



Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 19 ♦ NUMBER 3 ♦ SPRING/SUMMER 2003

WOMEN AND THE WORD 2003

Karen Alley, Rebecca Clark

We all have stories, experiences, and texts that are deep in ourselves. They wait there: to be found, to become a greater part of our lives, and to be honored in our worship. We honor ourselves when we acknowledge these experiences, making them part of our theologies and rituals, and that is exactly what we tried to do at Women and the Word 2003, "Loose Ends: The Ragged Wisdom of Women's Lives."

The Anna Howard Shaw Center hosted the nineteenth annual Women and the Word Conference at Boston University March 26 and 27. The leadership for the event was a group of five women: The Reverend Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad, Dr. Janet R. Walton, Yanira Chacon-Lopez, Ginger Worden, and Laura Hodges. Together these women led panel discussion sessions and worship services that embraced the "ragged" experience of women.



The Women and the Word leadership was made up of a team of five women (clockwise from above): Ginger Worden and Rev. Dr. Barbara Lundblad, Yanira Chacon-Lopez and Dr. Janet Walton, and Laura Hodges.

The event began Wednesday morning with prayer and an introduction of the panelists. The Reverend Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad has served for seventeen years as a pastor of a Lutheran parish in New



Continued on page 4

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Deborah Luchenbill, Interim Director

Rituals are very important in our lives. Rituals of all sorts help us mark milestones in our lives, and they help us celebrate seasons of nature, the Divine at work in the world. In my own life, rituals that mark transitions or celebrate milestones have been most important. I will never forget the feeling, on my twenty-first birthday, of walking into my best

friends' dorm room, which had been transformed into a very different space—a site for a ritual celebrating the transition of three young women into adulthood. It was an incredible experience to be led, in a sacred way, into that age in which our society deems us "fully adult." When I graduated from college, my women friends came to my apartment to do a

Continued on page 2

In this Issue

WOMEN AND THE WORD	1
FROM THE DIRECTOR	1
ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER SELECTS NEW DIRECTOR	2
DR. LINDA CLARK RETIRES	3
STH GAINS TENURED PROFESSOR	3



ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER SELECTS NEW DIRECTOR

Rebecca Clark

It is official! The Anna Howard Shaw Center has a new director, who will begin work in July of 2003. The Reverend Dr. Hee An Choi will be joining the Boston University School of Theology community this summer. She comes to us from Chicago, having recently completed her Ph.D. in Theology, Ethics, and Human Sciences from Chicago Theological Seminary. Highly qualified for the position, Dr. Choi is experienced in lecturing, administration, and ministry. Her dissertation focused on the self-concepts of Korean women, and both of her gradu-

ate theses explored the subjects of women, sexuality, and religion, so Dr. Choi's background is perfectly suited to the Anna Howard Shaw Center.

In addition to her Ph.D., Dr. Choi also holds a Master of Arts in Women's Studies from United Theological Seminary in Minnesota, and a Master of Divinity from the Graduate School of Theology, Hanshin University in Korea. She has been highly honored for her academic research and work.

Dr. Choi was very excited by her visits to Boston University, and was glad to

return this March to attend Women and the Word. Through that experience, she was able to get an idea of the Shaw Center's work, and she already has many visions for the future. Expressing her excitement to the members of the Shaw Center Board, Dr. Choi wrote, "I surely believe that the Anna Howard Shaw Center is a great place for women to envision new hope and ministry." We eagerly await Dr. Choi's arrival, and are excited to learn what talents and ideas she will bring to her work here. ♦

*From the Director
Continued from page 1*

ritual blessing for moving away, since I was moving across the country from Arizona to Boston and they were all staying. They made me a "friendship wreath," based on an old European tradition, which I still have hanging on my front door. It was a wonderful way to honor our connectedness as women as well as the presence of God in our lives and in the changes we faced. I have enjoyed creating rituals of various sorts with my friends and family, whether celebrations of holidays and seasons of the year, a family ritual acknowledging transition into different stages of life, or a ritual of house blessing after my parents' recent move. Our rituals, both small and large, in nature, at home, in church, or any other setting, help us to remember we are connected with each other and with God in our midst. They help remind us that we are not alone, that we are loved, and that we have much love and much talent to offer others.

