



Gender Equity & Reconciliation International (GERI)
Transforming gender injustice & establishing beloved community

GERI Newsletter *March / April 2025*



“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

~ Archbishop Desmond Tutu,
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Welcome, beloved community, to our March/April Newsletter.

As we navigate these times, we acknowledge the challenges that continue to unfold, as division, pain, and inequality continue to bring suffering across the world. Yet, history teaches us that through adversity, the strongest rise up through courage, truth, love, and the willingness to heal.

At GERI, we witness this transformation when people come together with open hearts and deep listening. Even in the midst of struggle, there is always an opportunity to restore connection, to heal, and to shape the world we long for.

Our newsletter reaches thousands of people worldwide—a testament to the growing movement of those committed to this work. This month, we invite you to stand with us in this vision. Whether through a workshop or training, or a conversation and a moment of reflection, know that you are

part of a global community dedicated to healing and renewal.

We. Heal. Together.

Highlights from the past two months:

- GERI Facilitator Training – South Africa
- Thomas Keating Symposium at Garrison Institute, NY
- United Nations - NGO CSW69 Forum, New York City
- Second Saturday Circle ([register here for May 10th](#)), online
- GERI at Canticle Farm - Oakland, CA
- Unity of Houston, Texas
- Fathers and Sons at Chrysalis Academy, South Africa
- GERI Introductory Session in Nairobi, Kenya

Cultivating Change Makers: GERI's Immersive Facilitator Training in Cape Town, South Africa



From February 23 - 28, 2025, a dedicated cohort of 18 trainees from across South Africa and Namibia gathered at Jacana Lodge, Cape Town, to embark on the first module of the **2025 Professional Facilitator and Immersion Training**.



Sharing our visions for a "Gender Healed World"

In partnership with **Genderworks** and **Chrysalis Academy**, this immersive experience marked GERI's ninth professional training in South Africa, guiding participants through trauma-informed facilitation, deep dialogue, and transformative reconciliation work.



A moment of joyful movement and play in the process

Right from the start, the group set an intentional foundation of spiritual practice and deep presence. Morning sessions began with mindful movement and meditation at sunrise, and the group embraced the importance of grounding and centering before stepping into the work ahead.



Trainee-created sacred altars

A key moment in the training came with the Silent Witnessing practice, a sacred exercise in deep listening. *"Both tears and deep*

appreciation filled the room," as participants sat in silent solidarity, witnessing each other's experiences without interruption or judgment.



Sharing of gender stories

The Truth Forums were a profound and courageous reckoning. In the men's forum, they shared struggles with fatherhood, abusive relationships, hardened hearts from past wounds, and the challenges of queer identity. Their honesty was deeply appreciated by the women. In the afternoon, the women's forum delved into stories of abuse, violence, loss, and resilience. The men received these challenging truths with deep respect, and the day ended in a space of mutual understanding and heartfelt reflection.



Men's group preparing gifts for their honoring ceremony for the women



A moment of joyful connection after the honoring ceremonies



Men's honoring ceremony for the women

Despite the depth and intensity of the process, the closing days of the training radiated with healing and connection. One facilitator remarked, *"the whole group emerged with a renewed sense of wholeness and appreciation for each other's journeys."* Many participants shared how the process had softened and opened them, shifting their perspectives and strengthening their commitment to this work.

"This was a remarkable first

module,” one trainer reflected. *“The depth, the spirituality, the caliber of the trainees, the immersion in the process—it all flowed in such a beautiful and profound way.”*

With three more modules ahead, this cohort of emerging facilitators carries forward the spirit of truth and reconciliation, stepping deeper into the sacred work of restoring balance between genders, and within the human heart itself.



GERI Trainer Team: Garrett Evans, Desirée English, Tristan Johannes, Antonia Porter, Laurie Gaum, and Lucille Meyer

Thomas Keating Symposium Garrison Institute

It was a deep honor to join the Thomas Keating Symposium, *A Rising Tide of Oneness*, at Garrison Institute in New York on March 7. This day-long symposium was convened to explore and celebrate the spiritual legacy of Father Thomas Keating: Trappist monk, founder of the Centering Prayer movement, and a pillar of contemplative inter-spiritual dialogue.



Will Keepin and Sabine Alkira speak together on "Acting Skillfully in a Polarized World"

Fr. Thomas was also a remarkable mentor, spiritual companion and friend, and unwavering supporter of Will and Cynthia; as well as a central pillar of spiritual and prayerful support for both our Gender Equity and Reconciliation and Dawn of Interspirituality programs. It was a privilege to sit in community with so many others whose lives he profoundly touched, and to honor his legacy and spirit, and the ways it lives on in our hearts and through our work in the world.

