

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

Boston University School of Theology Fall 1985 Vol. 2, No. 1



Women in the Church Today: The Conversation Begins

Conversations between the women in the congregation and the women in the seminary really happened! Not only did five Monday evening sessions occur, but a lively, creative conversation has begun. Each began with a presentation from the perspective of one of five faculty women, followed by questions, a small group discussion, and a plenary session. The first three evenings were held at Christ Church, Wellesley (UMC), and two final sessions at Boston University School of Theology. Women from as far away as Springfield, MA, and Providence, RI, attended.

As I participated, one thing became very clear: no one who attended can have a stereotypic idea about what a woman seminary professor is like! Five able and unique women presented information and provocative material from their individual disciplines. The faculty members who spoke were:

Dr. Kathe Pfisterer Darr, Asst. Prof. of Old Testament, Biblical Perspective;

Dr. Carole Bohn, Adjunct Asst. Prof. of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Psychological Perspective;

Dr. Elizabeth Bettenhausen, Assoc. Prof. of Ethics and Theology, Theological and Ethical Perspective;

Dr. Linda Clark, Asst. Prof. of Sacred Music, Spiritual Perspective;

Dr. Dana Robert, Asst. Prof. of Intl. Mission, Missional Perspective.

We need the support and stimulation of one another as we explore our various ministries in this time and place. The Anna Howard Shaw Center seeks to be a resource center and hopefully, an enabling catalyst for this networking and building up of one another to occur.

Planning for next year's "Women's Studies Series" has already begun. If you have ideas you would like to share with us, please send them along. Some of the thoughts from the evaluations for this year's series are:

---"I now understand the reason and method for inclusive language in the Bible. In fact, I look forward to it!"

---"Excellent!" "Wonderful! Marvelous things are beginning to happen!"

---"Fantastic, moving, especially touched the poet in me."

Suggestions which have already been made for next year's series are to have more on the abuse of women, homeless women, women and business, biographies, spiritual journeys, women and the arts, or as one woman wrote on her evaluation: "Anything that speaks to a lay woman as an intelligent, capable being." It is exciting to affirm each other!

Margaret Wiborg

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, THEOLOGY, AND THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

On the weekend of October 25-26, the Anna Howard Shaw Center, the Women's Theological Center, and the Office of Women's Programs at Harvard Divinity School co-sponsored a conference entitled "Domestic Violence, Theology, and the Church." The event was held at Episcopal Divinity School and featured the Rev. Marie Fortune, a United Church of Christ pastor and executive director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle, WA. She is the author of Sexual Violence: the Unmentionable Sin: An Ethical and Pastoral Perspective (Pilgrim Press, 1983), and a handbook for working with teen-age victims of sexual violence. Over thirty students from BUSTh attended, along with about seventy persons from other schools and organizations.

It is difficult for many people to believe that violence, like poverty, is a women's issue. Few seminaries train pastors to deal with issues of violence and hence, many pastors never learn of the violence in their congregations. By not being aware of the signs of abuse, and by denying that it exists, pastors perform a disservice to their parishioners and to the God they serve, a God who came to earth to "set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18). How can we deal theologically and pastorally with domestic violence? The conference gave us a good starting point.

The keynote address by Rev. Fortune distinguished between four kinds of domestic violence: physical abuse, sexual abuse (marital rape and incest), psychological abuse, and damage to property and pets. At the close of the lecture we divided into twelve groups to brainstorm for questions we wanted answered by Marie and the other leaders.

The second day began with a panel presentation entitled "Resources the Church Could Offer to Prevent Family Violence." Representatives from Harbor Me and Casa Myrna Vasquez (shelter organizations), a woman pastor, and a counselor from Emerge (an organization helping men who are batterers) gave fascinating presentations on the issue from each of

their own perspectives. How can the church help? By being prepared to deal with the issue of violence, by working with and not against shelters, and by refusing to preach and practice a theology of violence and submission of women.

Three workshops were then offered dealing with specific aspects of domestic violence. Marie Fortune discussed "Appropriate and Inappropriate Pastoral Responses" in which we did impromptu exegesis of biblical passages. Victims can gain new flexibility if they are helped to see the "roadblocks" and "resources" in the same text. This wholistic approach to Scripture can help women realize battering is not justifiable. A woman should never be put in the situation of having to choose between her faith and her safety.

Psychotherapist Susan Cayoutte from the North Shore Community Mental Health Center gave a wonderful workshop on "Successful and Unsuccessful Interventions" in counseling victims of abuse. For pastors and other helping professionals, this advice was extremely helpful.

A film, "Suzanne, Suzanne," was the third workshop. The film tells the story of a family with three generations of violence to women--grandmother, mother, and daughter. The Rev. Adele Smith Penniman from the Women's Theological Center led a discussion following the film.

