

The Great Lakes Initiative (GLI)



6th Annual Leadership Institute Report

Compiled by

Ms. Milcah Lalam

GLI Regional Coordinator

gliregionalcoordinator@gmail.com

Introduction:

The 6th annual Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) Leadership Institute held January 10-16, 2016, at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, Kampala, Uganda, was the 10th gathering since the founding of the Great Lakes Initiative. It was an exciting and thrilling Institute. Seven months of planning and communication bore much fruit. There was very high interest expressed in the 2016 Leadership Institute compared to the 9th gathering by Christian leaders from the GLI focus countries and beyond. Over 190 applications were received up until the institute opening day. However, due to limitations in the meeting space and other logistical considerations, we were only able to accept 160 participants from eleven countries (the seven East Africa Countries plus, Ghana, Canada and the USA). There has been a steady growth in the number of leaders participating at the GLI gatherings over the years.

In its 10th year of gatherings, GLI has been able to host the largest number of participants ever due to the establishment of the GLI Regional Coordination office in the Great Lakes Region. Truly a blessing for the reconciliation work being undertaken in the region! The GLI's intentionally regional focus brought together twenty-two participants from Burundi, twenty-four from DR Congo, eleven from Kenya, sixteen from Rwanda, twenty-six from South Sudan, five from Tanzania, and twenty-two from Uganda. Interested leaders from Ghana, Canada, and USA also attended. Sixteen of the twenty-five participants from the USA were affiliated with Duke University, twelve of the twenty-five participants from USA live and work in East Africa. Ten volunteers were drawn from Uganda.

The tremendous increase in participants at this year's gathering and the availability of more scholarships for select participants has been in part due to the increased understanding of the Country Working Groups on their role in mobilizing restless Christian leaders and the rooting of the GLI in the Great Lakes Region. The first every training for members of the Country Working Groups held in October 2015 deepened the understanding of the CWG members on the Word Made Flesh Methodology. This in turn expanded their capacity to discern key restless leaders from their contexts to be trained and transformed at the annual regional Leadership Institute. We were very inspired by the select key leaders and the stories of hope from the work they carried out after the 2015 Leadership Institute. Thus, due to the active role of the strengthened CWGs, we were able to witness increased interest and high-caliber participants at this year's annual regional institute.

The 10th Gathering-From Pataya to Kam pala (2006-2016)

The opening ceremony provide an opportunity for first-time attendees at the institute to hear the genesis of the initiative. The GLI board of directors' Chair Emmanuel Ndikumana gave the opening welcome speech. He shared some historical milestones which led to the founding of the Great Lakes Initiative (GLI). Among them were: The collaboration and presentation by a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-denominational issue group on reconciliation at the 2004 Lusanne Movement for World Evangelization, in Pataya, Thailand which became the starting point of the subsequent collaboration of the co-conveners and members of this issue group on reconciliation. The collaboration of the issue group on reconciliation at Pataya, the founding of Duke Center for Reconciliation and the collaboration with MCC, World Vision and ALARM in the Great Lakes Region were key milestones which led to gatherings and pilgrimages of Christian Leaders in the Great Lakes Region from 2006-2010 in Kampala, Bujumbura and Goma. The gatherings were the main events of the initiative until 2011 when the first Annual Leadership Institute was held. The institute teaching focuses on the importance of theology, context and practicality of the reconciliation work in the Great Lakes Region. Emmanuel concluded by tracing the journey of transition from Duke coordinating and managing the GLI events to GLI's legal registration and rooting in the region. He noted with joy that this 10th gathering was entirely organized and managed from the region by the GLI Regional Coordination Office.

