

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

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WOMEN AND THE WORD PREACHING EVENT DARING TO TOUCH THE GARMENT

Nearly 150 women and men from eighteen states and eleven denominations gathered to "Touch the Garment" at Boston University School of Theology on March 19 and 20 for the Anna Howard Shaw Center's Third Annual "Women and the Word" preaching event.

The diversity among participants as well as among the leadership helped to remind us that there is indeed more than one way to touch the garment. The conference was graced by the unique gifts of many women. The richness of those gifts was apparent at the very opening of the event: the scripture at worship was read in Korean, Spanish, English, and sign language. The synoptic gospel story of the woman who dares to lay her hand on the robe of Jesus and is thus healed by her faith took on special meaning as the congregation became witnesses to women bring alive the Word.

From opening worship through closing communion, keynote preacher Ansley Coe Throckmorton provided gracious and inspiring leadership. Ruthenia Finley and Vicki Woods, each of whom presented workshops on the first afternoon, were a beautiful example of contrasting styles yet equally compelling messages. No one who experienced Ruthenia's sermon will ever think of frogs in quite the same way again! Valerie Stittler and Ruth Duck led the second-day morning workshop, opening with worship which enabled each person present to claim Isaiah's call to ministry as her or his own: "Here am I, Lord, send me!"

For many of the participants, affirming the call to ministry (ordained or otherwise) was an important aspect of the two days. Though over 10 percent of the participants were men (which contributed to the wealth of experiences and perspectives to be shared), many of the women in particular felt a personal "shot in the arm" from the opportunity to see women accepted in leadership roles in worship. One participant commented that she heard more women giving sermons in those two days than in her entire forty-two years of life! Others reported feeling joy at not being excluded by the language used in worship. Many planned to take ideas for inclusive-language hymns back to their churches.

Nearly half of the registrants were students, including a woman from West Germany who is currently studying at Garret Evangelical Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. It is exciting to think of the reverberations of Women and the Word as these students return to their schools and incorporate their experiences into their educations, and eventually into their own ministries. Plans are already under way for next year's conference, aided by the \$24,000 grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations which will underwrite both the 1987 and 1988 Women and the Word events. And so we continue into the future, daring to touch the garment, healed and enabled by our faith.

Laura Jaquith

WEEDING OUR MOTHER'S GARDEN

Despite the tremendous effect various schools of feminist thought have had upon raising the consciousness of American men, the 1987 Women's Inter-Seminary Conference (WISC)--held April 3 through 5 at Princeton Theological Seminary--showed that women, white middle-class women in particular, still have great distances to travel in order to recognize the great diversity and areas of concern expressed by their Asian, black, Jewish, lesbian, and economically disadvantaged sisters.

This year's conference theme, "Inheriting Our Mother's Gardens," was unable to move from smelling the garden flowers into the fields where the concerns of the field hands are obviously different than those of women who "inherited gardens." Although it was advertised as an event which sought "to engage in conversation that crossed racial/ethnic (and, I add, economic) lines and enable us to consider the experiences of ourselves and others, critically," conversations following plenaries, in addition to small group discussions, were thwarted to prevent the exposure of any "weeds" in our mother's gardens. This stymied the full impact of the conference's plenary speakers, who included Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Pui Lan Kwok, and Letty Russell.

Carolyn Nikkal, a Boston University participant at WISC, noted, "Although a number of the plenary sessions touched on some important issues, including realities like the dearth of information on Central America, the oppression of Oriental women, and the role of the church in maintaining these structures, the sessions tended to be covered over by a

misapplication of the conference theme" Nikkal went on to say that, "on the whole the conference did not deal with women's ordination, particularly in the Catholic Church, lesbian concerns, rape, incest, and other forms of sexual abuse," which plague clergy and lay women personally as well as in their ministries. Another BU participant, Ellen Brenner, added, "And the thing was that those problems were right there (at Princeton) among us!"

