

Boston University School of Theology

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER

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Forgiveness & Reconciliation



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Dear Friends of the Anna Howard Shaw Center

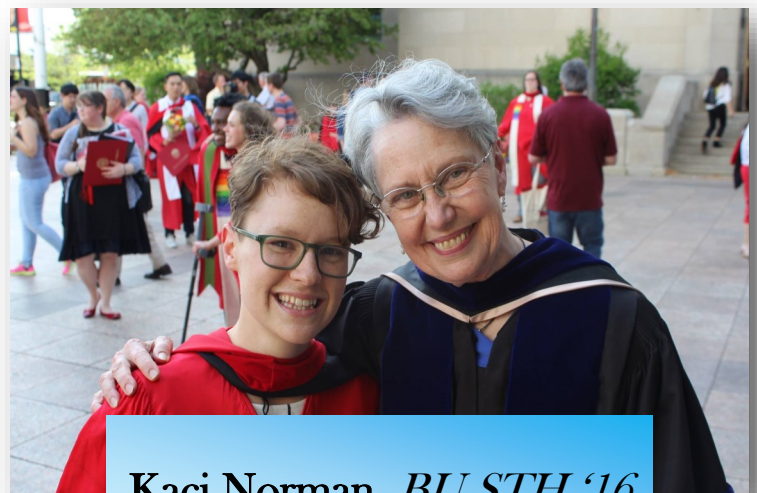
Even amidst what feels like an irreparably divided world, the Shaw Center is a place of warmth. It is a space to explore hard questions, learn to listen well, and imagine together what the world could look like. The Shaw Center's vision seeks to bring people together from various corners of the world. It was there that I continued my process of learning how to have difficult conversations and not running away when the conversation was unfamiliar, disorienting, or even way out of my comfort zone. We hope to continue this work of listening, questioning, and imagining on a larger scale in response to the often harsh reality of our world.

This year, the Anna Howard Shaw Center has an important role to play as we discern how to act and who to be in the face of blatant sexism, racism, ableism, and homophobia. Events such as the Multicultural Expo help us put aside our assumptions and enjoy for a moment the myriad experiences of the world. It is a reminder that our differences are important. Differences emerge because we are different people with often vastly different experiences of the world. We choose to celebrate these so that people feel free to bring their whole selves to the space and conversations of the Shaw Center.

Further, students are given the opportunity to stop and collaboratively seek restora-

tion in the midst of busy schedules and emotional exhaustion through the Spiritual Growth and Stress Support Group. For many this is a space of quiet- a small window during the week to stop and breathe. To reset. For others, it is a space for guidance on the quest for deeper understanding of one's place in the world. This space, whatever its purpose, becomes more and more important to the work of closing the wide gap found when looking at places across the country and places within our own self.

Who do we want to be moving forward? We ask that you join with the Anna Howard Shaw Center this year as we explore processes of peace and reconciliation by donating to the center [here!](#)



Kaci Norman, *BU STH '16*



2016 Multicultural Expo



Photos by: Ylisse Bess Washington



Anna Howard Shaw Center 1st Annual Multicultural Expo

With great success, the Anna Howard Shaw Center sponsored its first annual Multicultural Exposition on November 10th, 2016. Two weeks before the controversial North American Holiday, Thanksgiving, The Anna Howard Shaw Center honored the diverse and often underrepresented communities and holidays that exist in the BUSTH community. The Shaw Center celebrated the beautiful, resilient, and resourceful people and cultures of international students and people of color who currently study at Boston University School of Theology.

The Anna Howard Shaw Center exists to promote and encourage everyone to feel an inward pride for simply being themselves and then express it. International students and students of color come from far and wide to study at Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) and leave their communities of comfort and familiarity in the process. Consequently, it was no surprise when the Anna Howard Shaw Center employees gathered students of color and international students from BUSTH and Eastern Nazarene College to share with the Boston community, what makes them proud of their land and their people.

The Anna Howard Shaw Center partnered with the Community Life Office and the School of Theology Student Association to gather student speakers and performers to publicly remember their history and culture. Dr. Choi Hee An welcomed all participants and audience members physically present and watching from the livestream, to the event.

The presenters for the evening included students

from BUSTH, Eastern Nazarene College and BU community members. Presenters represented their homes both near and far; their lands included South Korea, Nigeria, Netherlands, China, Mexico, Guatemala, Congo, and the United States.

