



BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Anna Howard Shaw Center

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Fall 2006

Series tackles women's interests

By Mary Bryant

Every Thursday many STH students can tell you where they will be having lunch!

The Anna Howard Shaw Center weekly discussion series has become a part of the STH weekly gathering where students can share pizza and discuss interesting topics about women. There was a time in the center's history that one could say "for and about women" only. This has not been the case for the Fall 2006 luncheon series. The discussions continue to be about women, but the leaders of the discussions have been both men and women. Topics covered have ranged from supporting women in ministry from a pastor's husband perspectives to planning a retreat for STH women and spouses after the winter break.

Lisa Jo Bezner, second-year MDiv and AHSC work study, kicked off the weekly discussion series on Oct. 5 sharing her internship experience last summer at the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist



Lisa Jo Bezner

See **SERIES**, page 2 Students get pizza at the beginning of a Thursday lunch talk.

Traveling the tunnel toward equality

Sometime in our lives, we feel that we stand in a long, endless, hopeless gray tunnel that has no end. When we start to work in the tunnel in the beginning, it is endurable. When we get sick, at first, many people visit and encourage us, but the longer we are ill, the fewer people come and cheer us. And we gradually and slowly wear out. The more we stay in the tunnel, the more we

lose hope and our faith disappears. It seems that the more we walk or run, the longer a tunnel extends.

What is the most difficult thing in our lives? It is staying in the hopeless ongoing struggle that never ends. It is going, going and going. It continues for several months, years, a lifetime and even from generation to generation. We are tired but the struggle continues.

This fall, I taught a class, "Women's Theologies and

Ministry." While I prepared my lectures, I had to read not only women's history, but also feel their long painful struggle with my heart. Every single individual had to fight against something and sacrificed some part of her life. Sometimes they paid a high cost. They were condemned, scorned, ridiculed, disdained and even killed. However, they were also brave and resilient.

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**From the
director**

SERIES

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Church in Washington, D.C. She shared her sermon on the death penalty that she delivered for a noon service. The sermon sparked many questions on preaching social justice from the pulpit. The topic created a very interesting and stimulating discussion.

The following week Rev. Cheryln Gates, STH registrar, provided a synopsis of the Clergywomen Celebration in Chicago in August, which commemorated the ordination of UMC women over the past 50 years. Her slide presentation provided an overview of the wide range of cultures that attended the celebration.

Rev. Gates was followed by a presentation by a Christian Peacemakers Team. The team members, working in Columbia presented their ongoing efforts in working with the community to bring about peace. Comments from students who attended stated that the information provided through a slide presentation, literature, and discussion was very illuminating. Many thanks to Larry Whitney, a second year STH student and volunteer for Christian Peacemakers for inviting the team to share their experiences with the Shaw Center.

Wrapping up the October series was Dr. Carole Bohn, associate professor of counseling psychology and religion at Boston University, who shared her journey into feminism. Students found her experiences as a feminist both inspiring and insightful.

Katherine Kennedy, Director of the Howard Thurman Center at Boston University, was the first presenter for November. She shared her memories on the life and contri-



Lisa Jo Bezner

Claire Hoffman and Jeremy Pickens, two regulars at the lunchtime talks, discuss plans for the retreat.

butions of Sue Bailey Thurman, wife of Dr. Howard Thurman. Dr. Thurman was Dean Emeritus of Marsh Chapel at Boston University. Not only was Sue Bailey Thurman a strong supporter of Dr. Thurman, she also made significant contributions in her own right. Among her many contribution was founding the Museum of Afro-American History in Boston, Mass.

The STH men and women attended the next noon talk in November with much interest to hear the thoughts and experiences from Dr. Kirk Wegter-McNelly on being a pastor's husband. Students asked questions ranging from "What's it like to be a husband and a fellow theologian in a church setting?" to "Are the expectations the same for the husband of the pastor as they are for the wife of the pastor?"

Retreat Planning was the pri-

mary topic of the discussion for the noon talk session prior to the Thanksgiving break. Attendees for this session "brainstormed" on the kind of activities they would like to experience and enjoy during a day long retreat after winter break. The all-women retreat, "Experiencing the Holy Spirit," is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 20, 2007, at the home of Dr. Kathe Darr. Board members Mary Todd and Jo Ann Carlotta volunteered to provide food for the retreat.

Also discussed were the kinds of topics, and discussions students want to share at the Anna Howard Shaw Center for Spring 2007. The Spring Series will begin Feb. 1, 2007. One of the future speakers will be Dr. Brian Stone of BUSTH.