Yet another dandelion in the garden sprouted in the form of exclusivism. For those women who did not fit the category of "economically disadvantaged minority women" and could not afford the \$45 registration fee up front, attendance to the conference--whose registration was limited to three hundred--was not a possibility.

Another form of exclusivism resulted from the lack of clarity regarding male attendance at the conference. Though never communicated in press releases from Princeton, an unspoken understanding existed among the conference planners: "No men allowed!" At previous conferences, however, men were active participants. Apparently, it was assumed that male attendance at this conference would be both disruptive and threatening.

Still another WISC participant confessed, "not until my lesbian identity was berated did my mind register how exclusive the conference was, in spite of efforts to provide international plenary speakers." Ironically, most women, including those planning WISC, have experienced the stupefying blows of exclusion vis-a-vis

Continued on page 5

SHAW CENTER NEWS VOL 3, NO. 3

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CONTENTS

Weeding Our Mother's Garden	2
In Celebration of Anna	3
Clergywomen's Consultation.	4
Congrats, Rebecca Dolch.	4
Recognition Gifts	4
Women's Enrollment Increases.	5
Women's History Event	5
Summer Reading List.	6
Book Contributions	6

IN CELEBRATION OF ANNA

*A living valentine thou art
New every year to every heart.
Nature chose well thy natal day
And sent thee on thy earthly way
Surrounded by the hopeful spring
Her message of true life to bring.
And we who love thee
And who linger near thy shrine
Would bless and call thee,
"Dear Saint Sister Valentine."*

This greeting, signed "from one of your many Valentines," was sent to Anna Howard Shaw on her fifty-third birthday, February 14, 1900. On February 11, 1987 (the fourteenth of the month falling on a Saturday), the reading of this poem opened an evening of celebration of Anna Howard Shaw's birthday, her life, and the role of friends in her life and ours. Sponsored by the Shaw Center and called "In Celebration of Friendship," the event brought together nearly one hundred students, faculty, alumni, and friends at the Castle at Boston University.

A brief social hour provided a chance for new friends and old to greet one another. Then guests assembled in the Reception Hall for a lively and varied program of music and reminiscences of Anna and her friends. Participating were students (Char Caver, Pamela Estes, Glynis Hawkins, Laura Jaquith, Julie Raines, and Dorothy Rogers), faculty (Kathe Pfisterer Darr), an alumna (Elizabeth Davis), and Shaw Center Advisory Board members (Priscilla Barnard, Lee Carpenter, Florence Freeman, and Carmen Ward).

Shaw Center Director Margaret Wiborg officially welcomed those present, who were entertained with music provided by Julie Raines (vocalist) and Pamela Estes and Laura Jaquith (flutists). To provide the audience a common background of knowledge about Anna Howard Shaw, Carmen Ward presented a brief biography of her life, and then Anna and her friends "came alive"! With the wide and imposing central staircase in the Reception Hall as the "stage" and with Lee Carpenter as the narrator, the audience heard thoughts on friendship from Anna

(Florence Freeman), Susan B. Anthony (Priscilla Barnard), Ina Sizer Cassidy (Dorothy Rogers), Carrie Chapman Catt (Kathe Darr), Frances Willard (Char Caver), and Myra Wren (Glynis Hawkins).

Among the tributes to Anna by her friends were these:

"Reverend Anna H. Shaw is one of the ablest speakers on the platform, either among men or women. She has a well-trained mind, quenchless enthusiasm, and that rarest of all qualities, pluck. Her history proves all this. No woman could have wrenched education and success from more difficult conditions. America does not contain a more loyal and devoted adherent of women's cause." --Frances Willard.

"How many happy, happy times we have travelled about together day and night, in stage coaches, on freight trains, over the mountains and across the prairies, hungry and tired, we have wandered! The work was sometimes hard and discouraging but those were happy and useful years." --Susan B. Anthony, speaking of their campaigning together for the cause of women's suffrage.

