



Anna Howard Shaw Center

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 19 ♦ NUMBER 2 ♦ FALL/WINTER 2002

ALL-WOMEN'S RETREAT

Rev. Nikita McCalister

I attended the "Faith and Fear" All-Women's Retreat held on September 13-14, 2002, in Worcester, Massachusetts, with anxiety, anticipation, and gladness. The event offered a welcome opportunity to build Christian relationships with fellow students and faculty, as well as to develop a sisterhood that reached across the barriers of race, age, belief, and sexual orientation. All ten participants were in accord to assist each other through the process of moving from fear to faith. The retreat proved to be an enriching and very worthwhile endeavor.

Teaching assistant, Th.D. candidate, and returning Shaw Woman Tiffany Steinwert led several very creative services that challenged us directly to face our fears. Although I did not feel that I had a lot of significant fears to resolve, I rather enjoyed the many exercises we participated in as we wrestled with the concept of



The Annual All-Women's Retreat was a big success this fall, and the participants enjoyed their time together.

"Faith and Fear." Friday night's service focused on water as both a source of life and a dangerous force. We meditated on the fear the Disciples faced during the storm, as narrated in Matthew 8. We also drew visual representations of our fears, depicting where we felt we were in the stormy seas of life, and looking for the

hope of God's presence to carry us through the storm. Through these exercises, we all had the opportunity to acknowledge and separate from our fears and reservations about the unknown future. This was a liberating experience!

continued on page 2

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Deborah Luchenbill, Interim Director

Transition happens in all our lives. It is necessary to keep our lives from becoming too stagnant. We may look to times of transition with anticipation or with anxiety. Most likely, we view transition with a little of both. The Anna Howard Shaw Center is in a time of transition of many sorts, and it is a very exciting time. We recently welcomed the students back to the School and greeted a new class. The Shaw Center has hired some wonderful new Work-Study students to complement Rebecca Clark, who is returning from last year. The Advisory Board met recently and had a daylong working retreat where we did some planning for the coming year's activities and discussed two books we read, *Bailey's Café* and *The Red Tent*. We are also undertaking a search for a new Director of the Shaw Center. In addition, the School of Theology as a whole has mourned the

continued on page 2

In this Issue

ALL-WOMEN'S RETREAT	1
FROM THE DIRECTOR	1
LOSING ONE OF OUR OWN	3
REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES	4
NEW FACES AT STH	5



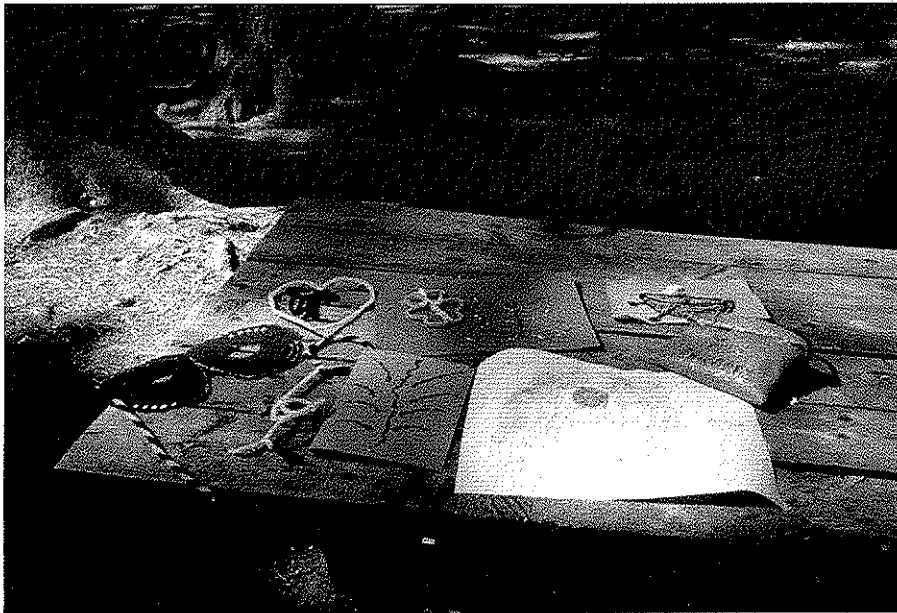
*From the Director
continued from page 1*

loss of Professor Prathia Hall, who passed away this summer, and more recently, the loss of Professor Anthony Campbell, while at the same time anticipating the arrival of new faculty and staff. Our communities and our nation are going through transition after the recent elections. There is a lot going on!