As I write this, the School of Theology is going through a period where we mark transition and milestones within our community. Some students are getting ready for graduation and others are preparing for summer activities. The community is going through rituals of saying goodbye to students and other members of the community who are graduating, leaving, or retiring. All these rituals help mark this time of year as special in the life of the community at the School of Theology. They will, hopefully, remind us all of how we remain connected through our experiences here, even through great change and through endings of certain stages of our lives.

In the Shaw Center, we have our own rituals that contribute to these times of transitions and endings. Just a couple weeks ago, for instance, we had our graduating women's dinner, which was a wonderful time to celebrate with graduating women the culmination of their degree programs, and look forward with them to

their futures. It was a very meaningful evening both for the graduates and for those of us who are staying. Annual events, like Women and the Word, or like our community lunch near Anna's birthday where we share her stories and her importance, help us remain connected as a community of women through time and space, as well as giving us impetus to move ahead with our lives.

This is also a time of moving forward to new things. We look forward to celebrating the arrival, this summer, of our new director, The Reverend Dr. Hee An Choi, and all the gifts and talents she will bring to the Anna Howard Shaw Center. It will be a time of transition and new beginnings, of creating new rituals as well as honoring our traditional ones. It will be a very exciting, special, and meaningful new journey, and I wait, in delighted anticipation, for what will come. ♦



SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY GAINS ANOTHER TENURED PROFESSOR

This spring, Dr. Claire Wolfteich's application for tenure was accepted, to the great delight of the Boston University School of Theology community. Dr. Wolfteich has been teaching at Boston University School of Theology for six years, in religion and society, and is currently the Assistant Professor of Practical Theology and Spiritual Formation. She now joins the ranks of tenured women professors at the School of Theology, bringing the total to three.

Dr. Wolfteich received her Ph.D. in practical theology and the Master of Divinity degree from the University of Chicago. In addition, she holds a diploma in pastoral studies from St. Patrick's College in Ireland and a B.A. from Yale Uni-

versity. Working with sociologist Peter Berger, Dr. Wolfteich co-directs a research grant project called "Church and Theology in the Contemporary World," funded by the Lilly Endowment. The project combines creative teaching approaches with international research on faith, the church, and social contexts. Her most recent book, *Navigating New Terrain: Work and Women's Spiritual Lives in Twentieth-Century America*, discusses the sociological and theological implications of women's changing work roles in American society. The members of the School of Theology community gladly welcome Dr. Wolfteich and her experience to our tenured staff! ♦

DR. LINDA CLARK RETIRES

Dr. Linda Clark, a long-time member of the School of Theology community and friend of the Shaw Center, is retiring this year after twenty-three-and-a-half years of service. Two decades ago, Dr. Clark donated an old coffeepot to the women's research and reference center, and a Shaw Center tradition was born. Throughout her career at Boston University School of Theology, Linda was an active feminist and a supporter of the Shaw Center, serving as a member of the Advisory Board, chairing the search committee for a new Shaw Center Director, and donating her time, talents, plant life, and small appliances to the Center whenever there was a

need. She has been a constant voice for equality, inclusion, justice, and peace in her community and her world.

Dr. Clark taught music and worship at STH, and has been a beloved professor, advisor, and mentor. Her exceptional organ music during the School of Theology worship services has always been moving and, along with the rest of the gifts she shared with our community, will be deeply missed. With great love, respect, and bittersweet joy, we wish Linda the best as she transitions to a new part of her life journey. We pray that she will be blessed just as she has blessed all of us with her presence. ♦

NEWS FROM THE STH WOMEN

Dana Robert reports that her recent book, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century* (Dana L. Robert, ed., Orbis, 2002) was selected one of the fifteen outstanding books in mission studies for the year 2002. Dr. Robert also has three new books coming out between April and June, which represent the culmination of years of work. Look for *African Christian Outreach: Vol 2: The Mission Churches* (Dana L. Robert, ed., Pretoria: South African Missiological Society, 2003), *Frontiers of African Christianity: Essays in Honour of Inus Daneel* (Cuthertson, Pretorius, and Robert, eds., Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003), and *Occupy Until I Come: A.T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Dana L. Robert, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

