

Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

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The Ballad of Hispanic/Latina Immigrant Ministries

By *Aida Irizarry-Fernandez*

There is a wonderful hymn composed by the Argentinean Bishop, Federico Paruga: “*Tenemos Esperanza*,” which translates “we have hope.” To me, the powerful lyrics of this ballad or “tango” can be considered the song of many immigrant Hispanic and Latina/os. Paruga understands both the pain and yearnings of his people, people who suffer under despotic regimes and oppressive systems. He wrote this hymn having in mind those who needed to flee their countries due to the dangers of dictatorships and militarism. The only way he could provide a sense of hope for those staying in the midst of chaos, as well as for those who were forced into exile, was by preaching a gospel of liberation and singing songs. His lyrics are about God incar-



Rev. Dr. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez

nated in the poor, the marginalized, the exiled, and the immigrant. It is in the hope of this incarnated Christ

For the immigrant, resurrection is a journey toward humanization, radical hospitality, and community.

that those who are persecuted and dehumanized can sing their story with genuine trust and faith. For them, there is no naive romanticizing of the torture and shame of the cross, but rather a profound understanding and comfort in hope of the resurrection. For the immigrant, resurrection is a journey toward humanization, radical hospitality, and community. Their stories of faith, courage, and perseverance in the journey need to be told.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

By *Choi Hee An*

Our research on women in immigrant churches has been successfully finished. It has been three years of wonderful hard work. Our researchers gave an academic presentation at the American Academy of Religion and an amazing presentation at our annual conference, Women in the

World. Our researchers and I co-published an article as a special report in *Progressive Christian* magazine (Sept./Oct. 2008). This has been a wonderful journey to experience and share. As I promised in the last issue of this newsletter, in this article, I

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Vulnerability of leadership development

Tina came to this country six years ago. Her husband, a young architect, was brought to the USA by a company with the promise of helping him to get his permanent visa. They both

not going to get his papers in order. Needless to say, the new circumstances created turmoil not only for the couple but also for this congregation. After several months of attempting to negotiate with her husband's company with no success, they decided to return to Brazil. The young church was left without leadership. However, the church has decided to continue to take risks in inviting, training, and recruiting leadership—knowing that,

Interethnic and multiethnic coalitions can be very powerful instruments to deal with matters of justice. However, fear of betrayal and appropriate survival instincts are stumbling blocks.

left good positions at their home in Rio de Janeiro. Tina has an MA from the Methodist University in Brazil. She also had a small practice as a speech pathologist. This young couple, after careful prayer and consideration, decided to come to Massachusetts and trusted the promises made to them by a prominent architectural firm.

As soon as they arrived and got established, they began to look for a church so they could worship and be part of a Brazilian community in a foreign land. Tina became the treasurer, Sunday school teacher, and pianist for a young congregation. She led retreats and contributed financially to the church. She not only paid her tithe but also gave generously to different kinds of programs in the church. Tina was also instrumental in the development of this young congregation's organization and strategic planning, which included both short-term and long-term commitments. However, reality hit hard when they found out that Tina's husband's company was

at any given time, they may have to begin from scratch due to broken promises.

Intense and intentional persecution of the weak

It was about 3 p.m. and we were in the middle of a session at a meeting in North Carolina, when the speaker was interrupted by an urgent request for prayer. One of the pastors had just arrived, trembling, reporting that two immigration enforcement vans had come to his small storefront congregation and without notification entered the church and arrested several undocumented people. Few were able to escape. The pastor felt completely helpless; they harassed him too, but he was able to prove that he was a U.S. citizen. Many of the people arrested were pregnant women or women with small children. A few were young female teenagers who had never been touched roughly by a male. The husbands, fathers, and partners of many of these women were working in the fields when this event took place. The pas-

tor, sobbing, said, "Yesterday, I had a healthy congregation of 60 people; this afternoon, everyone is gone."

Internalized oppression and high tension

"I've had it, I cannot hold my tongue anymore, and I am going to accuse her with homeland security. How can she keep doing this to me over and over again?" asked Sylvia, a Puerto Rican early-childhood teacher, who has been trying unsuccessfully for five years to get her teaching license in the state of New Jersey. The woman that she is complaining about is a state employee in Trenton who approves licenses. Several of Sylvia's co-workers are Cuban. They came to this country after Sylvia, and within a year, they were able to get their papers and licenses. Once she had poured her heart out and vented all her frustrations about the unequal treatment she gets compared to her co-workers, Sylvia said, "I cannot do that. These women have little children and are just trying to survive like me. Why do we have to suffer so much? It is not fair."

