Report on the 10th GLI Leadership Institute Held on 14-18 June 2021

Theme: ***Christian Leadership for Reconciliation in the Context of pandemics, crises and politics: A Biblical Response for our times***

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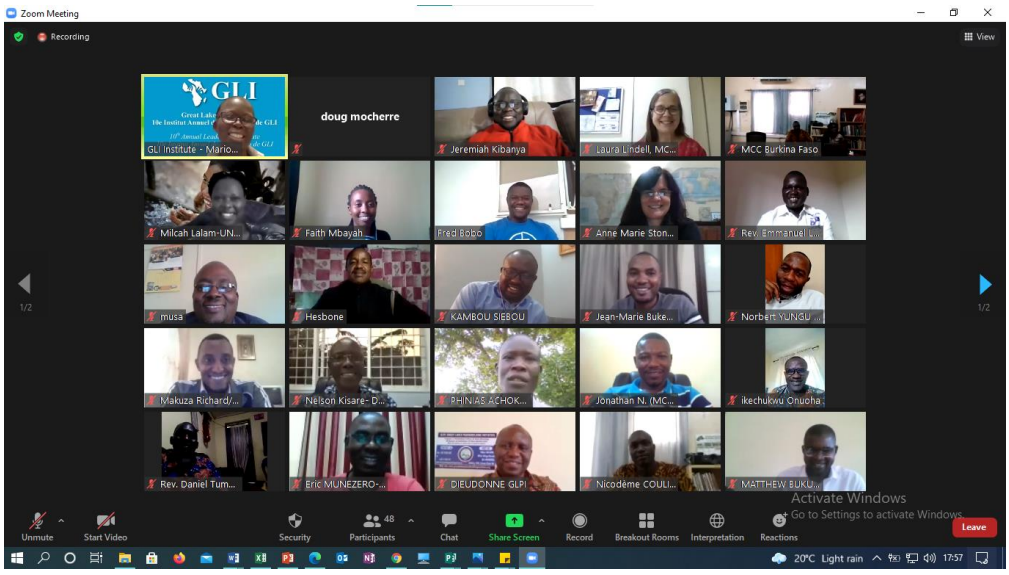
"Good lessons in the reconciliation journey and great men and women of God who live as examples for me. I am now confident in my work as a minister of God's word and a peace builder."

"Even though COVID has denied us the in-person gathering as we are used to, the online Institute still was as rich and transformative as I have always experienced GLI every time I come."

"This institute has rekindled my hope and joy of a continued GLI Leadership Institute and its rich methodology that COVID and its challenges were threatening to scuttle."

"I am so enriched from being at the GLI Leadership Institute for the first time. The diversity and content has built my inner person."

Feedback from GLI 2021 Leadership Institute participants



Asection of the Christian Leaders at the 10th Annual Leadership Institute in June 2021

The 10th Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) 2021 Leadership Institute was a unique one!

Being the first online gathering GLI has ever had, the Institute was anchored on the theme "*Christian Leadership for Reconciliation in the Context of pandemics, crises and politics: A Biblical Response for*

our times." This online gathering was occasioned by the COVID-19 protocols, inconveniences and laid out restrictions that prohibited in-person gatherings. The theme of the Institute was guided by the context of the region at the moment, considering that many of the GLI focus countries have either just come out of elections, deep in elections or hot on heels towards an election. The theme was also to bring alive the contexts of crises like Ebola and the volcano disaster that are still bothering D. R. Congo and its neighbours, as well as the global pandemic, COVID-19. It sought to answer the question "how do Christians respond in the midst of all these?"

Welcome Program and Keynote Address

Unlike in the past where Christian leaders gather in-person at St. Mary's National Seminary in Ggaba, in Kampala, Uganda, the 2021 institute was held online. Though a good experience, the online gathering denied participants the privilege of an in-person gathering.

