

Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

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Special Edition on “Women and Social Justice”

Spiritual Renewal and Healing for Shepherds Working in Christian Ministry and Social Justice

By Rev. Dr. Choi, Hee An
and Kelly Hill

Greetings from the Anna Howard Shaw Center!

We hope that you are renewed and full of life during this Easter Season! Over the years, the Center has engaged in analyses of personal and collective experiences of women in ministry. Research, especially the Female Clergy Support Projects, has revealed an unhealthy level of spiritual malaise, “burn out,” and the serious need for systematic support for clergy from both local churches and denominations. Both clergy and laity continue to be at risk of suffering spiritual crises due to the stressful environments of many church and social-economic contexts.

Shepherds need tending as much as the sheep in the flock. That is why



this year’s *Women in the World Conference*, entitled “Feed My Shepherds: Spiritual Healing and Renewal for those in Christian Leadership” addressed challenges, strategies and practices for self-care for religious leaders, particularly women in ministry. By nurturing our gifts and spirituality, we as religious leaders are able to sustain “devotion to social justice, persistence in difficult circumstances, service for the common good, and a vision of a better world,” which women such as Anna Howard Shaw and the recipients of the award

given in her name have exemplified.

This year’s conference began with a presentation by Dr. Christina Belogour on challenges to self-care faced by women in ministry, including issues such as sexism and misrepresentation of the female body images for clergypersons. Regarding self-care Dr. Belogour noted, “knowing but not doing is not knowing.” Rev. Dr. Nizzi Digan, the preacher for the worship service at Marsh Chapel, shared her personal testimony as a female immigrant minister. She spoke about learning the otherness of “I” in America and creating and claiming her place from the margins to the center. Our second speaker, Rev. Dr. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez, gave words of courage and inspiration, sharing her own

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And so, my sisters, do not falter; and when they cry, the world is not ready, the world has not been educated up to your truth, call back to the world, “We can not lower our standard to the level of the world. Bring your old world up to the level of our standard.”

— Anna Howard Shaw, 1894

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Engaging in Social Justice Work for the Long Haul

By Rev. Michelle A. Walsh, MSW,
LICSW

When asked to write about my experiences with Occupy Boston as a feminist practical theologian and minister, the first thought that came to my mind was: "What does it take to engage with and remain grounded spiritually in social justice work for the long haul?" I speak this question from the place of several intersecting identities: (1) as one who has known gender and class oppression in her life and with some direct experience of ableism and heterosexism as well; (2) as one who has been immersed in urban social work and ministry as a Unitarian Universalist community minister and social worker for over 20 years now; and (3) as one who lives as a racialized white person in an interracial immediate and extended family. I also speak this question from having witnessed painful ruptures in the Occupy movement based on conflicts centered often around race, gender, and class, but also having witnessed a few successful moments of movement building despite these conflicts.

I have been a participant in and witness to several successes and failures in the Occupy Boston movement (some of which speak to the successes and failures of the larger Occupy movement as well) since I first set foot in Dewey Square on my 50th birthday, October 9, 2010. I had particularly wanted to celebrate my 50th birthday by going to Dewey Square to see this nascent social movement in action, and I was so thrilled to see the Gandhi statue on loan from the Peace Abbey as well as the Faith and Spirituality Tent on site. That day also marked the first Sunday Vesper's service being led at Dewey Square by some of my UU colleagues. These signs seemed to me to be testimonies to the hopes and dreams of a spiritual, rather than a solely secular, center in Occupy Boston. Indeed, in the first two months, idealism and nonviolent political theater seemed to be core components of the movement –

particularly in response to acts of police brutality nationally (aka pepper spraying incidents) and a significant police raid in Boston in which 141 people were arrested in Dewey Square on October 10th for seeking to expand the tent site occupation beyond Dewey Square.