I must admit that I have not always had a positive perspective on times of transition. Being faced with an unknown

future can be daunting and scary. Over the past few years, however, I have been learning to focus on the more positive aspects of transition as well. Times of transition can be filled with positive energy and visioning for the future. It is this kind of energy that fills the Shaw Center right now. We are maintaining the vital functions and programs of the Center, while looking with anticipation to the hiring of a full-time director and the gifts and interests she will bring. We are also working to ensure that the Shaw Center

meets the needs and interests of the current women students and to shape new programming and research in response to such needs and interests. There are a lot of exciting things happening at the Center and for all the different women who use and are a part of it. We will continue visioning together about the future of the Center—looking to new ideas and interests while maintaining important traditions. I am pleased to be serving the Shaw Center during this time of transition, this time of visioning and energy. ♦



After some moving worship services, the participants had a chance to express their creativity, and then let their artwork dry in the sun.

*All-Women's Retreat
continued from page 1*

I found the burning ceremony wonderfully presented as one of the climactic moments of the retreat. For this exercise, we focused on fire as the presence of God, the purifying flame, the offertory pyre, and a power of destruction. This exercise took place early Saturday morning. Each woman recorded her thoughts

about fear and doubt and cast these reflections into the fire. This was a phenomenal experience, since most often we move from either "fear to faith" or "doubt to belief" in our Christian experience. It was empowering to watch other women cast their fears aside and give them over to God. At the conclusion of the ceremony, we shared communion and feasted on milk and honey.

As I sat in prayer for my sisters and watched some of them struggle with releasing their fears and embracing God's truth, God spoke to my heart. It was definitely a moving experience. We had created a sacred space. We united our faith to encourage one another to take a leap of faith, leaving our worries behind. Some came forth hesitantly as they tossed their fears into the burning flame, while others came with a sense of freedom and relief, quickly throwing their memoirs of doubt away. Yet, as the flames from the fire crackled and singed the written confessed fears, the Holy Spirit whispered a message in my ear as the women approached the fire. The message sounded as if a melodious choir sang these words:

The sum of our fears,
The sum of our doubts,
We cast them away!

In closing, once we have put all of our fears and doubts behind us, we are now able to exclaim, "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us" (Philippians 4:13). We are able to move from Fear to Faith. ♦



LOSING ONE OF OUR OWN

Rebecca Clark

Late this summer the School of Theology community suffered a tremendous loss. The Reverend Dr. Prathia Hall passed away on August 12, 2002, after a long battle with illness. Dr. Hall, the School's Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of Christian Social Ethics, first came to the School of Theology as a Women and the Word presenter in 1996. She was appointed as the King scholar in the 2000–2001 academic year, concluding a three-year-long search to fill that important position. This was a fitting appointment, as Dr. Hall herself uttered a prayer at a 1962 memorial service in Terrell County, Georgia, that profoundly influenced Dr. King, one of the attendees. Her stirring repetition of her vision for the future—"I have a dream"—inspired King so deeply that he later incorporated it into his most famous speech.

The Reverend Dr. Prathia Hall received both a Master of Divinity and a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. During the 1960s, she was active in the Civil Rights movement, which she said was "a movement about people. Our goal was human dignity and rights for all people." She was also a leader in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in Alabama and Georgia, and she directed community action programs. An ordained American Baptist minister, Dr. Hall pastored the Mount Sharon Baptist Church beginning in 1978, and enjoyed an active career as a preacher, writer, and lecturer. In her 1996 address to the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Dr. Hall reiterated her passion for freedom, saying that "captivity is a lie," as the burden is already removed

by Christ. Her commitment to justice and community action were living testimony to her conviction that Christ has already won the victory over captivity.

At Boston University School of Theology, The Reverend Dr. Prathia Hall held the Martin Luther King Jr. Chair in Social Ethics, and taught additional courses in Women and Religion, African/American Religious Experience, and Christian Social Ethics. She specialized in Womanist theology, ethics, and African/American church history. In addition, she served as a mentor and friend to many students who had the opportunity to work with her during her brief tenure at the School of Theology. She was a passionate woman of courage and faith, whose deep dependence on God sustained her through the trials of her life, keeping her peaceful and positive in the months preceding her death.