This time, alive to the fact that an online gathering would not grant us the abundance of time, the usual Sunday evening worship that commences the Institute, was replaced by an in advance worship guidelines that were sent to all participants. These would help participants prepare for the institute.

Compared to all day programs that ran for a whole week, this time the program only lasted two and a half hours, cutting out breaks and seminars.

At the opening, the GLI Chairman, Dr. Daniel Muvengi was at hand to offer a special welcome to the mixed virtual multitude. Introducing the theme of the year, he made attendees aware of the fact that "we are living in troubled times, the reason of our 2021 theme that calls us to a biblical response towards the current situation of pandemics, crises and conflicts."

Thereafter, a call to worship from Psalm 133 ushered all participants into the Institute, coupled with the rendition "*God ever merciful*," by Rob Descoutes, Omega Publishing 1997.

Dr. Stephen Omollo, the World Vision Vice – President and Regional leader, while delivering the keynote address that outlined the basics of reconciliation, called every attending participant to the realization that "this is the time!" He said this is the time to address the massive protracted conflict, the impact of climate change as well as the issues of identity.

"If we want to make a change, what will it take? Going back to where it all began – having the heart of a child," he challenged.

Dr. Omollo challenged participants that as restless and transformed Christian leaders "do more to work on the hearts and minds of people. Change mindsets and bring in transformation."

Drawing inspiration from the words of Psalm 33, he cautioned participants against blame and pointing fingers during times of adversity, times of trouble. "God is telling us that during such times (times of adversity) is when God gives us a heart of creativity and innovation on how to handle the otherwise seeming dire situation." He said "the best form of giving is forgiving." With his powerful reflections, Dr. Omollo had paved way for participants to receive and give the gift of forgiveness in the week and take it beyond the Institute with the words that "the best reconciliation is yielding to God, self and others."

The Word Made Flesh Methodology: Five themes in Five days

The *Word Made Flesh Methodology* (WMF) is a theological, contextual and practical framework, carefully crafted to cover a set of themes, namely: New Creation, Lament, Hope, Leadership and Spirituality. The themes shape the five days of the Annual Leadership Institute, pointing to how Christian leaders can work towards God's mission of reconciliation. The themes at the same time remind participants that since the fall of man at the beginning of creation, God has been reconciling the old and the new. God's compassion is evident when he bridges the distance between himself and the unrepentant world through Christ.

First Theme: Reconciliation Towards What? New Creation

To start off the five-day themes, Emmanuel Ndikumana, one of the founding members of GLI in sharing on the journey that birthed GLI, said, "I remember how the journey started. I remember some companions I first met on the journey." He remembered the common journey of leaders with diverse backgrounds but with a common thought. "We were diverse. We represented different regions of the world. We were Protestants, Catholics, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, etc. We spoke the same language but with different accents." "As we continued the journey of reconciliation," he added, "from GLI gatherings to the GLI institutes, we started speaking the language of Reconciliation with more or less the same accent." Honoring his fellow co-founders, he used a Kirundi adage that says "Shoulders may grow but they cannot outgrow the neck."

Emmanuel explained that God invites us into the ministry of reconciliation. "He has given us reconciliation as a gift," because we are part of God's creation and God created us in his image for a task, which is the work of reconciliation.

Sighting the beginning chapters of the Book of Genesis, Emmanuel reminded us that "we are not only part of God's story of creation, but also part of the story of disobedience." He noting that "we are being recreated in conformity to the image of his Son so that, as people redeemed from the curse of our first parents' disobedience, we may participate in God's blessing through the second Adam, and extend God's reconciling blessing to the rest of the creation as Christ's ambassadors." Emmanuel powerfully concluded his presentation with the affirmation that "the story that started with creation will conclude with new creation at the end of everything."