Sylvia is in an economically impoverished neighborhood in the vicinity of Newark. She deals with many parents who live in constant fear of being deported. She tries to help by referring them to programs that may offer assistance. In other cases, she knows that these parents have no chance unless there are changes in the immigration laws.

Each immigration case has its own issues, and some groups have better access to services than others. The government has created these benefits and distinctions. An immigration lawyer at Justice for Our Neighbors in New York explained to me that immigration law is very complex and people are treated very differently.



From the Director

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want to share some more findings from our research.

Korean Immigrant Church Worship and Program

The Korean immigrant church has several worship services and various programs. The churches that I visited have Sunday worship services, Wednesday worship services, daily dawn worship services, Bible studies, and monthly and weekly small group worship services. They also have church programs such as Wednesday Bible study, Sunday school classes, fellowship after every worship service, and church activities. There are also small group meetings and events depending on different age and gender groups and other special denominational activities.

Their services are similar to white congregational styles of worship. They do not have Korean ethnic styles of worship such as hymns of traditional Korean music, doctrinal confession, and liturgy. The second generation is especially more distant from attempts at Korean ethnic styles of worship or liturgy. They are more familiar with American evangelical traditions.

The sermon is the center of the worship service. Many interviewees expressed that the quality of the

sermon is the most important part of their spiritual faith journey. And this is the reason that they participate in the worship. It is also significant that the leadership of worship and the sermon are predominantly dependent on and controlled exclusively by male senior ministers.

Music is not as important as the sermon, but this is the most important part of women's participation in Sunday worship. For example, choir is the only place that lay women can be involved with worship services.

While Korean people do not have much ethnic color in their Sunday worship or their worship styles, they have great ethnic activities around fellowship. After Sunday worship or small group worship, they prepare traditional Korean food and share full meals together. They create social networks and connections in this fellowship. In any weekly meeting, Bible study, or monthly meetings, they show the same patterns; after a meeting or worship they want to share meals or hang out in the church. They also gather and have meetings outside of the church after worship or other church activities.

Through this fellowship, they feel more connected and alive. After they finish worship and have this fellowship time with small groups, they say, "This is living. This is a way of living with people."

Besides their Sunday worship participation, their spiritual practices

are prayers and reading the Bible (or participating in Bible study). They usually have prayer time in the morning (daily morning service) or in the evening before they go to bed. Many of them shared experiences of how their prayers have been answered and how God has led them out of troubles. Because of these experiences, they confess that they believe in God. However, half of them are concerned that their prayer time and the intensity of prayer get lost because of the busyness of their lives, their laziness, or because their church does not provide more opportunities for worship or prayer services.

Korean immigrant worship and church programs are more community-oriented than typical white congregations. Korean immigrants spend more time and money in the church compared to other ethnic groups. Their church gives them a place to be themselves. From the interviews, we have learned that the Korean immigrant church is the place where Korean immigrants can survive and live not as a minority but as equal people of God.

From our research, the Shaw Center has decided to continue our attention to immigrant ministry and help our communities grow more multiculturally and multiracially sensitive and to practice hospitality. We hope that you join our wonderful work and support us enthusiastically!

Often, good intentions from lawyers who do not know immigration law well do more harm than good. As a result, immigrants fight with each other to get the benefits that have been given to some but denied to others. Many of these women develop resentment toward other

women in a similar situation, to the point of making anonymous reports to the police. In the end, no one benefits except the system that created these situations, which increases its number of informants. It is an indirect way to weaken an already vulnerable immigrant population.

Interethnic and multiethnic coalitions can be very powerful instruments to deal with matters of justice. However, fear of betrayal and appropriate survival instincts are stumbling blocks. I often hear the expression, "At the end of the day, people will only support their own."



A Letter of Invitation

*Dear Friends of the
Anna Howard Shaw Center,*

Please join us, School of Theology Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore, and Dr. Beverly Brown when the Anna Howard Shaw Center honors Dr. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr as the sixth recipient of the Anna Howard Shaw Award at a dinner celebration on April 24, 2009, at 6 p.m. on the fifth floor of Boston University's George Sherman Student Union. The Anna Howard Shaw Award is presented to a woman who embodies those values expressed in the life of Anna Howard Shaw: courage born of Christian faith; dedication to increased opportunities for women; devotion to social justice; persistence in difficult circumstances; service for the common good; and a vision of a better world.

