

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER



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Women and the Word-- "and Your Daughters Shall Prophecy"

Eighty women and men--clergy, lay, and seminary students--gathered on April 7 and 8 to celebrate the prophetic voice of women who proclaim the Word. The second annual "Women and the Word" conference on women's preaching was opened by keynote speaker the Rev. Katie Canon, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge. She is the first Afro-American woman to earn her Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary and to be ordained in the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Katie's lecture on preaching in the Black idiom was powerful. Not one word was wasted; practical information on sermon construction, choice of topics, titles, and texts was appreciated by the hearers. Especially helpful was Katie's feel for the difference between homiletic and lecture material. More than once, we were reminded that an idea may be good, but if it "won't preach," it is useless in the pulpit.

The morning lecture was integrated in afternoon discussions groups facilitated by area clergywomen. A special workshop on liturgical dance was taught by Lee Carpenter and Chris Laurie. After the groups, we heard from Kip Tiernan, one of the most prophetic women in the U.S. today! Kip is the founder and director of Rosie's Place, a shelter for homeless women, and co-founder of the Poor People's United Fund. Her words on urban life and the struggle to put Christ's prophetic Word into action in the city of Boston were inspiring. She called for a "theology of relinquishment" in this country, urging us to "repent, resist, and rebel."

One of the delights of the event was the performance of the "Lost and Found Storytellers," alias M.Div. students Linda Bandelier and Elizabeth Davis. Hearing the stories of the women of the Bible presented through song and drama shatters many of our childhood impressions, allowing us to hear these stories in a new light. The "uppity woman" from Syrophoenicia, the daughter of Jephthah, Mary and Martha, and the story of Eve as SHE would tell it delighted and touched us as we felt their power and powerlessness.

Katie's prophetic voice filled Marsh Chapel at the Tuesday morning worship service. Preaching from the text II Kings 7:3-9, she lifted out the phrase, "Why sit we here until we die?" A very special closing service followed the plenary session on the final afternoon of "Women and the Word." Led by the Rev. Shirley Hoover, who read the story of the Samaritan woman, the women present offered words, stories, or reflections on the text, creating a sermon. The concluding "communion of empty hands" was a moving reminder of those who regularly use this service--the incarcerated--and of the Body of Christ present not just in the elements, but in our seemingly empty hands and lives.

Perhaps the most valuable wisdom of the event is that the minister who would preach prophetically must pastor compassionately. Our words of challenge must be linked to our actions of love. Prophets are those who love life enough to care about its quality, who speak the truth in love "with one ear to the ground."

--Beth Jenkins, M.Div. student

WOMEN'S INTERSEMINARY CONFERENCE

Iliff School of Theology in Denver hosted the Women's Interseminary Conference, "Celebrate the Time at Hand," April 4-6, which Five women from BUSTh attended. Nancy Ginty gives the following summary of the keynote address, entitled "Struggle Is Another Name for Hope: Women, Church and Ecclesiastical Patriarchy," by Elisabeth Schussler Firoenza:

"Feminist theologians find the topic of celebration difficult in light of our pain and victimization in the struggle against patriarchy. As feminists, we seek a spirituality against patriarchy and claim that women are of God. We claim the history of women of God such as Anne Hutchinson, Julian of Norwich, Sojourner Truth, and Phoebe Palmer, who have taken their spiritual authority seriously.

"Feminist theology must be critical, throwing everything into question. We have lost touch with our sacred mothers because we strive to identify with a divine 'Father.' Women must identify with women in order for the patriarchy to lose its power. We must reclaim our biblical heritage, expose our pain to realize change, name and explore victim oppression to articulate our wholeness.