I think it was the arrest of so many young people so soon after I had visited, as well as the reports and pictures of their nonviolent purposeful resistance, that prompted a feeling of outrage and inspired me to begin to go down to the site on a more regular basis each week, if only as a chaplain. It was during one of my visits that I was spontaneously pulled into helping with an anti-oppression workshop by my colleague, Rev. Jason Lydon. Jason had been heavily involved from the beginning of Occupy Boston and had helped to raise a significant amount of bail money the night of the arrests. Not surprisingly, there were a lot of racial tensions emerging in the movement, as well as class and gender conflicts. Those who were participating tended to be white, more highly educated and of middle class background – those who did not fit these categories were less often in charge or given a voice to speak to the media, this despite ideals of being an inclusive movement of the 99% and one deeply committed to horizontal democracy. White males in particular tended to dominate in significant positions of power at the campsite and with the media. Episodes of violence toward women and a lack of safety, inclusive of substance abuse, also began to emerge over the months that followed, which ideals of horizontal

democracy and respecting the rights of each person were not able to effectively combat.

The Anti-Oppression Working Group began as a group of individuals, with various levels of training in this work, who were enlisted initially to lead a consciousness raising workshop for a General Assembly at Dewey Square not



long after the initial police raid. I joined in to help facilitate a small group but later joined this particular working group on a permanent basis. My husband, who is Cherokee in his heritage, and who has been a significant political activist since the 1950's, also joined this group, as well as the Decolonize/Liberation Working Group, a group focused on raising awareness of the impact of colonization on indigenous peoples inclusive of how the legacy of colonization collectively forms our world and cultures today. Ideally the Decolonize/Liberation Working Group would like the movement to change its name from "Occupy" to "Decolonize" because "Occupy" has highly negative connotations to indigenous peoples who have been literally occupied by colonial powers for centuries.

So these are two core working groups in the Boston area movement seeking to shift awareness and consciousness to enable a truly collective and inclusive movement to emerge. Yet, these two groups have also run into difficulty with their internal conflicts around race, class, and gender and how anger is expressed and received. The Anti-Oppression Working Group (AOWG) fractured recently in a conflict and had to cancel a planned public event. The group is slowly working its way back from this fracture. The



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Developing the Spirit: Transforming Religious Communities and Individual Lives

By Alyssa Lodewick (*alysal@bu.edu*)

This spring, Sacred Worth—the organization at BUSTH that promotes the full inclusion of members of the LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and ally) community in religious organizations, the academy, and wider society—hosted a series of three symposia entitled “Transforming the Conversation: LGBTQIA Narratives, Theologies, and Action.” All too often, conflict over identity, gender, and/or sexuality threatens to divide families, religious organizations, and communities. Sacred Worth’s gatherings explored ways in which conversations and actions surrounding justice and equality can be made as productive and healthy as possible.

While debates over inclusion often prove painful and heart-rending for everyone involved, they can be excruciating for members of the LGBTQIA community. For us, arguments over the construction of gender and sexual identity—or marriage equality, or the ordination of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people—are never merely abstract, academic, theoretical debates about ‘timeless values’ or ‘natural truths’ or ‘religious stan-

dards’ or ‘rules of discipline.’ Instead, decisions emerging from these debates possess the power to shape the contours of our lives and our vocations in concrete, practical, and very real ways. Thus, all people of faith who engage in conversations about LGBTQIA equality must not forget that what constitutes a mere ‘issue’ for one person is equivalent to another person’s *life*. Ignoring this power differential is dangerous.