Proverbs 31 states that an accomplished woman is "far more precious than jewels." This scriptural phrase, also the title of Dr. Darr's first book, is the theme for our celebration of this accomplished woman. For twenty-five years, Kathe has taught courses in Hebrew Bible at STH, instilling in her students her passionate love of Scripture. A recipient of



Professor Katheryn Pfisterer Darr

Boston University's 1989 Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching, she was recently installed as the Harrell F. Beck Scholar of Hebrew Scripture. Across the years, Kathe has been a strong advocate of the Shaw Center, chairing its Advisory Board for four years, participating in its programming, and welcoming women into her home for retreats and meetings.

We hope that you will join us on April 24 for an evening of food, entertainment, fellowship, and

memories. The cost of the dinner, which includes a donation to the Shaw Center, is \$60. If you are unable to attend the dinner but would like to make a donation to the AHSC Endowment Fund in Kathe's honor, we will be very grateful for your generosity. Gifts both large and small provide much-needed support for the Shaw Center's many activities and contributions to women in ministry.

At the award dinner, we will present Dr. Darr with a book of letters of appreciation and recognition. We hope you will participate in this project by sending us your own memories and reflections. Please send your donations and letters by March 25.

Sincerely yours,

*The Anna Howard Shaw Center
Advisory Board*

JoAnn Carlotto, Choi Hee An, Kathe Darr, Nizzi Digan, Latrelle Easterling, Cheryl Gates, Susan Hassinger, Aida Irizarry-Fernandez, Pauline Jennett, Judith Kohatsu, Norma Leachon, Leeda March, Amanda Norris, Sally Paddock, Laurel Scott, Mary Todd, and Margaret Wiborg.

P.S. Our celebration begins

weeks before the celebratory dinner with a series of three lectures on the theme "Violence in the Hebrew Bible." In these lectures, Professor Darr will examine not only violent biblical war texts, but also how the legacy of biblical violence continues to influence contemporary theologies and events around the globe. These lectures, which will be presented in Boston University's Marsh Chapel on March 17, 24, and 31, are free and open to the public. For more information about the lecture series, please log on to our website at <http://sthweb.bu.edu/shaw/>, e-mail us at shawctr@bu.edu, or call the Shaw Center at 617-353-3059.

Yes, I want to be a part of the celebration!

- Bible study (free and open to the public)
- Dinner and donation to the Shaw Center: \$60
- Gift to the Shaw Center Endowment Fund in the amount of \$_____

Name _____

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Dinner Guests _____

Vegetarian Option: For ___ guests

I authorize Boston University to collect my gift of \$_____ through the credit card indicated:

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UPCOMING EVENTS

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER WORSHIP

*Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 11 a.m.–noon,
Marsh Chapel at Boston University*

Rev. LaTrelle Easterling—Preaching

Rev. Nizzi Digan and Rev. Laurel Scott—Leading and designing
the worship with School of Theology Worship Team

WINTER RETREAT FOR WOMEN

Saturday, February 14, 2009, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Please make a reservation with the Shaw Center staff

VIOLENCE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE— THREE WEEKS OF BIBLICAL LECTURE SERIES

*Tuesdays, March 17, 24, and 31, 2009, 6–8 p.m.,
Marsh Chapel (Robinson chapel) at Boston University*

Lecture by Dr. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr

Respondents—Bishop Peter D. Weaver (March 17)

Rev. Aida Irizarry-Fernandez (March 24)

Rev. Dr. Robert Hill (March 31)

DEVELOPING A MULTICULTURAL PEDAGOGY

FOR KOREAN/KOREAN AMERICAN MINISTRY IN FIELD EDUCATION

Wednesday, March 25, 2009, Noon–1 p.m. in Community Lunch

Presenters—Rev. Young G. Lee, Rev. Sandra Bonnette-Kim,
Rev. Paul H. Chang, Rev. Dr. HiRho Park, Rev. Samuel
Johnson, Rev. Dr. Robert Hill, Dr. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr,
Rev. Dr. Choi Hee An

Researched by Anna Howard Shaw Center and Field Education Office

Co-sponsored by Anna Howard Shaw Center, Field Education
Office, and Center for Practical Theology

ANNA HOWARD SHAW AWARD RECEPTION

for Dr. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr with students, faculty, and staff
Thursday, April 23, 2009, Noon–1 p.m., Anna Howard Shaw Center