Emmanuel Ndikumana making his presentation on New Creation

We had two witnesses testifying of the "New Creation," in understanding and shaping of reconciliation in their practice. Maurice from Kenya illustrating his journey of reconciliation, he shared about Abraham's journey with Lot as his sojourner when they got into conflict because of grazing fields. "This story has been my guiding principle of the way I respond to conflict – nonresistance to allow for compromise." Daniel of Turning The Tide, Rwanda, shared that he began experiencing the "New Creation" from his father's ministry to society. Daniel revealed that it was through his interaction with testimonies of the work others were doing that he got his own calling to the work of peacebuilding.

"Reconciliation begins with my own heart as it spreads to others around me," he said.

Second Theme: What is going on? Lament

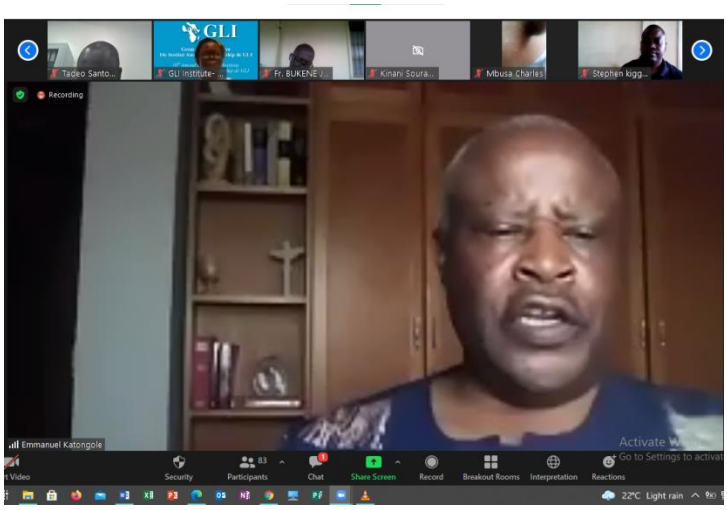
The GLI Methodology of Word Made Flesh describes reconciliation as a journey that leads to the New Creation. But before then, we have to look around and ask the question "What is going on?"

Presenting on "The Work of Lament in midst of Ruins," Father Emmanuel Katongole, a Professor of Theology and Peace Studies at the Keough School of Global Affairs, shared that "the journey of reconciliation begins in lament, and is sustained through lament." He opined that though might sound strange, "lament is a gift." "It is a gift because it is a discipline, a set of practices that allows us to see what is going on, to name the brokenness that surrounds us; to cry out to God; and to hold on onto God's promises for healing and restoration." He added that "lament shapes and disciplines our hope. There is no hope without lament."

Father Emmanuel explained that "lament not only helps us to find a voice in the midst of pain and suffering, lament helps us to see and name the depth of brokenness, indeed the fact that we cannot carry on in the same way." He further said that "we need not just healing and restoration (to return to our usual way of living), but a future that looks totally different from what we are used to." To challenge the status quo that will bring about the future that we desire, Father Emmanuel said "we need new visions and dreams as can only come from God."

He noted that as was in the days of Prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 7:29; 9:16-18, 9:19-21, and as quoted in the writings of the famous Ghanaian author Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart," the current generation finds itself in a similar predicament that "calls for prophetic leadership and lament."

Comparing our times (referred to by the UN Secretary as the skeletons, the foundations of our lives), and the times described in Psalm 11, Father Emmanuel said that "it is especially at such a time that we are all invited to become prophets; to provide prophetic leadership." He noted that "prophetic leadership is grounded in lament, shaped by lament, and sustained through the discipline of lament. That is what makes prophetic leadership hopeful." The Psalmist in Psalm 11 turns to God. He takes refuge in God.



Stating that the discipline of lament is the work of turning to, turning in and around God, Father Emmanuel suggested four practises, four pillars, four tasks for the work of lament. He said this generation stands in a similar moment, "a similar Kairos as the prophet," he opined, adding that the four practices defined what it means to "take refuge in God when the foundations have been destroyed." These were;

1. Recognising and naming the time – an opportune moment.

Father Emmanuel highlighted that realising that now is the time, that Kairos is God's time. He quoted that Apostle Paul evoked "Kairos" in 2 Corinthians 6:1 that says "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."

