



# Loving Reconciliation: For the Sake of the Neighbor

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**Michigan District**  
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

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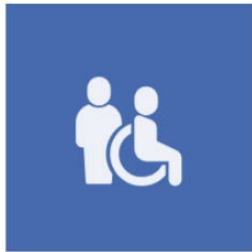
Exploring the role of empathy and compassion in fostering reconciliation.



**“WHOEVER ASPIRES TO BE AN OVERSEER DESIRES A NOBLE TASK. NOW THE OVERSEER IS TO BE ABOVE REPROACH, FAITHFUL TO HIS WIFE, TEMPERATE, SELF-CONTROLLED, RESPECTABLE, HOSPITABLE, ABLE TO TEACH, NOT GIVEN TO DRUNKENNESS, NOT VIOLENT BUT GENTLE, NOT QUARRELSOME, NOT A LOVER OF MONEY.... HE MUST ALSO HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION WITH OUTSIDERS, SO THAT HE WILL NOT FALL INTO DISGRACE AND INTO THE DEVIL’S TRAP.”**

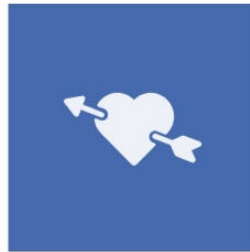
1 TIMOTHY 3:1-3, 7

# LOVING RECONCILIATION



Without love,  
reconciliation is impossible

Reconciliation requires selfless, compassionate love that is able to transcend difference and animosity.



Love seeks the good  
of the neighbor

Reconciliation is not possible without a genuine concern for the other person's needs, desires, and overall well-being.



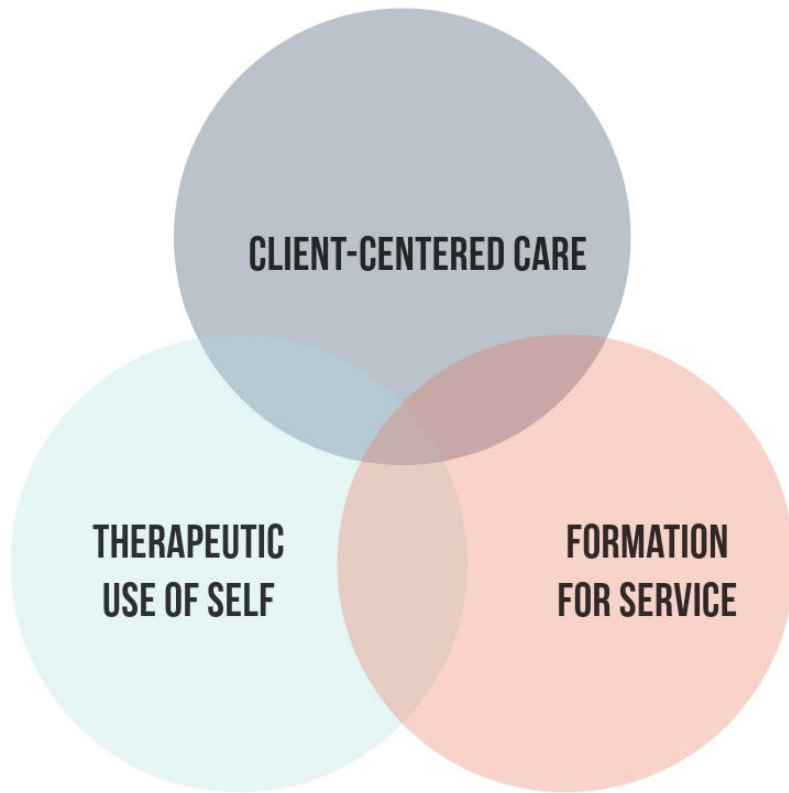
Reconciliation must  
be loved to be lived

True reconciliation between opposing parties cannot be forced or coerced.

It must first be desired.

Ultimately, love is the foundation upon which lasting reconciliation can be built. It is the key to mending broken relationships and restoring harmony.

# LOVING CARE: DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



 **Duke University School of Medicine**

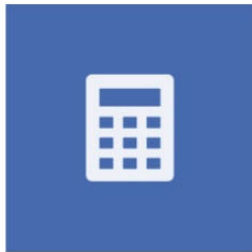
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**Occupational Therapy Doctorate**

**“'MAKE LEVEL PATHS FOR YOUR FEET', SO THAT THE LAME MAY NOT BE DISABLED, BUT RATHER HEALED. MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH EVERYONE AND TO BE HOLY; WITHOUT HOLINESS NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD. SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE FALLS SHORT OF THE GRACE OF GOD AND THAT NO BITTER ROOT GROWS UP TO CAUSE TROUBLE AND DEFILE MANY.”**

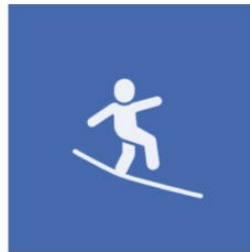
HEBREWS 12:13-15

# LOVING RECONCILIATION: EMBRACING CONFLICT



## **Conflict Resolution**

"Identifies a solution to end the conflict, prioritizing immediate remedies and often overlooking deeper issues."



