

# Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 • Issue 2 • Spring 2011



## From the Director

By Rev. Dr. Choi, Hee An

When I teach my classes, I am sometimes asked by students why women need to band together. Some people think that feminism is old news. Others think that women gathering is exclusive, and if women really need to be equal with men, they should always include men in the conversation. There is a common misconception that women already have what they asked for, so there is no need to have a separate gathering for women anymore. However, as research shows, many women claim that they need to be together more than before because of what they experience in this society. When women gather, like at Women in the World or the Northeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation, I always witness a personal and communal transformation that happens with joy in the hearts of women. One of the students confessed that she had never experienced the power of women



or never recognized power in her, but when she participated in these women gatherings, she experienced an amazing transformation. It changed her life completely. Now she is confident and feels good about herself because of that transformative experience. This is the reason why we need to have women gatherings like Women in the World this year. What we have learned is not just what we know. It is about who we are and who we become.

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## A Word from Anna Howard Shaw

*"A gentleman opposed to their enfranchisement once said to me, women have never produced anything of any value to the world. I told him the chief product of the women had been the men, and left it to him to decide whether the product was of any value."*

## A Glimpse at the Center



Thursday Lunch



A Place to Study



Good Friends



Ten Thousand Villages



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# An Exciting Experience at Racial/Ethnic Clergywomen's Forum Pre-conference and the Northeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation Feb 26- March 2, 2011

By Nory Leachon

Nory is an Anna Howard Shaw Center work-study student from Singapore. She previously worked as an architect and is currently pursuing her M.Div.

I was given the opportunity by AHSC to attend the Racial/Ethnic Clergywomen's Forum Pre-conference Gathering & the Northeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation from Feb 26 - March 2, 2011 that took place in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Racial/Ethnic Clergywomen's Forum Pre-Conference registration begun the night of Feb 26 and a number of clergywomen welcomed each other with enthusiasm and eagerness looking forward to the next day event with representatives from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). The next day, we were inspired by a powerful worship and vigorous preaching by Bishop Violet L. Fisher: "The Anointing Breaks the Yoke." At the beginning of her preaching she invited us to be in a place of "holy boldness" so that when we leave the conference, we are reminded to be bold, courageous and "anointed" in our ministry. A remark from her preaching that really impinged on me is thus, "Women of God, the world doesn't need our theology without the anointing." This anointing will make a difference into our churches and into the world.

The conference continued with a conversation about "Women of Color: What is in it for us?" and "Embracing Unity Celebrating our Diversity." Rev. Dr. HiRho Park, the GBHEM Director of Continuing Formation for Ministry, talked about "The United

Methodist Clergywomen's Consultation in a Global Context." The goal of the consultation is to bring together global clergywomen of the United Methodist Church to listen to and learn from one another and to develop clergywomen's leadership suitable to a global context. She also mentioned that the planning will begin in 2012 and the Global

UM clergywomen's Consultation will be in Miami by 2014. Dr. Park also gave an update of the demographics of UM clergywomen in the U.S.A. There are a total of 9,131 UM clergywomen as of January 2011 and 1,137 are racial-ethnic clergywomen which comprises of African American, 728; Asian American, 182; Hispanic/Latina, 153; Native American, 54; Pacific Islander, 20. There was a time of consultation among each Racial/Ethnic group to discuss the Episcopal election in 2012 and how we can organize and support women leaders in the United Methodist church.

The NEJ Clergywomen Consultation with its theme "Bodacious and Bold: Bubbling Up, Bursting Out, Breaking Through & Building Up" was aligned with Bible passages from Second Corinthians about lifting the veil. The consultation was attended by almost 400 Clergywomen from eleven Annual Conferences in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. Several worship services were held throughout the consultation

participated by five Bishops - Bishop Violet Fisher, Bishop Susan Hassinger, Bishop Peggy Johnson, Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, and Bishop Susan Morrison. A number of workshops were offered for participating women in the consultation. There were workshops that focused on building up racial-ethnic clergywomen relationships, cultivating the leaderships of young adults, intentional multicultural ministry development, looking for mission beyond the local church and a dialogue about the future of the UMC as a global church and its implication for clergywomen to name a few. There was also a marketplace for local as well as national vendors, artisans that offered books, vestments, and artwork and an opportunity for some organization to display important information that is helpful for the clergywomen's well being. The AHSC participated in this marketplace opportunity.

