened, from June 6 to 10, 2022. The Institute focused on the theme: *Christian Leadership for Reconciliation: Tackling Ideological and Identity Conflicts*.

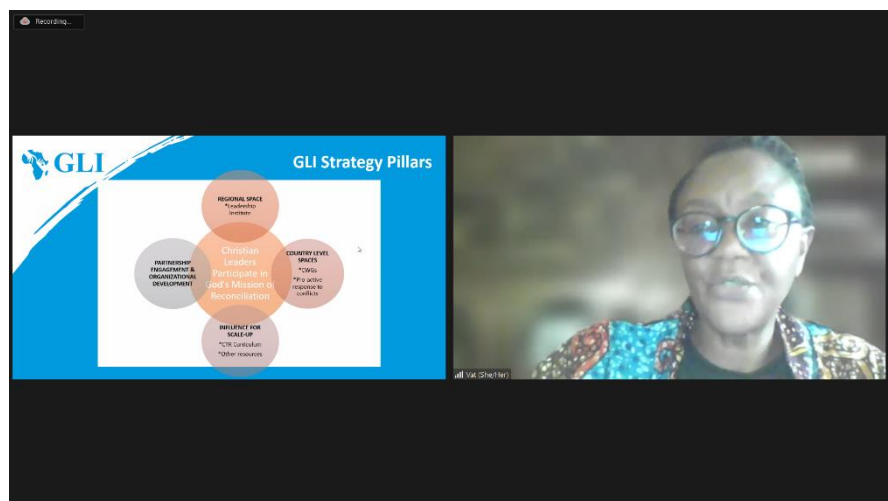
Our world is embroiled in struggles over identity and truth. Nations once united are now being torn apart by ethnic-based politics and power struggles. Past history is invented in the present to justify violent conflict and retribution. Even families are divided when political identities take supremacy over faith commitments. Fake news, rumours, conspiracy theories and politically-expedient lies swirl around us and disorient us, drawing our gaze away from the Solid Rock. "What version of reality is trustworthy?" we ask. "What is truth?" An epistemological crisis has been added to the age-old struggle of US versus THEM. In this time in history, we need to direct our eyes once more towards the deepest source of our identity, our redemption into the family of God by the death of Jesus on the cross through the work of the Spirit. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." It is on this backdrop that this year's theme was picked, so as to allow participants reflect on how our identity in Christ is the pathway leading towards a diverse but reconciled beloved community.

The week-long Institute ran for two and a half hours each day, focusing on a rich theological content and discourse. As is the GLI tradition in line with the Word Made Flesh Methodology, each day focused on a question in regards to the ministry of reconciliation: Reconciliation towards what? What's going on? What does Christian hope look like? What kind of Leadership? Why me, why bother? This were aligned to the Institute timely and thought provoking theme on "Confronting Ideological and Identity Conflicts.

Daily worship and scripture extracts were read both in English and French to cater for the language diversity and provided the context to explore these questions in depth; worship also offered space for personal response between sessions. Despite being away from each other, we still were able to celebrate our diversity through the ecumenical worship through the varying styles of worship in a multitude of languages. Plenaries offered further theological reflection on the days' themes, rooted

in both Biblical and contextual analysis. Along with thematic theological teaching, each plenary was climaxed with a witness testimony reflecting on God’s work of reconciliation in a particular context. These witnesses spoke to the reality that the work of reconciliation is fraught with both lament and hope, and encouraged all participants to seek the “signs of the times” in their own context. All plenaries and worship were bi-lingual (French and English), thereby reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of the participants. We also hosted discussion forums for participants after every plenary to further digest and share personal experiences related to the subject of the day. In each of these, plenary speakers offered guiding questions that would structure the flow of discussions in the various groups. Responses from the groups would be shared at the following day’s beginning session where we name gifts we have received for each day of the Institute. It was evident from the participants that they would have valued having more time to continue the rich conversations and networking that would happen and be created at the end of each day.

