

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

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REMEMBERING THE WORD: Looking Back at Women and the Word 1988

There are times when I wonder what the Shaw Center really does. Sometimes I get so buried under filling out requisitions, re-stocking coffee and napkins, scheduling staff meetings, and bulk mailing the newsletter that I lose sight of why we are at Boston University, why we fill out requisitions for countless events and materials, and why we concern ourselves with this business of women in ministry.

It was with these doubts and questions that I joined the many women involved in the process of planning and organizing this year's Women and the Word Preaching Event. It was because of these doubts and questions that Women and the Word was such a thrilling, refreshing, and encouraging experience for me.

Because they have been over for almost two months now, the specific details of the different workshops and presentations are not as clear to me as the general sense of inspiration and renewed purpose which I carried away from that event. The feedback we received from other people makes me realize it was not only I who felt a much needed boost.

I have heard and read comments such as: "I was uplifted"; "Hearing Rosemary Brown brought out all the emotion I feel about preaching and gave me more enabling to go on"; "A powerful event"; "It was like a cool, fresh-water spring bubbling up in the midst of the desert"; and "This event keeps me alive from March to March."

Over one hundred women and men participated in Women and the Word this year. In the opening worship Kay Albury-Smith preached a sermon entitled "I-Thou." After lunch, we gathered to hear Maria Harris speak on Creating the Word: Women and Preaching. That afternoon Maria Harris, Kay Albury-Smith, Rosemary Brown, the members of the Credo liturgical dance company, Linda Clark, Margie DeSpain and Robin Sprague led workshops.

On Friday, Rosemary Brown preached a sermon entitled "Shattered." Credo enriched this service by dancing and passing out colored shards made of cellophane which the congregation later hung across the front of the sanctuary, to symbolize the beautiful wholeness which even broken shards can make. That morning and afternoon all six workshops were offered again. The closing of the preaching event was a communion service, served by Kay Albury-Smith, Rosemary Brown, and Shirley Hoover.

As I look back at this tumultuous year, this year of frustration, transition, doubt, sadness, and challenge for the Shaw Center as well as the larger STH community, I now know some of the reasons we fill out requisitions and plan events. Women and the Word was an eloquent and passionate reminder of why we are committed to women in ministry. It was a resounding affirmation of why we are here.

Kristy Klein

The Seed

by Eileen Verchereau

Wearily, I pick my way through the gloomy overcast of today, trying to recall the winsome promise of winter's first snow; its features now faded and worn; its frock now drab and dingy.

I see the seed lying on the ground. I kneel in the cold desert of mud, reach out for the seed, touch it, take it hold it. The little seed rests in the palm of my hand.

A seed, any seed, has within all that it is to become. To become its purposes.

I imagine what it will be...

The seed holds the essence of white birch...

I picture its growth...

Now a fragile seedling...new life tentatively poking through the warm earth.

Bathing in gentle life-giving showers, basking in the radiant warmth of the sun, its frail roots guided into the rich, brown soil grasping to take a firm hold.

Then a young sapling, its slender trunk barely able to support its length.

I watch it...growing...becoming...

The promise of spring; the fullness of summer; the golden array of autumn; the bleakness of winter's seeming death; the renewal and rebirth of spring.

The years pass in but a moment. Where once the-little-seed-become-a-tree stood among a clump of its brothers and sisters, now it alone has withstood the ravages of time. The once-frail roots, deep within the source from which they came, brace and sustain the slender trunk grown sturdy. In its branches, tentative life has become fullness of life.

I awake from my reverie...all that I beheld but a fleeting impression.

I wonder: has my-little-seed-to-become-a-tree no doubts? No inner turmoil and torment? Does it face time without time's relentless questioning and searching?

Imperfectly I perceive that my-little-seed-to-become-a-tree is eternally whole and complete, yet is always becoming. It is and will. It will fulfill its purpose for the secret of its perfection lies in its oneness with creation.

The little seed holds the secret of being and becoming that I but dimly discern. It grows and becomes, all the while raising its branches in joyous prayer and adoration.

This seed in the palm of my hand holds the beginnings of a life with its promises and fullness; its brokenness and anguish; its death and rebirth.

Yet, there is within me a little seed of becoming. It too knows the secret of its oneness with the creation. It would become, if I were to stop impeding its course; if I were to cease imagining in my mind's eye what I cannot know.

For like my-little-seed-become-a-tree, the little-seed-that-is-me knows the secret of being and becoming. It is and will become...