"There are no words with which to measure the part which Dr. Shaw played in this monumental victory. She was of the suffrage struggle its greatest orator, its wit, its humor, its deathless spirit." --Carrie Chapman Catt,

Closing the evening with her own tribute to Anna, Elizabeth Davis read an original poem written for the occasion, echoing the admiration expressed by Ina Sizer Cassidy in the following poem to Anna on her birthday in 1918:

*"...Your dauntless struggle on the
upward trail...
Will blazon down long ages still to
come,
And cheer the striving mass
Of women yet to rise above the old
regime!
We Hail you Leader, Friend!"*

--Carmen Ward
(quotations researched by Lee Carpenter)

WELLSPRINGS OF HOPE: CLERGYWOMEN'S CONSULTATION

"...Wellsprings of hope, which draw upon the creative and spiritual gifts of women in the ministry, characterize the United Methodist (UM) Clergywomen's Consultation," commented Reverend Kathy Nickerson on a three-day visit (April 7-9) to the School of Theology. A coordinator of the Consultation--to be held in Great George, New Jersey, August 17 through 21, Reverend Nickerson attended student forums, met with clergywomen, taught a session of the Women and Ministry course, and provided some background on the upcoming Consultation.

The Consultation, a clergywomen's resource exchange network, is conducted every four years. The event was born out of UM clergywomen's feelings of isolation and unconnectedness in the various conferences. The founding clergywomen were led to examine their ministry in light of women's ever-changing roles in the UM church. The Consultation will provide a forum to address vital questions and concerns of clergywomen, including "the issues and struggles confronting women today" in their ministry. The Consultation seeks to empower and affirm women's spirituality and the gifts women bring to the ministry. According to Reverend Nickerson, "we also hope the Consultation will be life-transforming for the men who attend the conference."

The primary aim of the Consultation is to augment clergywomen's practice of ministry in the parish or at an appointment in the UM church. The Consultation, however, welcomes

and encourages the participation of at least one male member of the cabinet or the Board of Ordained Ministry from each Annual Conference. Planners of this event anticipate participation of women from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, as the planning committee also reflects the diversity among UM clergy and lay women.

Workshop topics for the Consultation include enhancing women's preaching techniques, spiritual development, and prayer power. A great many other tools and techniques will be exchanged to affirm, empower, and connect women in their roles as clergy, lay, and administrators in the UM church.

Registration information can be picked up at the Anna Howard Shaw Center between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or, those interested can contact the Division of Ordained Ministry, Board of Higher Education and Ministry for the United Methodist Church. Registration deadline is July 1.

If you are attending the Consultation, please plan to be the guests of Boston University School of Theology at the Seminary Reunion Luncheon, to be held Thursday, August 20. We are especially fortunate to have Dr. Elizabeth Bettenhausen, active Shaw Center participants, clergy and students as a part of our reconnecting conversation.

CONGRATS, REBECCA DOLCH

Rebecca Wilson Dolch--Boston University School of Theology's (BUSTh) first *Woman and the Word* keynote speaker--was recently appointed District Supervisor in the Western New York United Methodist Conference. The spiritual depth and theological and administrative competence of Reverend Dolch were clearly recognized during her keynote address at BUSTh three years ago. It is with great admiration and respect that the BUSTh's Anna Howard Shaw Center extends its congratulations to Reverend Dolch.

RECOGNITION GIFTS

If you would like to give a gift of special recognition or appreciation to someone of importance in your life or ministry, please consider an Anna Howard Shaw Appreciation and Recognition Gift. Your gift provides both a card and a listing in the Shaw Center Newsletter to the honoree.

Gifts may be made directly to the Anna Howard Shaw Center. Please send the name and address of the honoree with your gift.

WOMEN'S ENROLLMENT INCREASES

The BU School of Theology's Admissions Office recently compiled statistics for the 1986-87 entering class. A number of interesting things were discovered.

Matriculating into the seven degree programs offered at the School of Theology were 136 students, up from the 120 students entering each of the two previous years. This year's entering class includes 72 men and 64 women from 31 states and 18 denominations. One half of this group is United Methodist. Of this class, 67 students are married and/or are parents; 21 students are ethnic minorities and 15 are international students.

