### Ministry of Reconciliation

18 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19, NASB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 Dimensions: Jesus death on the cross enables both dimensions.</th>
<th>(1) Reconciled to God</th>
<th>(2) Reconciled to Each Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:10-11).</td>
<td>“For He Himself is our peace, who made both <em>groups into one</em> and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, <em>which is</em> the Law of commandments <em>contained</em> in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, <em>thus</em> establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity” (Eph. 2:14-16).</td>
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<td>“For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. 1:19-20).</td>
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Unity in the one body of Christ is an important theme for Paul, which encompasses both dimensions—in the one body of Christ, we are reconciled to each other and to God.

“For by one Spirit we were all *baptized into one body*, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit…. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:13, 27).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all *one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3: 27-28).

“Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a *renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but *Christ is all, and in all…. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body” (Col. 3:9-11, 15).

“The new identity in Christ, which from the church's beginnings was taken on in baptism, was actually understood as the reconciliation of humans with God by God and, as a consequence of this, with everyone else.”

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| **Biblical reconciliation has social implications.** | “Interpreting the pivotal salvific event as reconciliation is quite a bold move because it inextricably links faith in Jesus Christ to the fabric of human relationships.”
This understanding argues against the “widespread notion in some of the most energetic contemporary Christian movements that the biblical call to reconciliation is solely about reconciling God and humanity, with no reference to social realities.”

| **Now we are given the ministry of reconciliation.** | 16 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18-19)

| **Therefore, our ministry must…** | …connect people with God, enable people to come into harmony with God.
…connect people with each other, enable people to come into harmony with each other.

| **As ambassadors we represent God’s kingdom by demonstrating the way of Christ.** | “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men…. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Yoder asserts, “there is no general concept of living like Jesus in the New Testament.”

“‘There is but one realm in which the concept of imitation holds—but there it holds in every strand of the New Testament literature…. This is at the point of the concrete social meaning of the cross in its relation to enmity and power. Servanthood replaces dominion, forgiveness absorbs hostility. Thus—and only thus—are we bound by New Testament thought to ‘be like Jesus.’”

“God’s gift of a call to be Christ’s ambassadors or reconciliation intends to unseat other lords—power, nationalism, race or ethnic loyalty as an end in itself—and give birth to deeper allegiances, stories, spaces and communities that are a ‘demonstration plot’ of the reality of God’s new creation in Christ. Put simply, reconciliation both names the church as and requires the church to be the sign and agent of God’s reconciliation.”

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2 Ibid., 259.
5 Ibid., 131.
6 Katongole and Rice, *Reconciling All Things*, 53.