Due to the fact that gender and sexuality constitute sources of controversy in American life, the personal spirituality of LGBTQIA individuals often develops in highly charged environments. Certainly, the tides of history are changing, but at this point in time in the United States, Christian churches that exclude and deny full participation to LGBTQIA individuals outnumber Christian churches that are expansive and inclusive. If we—as people of faith committed to social transformation and personal integrity—are unwilling to abandon our LGBTQIA brothers and sisters to spiritual pain or stagnancy, we must consciously work to create religious spaces where *all* individuals find justice, comfort, em-

powerment, and the love of God. Churches must open their doors to newcomers, even as they actively embrace and acknowledge the LGBTQIA individuals who are already community members. For we always have been present, even if we have not been ‘out.’ How might churches become spaces of spiritual safety? Given the space limitations of this article, I am offering two possible ideas, which are by no means all-encompassing:

1) Emphasize inclusive interpretations of scripture and Christian tradition. In order to transform religious institutions into places of abundant hospitality, we first need to examine the foundational ideas that undergird structural inequality. In other words, we need to identify the ways in which societal institutions, religious organizations, and belief systems systematically work together to promote and reinforce injustice. When we do so, we quickly realize that *heterosexism*—which is “a reasoned system of bias regarding sexual orientation [that] denotes prejudice in favor of heterosexual people and

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Frosty the Snowfriend: The Language Journey of Empowered Community

By Trelawney Grenfell-Muir

During a recent almost-blizzard, my little girls and I made an impressively large snowfriend in the back yard. My three year-old stood in front of the snowfriend trying desperately to cast spells and perform magic tricks that would make Frosty come to life and play with her. When none of them worked, she sobbed in crestfallen disappointment for a good ten minutes. I certainly felt like a colossal failure for somehow setting up my imaginative child for heartbreak by inadequately teaching her the difference between reality and fantasy. However, I also felt relieved. You see, my daughter had consistently called Frosty “she.”

I often feel beset by messages designed to limit and silence my daughters. Media everywhere scream that women and girls have precisely one currency of value: appearance. Specifically, they must appear non-

threatening and designed for maximum childbearing potential. Student groups at STH recently sponsored a viewing of the documentary film “Miss Representation.”¹ The film “connects the dots” between our culture’s obsession with female appearance, and widespread violence against women. But they leave out a few dots.

For example, they neglect the “dot” about children’s literature. For a decade now, my sisters and I have methodically called Piglet, Tigger, Rabbit, and Eeyore “she.” We chant, “Pat-a-cake, Pat-a-cake, baker’s hands!” Old MacDonald has lots of animals on her farm. And we all love Frosty the Snowfriend! (She’s such a jolly, happy soul!) We realized that society was inundating our girls with a deluge of messages that constrict and diminish them. We did our best to resist the carefully gendered cloth-

ing (Help! I’m drowning in pink!), the instant sexualization (bikinis for one year old babies? Really?), and especially the language. Females comprise over half of the population. Yet, people automatically use male pronouns when they animate teddy bears, point to doggies on the street, and admire messy paintings of dinosaurs and monkeys. Where are the girls? Well, Kanga’s at home washing dishes, if she’s mentioned at all.²

Male language causes a male bias in the way people imagine and understand the world around them.³ Prevalent androcentric language reveals and contributes to our cultural assumption that maleness is normative. “Miss Representation” may have missed the specific “dot” of androcentric language, but they expose the combined results of the many ways our society describes

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Breaking the Walls: Reflections on Israel/Palestine

By Kasey Cox

When I was little, I asked my parents in an exasperated tone: “Why do people hate each other?” Before they could answer me, I blurted out matter-of-factly: “It’s so much easier to love than to hate! People should just love each other.” I can’t remember what act of observed hatred spawned this question, nor do I remember my parents’ response. Whatever their answer, I remember that I didn’t believe it. I knew that I wanted to make a difference, to spread the love and erase the hate. This bleeding heart tendency of mine stayed with me as I grew up.

At twenty-five years old, and a third year seminary student, I found myself taking my need to understand conflict to the Holy Land. Boston University School of Theology and Andover Newton Theological School sponsored an eleven-day travel course to Israel/Palestine. The purpose of the course was to learn about the dual narratives of the Israelis and Palestinians. Upon hearing stories of Israeli soldiers, Palestinian refugees, and religious peacemakers on both sides of the story, I began to wonder about this term “dual narrative.”