"As long as patriarchy exists, women and men are not liberated. To end patriarchy is to end oppression and to celebrate the God of Judith and Jesus as Emmanuel, 'God with us.' Women are church-called and directed by God. Together we call our church to conversion and repentance. God calls us to come forth and overcome our deepest self-alienation, and to create a theology of self-respect as women. Overcoming the internalized concept that 'father knows best' is our mission. Women's lack of self-love is in place because of our misogynist structures. Our self-negation and distrust of other women is our greatest obstacle to hope for our future. Feminist liberation ministry needs to be defined in terms of women in solidarity with all women. All divisions, including denominational divisions, are manmade and are a separation from ourselves. Consciousness-raising is a

crucial tool for redefining ourselves and our communities. Women's communities, centers, and feminist retreats replace divisions while renewing our vision and energy. We must keep alive our burning holy anger--it gives us the courage to struggle toward a 'discipleship of equals,' or 'Woman Church.'"

Nancy, who is the Sexism Intern at BUSTh, also attended a workshop on "Theology and Abuse" led by United Church of Christ pastor Joan Ham, who presented the following ideas:

"Theology is meant to be sacred. Thus, the painful reality of abuse must be approached gently. Recent statistics show one out of two women have been (or will be) battered, one out of seven have been raped, one out of three women are sexually traumatized by the age of sixteen, and ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of prostitutes were victims of incest.

"Our tasks are to acknowledge that our tradition has legitimated violence to women and to move beyond the religious forces that condone violence. We must search our religious heritage for multifaceted traditions that are not abusive. What we believe about God and ourselves, we inevitably live out in our relationships. If we believe in a theology of domination where 'God the Father' is at the top of the pyramid with all of the power, and with women, children, and humanity subservient to 'Him,' we condone a closed model of the family that allows abuse to occur. God the Father symbolized the painful betrayal of trust many women experienced as powerless children. Incest survivors and battered women develop a hypersensitivity to masculine images and language which urge us to sell our souls to something which is not only dangerous, but lethal. How does a female come to terms with an omnipotent male deity that allowed and continues to allow sexual exploitation to occur? It is imperative that we find new names and images for the Divine. We must continue to search for a common ground that gives us images, language, and attributes for a spirituality that gives us a feeling of trust, connectedness, and wholeness."

REPORT FROM ANAHEIM

BUSTh was represented at the United Methodist Women 1986 Assembly, April 17-20, in Anaheim, California, by four women, Diane Rew-Gottfried, Robin Olson, Mary Lou Greenwood, and Margaret Wiborg. The theme for this gathering, which is moving into its second century, was "Into the Future by Faith." Over eight thousand six hundred women and some men gathered from throughout the nation and the world to worship and study together.

Highlights of the event included Bible Study led by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a theologian born in Ghana who lives in Nigeria; Dame Nita Barrow (Barbados); Dr. Erlinda Senturias (Philippines); and Dr. Arthur Flemming (U.S.A.), who addressed the issue of "Health for All by the Year 2000." Other presenters included Dr. Mamphele Ramphele (South Africa), Elsa Tamey (Central America), and Peggy Hutchinson (Tucson, Arizona), who spoke concerning "A World in Search of Justice." Evening celebrations, workshops, and a closing communion service using the Lima Liturgy and with Bishop Leontyne Kelly preaching were also important parts of the assembly. Inclusive, diverse, forward looking, justice seeking, extremely well organized--all of these words describe both the event and the character of this organization. A BUSTh alum breakfast also gave us the opportunity to connect with some of our colleagues from throughout the country.

We returned to Boston and our respective ministries with a great conviction that we as Christian women do indeed go into the future by faith. The affirmation and sense of solidarity received in this incredible gathering of women will carry us into the weeks and years to come. Faith stronger, future brighter, we travel together on this journey which is our home.

--Margaret Wiborg

IN THE BEGINNING...

The following paraphrase on John 1:1-14 was written by third-year Master of Divinity student Sharon Link, as part of a project for the course "Women in Parish Ministry."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

"She was in the beginning with God; through her everything was formed, and nothing was done without her. In her was life, and her life was the music of humanity. Her song echoes through silence; her rhythm cannot be stopped.

"There was a man sent from Galilee, whose name was John. He had heard her song and had felt the power of her rhythm. He came to prepare others to hear her music so that all might discover the song of life. Her music, the truth of God, was coming into the world.