Before closing, the participants from each school or organization met to strategize ways in which the information learned could be brought back to teach others, and ways in which seminaries and churches can address the problem of family violence.

Is there hope? Two weeks after the conference we learned that Casa Myrna was burned, presumably by the husband of one of the women sheltered there. There seems to be little hope. Yet, when we hear the stories of women who have left their battering situation and begun new lives, we are given a vision of the liberation of which Jesus spoke. Will the Church, with an eye turned inward, join the liberation of those who are victims of domestic violence? With God's help and ours, yes.

Beth Jenkins

ORDINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The following BUSTh women were ordained on June 7, 1985, by the Southern New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

Deacon:

Kathryn June Johnson (appointed to General Board of Global Ministries Mission Intern Program), Judith Jenkins Kohatsu (appointed to school), Sammie Maxwell-Pregeant (appointed to St. Paul's UMC, Ludlow, MA), and DanaBeth Wells-Goodwin (appointed to school).

Elder:

Lynn Leslie Euzenas (appointed to Assabet Valley UMC Parish, Hudson and Stow).

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

The Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has awarded the Boston University School of Theology Library \$10,000 in Methodist Education Funds for resources in the Women's Studies section.

RESOURCES

A group of women who perform sacred dance is available for your church service or church group. "Iris" consists of the Rev. Ellen Chahey, Lee Carpenter, and Christine Laurie. Ellen may be contacted at 482-1098, or call the Shaw Center.

Carol Calhoun has completed a course on women's mid-life transitions and is willing to pass on the knowledge to women's groups. Please contact Carol at Box 99, BUSTh, or call the Shaw Center (353-3075).

The "Lost and Found Storytellers" are available to share the stories of the women in the Bible through song and drama. Give your women's group a treat by contacting Linda Bandelier or Elizabeth Davis at BUSTh or call the Shaw Center (353-3075).

Resources, con't...

Handmade bobbin lace for edging, doilies, and handkerchiefs is available through the Rev. Katia Levin, BUSTh Box 61. Lessons for individuals are \$10 an hour. Group rates available on request.

BUSTh student Shelley Matthews will be traveling to Kenya, India, and Pakistan with a group from the Board of Global Ministries over Christmas vacation. She will be available to speak to church groups upon her return. Contact the Shaw Center.

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Dana Robert was elected a member of the Board of Publications at the annual June meeting of the American Society of Missiology. She was also selected for the planning committee for next year's meeting. Dr. Robert has been asked to be the editor of the "Mission History" section of the annotated bibliography on Mission to be published by the professional journal, Missiology.

Dr. Elizabeth Bettenhausen has a book review on Beverly Harrison's new book of essays, Making the Connections, in the September 30, 1985, issue of Christianity and Crisis. She also attended a Public Policy Conference for Religious Leaders in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Brookings Institution and the Center for Theology and Public Policy. While the conference was informative and an occasion to converse with government officials, only five of the thirty "leaders" were women and only one woman was among the speakers. Says Dr. Bettenhausen, "It brings to mind weather reports in a storm: visibility: zero."

Margaret Wiborg and Kathe Pfisterer Darr represented BUSTh at the meeting of Women Administrators and Faculty (WAFS) of the 13 UMC seminaries in Anaheim, CA, on Nov. 22 and 23. Dr. Darr also presented a paper entitled "The Wall Around Paradise: Ezekielian Ideas About the Future" at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Anaheim on Nov. 25.

THE REVEREND KATHLEEN WEED HONORED

In 1979, the Maine Commission on the Status and Role of Women honored Kathleen Weed as the woman serving the longest time in the ordained ministry in the United States. This year, COSROW once again honored Kay as she retired--after 46 years of continuous ministry.

As she accepted her bouquet of yellow roses, she said, "I really don't know what all the fuss is about!" However, as I listened to testimony when the entire Maine Annual Conference honored Kay, and as I have listened to stories which various persons--especially women--have shared over the past weeks, it is clear to me what all the fuss is about.

Upon graduation from high school, Kay attended Boston University, hoping to pursue a career in religious education. But she was unable to complete her studies due to lack of finances. Not long after returning to Maine, she was asked if she would like to have a license to preach. Since she had done some debating in high school and enjoyed public speaking, this seemed to be a natural.

Soon after, the District Superintendent asked if she would like to take a church, and she said, "Yes. . . because there was no reason not to." Thus, in 1939 Kay was appointed to the church in East Livermore, and in 1940 she was accepted as an approved supply pastor. This action, taken when Kay was barely 21 years old, launched her into a life-long career.

I asked Kay what it was like to be a woman minister in those days. "It wasn't very difficult. . . I didn't have to do anything to get my license to preach. . . I had it very easy. I know, having sat on both the District and Conference Boards of Ministry."