We have displayed our research and fellowship events that have been happening in our center at Boston University. Our

AHSC Director, Rev. Dr. Choi, Hee An presented a short video clip of what AHSC has been offering to women and men at BU STH community, clergywomen and women in the world.

All the participating women were asked to be photographed so that our picture can be included in the renowned women timeline starting with Susan Wesley (John Wesley's mother). I saw pictures of former women bishops, ordained clergy



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## An exciting experience, continued from page 3

women in their corresponding year. I told the lady who took my picture that I am a seminarian, so maybe I should not be included. But she said, "Tell me which year was or will be memorable to you and I shall put your photo under that year." So I told her, "2012 it is!" The year I will graduate with a Master of Divinity degree at Boston University.

I was greatly encouraged in the opening worship, "Burst Out from Our Veiling"

when the five participating Bishops shared their life experiences that made them lift their veils. Bishop Jane

Allen Middleton recounted the first time she heard her "call" but it didn't make any sense to her at first. After twenty years, she decided to lift up her veil, go to seminary and pursue ordination as an elder. Bishop S. Morrison shared her experience on a campus ministry retreat

that made her realize that, "All Are In" God's love and grace. As she lifted her veil she challenged herself

to tell that story of love and grace to people who don't know they are in (quoting B. Morrison). Bishop Susan Hassinger addressed us by saying her veiling began in her early childhood and youth when her church didn't teach her that all people were children of God regardless of cultural background, language, color or sexual orientation. Bishop Hassinger also dealt



with issues of racism, civil rights, white privileges and powers in her college days. With much prayer, searching, and discussion, she lifted up of her own veil and became one of the retired Bishops who signed a statement asking that part of paragraph 304 that prohibits gays and lesbians from ordination be removed from the UM Discipline. She asked the women to recite the first of John Wesley's general rule, "Do no harm." She ended her sharing by

saying, "Excluding persons from the life of the church is sinful and harmful not only to the individual but to the church as a whole. And so I hope that I've dropped the veil and keep it off."

These two conferences have revolutionized and invigorated me in my journey to ministry not only as a woman, but a woman of color in the United Methodist Church. There will always be challenges, fights, and struggles along the way, but it is great to be part of the experience with women and friends that

continually support female endeavors. They support not only the development of skills and leadership within the church, but they also to serve as partners and guiding hands as women from all cultures and backgrounds continue to choose to take that long road to ministry. I hope that AHSC will continue to support students to attend such conferences.

## Congratulations to the School of Theology Graduating Women of 2011!



- Ashley Michele Benner*
- Debbie Lynn Brubaker*
- Carolyn Marie Bruner*
- Samanda Davina Bryant*
- Jessica Ann Hittinger*
- Chicka*
- Stephanie Christine Edwards*
- Georgia Gojmerac-Leiner*
- Candace Hallett*
- Philomena Hare*
- Patricia Kay Hatch*
- Karen Leslie Hernandez*
- Allidah Benay Hicks*
- Emily Louise Howe*
- Meredith English Hoxie*
- Adrienne Lee Kisner*
- Lourey Gail Middlecamp*
- Krista Dawn Millay*
- Divine Aguh Mungre*
- HiRho Yoon Park*
- Annah Peyiye*
- Jennifer Aileen Quigley*
- Holly G Reed*
- Krishana Ann Suckau*
- Jayne Susanne Swank*
- Cecilia Marie Woodworth*
- Monica Denise Yungeberg*