Wrapping up the Fall 2006 Discussion Series will be Dr. Dale

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Meet Mary Bryant

By Mary Bryant

Mary Bryant, a first-year MDiv student, comes to Boston University School of Theology after more than 15 years of social work experience, ten of those years as a Public Health Social Worker with the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Officer Corps. Those ten years were spent as a medical and mental health social worker assigned to the Federal Bureau of Prisons Health Services Division. As one of the first seven Clinical Social Workers and the first African-American Clinical Social Worker assigned to work in the Federal Bureau of Prisons Health Services Division in the early 1990s, Mary experienced working with both the male and female inmate populations in four of the six medical referral centers for federal prisoners. As a lieutenant commander with the U.S. Public Health Service, Mary was deployed to provide mental health services to the victims of hurricanes Charley and Ivan in Florida in 2004. This deployment, Mary asserts, was a defining moment in her life. In 2005, Mary deactivated her commission from the Corps, left the FBOP and decided to enter seminary to prepare for ministry at BUSTH.

Mary is married to a retired U.S. Army servicemember, now a third-grade teacher. They have three young adult children and the grand-parents of two dogs, Verdell and Georgia.

Mary was born in Georgia, but as a uniformed ser-



Lisa Jo Bezner

vicemember and the spouse of a career servicemember lived in Alabama, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Florida, Missouri, Maryland and Virginia, just to name a few. Mary earned her MSW from Howard University and has done post-graduate work at Morgan State University and the University of Michigan in Urban and Community Planning.

Mary has a love for people and enjoys spending her time talking and sharing with the “human spirit.” Returning to school after many years of workplace experience has been one of many transitions and challenges in her life. Attending seminary and being at BU by far has been most exciting and life-changing!

CHOI

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Sometimes they stood in the middle of a long, endless, hopeless tunnel and still did not stop fighting. As their struggle continues, history has been created and rewritten again and again. Aren't they tired? Don't they stop? There are many moments that we want to quit because we see no end. It seems not worth it to continue, but our lives must go on and so we do.

Just this summer, United Methodist women celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of full clergy rights for women. It is important

evidence of women's resilient and relentless struggle. Not only United Methodist women but also Presbyterian, UCC, Disciples and women in other denominations stood up and created a new history of Christianity. They fought together for women's rights and ordination. They believed that women were as fully God's partners as men were. We also know that women in other religions fought for their rights as well as ordination. They changed the history of religion. The women that I read and taught in my class, “Women's Theologies and

Ministry” displayed every step of making a way where there had been no way. The women that I met, knew, and made friends with led me to walk in the valley of shadow with tears and laughter, with joy and pain, and with fear and hope, and with doubt and faith.

From the history, there is much evidence of women's persistent struggle toward justice and love. In the beginning of every story, it was almost impossible to have hope. It was hard to even imagine. However, in every single story,

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Shaw Center Bible study available

By AHSC staff

In 2004 a range of feminist voices were assembled by the Shaw Center and the Center for Congregational Research and Development to do a multicultural biblical lecture and study series, "A Mosaic of Voices." From that series comes the book *Engaging the Bible*,

Five prominent scholars were invited to BU to present programs from the African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Asian-American, gay/lesbian, and Caucasian feminist perspectives. Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Dr. Carter Heyward, Dr. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez, Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, and Dr. Kwok Pui-lan shared their experiences and worked to get participants thinking in new ways in a one-day workshop.

Engaging the Bible was edited by Dr. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, professor of Hebrew Bible at Boston University and chairperson of the Anna Howard Shaw Center Board,

In the first part of each chapter in Engaging the Bible, the contributors explain how they see their own traditions and circumstances and how they reflect on their struggles in those contexts. Using specific biblical texts, the second part of each chapter illustrates how the contributors understand a particular Bible passage and interpret it through their own perspectives.

and Dr. Hee An Choi, director of the Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University, this past spring

Engaging the Bible is comprised of five chapters, one for each of the lecturers in the series. In the first part of each chapter, the contributors explain how they see their own traditions and circumstances and how they reflect on their struggles in those contexts. Using specific biblical texts, the second part of each chapter illustrates how the contributors understand a particular

Bible passage and interpret it through their own perspectives. After each chapter, *Engaging the Bible* provides several Bible study questions that can be used for self-study or for church Bible study groups in local church settings.

This book is a significant product of our own vision for multicultural ministry and shows our serious commitment to the real world.

Engaging the Bible is available at bookstores and through online booksellers Amazon.com.

