



## A Glimpse of Heaven



*In November 2019, Gender Equity and Reconciliation International and the Imago Dei Fund convened a special 3-day training in Boston for clergy, ministers, and religious lay leaders. Below is one man's reflection on his experience of the training.*

I felt loved. When a woman I barely knew wiped tears from my eyes and said, "I see you," I felt loved.

I'm not sure how I got from here to there over three days through the Gender Equity and Reconciliation International retreat in Boston this Fall, but somehow I did. I walked into a room with 21 people, most of whom I had never met, a large number of whom were women, and I was invited to participate in the human growth process.



Clearly God wanted me to be there. I had just come off a weekend with a small group of friends where we spent time in guided reflection about what it meant to be made in the Image of God. It was the first time I had in any serious way contemplated God as

represented both in the masculine and feminine, and I was hungry to learn more.



At the GERI retreat, I struggled with the intense level of vulnerability in the midst of people I barely knew. I found myself defensive about whatever culpability I might have in the Gender-inequity so prevalent in our world. But I committed to share and

engage as authentically as I felt able to do.

I talked about growing up 40+ years ago in a home where mom and dad played relatively traditional roles. In spite of going on to be an Army Ranger, I was the kid who didn't lean as much toward hunting and working on cars as my brother did. I played the piano and helped my mom bake cookies and clean the house. That was fine, but not necessarily highly praised. I

shared with a smaller group about my relationship with my mom and dad, friendships and romance in high school and college, married life and being the father of a son and two daughters and the consequent considerations of being a man made in the image of God.



I also listened a lot. I listened to the other men in a group of only men. I listened to the women as they shared with the full group of men and women. It was heart-breaking to listen and contemplate the ways we had debased the Image of God in each other.

This was all facilitated by a thoughtful, wise and experienced group of GERI counselors and mentors. One of the questions asked was "if there was one thing you wanted the women around the room to know about men, what would it be?" My immediate thought, I believe from God, and which I later shared with the group was

simply, "We Love Them." We men struggle and fail - sometimes disastrously, but we do genuinely love our wives and daughters and mothers and sisters and friends.

At the end of the three days, the men had an opportunity to "produce" a ceremony honoring the women, and vice versa. These took a good chunk of time to prepare and were rather elaborate. We men did a decent job and I believe the women were touched by the theme of putting on a "Garment of Praise."

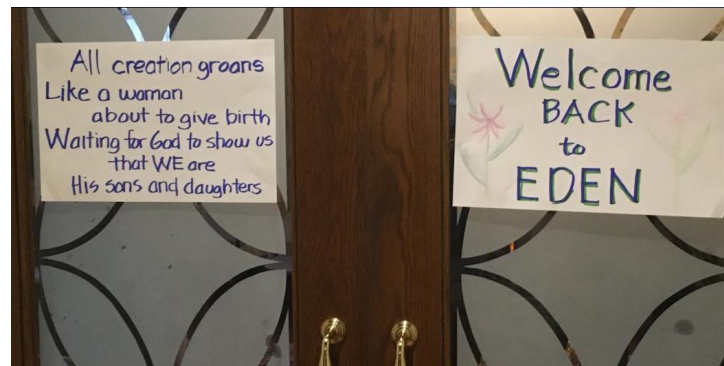
But the women really blew us a way with the ceremony they prepared. The men walked into the foyer where there were three bowls set up on a table. Some of the women guided us through steps to take dried leaves that represented our own grief and crumple them up and let them go, then they poured water over our hands into a basin as a sign of new life.



We walked toward the meeting room where there was a sign on the door that said, "Welcome to Eden."

After having spent a few days really baring my soul and uncovering my own

brokenness and better understanding more the pain others have experienced, seeing that sign made my heart leap with hope at what relationships between men and women were intended to be and can be in the context of communion with their creator.





All the men lined up in the room, each standing face-to-face with one of the women at the retreat. Some of the women were narrating a larger story, but the woman each of us was standing in front of, would periodically repeat, "we see you. . . in your

grief," "we see you. . . in your desire to protect," "we see you. . . in your love for the women in your life," "we see you. . . in your strength," "we see you. . . in your fear," and on and on.

They read a version of the Lord's Prayer modified to be "A Prayer for a Brother." It was overwhelming, and still is even as I write this. I suppose you would have to be there to really understand what I'm describing.

### **Prayer offered by the women during their honoring ceremony:**

#### **Our brothers of GERI**

*Courage be your  
names  
Your healing come  
God's will be done  
In your bodies, minds,  
& souls*

*We give you today  
Our eyes and ears  
Forgive us our  
deafness  
As we forgive those  
Who don't hear us*

*We walk not by ourselves  
But together in God's image  
For ours is the calling  
To God be the glory*



*Forever and ever. Amen.*

I'm so thankful to have been part of the GERI retreat this fall, if nothing comes out of it other than me getting to have that small glimpse of Heaven where I will see God face-to-face and know God's perfect and unconditional love.

*Dano Jukanovich*  
*Boston Collaborative*

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## **Upcoming GERI Workshops USA:**

***MeToo to WeTogether:***  
***Healing Between Women and Men in***  
***Community***

February 19 - 23, 2020

Abiquiu, NM

Ghost Ranch Retreat Center

*In Partnership with Illuman*

**[Register Here](#)**

***Gender & Spiritual Companionship:***  
***Healing the Divide***

April 23, 2020: 9am - 5pm

Santa Fe, NM

*With Spiritual Directors International*

**[Register Here](#)**

***MeToo to WeTogether:***  
***Reconciling Relations Between Women and***

# *Men*

June 5 - 7, 2020

Boston, MA

*Special training for ministers, clergy, and religious  
lay leaders.*

**Pre-Register Here**

Contact Garrett at **[Garrett@grworld.org](mailto:Garrett@grworld.org)** for more details

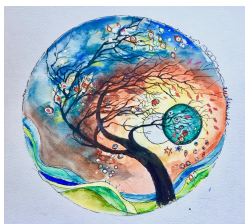
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Interested in becoming a Gender Equity and Reconciliation Facilitator?  
**Apply for our 2020-2021 Professional Immersion & Facilitator  
Training!**

Or register for our online informational session **here**.  
GERI Training Info Session: **Saturday, Feb. 15 at 9:00am Pacific.**

For more information visit:  
**[www.GRworld.org](http://www.GRworld.org)**

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Artist: Myra Eadie has taught Studio Art and Art Education for 30 years in secondary schools and universities in BC and Quebec. She currently teaches Sacred Geometry and Mandala classes privately, and the issues and dynamics of gender balance and equity have been currents adding layers of meaning in her work.

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