# A Celebration of the Divine Imprint of *Imago Dei*

By Rev. Dr. Robin J. Olson

Robin Olson is an alumna of BU STH, class of 1986, and was extremely involved with the Shaw Center during her studies. As a United Methodist elder, she has served local churches across New York and Wisconsin. Immediately prior to her return to BU, she served as Protestant Chaplain at Nazareth College in Rochester NY. Robin currently serves as the Coordinator for Spiritual Life in the School of Theology, a new position established by the school in January 2011. Robin earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in May of 2010. What follows is a brief excerpt from her dissertation, in which she relates the transformative doctrine of *imago Dei* to the lives of undergraduate female students at Nazareth College.



My doctor of ministry project explores the practical intersections of the doctrine of *imago Dei* with the lives of my students. *Imago Dei* is a treasure of a tenet from Genesis 1:26-28, describing humanity's original blessedness, created as we are in the image and likeness of God. I seek to claim and re-imagine this ancient concept for a post-modern people in search of identity and purpose. I am guided by Bruce Epperly's lovely phrase, that the "Divine imprint is our deepest reality."

"Self-esteem is the gift of a transformed vision of ourselves and our potential, grounded in our relationship to the Creator of love and beauty (Genesis 1:26-28). As Genesis proclaims, we are created, male and female, in God's image. *The Divine imprint is our deepest reality.* We bear the reflection of God in every thought, word, and deed...We are unique in the whole universe.

Without each of our particular gifts, the universe remains incomplete and imperfect."<sup>1</sup> (*emphasis mine*)

This project was inspired through the sacred intersection of my life with the lives of my students, most of whom are traditionally aged undergraduate women. As women, my students bring a deep concern for a spirituality of right relationships. They struggle to find the right balance of relationship with God, with self, and with others. While my students are incredibly eager to explore their spirituality, most have minimal experience with religious tradition. They are not sure where to begin their quests or what resources to access along the way. They are, however, certain of two things: the search for meaning in life is a valuable journey that requires the company of friends, and they want their lives to make a difference. As they have been introduced to *imago Dei*, and absorbed this blessing

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## From the Director, continued from cover

When the Women in the World program is held every year, I always have some anxiety about our event. As we live in this speedy technological society, many events and gatherings are not like they used to be, especially because of the financial difficulty and economic crisis. It is also hard to get a satisfactory number of participants each year. More importantly, as this society changes very quickly, the Shaw Center has to learn about who we were and who we have to become in this society and find a new way to reach out women and their ministry. When I came to the Shaw center eight years ago, the audience of this conference was predominately white women. After eight years, our participants are so colorful. Our board members, School of Theology community members, local

community members and I have long conversations about feminism, women's issues, women's ministry, women's health, women's well-being, women and race, women and immigrants and so forth. To find our identity as a women's center, we have to take risks and overcome fear that we did not face before. We have to ask ourselves seriously who we are and who we have to become. It was and is a hard and long struggle but it is a necessary transformative process that we need to have. This year, Women in the World shows the results of our endeavor. Many women have consistently come to our conference and created new identities; they show who we are becoming. All of us are empowered by each other and surrounded by love again and again.

Snapshots of Women in the World 2011:





## A Celebration of the Divine Imprint of *Imago Dei*, continued from page 4

of being deep into their lives, transformation has occurred.

I chose to begin at the beginning, to start with the genesis of it all: our relatedness to God as creature to Creator. The love and beauty in which we are fashioned - the "goodness" with which we are stamped - is the place to start for those who want to offer their lives for purpose. I also chose *imago Dei* because it offers an inherently redemptive message for women.

Having come of age myself in an era strong with Christian feminism, I bring a perspective of women's empowerment to my ministry. I believe that women's particular ways of knowing and being in the world reveal to us particular ways of growing in spiritual maturity. I believe that the inherited stain of sexism distorts the very things we treasure: our relationships with God, self, and others.

