



Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

Volume 29 • Issue 1 • Fall 2012

Special Edition on “Women of Color in Ministry”

Dear Friends of the Anna Howard Shaw Center,

By Mary Bryant

Seven years ago I entered Boston University School of Theology after being a social worker in the U.S. Public Health Services for over twelve years. At that time, I also began working as a work-study student at the Anna Howard Shaw Center. For over eighteen months, the Shaw Center was my home away from home. The company of women that frequented the Shaw Center became my extended family. Being both a seminarian and staff member at the Shaw Center afforded me the opportunity to get to know faculty,

staff, and students in the School of Theology community in a very special way. I found a safe place to dialogue, particularly during the Shaw Center’s weekly Thursday Lunch Lecture Series. The Thursday Lunch Lectures were a time and space set aside for women to express our concerns as well as find our voice in the larger STH community.

A year after I entered Boston University School of Theology, my daughter began her first year there as well. We were not only classmates, we were also roommates. She often threatens to write a book about that experience! It was a very special time in my life because I was able to see my

daughter as well as other young women in the School of Theology come together in the Shaw Center to share and grow together from the diverse and varied generations represented. Observing the diversity of women coming together at the Shaw Center’s many programs like the Thursday Lunch Talks, the AHSC sponsored fall/spring retreats, the annual graduating women’s dinner, and the annual Women in the World conference helped me to realize how unique and special the Anna Howard Shaw Center is not just in the School of Theology but for women all over the world. The Anna Howard

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Save the Date!

Women in the World

April 10, 2013

9:30am–8:00pm

Boston University
School of Theology

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Suffering is a necessary part of human life whether we accept it or not. It is the most difficult problem in our lives and it happens to everyone to different degrees and in different situations. It can take the forms of physical suffering, psychological distress, and/or spiritual affliction. Some suffering is erasable, forget-

table and non-traceable. When we have a cold, we suffer, but when it is gone, we forget as if the pain were never there. It is not traceable. Other suffering is possibly avoidable and presents opportunities to learn from our mistakes. When we fail important exams or crucial job interviews, we feel some

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Special Edition on “Women of Color in Ministries”

By Hyebin Hong

Being attentive to injustice is tiresome. It is uncomfortable both to remain in silence and to speak up thereby making the public upset. Sometimes we give in to the all too human temptation to turn a blind eye towards the problem; we trivialize it to avoid such uncomfortableness. The thing that makes us able to withstand this sweet temptation are stories, lively and concrete stories of those who are suffering from and/or fiercely fighting against injustice.

In a bid to be a prophetic voice, the Shaw Center has created this special edition of the newsletter titled “Women of Color in Ministries.” We invited Rev. Sandra Bonnette-Kim and STH student Emma A. Escobar to share their stories of difficulties and injustice they experience as they walk the path of ministry as women of color. We also asked Ms. Myung-Eun Park to share her reflection on the Domestic Violence Forum and Vigil that she hosted. This forum alerted us the seriousness and prevalence of domestic vio-

lence in the United States. This special edition on “Women of Color in Ministries” is the Shaw Center’s follow-up project after the UMC Clergy Women Retention Study II, our two year research project on the difficulties of clergywomen in the United Methodist church. We will publish the results of this study in the next two consecutive issues of our newsletter.

We hope that these lively voices can inspire you to relentlessly pursue justice against racial discrimination and violent against women.

The Labels of Emma Arely Escobar

By Emma Arely Escobar



When my family and I moved to the United States, I was 15 years old and the language, the culture, and the city were all new to me. I started to experience “labels” such as Hispanic / Latina, or woman of color. I did not know what that meant. I did not understand why people called me that. I never understood why people within the church would ask me to participate in certain programs. Some would say they did not have a Hispanic/Latina, or young adult woman of color participating. It is frustrating because I know I am not there for who I am and what I bring to the table, but because of the category of “diversity” that the church requires. So even though I have had good experiences and learned so much, I have realized that I am like a product with many labels. People are shopping for a product to fill out their forms and

be considered “diverse” institutions. In the church, I am a Hispanic/Latina young adult woman, a pastor’s daughter, and a seminary student pursuing ordination whose name is Emma Arely Escobar.

