



A Word of Apology

Synergy apologizes for the lateness in arrival of this issue of the newsletter. We have had some problems in scheduling and mailing, but hope the kinks are ironed out and we can get back on a reasonable schedule. Please bear with us.

The content and writing assignments were lined up last fall. For those who think the millennium as a theme is a bit late, remember that the real millenium will take place on Jan. 1, 2001!

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Conference Plans Announced

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry announces plans for the annual conference, to be held this year at River Road Church in Richmond on September 23, from 9 to 3. Lunch will be included.

The conference is organized around the theme of **Worship and the Arts** and will feature as worship leaders Catherine Kapikian and Fredericka Berger, from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.; Carol Chase from Elon College in North Carolina; and Deborah Shoenfeld from Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond.

Kapikian and Berger are faculty members and the director and associate director, respectively, of the Center for the Arts and Religion at Wesley Seminary. Chase is a writer and professor of English at Elon College and has written on the works of Madeline L'Engle. Shoenfeld is a musician and professor at B TSR, and is charged with organizing the new degree program in church music.

Reservation information will be mailed later in the summer. However, interested persons are encouraged to reserve the time on your calendars and plan to be there.

Editorial

End Game Strategy

by Barbara Jackson

What did you expect would happen with the Y2K business? I had to laugh at the folks who went to Israel so they would be present for the new Armageddon and ready for the rapture. But I did love to watch the festivities on television. The fireworks were spectacular—even if it happened a year too early!

With all the hype about the new millennium, I took the occasion to read a little about calendars and dating schemes. For instance, for the Jews the year is already 5760, the Muslims 1420, and the Chinese celebrated the Year of the Dragon on Feb. 4? What is clear is that calendars are artificial constructs subject to tampering and change, both a tool of the state and a reflection of politics as well as theology.

However, the whole scenario was interesting. I'm sure those who stockpiled batteries and food supplies were glad they had those things on hand during the winter ice storm that knocked out power for a lot of people in the Richmond area. The Jackson family had to revive some camping skills!

In case you haven't figured it out, the articles in this issue of SYNERGY have a common thread running through them in the exploration of millennium, life's purpose and facing death.

I came across an article recently about the game of checkers. The gist of the article was that checkers is more complex than chess, more engrossing to its practitioners than computer games and is endlessly fascinating. The literature about checkers covers long lists of strategic moves, opening gambits, ploys, misleading plays and traps—and most interesting to me, a well defined theory of end-game strategy.

I don't play checkers—that is to say, I don't play checkers now. As a child I used to play with my dad. I usually lost, but then I expected to lose with that master game player. At some point after I discovered that *any* kid younger than I could beat me, I decided a strategic retreat was wise and I should apply my energies elsewhere!

Yet even today some of the lessons of checkers come to me out of the blue. For instance, the one who goes first has a strategic advantage and can set up the board for an eventual win. The inexperienced player usually does not recognize when he or she is out-manuevered and often steps into a trap. And even if one plays well at first, to make just one wrong move can put the player in a fatal trap that leads to defeat.

That is where “end game strategy” comes into play. The idea here is that the checkers player must keep in mind the goals of

the game, i.e., get to the other side and crown your kings and take all the opponents' pieces. In the process of achieving the overall goal, one must implement a strategy that will minimize losses and maximize gains. One must view the board and say “where do I need to be to pull a win out of this game?”

Even though I don't play checkers now, I do play computer games. They are endlessly fascinating and annoyingly addictive. And I have discovered some of the same principles apply. One game I like is a scheme in which the player matches up pairs of tiles until there are no tiles left. There are four tiles of the same icon or color. If you make a wrong match you may be in a trap and the game is lost. The player is not playing against the computer or another player but against oneself. The game requires an understanding of strategy and a sense of logical sequence. It also requires the player to view the board as a whole rather than concentrate on just the next play. That is to say, the player must ask, what do I need to do to end up where I want to be!

Of course, by now the reader knows where I am going with this essay. Games are like life. The effective participants in life's game have goals, know the rules, know how to maneuver to achieve a strategic advantage, and above all know what they need to do to end up where they want to be. That is to say, be focused!

Of course, we could spiritualize this little parable and talk about turning the other cheek and loving one's neighbor and accepting God's will. Of course.

The flip side, however, is to critique the usual churchly position. Far too often the church advises one to keep the faith and all will be well. Job knew that was not true. We know that is not true. We were told growing up that to accept God's will means to stay open to God's guidance and God would provide.

My point in this essay is to suggest that in following God's will it is more productive to be intentional in making choices than to believe God will lead us into the next step without our having a say. The principles are valid in career choices and financial decisions as well as games. They are also valid in exercising theological discernment and splitting hairs.

When the game of life draws to a close, we ask what it is you want to have accomplished. Epitaphs are merely words—deeds are real. And in playing the game of life, are you having fun! Can you find time to watch the birds and smell the roses?

Barbara Jackson is the editor of SYNERGY, loves to sing in the choir and grub in the garden, and is a writer for several publications.

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Millennial Mania

by Betty Pugh

As I was preparing this past Summer for what would be the focus of our Wednesday night study series in the Fall, I began to realize how much energy was being expended on this whole millennium thing. Fatalistic, millennial fears and Y2K angst related to the ultimate and expansive dysfunction in our computerized systems pervaded newscasts, newspapers, and daily conversations in business offices. But what also intrigued me were the underpinnings that had a religious feel, even among people who were not particularly religious. Words and phrases like rapture, the second coming, and Armageddon were being thrown around by just about everyone but with very little understanding of what all this early Christian stuff is really all about.