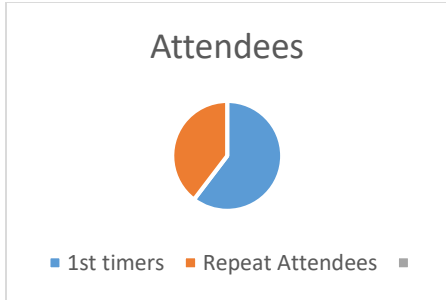
On the final day of the Institute, the GLI Chairperson, Dr. Vat Kamatsiko in her commissioning remarks reminded participants that as espoused in the GLI anthem, we continue to seek courage from God to “press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus, (Philippians 3:14, NIV).” Vat said the



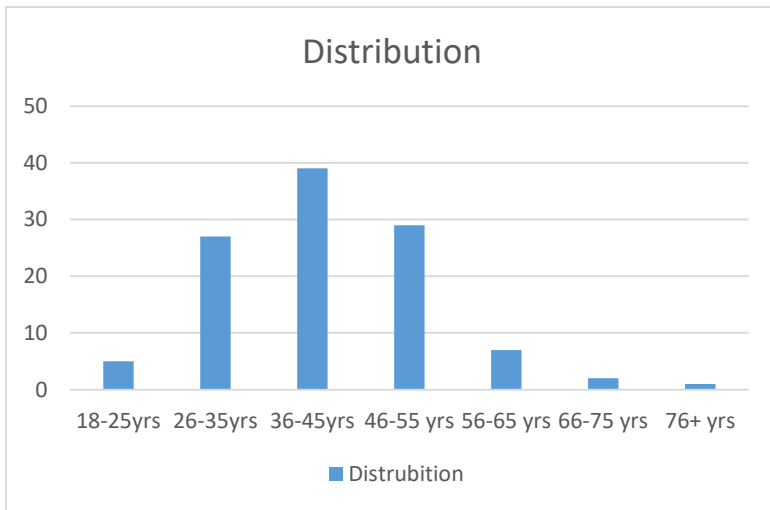
GLI DNA is one that encourages and charges us to continue expanding the circle of influence through our ecumenical gatherings, build communities where we share our stories of pain and hope, as we go out to seek and experience the signs of hope through pilgrimage as a central practice, all centered on a theological content and learning, commonly referred to as the Word Made Flesh methodology.

Out of the total number of participants, 67 were new comers, forming 60.4%. The rest were returning, many for more than a second time. Besides the national, gender and age diversities, the Institute continued to enjoy the denominational diversities that see both Catholics and Protestants gather in this same space. For the first time, the Institute hosted a senior citizen in the age bracket of beyond 75. We also noted a slight increase in percentage of attending women as compared to last year.

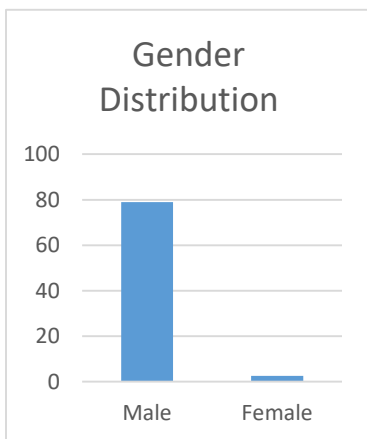
Attendance distribution:



While it is interesting to note that even seniors are still engaged and desire to continue connecting with GLI in the work of peace-making and reconciliation, the age distribution table below reveals GLI still has a bit of foot work to do as concerns attracting the youth between ages 18 to 35:



Gender distribution, there were 79 men and 28 women as depicted in the below graph:

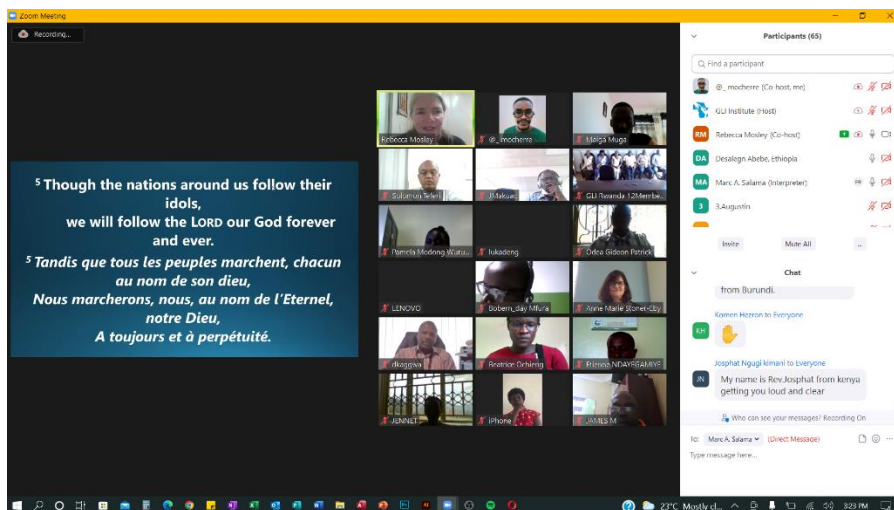


This means there were fewer women attending the Institute as compared to men; GLI continues to try to understand the factors behind this gender imbalance so as to get an equal gender representation.