TALKS

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P. Andrews, Martin L. King Jr. Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. Professor Andrews joined the BUSTH faculty in September 2005. He is an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and a Massachusetts native. With Professor Andrews' extensive homiletics, pastoral theology, and social work knowledge base and experience, we look forward to a very stimulating discussion as we prepare for the close of the semester!



Deborah Hamilton listens as Dr. Hee An Choi talks about how the retreats have worked in the past and asks for ideas for the spring semester retreat.

Lisa Jo Bezner

Women in the World 2007

Christ's Word in the World

Immigration and Mission in Ministry

By Lisa Jo Bezner

The Anna Howard Shaw Center's 2007 Women in the World conference is scheduled for two full days of programs on March 21-22. The theme for this year is "Christ's Word in the World: Immigration and Mission in Ministry."

The focus of the conference is centered on globalism in both the incoming and outgoing directions. Rev. Dr. Gennifer Brooks and Dr. Elizabeth Tapia will focus on multicultural ministry as immigrants enter traditional congregations. Dr. Dana Robert will be presenting on mission work from the United States into other countries.

This year's conference will feature two formats for guest speakers. Brooks, Tapia and Robert will be the key speakers in the traditional format with time for discussion in table groups following the presentation. Those sessions will last 90 minutes.

And local clergy will be talking about their experiences with multicultural ministry in their own congregations. The center is hoping to have three local clergy for the conference but at this time two local clergy have agreed to speak: Gabriela Garcia, Christ United Methodist Church in Lawrence, Mass., and Lorraine Anderson, International Community Church.

The local clergy will talk about their experiences for roughly 30 minutes and participants can then

Tentative schedule of events

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

- 11 a.m. Worship services at Marsh Chapel
- 12 p.m. Bag lunch and conference registration
Photonics Center - BU Campus
- 1:30 p.m. Table Talk
- 2 p.m. Dr. Gennifer Brooks
assistant professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- 3:45 p.m. Voices from the Parish: Gabriela Garcia
- 5 p.m. Dinner
- 6 p.m. Research project update and review
Anna Howard Shaw Center Scholar, Rev. Laurel E. Scott

Thursday, March 22, 2007

- 9:30 a.m. Dr. Dana Robert
co-director of Global Christianity & Ministry at BU
- 11:15 a.m. Voices from the Parish: Lorraine Anderson
- 12:15 p.m. Bag lunch
- 1:15 p.m. Voices from the Parish
- 2:15 p.m. Dr. Elizabeth Tapia,
director of Global Ministry at Drew University
- 4 p.m. Sending forth

ask questions for the second half of the presentation.

There will also be an update on the immigrant church study following the dinner by Anna Howard Shaw Center Scholar, Rev. Laurel Scott.

The conference will begin with a multicultural worship service at Marsh Chapel during the regular Wednesday worship time. After that conference participants will cross Commonwealth Avenue for lunch at conference registration at the Photonics Center, which will be the site for all remaining conference activities.

This year's conference features two lunches and a dinner, but there

will not be a continental breakfast prior to the Thursday morning programs. The cost of the conference this year is \$85, which includes the programs for two days, two lunches and a dinner.

Parking passes will be available for an extra charge and will be left at the parking garage. The passes will not be mailed out.

More information will be available in the brochure and registration form. The deadline for early registration will be March 1, 2007. If you have not received a registration form, you may call the center at 617-353-3075 to get your name on the list. Registrations after that date will be assessed a late fee.

Finding the living water at conference

By Rev. Yoo-Yun Cho-Chang

Have you ever felt that you are a part of big movement?

I can tell you that as a clergy-woman who has been serving many small churches in New England, it's very hard to feel that what I do has anything to do with a movement. The 2006 United Methodist Clergywomen Consultation certainly helped me see the movement.

This year was the 50th Anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the Methodist tradition and I was able to see a glimpse of how God has moved us so far.

Being occupied by daily tasks and chores in ministry, I easily lose the sight of this movement of God. Especially, when I am faced with financial struggles of small churches, I often wonder what good can come out of this labor. Participating in the consultation was like finding the living water.

The consultation was followed by the United Methodist Women of Color celebration. Because I have been in the Women of Color Scholar's program, I was invited for the event. Here I met many United Methodist women of color who have boldly expanded the horizon in spite of challenges. The presence of women of color bishops was an affirmation of hope for change in the United Methodist Church.