As I learned to navigate the dominant culture I experienced labels given to me by my own *pueblo* as well. In my different ministries I have been criticized and framed as not being part of “them” anymore because I am educated and I want to become a deacon. I am 24 years old, unmarried, and have no children. After learning this, some conclude that something is “wrong” with me. It is painful when you work so hard in your ministry fighting for people of a *pueblo* that in the end labels and sets you aside. It was easy to deal with the labels of the dominant culture, however it has been painful and difficult to deal with the labels and rejection of my culture. One culture labels me for being from where I come from, reminding me of the oppression of my ancestors and categorizing me as a “minority” while the other thinks I am forgetting my roots and assimilating to the dominant culture because I do not

practice, but “undermine” the norms of my *pueblo*.

I have learned to operate in the system of the dominant culture meanwhile continuing to retain the ability to operate in my own culture. My inspiration and work is setting an example for the next generations, making a change so that they will not have to deal with the labeling I experience. I want my nieces, Katherine Escobar and Valerie Salguero, to not feel oppressed by both cultures. I want Katherine and Valerie to be educated and become who they want to be, achieving God’s purpose for their lives. Every day I wonder how I can become a leader for my *pueblo* and make a difference without being rejected by my *pueblo* or feeling oppressed and used by the dominant culture. I share my experiences not as problems experienced by “minorities”, “women of color”, or whatever else I am labeled, but by Emma Arely Escobar, an individual attempting to discern and answer God’s calling as best she can.



Joy and Trials of Ministry

By Rev. Sandra J. Bonnette-Kim



Serving as an ordained pastor for last 17 years in the Northern Illinois Conference and the New England Conference

of the United Methodist church, has been rewarding and yet it has come with many challenges. In these years, I have served in various settings and in various capacities. I have served in suburban and rural areas, as a sole pastor, an associate pastor, a co-pastor, in multi-staff settings, and a new church starter. In all of these setting, I have tried to serve faithfully and follow God's call.

As I look back in my ministries, I have served in areas that I would have never imagine I would ever be. Growing up in Montreal, Canada as a child, never in million years I thought I would be living in the USA, never mind serving in middle of a corn field. However, God had led me to many wonderful ministries where my gifts were needed and I was able to not only share but also grow from my experiences in these setting. Overall, I have had great churches but this does not mean that it did not come with challenges.

From the very beginning of my ministry, I had to deal with parishioners and even a senior pastor who undermined what I was doing, accusing me for not being able to be understood because of my accent, thus

wanting me to practice reading scripture and go over the order of service before we began on Sundays with the senior pastor. They questioned me if I knew about the American culture to relate to their youth, even though I had just clearly shared my life story of how being raised in Canada, educated in Canadian school system from 3rd grade. People just could not go beyond what I looked like to actually hear what I had to say. They just assumed that since I'm Asian, I must not be able to speak English or understand American culture.

"I have been blessed by people who soon saw beyond my race, gender and age. As we began to serve together, they soon realized that I bring a unique perspective, gifts, and world experience that will help them to grow. I have been able to open their eyes and welcome all no matter who they are to Jesus' table."

In addition to dealing with racism, I also had to deal with being a female pastor. Over the years, I have seen how different people accept a male pastor to a female pastor, especially when I was co-serving with my husband, who also happens to be a White-American. In those churches, it was blatant that parishioners did not see me as their pastor but only as a pastor's wife and this was how they would introduce me outside of the church. In meetings if

I made a suggestion or had an opinion, they always turned and asked what my husband thought.

This need to hear the opinion of a male pastor did not ended with this ministry. Over the years, I have noticed that my male colleagues' opinion matters more than mine. I had to and still have to deal with other male clergy who speak to me disrespectfully, in patronizing tones, not taking me seriously because of my race, gender and age.

