

Reconciling
ALL THINGS



A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing

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Resources for Reconciliation

series editors

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Series Preface

The Resources for Reconciliation Book Series

A partnership between InterVarsity Press and the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School, Resources for Reconciliation books address what it means to pursue hope in areas of brokenness, including the family, the city, the poor, the disabled, Christianity and Islam, racial and ethnic divisions, violent conflicts and the environment. The series seeks to offer a fresh and distinctive vision for reconciliation as God's mission and a journey toward God's new creation in Christ. Each book is authored by two leading voices, one in the field of practice or grassroots experience, the other from the academy. Each book is grounded in the biblical story, engages stories and places of pain and hope, and seeks to help readers to live faithfully—a rich mix of theology, context and practice.

This book series was born out of the mission of the Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation: *Advancing God's mission of*

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reconciliation in a divided world by cultivating new leaders, communicating wisdom and hope, and connecting in outreach to strengthen leadership. A divided world needs people with the vision, spiritual maturity and daily skills integral to reconciliation. The church needs fresh resources—a mix of biblical vision, skills in social and historical analysis, and practical gifts of spirituality and social leadership—in order to pursue reconciliation in real places, from congregations to communities.

The ministry of reconciliation is not reserved for experts. It is the core of God's mission and an everyday call of the Christian life. These books are written to equip and stimulate God's people to be more faithful ambassadors of reconciliation in a fractured world.

For more information, email the Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation at reconciliation@div.duke.edu, or visit our website: <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/reconciliation/>.

Emmanuel Katongole

Chris Rice

Center codirectors and series editors

Introduction



*R*econciling All Things. It's a pretty preposterous title for a book. Especially one as short as this. If the title is ambitious, it is because this book arises out of our deep restlessness about what it means to live faithfully in a broken and divided world.

One of us is American. One of us is African. One is Protestant, one Catholic. One is a practitioner, one a theologian. Yet our journeys cross and defy easy categories, borders and loyalties. We find ourselves bound together as restless pilgrims in search of something better in a divided world.

The restlessness and convictions of this book grow out of three pilgrim journeys.

A PILGRIM'S LIFE

For me (Chris), even after seven years in Durham, North Carolina, I still feel like a stranger in unfamiliar territory. I am as

white and American as most of my dear friends at Blacknall Presbyterian Church. My children play in soccer leagues and ride horses. We live in a quiet and stable urban neighborhood. Trained at Duke Divinity School, where I now serve, I can talk the talk of the academic world.

But the most important education I ever received came during my twelve years growing up in South Korea as a son of missionary parents and my seventeen years living in an inner-city black neighborhood in Jackson, Mississippi. There I was, born in the U.S.A. but growing up in bustling Seoul during the tumultuous post-Korean war years, when we also saw an explosive growth of Christianity. And there I was after that, studying Chinese at Middlebury College and aspiring to a government career. I took a summer break to volunteer in Mississippi, of all places.

I arrived in Mississippi in 1981 as a starry-eyed twenty-one-year-old. There at Voice of Calvary Ministries—founded by Mississippi pastor and activist John Perkins in an inner-city neighborhood that had been abandoned by churches of every color—Christians of different races worshiped, worked and lived side-by-side on the same streets, seven days a week. You name it, Voice of Calvary did it: housing, economic development, youth ministry. It was an exciting place to be.

I went to Jackson for three months and stayed for seventeen years. My wife, Donna, and I met and married at Voice of Calvary, and our three children were all born or adopted there. I saw our church almost split over a racial crisis. I experienced revelations of how God can bring joy, friendship and new life out

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of pain, failure and weakness. Along the way, I became an unlikely friend and colaborer with Spencer Perkins, the founder's son, who grew up amid intense racial animosity. We helped start a Christian community called Antioch, where our families lived for twelve years. We also founded a national reconciliation ministry and wrote a book to tell our story.

Then Spencer and I nearly split apart in 1997—a bitter relational crisis. Yet somehow, with the help of friends, we learned to give each other enough grace to go on and to trust God for the lack. Just trying to live peacefully in one neighborhood, in one church and with one person named Spencer taught me that reconciliation is a long and fragile journey.