## **Conflict Management**

"Aims to control or stabilize the situation without necessarily resolving it, often maintaining a status quo that avoids deeper engagement with the conflict's root causes."



## **Conflict Transformation**

"Looks beyond these approaches by addressing the systemic and relational aspects of conflict, aiming not just to resolve or manage but to change the underlying structures that led to the conflict."

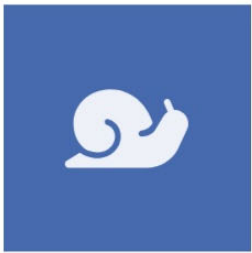
"Inevitable interpersonal events" are naturally occurring events that take place during client-therapist interactions. If not handled properly, these can harm the client-therapist relationship.



**BUT WHAT HAPPENS  
IF WE STOP CARING?**

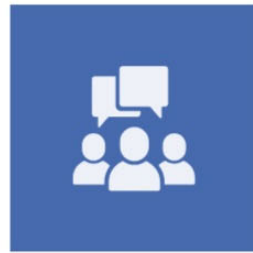
**IF WE EVER STOP CARING, 'LOVE'  
ITSELF IS CALLED INTO QUESTION.**

# WHAT DOES RECONCILIATION LOOK LIKE?



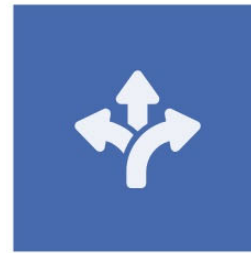
It is patient and kind

Reconciliation is supported by patience and kindness, even in the face of provocation.



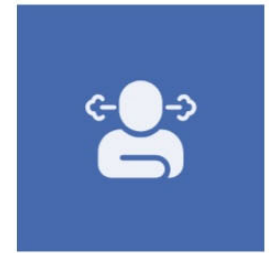
It is not arrogant or rude

Reconciliation involves respect of others, without an attitude of superiority or disregard.



It does not insist on its own way

Reconciliation is willing to compromise and put the needs of others before its own, seeking unity and reconciliation.



It is not irritable or resentful

Resentment prevents effective communication, putting up barriers to connection. It can lead to judgment and blame

Love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13, is at the heart of reconciliation, as it embodies the selfless and compassionate qualities necessary to restore broken relationships and bring people together.

**“LET NO DEBT REMAIN OUTSTANDING, EXCEPT THE  
CONTINUING DEBT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR  
WHOEVER LOVES OTHERS HAS FULFILLED THE LAW...  
LOVE DOES NO HARM TO A NEIGHBOR.  
THEREFORE LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW.”**

ROMANS 13:8, 10



# NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Nonviolent communication is an approach to resolving conflicts and fostering reconciliation. It emphasizes empathy, understanding, and a focus on unmet needs rather than demands, enabling parties to work collaboratively towards mutually satisfactory solutions.

## *Nonviolent Communication* **PARADIGMS OF COMMUNICATION**



retributive  
**DOMINATION**  
Paradigm

- Duality
- Separation
- Scarcity
- Power over
- Lack of possibility of choice
- Invisible violence



restorative  
**PARTNERSHIP**  
Paradigm

- Unicity
- Connection
- Abundance
- Creativity
- Shared power
- Choice
- Collaboration

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# EMBRACING NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?



## Observation

Observe the other person's words and actions without judgment. Separate facts from evaluations.

Purpose: Build common ground. What are you able to agree on?



## Feeling

The purpose of naming our feelings is so we can begin to identify the unmet needs behind them.

This is not to be confused with "false feelings," evaluations masked as feelings. Ex: "I feel like you don't care about me at all!"



## Need

Identifying unmet needs is the most important part of the process.

Like "false feelings," we want to avoid confusing 'needs' with 'strategies'. Ex. "I need you to..."

Needs are universal.



## Request

Here, instead of hoping people will read your mind, you ask, not demand, others to do something.

If you get angry or judge the other person for saying 'no', you are not making a request but a demand.

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken." - C.S. Lewis

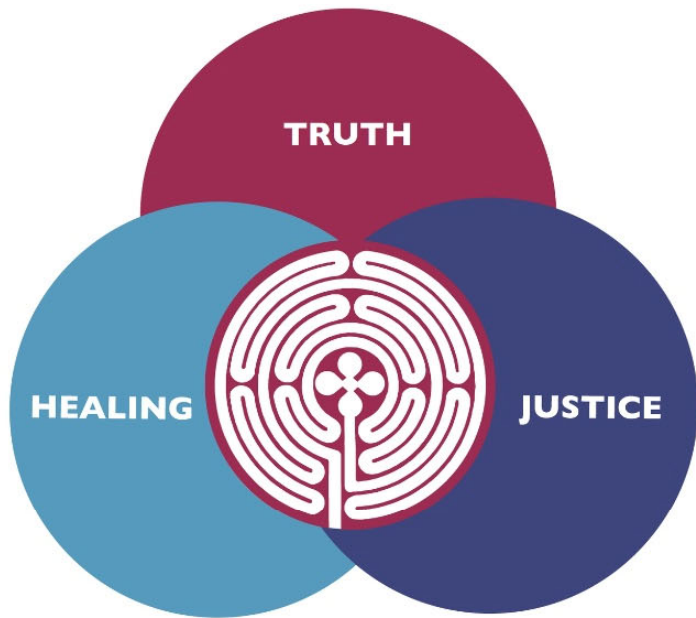
**“AS LOVE OF GOD BEGINS WITH LISTENING TO HIS WORD,  
SO THE BEGINNING OF LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN IS  
LEARNING TO LISTEN TO THEM. IT IS GOD’S LOVE FOR US  
THAT HE NOT ONLY GIVES US HIS WORD BUT ALSO  
LEND US HIS EAR. MANY PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR AN  
EAR THAT WILL LISTEN. THEY DO NOT FIND IT AMONG  
CHRISTIANS, BECAUSE THESE CHRISTIANS ARE TALKING  
WHERE THEY SHOULD BE LISTENING....”**