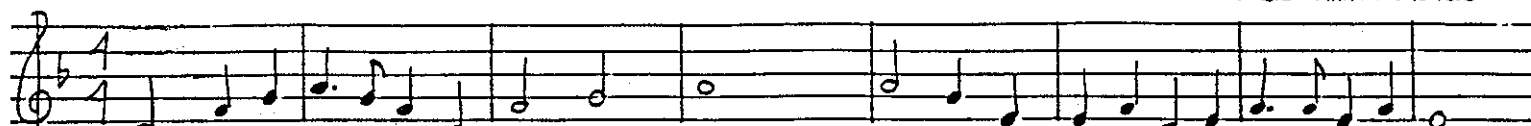
If I can let it be...

Eileen has just completed her first year in the M.Div. program at STH. She lives in Vermont.

Out of the Depths, Oh God, We Call to You

Words - Ruth Duck

Music - Ann MacKenzie



1. Out of the depths, O God, we call to You. Wounds of the past re-main, af-fect-ing all we do.
 2. Out of the depths of fear, O God, we speak. Break-ing the si-lenc-es, your truth and light we seek.
 3. God of the lov-ing heart, we praise your name. Dance through our lives and loves; a-noint with Spir-it flame.



1. Grant us the heal-ing light we need so much. Here in this com-mu-ni-ty, heal us by your touch.
 2. Grant us ac-cept-ance, friends who hear, who bear. Here in this com-mu-ni-ty, hold us in your care.
 3. Grant us your pres-ence in flesh'd, fa-mi-liar face. Here in this com-mu-ni-ty, heal us by your grace.

This hymn was commissioned of Ruth Duck and Ann MacKenzie by Women and the Word, 1988, Anna Howard Shaw Center, School of Theology, Boston University School of Theology.

© Ruth Duck, 1988
 © Ann MacKenzie, 1988

Ann MacKenzie has just named the tune, "Shawannaho," in honor of her Native American heritage and Anna Howard Shaw.

CELEBRATION AND GOOD-BYE

On April 20, about eighty people gathered in the festively decorated basement of STH for a celebration of Elizabeth Bettenhausen's years at STH.

The evening's program was held together by the newly formed musical group of Amy Brooks, Will Fairbanks, Scott Hanson, Laura Jaquith, Barb Lemmel, Mary Scifres, Kathy Watson, and Mark Word. They started the presentation with two pieces by Bach, Elizabeth's favorite composer. Elizabeth Davis, of the Lost and Found Storytellers, told one of her original stories called "If Sisyphus Were a Woman." Dorothy Rogers and Tim Cumings enlivened the evening

with some "Heretical Songs." Walter Meulder, Jane Cary Peck, Merle Jordan, Margaret Wiborg, and Carolyn Nikkal spoke on behalf of the many different groups which have been affected by Elizabeth's gifts and presence.

The crowd, the entertainment, the food, the flowers, and the occasion were a good blend of joviality and sadness, which made the evening both a celebration and an acknowledgement of what her termination means to us all.

Next year, Elizabeth will be a Theologian in Residence at the Walker Ecumenical Exchange here in Boston.

BOOK REVIEW: Developments in Religious Education

One of the fastest-growing fields in church ministry is adult education and, praise God, women are "in the thick of it." During the past decade, women have contributed significantly to the outpouring of books, monographs, and articles on the general subject of adult and continuing education. Amidst this plethora of material, readers will find two recently published books by Religious Education Press of great benefit. Written by two United Methodist Women, both diaconal ministers, *Handbook of Adult Religious Education* (1986) and *Religious Education of Older Adults* (1984) offer rich resources to those seeking an effective ministry to adults.

The *Handbook of Adult Religious Education*, edited by Dr. Nancy Foltz of the Western Pennsylvania Conference, is a compendium of ten introductory, scholarly articles on the theory and practice of adult religious education. Written for practitioners, this highly useful volume reviews a variety of ministerial situations and adult needs in today's church society: the purpose and scope of adult religious education; working with young, middle-aged, and older adults; working with educators of adults, with single parents, with adults in separation and divorce, and with adults in death-related circumstances; and the future of adult religious education. Regrettably, there are no in-depth articles on family ministries and parent education, two traditional yet creative areas of adult education. At the same time, the *Handbook of Adult Religious Education* is a solid reference work for anyone involved in adult ministries.

The Religious Education of Older Adults written by Dr. Linda Vogel, of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, is a helpful guidebook for seniors, the majority of whom are women, and those ministering to older adults. An outgrowth of Vogel's dissertation work at the University of Iowa, this book celebrates the promise and opportunity for ministry and adult religious education for senior citizens in all types of settings (e.g., churches, adult day-care centers, retirement communities, nursing homes, and community education centers). Interestingly, a principal reader of the Vogel manuscript was Nelle Slater, a former faculty member in religious education and associate dean at BUSTH who is now professor of Christian education at the Christian School of Theology in Indianapolis.

In the main, Dr. Vogel's work discusses the aging process, the teaching-learning transaction as it applies to older adults, barriers to older adult learning, and useful strategies for promoting effective religious education experiences for seniors.