Dr. Hall's death in August came as a great shock to the students, faculty, and staff at Boston University. Many members of the School of Theology community attended Dr. Hall's funeral in August as well as the memorial service held for the community in Marsh Chapel in mid-October. The memorial service provided an excellent opportunity for the entire School of Theology community to celebrate the life of Dr. Hall and grieve her passing. Several testimonies were given by students who had worked with her, by her pastor, and by Dean Robert Neville. All the witnesses commented on Dr. Hall's exceptional courage and grace through her long struggle with illness. The Reverend Faith Harris, a Th.D. candidate at the School of Theology, described Dr. Hall as a "modern day hero," and a woman who was "courage



A powerful preacher, scholar, professor, and friend, The Reverend Dr. Prathia Hall will be deeply missed by the School of Theology community.

personified." This sentiment was echoed by many who knew Dr. Hall, and who appreciated what Jabulani McCalister (M.Div. 2005) referred to as her "Victory in Struggle." Dr. Hall was truly an inspiration to the students, faculty, and church members who were fortunate enough to work with her, and she is remembered as a powerful voice both in the pulpit and in the social context, speaking out for African Americans and for women. In his remembrance, Th.D. candidate Jim Fripp quoted these telling words from Dr. Hall: "The same God who made me a preacher made me a woman—and I am convinced that God was not confused on either count!" ♦



REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Megan Stowe

I attended the Anna Howard Shaw Center annual retreat in September. What was striking to me was the awesome female companionship I found there. Definitely the most eye-opening experience was the communion service on Saturday. It could have been the freshly baked bread or maybe it was the symbolism embodied in the milk and honey served, or even the altar that included our sacred objects and bright cloths from many different cultures (predominantly African). But I think it was when Tiffany, in the liturgy, referred to Jesus as God's child—rather than son—that made this one of the most memorable communion services I ever attended. Why was it so enlightening for me that Jesus was called "child"? It was the first time that I identified with Jesus as something more than "wholly other." I have always seen Jesus as half divine and half

man, neither of which I can relate to, but I am also a child of God, and in that moment I felt incredibly close to Jesus in a way I had never experienced before. For the first time, I really understood the argument for inclusive language, even for Jesus. When people disagree with inclusive language, I feel that they are missing an important component of Jesus' identity.

I also attended Student Forum 2002 this Memorial Day weekend as a member of the United Methodist Student Movement, where I again appreciated the unique ministry of the Anna Howard Shaw Center. Student Forum is a nationwide gathering of young adults (18–30 years old) in the United Methodist Church who get together for a few days of fellowship and work on petitions similar to those brought to General Conference.

This is also an occasion for educational seminars. I was pleased that there was one seminar that dealt exclusively with women's issues in the church, both for laity and clergy. It was great hearing other women's experiences that really resonated with my own. In addition, there were also some men who attended because they share our concerns. However, the whole experience made me thankful that I attend a seminary that has a safe place for women, because many of the women present did not have an asset like the Shaw Center. I am also grateful that there were women like Anna Howard Shaw who went before me to pave the road toward ordination and equality among the genders in ministry. ♦

MEET THE SHAW CENTER STAFF

Rebecca Clark

Returning to the Shaw Center staff for a second year as newsletter editor is Rebecca Clark. Becca is an M.Div. student, on track for ordination in the United Methodist Church. Originally from northeastern Vermont, she graduated from Elmira College in Elmira, NY, with a major in philosophy and religion.

Now in her second year, Becca is busy working as a student pastor at Christ Church United Methodist in Wellesley, MA. In addition, she juggles her responsibilities as student, Shaw worker, and wife to husband Benjamin. This year, Becca continues to produce the Anna Howard Shaw Center Newsletter and care for the growing Shaw plant collection.

Jen Coggins

Joining the Shaw Center staff this year is Jen Coggins, coordinator of Women and the Word. Jen is a second-year M.T.S. student at Boston University School of Theology and hopes to go on to a career in non-profit work after she graduates in May. Originally from Fort Worth, TX, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Texas Christian University.

In addition to her work at the Shaw Center planning this spring's Women and the Word conference, Jen keeps herself busy with a full load of courses and the MTS Club. She also has a second job providing childcare for two adorable toddlers.

Karen Alley

Karen Alley joins the Shaw Center staff this year as the coordinator of programming and resources. Karen is a first-year M.Div. student and on the track for ordination in the United Methodist Church. She is originally from Montana and attended Montana State University-Billings where she obtained her degree in mathematics.

As a first-year student, Karen is learning to juggle her course load, learning to live in a city (and use public transportation!), as well as working at the Shaw Center. This year, she will serve as a program resource person and hopes to organize some programming for School of Theology women.



NEW FACES AT THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Niki Johnson is a first-year student in the Th.D. program, hoping to major in Practical Theology and minor in Church History. Upon completion of her degree, Niki hopes to teach at a Christian-affiliated college or university. Niki grew up in western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania, and has always lived near a lake. Before coming to Boston University School of Theology, she worked for four years in campus ministry, specializing in community development and service-learning. Niki has also spent some time in Cuba and Haiti and hopes to return to both some day. She has a great commitment to social justice issues, and appreciates participating in peace protests, service in poor neighborhoods, and ecumenical dialogue. Commenting on her first experience with city life, Niki says Boston is a fabulous and exciting city, with a rich "diversity of foods, faces, and languages." She adds that she can say the same for BUSTH.