It might be better said that these are *dueling*, or conflicting narratives. I heard Israelis say that security is the only way to keep the peace; I heard Palestinian Christians and Muslims say that the Israelis’ adherence to security is idolatry, a new “golden calf.” The Israelis believe that the Palestinians are a real threat and must be kept separate or else the safety of the Israelis will be jeopardized. The Palestinians claim that the Israelis’ obsession with security is an excuse to keep Palestinians in apartheid-type conditions. Moreover, *both* sides claim the right to return. The Palestinians believe in the right to return to the land and homes they were separated from after the 1948 war, a war the Palestinians call the *Nakba* or the “disaster.”¹ On the other hand, the Israelis believe in their right to the land of their ancestors as given by God. After thousands of years of di-

aspora and persecution, the Israelis believe in their right to a Jewish state in the land of their ancestors. These dueling narratives create separation since each narrative asserts one’s own story is right and the other’s is wrong.

There are physical barriers of separation as well. While some Palestinians live in the Israeli state, most are confined to the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Additionally, Israeli settlements in the West Bank are encroaching on Palestinian villages and threatening the possibility of a two-state solution. In Hebron, roads are divided with Palestinians on one side and Israelis on the other. The Tomb of the Patriarchs is divided as a mosque on one side and a synagogue on the other. Metal detectors and the Israeli Defense Forces guard the entrances. I remember thinking, “how sad that our holy places cannot be sanctuaries without being protected by metal detectors and M-16s.” Then I realized that this is the myth that we buy into: *that there is no way other than force to protect ourselves*. This is why it is easier to hate than to do the hard work of reaching out, meeting our neighbors and building relationships of love. Security forces may keep acts of terror out, but they do not solve the problem of the tumultuous relationship between the Israelis and Palestinians. We have to address the root of the violence in order to transform it.

On the trip, I walked through refugee camps and heard heart-wrenching stories of people suffering under occupation. I also heard the trauma that remains after the *Shoah* (a Hebrew term many Jews use to refer to the Holocaust) and the promise never to let it happen again. I heard two very different narratives, but there were similarities too. Both sides were suffering. The Israeli narrative operates out of fear; the nation is coping with a collective trauma and acting to ensure that history will not repeat itself. The Palestinian narrative longs for equal rights, and the dignity of being able to return home.

Perhaps the presence of conflicting narratives does not mean they have to duel. Rather than accepting that “there will never be peace in the Middle East,” we can choose, as Palestinian Christians we met at the Tent of Nations have chosen, “to refuse to be enemies.” Change takes time and a commitment to action, but the way things are now is not the way things have to be. Rabbi Arik Ascherman told us of his work with Rabbis for Human Rights. He said that his work helping to rebuild Palestinian homes and advocating for the human rights of *all* is the best security for Israel’s future. His hope is that a Palestinian child will say, “a tall man in a *Kippah* came to help me and told me it would be all right.” Through his interactions with Palestinians, Rabbi Ascherman hopes fewer Palestinian children will grow up believing Jews have tails² and learn to see one another as good neighbors. His work puts a human face on Israelis in a way that M-16s do not.

The truth is it’s easy to tell only one side of the story. Our side of the story justifies us and assuages any feelings of guilt or responsibility. It takes work to learn the other side of the story. Perhaps that is why people hate instead of love. The good news: we have a choice. We have the choice to speak up or stay silent, to stand up for justice or to sit with the status quo. We must ask ourselves, where are we building walls of separation that reinforce stereotypes? How can we break down the walls, to hear the other side? Who does our story leave out? Our commitment to liberty and justice propels us to love, speak, and stand, but also to listen. Listening is the pursuit of understanding that reaches out to the other with hospitable arms to hear the other story. Hope is found in the child-like innocence that sees the world with potential, and chooses love over hate.

¹ Michael Lerner, *Embracing Israel/Palestine: A Strategy to Heal and Transform the Middle East*, p. 129.