The Boston University School of Theology community extends its best wishes to Dr. Carrie Doehring as she moves forward in her career. Dr. Doehring has accepted a position at Iliff School of Theology as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care. Although we are sad to see her go, we wish Dr. Doehring much blessing as she enters life beyond BU STH. ♦

LOOKING AHEAD TO WOMEN AND THE WORD 2004

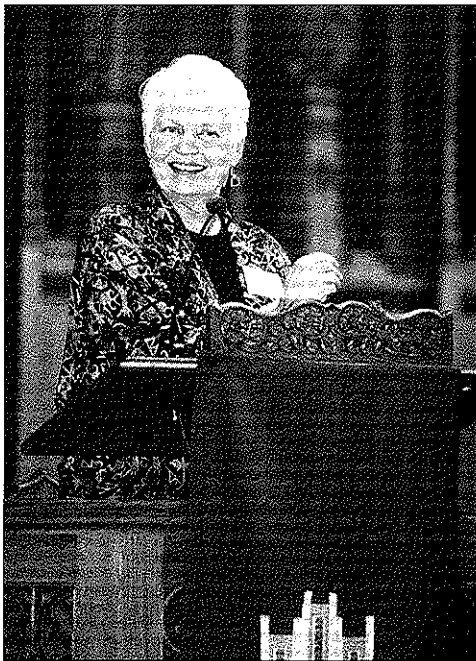
Plans are already under way for a special Women and the Word 2004. To celebrate the twentieth annual Women and the Word Preaching Event, we have invited all of the past leadership to return to speak on panels about the developments in their lives and in the women's movement since they first appeared at Women and the Word. Save the date for March 24-25, 2004; you don't want to miss this extravaganza! ♦



Women and the Word

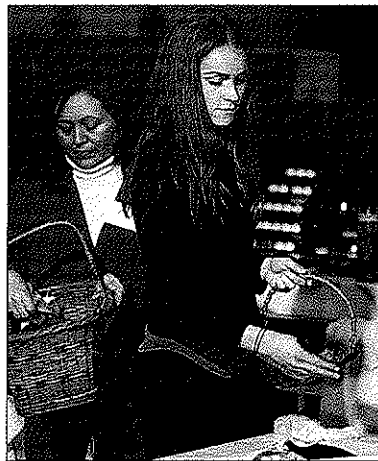
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York City, and now teaches Preaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York. She was joined by Dr. Janet R. Walton, a musician, social justice advocate, and Professor of Worship at Union Theological Seminary. Together these two Union professors gathered a diverse group of women who would enrich us with their stories. Panelist Yanira Chacon-Lopez came to the U.S. in the 1980s from El Salvador, is the mother of four, and works as the Latino Outreach Coordinator at the Intercommunity Center for Justice and Peace in New York City. For-



mer lawyer Ginger Worden brought her experience as a wife, mother, student of theology, and co-founder of a not-for-profit organization seeking community between housed people and homeless street dwellers. Rounding out the panel was Laura Hodges, who is working as a library assistant at the NYU School of Medicine while she considers what she wants to do with the rest of her life. Laura volunteers with the Street Harassment Project, a grassroots feminist organization that works to end the harassment of women in public spaces. As the panel talked, participants were encouraged to exercise their creativity and draw on their tablecloths. These banners would then become incorporated

The Reverend Dr. Barbara Lundblad's sermon combined with the offering of our "ragged wisdom" to create a memorable worship service.