Being married to a White-American clergy, we have noticed how different my ministries have been compare to his in last 19 years. People have accepted him more easily, more doors have opened for him, and he did not have to struggle to prove himself to others both in and outside of the church. I am forever reminded that people cannot go beyond what I look like and I have to prove in every setting that I can speak English, do understand American culture, and am an effective pastor.

However, despite these difficulties, my ministries have been fruitful and rewarding. I have been blessed by people who soon saw beyond my race, gender and age. As we began to serve together, they soon realized that I bring a unique perspective, gifts, and world experience that will help them to grow. I have been able to open their eyes and welcome all no matter who they are to Jesus' table. I have also been welcomed by people who have been waiting to have a pastor like me. We have become partners in sharing the Gospel, reaching out to those in need and serving God faithfully.

The UMC Clergywomen Retention Study II, Part 1

By Rev. Dr. Choi Hee An and
Rev. Jacqueline B. Blue

In July of 2010, the Anna Howard Shaw Center, co-sponsored by the Clergy Lifelong Learning office, Division of Ordained Ministry at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry launched a two year research project concerning clergywomen in the United Methodist church; United Methodist Clergywomen Retention Study II.

The first United Methodist Clergywomen Retention Study concluded in 1997, 38 years after the initiation of women's ordination in 1956. It attempted to gain insight into clergywomen's experiences, more specifically, the various ways in which they partici-

church life as they attempted to live out their calling.

Even as women's rights and situations improved in society-at-large and women's status in the church improved both economically and politically, complaints regarding clergywomen's persistent struggles were continually heard since the initial study. Many of these complaints were discovered through the Anna Howard Shaw Center's annual conference, Women in the World, and other programs and research sponsored by the center. Primarily, clergywomen voiced their suspicions about the stated progress or improvement regarding clergywomen's ministerial experience. The purpose of the second study was to determine, what if any changes in clergy-

“out” of local church ministry, and 3) Responding to why — sought to obtain insight into reasons why clergywomen departed ministry either permanently or temporarily.

Answering the Call. In response to the first area, Answering the Call, participants were asked to identify their primary reason for seeking ordination. The study found UMC clergywomen, in large numbers, were serving churches because of a distinct call to ministry. It revealed 72% (previously 68%) of the respondents said their primary reason for seeking ordination was a “nonspecific call to ministry.” This particular reason was unchanged from the previous study. Furthermore, 79% (previously 82%) of the respondents primarily wanted their

“... regardless of marital status, participants with a clergy partner or no partner, or denominational background, when we asked questions in reference to the ‘Local church being the best place to serve,’ the primary reason given was ‘Doing God’s Call.’ It is still true that their call to ministry is very vital and clergywomen’s desire to be in a local church is a big part of their call.”

pated in ministry. Additionally, the research project sought to “identify reasons why large numbers of clergywomen were not serving local churches and to propose possible interventions by the connectional structure, who intended to retain clergywomen in local church ministry.”¹ The findings of the first retention study revealed that the primary reasons UMC clergywomen left local church ministry were: 1) “lack of support from the hierarchical system, 2) unable to maintain one’s integrity in the system, 3) rejection from congregation/parishioners, and 4) conflict of family and pastoral responsibilities.”² Overall, the study revealed the difficulties clergywomen encountered in ministry, their personal lives, and structural factors of

women's ministerial experience occurred since the initial study two decades earlier. In June 2010, the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church provided the following numbers of possible survey participants: 7,531 active clergywomen and 2,700 retired. Invitations, both snail and email, were sent to both active and retired clergywomen with 1906 responding for a response rate of 18.6%.