Rich Theological Content and Discourse: Daily Rhythm

On day one of the Institute, Father Professor Jacob Onyumbé while introducing the subject “Reconciliation towards what?” said “in trying to answer that question, we assume that reconciliation is possible. But who needs reconciliation? Towards what? And why do we think we can and must work for reconciliation?” To define ideologies and identities while borrowing from the work of Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah, and insights from scholars who were published in the 2011 *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, Father Onyumbé shared that in our region, we know the kinds of labels we give ourselves: they are related to nationalities, ethnicities, tribes, clans, faith groups, religions, class, and political affiliations. “We tend to idolize those categories and, by attaching ourselves to one of them or to a few of them, we easily fall into exclusion and violence.”

In a powerful exposition and seeking to answer the questions: “What does it mean for us to be renewed in mind? To change our ideology? To live and act, not according to the standards of this age, but by letting ourselves be transformed by the renewal of our minds?” Father Onyumbé read Romans 12:1 – 2, and 2 Corinthians 5:14 – 19, and drew a parallel between the Biblical stories of Rahab and Ruth. He considered how Rahab and Ruth, though foreigners in their lands of settlement, took various courageous positions at particular times of their lives, and history has seen them “counted by the gospel of Matthew as ancestors of Christ. They have been included in the family of Christ, even though they would not be allowed, according to the dominant belief about the inclusion of the Gentiles in the community of the chosen.” As per the GLI mission, Rahab and Ruth were restless leaders who challenged status-quo.

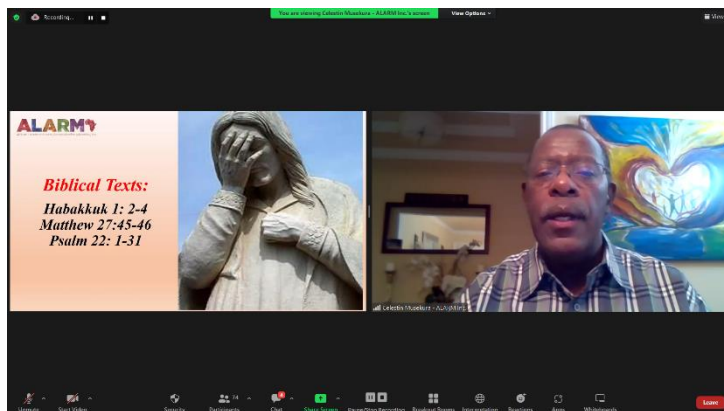


“By including these two women in his genealogy, Saint Matthew intends to direct the minds of his readers to the kind of community Jesus is coming to build, “ he said, adding, “Jesus is coming, not to treat people and society according to the patterns of this world, but through the transformation of old labels and ideologies.” He urged all to embrace the spirit of ecumenism, where we all work

together towards a common goal of reconciliation, coordination and cohesion. Responding to a question from the plenary regarding a Christian burnout as a result of embracing all and sundry, Father Jacob stated that Christians should be more afraid of exclusion than inclusion, which creates the *WE* verses *THEM*.

Witnessing to the power of a New Creation in her home country of Peru, Dr. Nina Velma Balmaceda, an associate professor at Duke Divinity School, shared a powerful witness and call to participants to resist violence and embrace a non-violent path in seeking peace and justice in our communities. Drawing from the story of Peru, her home country, Nina exposed how a group of young Christians in Peru rose to confront two decades of social, economic and racial discrimination to demonstrate a clear examples of a new creation in a country ridden with violent conflict. A common vision for justice united Catholics and Evangelicals at a unique time in history. Sharing the words of Romans 12:1-2, she said “becoming flesh means becoming culture, becoming history, and becoming people.” She added that life and theology go together.

Introducing the subject of Day Two of the Institute, the day of lament, one of GLI’s elders, Celestin Musekura said “Today’s world is lamenting. Not only the people in developing world are mourning, rich nations and developed nations are mourning and lamenting uncontrollable



suffering and pain inflicted on people because of ethnic/tribal, racial, social, and political ideologies and identities.” Reflecting on the words in Habakkuk 1: 2-4 & Matthew 27:45-46, Celestin lamented that “rather than celebrating diversities, self-preservation of groups based on ideologies and identities continue to cause endless suffering, pain, grief, and distress to humanity.”