To conclude the opening session, Fr. Emmanuel Katongole spoke as an elder of the GLI, a former co-founding director of Duke's Center for Reconciliation, he has been a part of the GLI from its genesis. "I do remember our first gathering here in Kampala in 2006, we were only 33 leaders. To see that today the auditorium is full with over 160 participants, and to understand that many more than applications were received than we could host, I can only join the Psalmist who sung: "When the LORD delivered Zion it seemed like a dream. Then were our hearts filled with joy. What wonders, what marvels the Lord worked for us. Indeed we were glad. That is my prayer, my gratitude for the many gifts the LORD has given us through the years," he stated. Fr. Katongole compared what God is doing with the GLI to a train that can never be stopped. As it moves along it gathers speed but also more and more people board the train. He welcomed first time participants into the train. Quoting from one unnamed Civil Rights' Leaders of the American Civil Rights Movement, he noted "We don't know what God is doing but we are so glad to be part of it." He appreciated the contributions of the founding partners of GLI comparing their contributions to the fuel which has sustained the train on its journey. Referring to the need for more partners to ensure the train continues the journey of reconciliation and new creation, he concluded with an appeal: "Now as the train gathers more momentum and more speed, we need more fuel. We have a lot of needs but we are not desperate because we have already tasted and

already experienced the gifts that God has given us beyond what we could have asked for or ever imagined and for this we are very grateful.”

The 10th GLI gathering brought together Christian leaders across the Catholic/Protestant divide. The denominational disaggregation is as follows: Catholic (24); Presbyterian (22); Pentecostal (20); Anglican/Episcopal (18); Non-denominational (15); Baptist (8); Methodist (5); Mennonite (4); Restoration Movement (4); Lutheran (2); United Church (1) Other (6); and Unstated (26). Reflecting the rich diversity of Christians gathered, worship was ecumenical and was led in varying styles and a multitude of languages. Morning plenaries offered theological reflection on each day’s themes, rooted in both Biblical and contextual analysis, and also included witnesses who reflected on God’s work of reconciliation in their particular contexts. These witnesses spoke to the reality that is the work of reconciliation—a work intermingled with both lament and hope—and encouraged all participants to seek the “signs of hope” and evidence of New Creation in their own context while also providing space for lament.

Stories of New Creation and Hope

The late Archbishop of Bukavu, Emmanuel Kataliko’s life and work aptly illustrates how Christians live into a new vision of society- New Creation. Participants were better able to get a glimpse of God’s excess love through Archbishop Kataliko’s life and work. He demonstrated in practical, concrete, material and spiritual ways in a time of war, pain suffering and oppression, how Christians can live as Ambassadors of Reconciliation.

Fr. Emmanuel Katongole, the speaker of the first plenary session *“Reconciliation towards what?– New Creation”* narrated the story of Archbishop Kataliko to the 10th GLI gathering as follows. Kataliko was installed as Archbishop of Bukavu in May 1997 - a very difficult time in the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The first Congo war had broken out in October 1996- May 1997 when Desire Kabila backed by Ugandan and Rwandan forces overthrew the Mobutu regime in Kinshasa. In 1999 the second Congo war began when Kabila fell out with Uganda and Rwanda. Soon after the war began, Uganda and Rwanda exerted control over parts of Eastern Congo together with Congolese rebels allied to them. It was in this context of foreign occupation, war and devastation that Archbishop Emmanuel Kataliko served in Bukavu. He did

Dr. Acolaste reflected on qualities of



not shy away from speaking out about the heavy taxation, looting of mineral wealth and violent occupation and oppression by foreign forces and local militias of Eastern DR Congo. In his pastoral letters of 1999 he wrote "We are crushed by foreign domination and even our Congolese brothers join the oppressors to loot the resources which should be used to develop our country, in killing the citizens and destroying property." His message touched the people of Bukavu and this led to a civil strike for 3 months. Due to this strike the rebels felt that he was meddling in politics and the Archbishop was exiled to Butembo- the town where he had served as Bishop prior to becoming Archbishop. While exiled in Butembo, he continued to write pastoral letters using the liturgical seasons of Lent, Easter and Pentecost to encourage the Christians in Bukavu. His message was simple and profound. He expressed strong conviction in Christ's suffering as an example of God's excess love. In one pastoral letters to the community in Bukavu he wrote: "In these difficult times let us not doubt the love of God for us. The only response to the excess of evil is the excess of love." Quoting 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 Fr. Katongole noted that for Kataliko, he saw this as God's vision for a whole new society founded in justice without oppressor or oppressed. That through Christ's crucified love God reconciles the world to himself. This is the way that God responds to evil, suffering and violence by being willing to become a victim rather than continuing to perpetuate the violence. God conquers violence of the world through his son's suffering and death. From his letters it is clear that Kataliko was inviting the people into a new vision of society, into a new world. A new world founded on God's reconciling love.