The Clergywomen Retention Study II divided its findings into three categories: 1) Answering the Call — which sought to obtain insight into why clergywomen entered ministry, the position in which they expected to serve, and where, 2) In and Out — sought to obtain the number of clergywomen either “in” and

appointment after receiving elder's orders to be in a local church. The current study also confirmed that the majority of clergywomen still entered the ministry to serve a local church and had a desire to stay in congregational ministry, as they did twenty years ago. Second to nonspecific call to ministry was “a call to preach” at 7.5% (previously 8%), followed closely by “natural / logical progression (in terms of vocation)” at 6% (previously 10%). When the same question (primary reason for seeking ordination) was asked according to ethnicity, 57% (previously 66%) racial ethnic clergywomen responded that their reason for seeking ordination was a nonspecific call to ministry. The leading reason for seeking ordination, “nonspecific call to

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The UMC Clergywomen Retention Study II, Part 1 *continued from page 4*

ministry” was the same across all ethnicities.

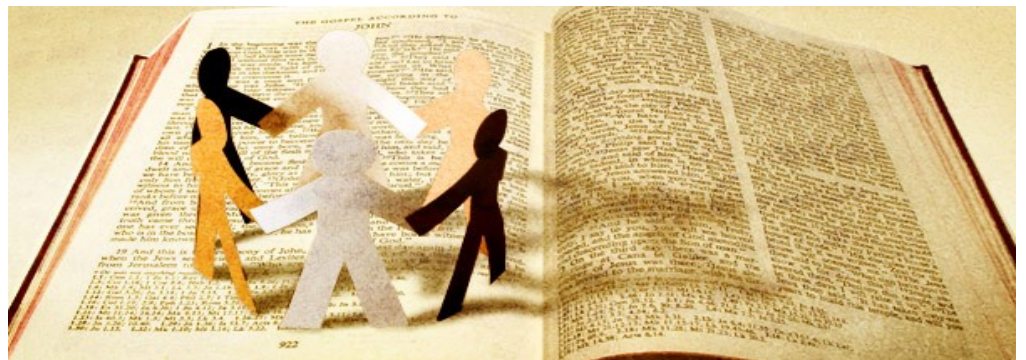
When marital status was taken into consideration, the data was categorized into four main areas: Never Married (NM), Ever Separated / Divorced / Widowed (SDW), Currently Married (CM), and In Committed Relationship (CR). Across all groups, “nonspecific call to ministry” continued to be the leading reason for seeking ordination in both our current and previous research. An interesting aspect from the previous research was “nonspecific call to ministry” was the leading reason within four different categories at similar percentages between 63% and 70%. However, in the current research, clergywomen who “never married” 82.1% (previously 63%) and those “in committed relationship” 92.3% (previously 67%), showed much higher percentages for this answer. In case of “Participants with a Clergy Partner,” and “Denominational Background of Participants,” both the previous and current researches found “Nonspecific Call to Ministry” the leading reason for seeking ordination in similar percentages. Delving further into the reasons the women were serving, the survey questioned the participants about appointments. Specifically, the question asked “What primary appointment did they intend after receiving Elder orders?” Seventy-nine percent responded an appointment as “local church pastor” (previously 82%), secondly, “Chaplain” at 4.3% (previously 5%), and thirdly, “teaching” at 3.7% (previously “other” ranked third at 3%). According to ethnicity 70% (previously 81%), of racial ethnic clergywomen responded “local church pastor” with a second response of “teaching” at 7.8% (previous second rank response was “other” at 7%) and thirdly “other”

at 4.7% (“chaplain” and “campus ministry” tied for third with 4% in the previous research). In the case of “Marital Status of Participants,” the response from the four separate groups was local pastor. However, clergywomen in “committed relationships” had a higher percentage (88%) for “local church pastor” (previously 71%). In case of “Participants with a Clergy Partner,” “local church pastor” remained the leading reason, but was 11% lower than the previous research 74% (previously 85%). Lastly, the group with no clergy partner stayed in similar percentages. This is a significant change over the past twenty years.