He said "a Kairos event as something new, totally unexpected; a new birth, an in-breaking." Also, that the new reality is totally beyond us, and is therefore connected to or reveals something of the power and agency of "God," and that "there is something of "good news" in the Kairos event, something as what might be called salvation." He was quick to caution that it should not be misunderstood that "Kairos" moment is always a "happy" one. "On the contrary, Kairos event is a moment of "grace" but also of "judgement", an opportunity, but also a moment of tribulation." He named David Kasali as one such leader who quit his comfort in Nairobi to return to his warring "native country of Congo, and in his town of Beni, to be with his people at that time of mourning.

2. Gathering the Community

Gathering the community includes hoarding together for a time of reflection on what had gone wrong? Ask what the church was doing? Ask what the future looks like. He revealed that violence, conflict and war scatter us. "Violence, pain, war, uncertainty usually scatters and isolates us. Gathering of Community is an essential component of the work of lament," as in Joel 1:14 and 2:16. He said Maggy of 'Maisom Shalom' from Burundi had done exactly that after the Burundi genocide, through her intriguing story of how God had revealed to her the ministry of raising children survivors of the genocide by miraculously saving the lives of the seven she had been raising. "She started gathering children: Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, child soldiers. To date she has raised over 40,000 children under her organization 'Maison Shalom'."

He challenged once again, "when the Foundations are destroyed what can the just do? Well, they gather a community, especially the poor, refugees, widows, the community of the most vulnerable; the community of the victims. These, which the bible describes as the poor, widows and orphans, are the way to God's heart."

3. Practices of lament

He explained that the third practice is a moment to mourn loss, to wail and lament (Joel 1:5, 8, 13 – 14, 2:12, 17). He observed that for Joel and other biblical prophets, lament comprised a series of actions, which "pay attention" (1.2), "wake up," (1.5) "be appalled" (1.11), "see" (2:19), "rend your hearts" (2:13), "pray" and "return" to the Lord." Demonstrating an example of the practice of lament, Father Emmanuel shared the story of Angelina Atyam, of Northern Uganda, woman whose daughter was among the 139 girls abducted from a school by the Lord's Resistance Army of Joseph Kony, and would gather together with other parents of the abducted girls "to fast, to pray, to remember, and to call for the release of their daughters."

Through the story of Angelina, who practiced lament through fasting, weeping, mourning, arguing with God as she waited and hoped for a reunion with her daughter, which took seven years to happen, he said confirmed that lament "draws us deeper into God's own life and story of self-sacrificing love, in a manner that releases us from hatred, transforms fear into courage, and deepens and intensifies advocacy with and on behalf of suffering humanity" and that "in allowing us to "see", to "be appalled", to "rend out hearts," the practices of lament return us to God, to others, and return us to ourselves." He said lament enables us to see value of things that matter and also the thoughtfulness of the things we thought mattered.

4. The Practice of Dreams and Visions

Father Katongole observed that when God brings us to the breaking point, that is when He plants the gifts of a new future (Joel 3:1).

He said the examples of "of dreams and visions," are "the visions for Kasali's Congo Initiative and UCBC, for Angelina's Concerned Parents Association, for Maggy's 'Maison Shalom' and 'Oasis of Peace' – they all emerged from and in the midst of lament. It is also the story of Taban, who founded the Kuron Peace Village, and of Katho Bungishiabaku's Jeremiah Center, Julia Duany's 'Women Development Program,' Celestin Musekura's Africa Leadership And Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM). All birthed in and through lament." "You cannot dream dreams without a certain degree of madness," he mused.

The witness of the day, Rose Mbone, a social justice advocate from Kenya shared her times of lament regarding the criminal gangs comprising of young people in the informal settlements that saw her brother serve a jail term and was eventually executed by the police. She witnessed how the pain of losing her brother in his tender age became her "Kairos moment" that started her quest to seek to redeem the youth in gangs into responsible men and women of the society.