In another letter he wrote "In this life long battle, Christ knows that justice and love cannot exist unless they are crucified. Thus, Christ accepted to hang on the cross; the instrument of torture reserved for slaves which the son of God transformed into a means of liberation and redemption". Thus Archbishop Kataliko's courage came to him with the certainty that "to live with love, to practice justice and to tell the truth is the only way to have God on your side". He wrote to people caught up in a situation of war, of suffering, of massacres and violence reminding them of God's excess love – a vision of a whole new society. This being an invitation to advocacy for Christians in the midst of suffering. An invitation not on behalf of themselves but on behalf of others as recipients of new creation. Christ's sacrifice thus becomes an invitation to suffering humanity into his love into a different story even as God stands in solidarity with the world, new humanity is formed. Therefore, Jesus becomes our example of all our practical engagements in the world.

Kataliko lived out this practical example set by Christ. When he was Bishop of Butembo he not only spoke about the practical but took the initiative to join the people of the town in clearing blocked drainages, construction of bridges and roads, health clinics and schools. The people of Butembo remember him for his everyday engagement in order to support the suffering humanity so that the image of Christ may shine. His motto there was dignity and development. In his first pastoral letter as Archbishop he called on the people of Bukavu to join him in clearing the canals and drainages so that during the rainy season the city would be stand firm-very concrete and very practical. For Kataliko, the practical and mundane concerns were part and parcel of God's

reconciling love. They are not only connected, they flowed out of God's excess love for humanity- very practical, concrete and material. Kataliko's view was that the same way these practical realities are part of God's reconciling love, so were the spiritual realities. In fact for Kataliko the spiritual realities were very concrete realities that introduce the Christian into the story of God's reconciling love. The spiritual realities becoming a way of entering into this other vision of humanity and society, an invitation into this different story of the world- the story of God's excessive love. Hence, in his letters he often reminded the Christians not to forget spiritual practices of worship, liturgy and prayer. By entering into this story Kataliko was able to see the different alternatives to war and violence, a way to respond to the excess evil.

In his Pastoral letter of 1998, he wrote " In the face of violence let us endeavor to resist with all the strength of our faith without letting ourselves be taken up in the spirit of violence. Let us not be paralyzed by fear and laziness. Everyone should work double to double the efforts. Farmers should double food production." Even as the war intensified, he encouraging the citizens to go about cultivating the land and planting food crops. He encouraged the citizens to keep active in food production to ensure there is supply of food at a time when citizens were being told not to cultivate or do this and that development work for fear of attacks by armed militias. It is these efforts that Kataliko calls the work of peace which does not wait until the end of the war but goes on as everyday work in the midst of war. This is how to respond to the excess of evil with the excess of love. For Kataliko these were not just strategies of peace these are connected to and flow out of the story of God's excess love manifested on the Cross.

He remained in exile until September 2000 when the rebels allowed him to return to Bukavu. Tens of thousands of people gathered for a huge welcome- "*Karibu Tena Baba.*" Two days after his return to Bukavu, he left for a meeting in Rome. Unfortunately while in Rome he took ill and died. When his funeral was held in Bukavu millions of people attended. He truly had touched the lives of many.