Kathleen was ordained as a local deacon in 1945 and as a local elder in 1949. At the 1957 Maine Annual Conference, Kay was received as a probationary member of the Conference, only the fifth woman to have been admitted on trial. Prior to becoming a full member of the Conference in 1959, she completed a course of study with the Conference Board of Ministry and did further study at Boston University.

With a twinkle in her eye, Kay said that she had never felt any real resistance to her ministry as a woman. She did remember one man who said, "You can be my teacher, but you can't be my minister." But that was the exception rather than the rule.

Kay exemplifies, for me, the meaning of a servanthood ministry. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15b) surely describes her ministry. Kay said that it had always been her major goal to build the spiritual life of the community--through classes and small groups as well as through her preaching and visitation.

Many witnesses at Annual Conference testified to the inspiration, support, and leadership which Kay has provided throughout her ministry--years which have not always been easy. Kay recalled that in her first parish her salary was supposed to be \$400/year. However, she would have to depend on whatever was in the collection plate --one Sunday there was only \$.39!

And yet, Kathleen concluded, "It has been a great privilege for me to serve all these years. . . This Conference has been like a family to me." As Kathleen Weed retires after 46 years, she can truly be an inspiration to all who follow her in the ordained ministry.

Pat Jewett

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Interession 1986: Courses Taught By Women Faculty Members (Jan 6-10/May 12-16)

<u>Professor</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Day/Time</u>
Kathe Darr	Prophetic Tradition	MTWThF 9-12:30 p.m.

Spring 1986: Courses Taught By Women Faculty Members

<u>Professor</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Day/Time</u>
Elizabeth Bettenhausen	On Sabbatical Spring 1986	
Carole Bohn	Pastoral Care & Culture	Ohio DMin Cluster
Linda Clark	Seminary Singers Anthems for Church Choirs	TTh 1-2 p.m. F 9-noon
Kathe Darr	Biblical Hebrew II Goddesses and Women in Ancient Israel	TWTh 3:30-4:20 p.m. T 6:30-9:00 p.m.
Shirley Lund	The Johannine Literature	M 2:30-5:30 p.m.
Dana Robert	History of American Evangelism The Debate over Modern Mission	TTh 11-12:15 a.m. TTh 2-3:30 p.m.
Theresa Scherf	Supervised Ministry and ITP	Arranged
Margaret Wiborg	Women in Parish Ministry	Th 2-3:30 p.m.

You are welcome to visit the School of Theology and sit in on these or other classes at anytime, with the exception of Spring Recess (March 1-8) and reading and exam weeks (April 29-May 11).

In addition to visitors, the School of Theology welcomes Special Students each semester. Special Students include persons interested in religious study but not a theological degree or persons interested in investigating the possibilities of a theological degree. All Special Students are enrolled in courses for credit unless they receive permission to audit courses; they must reapply each semester before registration day to renew their Special Student status. The cost for registration as a Special Student is \$432. per semester (4 credits) or \$108. per credit. For further information regarding Special Student admission and application materials please contact The Rev. Earl R. Beane, Director of Admissions, at the above address and telephone number.

Women 60 years of age or older are eligible to audit School of Theology courses through the Evergreen Program at Boston University; cost per course is \$10.00. For further information regarding courses through the Evergreen Program, please contact Rebecca Alssid, (Director of Continuing Education, 118 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215) at 353-4128.

WEAVING THE FABRIC OF OUR SHARED LIVES

This semester Anna has added another focus to her ministry at BUSTh. Two support groups for "older" women have been formed. These groups which meet weekly deal with mid-life issues of women training for the ministry. The present groups grew out of a similar group which met last spring as part of Dr. Carole Bohn's "Pastoral Psychology of Women" course. The group leaders, Elaine Tuttle and Caitlin Merrill, were members of the original group which continues to meet monthly.

The women in these groups are in good company. Anna Howard Shaw was herself a second (actually third or fourth) career woman. The gifts brought to the ministry by women who have experienced life are an immeasurable asset to the School of Theology and to the Church.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 1987: Kathe Pfisterer Darr and Margaret Wiborg will lead a study group tour to Israel arranged through Educational Opportunities on "Women and the Bible." Details will be made known as plans are finalized. Contact the AHSC if interested!

The Shaw Center Phonaton will be January 28-29. We look forward to talking to you across the miles!

The Women's Ordination Conference and the Shaw Center will sponsor a Coffee House featuring the "Lost and Found Storytellers" on Feb. 7, 1986, at BUSTh.

Plan now to attend WOMEN AND THE WORD: THE PROPHETIC STANCE, April 7 and 8, 1986, at BUSTh.

The Rev. Lillian Frier Webb, columnist for Essence, will be speaking at BUSTh on February 19 or 20. Call Anna for details.