Third Theme: What does hope look like? Pilgrimage

On the afternoon of the third day, leading a reflection on Question Three of the WMF methodology, Dr. Ellen F. Davis, the Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke Divinity School, acknowledged the joy that filled her heart to be back at GLI at its 10th anniversary.

She asked, "What does hope look like? …on the ground, in our time, in particular lives?" Admitting that there is no single definitive answer to the question, she called attention to a few words of the GLI anthem, which "…speaks of the basic elements of hope succinctly and memorably."

Citing the ongoing global emergency of climate change, Dr. Ellen termed it as a tragedy and corporate sin for which nations "bear a heavy load of guilt and responsibility, because for half a century we ignored the growing disaster, even as our lifestyle and economy were pumping carbon into the atmosphere and changing the climate of our whole planet."

Dr. Ellen challenged participants to imagine what hope looked like if the question was expanded to "…when you are living in the face of a disaster that "was never supposed to happen," *and* …you can no longer deny that disaster, *and* …you know you must try to tell the terrible truth without diminishment of your humanity, your faith, your love?"

She invoked the words of St Augustine of Hippo (Algeria), an ancient African theologian, who said hope has two beautiful daughters. "Their names are Anger and Courage." She noted articulating that "Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are."

Dr. Davis unpacked the nature of hope as she drew our attention to the Book of Psalms, one she termed "the book of hope," that "there was no good reason for anger and no need for courage unless there was trouble."

She said hope takes root in troubled situations, and so "speaking to God honestly about trouble is the beginning of the growth of hope." She added that the fact that "hope takes root in troubles situations is the difference between genuine hope and optimism, or complacency."

The second nature of hope once it manifests as trouble that leads us to speak honestly to God (Psalm 65:3), it "might sound like confidence in God, *or* it might sound like anxiety, even desperation, and both confidence and anxiety are necessary ways to come before God," she said. Dr. Davis noted that even though we may oscillate between confidence and anxiety (Psalm 27), that "even confidence is a sometime – thing." She encouraged participants to make a habit of submitting to God "all that is in our hearts, so that God can do the work of transformation and lead us toward hope."

She encouraged us to wait in hope, as we contemplate on what God has done in the past and what he is yet to do, as we keep in anticipation of something positive emerging from a point of despair and suffering. Lastly, the third nature of hope she said as outlined in Psalm 40 like Psalm 27 reveals that "hope looks like tough endurance and (sometimes) holy impatience, calling on God persistently and insistently," where hope goes between confidence and lament. To explain the concept of holy impatience and tough endurance, Dr. Davis said the eager expectation expressed in Psalm 40 is the same as expressed in Romans 8:19 and Romans 8:25, where "Paul tells us …that the whole creation is groaning in its sufferings, hardly waiting for the revelation of those who live as children of God." She concluded by saying that like the GLI anthem, "we must ask God to "help us lead with hope and *passion*" – not hope and patience," where we hold persistently and energetically "'til all things are reconciled" to God in Christ."

Reacting to this message a first-time attendee said that going forward "*I call hope my intrinsic motivation*."

Unlike in the past when we have visited physical spaces of hope, to see, smell, touch and even taste hope, this year presented us with a virtual pilgrimage, as explained by Father Stephen Kiggundu of the Kampala Diocese as a place of pain and hope.

He encouraged and challenged us to make pilgrimages a discipline and part of our Christian faith so we are able to see the sprouting seeds of hope in the midst of ruins. He described the faith of the young Uganda martyrs who despite the pain and suffering meted on the physical bodies held onto their faith because of the bigger picture of eternity they had in mind. He said there have been others like the St. Jude Farm who decided to hope in the midst of the ruins life had thrown them to, and are now sharing the hope with the rest of the world.

Fourth Theme: What Kind of Leadership?

To bring us to the question of what kind of leadership that is required of us in these times of lament and hope, Rebecca Mosley through a powerful worship experience reminded us that we are Christ's ambassadors.