"She was in the world, and even though the world was made through her, the world did not recognize her. She came to her own home, and her own people did not accept her. But to all who listened to her, who discovered her rhythm and joined in her song, she gave the power to become children of God; who, being born through blood and of flesh, were born anew in God.

"And the Word become flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Behold her glory--the glory of God."

Sharon describes the paraphrase in the words, "Besides using the effect of reading or hearing a feminine personal pronoun included in such a familiar passage, I have tried to find a truly inclusive metaphor--music. It is my understanding that even those with hearing disabilities are able to participate in and experience music through the sensation of rhythm and vibrations."

ORDINATIONS

The following women will be ordained deacon by their Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church:

Kandy Burch--West Ohio
Ellen Casey--Southern New England
Debbie Gildart--Maine
Sharon Link--Southern New England
Robin Olson--Central New York
Barbara (Breen) Silk--Troy
Heidi Schnauffer--Detroit

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Kathe Pfisterer Darr's article "Like Warrior, Like Woman: Destruction and Deliverance in Isaiah 42:10-17," will be published in an upcoming issue of Catholic Biblical Quarterly. Congratulations, Kathe!

ANNA HONORS EARL KENT BROWN

On March 21, the Shaw Center honored Dr. Earl Kent Brown with a reception in appreciation for his interest in the Center. One of the people responsible for the Center's establishment, Dr. Brown has continued his involvement through the years. He has served on the Advisory Board and has financially provided for the Center's future by making it the beneficiary of a life insurance policy and one third of his estate.

The reception had a distinctive "Brown" flavor. Dr. Brown presented a paper on "The History of Women at BUSTh." From the time of the earliest women students to the Shaw Center's advent, and by acknowledging women as students, faculty, support persons, and wives, Dr. Brown voiced words of affirmation of the women of the school.

The Rev. Sammie Maxwell-Pregeant gave a tongue-in-cheek presentation entitled "Boston's Brown"---a play on Dr. Brown's popular talk, "Brown's Boston." Included was a glance at Dr. Brown's own history and some of the formative events that make Brown Brown. Letters and other words of appreciation and love followed.

The Shaw Center presented Dr. Brown with a plaque citing appreciation for his continuing care.

--Margaret Wiborg, director AHSC

COURSES BY WOMEN FACULTY

Fall Term 1986 promises a host of courses by women faculty members at BUSTh. They include:

Dr. Dana Robert:
TM825 Emergence of the Modern Church in Third World Perspective (T,W,Th 8-9)
TM910 History of Missions (W 3-6)

Dr. Kathe Darr:
TO723 Hebrew I (T,W,Th 3:30-4:30, F 11-12)
TE850 Seminar: Use of the Bible in Christian Teaching (T,Th 11-12:20)

Dr. Shirley Lund:
TN812 Apochrypha (M 3-6)

Dr. Elizabeth Bettenhausen:
TT701 Introduction to Christian Theology and Philosophy (T,W,Th 8-9)
TS904 Seminar in Feminist Ethics (M 2-5)

Dr. Carole Bohn:
TE807 Life Span: Human Learning and Human Development (W 3-6)

Dr. Demaris Wehr:
TY702 Personality, Culture, and Religious Development (T,Th 3:30-5)
TY801 Religion and Mental Health (W 3-6)

Dr. Linda Clark:
TA810 Hymns and Their Music (W 3-6)
TC711 Worship and Music (Th 3:30-5)
TC858 Rites and Ceremonies of the Church (Th 2-3:30)
(TC711 and TC858 co-taught with Dr. Allen)

If you are interested in registering for any of the above courses or would like more information, please call the Admissions Office at 353-3036.