Jordan Zepher, a third year Master of Divinity student at BUSTH, began the expo with some of her profound poetry, reminding the audience of the power in their eccentricity. *Yichen Liang*, from Beijing, China, is a second year Master of Divinity Student at BUSTH. She spoke about her name which has two Chinese characters: "Yi" meaning art and "Chen" meaning treasure. Her parents hoped that she would excel in the art, but alas, she studies theology at BUSTH. Next was, *Olusegun Osinye* from one of the Yoruba communities in Nigeria and a second year Master of Theological Studies student at BUSTH. Olusegun shared the sung parable by a renowned Nigerian Artist, Ebenezer Obey: "The Horse; The Man and His Son."

Eun Su Kim, from South Korea, spoke of the beauty of her dress, "Hanbok". "Hanbok" is the name of South Korean women's traditional dress, regularly worn for festivals and celebrations. It is composed of two sections; "jjeogori", a blouse shirt or a jacket, and "chima", a wrap-around skirt. The idea is for the upper half of a woman's figure to appear small and then accentuate her lower half. The *Korean Student Association* performed a single by Korean Pop Music group, G.O.D. and had everyone moving, a perfect segue from older traditions in Korean culture to current trends in the community.



Photos by: Ylisse Bess Washington



**Uchenna Awa, Dean Moore, Dr. Choi Hee An,
Eun Su Kim, Yichen Liang**

Chris Van Der Kamp, from the Netherlands, concentrated his presentation on his heritage and cultural dress. *Leticia “Lety” Trujillo* briefly shared about her Mexican and Guatemalan indigenous heritage. She helped the audience to focus on why the Multicultural Expo was so significant; for many people of color, women, and immigrant communities, their worlds have shifted by the newly elected president of the U.S.A. Already, hate crimes against people of color and Muslim communities have gone up. Now, more than ever, people of color and immigrants, need to find and express pride in themselves and their heritage. The pride that they carry is also their hope, as well, it is evidence of the power of resistance and resilience alive in them. *Todd McNeel, Jr.*, Fellow at [ArtsEmerson](#) and graduate of [Longy School of Music of Bard College](#) in Opera studies, closed the event with a song from English-Language opera, *Porgy and Bess*.

Christina Richardson stated “It was really awesome to see different cultures to come together, I can’t wait for next year because it will be even bigger, and I hope to have Caribbean and Liberian cultures represented next year. To be in an environment where we can share our heritage and culture was a great experience.”

The Multicultural Expo provides BUSTH a platform to expand and diversify the voice of its community. It is vital that the BUSTH community recognizes who it is—in all of its diversity—to understand where it should be going and what it should be doing; diversifying its courses to reflect the makeup of the student population. The Multicultural Expo is evidence of presence of the Divine Spirit, so vast that it manifests itself in all different people and cultures. The Anna Howard Shaw Center looks forward to the 2017 Multicultural Expo, when we will see more ways God shows up. ☪

“A people's relationship to their heritage
is the same as the relationship of a child to its mother.”
John Henrik Clarke