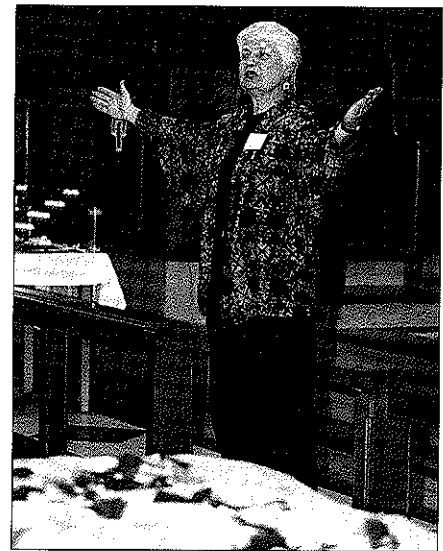
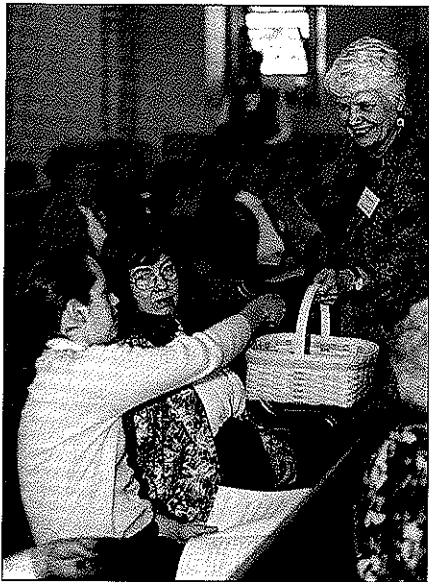
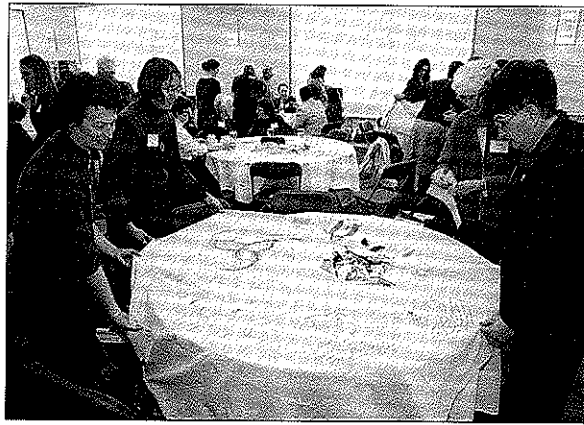
into the two worship services later in the conference.

After introductions, the panel asked the question: what is ragged in our lives? The answers the group brainstormed were many: church membership, public expressions of faith, our bodies, our place in the world, the war with Iraq, the feeling of being pulled in too many directions, and many other experiences. It is then important to ask if the church currently addresses these ragged edges, or if the practices of hierarchy and predictable worship strip the church of its potential relevance in our lives. The panelists suggested that the church could make itself more relevant by welcoming the stories we hear everyday into the stories that the church tells, gathering the wisdom of all members into the worship and life of the church body.

The worship service that followed was decidedly different—it was backward! The congregation began with a closing hymn and then a benediction, and proceeded backward through the service. For the offering, participants passed up scraps of fabric, representing the tattered bits of wisdom and experience they each brought to the altar. The Reverend Dr. Lundblad preached a sermon honoring the individual texts within each of us—the women in the Bible and the people of the congregation. Each person comes to the Biblical text or the sermon with a “pre-text” of her or his own, a set of experiences and thoughts that shape the person’s understanding of the Word. Each ragged life, each collection of experiences, is uniquely breathed into an individual by God, and cannot be set aside. Rather, we must allow for a meeting place for these two texts. “How will the Bible text come alive,” Dr. Lundblad asked, “if our own text is completely destroyed?”

Wednesday afternoon continued with a discussion of the personal and public





aspects of our lives and how they intertwine. In the past, it seemed that women's lives were entirely private, and so it is now a challenge to bring one's whole self to the public sector in work and in everyday life. The discussion focused on the street: where the public and the private meet.

Ginger Worden spoke specifically about the homeless, describing her experiences in building a relationship with a homeless man who frequented her neighborhood in New York City. Ginger shared how her daughter was involved in relationship building, describing a dialogue that occurred between her daughter and a homeless man. Her story demonstrated that often children are the prime movers in building relationships with people who are on the fringe of society.

This leads to the question of welcoming varied expertise. How can a housed person and a person who lives in a box come to the communion table together and feel like they both have something to offer? Many people believe that the church is a place that welcomes everyone, without realizing that the church must continue to change so that everybody *can* come. For example, would a homeless person feel truly welcomed in a church where everyone wore his or her "Sunday best" or business attire to worship? The solution discussed in this session was a call to intentionality, to building relationships with homeless persons, and to a willingness to be disrupted. Attire, social status, or lack of church experience should not prevent anyone from being welcomed into the family of God. By

being willing to be disrupted, congregations can be ready to accept whoever walks off the street and into worship.