GERI Trainer,
Pentecostal minister,
spiritual activist, and
vipassana meditator
Tristan Johannes
spoke beautifully on
the panel, *Oneness in
our One World*.



Heather Ruce, Rev. Tristan Johannes, and Rev. Matthew Wright

William Keepin presented on and moderated several panels, including:

- *The Spirit of the Snowmass Conference,*
- *Acting Skillfully in a Polarized World,*
- *Oneness Among the World's Religions,*
- *Oneness in our One World.*



Dr. William Keepin, Rev. Matthew Wright, Dr. Netanel Miles-Yépez, and Fr. Cyprian Consiglio

When asked about the application of interspirituality in these times of accelerating global crisis, Will Keepin replied, “I see all the things that are happening now as both symptoms and signs of the rebirthing of the entire human species. ... Every religion has some version of the teaching, ‘love thy neighbor as thyself,’ and yet every religion betrays this principle, in its competition with other religions. ... This is why interspiritual dialogue is so important.”

Tristan Johannes invoked the legacy of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the African principle of *Ubuntu* (‘I am because you are’). He raised the key question, “What can *I* do? ... We have these giants, like Martin Luther King, Jr, and Thomas Keating, and all these wonderful leaders. And also among *us*—are giants, who can do brave and great things in the face of adversity. I’m reminded of our power, which we all have,” he said.

Videos of key sessions from the Keating Symposium are now available [here](#). We are grateful to Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault for her key role in

organizing this Symposium, and to Jonathan Rose and the Garrison Institute for their wonderful hosting of this symposium and subsequent retreat.

United Nations - CSW NGO Forum

At the 69th United Nations Conference on the Status of Women in New York City, participants experienced a powerful introduction to GERI on March 13 in the NGO Forum. This marks GERI's seventh time presenting at UN-CSW.



We extend our gratitude to the facilitation team: Hugo Sanchez, Michele Breene, Tristan Johannes, Garrett Evans, Cynthia Brix, and William Keepin.

*GERI UN Team:
Garrett Evans, Konyka Dunson, Mike Oreskes,
Hugo Sanchez, William Keepin, Cynthia Brix,
Tristan Johannes, (not pictured: Michele Breene
and Beth Blissman)*

A special featured guest was Dr. Konyka Dunson, who presented on her doctoral research on the lasting impacts of GERI's methodology. Her findings, published in two academic journals, reveal how the work strengthens participants' commitment to gender equity, deepens communication skills, and inspires meaningful conversations in their communities – as reported in our February newsletter.



Dr. Konyka Dunson presenting on her research on key impacts of the GERI methodology

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing opportunity to contribute to this vital global dialogue. A heartfelt thank you to the CSW leadership, the Loretto Community at the UN for co-sponsoring this session, and Beth Blissman for her steadfast support of GERI at the UN.

We gathered on March 8 and April 12 for our monthly Second Saturday Circles!

What an absolute delight to meet in community and be guided by this facilitation team spanning across Africa, India, and North and Central America.



Facilitation Team: Desireé English, Marco Cañizales, Lucille Meyer, Hugo Sanchez, Venu Doddavarapu, Ticha Masai, Dorothea Hendricks, and Mercy Mwende

During our time together, we entered into a shared exploration of our personal gender histories and stories, opening into safe and sacred connections among us.

We're excited to continue this journey together! We hope you'll join us as we deepen our conversations and weave the threads of our beloved community together.

Join us for our next Second Saturday Circle, May 10th—[9 am Pacific](#) on Zoom!

Register here! [Second Saturday Circles](#)

GERI at Canticle Farm Oakland, California Transforming Gender Relations

What a blessing to be invited by Anne and Terry Symens-Bucher to offer a GERI workshop for their community at Canticle Farm in Oakland, CA, Feb 28 - Mar 2. Over three days, the space became a sanctuary for deep listening, truth-telling, and healing, guided by a dedicated facilitation team.



Canticle Farm community at the



Participants connecting in small groups

Theatrical skits created by participants infused humor into challenging topics including: sexual harassment, body image, rigid gender roles, and masculinity conditioning, offering new ways to engage with these realities.

At the heart of the workshop, the *Truth Forums* opened raw and honest dialogue. In the women's circle, themes of leadership, resilience, and reclaiming feminine space emerged. The women's voices resounded with strength, and then in collective song, moving the entire room. In the men's forum, stories of fatherhood, racial identity, the prison system's impact, and vulnerability deepened the journey of healing. One man offered a heartfelt apology for past shaming of gay men, a moment of deep recognition and healing. The gender-expansive group spoke of ancestral gender lineage, the expansiveness of being genderqueer, and the challenge of gender categorization—stretching perspectives across the circle.

