



# Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 24 ♦ NUMBER 1 ♦ FALL/WINTER 2007

## AHSC PRESENTS RESEARCH AT AAR

*Choi Hee An*

Our immigrant research project has been in progress for the last three years. We finished our interviews and some research last summer; now we are in the process of analyzing our data and interpreting our theological findings. We have decided to disseminate our results in three areas: academic presentations, the Women in the World conference, and Methodist denominational gatherings. We have just finished academic presentations, our first mission. It was wonderful to watch our researchers and supporters make such fantastic presentations at Amer-

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*Anna Howard Shaw Center researchers at AAR conference in San Diego. From left: Kee Boem So, Loida Martell-Otero, Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang, Choi Hee An, M.T. Davila, Laurel Scott, and Jennifer Brooks.*

## A TAPESTRY OF WISDOM

*Mary Bryant*

The Anna Howard Shaw Center's Thursday Lunch Talk series continues to play a major role in STH student life as, each week, students enjoy pizza and stimulating conversation. Topics covered this fall have ranged from the creativity women bring to ministry to cultivating spiritual practices. For many STH students, this semester's AHSC Lunch Talks have been both exciting and informative, as eight women have

gradually woven together a tapestry of experience and wisdom for all to enjoy and offered multicultural and multiethnic perspectives on making spiritual journeys and understanding the struggle and importance of women in ministry and society.

Our first speaker, second-year MDiv student Caroline Wiggins, shared her thoughts, ideas, and work

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ican Academy of Religion's Practical Theology Group on November 19.

Our moderator, Gennifer Brooks, introduced six presenters—Laurel Scott, M.T. Davila, Choi Hee An, Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang, Loida Martell-Otero, and Kee Boem So—to the practical theology audiences in San Diego. These speakers raised critical questions and presented thought-provoking ruminations on the immigrant church and its future. Borrowing the analysis of our critical respondent, Kee Boem So, I will briefly summarize our presentations.

Laurel Scott shared reflections on her interviews of local immigrant churches. She described models of and teachings on immigrants in the biblical tradition to answer the question, "How can the Church in the U.S. provide a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere for immigrants?" She also encouraged the Church to be involved in policy making regarding immigration.

M.T. Davila described the importance of immigration in the identity and role of the Church in the U.S., not only concerning immigrants and politicians, but also the Church as a whole. She highlighted some characteristics of the immigration experience—"migration as a quest for life, wrought with risk, challenging us with the other, and inviting transformation." She also urged mutual transformation and interconnectedness, proposing three models for Christian theology: "risking sanctuary, prophetic hospitality, and encountering wholeness."

Choi Hee An's presentation explored how the Korean-American immigrant church has a two-faced identity regarding postcolonialism.



*Rev. Dr. Choi Hee An, Director of the Anna Howard Shaw Center, gives a presentation on immigrant identity at the AAR conference.*

On the one hand, Korean churches in the history of Korean Christianity have played a role in propagating colonial power. Alternatively, the Korean-American church is a "main

women. She indicated different modes and methods of interpreting Korean women's faith experience and development, proposing that "Faith has less to do with finding

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*Our presenters tackled these issues very seriously within varying ethnic immigrant contexts and laid the foundation for significant consideration of political, economic, cultural, and spiritual transformation.*

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counter postcolonial ethnic institution." She analyzed their marginalized identity, "I as the other," which stems from immigrants' burdensome experience in America. Choi then introduced a new concept of immigrant identity: "I and We among Others," which constitutes a collective hybrid functioning as "the counterpart of colonial/postcolonial orientation."

Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang critically examined James Fowler's theory of faith development from the perspective of immigrant Korean-American

meaning in life and more to do with practical solutions for survival as immigrants."

Noting that there is a "link between corporate and military immigration with a concomitant global homelessness," Loida Martell-Otero focused on "homelessness and the lack of kinship" as the main problems in immigrant contexts and affirmed "taking in the stranger as family" as an important ethic for responding to immigrant issues.

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# A FEAST OF NEW STUDENTS

*Amanda Norris*

## **Amanda Norris**

What better way to begin a banquet than with a bowl of savory fruit salad? With her sentimental sweetness and sarcastic tart, Amanda is paradoxical and a little nutty. With unnatural levels of estrogen, she is a jumble of divergent human emotions; fortunately, most of that neurotic energy is released through empathy and fellow-feeling.

