

Jocelyn Bires

Introduction to World Religion

Professor Ko

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Site Visit Report 2

On Thursday April 23, 2015, I attended a Comparative Religion Seminar on Women in Abrahamic Religions. This took place at Lorain Country Community College in the Spitzer Conference Center Grand Room at 7 pm for approximately 2 hours ending about 9 pm. The seating was set in three sections, a middle section and 2 sections on the sides. There were approximately 200 people attending. There were people of all ages and seemed to be pretty even in the distribution of females and males in attendance. For my first site visit I attended a Catholic mass on Easter. I have always liked learning about women's roles changing throughout time in society. Since I do not practice a specific religion, I thought this would be a perfect meeting for me to attend so I could learn about multiple religions at once.

During this seminar I had the pleasure of listening to three women speak on behalf of their religion. Representing Judaism was Rabbi Lauren Werber of Temple B'nai Abraham, then Rev. Mary Carson of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer spoke about Christianity, and finally Ms. Julia Shearson, the Executive Director of the Cleveland and Northern Ohio Chapter Council on American-Islamic Relations spoke. Each of them spoke for about 30 minutes and then the last 30 minutes of the seminar was for any questions the attending audience had. As this seminar took place in a conference room, there were no distinctive symbols or decorations representing

any of the religions. However, the women speaking wore attire that represented their religion. For example, while all 3 of the women were dressed in business casual attire, Ms. Julia Shearson wore a hijab which is a veil worn by Muslim women that covers the head and chest and is worn as a symbol of modesty and privacy. Each of the 3 women gave very interesting information about their religions and how women and their roles in each religion have changed over time. While speaking about Judaism, Rabbi Lauren Werber discussed how women were never as empowered as men but have always found ways to be successful in helping to improve the ways others view them and increase their responsibility in society. She then talked about how the Reform Movement has allowed for complete equality for women to be a rabbi (with the first female rabbi in December 1935) and that recently it has been more common for women to be ordained over men. Next, Mary Carson spoke on behalf of Christianity. She said that while there were not many women mentioned in the bible there were plenty who were significant and had major accomplishments throughout time. Just some of them include Mary Magdalene, Harriet Ross Tubman, Isabella Thoburn, and Reverend Antoinette Brown Blackwell. Finally, Julia Shearson talked about women in Islamic faith. She discussed the many stereotypes that go along with Muslim women. One of the biggest stereotypes is about the way Muslim women dress. She said that the way Muslim women dress is done because they want to not because they have to and also in their culture it is a symbol of modesty. She also described the rights these women have and how there are more options open to women than many people think. For example, they have the right to work and have an actual job if they want. Also, even though there are arranged marriages, women have consent and may say no. They also

have the right to divorce, however it is very frowned upon and is only to be used as a last resort.

I found this seminar to be very interesting. The women speaking were very knowledgeable and gave great information about all 3 religions that made me want to learn about them more. It is great to learn about women making such great strides and accomplishments throughout history. I felt that this would encourage any woman to try and do whatever she wants no matter what other people say. I would recommend other people to attend this meeting if it or anything similar was to take place again.