Photos by: Ylisse Bess Washington



Todd McNeel Jr.
Fellow at Arts Emerson



Olusegun Solomon Osineye
STH '17



Uchenna Awa
STH '17



Yichen Liang
STH '18
Eun Su Kim
STH '19



Jordan Zepher
STH '17



Amelia Ferreras Camilo
Eastern Nazarene College '18



Leticia Trujillo
STH '20



Chris Van Der Kamp
STH '20



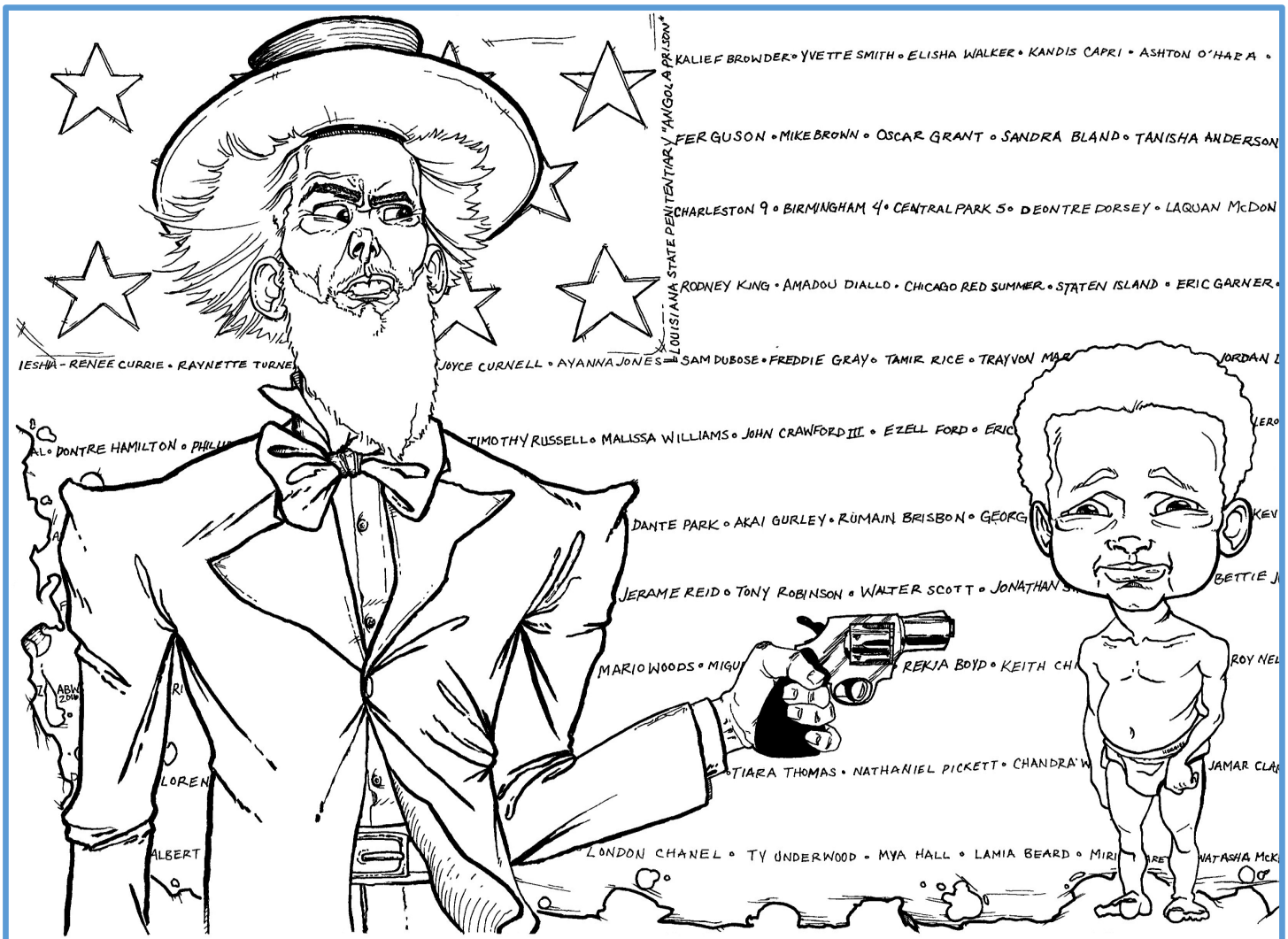
Watch the 2016 Multicultural Expo [here!](#)

Processing Forgiveness

At 9:05PM on June 17, 2015, Dylan Roof sat in the back of Emmanuel AME Church for an entire church service and then opened fired, murdering nine people--now known as the Emanuel 9. Yet another domestic, white American terrorist disregarded the lives of Black people. With his actions he said loud and clear: "you, black America, do not matter to me or anyone else." The daughter of one of the murdered Emmanuel 9 stated in tears, "You took something very precious from me, but I forgive you....It hurts me. You hurt a lot of people, but may God forgive you." "[Emanuel](#)" was catapulted onto the international stage not only because of the horrific act. But because of the shocking speed by which some members expressed forgiveness toward Dylann Roof, the 21-year-old man charged with the slayings..." Al Jazeera, TIME Magazine, the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and others wrote stories about Emmanuel AME Church concerning how their faith inspired their [forgiveness](#). News outlets like the aforementioned sources also asked [Trayvon Martin's](#), Jordan Davis'

and Mike Brown's parents as well as the widow of [Eric Garner](#) if they would forgive the white men who killed their family members. An overwhelming majority responded in the affirmative.

While many family members of victims responded in the affirmative, their suffering was not affirmed. Black churches that are forced to function within a society—in educational, economic, social, cultural and political systems—that does not recognize the ways that racism, class, and sexism collude to absolve white terrorism of all responsibility are left with little alternative other than what has become the formality of a dubious declaration of forgiveness. By no means am I arguing that Black churches and their congregants are devoid of agency in their forgiveness, but I am claiming that massacres like the Emmanuel 9 shooting, are events that leave people at a loss for what to do or say next because there is no person, government or institution we can hold the violator accountable to.



“Politics In Black & White” By Austin Bess Washington, STH ‘16

Processing Forgiveness, Continued...