Father Jacob Onyumbe of DR. Congo passionately exposed "we are going to speak about the kind of leadership we need in our region, especially during this time of crisis." He said this region has known wars, tribal conflict and now the pandemic. "How can be good witnesses of Christ in this time of crisis – COVID-19? How can we be a New Creation in this time of the pandemic?" he posed adding "at GLI, when we speak about leaders, we speak about people who demonstrate a New Creation."

He said “in our region, when we speak about leaders, we easily think about somebody who can do everything by himself, somebody who does not rely on other people. We see people who have power they have authority, they can easily invite their family and be part of what they do and ignore all other people. Is that kind of leadership going to sustain us during a crisis? Is that kind of leadership good for Christians? We need a different kind of leadership in Africa especially our troubled East Africa region. He gave some biblical reflections of leadership as;

1. Delegation and avoiding the temptations of power

Exposing scripture to us, he said “God does not expect us to lead that way.” In Exodus, he said, when God wanted to take the children of Israel from Egypt, “as a powerful God he would have picked them up and put them where he wanted them. But he did not do that. He shows us an example.” He said the best known are three – Miriam, Aaron and Moses, where he started by speaking to Moses but then involve the other two. “So God chooses the Prophet Miriam, who is going to lead the people in Music.” He added that when they Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, he went to visit his father in-law Jethro, who looked at him and said to him in Exodus 18:13 *"The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone."* He encouraged the gathered Christian leaders to share responsibilities. “You cannot be the strong woman or man doing everything by yourself. A leader has to make it possible for other people to function properly, to help the community,” Father Jacob cautioned us.

2. Elevating new leaders

“How does a leader find people who can work with her/him in order to lead a community?” he questioned. He said it is important to empower the right people who can deal with a crisis, people who can analyse problems and propose solutions at all levels. He said Africa suffers from a poison called nepotism. “When they put you somewhere, you are the pastor, your wife is you’re the assistant person, your uncle is in charge of finance, so everything turns around your village, your family.” “What we forget is that we need people who are qualified. This is what is killing communities and churches,” he observed. Father Jacob regretted “that we let family ties invade the way we lead.”

Speaking about developing all rounded leaders, he said that “but as you are choosing people, who are qualified, you not only choose people looking at their experience, their studies, but you need to think about people capable of encouraging others to move beyond the crisis. Elevate leaders who can tell the truth and communicate it effectively.”

Bounded optimism = capable of analyzing the situation, understanding tjay its diffuclt but with Gods help we will make through.

Numbers 13, Moses sent scouts in the land of promise. When back, there are two reports. Majority = the land is good but we will never make it. The people over there are giants, we are going to die. Then there were two (Caleb and Joshua) who admit that yes, we saw strong people, we are going to win. With the help of God, we will win. We will get to that land flowing with milk and honey. This is bounded optimism. The kind of leaders we need in difficult times. People capable of anaylsing thr situation but also offering hope to the community.

3. People able to act. Not perfectionists.

Father Jacob pointed out that it is good to do things perfectly, but becoming perfectionists "means we are somehow conditioned in our doing." He explained that perfectionism impedes the ability to make urgent decisions that required reasonable or minimal time to act especially in time of crisis, since perfectionists have to visualize the whole picture of the outcome. He urged us not to be afraid to make decisions that fail since there is always room to amend and act again. "Do not fear to make mistakes," he encouraged. He challenged that a good leader "needs to understand that their decisions are not like the Persian laws in the Book of Daniel and Esther – laws that cannot be changed." "You take precautions to make sure that the decision you make is an informed decision but when you realise you have made a mistake, admit the shortcoming and act immediately to correct or adjust."

4. Demonstration of empathy

Describing the place of empathy in time of crisis, Father Jacob outlined that a leader ought to look at the human tragedy, recognize that people are hurting and find or prescribe a solution that would bring healing.