I see the need for a recovered *imago Dei* in the lives of my students. I see this in the shattered self-image of victimized women students, in the diminutive or self-effacing affect that places "Everyone Else" before "Self," in the ways women know deep down that somehow they are "just not good enough." I see this in the women who bare their arms in confession, revealing the scars from their latest cuts, revealing a yet deeper scar of incomplete self. I see this as women agonize over binging and purging cycles and struggles with anorexia. None of it, none of it, they say is about the food or the razor or the other people. It is about something missing or stolen or never received way deep down in their souls. It is about a quest to embody the assurance that we are made in the image and likeness of God. It is about *imago Dei*.

Two experiences compelled me to

choose this as a project topic. First, in residence during a January term at Wesley, I was contemplating the theme of *imago Dei* for a paper. I consulted a group of my classmates for their opinion. This group happened to be four or five men. I explained to them that I felt I was on to something genuinely revolutionary: "what if people *really* knew that they were created in God's image. What if your ontological go-to place was 'I am a likeness of God?'" I was thrilled with possibilities of healing for my students, and had many ideas for practical applications in pastoral care and program. "Of course," I explained, "this is not any new doctrine, but what if we could *truly embody* it in the way we lived?"

I was surprised by their reaction. They were quiet and hesitant, so I continued probing them for reaction. Finally they replied, each one in his own way, "Maybe that would be good for women. But it wouldn't be good for my setting and men."

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## From the Director, continued from page 4



The Anna Howard Shaw Center has been involved in many research projects, programs, and events reaching out to women and their ministry. We have developed wonderful partnerships with the Boston University School of Theology, the Northeastern Jurisdiction Conference, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the Wabash Center, and many local churches. As a

national research center in higher education, the Shaw Center has taken a leading role in helping Christian women, both lay and clergy, understand Christian leadership and ministry. Furthermore, the Center has provided continuing education through important research projects such as the Women's Retention Study, Women and Immigrant Church, Salary Study and our annual conference, Women in the World. We have recently finished a salary study project (with GBHEM) and started Women's retention study II project. As we have received grace from friends of the Shaw Center and many partners, we continue to grow. Finding new ways to support our women and their ministry every year, we will continue to work hard to cherish women and their vision for God's kin-dom.

## A Celebration of the Divine, continued from page 5

They already know that they are God's gift to the world. They already have a sense of entitlement. The last thing I want to tell them is that they are unique and special before God. They need to hear something a bit more humbling." I was astonished. My proverbial jaw may have even dropped.

Their tales of male confidence were so different from my experiences with women, and their attendant prescriptions for pastoral care vastly different from what I find helpful for women. When a woman comes to understand herself as divinely constructed, there is an awesome relief and rejoicing. When she considers that God might even have some female attributes, that the two just might be partial reflections in a mirror, it takes a while for the notion to settle in. Once she embraces this knowledge of divine imprint, it deepens the already-present ethic of care and love for others. Never in my experience has it resulted in hubris. As I continued to reflect on my colleagues' responses, I realized my first intuition was correct: there are some different spiritual formation needs for men and women. Given my current context as a chaplain to a predominantly female campus, my passion was fueled to contribute to women's spiritual empowerment.

My second anecdote of epiphany is a reality check from my campus. I recall the first "Club Fair" I attended on campus - the annual recruitment event for Undergraduate Association clubs. I entered a room of probably fifty display tables, each surrounded by small groups of engaged, interested students. One lone table sat in an island of undergraduate exile; the Club representative sat quietly, attracting no interested students. I went over to inquire, and discovered it was the

"Women's Studies Club." I introduced myself and my interest to the student, who was relieved to have me sign her still blank E-mail roster. Then she handed me a tampon, on which the Club name was emblazoned. I suddenly understood why her table was so poorly visited. While I did my part, walking around the rest of the event boldly holding my gift tampon aloft, encouraging other women to visit the table, each one laughed and declined.