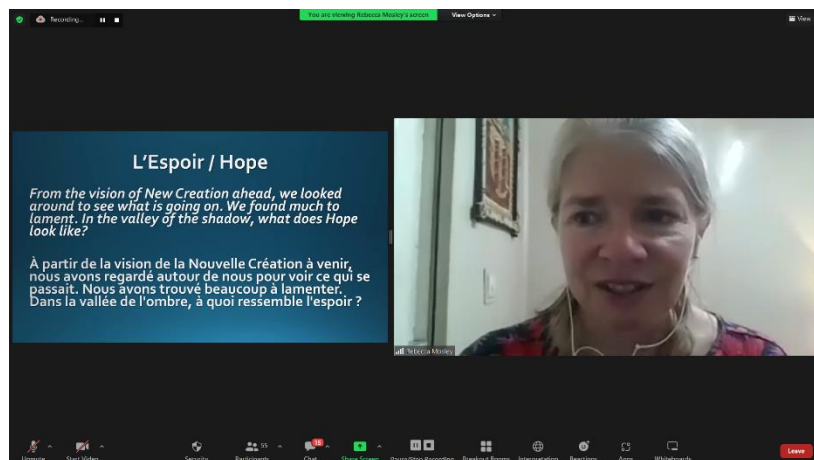
He explained that lament comes in two faces, individual laments as pain and suffering and experiences of an individual, or/and communal laments, expressing the pain and suffering of whole communities or groups of people. Celestin exposed that “All these individuals, families, communities, and nations are lamenting and asking questions: “What is going on? Why me? Why us? What is happening? Who is going to help us? What is God doing about our unjust suffering?” He shared that lament is a prayer that enables us to petition for God’s help and deliverance from grief, distress, suffering, and physical or emotional pain and oppression. “The lament prayer has the goal of inviting and persuading God to act and react on behalf of the sufferer who remains hopeful in the God who saves, vindicates, heals and restores, he outlined.” Using the doctoral dissertation of Rebekah Ann Eklund, “Lord Teach Us How to Grieve: Jesus’ Laments and Christian Hope” (Duke Divinity School, 2012:), Celestin defined biblical lament as “a persistent cry for salvation to the God who promises to save, in a situation of suffering or sin, in the confident hope that this God hears and responds to cries, and acts now and in the future to make whole. Lament calls upon God to be true to God’s own character and to keep God’s own promises, with respect to humanity, Israel, and the church.” He identified with Dan Allender (*The Hidden Hope of Lament*, 1994) who describes three types of laments: Lament as cries of pain, anger, and confusion. “Lament is our battle cry!” Commented a participant.

Two witnesses from Ethiopia shared in their lament expressing the pain, anger and cry regarding the conflict crisis in Ethiopia. They shared stories of the violence, misery, hunger, displacements and even death amidst the political conflict in Ethiopia. We ended the day with a communal prayer of lament led by Rebecca Mosley.



On Day Three, the day of HOPE, we considered the question: What Does Hope Look Like? Professor Father Emmanuel Katongole agreed with Father Jacob’s presentation of Day One that “You can never over embrace. We are ecumenical, gearing towards a New Jerusalem.” He said Psalm 22 shares aspects of a lament, which is a cry to God, explaining that “it’s between a cry, complaint and expression of hope. Angry about injustices and pain around us but hopeful in Christ.”

“Are we drinking from a different well? Different from our Christ identity?” Father Katongole paused. Referring to 1 Peter 3:15 that state, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (NIV),” Father Katongole reminded participants that our identity is “a royal priesthood, people set apart (1 Peter 2:9). He added that this helps to draw out the implications of the discipline of hope. The vastly published professor in matters peacemaking and reconciliation impressed on the hearts of the gathered that the Apostle Peter urges Christians to;



1. “See” hope – that we know we have hope because we belong to Christ who is our hope. “In terms of seeing hope, expect miracles,” he said.
2. Speak, tell and/or share about hope – that we provide stories of hope “with gentleness and humility,” as outlined in 1 Peter 3:15. “Begin with stories of yourself,” he challenged. “Nature hope,” he said, “is like a flame to be protected, a seedling nurtures. Nurture and sustain. Hope is like a baby to be handled with care.”

He reminded participants that “hope keeps us going. It is a quiet revolution.”