My understanding of forgiveness comes from Luke 23:34 and the moment that Jesus is on the cross and people are casting lots for his belongings as if his life means nothing and Jesus says "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." I understand Jesus to be an ethnic and religious minority, living in poverty, seeking justice and hope for all people and yet, he was hung on a tree. He was abused, humiliated and ridiculed throughout his life. He belonged nowhere and continued to work for social justice. Jesus regularly cleansed, healed, advised, served and forgave people. And as loving and forgiving as he was, when he, an unarmed Black man was hung, he, arguably, did not have the capacity to forgive those who sinned against him, the human part of God. He did not have the chance to grieve, process, have a chance at restoration. Rather, he essentially says, "God, the divine part of me, please do this because I can't breathe. I can't breathe, my chest is caving in, my body has been pierced and the pain is more than I can bare." We are placing unreasonable expectations on the shoulders of the violated. In situations of violence, forgiveness is often the last step in the process of healing. The purpose of forgiveness is to restore the violated to their whole self, the violated goes under a process of healing.

[The morgue tag](#) was still on Sharonda Coleman-Singleton's toe when her teenage children stood in front of news cameras and said they had forgiven Dylann Roof for murdering their mother in cold blood which disturbed Washington Post's writer Stacey Patton, enough to argue that, "Black America should stop forgiving white racists." Patton argues that forgiveness has become a requirement for Black people in America who are experiencing "Black death", as if it is different from their white counterparts. Black people "are expected to grieve as a public spectacle, to offer comfort, redemption, and a pathway to a new day..." The Black communities being referenced in this essay further offer "...salvation without any conditions or [rewriting of reality](#)."

The rush for Black people to forgive is problematic

because it forgoes an important part of the process of grieving: holding the perpetrator accountable for the injustice they inflict. Forgiveness is a part of grieving, it is for both the violated and the violator. The hurried pace also ignores the trauma that Black communities are left to work through. Furthermore, in simplifying forgiveness and removing accountability overlooks the need for reparation and the idea of "racial sin" as Dr. Chad Williams, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of African and Afro-American Studies at Brandeis University, puts it. Black churches understand that what they are forgiving is a sin, something deemed wrong by God, but it seems that in general, White America is missing that piece. For me, seeking forgiveness means seeking repentance--to repair damages caused by sin and an inward transformation to become better. Instead of demanding a correction in behavior and attitude, Black Churches—in failing to maintain the hearty definition of forgiveness due to unmanageable standards placed upon them by white supremacists—have been forced to settle for less than what Ta-Nehisi Coates calls "[good racists](#)."

Good racists are in fact racists, who do racist things that are informed by racist thoughts and then apologize for their racism. And then, because they have apologized, they gain some sense of entitlement and project the belief that they are absolved from all responsibility and make the claim "[I'm not a racist](#)." These white murders I am writing about, haven't even apologized.

Forgiving too quickly does not save or help Black people, instead it serves to coddle white people—their guilt, emotions and their self preservation over and against our own. Quick forgiveness denies Black people of their humanity because quick forgiveness denies them their "full range of emotions." Black people, just like any other people, experience trauma and suffering, they feel rage, anger and sadness. In denying these human characteristics Black communities are giving white terrorists permission to dehumanize Black people and move toward the dismissal of Black life as life. Hence the need to claim, #BlackLivesMatter.



Processing Forgiveness, Continued...

Black life matters and black people are worth remembering and grieving. The Black church is a community of believers in God who believe that all of God's creation is inherently precious and thus, worth noting, protecting and living a liberated life. As such, the Black church is opposed to the impediment of people living their best, most full and most authentic lives. The Black church's mission is to aid Black people in spiritual, social, political and economic freedom. Its nature is to support black people in actualizing their humanity as well as to recognize and strengthen the divine in themselves. Theological insights that support this claim include James Cone's A Black Theology of Liberation and his claim, "Black theology cannot accept a view of God which does not represent God as being for oppressed blacks and thus against white oppressors. Living in a world of white oppressors, blacks have no time for a neutral God. The brutalities are too great and the pain too severe, and this means we must know where God is and what God is doing in the revolution." If God is for the oppressed and if God's people are to do what is pleasing in God's sight, then it follows that the Church is also on the side of the oppressed. Black theology's entire goal is, "to apply the freeing power of the gospel to Black people under white oppression." Biblical insights that further establish the mission and nature of the Black church as aiding Black people in spiritual, social, political and economic freedom include Luke: 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." To be clearer, God's creation is meant to be free--free from physical, social and political bondage. Black people's propensity to forgive has damaging social and political implications due to the political leaders in power who make decisions that are in favor of the majority and do not reflect the interests of Black communities. As black communities recognize this, their declarations of forgiveness become more of a diplomatic response—a response that pleases those in power.

God presented God's self to us through Jesus to identify with the marginalized and Jesus had a hard time too. Christianity is hard, it's uncomfortable, it's selfless, it's not cute and I do not want to be like Jesus. I don't want to be pierced, I don't want to be persecuted, I don't want to be in the public eye after constant attacks on my personhood, with no acknowledgement of the genocide and then be asked to forgive. Forgiveness is not some monolith, its a process, there is a method to it.