I mention this for two reasons. First, I was rather distressed that our very female campus could not muster interest for a "Women's Study Club." Why was this so, with such an estrogen-friendly environment? And second, I was equally alarmed that the best recruitment strategy the Club could imagine was one so alienating to their peers. The tampon-toting message was akin in symbol to a bra-burning radical feminism with which today's students want no association. One college student summed it up: "over the past few years I bolt for the door at the sound of 'feminism'."<sup>2</sup> I reached out to the Director of the Women's Studies department and quickly realized that she had no interest, and even harbored a bit of suspicion, in cooperating with me for programming. Spirituality and Women were not topics that appropriately intersected for her.

I was left with questions and issues that stirred me as I sought to be in ministry in this new campus context, with these young women of the Millennial generation. How could a *woman's* perspective be relevant and liberating to the spiritual life of women on campus? How might I connect the revolutionary blessing of *imago Dei* through my ministry with these wonderful women? How might I speak their

language and attract, not alienate?

In chapter one I describe in greater detail the context of my Protestant Community and campus. I sketch the characteristics of the Millennial generation and my own ethnographic perspective as a participant observer from the Baby Boomer generation. In addition, I highlight research about women's spiritual and psychological development, with emphasis on the collegiate years. Finally, my personal biography reveals my deep connection with this project.

In chapter two I move into a relational interpretation of the doctrine of *imago Dei*. I consider biblical, theological, and historical background, in order to articulate a vision for a modern day embrace of *imago Dei*.

Chapters three through five are descriptions of programmatic and pastoral celebrations of *imago Dei* on my campus. Thematically these all center on sacred relationships, moving from relationship with God to relationship with Self to relationships with Others.

Chapter six expresses much of what I have learned in this project, and ideas for next steps in the spiritual development of college women.

### Works Cited

<sup>1</sup>Bruce Epperly and Lewis D. Solomon, *Mending the World: Spiritual Hope for Ourselves and our Planet* (Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, 2002): 71.

<sup>2</sup>Liisa Rajala, "The Feminist Movement and it's Push on Me" *American University Word* (April 2009): 4.



# School of Theology Future and Recent Female Faculty & Staff Publications

## Nancy Ammerman

- ◇ “The Challenges of Pluralism: Locating Religion in a World of Diversity.” *Social Compass* 57 (2): 154-167.
- ◇ “American Evangelicals in American Culture: Continuity and Change” pp. 44-73 in Steven Brint and Jean Reith Schroedel, eds., *Evangelicals and Democracy in America*, Vol. 1. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- ◇ “Congregations: Local, Social, and Religious.” Pp. 562-580 in Peter B. Clarke, ed., *Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Katheryn Pfisterer Darr

- ◇ “Asking at Abel: A Wise Woman’s Proverb Performance in 2 Samuel 20” in *From the Margins 1: Women of the Hebrew Bible and Their Afterlives*.

## Jennifer Wright Knust

- ◇ *Unprotected Texts: The Bible’s Surprising Contradictions about Sex and Desire*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2011.
- ◇ *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice: Images, Acts, Meanings*, edited with Zuzsanna Várhelyi. New York and London: Oxford University Press, forthcoming July 2011.
- ◇ “Earth Accuses Earth: Tracing Jesus’ Writing on the Ground,” with Tommy Wasserman, *Harvard Theological Review* 103.4 (2010): 407-47.
- ◇ “Exegesis: Luke 24:13-35, John 10:1-10.” *Lectionary Homiletics* 22.3 (April/May 2011): 46-48; 57-58.
- ◇ “Debunking Biblical Marriage: Why the Bible Cannot Dictate Today’s Sexual Morals” A three part series in the *Washington Post* “On Faith”  
Part I, “Biblical Marriage: [http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2011/02/debunking\\_biblical\\_marriage\\_why\\_the\\_bible\\_cant\\_dictate\\_todays\\_sexual\\_morals.html](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2011/02/debunking_biblical_marriage_why_the_bible_cant_dictate_todays_sexual_morals.html)  
Part II, “Biblical Sexuality”: [http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2011/02/what\\_does\\_the\\_bible\\_say\\_about\\_sexuality.html](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2011/02/what_does_the_bible_say_about_sexuality.html)  
Part III: “Biblical Desire”: [http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2011/02/what\\_does\\_the\\_bible\\_say\\_about\\_sexual\\_desire.html](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2011/02/what_does_the_bible_say_about_sexual_desire.html)
- ◇ “My Take: The Bible’s Surprisingly Mixed Messages on Sexuality.” CNN Belief Blog. 9 February 2011. <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/02/09/my-take-the-bible-s-surprisingly-mixed-messages-on-sexuality/>