The White Rose: Munich, 1942-1943
by Inge Scholl

With an Introduction by Dorothee
Sölle

Wesleyan University Press

Book Review by Peg Huff

In 1942 and 1943, at the University of Munich, Hans and Sophie Scholl were among the leaders of a student group known as The White Rose. This group was attempting to arouse the German people to resist the Nazis. On February 18, 1943, Hans and Sophie were arrested by the Gestapo. On February 22, 1943, they were executed. This short account of their lives was written by their sister in 1947 in an effort, as she explains in her 1969 "Concluding Remarks," to respond to the questions of German children who were asking their parents, "How was it possible for you to be taken in by the Nazis?"

Dorothee Sölle closes her introduction with these words:

I spent almost ten years of my young adulthood pondering the most important question for my generation. The question was very simple, and we asked it of our fathers and our mothers, our teachers and professors, our textbooks and our culture. The question was related to the Holocaust: How could it have happened? The most terrifying response we got to this question was the most innocent one. People told us that they were unaware of what was happening, that they did not know. I never believed this, and I would not accept this response from anyone. Sometimes I have this nightmare--that my children will later approach me and ask, "Mom, what did you do when Ronald Reagan laid the groundwork for the nuclear Holocaust?" No matter what, I would not be able to say that I did not know. All of us know. We do know, and we have to act in one way or another. That is the legacy of the White Rose.

This book not only recounts what happens when people of good will remain silent; it shows, as did the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines, what can happen when they speak. We need to recognize and to accept "the legacy of the White Rose," if for no other reason, that we as individuals and as communities have an honorable response to our children; that no latter-day Inge Scholl has cause to write, "The church hierarchy in those years had compromised itself by its initial alliance with [Reagan], and it was silent." Scholl also says, "... A pathway was opened that led to Christianity--a path not blocked by any irrelevant acts of the Church." A path facilitated by relevant acts of the church would be better.

SEXUALITY AWARENESS SEMINAR

Approximately forty BUSTh students (including seven men) and faculty attended a "Sexual Awareness Seminar" on March 18 in Marsh Chapel. The presenter was Wendy Sanford, chaplain at Suffolk University and co-author of Our Bodies, Our Selves. The focus of the seminar was how our male/female sexual identity impacts our interactions and our pastoral relationships.

The first part of the two-hour session was spent brainstorming all the ways sexuality impacts ministry--the list is endless! Sanford then guided the group in a meditation using questions that led the participants in reflection on childhood experiences which have influenced our present feelings toward sexuality. A time of sharing these reflections, first in small groups and then in the whole group, followed. There was some deep sharing, even in the large group. Many of the participants regretted that shortness of time prevented continued dialogue.

Ms. Sanford emphasized that we have a power role in ministry and must know ourselves and be comfortable with ourselves --including our sexuality--in order to use that power responsibly. Obviously, there is a need at BUSTh for students to have the opportunity to look at our sexuality as it relates to our whole selves in ministry.

--Elaine Tuttle, M.Div. student

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Anna celebrates with all 1986 graduates of Boston University School of Theology. In order for us to keep in contact with you, please send your new address (home or church) to the Shaw Center. Many women have reported that the most critical time in their careers has been the period between graduation and their time of appointment or hiring. One way to ease this adjustment is to keep in touch with those people near and dear to you--like the women of BUSTh! Peace to you as you go, and Yahweh's blessing on your ministries!

PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBIT

The Anna Howard Shaw Center wishes to thank Shelley Matthews and Kathryn Johnson for the pictures they have presented to the Center from their recent world travels. Shelley's photo of three Indian women and Kathryn's pictures of Filipino women will soon grace the walls of the Center. This seems like a marvelous time to start a permanent exhibit of pictures of women around the world. If you have a favorite photo from your travels, please think of the Shaw Center. We will pay for framing. Thanks!

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SUGGESTED RESOURCES ON WOMEN, RELIGION, AND ABUSE

Fortune, Marie Marshall. Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin--An Ethical and Pastoral Perspective. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1983.

Trible, Phyllis. Texts of Terror. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

An extremely valuable (and thorough) exegetical look at biblical texts of violence against women.

Janssen, Martha. The Silent Scream. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

Butler, Sandra. Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest. San Francisco: Volcano Press, 1978.