Amanda is currently enrolled in the Master of Divinity program, flouting the expectations of her native Southern Baptist community by seeking ordination, while—at the ripe old age of 22—she drifts into spinsterhood. Having never lived off campus before, Amanda’s biggest challenge has been getting to class on time, however, multiple alarm clocks and an increasing familiarity with public transportation are slowly remedying this situation. New to the Anna Howard Shaw Center Staff, Amanda enjoys being surrounded by feminist literature and cultivating new relationships—she especially hopes to see you all crowding around the AHSC beverage table! Rest assured, in whatever state she finds you, you will have a friend.

## **Cheryl Meachen**

Another most delectable item on our seminarian menu is Cheryl Meachen—the wholesome and spunky pumpkin pie. A perfect blend of traditional wisdom and fresh insight, Cheryl is simultaneously comforting and compelling. “Seminarian” is but one of the many banners fluttering in the wake of Cheryl’s ceaseless multitasking—pen-

nants reading “mother,” “wife,” and “pastor” also wave behind her. In addition to Cheryl’s wealth of responsibilities this semester, her biggest challenge has been the long daily commute from Concord, which amounts to eighteen hours of travel time a week; using some of that time for study and sometimes sleep, she turns inconvenience into efficiency. Despite her hectic schedule, you will always find Cheryl wearing a pleasant countenance and ready to engage you in encouraging conversation.

## **Joy Perkett**

In this cornucopia of newly matriculated students, Joy Perkett is a crisp, rubescent apple. Her snappy sweetness resounds with the freshness of life and those simple pleasures we so often forget to slow down and enjoy. Joy’s journey to Boston University is an inspiring one. Her story is one of struggle—a tug-of-war between the undeniable call of God and the conflicting voice of certain religious communities. I am happy to say that God and Joy walked away with the rope, and out of that toil and triumph and the internal search and unearthing of vocational clarity, Joy strides steadily forward in pursuit of the call God has secured within her. If you keep your eyes open, you will undoubtedly see her cantering happily around campus, running after God and living up to her name.

## **Rachel Vogelzang de Lima**

What culinary collection is complete without a robust red wine? Fear not, seminarians! With her sanguine richness, Rachel Vogelzang de Lima

## *New Faculty Book Out This Year*

*Converting Colonialism: Visions and  
Realities in Mission History,  
1706–1914*

Series: Studies in the History  
of Christian Missions

Dana L. Robert (editor)

Published by Curzon-  
Eerdmans, 2006

never fails to leave our cheeks rosy with laughter and our hearts full with courage. Time management is Rachel’s most challenging obstacle of the semester. Fortunately, in response to the overwhelming number of tasks she must cram into twenty-four hour periods, Rachel has developed list- and schedule-making abilities to shame even the most tightly wound Type-A personalities. Among the many benefits of seminary, Rachel says stimulating intellectual discourse is her most cherished and uplifting activity. If ever your path crosses hers, you will undoubtedly find yourself in the midst of a merry and fortifying friendship.



A Tapestry of Wisdom  
Continued from page 1



*Kristin White shares her experience with the Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence Program.*

on the role of creativity in ministry and how she utilizes it in her approach; she also displayed her art. On October 4, Susan Forshey of the Center for Practical Theology invited

the gathering to experience “Shekinah,” the glorious and powerful femininity of God. On October 11, Kristin White, AHSC Board Member and Administrative Coordinator for the Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence Program (SUPE) at STH, discussed the endeavors of four Maine women in ministry who used art as a mechanism for drawing people together. She said, “These women found that to sustain ministry in this context, a disciplined practice of honoring Sabbath, rest, holy friendships, and creating space is imperative.”

JoAnn Carlotto, also an AHSC Board Member, followed on October 18 with an interactive and exciting dialogue launched by her talk on women in mission and ministry in the Dominican Republic. Rev. Jennifer Wegter-McNelly, pastor, wife, and mother, closed the October Lunch Talks with an informative session on managing the demands of ministry. She invited the gathering to “imagine your work environment

through a snapshot of the Big Picture,” which involves the recognition of personal needs as well as practical goal-setting.

Beginning November’s series was Marla Marcum, ThD, a scholar who emphasizes social ethics. Marla facilitated a discussion on creative ways to support social justice issues alongside the demands of class and work. On November 8, Ruth Padilla DeBorst, ThD, a scholar in missiology and social ethics, shared how her identity and vocation were shaped by her diverse experience. Lisa Jo Bezner, a third-year MDiv student, wrapped up the Fall 2007 Lunch Talks with a thought-provoking presentation on spiritual practices.