Anna Howard Shaw Award Event—
Honoring Dr. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr

*Friday, April 24, 2009, 6–9 p.m.,
Faculty Dining Hall, GSU, Boston University*

Dinner—\$60



Fellowship and Fare

By Sally Paddock

As new and returning students have entered the hallways of STH this semester, the chorus of communication has followed both an energized and familiar tune: Where are you from? Where are you living? How do you like Hebrew Bible? People are reacquainted and newly acquainted through these habitual but simple and sincere questions. In my experience, in seminary, there are always a few other ways people can expect to get to know each other. Riding the same subway line, studying together, and wriggling up that last empty chair beside someone at community lunch are common experiences for us all. And, of course, there are the more spiritually bent questions: Are you Methodist, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Unitarian? Having no one-denominational commitment myself, I usually ask a different question: Do they have food at your church? People laugh, but they usually understand. Even at STH's weekly community lunch, the biggest round of applause this past semester was the announcement that lunch will be provided every Thursday for the rest of the year! It was fantastic news, especially in a time of tight budgets for students and institutions alike.

At the Anna Howard Shaw Center, we continually experience the value of sharing a meal together. Meal sharing—though habitual, sometimes taken for granted, and sometimes shelved in the “must be a poor college student” section—has a long spiritual tradition. In the Christian tradition, I do not think it

is without significance that some of Jesus' most famous miracles involved meals and the distribution of food. True, many students likely come up to the third floor of STH every Thursday not so much for spiritual nourishment but more because we advertise each speaking engagement with “Free Food!” But they stay, and they keep coming back, because there is something more than food that is offered: Thursday afternoons become a place to rest, to converse, and to get to know each other on a level beyond the polite, “Where do you live?” We share what simple food is available each week and we share a bit about the questions and simple revelations of our lives.

This semester we have seen many colorful lives come through our

doors. We heard from one of our fellow students about her summer spent in a monastery—what richness was found living and praying the disciplined hours with a community of sisters on a New England farm. We were blessed to hear about ever-emerging relevant interpretations in which the Hebrew Bible can be understood, in the context of the unfortunately still-relevant issue of abuse; economic and ecologic sustainability for churches; rituals and human rights of burial practices; and wondering what feminism really is in our current age. We've been privileged to wrestle with and enjoy all of these issues and we are looking forward, still, to hearing of the journeys, hopes, and fears of other members of



A lecture by Mark Perry for the Anna Howard Shaw Center Thursday Talk



our School and extended community as the semester continues.

Our Thursday lunches offer us the chance to be nourished in our bodies, minds, and spirits, knowing that the health of each affects the health of us as whole persons and members of our communities. Thursdays also offer students, faculty, and members outside our school community a chance to share interests and try out new ideas in an informal, welcoming context. Please, if you have never joined us, we would love to have you stop in—to come and rest, eat, and share with us your own favorite recipe for nourishment!



A lecture by Elizabeth Siwo-Okundi for the Anna Howard Shaw Center Thursday Talk

New Work-Study Student

Norma Vedan Leachon is our new Anna Howard Shaw Center Work-Study student. Nory, as her friends call her, was an architect in Singapore for 12 years before she moved to Boston in response to a call to the ministry. In the early 90s, Nory worked with the International Catholic Migration Commission, in its Cultural Orientation program as an instructor preparing Indo-Chinese refugees for resettlement in the U.S. As an architect, prior to working in Singapore, she worked in Manila and Malaysia for four years. As a Filipino native and a Singaporean citizen, she loves traveling and is fascinated with the architecture of New York City and the uniqueness of Boston architecture. She never gets tired of



Nory Leachon, new Anna Howard Shaw Center Work-Study student

analyzing building designs. She was involved in the Ministry of Hearing Impaired with Wesley Methodist Church in Singapore. As to the

question of what brought her here to STH, she responds, “I said ‘Yes!’ to God’s call to ministry after our mission trip to one of the Christian Deaf schools in the Philippines. But I am prayerfully discerning how my gift in my former career fits with theology and ministry. In the meantime, I am happy to work at AHSC to serve our community and contribute by making our center more accessible to students and friends through our website and other forms of communication.”





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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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To help underwrite the Shaw Center's operating costs, I am enclosing \$ _____
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ANNA HOWARD
 SHAW CENTER
 NEWSLETTER

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