Why is Archbishop Kataliko's story of significance and importance for the region today? For the following reasons:

1. His story clearly shows the connections between God's New Creation and the different practical dimensions of that message. God in Christ was reconciling all things to Himself. This is what Kataliko constantly referred to as God's excessive love on the Cross. This message of God's reconciling love is a whole new world, a new way of seeing and relating in the world- very concrete, spiritual, material, political, social and everything.
2. The message invites us to advocacy. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, Paul writes 'We are Ambassadors' that are working from within that whole new world, not just for ourselves but on behalf of others. But in order to do so we ourselves have to be already recipients of that message of New Creation.

3. The non-violent alternatives that Kataliko discovered within that story of love. "Let us not be taken up in the story of violence, but if we enter into the story of God's excess love, we discover ways to respond to the excess of evil with the excess of love", wrote Kataliko. That response takes many forms as we see in the life of Kataliko.
4. Spiritual Exercises- Worship, Liturgy and Prayer are very important as another way of entering into the story of God's excess love.
5. Kataliko preached a simple but very profound message that of God's reconciling love. The old is gone the new is here. Though simple, it required a lot of courage. In one of his pastoral letters while still in exile he wrote "when I think about your suffering, tears come to my eyes. But this message of God's love is one for which I am prepared to die."
6. Kataliko's example gives us a glimpse of what it means to step into God's new creation, what it would look like in our own countries and contexts.

The questions asked after the presentation provided an opportunity for Fr. Katongole to expound on the Christian's response to the excess of evil with an excess of love. They were: 1) What should be our attitude to those who advocate for non-violence but when violence manifests itself they flee? 2) Those who live the logic of the gospel of love seem to die young, can ones who advocate for excess love really live long? 3) How can I reconcile people who hold different views some preferring the logic of power which seeks personal interest and others the logic of love? 4) Is it possible to have reconciliation while still heavily depending on weapons of destruction of our security? Fr. Katongole expounded as follows:

1) The story of New Creation gives the alternative of solidarity founded on excess of love. It is revealed in the Cross of Christ, solidarity of groups (i.e conflicting ethnic groups staying together to protect each other from attacks). It is challenging for us and for our western brothers and sisters. Solidarity reflected in God's excess love. By staying together we can discover non-violent alternatives in the midst of violence.

2) The logic of love is a very fragile gift. There is something for which we have to be willing to follow that example of excess love. The strangeness of this gift is the willingness to face our own death. The question is not whether to die or not to die but how to die better in this New Creation.

3) There is no manual with A, B, C & D- do this and that and here is reconciliation. But what we do have to guide us is stories. The stories of God and Christ reconciling all things. This is how God deals with violence, hostility, enemies, pain and all suffering. Then Christ's stories of how he deals with his enemies. We are called to step into God's story. Then we also have the different stories from people dealing with these situations in their own contexts. There is a way in which reconciliation is carried out more by the stories than even by strategies and techniques. These stories allow us to see that a different world is possible. They allow us to imagine how this can be possible in our own context.

4) There is so much violence in our region. The gun holds the day. The challenge for us Christians is that we also easily get drawn into the cycle of violence believing that the only way to get peace is through the gun, violence and military struggle. That we somehow can kill our way into peace. Christians need to imagine a different peace not based on violence but it needs a lot of courage and a creation of New "We". Thus the only response we Christians have is an excess of love in the midst of violence.

Bishop Arkangelo Wani Lemi, Bishop Samuel Peni Enosa and Mr. Angelo Mathuch, Mrs. Atong Juuk Mayol and Rev. Peter Gai Marrow from South Sudan shared stories which spoke to the questions Do you see any connection from the story of Archbishop Kataliko to the situation of South Sudan. Are there signs of New Creation in your Context?

