Dr. Boustan Hirji (STH ’81)

Dr. Boustan Hirji was born in India and brought up in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Dr. Hirji received a Master of Theological Studies from Boston University School of Theology in 1981. Dr. Hirji has travelled widely and lived in other places—Canada, Egypt, England—studying, teaching, and lecturing. She came to the USA in 1971 to St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame.

She is a spiritual leader and interfaith educator. Her thesis at Boston University School of Theology was a comparative study of Exodus and Hijrah (comparing the Judaeo-Christian tradition to the Islamic one). Dr. Hirji received her doctorate from McGill University. She has been teaching Comparative Religion at Dawson College, Quebec, for twenty-five years.

Hirji has been a regular consultant and lecturer for Clinical Pastoral Education students. She worked with the faculty to develop a course on how various religious traditions view the concept of health and illness. She was also keynote speaker for the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Racial Ethnic Minority Conference in Washington, DC and was the first to address interfaith issues at the conference.

Dr. Hirji has been a powerful voice for gender and human rights in Islam. She has written many papers on this subject. Her new book, Sands Under a Relentless Sun, is a volume of short stories about women: their loves, their strengths, their oppression, and their endurance.

Hirji has been active at the Shambhalacalli Buddhist Centre in Mexico and For Action Aid and Naripokkho in Bangladesh. She was a lecturer at the Washington Hospital Center Program of Clinical Pastoral Education from 1988-1989 and developed a new course for the CPE program: “Health and Healing in Religious Traditions.” She has also been a lecturer in London at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. In addition to her work in academia, she also leads workshops for the community including serving as a community counselor in London, leading workshops for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and serving as a counselor at Walpole State Penitentiary. She speaks English, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali. She has presented numerous papers on Islam, human rights, interfaith topics, and gender and has lectured in England, Mexico, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.