Even more noteworthy is the number of women in the Master of Divinity (MDiv)

program. Fifty-three persons began the Master of Divinity program; this number is similar to that of the past two years (53 and 52 students). For the second time in five years, a higher percentage of women than men matriculated into the Master of Divinity program--53 percent in 1986-87 and 51 percent in 1982-83). Of this group, 34 percent are married and/or are parents; and 30 percent are Merit Scholar recipients.

We in the Admissions Office are both excited by and grateful for the gifts brought by each individual at the School of Theology. We especially recognize the great diversity of interests and backgrounds which converge here.

Marylou Greenwood

WOMEN'S HISTORY EVENT

The Anna Howard Shaw Center, COSROW, Archives and History Committee, and United Methodist women will sponsor a Northeast Jurisdiction Women's History Training Event. Entitled "Women's History: Everybody's History," it will be held at the BU School of Theology on Saturday, November 7, beginning at 9 a.m. Susan M. Eltscher, newly appointed Director of the Women's and Ethnic History for the General Commission on Archives and History, will be the keynote speaker.

Workshops "to provide resources and develop skills to unearth, preserve and proclaim the histories of women in mission and ministry" will follow the keynote speaker. Each participant will choose two of the following workshops: *Doing*

Oral History, to be led by Hilah Thomas; *Retrieving History in the Local Church*, to be led by T. C. Whitehouse and Donald Williams; *Finding the Lost Threads*, to be led by Pat Jewett; and *Using Media for Oral History*, to be led by Lee Carpenter and John Ward. A panel and open discussion, *Where Do We Go From Here?*, to be moderated by Faith Richardson, chairperson of the Anna Howard Shaw Center History Project, will provide an opportunity for participants to begin to strategize for further work in oral history.

Brochures will be ready by June 1. For more information, contact the Shaw Center, (617) 353-3075 or 3059.

WISC, continued from page 2

classism, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, and sexism. It is inexcusable for women to use those same oppressive patriarchal mechanisms against other women--and against well informed male advocates of women's concerns.

Although more astute planning might have averted these conflicts, hindsight is sometimes the best sight. In the light of all this, for some,

this year's WISC will be the catalyst for consciousness-raising among women seminarians, in particular. Indeed, as the dialogue must begin somewhere, what better arena than that of those spiritually connected? (Special thanks to Carolyn Nikkal, Ellen Brenner, and the other BU participants at the 1987 WISC for their helpful comments and honest feedback.)

SUMMER READING LIST

They Went Out Not Knowing: 100 Women in Mission, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church.

The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative, Athalya Brenner.

The Creation of Patriarchy, Gerda Lerner.

Women's Ways of Knowing, Mary Field Belenky.

Black Foremothers, Dorothy Sterling.

When Will We Laugh Again? Barbara P. Kinoy, ed.

Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls, Victoria Byerly.

The House of Spirits, Isabelle Allende.

The Myths of Avalon, Marion Zimmer Bradley.

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood.

Jubilee, Margaret Walker.

Ariadne's Thread, Lyn Lifshin, ed.

Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of American Indian Women, Carolyn Niethammer.

GIFTS TO SHAW CENTER LIBRARY

After a year of ever-increasing involvement and activity for the Shaw Center, we've also found ourselves with a greatly expanding library. As a matter of fact, Shaw's shelf-space for library books is nearly inadequate! Much of this growth is a result of the generosity of friends old and new. So at the close of another academic period, we extend thanks to the following people who have donated books,

magazines or funds to help build our resources: Ruth Duck, Nancy Ginty, Marylou Greenwood, Glynis Hawkins, Peg Huff, Beth Jenkins, Pat Jewett, Emmalou Kirchmeier, Harry Oliver, Irene Scaramazza, Polly Taylor, Chris Wagner, and Carmen Ward.

Thanks also to those who have helped build our library in the past: faculty, staff, students, and friends.