The voices of these eight women intertwine to create a tapestry of wisdom that presents us with an opportunity to expand our moral and theological horizons, stretch ourselves, and understand the challenges and significance of women in ministry and society.



*Students enjoy pizza during Thursday Lunch Talk.*



## CULTIVATING SABBATH PRACTICE

*Susan Forshey*

A common refrain among the pastors who participated in the Center for Practical Theology's Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence program was that they had a newfound commitment to weekly Sabbath practices as a result of the program's sabbatical experience. Many of them commented that learning Sabbath-keeping and disciplines of self-care were not part of their seminary education, which set them up for exhaustion and burnout once in their ministry positions.

Women in seminary often experience a feeling of time scarcity. Many times, the student study pattern is to push hard for a semester at a time; this pattern can become a way of life. In addition, Stephen Rechtschaffen notes that many people believe a minute is 20 to 30 seconds shorter than it actually is. We are constantly "falling forward into the next moment," pushed not only by the length of our "to-do" lists, but also by a mistaken internal clock.

Unfortunately, once seminary is completed, the pace will not slow; women in ministry may find themselves caring for a congregation *and* shouldering the majority of household and family responsibilities. Cultivating habits of self-care is crucial to survival—both now and later. Cultivating Sabbath practices help people flourish in the midst of life's challenges, rather than merely live with constant exhaustion.

The gift of Sabbath rest to creation as described in the Hebrew Scriptures is a profound statement that work is not the "end all, be all" of human endeavor. As one BU student commented, "Even God rested." All creation is called to a day of rest and God leads the way.



*Lisa Jo Benzer colors mandala during Sabbath space.*

The key to Sabbath practice is setting aside *some* time each week. This sacred time strengthens a person's ability to set boundaries; it acknowledges human limitation and the need for rest; and it honors that creativity needs periods of renewal to flourish. *Sabbath invites us to let go of time-conscious drivenness and relax into the timeless experience of play.* The main challenge is not so much finding the time, but learning to let go of time's seeming scarcity and enter into a sense of abundance.

Sabbath space at the School of Theology is one way to experience that sacred time of play in the midst of life. Sponsored by the Spiritual Formation and Church Life project, Center for Practical Theology, it takes place every Wednesday from 12:30 to 2:30 as Muelder Chapel is transformed with art supplies, paintings, and activities such as collaging, lectio divina, and art meditation. Some students rest, others color;

some come in for moment, then leave; others remain the entire time.

But Sabbath space can be created anywhere. Women thirsty for rest can create a little Sabbath sanctuary they can enter during the day, if only for a moment. At home, I have a table in my kitchen looking out the window where art supplies are close at hand. Just a few minutes there helps me enter the spacious sense of time that Sabbath practices engender. Spending time in nature, listening to music, enjoying conversation with dear friends, or playing with children can also enkindle this delight. The only requirement is that the activity be pursued for its own joy and not merely to be checked off a "to-do" list. Gradually, spending a day each week in the Sabbath's welcoming embrace will not feel so impossible, since time will no longer feel scarce but abundant.



# ANNUAL GIVING LIST

December 2006 through October 2007

Many thanks to our contributors!

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## AHSC Presents Research at AAR

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Consulting the perspective of constructive theology, she compared “taking in the stranger as family” to the community in the interpenetrating relations of the Triune God and urged us to create immigrant churches which re-vision salvation for immigrants.

Our respondent, Kee Boem So, critically reflected on these five presentations from the experiences of immigrant ministry and encouraged future exploration of these compelling

ideas. As So observed, these presentations did not only challenge the academic audience but also confronted the immigrant church ministry itself. Our presenters tackled these issues very seriously within varying ethnic immigrant contexts and laid the foundation for significant consideration of political, economic, cultural, and spiritual transformation.

These superb presentations will be much more intensively explored in our upcoming Women in the World

conference. Through this wonderful conference, the Anna Howard Shaw Center—in cooperation with the Hope Metro Boston District of the United Methodist Church—will provide more opportunities for our ministers and lay leaders to understand the difficulties and challenges of the immigrant church and to envision new forms of cooperative immigrant ministry. Come! Let’s hear new songs and sing together in a new choir!







## Here's how you can help carry on Anna's work...

*The Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology seeks to empower women in ministry through research, education, support, and advocacy. If you would like to learn more about the Anna Howard Shaw Center, please fill out this form and return it to the address below. Thank you for supporting women in ministry!*

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