Overall, the preference to be a local pastor for clergywomen remained the leading reason for primary appointment expectations. However, twenty years ago, there was almost no gap between racial ethnic clergywomen (81%) and white clergywomen (82%) for the primary appointment intended after elders’ orders. In the current research, there is a 10.3% difference between racial ethnic clergywomen (70%) and white clergywomen (80.3%). 81% percent of racial ethnic clergywomen expected to serve as local church pastors like white clergywomen twenty years ago, but twenty years later, they appear to have less interest in being local church pastors after receiving elder’s orders. Nevertheless, there are no sig-

nificant changes in their second (teaching) and third (chaplain and campus ministry) responses.

Lastly, we asked questions in reference to the “Local church being the best place to serve.” The primary reason given was “Doing God’s Call” at 68% (61% previously). The majority of clergywomen confirm that they serve the local church by doing God’s call. In the case of racial ethnic clergywomen, 58% of them answered with this reason while 73% of white clergywomen indicated the same answer. In the previous research, 70% of racial ethnic clergywomen answered with this reason while 61% of white clergywomen chose the same answer. It is interesting that while racial ethnic clergywomen chose this answer decreasingly (-12%) from 70% to 58%, white clergywomen chose this answer increasingly from 61% to 73% (+12%) in an equal rate. For racial ethnic clergywomen, the second leading reason is “Committed to the Church as an Institution” (11%) and third leading reason is “Priestly Duties are Important” (9%), while for white clergywomen, the second leading reason is “Enjoy; Comfortable; Home” (7%) and the third leading reason is “Appreciate Parish Relationships” (6.1%) in the current research. In the case of “Marital Status of Participants,” “Doing God’s Call” is the primary reason. “Never Married” 71% (previously 60%), “currently married” 70% (previously 60%) show a higher percentage while “separated / divorced / widowed” and “committed relationship” stayed in similar percentages that the



The UMC Clergywomen Retention Study II, Part 1 *continued from page 5*

previous research indicated. For clergywomen with a “Clergy Partner,” both clergy partner 66% (previously 57%) and no clergy partner 71% (previously 64%) groups show slightly higher percentages in choosing this answer as the leading reason. In case of “Denominational Background of Participants,” it shows the same. Reared Methodist group shows a higher percentage 71% (previously 59%) to choose “Doing God’s Call.”

In response to Answering the Call, both our previous research and current research concur that “while a large majority of the participants indicated a non-specific call to ministry, their intended appointment after receiving their elders’ orders indicates their commitment to

local church ministry.”³ However, we recognize that the reduction in the number of clergywomen who indicated a call to be a local pastor after receiving elder’s orders in general and especially for racial ethnic clergywomen. Furthermore, regardless of marital status, participants with a clergy partner or no partner, or denominational background, when we asked questions in reference to the “Local church being the best place to serve,” the primary reason given was “Doing God’s Call.” It is still true that their call to ministry is very vital and clergywomen’s desire to be in a local church is a big part of their call.

Therefore, we concluded that large numbers of clergywomen serving in the

UMC are continually answering God’s call to specifically serve the local church. Regardless of marital status, clergy partner, or previous denominational background, nonspecific call to ministry, and doing God’s call to serve the local church were consistent responses when various forms of the above questions were asked.

1. Margaret S. Wiborg and Elizabeth J. Collier, *United Methodist Clergywomen Retention Study* (Anna Howard Shaw Center: Boston University School of Theology, 1997), 1.

2. *Ibid.*, 29.

3. *Ibid.*, 6.

The UMC Clergywomen Retention Study II, Part 2 will appear in the next issue of the Anna Howard Shaw Center Newsletter.

From the Director *continued from page 1*

distress for a while, but we may try to forget, to overcome, or to learn, then move on. However, the suffering many of us are out through due to poverty, chronic illness, abuse, and prejudices against certain races, sex/gender, ethnic groups, and more are neither erasable nor avoidable because it is very present in our day lives. It causes us pain constantly. In the worst cases, it is never over and we have no relief. What should we do? What should our attitudes be as we face this suffering?