I am called to be like Jesus, and since we are connected to the body of Christ, we have a responsibility to restore God's people. We have to take up our "cross" and do the hard work of living Christ like lives; being in com-

munity, grieving with one another, understanding the anger felt by Black communities as they are unjustly attacked, and allowing that anger to exist, let that human emotion fuel us in our efforts to rethink a society where everyone can attend a [pool party](#), play at the [park](#), and [drive](#) down a highway safely. To be like Jesus is to love people and if we love people we must make them aware of their ignorance, their sin, and guide them on a path toward repairing the relationship they violated in the process of committing sin. But first, we - Black people, the violated - must care for ourselves, because if we are not whole we cannot help others become whole.

We put too much emphasis on forgiving our enemy as if that is how we receive salvation and as if our forgiving and loving kindness will protect our black bodies. I don't mean to dismiss the salvific meaning of forgiveness. But, I do believe our idea of forgiveness is misguided and is motivated by an unachievable goal. As long as we deny our humanity by dismissing the emotions that make us human, we are only helping white supremacist terrorist further invalidate Black life. So today I am proclaiming to readers, that if you did not know, now you know:

I am Black, I am person,
I am a child of God,
I am inherently precious to God.
I am somebody, respect me,
protect me, never neglect me,

Black people are precious in God's sight. ✝



Forgiveness, Chewed Up

Have you ever heard or said one of the following two idioms? Chew with your mouth closed! Or don't bite off more than you can chew? The first assertion is a plea to be aware of proper "digestive" etiquette. It's just plain rude to eat with your mouth open. Right? After all who really wants to see all that mangled and partially mandible-tenderized, life-giving, life sustaining nutritional substances all at once. Whereas, the other phrase serves more as a warning to a person not to take on more than s/he can handle. It is a cautionary tale not to try to do something that is too big or difficult alone.

Somehow when I contemplated the theme of this newsletter, I was drawn to the metaphor "Forgiveness Chewed Up." Forgiveness is something we all are encouraged to do. Every religious tradition highlights the importance of this practice. Forgiveness is something that ultimately, we cannot do alone. We need the help of God. Forgiveness is essential to personal spiritual formation, building the Beloved Community, and acceptance of salvation. To receive forgiveness is to be pardoned to the remissions of sins, it is core to both Christology and Soteriology. Through Christ, humanity is reconciled to God. Hence, forgiveness is at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Christ as modeled by the words and actions of Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness Chewed Up implies that one has to be intentional to the process. Do we savor our bites? Do we take the time to identify the flavors or spices? Or do we quickly swallow? How does our palate respond to what we have tasted? Are there lingering aftertastes? The forgiveness process is different for each person. Yet, the process requires the same steps for all of us. We begin with some type of acknowledgement to either forgive or be forgiven. We are encouraged to be attentive to the details of every bite. We learn to chew one bit at a time. We must ask ourselves are we practicing acts of reconciliation?

Can we identify all the principle parties involved in forgiveness? How do we actuate forgiveness? Why does it appear easier to forgive a stranger than a loved one? The Lord's Prayer emphasizes the conditional aspect of God's forgiveness (Matthew 6:12.14-15). God forgives as we forgive. But how do we practice forgiveness when identifying all the ingredients and/or "participants" involved is convoluted and complex? For example, whose is to blame in the times when a child has been abused by a parent? Was the other parent or family members complicit or ignorant to the child's plight? What happens when societal safe guards such as the educational system, foster system, the justice system, and even the Church fail to stymie the systematic evils that change to course of that child's life? Whose is to blame? And who needs to be forgiven? It seems to me that forgiveness can be a lot to chew.

Forgiveness is messy. It sometimes forces us to chew and watch others chew with their mouths wide open. For

we need to be confronted with the large chunks of injustice, inequality, and oppression. The task of uncovering what, whom, and when to forgive is an arduous task. It's as if we are peeling and eating the pulled layers of an onion at the same time. No doubt there will be tears! But, to practice forgiveness means the we must also acknowledge pain. Hence, forgiveness is not easy! Reconciliation is a process that occurs over time. But, true forgiveness is practiced daily. It is ongoing and continuous.

Arguably, the practice of forgiveness is even more saucy, dicey, and sometimes just a little too spicy to digest when one adds cultural, ethnic and racial experiences to the recipe. Do people of color inherit a forgiveness chromosomes at birth? How are they able to endure systemic racism, discrimination, and oppression? How do those with more melanin in their skin forgive when faced with constant assaults on their person-hood, the micro and macro aggressions seeking to erode their sense of community every minute of the day? If you ask some of the family members of the 2015 Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church massacre in Charlestown, NC they will tell you their stories of forgiveness. Some might argue that they were "too quick" to forgive. Ultimately, they will testify that "if it had not been for the Lord on their side" they would not be able to hope, to move forward, or to forgive. Forgiveness is not easy but it is doable with help from God.