Vogel's study enters some challenging fields of inquiry. Her review of traditional versus contemporary approaches to adult Christian education is a masterpiece. Her instructions to teachers/facilitators of older adult learners and her presentation of a contextual model for adult learning ought to be required reading for every adult educator. Clearly hers is an adult education philosophy:

The effective teacher of older adults can be described first and foremost as an enabler. The teacher as enabler seeks to authorize older adults by encouraging them to pursue their interests and aspirations to grow and develop, to free them to learn by providing them relational support, and to empower them by affirming their abilities to achieve their aspirations (pg. 113).

Finally, the author provides detailed guidance to those interested in developing and implementing programs of religious education for older adults. Through use of a case study and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Vogel identifies and discusses four program areas for ministry to senior citizens: life maintenance (basic human services, e.g. Meals on Wheels and day care), life enrichment (adult education aimed at providing life-coping and life-enriching skills), life reconstruction (learning experiences that deal with loss and proposing new beginnings), and life transcendence ("discovering mystery and beauty in existence"). Vogel's compelling volume lends increased validity to the psalmist's declaration: "As long as I have breath, I will give praise to my God" (Ps. 146:2).

Dianne Reistroffer

(Dianne just completed her second year in the Master of Divinity program. She is also a doctoral student in adult and community education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.)

BOOK REVIEW: *As We Are Now*

May Sarton, New England poet and novelist, describes in *As We Are Now* the poignant realities of being old. The novel has the form of a journal written by seventy-six-year-old Caro Spencer. Now confined to a "home," she presents in stark terms the "concentration camp for the old."

As in many contemporary novels, the issues of power and powerlessness are foremost. Ms. Spencer says, "I am not mad, only old," and then proceeds to write in her journal of the continuous struggle to maintain that sanity. Unlike many novels, *As We Are Now* contains a minister who is not only sympathetically treated but also behaves professionally. The Reverend Thornhill, minister at the Methodist Church, comes to visit all the residents. He listens to Ms. Spencer and hears the unspoken.

This novel is not fast-paced, but it is a thought-provoking story with an interesting twist of plot. May Sarton guides the reader to consider the full ramification of the tombstone's verse:

As you are now, so once was I;
Prepare for death and follow me.

Pamela Jean Estes

CONGRATULATIONS, RUTH DUCK

Ruth Duck is a United Church of Christ clergywoman, hymnwriter, and Th.D. candidate at BUSTH. She has written *Everflowing Streams*, *Bread for the Journey*, and *Flames of the Spirit*. The hymnal revision committee of the United Methodist Church has selected her hymn, "Wash Us, God, Your Sons and Daughters," as one of its new baptismal hymns. Congratulations, Ruth.

GEORGIA HARKNESS AWARDS

Mary Lou Greenwood in the financial aid office announces that out of the eighty-eight women applicants for this year's Georgia Harkness Scholarship, fifty-three awards were offered. All three of the women from Boston University School of Theology who applied received an award. Congratulations to **Susan Montgomery**, **Dianne Reistroffer**, and **Eileen Verchereau**!

UMC GENERAL CONFERENCE

The Shaw Center was well-represented at the 1988 General Conference of the United Methodist Church, held in St. Louis, Missouri, April 25-May 5. Shirley Hoover, a BUSTH graduate and advisory board member was a clergy delegate. Margaret Wiborg, director of the Shaw Center, and Joyce Robinson, a former advisory board member, were lay delegates. Faith Richardson, an advisory board member, is the General Conference Secretary. Florence Freeman, chair of the advisory board is on the General Council on Finance and Administration, the committee which receives and disburses general church funds. A vanload of BUSTH students also made it out to St. Louis for the second week of the conference. These students were Amy Alletzhauser, Paul Baker, Barb Lemmel, Carolyn Nikkal, and Kathy Watson.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

June 28-30: National Gathering Network for United Church of Christ Clergywomen: By the Power of the Spririt. Eighteen opportunities will be offered to explore the abuse and right use of power--personal, pastoral, and political--using the transforming and renewing power of God as our guide. Will be held at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. For more information, contact Joan Pettis: 619/ 466-0504 or 619/ 589-0191.

September 16-17: Retreat for women students, faculty, and staff at BUSTH. Rolling Ridge Conference Center, North Andover, Massachusetts. For more information, contact the Shaw Center at 617/ 353-3075.

March 16-17, 1989: Fifth Annual Women and the Word Preaching Event. Mark your calendars now!

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FAREWELL

As the academic year comes to a close, the list of departing faculty and staff women is growing. We would like to recognize these women who have contributed so much to the School of Theology, to celebrate their time at STH, and to wish them the best in their new environments. Farewell to:

Elizabeth Bettenhausen
Amy Brooks
Kathy Fairbanks
Shirley Lund
Elizabeth Swayne
Carolyn Waller
Linda Wood