² Sami Al Jundi and Jen Marlowe, *The Hour of Sunlight: One Palestinian’s Journey from Prisoner to Peacemaker*, p. 31-32.

** See pictures from Kasey’s trip on page 5.



A Prayer from the Black Community

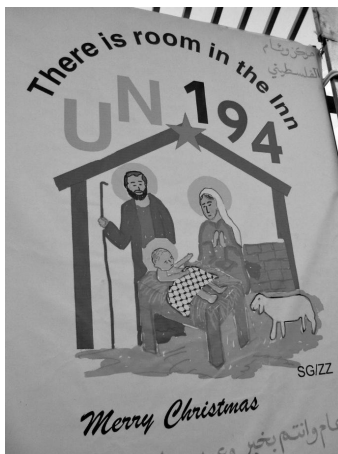
By Carrington Moore

God of the Universe where are you? Sovereign Savior where have you been? Mighty God what have you been doing? Here we stand not to question your character but to understand you and the fullness of your glory. Lord we ask that you manifest yourself in the areas of our life and society where brokenness is the norm. We are like broken clay vessels that have been thrown away and cast aside. With little care and concern we are treated. We admit to our mistakes, and we ask forgiveness for our self-inflicted setbacks.

But Lord I ask you to dwell with us in the secret place of our Jail-Cells, our 9-5's with very little pay. Be with us as we try to rear our children with very little guidance and resources. Be

with us as society continually depicts us as sub-human and unworthy of recognition. Lord let not our hearts grow weary in doing good, let not our identity be invested in the things others say we cannot do but rather in the richness of your love, the beauty of your majesty and the depth of your desire to bless us. Let your presence saturate our urban corridors, our hoods, our Ghettos, and our chocolate suburbs. In the lonely detention facilities be there. In the underfunded classroom with cultural incompetent teachers, be there. In the board room where people undermine our opinion based on our skin color be there. In our homes, families and churches be there.

Lord we pray that you protect and encourage our beautiful black women. Attend unto their tears, frustrations, setbacks and spiritual groaning for freedom and deliverance. Lord we thank you for the wonderful creation of their beautiful bodies. Lord we thank you for their smiles that bring healing to nations and their love that has sustained many generations. Lord when their love and nourishment go unnoticed I pray that you affirm their achievements and contributions to the world. Lord let your love allow for the arc of the universe to continually bend towards justice. O Lord, the giver of life, the joy of our soul and the creator of our beautiful black skin. Amen



Pictures: (L): A Christian message in support of UN Resolution 194, in favor of the Palestinian right of return; (Center) Kasey Cox at the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem; (R) Students from Boston University at the site of Gethsemane.



Frosty the Snowfriend: The Language Journey of Empowered Community, cont.

women as less than human: widespread child sexual abuse, woman battery, and rape. What else might we say about how our dehumanization of women connects with widespread violence against the LGBT community?⁴

George Lindbeck's postmodern critique, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, describes Christianity as a cultural-linguistic community that uses language and symbols both to shape and to reflect our story and our values. How does the language we use about God/ess,⁵ who transcends all gender categories, shape our communities? How are we called to transform the way we use gendered language in our faith communities and in the stories we tell our children? When my

daughter received a doll for Christmas, a little girl with lovely brown skin, she named the doll "Baby Jesus." That's the community I want to imagine into being. That's the language-culture that will get us there. No matter which hat we place on her head, Frosty probably won't begin to dance around. Sophia-Christ is dancing with my daughter already, and with all of Creation: still and always giving voice to the voiceless... the Wisdom-Word, the Good News, the Immanent Truth. God/ess is good, all the time. All the time...

¹ For more information, see www.missrepresentation.org.

² For more information about automatically inserting male pronouns onto genderless characters, see J. S. DeLoache, D. J. Cassidy,

& C. J. Carpenter, "The three bears are all boys: Mothers' gender labeling of neutral picture book characters," *Sex Roles*, 17, (1987) 163-178.