But the most important lesson of those seventeen Mississippi years was this: even in a deeply divided world, even in the most deeply divided relationship, *the way things are is not the way things have to be*.

After Spencer's sudden death in 1998 and a period of discernment, our family opened a new chapter. Here in a different place—on the other side of the tracks at Duke University—I found myself immediately restless: can places like Duke and West Jackson say hello, become friends and transform each other?

Through this pilgrimage from America to Korea to Mississippi to Duke, I find myself constantly longing and searching for communion across worlds and divides I have lived on both sides of—Asia and America, black and white, haves and have-nots, action and reflection, Blacknall's Presbyterian deliberateness and Voice of Calvary's gospel choir spontaneity, Korean *kimchi* and Missis-

ssippi ribs, the reality of West Jackson gunshots and the beauty of Duke gardens.

AFRICAN IN AMERICA

This book's second source of restlessness is found in Emmanuel's journey.

For me (Emmanuel) as well, this has been an unexpected pilgrim journey, for I never imagined myself at a place like Duke.

Here I am, a Ugandan who grew up in the small village of Malube. A Catholic priest in a Methodist seminary. An African living in the United States. I am a village-born-and-bred son of Uganda who can remember waking up to 5:00 a.m. chores in the garden before running the two miles to school. But I have also been able to study in Uganda, Rome and Belgium. I am now teaching in a wealthy research university, going home and back again and again in the name of a fresh conversation about Africa.

My father came from a poor family in Rwanda to Uganda, raising seven children with my mother. He never went to school himself yet became a parent leader at our school and mobilized children in the village to get an education. My father died when I was twelve. My brother died of AIDS in 1993. When civil war broke out in 1980, my mother fled the house as the military demolished every living thing. She walked fifty miles to Kampala and did not return until six years later. Here I am, with both my experience of growing up in Africa under the brutal regime of Idi Amin and my involvement in the dynamic and rich traditions of the African church.

In all my teaching I find myself in search of something better than the tribalization that divides so much of Africa, or categories such as North and South, black and white. Here I am, pressing the question as I teach, “But what does this theology mean for my mother?” What does it mean back in Malube, where trees are being cut down by powerful businesses, where roads are in disrepair, where clean water is not available, where the priest lives in a faraway town? What does it mean for our conversations about God and peace never to be disconnected from the challenges of real, local places, from digging wells, organizing education and planting trees?

Whether it is building community between African and American congregations through the ministry of Share the Blessings or leading pilgrimages of Duke students and faculty to Uganda or supporting Ugandans who serve as priests in American parishes, my life is about being at Duke and at the same time never leaving Africa.

A SHARED JOURNEY

The third source of restlessness for this book comes out of the journey we have shared.

We discovered each other in a classroom at Duke, Emmanuel as teacher and Chris as student. Soon we were friends, discovering we were even born the same year. Eventually a remarkable international journey merged with our two journeys through the Reconciliation Track of the 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization.

Chris was invited to convene the Reconciliation Track and invited Emmanuel to join the leadership team. The journey took the team to Duke, to Rwanda ten years after the genocide and to the October 2004 Thailand forum of 1,500 participants. Over that week in Thailand we joined fifty Christian leaders in our track from twenty-one of the world's most divided places historically—from Korea to Northern Ireland, from India to South Africa. As we worshiped across denominations and nations, ate together, debated and reflected on our ministries of reconciliation, something beautiful happened: strangers became companions, and a global community of the restless was born.

Rooming together in Thailand, the two of us bonded and talked into the night each evening. Returning to Duke, conversations intensified with Greg Jones, our dean, about a major new initiative focused on reconciliation. By December 2004, the two of us were walking down a North Carolina beach as the new codirectors of the Duke Center for Reconciliation, sharing our dreams for what a center would look like if it were to take seriously both social realities and Scripture, action and reflection, America and Africa. Yet even in this growing friendship, we weren't sure what we were getting into. As Protestant and Catholic in churches that do not share the Communion cup, we knew the church's brokenness was at the heart of our restlessness.