Bishop Peni of Nzara Diocese of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan (ECSSS) spoke first. He is also the Chairperson of the ECSSS Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission. He noted that South Sudan's liberation struggle from oppression and domination by one section of the country had inspired citizens towards a new society founded on principals of democratic freedoms and rights as well as freedom from oppression, ethnic division and regionalism. The leaders of the struggle moved the citizens to imagine a country which was economically prosperous, with abundance of all social amenities, jobs for the youth and improved overall well-being of citizens guaranteed. But alas, this vision was not to be realized. Less than three weeks after assuming political office made possible in a peace agreement which halted what had been termed Africa's longest civil war, on July 2005 the leader of the liberation struggle died. His compatriots carried the vision for a while until we attained independence in July 2011. We were very happy that we had our own country, led by our own leaders. But it was less than two years before we were surprised to return to civil war worse than even the previous war. On December 15 2013, large scale killings in Juba triggered open armed rebellion, hundreds of thousands were killed; tens of thousands displaced into internally displaced camps and other into refugee camps in neighboring countries. The country is on the brink of economic collapse and the worst famine in humanitarian history is looming. Unlike the previous war where the Church was united and helped to bring about a peaceful end to the conflict through advocacy and lobby, this war has even created divisions among church leaders. In spite of this dire situation the South Sudan Council of Churches stood firm on the side of the voiceless, began to advocate for an end to the violence and called for the church leaders to unite the people and speak with one voice. "We began to say we are not Churches but the Church, we are not denominations we are all Christians. We as Church leaders and all the citizens were all hurt because our people lost their lives and properties. However, we know that if we remain hurt we cannot heal and help our citizens to heal. That's why last year, we were able to go on a retreat to Rwanda where we prayed together and began our own healing journey toward becoming new creation. This new body which can take forth this country. This is the New Creation which we can see".

Bishop Arkangelo Wani Lemi, the presiding bishop of Africa Inland Church, Sudan and South Sudan as well as a member of the South Sudan Council of Churches, Board of Trustees shared the following experience. "As I was hearing the story of Archbishop Kataliko and how he lived the example of God's excess love as a response to evil, I was thinking with the lens of my context. It made me think of St. Paul's admonition, 'Do not retaliate. Do not pay evil with evil.' That is turning the other cheek, very difficult yet doable. Shortly after meeting with the Ethiopian Prime Minister on peace discussions to end the current civil war in South Sudan; we, church leaders had a meeting with Archbishop Paulino Loro Ladu, of the Archdiocese of Juba. He told us "Now we must be ready to stand as a Church and we must be prepared that some of us may be arrest and even killed. We must speak up as the voice of the many people who have been rendered silent."

Rt Rev. Peter Gai Lual, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan and the Chairperson of the South Sudan Council of Churches is another example whose life demonstrates living as New Creation. His participation at GLI was made possible through a generous grant from Presbyterian Church USA. He made a very difficult and life threatening choice to visit the internally displaced peoples' in the UN Protection of Civilian's camps in Juba together with the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan, Rt. Rev. Daniel Deng. The visit was intended to express solidarity and share word of comfort and hope with the people. The people became so wild at Archbishop Deng who is from a different ethnic group. The ethnic group which is in conflict with the ethnic group who are in the camp, thus they perceived him as an enemy. They were also not happy with Rev. Gai. They felt that Rev. Gai had betrayed his own ethnic group by coming along with the perceived enemy. The two church leaders had to leave the camp quickly for their own safety as the people drove them out. Later in a meeting for heads of churches convened by South Sudan Council of Churches, Rev. Gai narrated their narrow brush with death but added firmly "I will not compromise my faith. I am a Christian, a pastor and I cannot allow tribe to divide me from my brothers and sisters. The people were wrong, he stated.

GLI participants listen intently to Mama Kizza's son explaining about the St. Jude's Farm practices



The third day was themed: "What does Hope like?" The GLI elders led GLI participants on a pilgrimage. The day was framed by Fr. Stephen Kiggundu: "this is a journey of self- discovery, of renewing your faith and encountering God," he stated. "Strengthen us through the tears to be better servants of yours. Hold our hands, so we can

express your love". These words aptly describe what Mama Josephine Kizza's experience following the 1981- 1986 Civil War in Uganda.