The Anna Howard Shaw Center has been very attentive to this topic from the beginning of our history: the suffering of women, the suffering of immigrants, the suffering of female clergy and lay people, the suffering of our churches and their ministries, the suffering of LGBTQ community members, the suffering of those in abusive situations, and others in need. All of our research projects, programs and events are involved and evolved with these pains and sufferings. We join those in

pain and work with them to overcome it together. We seek to overcome this suffering in different contexts. We tried to be a voice for and share a voice with these people. We want to be in solidarity; we choose to be co-sufferers. Sometimes we fail and cry together. Sometimes we succeed and laugh together. We never fail to try, however.

Here again, we want to try. The topic of the next Women in the World Conference is “Occupy the Church: Economic Justice for Ministry in the 21st Century.” We want to present our reality and share the concerns of our very own suffering. Economic justice is one of the greatest forms of suffering that we face in current time. Many of our church members have lost their jobs and their loving homes. They have closed their stores and businesses. They become homeless and jobless. They have to leave their beloved churches because of these reasons. We know and we hear. Now we want to act. We want to support. How do we do that? First,

we want to know where we are. Through this conference, we will present our reality and how we do in our church. And then we want to find how we can join suffering. Sharing pain in solidarity, we want to learn how we can join the suffering and stop it. When we cannot avoid pain and suffering, it is better to stay together and suffer together so we can gain our strength from each other in love and move on together in joy. Lastly, we know we cannot do this by ourselves. We need you. Please join us and teach us what to do. The Shaw Center intentionally creates this opportunity to meet you and hear from you. So we can truly join with you, those who have cared for and sustained us, those whom we have cared for and sustained, and together we can work to overcome suffering. We believe that our Women in the World event will bring an opportunity to be together in solidarity and provide strength to move on together. Please come and join us.



Meet the New Staff of the Anna Howard Shaw Center!



Myung Eun Park, Second Year STM

Myung Eun is originally from Seoul, South Korea and came to Boston in 2007 to pursue her Master of Divinity at BU School of Theology. She earned her MDiv degree on May 2012 and is pursuing her STM with a focus on Religious Education and Pastoral Leadership. She is seeking ordination as an elder in the New England Conference. She is currently a student pastor at First UMC of Stoughton and the Youth Director at Boston-West Korean Presbyterian Church. Myung Eun has a great interest in empowering and transforming marginalized women.

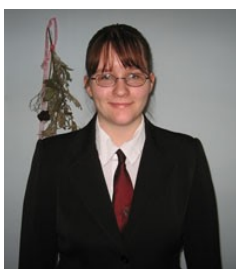
Hyebin Hong, Second Year MTS

Hyebin Hong is from Seoul, Korea and this fall is her second year in Boston. She majored in Korean Literature at Ewha Womans University in 2006, and graduated in 2009 from the same university with a Masters of Arts Degree in Christian Studies, focused on Christian economic ethics. Her education in the biggest women's university in the world helped her to form and develop an interest in feminism in general, specifically in gender theories. Her MA thesis was about the critique of neo-liberal market economy. She wants to pursue Christian economic ethics in BUSTH more deeply, putting it in conversation with ecofeminist perspective. She has also been working as a nursery staff member in Belmont United Methodist Church since last fall. Hyebin is excited about joining Anna Howard Shaw Center.



Samantha Ball, Second Year M.Div

Samantha Ball is originally from Ohio and moved to Boston with her spouse and three cats in 2010. She attended the University of Mount Union from 2005 to 2008 for her undergraduate degree, double majoring in Religious Studies and Japanese Language and also minoring in Philosophy. At Boston University School of Theology Samantha is studying for her Masters of Divinity and the BTI Certificate in Religion and Conflict Transformation. She is very interested in peace building and inter-religious dialogue, particularly in Asia. She hopes to develop skills that allow her to be sensitive to parties engaged in conflict and to learn how to effectively deal with conflict in her personal and professional life.