Stephanie Kinnitt is a new student in the M.Div. program, who previously worked as a full-time sixth-grade English teacher at the Gavin Middle School in

South Boston. After she completes her degree program, Stephanie has two goals: she would like to return to the Boston Public School system and work as a student support coordinator or counselor with troubled youth, and she would like to pursue a doctoral degree at Boston University. Stephanie remains close to her hometown roots. She grew up in Roxbury, part of Boston's inner city, and she was bussed to school in the suburbs for all twelve years of her public education. Her interest in working with children does not stop with her educational experiences, either. Stephanie spends her time outside of school working as Director of Young Adult Ministries at the Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church, where she is also a member of the Voices of Deliverance. She is also the proud and busy mother of her eight-year-old son, Khaivon, and a senior sales director with Mary Kay Cosmetics. Stephanie recently earned her second career car through Mary Kay: a 2003 Pontiac Grand Am! She agrees with Niki that the best thing about BU so far is the diversity.

Laura Strietelmeier is also a first-year M.Div. student, and plans to continue her education beyond the M.Div. program. She eventually plans to serve God either through ordained ministry or teaching. Originally from a small and beautiful corn-and-soybean-farming town in northeast Indiana, Laura was once a "sad, overworked biology major at Butler University in Indiana." She spent all of last year trying in vain to extract DNA from a plant called the "Jerusalem artichoke." Now her interests include reading, long-distance running, and music. She has taken piano lessons since she was eight, and enjoys playing improvisational piano for relaxation. Laura and her husband also have a passion for foreign travel and languages. They save all their pennies in their "travel fund," so that they can someday see the world! Laura loves living in Boston, because she can get around the city without driving and explore small, random shops. When it comes to the School of Theology, she too appreciates the diversity of religious traditions represented by the students because "it makes for great conversations and tons of fun new experiences." ♦

LOOKING AHEAD: WOMEN AND THE WORD 2003

The Anna Howard Shaw Center is preparing yet another great Women and the Word preaching event. This year's conference will be held at Boston University on March 26–27, 2003. The theme is "Loose Ends: The Ragged Wisdom of Women's Lives," focusing on women's unique experiences and incorporating those experiences in church wor-

ship and life. The presenters will be Rev. Dr. Barbara Lundblad and Dr. Janet Walton, professors at Union Theological Seminary. In addition, Drs. Lundblad and Walton will bring a panel of women with them to draw on their experiences in church life. Yanira Chacon-Lopez, Ginger Worden, and Alison Guttu will join the

presenters in discussion of women's experience. Together with a variety of workshops and resources, the leadership of Women and the Word 2003 should create an exciting conference. Look for information coming soon, or contact the Shaw Center for more information (617-353-3075, www.bu.edu/sth/shaw). ♦



NEWS FROM THE STH WOMEN

Dana Robert has had a busy fall. She lectured at two different theological seminaries in Korea in October, and in November she was the plenary speaker for the National Council of Churches annual meeting. In addition, Dr. Robert has released a new book, which she co-edited with two others: *Frontiers of African Christianity: Essays in Honour of Inus Daneel* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2002).

Claire Wolfteich has a new book, *Navigating New Terrain: Work and Women's Spiritual Lives*, published by Paulist Press

in November 2002. Her book explores women's changing work roles from 1940 to the present, looking particularly at issues such as vocation, family, time pressures, guilt, spiritual practice, models of holiness, and leadership in the church. In addition, Dr. Wolfteich has been invited to serve as an advisor to the Roman Catholic Bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church for a three-year term, from 2002 to 2004. The Committee will be working on two major areas of concern: collaborative ministry and women's changing work roles.

Former "Shaw Woman" and Women and the Word presenter **Ruth Duck** (STH '89) returned to Boston University School of Theology for the Brown Lecture Series this November. The series this year was entitled "The Words of Worship: Can We Be a Multicultural Church?" Dr. Duck delivered a sermon to the STH community and Lecture attendees in Marsh Chapel, and lectured on liturgy, hymnody, and worship. ♦

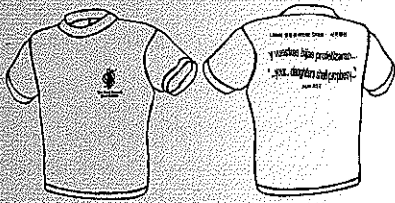
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