She and her husband transformed a rugged piece of land into a vibrant organic farm and training institute as the civil war was waning. Her farm was the sight of this year's Pilgrimage for GLI participants. On the day of Hope we journeyed 88 miles to see what hope looks like. Josephine began an organic farm in the midst of civil war in Uganda. Her motto is feed the land to feed you. Out of devastation, despair and hopelessness grew hope, prosperity and well-being. From the land streams forth life and restoration. A hope of new beginnings and a fresh start were what inspired the participants.

There were six seminars held at this institute. The seminars held in 2016 included the following: "The Prophetic Word in Conflict Zones: Lament and Hope," "Pastoral Leadership and the Reconciling Church," "Practical Spirituality to Sustain Peace Builders," "Pursuing Peace for Healing and Reconciliation of Multi-faith Communities," "How to grow a Country Working Group" and "Restorative Justice in African Contexts." The seminars focused on encouraging, supporting, and deepening regional rootedness in reconciliation as God's mission, and also on our work mentoring, guiding, and forming young leaders in reconciliation ministry and expanding inter-country links for peace and reconciliation processes.

Of the six seminars, two special seminars held for specific leaders. "The Prophetic Word in Conflict Zones" was one special seminar co-facilitated by Duke Divinity School's Interim Dean Dr. Ellen Davis, Dr. Katho Bungishabaku, President of Shalom University Bunia- DR Congo and Fr. Jacob Onyumba a Catholic priest from DR Congo and a doctoral student at Duke Divinity School. This seminar brought together Duke Divinity School Master's level theology students and theology students and academic staff from Theological Institutions in East Africa. The participation of 12 East African theology students and academic staff was made possible through the generous contribution of one GLI board member. "How to grow a Country Working Group" was the other special seminar co-facilitated by GLI's Chair Emmanuel Ndikumana and Christophe Mbonyingabo, a member of the GLI Content and Design Team. The seminar was sponsored by a generous grant of an Anonymous US foundation. This seminar was a follow up of the training began with CWG members in October who are members of the GLI Content and Design Team. The team which oversees the content and quality of the teaching done at the annual regional Institute. One participant noted this about the seminar: "I have been helped to get a sense of ownership and responsibility, and now feel the need to do this (sic) (grow the country group) because we can identify with other restless people and can be encouraged."

Impact of GLI

In line with its mission to create space for transformation and reconciliation, the GLI sought to ascertain if the 2016 Institute had had an impact on the participants' vision of reconciliation and identity. From the evaluations and one-on-one interviews, the following was shared:

- The institute has reinforced my understanding that I am first and foremost a Christian disciple of Jesus before anything else. That my identity in Christ supersedes my ethnic identity and therefore I must not seek reconciliation by itself without recognizing my new identity in Christ as its basis.
- I have learned to be a servant leader who is committed to doing things that are pertinent and selfless. I am going to begin by demonstrating this in my family first and later in the community.
- Leadership renewal is needed at all levels to work towards reconciliation. As I lead I will remember to take time for self-renewal and personal reflection on areas to improve as an ambassador for reconciliation.
- The institute has challenged us to take action on establishing steps for reconciliation in engaging with God, with his people and the people in pain.

Financial Support

GLI has been immensely fortunate in the funding it has received: this year our core partners, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), provided us with \$24,900, while World Vision East Africa and ALARM gave the Institute \$10,000 and \$10,800 respectively. The Duke Center for Reconciliation provided close to \$40,000 for the institute, including the GLI Ambassador's stipend, and the GLI Regional Coordinator's salary. Additionally, a total of \$31,547 was received in 2016 from self-funded participants, an Anonymous USA Foundation, Presbyterian Church USA, Notre Dame University's Catholic Peace Network, World Vision South Sudan, and World Vision DR Congo compared to \$17,685 received for the 2015 Leadership Institute.



Prayer Time at the Pilgrimage-South Sudanese brothers and Sisters lifted in Prayer by a Congolese Sister