In this article, I may have stirred the pot more than added to the forgiveness recipe by adding more questions than answers. Admittedly, I may have turned up the heat. What's central to my Christian context and experience is the belief that we are called to be introspective... to be confessional ... to be forgiven ... and to be forgiven. Forgiveness happens at its best when we are willing to take the first bite, to chew slowly (with or without our mouths wide open), and finally when we take time to chew - to process the cycle of being forgiven by a Savior and then offering that forgiveness to ourselves and others. Then and only then, is forgiveness digested in such a way that has lasting personal and communal implications for how we grow and prosper together as a society. Good dental health teaches us to brush our teeth at minimum twice a day - morning and night. I pray that we allow the constant refreshing of the Life-Giving, Life-Sustaining, Source of all being freshen our breathe so that we can take the next bite.



Rev. Nikita McCalister



Forgiveness & Reconciliation

The words forgive and reconcile are most commonly viewed as accounting terms, but they are also descriptive of transactions in human relationships. In accounting, forgiving is the process of releasing a person or entity from a debt, and reconciling is the process of making true or bringing into agreement accounts that differ. These processes are just as essential in human relationships as they are in accounting. The concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation exist for the purpose of allowing an event or condition that disrupts a relationship to be eliminated so that the relationship can be restored. Forgiveness and reconciliation are like inseparable twins; you cannot have one without the other. Although they are distinct concepts, they cannot exist or truly function individually.

Restoration is the ultimate goal of forgiveness and reconciliation. In order for restoration to occur it has to begin with a willingness and desire of one person, usually the offended party. Effectual restoration cannot occur solely based on a unilateral action or desire. It eventually requires that all parties desire that the relationship change from a hostile and dysfunctional state to one that is harmonious and mutually fulfilling. Whether we examine a business relationship or one that is in the context of family or friendship, each person must see that there is a benefit to maintaining or restoring the relationship to a state of mutual satisfaction. The hope of the cessation of hostility is not enough to fuel the effort required to complete the process, but in some cases it may provide the impetus required to begin.

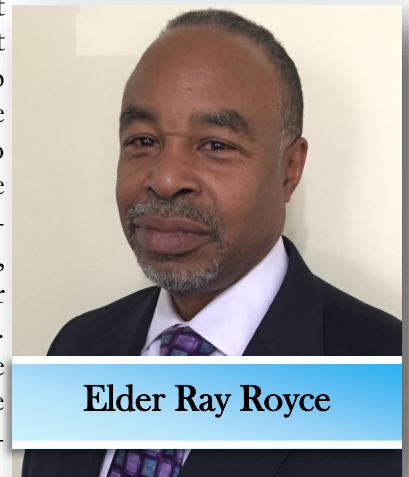
Healthy relationships often can navigate the road to forgiveness and reconciliation without a third party intervention. This is because the offending event or issue has been addressed with an urgency and not allowed to grow unimpeded. It is far too common that offenses are overlooked and allowed to fester and become toxic to the relationship. Unfortunately, the effect on the relationship can be so subtle that by time people acknowledge the problem, the healthy relationship has died and the parties are disconnected at best or at worst they are at war with each other.

Offenses, unmet needs, or unfulfilled expectations left unaddressed create a relationship disaster. I have coined the phrase “The Mount Saint Helens Effect” to describe the phenomena that occurs when offenses exist and no effort is made to forgive and reconcile. On May 18, 1980, Mount Saint Helens, a previously dormant volcano in Washington State erupted leaving an indelible scar on the landscape and caused over two billion dollars of damage. In the process, fifty-seven people and thousands of animals were killed. Prior to the eruption there was a series of earthquakes and venting that went on for two months. If these signals were taken seriously and acted upon, the loss of human life

could have been avoided. This is an illustration of the damage caused by ignoring or inappropriately responding to the signals from distressed relationships. Refusal to forgive and reconcile not only affects the principal parties in a relationship but like Mount Saint Helens, causes collateral damage to others within each person’s social circles. The emotional and psychological buildup often is vented or directed at people that have no involvement with situation at the root of the rift in the relationship.