³ For example, M. C. Hamilton, "Using masculine generics: Does generic "he" increase male bias in the user's imagery?" *Sex Roles*, 19(11/12), (1988) 785-799; and M. C. Hamilton, & N. M. Henley, "Sex bias in language: Effects on the reader/hearer's cognitions" (Paper presented at a conference of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, CA, August, 1982).

⁴ For a discussion of the connection between sexism and heterosexism, I recommend Christine M. Smith, "Grace Transforms Condemnation – HETEROSEXISM," in *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Radical Responses to Radical Evil*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, 87-109.

⁵ I like the term "God/ess" as an expression of a Divine who transcends gender categories. See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

Donations from October 2010 - April 2012

Thomas R. Albin
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 Temana Andalcio
 Thomas V. Atwater
 Mary G. Avery
 Jacqueline B. Blue
 Carole R. Bohn
 Mary Lou G. Boice
 John C. Brink
 Mary Bryant
 Gail P. Bucher
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 Betty B. Carpenter
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 Hee A. Choi
 Dawn E. Clark
 Elizabeth J. Collier
 Kathe P. Darr
 Cristian De La Rosa
 Nizzi S. Digan
 Frank E. Falvey
 Linda L. Falvey
 Marcelina Fernandez

Radames Fernandez
 Julia A. Foster
 Ann C. Fox
 Barbara P. Garcia
 Gabriela R. Garcia
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 James G. Todd
 Carmen D. Ward
 Kristin L. White
 Margaret S. Wiborg
 East Saugus United Methodist Church
 Leominster United Methodist Church
 Northeastern Jurisdictional
 Conference
 The United Methodist Church



Pictures from Women in the World Conference 2012 & Anna Howard Shaw Award Banquet honoring Aida Irizarry-Fernandez

Pictures: (Top R) Dr. Christina Belogour speaks to conference attendees; (Bottom R) Rev. Nizzi Digan preaches at Marsh Chapel; (Top C) Shaw Center board performing liturgy at Marsh Chapel worship service; (Bottom C) Shaw Center Staff with Rev. Dr. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez; (L) Dean Lightsey teaches conference attendees how to dance the "Cupid Shuffle."



Developing the Spirit: Transforming Communities and In-

prejudice against bisexual and, especially, homosexual people”¹—has promoted injustice in our churches.

Certainly, heterosexism has encouraged foes of the LGBTQIA community to use the Bible and Christian tradition to condemn same-gender relationships, which is problematic, because the Bible also contains many narratives that respect, validate, and affirm same-gender love and affection (e.g., David and Jonathan; Ruth and Naomi; “The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved”). Yet because of the way human beings process information, we may not immediately recognize LGBTQIA-positive themes. Living in a heteronormative society that defines opposite-gender love and ‘straight’ identities as ‘normal,’ we are trapped by our own hetero-centric interpretive lenses, which *help us see* Biblical passages that promote opposite-sex relations, even as they *blind us to* scriptural material that affirms same-sex love. Resources like the Human Rights Campaign’s “Out in Scripture”

project (<http://sites.hrc.org/scripture/>) can help religious communities move beyond hetero-centric hermeneutics and examine scripture in ways that encompass the full range of human experience.

2) Institute programs of spiritual companionship. Religious communities devoted to hospitality and spiritual growth might sponsor spiritual companionship initiatives. LGBTQIA parishioners could be matched up with progressive heterosexual congregants, or with one another. Small churches may wish to develop cooperative programs of spiritual companionship, in which members from one church serve as spiritual companions for members of another church. Such mutual-support programs will: (a) help LGBTQIA individuals experience solidarity in the context of their faith communities; (b) help participants realize that spiritual struggles are endemic to religious life (and not *necessarily* connected with gender or sexual orientation); and (c) reinforce

the importance of mutuality—the value of sharing perspectives and experiences. When successful, spiritual companionship programs offer support and validation, even as they reflect God’s relationality.