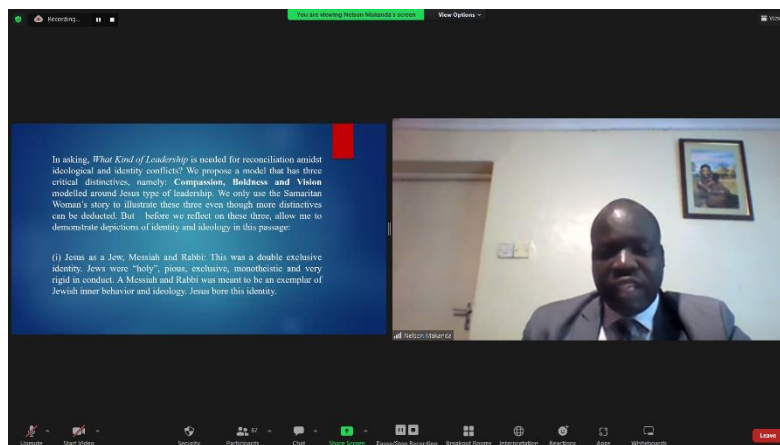
3. “Do” hope – performing hope. Drawing from the example of Bethany Land Institute, Father Katongole expounded that like in Genesis 2:15 where man is commissioned to care-taking, Bethany Land Institute has formed a sensibility of caring for the land in a sustainable way. He said the outcome that Bethany Land Institute has become is a lesson of hope that calls us to engage in the performing of hope.

He noted that hope calls us to improvisation, adding “feel called and go out to do good,” Father Katongole challenged. “That hope is a trust, to adore in Christ, an invitation for all to become investors.” He also said hope is “painfully slow, pains-taking, not sure if you are making or doing hope.”

He ended by saying that as urged and challenged by Peter, we should always be prepared to give account of the hope in each one of us, and that we should keep going. “Do not lose hope. This is the life received in baptism, grafting you into this life of pain and suffering.” He challenged participants to tell others what keeps them going. “Tell hope and get busy doing it,” Katongole urged. He further observed that nation state politics use ethnicity to divide us. “It’s a lie. Blood seems to divide us more than the baptism that makes us Christians,” “Being Christians is an invitation out of a constructed ideology. Unlearn these ideologies and learn what it is to be Christian, he concluded.

Elizabeth Kanini gave a moving testimony of how she moved out of her home years back to take shalom to the people on Northern Kenya in a place called Marsabit, an area prone to clan-ism and ethnic conflicts. Elizabeth shared stories of how God had used her in a strange land to “expect miracles,” “spoke hope,” and “performed hope” in her time of stay, and now Marsabit became her home. She shared her pain and suffering on the journeys to access her mission field but still persisted as she noticed small “sparks” of hope and fanned it into “fires” of hope, walking alongside locals in the quest for their peace and reconciliation.

Rev. Dr. Nelson Makanda, who is the serving General Secretary at Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK), while speaking on the fourth question of Leadership: What Kind of Leadership? based his



discourse on the scripture that discusses the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman in the Gospel of John 4. He allowed this text to “speak to “Leadership for Reconciliation” as exemplified by Christ. Christ modeled three critical distinctives, namely: Compassion, Boldness and Vision Rev. Makanda said just like in the quoted text, ethnicity is a construct, while ideology is a representation of reality, “the

colour of lens determines how you view what you view.” He exhorted Christians to look more for points of interaction and intersection while dealing with others instead of majoring on points of divergence. “Points of interaction and intersection are universal needs.” He added that even in

differences, leadership is about drawing out common identities – the *WE*.” Describing the three critical distinctives, Dr. Makanda noted that a compassionate leader focuses on people and their needs, and the preservation of life and human dignity. “Compassionate leadership is the medicine for sheep without a shepherd,” he challenged, adding that “they have love that never fades as in 1 Corinthians 13:8.”

On boldness, Dr. Makanda prescribed that the world needs bold leadership that overcomes stereotypes, and a vision, “seeing a God of potential in every community.”