## Mary Elizabeth Moore

- ◇ “Passion for Life: Power for Building Justice and Peace” in *Grace Jantzen: Redeeming the Present*.

## Elizabeth Parsons

- ◇ What Price for Privatization?: Cultural Encounter with Development Policy on the Zambian Copperbelt

## Dana L. Robert

- ◇ Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global Christianity, A Mission Study for 2010 and 2011

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## Meet the New Work-Study Student: Kelly Hill

Kelly Hill is a first-year Master of Theological Studies student specializing in Religion and Conflict Transformation. She graduated from Hendrix College in 2008 with a B.A. in



International Relations and Global Studies, and from Vanderbilt University in 2010 with a M.Ed. in International Education Policy and Management. Her academic interests include

multicultural and interfaith dialogue, peace education, and education in post-conflict settings. After graduating, she hopes to merge her interests in education policy and conflict transformation by developing youth education programs and educational policies for future generations of sustainable peace. Kelly is a new work-study student at the Anna Howard Shaw Center, and will be working on the newsletter and the website.

“As a student new to Boston, the

Shaw Center has become a second home for me. Throughout the year it has been a place for me to dialogue in many conversations surrounding women's issues, faith, and life in seminary. I've also had the opportunity to meet and be inspired by the women and men who have participated in the Shaw Center events. As a new staff, I'm excited to extend hospitality to Shaw Center visitors and support awareness and leadership development of women in the church.”



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*Dear Readers,*

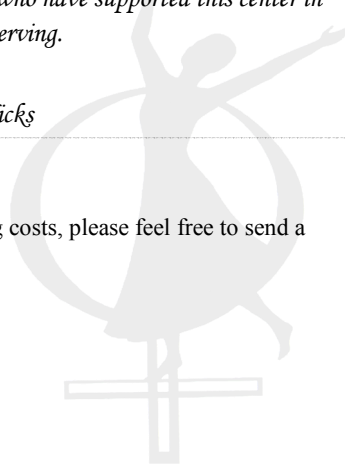
*It has been a privilege to work with the Anna Howard Shaw Center for the past two years. I have made many friends, met many empowering women, and witnessed Anna's beautiful legacy at the BU School of Theology. Without the Center, my time at SHC would have undoubtedly been less fulfilling; never underestimate the power of a simple room filled with couches, coffee, and good friends. I am graduating in May and moving to Durham, North Carolina with my husband in August, but I will never forget how cozy it always felt in the Center even when it was freezing outside. Nor will I forget the afternoons we spent telling stories over warm cups of coffee and hot chocolate and the deep discussions we would dive into after class. Though the Anna Howard Shaw Center may appear to be just an office in an old building, it is a place in which people of all ages, sexes, and colors can come together and be. I thank all of those who have supported this center in years past—while it may not be large, it is certainly worth preserving.*

*Thank you,  
 Benay Hicks*

## Help carry on Anna's work...

If you feel called to help underwrite the Shaw Center's operating costs, please feel free to send a check made out to the Anna Howard Shaw Center.

Please send donations to:  
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## ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

*Volume 27, Issue 2  
 Spring 2011*

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