5. Communication and transparency

"Tell people what's going on." "In Africa we love secrecy. We love to hide things," he said. He said it is unfortunate that African leaders will hoard information so as to surprise people with outcome, an action that may prolong suffering. He cautioned that hoarding information can be detrimental if the bearer is not able to make a decision with the information they are keeping to themselves.

Equating information hoarding to a scenario in 2 Kings 18:26, where the Assyrian army came to deliver a message of war to King Hezekiah of Judah in Jerusalem, King Hezekiah's servants asked the Assyrians to stop speaking in Hebrew, but instead deliver their message in Aramaic so the rest of Judah do not hear the threat. "The story reminds me of some of the practices here, when we want to hide information from ordinary people, we use the language of the elites and then those most affected by the crisis do not understand what is going on."

6. Generosity and scarcity

His final sharing was that generosity during a crisis requires a "manna economy mentality," like in the desert. "No one is keeping more than he/she needs to survive. But in Africa, and especially in our churches, we do not have enough resources, so what happens? Leaders take everything," he said. He added that the leaders "have beautiful cars and everything they need. But where do they get all these? They get from the resources of the community." He noted that in most cases when there is crisis and funding is availed to address the crisis, there usually are those others busy strategizing how to plunder for their own personal gain. "Greed is what is killing our churches in Africa. Greed is what destroys our communities, especially during crisis, when we do not have enough, yet people in authority tend to take all the little that there is for ourselves."

He called on us to be like the people in 2 Chronicles, the people of Issachar, who knew how to read the signs of the times. Father Jacob challenged all participants to be bounded optimists as opposed to being foolish optimists, in that foolish optimists who will openly deny danger even when they are staring it in the face, " like those who see the pandemic and keep saying it will go away by itself." He explained that bounded optimists will see a crisis, arise to the occasion and seek ways of addressing the crisis and rebuilding affected lives.

Sharing his journey of modeling leadership, the Director at the Great Lakes Peacebuilding Institute in Burundi, Dieudonne' Kibinakanwa, witnessed how he has been imprisoned four different times for challenging status quo and providing a divergent view from the view of the majority elites, where sometimes he has been seen as a traitor. He said that through it all, the love of his country and his people, and the desire to see things change has kept him going.

Fifth Theme: Why me? Why bother? Spirituality for the long haul

Ms. Marion Ndeta, GLI Board Member and Interim Regional Coordinator, in bringing us to the point of what will enable us build the "tough endurance" as we envisage the New Creation, she drew our attention to the story of Mary Mother of Jesus. She shared from Matthew 1, how Mary was called to be the mother of Jesus at a tender age, yet in submission to the will of God, accepted the call. Sharing from her own life's experience, she painted a picture of the torment Mary might have gone through to fill God's call over her life, possibly including ridicule from her peers and maybe even her family.

She encouraged participants to hold onto the call they have received, putting their trust in God, and knowing that "He who you them is faith to accomplish what concerns you today." She incited the participants imagination when she painted the story of Mary watching as Jesus was crucified, "her son, her child of promise" and the pain He endured on the Cross. Marion said Mary was among the three women who were early to attend to the body of Jesus, only to find him missing. "But the good news is, that she was also among the first people to know of His resurrection." Mary experienced the promise, just like the angel had said to her. Like in Romans 8, she encouraged participants to be a people of faith, a people like the people of Issachar who knew how to read the signs of the times, "God who has given the promise of a New Creation will bring it to fulfillment."

Marion challenged that like Mary, we may be able to say that we are God's handmaid, and that we are submitted to His will.

In closing, Daniel Muvengi called participants to the realization that the Institute was Moses-like mountain experience. She said "the glory is upon us, the call is here, we now must go!"