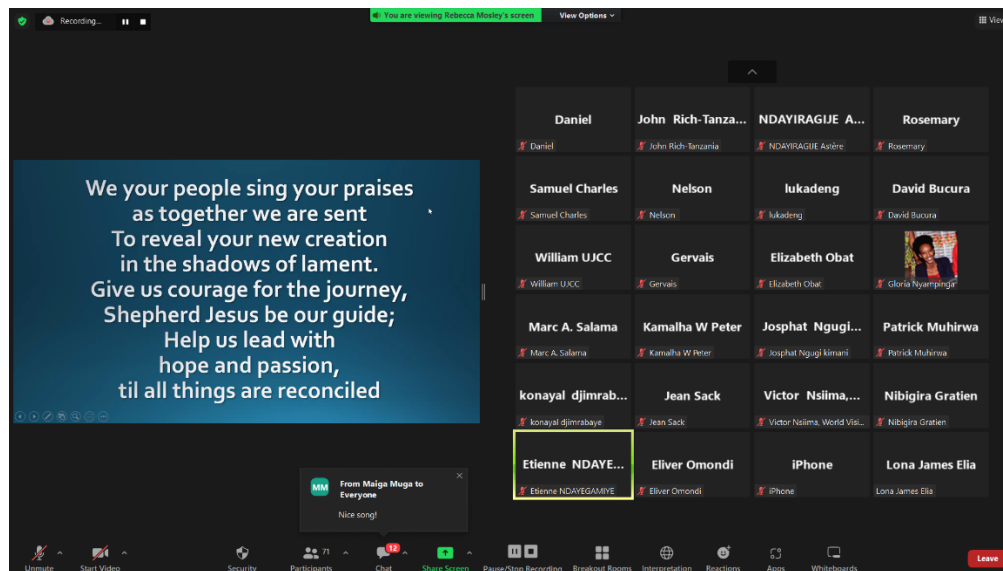
He ended his session by saying, “Jesus had a vision for the world’s salvation. Nothing was going to stop him. He was not going to leave anyone or any land out. HE came for the Jew and the Gentile. Male and female. All needed his message and an encounter with the savior. Conscious of this vision and mission, no boundary was going to be too difficult for him to cross; no cultural ideology was going to hold him back. No identity was going to limit his vision. His own life was not going to be more precious than the vision. This is the leadership needed for reconciliation. A leadership that sees the good and potential in every community. A leadership that dreams of a new creation and whose hope inspires action to cross every boundary.” In contrast to the example of Jesus as exposed by Rev. Makanda, Lona Jame Eliu in bearing witness to the subject of leadership, shared testimony of her participation in the quest for a peaceful South Sudan, and how the South Sudan leaders have continued to squabble for positions and wealth at the expenses of their fellow nationals. “I was born in war, went to school in war, got married in war, had children in war, and now my own children are getting married and their own children in war,” she lamented. The leadership we see around us rarely resembles the bold, compassionate, visionary leadership we need.

"Lord take the others but not me," was from our sister Violette Nyirarukundo’s childhood story concerning a group of seminarians who had been asked to pray so the Lord reveals who among them would donate a kidney to an ailing friend. This was in response to the question of the last day of the Institute, Day Five, Spirituality: Why me? Why bother? “Throughout history, we see that most of the time, people who are invited by God to serve him feel helpless, as if trapped, and they do everything to escape,” she said and added, “When man hears God's call, he is as if seized by surprise and fear, he feels insecure, he makes excuses because he sees his limitations and inabilities.” Violette gave examples of people in the Bible (Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah) who felt inadequate at their time of calling but ended up as heroes of faith due to their great achievements. She encouraged that “in the face of different reactions from people who are called, God's answer has always been the same: "Do not be afraid, for I am here!"

She shared how various studies of societies that have experienced conflict found that: because of the wounds of all kinds resulting from all kinds of violence, “people unconsciously close their eyes to what is around them, close their ears to outside voices and close their mouths for fear of speaking out and making life more difficult,” saying “But this ministry of reconciliation asks us to open our eyes to see all the misery around us; it asks us to lend our ears to listen to the lamentations around us; to open our mouths to plead for the voiceless,” as espoused in Prov.31.8-9 tells us: "Open your mouth for the mute, for the cause of all the helpless. Open your mouth, judge justly, and defend the poor and needy.

Sunday Andrea of ALARM South Sudan, in emphasis on the presence of God with us in whatever we do witnessed to her work of reconciling communities across prejudices in South Sudan, especially far away from her own people. She shared that many times she would feel so inadequate but then the Spirit of God would prompt her to keep going.

Let us make this prayer of serenity our own: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.



In conclusion, this year’s Institute presentations called participants to the reality that our DNAs do not indicate a tribe, Christ is our true identity. We learned that though we may stray, reconciliation is possible. We can be made new again – “New Creation” by the renewing of our minds.