Since that walk in December 2004, we have walked together in one another's formative villages in Uganda and Mississippi. Chris saw the church where Emmanuel was baptized into the

faith. Emmanuel saw the Antioch dinner table that bound Chris into a beloved community.

Now, three years into the journey of the center, a major new initiative is forming around reconciliation—a seedbed for future leaders (we send students to both Mississippi and Uganda), a resource center and a fueling station to nourish Christian leaders in America and across the world. Every semester is full of encounters—at Duke, across America and around the world—with people working in places of deep pain with great hope. We end every semester on that same North Carolina coast, walking the beach and naming the gifts. This journey is not worth it without joy and celebration along the way, without remembering the bigger story we are in.

THE CONVICTIONS IN THIS BOOK

The convictions we explore in this book became clear to us only as we worked together to establish the center. We discovered we had developed strong, common convictions about reconciliation as a Christian vision and practice.

Indeed, in our zest for constantly bridging diverse worlds, we see a bigger journey—a quest for God’s new creation and a fresh vision for the church—neither the church of the current divides nor the church enmeshed in violence, but the church as it can be: the bride of Christ, drawn from every nation, tongue, tribe and denomination.

Many of our students and other Christian young people we meet are searching for such a fresh vision. They are eager to

break the bubble of familiarity and comfort to serve in South Africa, Uganda, Sudan, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Mississippi. They return very restless, and are never the same.

Yet reconciliation is not only for seminary students or ministry “professionals” or those who go far and wide in the name of peace. The basic conviction of this book is that reconciliation as a Christian vision makes a claim on the life of every person, place and congregation—it is not the terrain of experts and professionals. This book is for you, wherever you live.

This quest of everyday people for God’s new creation in a broken world is the theme of the Resources for Reconciliation book series. In *Reconciling All Things*, the lead title, our intention is to trace the broad strokes of a journey of reconciliation that is distinctly Christian—a movement from seeing the story of Scripture, to learning to lament, to seeing what hope looks like in a broken world. We are not satisfied with the ways reconciliation is commonly approached within and beyond the church. So we begin by thinking critically about prevailing visions of reconciliation.

Two words are crucial throughout this book: *journey* and *gifts*. Reconciliation is indeed an invitation into a journey. It is not a “solution” or an end product, but a process and an ongoing search.

But we need gifts to engage this journey well. The good news of this book is that God has not left the world alone. God has given us everything we need to sustain us on the journey. One gift at the heart of this book is hope—a hope that flows from the conviction of our own life journeys: *the way things are is not the way*

things have to be. Wherever we go in the most broken places of the world, God is always planting seeds of hope. This hope is often under the radar screen and easily missed. In this book we share stories of God's new creation breaking in, the good news of what the Holy Spirit is doing throughout the world.

We see profound hope in the lives of faithful people who have gone before us. So part of our methodology in this book is to illuminate the lives of key leaders in reconciliation and cull insights from their work. Thus we'll revisit certain examples throughout.

At the end of the book we propose ten theses for "Recovering Reconciliation as the Mission of God." Our hope is to provide a roadmap for the rest of the series, which will begin to fill out the "all things," exploring different aspects of the Christian vision of reconciliation in relationship to real problems and challenges.

BECOMING MORE CHRISTIAN

One of the journeys we shared was Duke Divinity School's 2005 Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope in Uganda and Rwanda. Over the course of our two-week journey, a highlight was our Kampala, Uganda, visit with Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala, one of Emmanuel's spiritual mentors.

Greeting us warmly in his white robe and red hat, Wamala spoke eloquently of the challenge of living faithfully. "We have the book," he said, speaking of Africans and the Bible. "But how much do we know about it?"

Later the cardinal joked with Dean Greg Jones that Duke should be canonized for putting up with Emmanuel for all these

years. Then, reflecting on Emmanuel's presence as an African Catholic at this Protestant seminary in America, the cardinal offered striking words: "No, you have not made him more Catholic. You have made him more Christian."

In the end, learning to become faithful pilgrims amid the brokenness of this world is about becoming more Christian. A Rwandan proverb says, "To go fast, walk alone. To go far, walk together." When we learn how to slow down to make room for walking together across divides, we become more Christian.

That is what this book is about—becoming more Christian by slowing down.