The church should intentionally pay attention to the issues of racism and sexism in order to eradicate discrimination and injustice in the life of faith community and institutional church. Women of Color scholars have also diligently let their voices be heard in the academy and church through their teaching and research. Seeing other women of color who

Many women in ministry have paid a lot to go into ministry. The costs they have to pay are not cheap. How much have we been wounded by hostile stares from the patriarchal culture we live in? How much have our sacrifices been dismissed or put down by criticism of others? We were all crying together and healing together with the very gentle but powerful Spirit of God anointing us. God only knows and heals us.

hold a leadership position in the United Methodist Church and higher education showed me a vision for change.

The closing worship of Women of Color Celebration was a moment of empowerment. The text used for the sermon was Matthew 26:6-13, which is the story of a woman who was criticized by Jesus' disciples for pouring very costly ointment on Jesus.

Jesus' response was: "LEAVE HER ALONE!" When we are up against a lot of opposition in ministry and being criticized by voices from a dominant culture because what we do is different or challenges the mores, we should remember that Jesus rebuked the voice of power and empowers us to continue our walk of faith.

The celebration certainly reminded me that there is still pervasive racism and sexism in the church and we should continue to address the intersectional issues of many "-isms" within and outside the church.

Another powerful moment was the morning worship on the third day. The theme for the worship was "The Anointing." That morning before the worship, I had an inter-

esting experience.

As I was taking a shower, I felt that shower was a special cleansing ritual for preparation. Bishop Violet L. Fisher, who is the first African-American woman from the Northeastern Jurisdiction to be elected to the episcopacy, preached using the same text. During the message, I was watching a dancer reenacting the Scripture. Suddenly I felt that I was offering the alabaster jar to Jesus. It dawned on me that I had been prepared for that moment before the worship.

Fisher preached that women ministers pour out very costly ointment from our alabaster jars. She said people don't know the cost we pay. I saw tears running down from many clergywomen's eyes. We were anointing each other with tears.

Many women in ministry have paid a lot to go into ministry. The costs they have to pay are not cheap. How much have we been wounded by hostile stares from the patriarchal culture we live in? How much have our sacrifices been dismissed or put down by criticism of others? We were all crying together and healing together with the very

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CLERGYWOMEN

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gentle but powerful Spirit of God anointing us. God only knows and heals us.

During the banquet, some retired clergywomen, who had faced much more hostility and whose call had often been invalidated by the church, shared their stories of struggle. They certainly paid a lot to pave the way. I remembered the bishop's message. "You don't know the cost." I realized that many women have taken a difficult road. Responding to the call and following God's movement comes with cost. However, these women are the

ones who courageously stepped out of their comfort zone and dared to go into the unknown places. The only assurance they have is God's presence. I saw the movement of these women.

As I am back in my own place of ministry and struggles, I now have a bigger picture in my mind. I feel the solidarity with these women who were not deterred by difficulties but willing to pay for the cost as they continue to break and offer an alabaster jar, the jar of love and dedication.

As I am writing this article, I am thinking of my friend who has shown me tremendous courage and

tenacity in spite of so many struggles. She asked me the other day why her struggle never ends and why nothing has ever come easily for her. I didn't have any words for her then. Her questions have stayed with me because her struggle is not hers alone. She chose the difficult path of paving a new way and her cost is not small.

But my friend, you are not alone. I am glad that you are there. We are in this together.

Cho-Chang serves Weirs United Methodist Church in Weirs Beach, NH and is a doctoral student in counseling psychology and religion at Boston University.

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Annual giving list from January to November 2006:

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*Christ's
Word
in the
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*Immigration
and Mission
in Ministry*

*Mark your
calendars
for the Women
in the World
conference on
March 21-22!*

TUNNEL

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there were at least one or two women who had vision and hope. They envisioned something impossible. And then they kept going and knocking. Even though it seemed an incredibly long struggle that continued without light, they did not give up. Rather they challenged it with non-stoppable passion and faith. They kept up the struggle for their entire lives, right up to their deaths. And the next generation's women appeared and inherited their dreams and visions. They continue doing it. Their spirits have incarnated from mothers to daughters and from this generation to next generation. Until they make a dream come true, they do not stop. How can they

keep this faith? How can they keep the dream alive? Is that God's mystery?

Now I see this mystery in the Anna Howard Shaw Center. When we did not have a vision, we embraced one. When we did not have a dream, we created one. When we reached our limits, we extended it. When we could give up, we took on more challenges. We inherited women's stubborn faith and inexhaustible zeal. And we keep going. We keep doing something for and with women. We know and we believe that we are not going to stop.

Would you care to join us? We want to welcome you. We want to do God's work with you at our side.

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