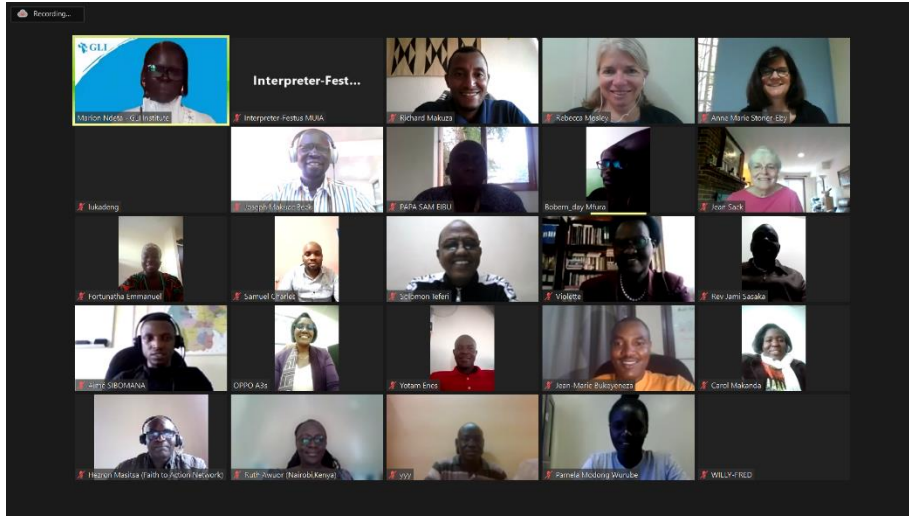
Participants heard that lament is our gift from God. A gift to cry to God, register our complaints but with hope. That when we lament, we should lament with hope and not in despair. Lament allows us to “get angry against injustices and pain around us,” Dr. Musekura explained, adding “yes, in view of these biblical truth and our faith in God who saves, redeems, and heals, Christians are encouraged to lament fully, courageously, boldly, honestly but with hope.” From the scriptures shared on Day Two, it was clear that God is always sowing gifts of hope. He invites us to “drink out of a different well. Draw from that well.”

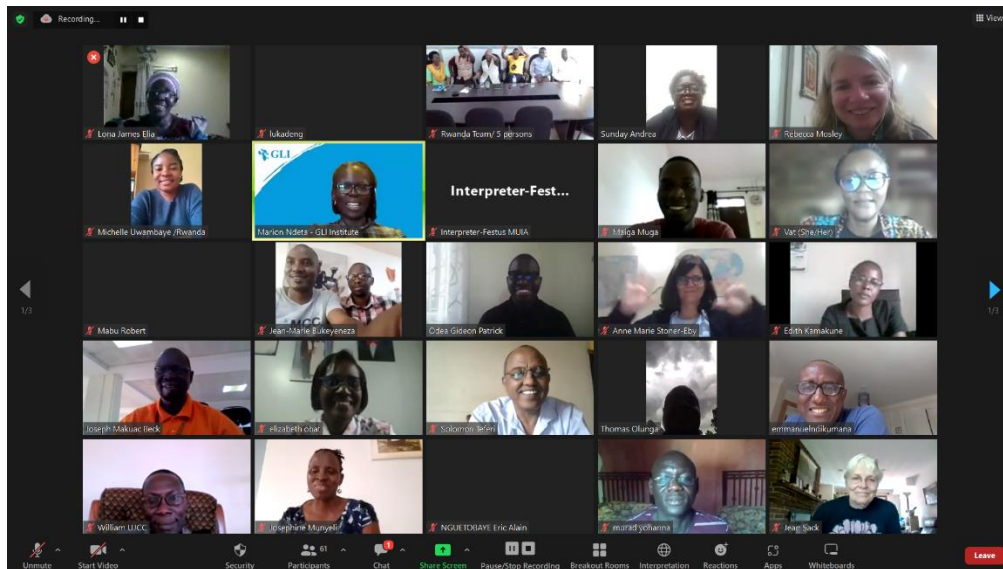
Hope is a journey, possible when Christ is at the centre, it can be seen, told and performed, and hope is like a flame to be protected, and like a baby to be cared for and nurtured.

“As for leadership,” said a participant from South Sudan, “there is so much more that unites us than what divides us.” Another wondered, “Which tribe would Jesus be? Which would the tribe of the Samaritan woman be in my own country today?”

We should always remember that the ministry of reconciliation is not about us but about God. God has promised to be with us in every situation, and He is ready and available to provide for our every need to accomplish this journey. “God does not condemn us in our weaknesses and he does

not send us away, but as with Elijah, he renews our strength and gives us a greater mission,” and surrounds us with a multitude of faithful people.





Financing the Institute

The GLI Leadership Institute has continued to benefit immensely from the goodwill of partner organisations who year after year have nominated participants to the GLI Institute and paid for their participation. We also benefit from the presence and contributions from self-sponsored participants, who are individuals that may have learned about GLI from previous interactions with GLI partners, or simply referrals from past participants. The funding facilitates the Institute costs, as well as a surplus that goes into meeting the operations costs of the GLI Secretariat.