Like homelessness, issues of violence against women and other marginalized groups of people are not often addressed in preaching or worship. Laura Hodges talked about street violence and harassment against women, and her work to diminish the difficulties young women face on the streets of New York City. Yanira Chacon-Lopez spoke movingly about her escape from El Salvador, and brought to our attention the need to stand in solidarity with the poor and marginalized persons in our midst. The experience of being a refugee is still very real today, as people are displaced by terrorism

Continued on page 6



KATIE GENEVA CANNON VISITS BOSTON AREA

Womanist author and theologian Katie Geneva Cannon came to Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, this June. Offering a workshop that introduced writing as an ethical act, she led "Teaching Preaching: A Forum for Ethical Teaching and Writing with Katie Geneva Cannon." This workshop used African American literature to define, elaborate, exemplify, and justify the central contestable issues in the daily-ness of our lives, and sought to give participants a way to live in solidarity with what they say.

Katie Geneva Cannon is the Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia. She is the author of *Teaching Preaching: Issac Rufus Clark and Black Sacred Rhetoric* and *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community*. For more information about this recent event, visit the **grass/roots** website: www.grassrootscenter.org, or write grass/roots, P.O. Box 67511, Newton, MA 02467. ♦

Women and the Word

Continued from page 5

and war. Although it is difficult to speak about and hear about these issues, it is essential that we address the texts of violence and terror—both the texts in the Bible and the texts of our lives—in our worship. We must know them in our rituals, know them with our bodies rather than simply with our minds.

Thursday morning we began again with prayer and moved to a discussion of planning the closing worship service in light of the need to include the "texts" of our lives as part of the worship experience. The participants then divided into groups to plan different aspects of the worship service.

In the next session Drs. Lundblad and Walton were joined by Boston University School of Theology's Dr. Linda Clark. Dr. Clark spoke about her life experience in the ongoing struggle for justice within the civil rights, anti-war, and feminist movements. Looking back, she said she

has to remind herself of how ragged the experience was, as hindsight has glossed it a little. She remembers the struggle to be strong in the face of sexism and humble in the light of her own white privilege. Dr. Clark's efforts helped to incorporate inclusive language and worship as integral parts of the universities she served. Her witness to the history of the women's movement was an important lesson for the participants at the conference, either as a reminder or a new message.

After lunch, the conference closed with the worship service that the participants had designed. Through unique use of space, ritual, proclamation of the Word, and walking prayer, the participants at the Women and the Word Conference sought to embody the relevant, creative, text-affirming worship we had envisioned. It was a fitting way to end the conference, providing an opportunity for experimentation and implementation, honoring the loose ends of our ragged wisdom. ♦

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATING WOMEN OF 2003!

MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (M.T.S.)

Kelly Allen
Lori Bohne
Cindy Choi
Jennifer Coggins
Rebecca Edmonson
Gail Gregoire
Elizabeth Harcourt
Marla Marcum
Amy Philips
Aimee Radom
Alexandra Russell
Krishana Suckau

MASTER OF DIVINITY (M.Div.)

Jill Barnes
Erin Beary
Gail Boucher
Ann Britton
Lori Godich
Hee-Kyung Kim
Adrienne Kisner
Heather Knowlton
Nadine Linendoll
Sharon Lovejoy
Pauletta Lehn McLaughlin
Peggy O'Connor
Mi-Kyong Park
Allison Stone

MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY (S.T.M.)

Larissa Waya
Roslyn Weiner
Natalie Wimberly

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY (Th.D.)

Karen Ayayo
Soyoung Chey
Helen Gierke

DUAL DEGREE

Megan Abe, M.T.S., Master
of Social Work



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WOMEN AND THE WORD AUDIO TAPES

Discover or rediscover the 2003 Women and the Word Conference, "Loose Ends: The Ragged Wisdom of Women's Lives." One \$20 set of tapes includes all of the plenary sessions from this year's event. Order yours today!

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