Break Silence to Stop Violence: Reflection on the DV Forum

By Myung Eun Park

In the United States and around the world untold numbers of people suffer from domestic violence every day. In many cases faith communities are reluctant to shed light on the topic domestic violence for many reasons. Ministers and other spiritual leaders may not be prepared to talk about domestic violence because they are not equipped with necessary information. Survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses of domestic violence may regard the issue as too sensitive or too shameful to be raised in a church setting. Often pastors trivialize violence or encourage survivors to endure their situations in order to maintain the so called sanctity of their marriages, rather than suggesting appropriate and safe options to victims. Consequently the victims' suffering is prolonged as the result of the lack of appropriate recognition and involvement by pastors and the

silence of the wider community.

Hoping to call people's attention to the prevalence of domestic violence in our faith communities and to break the silence I planned a forum and vigil entitled *The Church and Domestic Violence*. As potential and current ministers I hoped for BU School of Theology community members to gain an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and to become aware of the seriousness of the situation. Moreover I hoped for future pastors and spiritual leaders to gain the skills to develop faith-based responses to domestic violence in their communities.

The event was held on Wednesday, October 24th in honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I invited four speakers to offer answers to the following critical questions; Dr. Nancy Nienhuis provided a basis for understanding "What is Domestic Violence?" Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter offered practical skills

in "How to respond to Domestic Violence as a pastor." Ms. Claudia Segura helped us to understand the role of services providers, and Ms. Carmen Del Rosario addressed the difficult topic of "How to respond to batterers in faith based community?" Each speaker brought valuable insights to the forum from their vast and varied professional experiences. For the candle light vigil service, along with readings, prayer, and meditation, we were honored to fellowship with Ms. Lisa Lee, an artist of the written and spoken word and herself a survivor of domestic violence.

As Rev. Dr. Hunter mentioned during the forum, we who are seminarians and ministers are often domestic violence "first responders." I hope that we, as a community, continue to work against the prevailing silence by raising awareness, finding proper responses, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators accountable.



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Dear Friends of the Anna Howard Shaw Center,

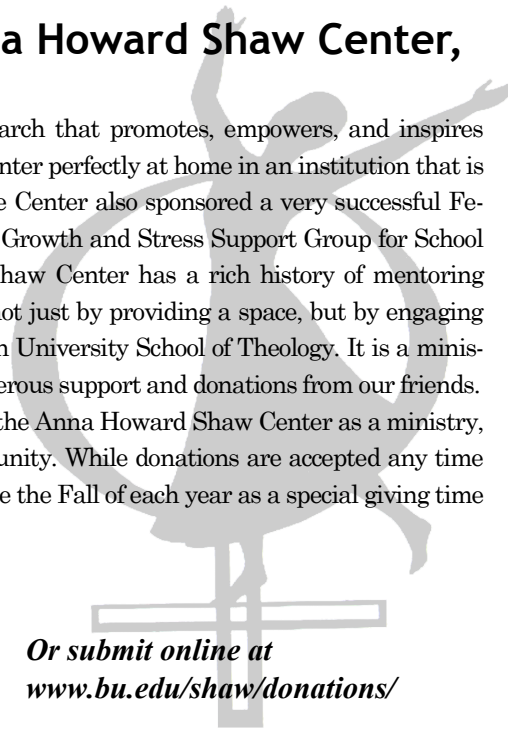
Continued from page 1

Shaw Center's dedication to academic research that promotes, empowers, and inspires women clergy and theologians makes the Center perfectly at home in an institution that is both prophetic and rigorously academic. The Center also sponsored a very successful Female Clergy Support Group and a Spiritual Growth and Stress Support Group for School of Theology students. The Anna Howard Shaw Center has a rich history of mentoring women students in the School of Theology not just by providing a space, but by engaging in a ministry that extends far beyond Boston University School of Theology. It is a ministry that has survived over time from the generous support and donations from our friends.

Please join me in continuing to support the Anna Howard Shaw Center as a ministry, a space, and a welcoming and caring community. While donations are accepted any time of the year, please join many of us who choose the Fall of each year as a special giving time to the Anna Howard Shaw Center!

Please send donations to:
Boston University School of Theology
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ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

*Volume 29, Issue 1
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