Forgiveness and reconciliation only occur as an act of the will. The capacity to forgive resides at the core of man, yet it is not an attribute that is commonly exhibited in society and is difficult to manifest even for one who is philosophically committed to these concepts. Proverbs 17:9 states, “Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.” Forgiveness is conceived in a soul that is saturated with love. The essence of love is sacrifice. Forgiveness requires a willingness to sacrifice in order to expunge the debt or offense. Inherent in the soul of every person resides a DNA strand that represents forgiveness and reconciliation. It is a helix with love as the core strand and intertwined around it is forgiveness and reconciliation. People that cannot forgive ought to be pitied. They suffer from a damaged soul that has been ravaged by a lifetime of emotional injury. Their inability to forgive leaves them in a state of perpetual discontent and anger.

The purposeful absence of the mention of God, to this point, may be conspicuous to many readers, but as in the world that we live, not acknowledging God does not deny God’s presence or power. God is the restorer of our souls. God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:26), “And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.” God must replace the damaged heart of the unforgiving person. It is inevitable that each of us will either offend or be offended. The challenge for each of us is what do we want most; to be right or to have our relationship and the other person to be restored. This requires us to live a self-less life where we live as the Apostle Paul admonished (Ephesians 5:21), “...submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”. In the midst of our sacrifice to forgive and reconcile, we will gain peace and a restored relationship. ✝



Elder Ray Royce

Speaking Our Halfway Truths

I distinctly recall sitting in a Bible study leader's living room one night about a decade ago. We were having a slow and awkward conversation about the ways God calls us into unconditional forgiveness in our relationships. The talking points felt flimsy in the face of the questions posed by the four teenage students present. Our suspicion had deep roots: years later, we discovered three of the four present had carried unwitnessed wounds of interpersonal violence into the room that evening. We continued our discussion for a while, until in what was to be the first of a number of challenges to tradition, I stubbornly declared I would not talk to my weekly Sunday school class about forgiveness: "How can I speak of this thing that has such potential to harm? I will not teach it."

The discussion rapidly came to a close. My siblings in the Christian faith reading this now may ask how I could refuse to speak of such foundational doctrine and still be one who guides others in the faith. You are not alone in this sentiment. Can one preach a gospel word without speaking about forgiveness?

In the last decade I have become a much more generous reader and practitioner of theology, and so now, I see the importance of forgiveness. But this acknowledgement of its importance acts as a reminder of its potency, its capacity for both good and ill. I confess that ten years later, in both podium and pulpit, I spend more time troubling the waters of reconciliation and forgiveness than seeking to guide others to and through them. I am convinced, perhaps more than ever, that we must speak gently and with care when unfolding theologies of reconciliation – for I can think of few words that carry more power as they take on flesh.

Today, I study and walk alongside others at the intersection of trauma and theology. It is a strange collision of study and experience both, a sort of haunted and haunting place where doctrines boasting of perfection's possibility or salvation that heals seamlessly become clumsy intruders among fragmentary truths. I also walk within a confessing tradition. Together, at the start of worship, we praise God, and then immediately, in the Confession, speak the truth of our mortality, of our dependence on God, and our sin.

In this liturgy, and the theology that undergirds it, we have inherited from our forefathers a tendency to speak only a half-truth when declaring "how it is with our lives." We are remarkably skilled when it comes to speaking about the ways we fall short of the glory of God, of the ways we fail to love others, God, and self, of the ways we do not care for the poor, the widow, and the orphan. And while these great figures of our faith spoke the truth the best way they knew how to, their version of truth proclaimed is unfinished. Much like the forgiveness lesson all those years ago, the confession we practice in worship can feel empty or incomplete. The truth that we harm others can be forgiven. But

the truths that we are wounded, or battling illnesses, or trapped in systems of oppression do not need forgiveness. These truths cry out for a witness, but because we see them as experiences caused by sin, they become secondary in our worship together. Wounds are relegated to quiet prayers in worship, to laments of particular concerns asking for God's intervention, while their sister truths are stamped with assumed universality, and gifted immediately in the corporate liturgy with an assurance that God has already pardoned those seeking forgiveness.

We confess and are pardoned. We lament later. Can this be the reconciled Body of Christ? No. For when the truth we tell together stops with the ways we inflict harm, and neglects the voices of those harmed, there is not reconciliation. There is erasure.

This is not only true of individuals or communities seeking reconciliation and wellness among themselves. It is true for each of us internally. We all wound and are wounded. We all fall short and are thrown down. We do not love others and have been abandoned and abused. We do not love the orphan and widow, and we are motherless and alone. When we neglect the second half of our truth, we do not split only relationships between people or groups. We fragment ourselves. We relegate corners of ourselves to silence.

What then do we do? We confess. We heed the invitation given to us for so many years: "In confessing together, we declare the truth of how it is with our lives." And as we heed the invitation, we refuse to speak only those things that our forefathers counted as truths. We speak of our complicity in violence, our apathy, and shortcomings. And, we speak each neglected corner of our lives, each wound unwitnessed, each illness and struggle to be.