"Hearing a father speak about his instinct to protect his daughters cracked my heart open." – Participant reflection

The workshop culminated in honoring ceremonies, where participants offered blessings to each other and personal commitments—to inner healing, authentic relationships, and continued exploration of gender in transformative ways. During the final council, many reflected on the safety of the container and the courage it took to step beyond their comfort zones. A self-described “revolutionary elder” shared how this experience

allowed him to grow in places that once felt unreachable. A young woman, attending with her father, described it as life-changing to hear him speak his truth and witness her dad's pain as a man.



A moment of lighthearted play during the process

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the facilitation team—John Guy, Myra Kinds, Tristan Johannes, Annette Williams, and Leila-Scott Price—as well as to the Canticle Farm community for welcoming this profound work into their space.



Anne Symens-Bucher, Myra Kinds, John Guy, Annette Williams, Tristan Johannes, Leila-Scott Price, and Terry Symens-Bucher.

Unity of Houston The Power of Healing Together

It was a total joy to share the healing work of GERI at Unity of Houston on Sun, Mar 16!



GERI participants at Unity of Houston

During the Sunday service that was attended by over 100 congregants, the facilitators (pictured) offered a brief sharing about the GERI work that was followed by a rich and inspiring 2.5-hour afternoon workshop.



GERI Facilitation Team:
Garrett Evans, Sarah Fournoy,
Leila-Scott Price, and Tristan Johannes

In just a short time, this group of 18 stepped into deep sharing and listening—bringing forward their hearts, hurts, and hopes for a gender-healed world with honesty and vulnerability. It's always remarkable and beautiful how quickly the alchemy of healing can take hold, leaving us with a profound sense of heartfelt connection, openness, and renewal.



Participants holding a prayer for each others' visions for a Gender Healed World to be manifest.

A deep bow to Unity of Houston and Kenneth Gayle for the invitation, and to local organizers and GERI facilitators Sarah Fournoy and Leila-Scott Price for their vision and work for GERI to take root in Houston.



GERI returns to Houston for an in-person workshop on October 2-5! Click below to register.

Register here! Houston GERI Workshop October 2 - 5, 2025

Sacred tying of bracelets representing shared commitments for healing and reconciliation.

Deepening Bonds: Fathers and Sons at Chrysalis Academy

The Chrysalis Academy "24 CHARLIE Father and Sons Program" was held March 15 - 16, where the facilitators deftly incorporate the GERI methodology for deeply moving sharing between fathers and sons.



Heartfelt reflections from three fathers who attended the Fathers and Sons' Workshop



Fathers and sons sharing with each other in small groups

Fathers reflected on how they

were shaped by their own father figures, opening up about both the joys and challenges of fatherhood. Students expressed their appreciation for their fathers' presence, with one poignantly sharing his deep longing for love and understanding.



Pair-sharing between fathers and sons



A moment of heartfelt connection

As the gathering came to a close, each participant made a commitment to strengthening their family bonds upon returning home. This work is a testament to the power of truth-sharing and deep listening in building bridges across generations.

We are immensely grateful for the ongoing support of Chrysalis Academy and Genderworks in South Africa, whose dedication continues to enrich this transformative process.



Chrysalis Academy team supporting the workshop

GERI Introductory Session in Nairobi

On Saturday, March 15, a group of 20 participants—10 men and 10 women—gathered at Ruaraka Methodist Church in Nairobi for a transformative Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI) introductory session.

Led by GERI intern facilitators Bryan Lepish and Kendi Edina (pictured), the session created a heartfelt and courageous space for deep dialogue.



Bryan Lepish and Kendi Edina

Participants shared powerful moments, ranging from unexpected interpersonal connections to eye-opening discussions on gender-based violence, street harassment, and workplace discrimination.



Participants writing their visions for a Gender Healed World

Everyone was deeply moved when all the women in the room stood in response to the fear of walking alone at night, while the men—who were visibly struck—remained seated for the same question. Tears were shed as more stories surfaced over our time together. This three hour introductory session concluded with appreciations for each other, and community visioning for a fully healed Kenya. The GERI facilitators held the space with care and sensitivity, allowing the transformation to unfold.

We are grateful for the openness and engagement of all who participated and for the growing community of GERI facilitators in Nairobi. Since then, two full three-day workshops have taken place in Kenya, which will be featured in our next newsletter.

Your support is deeply appreciated and makes this work possible.

We warmly welcome your tax-deductible donation to our 501(c)3 educational non-profit. Just click the donate button below!



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