Leadership Institute Participation Highlights: the maiden online GLI Leadership Institute received a total of 125 (one hundred and twenty-five participants), among them 89 men and 36 women. These comprised of clergy and lay people, professors and students, bishops and priests, men and women, the young and the old, Catholics and Protestants, Anglophones and Francophones. They all in their varied contexts accepted the invitation to e-gather and discuss a biblical response to our times – pandemics, crises and politics. They came to bear witness to God's ongoing action in our world and join Him as pilgrims in His mission of reconciliation. First-time participants made up 50% of those gathered and the remaining 50% were repeat participants.



The participants to the 2021 Leadership Institute were treated to a cocktail of rich spiritual foods, served in the form of worship experiences from the DR Congo, Sudan, francophone, Anglophone and a mix of other national languages like Kinyarwanda. This experience was spiced by scriptural imagination in plenary sessions, topped with a virtual experience of a pilgrimage, and a dessert in form of breakout sessions that replaced the usual seminars. The carefully selected scripture passages went a long way to enhance and expose each day's theme of focus. Even though the online gathering had time constrains, all presentations, witness testimonies and side conversations provided deep theological, practical and contextual resources for Christian Leaders for reconciliation. As confirmed by the GLI Chairman, "though a regional movement, GLI is beginning to stretch into a continental outfit. As you know, out continent is ridden with a lot of brokenness."

Testimony from a first time participant: Faith Mbayah, a first-time participant from Kenya, and youthful lecture in peace studies at Daystar University said *"**the Institute has helped me appreciate the coming together of people of like mindedness. I have enjoyed sharing a space with people sharing in the same lenses of viewing and interacting with the society**."*

Denominational Diversity

We had a cocktail of denominations represented, including 12 Anglicans, five Baptists, three Lutherans, 27 Mennonite, 16 Methodists, two who were non-denominational, 14 Pentecostals, seven Presbyterians, two Restoration Movement Christian Churches, six Western Liturgical (Catholicism) and 26 others (Seventh Day Adventist, Assemblies of God).

Country Diversity: GLI though a regional movement enjoys diversity from across the globe. This year was no exception with participants from Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada but serving in Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, United Kingdom, Kenya, Nigeria, Peruian serving in the USA, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Chad and Tanzania. Uganda and the United States were also represented.

Other Institute Highlights:

In the place of afternoon seminar sessions, these way participants engaged in breakout sessions that enabled them interrogate the plenary presentations in terms of how the messages applied to their own lives and ministries.

Those present were invited to after formal sessions networking opportunities that allowed us to connect with each other on a more personal level, albeit online.

We engaged our visional imagination to execute a virtual pilgrimage as was being described by the presenter. There also was a documentary on Rwanda's Father Ubald who helped rebuild the country by initiating many peace projects that have preceded his life.

And on the second last day of the Institute, participants congregated in their Virtual Country Working Group (CWG) to strategise on way forward and next steps as a response to what they had heard the Lord speak to their hearts.

Appreciation to Partners and Supporters of the 2021 Institute

GLI is continually grateful to its founder partners and supporters for their year after year support by coming and/or nominating participants to the Annual Leadership Institute. These are; the GLI Board of Directors, World Vision International, East Africa office, World Vision Kenya, World Vision Rwanda, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC Chad, DR Congo, Rwanda/Burundi, Kenya/Tanzania, South Sudan/Sudan, Uganda), MCC Area Directors of East Africa and Sahel, African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM), Duke Divinity School's Center for Reconciliation, Bishop Allison Theological Arua – Uganda, and self-paying individuals.

Appendix: GLI Leadership Institute Faculty and Staff

A. **Plenary Teachers:** Emmanuel Ndikumana, Prof. Father Emmanuel Katongole, Dr. Ellen F. Davis, Prof. Father Jacob Onyumbe and Ms. Marion Ndeta Wasia.

B. **Pilgrimage:** Father Stephen Kiggundu

C. **Translation, Worship and Coordination:** Jean – Marc Asobee, Festus Muia, Rebecca Mosley, Marion Ndeta Wasia, Elizabeth Namutosi, Douglas Mochere and Fredrick Ogalo.