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *LIFE TOGETHER*

**“...GOD, WHO THROUGH CHRIST RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF AND GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; THAT IS, IN CHRIST GOD WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM, AND ENTRUSTING TO US THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION. THEREFORE, WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, GOD MAKING HIS APPEAL THROUGH US. WE IMPLORE YOU ON BEHALF OF CHRIST, BE RECONCILED TO GOD.”**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-20





## **BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY NOW**

## **MLK'S BELOVED COMMUNITY**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned the Beloved Community as a model of reconciliation built on love.

The Beloved Community embraced equality, nonviolence, and unity as a means to achieve peace and justice.

"In the Beloved Community, conflict still exists, but it is resolved peacefully, nonviolently, and without hostility, ill will, or resentment."

**“THE AFTERMATH OF NONVIOLENCE IS THE CREATION OF  
THE BELOVED COMMUNITY, SO THAT WHEN THE  
BATTLE’S OVER, A NEW RELATIONSHIP COMES INTO  
BEING...**

**THE WAY OF VIOLENCE LEADS TO BITTERNESS IN THE  
SURVIVORS AND BRUTALITY IN THE DESTROYERS. BUT,  
THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE LEADS TO REDEMPTION AND  
THE CREATION OF THE BELOVED COMMUNITY.”**

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# LEYMAH GBOWEE: TRAUMA HEALING AND WOMEN'S PEACE MOVEMENT

Leymah Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist, social worker, and women's rights advocate. She is renowned for her leadership in the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement, which played a crucial role in ending the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. Gbowee began volunteering at the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Program, which provides support and counseling services to survivors of the conflict.





## LEYMAH GBOWEE: TRAUMA HEALING

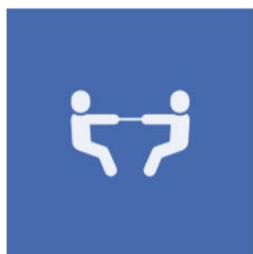
"Trauma Healing was a little like therapy. Our goal was to do workshops with villagers who'd suffered during the war, get them to tell their stories so they'd gain awareness of where they were now and what problems they faced. Then we'd teach them conflict resolution strategies that would enable them to help their communities.

*What is conflict to you? we'd ask. What is peace? How does your local language and custom define it? What are the national issues that affect your village? What do you see as the cause of conflict in Liberia? What do you have within your culture that can be used to resolve it?"*

Gbowee, Leymah. "Mighty Be Our Powers"

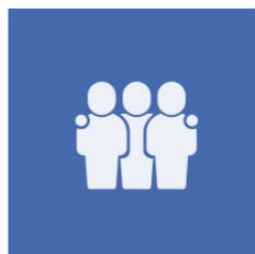


# LEYMAH GBOWEE: RECONCILIATION THROUGH LOVE



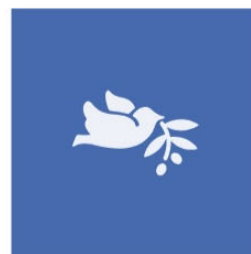
## Ending Liberian Civil War

Leymah Gbowee organized a nonviolent women's movement that helped end the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003.



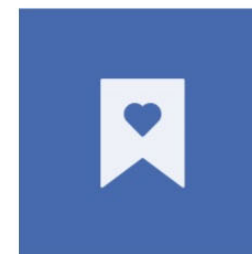
## Based in the Church

She brought together women of different religious and ethnic backgrounds to work towards peace and reconciliation.



## Women's Rights Activist

Championing women's rights and their role in peacebuilding, Gbowee was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her work.



## Ambassador of Reconciliation

Her approach emphasized the power of love and nonviolence to overcome conflict and promote lasting change.

Leymah Gbowee's remarkable story demonstrates how love, compassion, and nonviolent action can transform communities and bring an end to even the most intractable conflicts.

**“DARKNESS CANNOT DRIVE OUT  
DARKNESS; ONLY LIGHT CAN DO  
THAT. HATE CANNOT DRIVE OUT  
HATE; ONLY LOVE CAN DO THAT.”**

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# THOUGHTS? QUESTIONS?

Open the floor to feedback and discussion.