Imagine such a word enfleshed! This sort of declaration troubles our crisply concocted liturgies and our clean systems of theology. It may lead to reconciliation eventually, but more importantly, this speaking of a full truth together is an act of courage and witness. For the ways communities, relationships, and bodies are marked by suffering, this practice is an insistence that pain is a truth of existence. For those whose oppressors have long received words of pardon though injustice remained, it is a practice that denies elision of cruelty's weight. And, as we ask for forgiveness with the sound of lament ringing around us, we know this plea for grace is deepened and given new texture. It is messy, and it is honest. It is piecemeal, and it is full.

O Lord, we are wounding and wounded.
repenting and lamenting,
together confessing all that is true.

O Lord, here we are.



Meet The Staff

Reverend Dr. Choi Hee An, *Clinical Associate Professor of Practical Theology, Director of the Anna Howard Shaw Center*



Rev. Dr. Choi's research and teaching focuses on practical theology and gender and cultural studies in the multicultural and post-colonial context of the globalized, modern post-Diaspora era. Her most recent book, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and Church* (2015, SUNY), analyzes how Korean immigrants form their immigrant identity through the Korean immigrant church, constructing Korean immigrant theology in the complex dynamics of racism, sexism, classism and postcolonialism of the United States of America. She is also the author of *Korean Women and God: Experiencing God in a Multi-religious Colonial Context* (2005, Orbis) that explores the transforming relationship between images of God and self-images of women in Korean ministerial context. With Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, she is also the co-editor of *Engaging the Bible-Critical Reading from Contemporary Women* (2006, Fortress). Dr. Choi has conducted research projects concerning Women and Leadership, to develop spiritual programs to support clergy, lay leaders, and seminarians for multicultural/immigrant church ministry.

Ylisse Bess Washington, *Graduate Assistant*



Ylisse is from Lakewood, WA and a graduate of Gonzaga University with a B.A. in Sociology and Religious Studies. She served an AmeriCorps year with City Year Chicago where she worked as a tutor and mentor to high school students in Chicago. She is currently in her third and final year as a Master of Divinity student at Boston University School of Theology. Her interests include women's health and spiritual healthcare policy. She currently does theology as a Full Spectrum Doula, supporting people through the full spectrum of their reproductive experience.

Uchenna Joan Awa, *Graduate Assistant*



Uchenna is from Abia State, Nigeria. She is a graduate of Abuja University, with a BL and a LL.B in Law; a BA in Theology; and is currently pursuing her Masters in Theological Studies at Boston University School of Theology. In 2004 she was called to the Nigerian Bar. She has served in the Nigerian National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) where she worked as a teacher, teaching legal processes to high ranking police officers who attended classes at the Police Staff College, Jos, Plateau State. She practiced as a Barrister and Solicitor for several years, representing clients around Nigeria. Then she felt a pull to work with Non- Governmental Organizations whose major focus was to assist Nigeria in its improvement of good governance, creation of policies that will assist in the reduction of poverty levels and policies promoting Gender and Social Inclusion (G&SI). Her interests include; International Development, gender equality, and conflict resolution.

Anna Howard Shaw Center Lunches Fall 2016

Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
"Always Have a Battle Cry, Never Cease to Sing"

Steph Braman
BU STH



Thursday, Nov. 3
12:30-1:30PM
STH 320




Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
"Leading Thriving Christian Institutions"

Rev. Laura Everett
Boston University School of Theology



Thursday, Oct. 13
12:30-1:30PM
STH 320



Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
"My Journey towards Ministry as a Korean Woman"

Sooyoun Kim
SST




Thursday, Oct. 6
12:30-1:30PM
STH 320




Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
"Faith, Love and Vocational Discernment: A Personal Narrative"

Gina Carloni
SST




Thursday, Sep. 29
12:30-1:30PM
STH 320




Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
Ministry of Presence

Amanda Grant Rose
Theological Institute of Christian Ministries



Thursday, Sept. 15
12:30-1:30PM
STH 320



Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
"Our Bodies, Our Choices: My Journey with God, Politics and Reproductive Justice"

Kate Froehlich
SST




Thursday, Oct. 20
12:30-1:30PM
TH 320




Anna Howard Shaw Center

Thursday Lunch Lecture:
"From A to B: A Theological Auto-ethnography on Migration and Faith"

Hyunwoo Koo
BU STH
MLD 314



Thursday, Oct. 27
12:30-1:30PM
STH 320



ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

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STUDENT EDITORS:

Ylisse Bess Washington & Uchenna Awa

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