The initiatives I outlined can help transform churches into welcoming environments that promote LGBTQIA spirituality. The benefits of such initiatives extend well past the LGBTQIA community. Spiritually speaking, members of that particular community are no different than their heterosexual peers: everyone needs to feel safe, secure, and loved in order to maximize spiritual development. Thus, every action that promotes spiritual growth in those who identify as LGBTQIA also promotes spiritual growth in those who do not identify as LGBTQIA. In the end, positive spirituality benefits everyone: it creates stronger, more resilient, more faithful individuals, who then build stronger, more resilient, more faithful communities.

¹ Patricia Beattie Jung and Ralph F. Smith, *Heterosexism: An Ethical Challenge* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 13.

Meet Elizabeth Fonferek, New Work Study Staff!



Elizabeth is originally from Green Bay, Wisconsin and moved to Boston this past fall to pursue her Master’s of Theological Studies at BU School of Theol-

ogy. She graduated last May from St. Norbert College with a Bachelors Degree in European History and Religious Studies. As a MTS student she is focusing on church history. She is an active member at St. Cecilia’s Roman Catholic Church,

where she is a member of the choir. She also volunteers at a local school tutoring grade students in math and reading. Elizabeth is thrilled to be part of the Anna Howard Shaw Center and their efforts to empower women.

Engaging in Social Justice Work for the Long Haul, *continued*

Decolonize/Liberation Working Group has also had a major conflict, but was somehow able still to put on a highly successful major event that drew nearly 100 people for education on these issues. The AOWG had been focused for months on a lot of internal work, including “ways of being” and a vision and mission statement, but there did not seem to be a larger end goal to hold the group through a personal conflict with hurt feelings. The Decolonize group, on the other hand, did seem to have a commitment to a larger purpose and vision that helped individuals to put aside personal feelings temporarily for the sake of a larger goal – though now processing and healing also

needs to be done post-event.

What are some practical theological implications and learnings that I draw from these experiences? There is implicit theology in all actions, even if no explicit theology is ever articulated. So my learnings and re-learnings are: (1) the woundedness and brokenness of human beings runs deep (anthropology); (2) abstract idealism stripped of its particularities in implementation – or a sense of “God” that entails no mutual relationship to a practical ecclesia (a slogan of “We are the 99% with no real and mutual relationship to who are the *full* 99%) – will not be a healing or sustaining idealism in the face of the magnitude of this wounded-

ness and brokenness; and (3) likewise, ecclesia disconnected from a sense of “God” – or “ways of being” disconnected from relationship to the larger reason FOR being – also will lack substantive and motivating grounding. What is needed is mutuality of praxis between “God,” ecclesia, and human nature – a practical and concretely particular recognition of the nature of the Holy or “God” that *particular* groups of people are in covenanted relationship with, and ways of being together in that grounded covenanted ecclesia to enable sustained work toward healing the brokenness of human beings *and* our world. Occupy needs this to deepen its spiritual center.





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Continued, From the Director.

experiences of hardship through life's ups and downs. She encouraged us to leave behind our "messianic complex" and remember self-care during times of stress. Our third speaker, Dean Pamela Lightsey, showed us how to practice self-care, which included engaging in laughter, singing, dancing, and sharing our stories with one another. Her presentation was light-hearted, but also seriously considered the needs and experiences of women in ministry and leadership that are often forgotten. At the end of the day, Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore moderated a panel discussion with the three speakers. Her questions about personal practices of self-care led to a stimulating conversation that engaged all participants in the conference.

Rev. Dr. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez was honored at the Anna Howard Shaw Award Banquet in the evening. Her leadership and passion for ministry has been and continues to be loved and admired not only by her parishioners, but also by many pastors, colleagues, Bishops, General Secretaries, and mentees.

This year our conference and award banquet were more than mere events. "It was profound, powerful, educational, inspirational, deeply moving and yet very joyous." We sincerely thank those who made this wonderful event possible with your great support, generous donations, and heart-filled hard work.

Please send donations to:
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