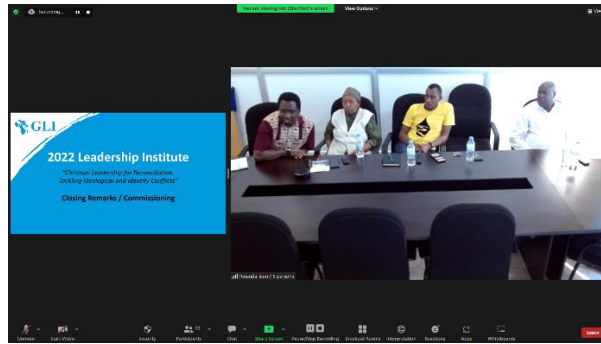
2022 was no exception as we received support from:

1. Duke University's Centre for Reconciliation USD\$ 4,017.5
2. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) USD\$ 10,712
3. Africa Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM) USD\$ 1,025
4. World Vision International USD\$ 3,255
5. Self-pay individuals USD\$ 150
6. Non-partner organisations USD\$ 275

GLI Leadership Institute as a Powerful Ecumenical Space

Certainly the Institute continues to provide a unique ecumenical space that allows participants to transform their understanding of what it means to be the Church. It was profound to hear participant testimonies of what they have gathered as the godly ideology and our true identity as Christians.

The "Word Made Flesh" curriculum and methodology continue to shape the Institute and the work of the GLI through the modeling of a Christian vision of reconciliation that is at once theological, practical, and contextual. This year gender balance and national diversity was at the core of the faculty, daily general moderators and witnesses.



Presence limitations did not hinder the connections that happen at GLI during in person gatherings. Even with the virtual event, the powerful content and moments of reflection at every sessions clearly left the participants hungry for more, evidence by the degree of engagement and feedback from participants was and still is a surety that the Institute was a powerful and enriching space of transformation:

“We are waiting for the continuation for the next activities,” said a participant from South Sudan. Another participant noted “The Institute was amazing, interactive and educative.”

It was humbling to witness the sacrifices that some of the leaders in this region make to be living examples of the call to peacemaking and reconciliation when I learned that Celestin Musekura was headed for a major surgery immediately after his day two presentation. Even knowing what awaited him, he still delivered words of encouragement, transformation and challenge to the gathered participants with the deserving urgency and importance.

For more information on the Great Lakes Initiative please, check out: <https://www.gliinstitute.org.ug/>, or contact: Marion Ndeti, GLI Regional Coordinator on gliregionalcoordinator@gmail.com

APPENDICES

Photo captions

1. A section of the Institute participants
2. GLI Chairperson, Vat Kamatsiko, highlighting the GLI Strategy pillar
3. Excerpt of a worship scripture both in English and French
4. Dr. Celestin Musekura and an image of lament
5. Pastor Desalegn Abebe and his colleague from Ethiopia lamenting the Ethiopian situation
6. Part of Day three worship session as led by Rebecca Mosley
7. Rev. Dr. Nelson Makanda on Day Four of the Institute
8. Words of the GLI anthem
9. Photos 9, 10 and 11 Institute group p

National Diversity and Denominational Participation

1. National Diversity

The following 13 countries were represented at the Institute:

Nationalities	
Burundi	22
DR Congo	4
Ethiopia	4
Kenya	21
Nigeria	1
Peru	1
Rwanda	19
Sudan	1
South Sudan	8
Chad	3
Tanzania	10
Uganda	12
USA	3

Total	111
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2. Denominational Participation

The denominations that were represented at the Institute were:

Denomination	No. or Participants
Anglican	15
Baptist	8
Lutheran	2
Mennonite	19
Methodist	3
Non-Denominational	7
Pentecost	18
Presbyterian	3
Restoration Movement Christian Church	8
Western Liturgical (Catholicism)	8
Other	18

GLI Leadership Institute Faculty and Staff

1. Plenary Leaders

Professor Father Jacob Onyumbe –Université Notre Dame de Tshumbe, DR Congo
 Dr. Celestin Musekura –Founder & Global Ambassador, ALARM Inc., President, Global Leadership for Peace and Reconciliation, Inc. (Lead for Peace)
 Professor Father Katongole – Professor of Theology and Peace Studies, Kroc Institute, USA
 Rev. Dr. Nelson Makanda – General Secretary, Evangelical Association of Kenya (EAK)
 Ms. Mwenedata Violette Nyirarukundo – Counsellor, Rwanda

2. Witnesses

Nina Velma Balmaceda – Duke CFR, USA
 Desalegn Abebe – Ethiopia
 Elizabeth Kanini – Kenya
 Lona James Eliu – South Sudan
 Sunday Andrea Ladu – South Sudan

3. Translation, Worship and Coordination

Marion Ndeta – GLI Regional Coordinator
Elizabeth Namutosi – Admin Accountant
Fredrick Ogalo – Logistics Coordinator
Douglas Mochere – ICT Support
Festus Muia – Interpretation/ Translation
Jean Marc Salama Asobee – Interpretation/Translation
Rebecca Mosley – Worship
Christophe Mbonyingabo
Faith Kawira
William Kiptoo