Of course, none of us really knows what will happen tomorrow, much less as we shift into the next millennium. But I believe that all of this actually does have some theological and prophetic impetus for the Christian who does not interpret that the texts in Revelation were literal prophecies for our day.

The last book of the Bible has found its way into *Time* as well as *Newsweek*. It has moved up in the charts from outright rejection or practical indifference to widespread curiosity and even intense scrutiny. Church people, modern-day prophets, journalists and others have turned to Revelation for some answers.

And I guess this is okay. What people think and believe about Revelation may actually affect how they proceed into the unknown, not only January 1, 2000, but each day before and after. So, what does Revelation have to say?

Although the word "millennium" does not appear in Revelation, Revelation is the only book of the Bible that refers explicitly to believers' thousand-year reign with Christ. Revelation 20:6 says:

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. (NRSV)

Whatever this passage means, a reference to the year 2000 is improbable, for numerical references in Revelation function primarily symbolically. Revelation does not predict the establishment of an earthly reign of a thousand years duration in the year 2000. Any assumption as such is purely coincidental.

In fact, when I read Revelation, it is really not in the predicting business at all. It is really about relationships in the first century, especially those institutions and structures which are oppressive and unjust. The power of this symbolic language lies in the fact that Christians of any historical context must answer the questions common to the early church: "How are we to make sense of a culture so attractive and powerful that its claim on our ultimate loyalties almost feels irresistible? How do we find ourselves being

obedient disciples of Christ in a world full of seduction? With so much evil in the world, is there anything in which we can find lasting hope?"

In John's vision, following the return (*parousia*) of Christ but preceding a final judgment of evil forces that have held sway, the resurrected saints will reign with Christ for a very long time. It asserts that any who lose their lives in their witness to Christ will regain them and that those who now exercise power unjustly will one day relinquish it to those who follow Christ. Those who repent and endure will share in Christ's victory.

In its symbolic representation of natural and cosmic destruction and restoration, Revelation does not so much predict particular events as promise that in a world which challenges God's ways, justice will prevail.

Not every aspect of Revelation fits the situation of most American churches in the modern age. The use of militaristic language is hard for some to engage. And the symbols of Revelation for cities, which are personified as women, can be just as distasteful. Revelation invites the reader to consider women in terms of polarized extremes: good or evil, pure or impure, heavenly or destructive, helpless or powerful, bride or temptress, wife or whore.

Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza states that rather than instilling a "hunger and thirst for righteousness," the symbolic message of Revelation can further perpetuate prejudice and injustice if it is not translated effectively into a contemporary situation that rhetorically fits. In other words, you must be aware of the misogynist possibilities contained in a literal interpretation that are as hazardous to justice and peace as making predictions about the end of time.

Revelation envisions the church as a witnessing people. In Revelation faith consists of faithfulness, a loyal witness to the truth

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that God alone deserves our ultimate allegiance. The opposite of faith is assimilation into a seductive culture that denies God. In the call for witnesses found in Revelation we are provided not only a hope for the future but a way of resistance in the present for those who reject violent retaliation.

Who knows what January 2000 will bring? [ed. note: the essay was written in Nov. of 1999.] But in the face of the unknown, Revelation affirms the most important knowledge that God's ways will ultimately prevail. We will respond best to the Y2K challenge, not by stocking up food and bottled water, but by investing more vulnerably in the one who knows the future and holds the future, our future.

The Rev. Dr. Betty Pugh is pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Richmond.

Nickels and Pears

by Sheryl Johnson

I have a pile of change on my dresser. I suppose that is not all that unusual. One evening I started looking through it, trying to find some of those new state quarters that have come out this year. For some reason I started taking notice of the dates on the quarters and saw one dated 1968. I was a little surprised to find a coin that had been around that long. (In case you didn't know, the average circulation life of a coin is 25 years.) Of course, now I needed to know what the oldest coin was of each type on my dresser. That 1968 quarter turned out to be the oldest 25¢ piece. I found a dime from 1967. The oldest penny was only from 1973. But the oldest nickel, worn smooth a bit from age, has been in circulation since 1958.

I do not know why, but that fact really struck me. That little piece of metal has been around for 41 years. I wonder what it's been doing all that time. Perhaps it spent some time in the piggy bank of an 8-year-old, saving up to buy mom something special for Christmas. Maybe it could be found rattling around in a coffee tin in the back of the cupboard. Perhaps it languished in the couch cushions for a few months (or years!).

How many different people have handled this coin? How far has it traveled? How many vending machines has it clunked its way through? Did a child ever stoop over to pick it up off the sidewalk and rejoice? What was the most important thing it was used to buy? Was it ever pulled out by a stranger to help someone in need?

I almost did not notice this piece of history sitting on my dresser. I am still not sure why I did.

There are many things in life we almost don't notice, a lot of things we are not sure why we do. Such things may seem small and insignificant but they can actually change lives, or at least make lives different in a good way.

Right now I am wondering if what I am doing is going to make a difference. I have decided to spend the next 4 (maybe 5) years in school pursuing a PhD in New Testament. By the time I hopefully finish, 27 of the first 31 years of my life will have been spent in school. Am I languishing in the couch cushions or am I a prized possession in a piggy bank waiting to be exchanged for something truly special? Am I spending my years in circulation responsibly?

I am reminded of a parable.

There once was a group of trees and all of them were apple trees except one. This tree was a pear tree. One day the caretaker of the trees went out to gather the fruit. When it came to the pear tree it noticed it had no pears. Instead, it was bearing apples. Perplexed, the caretaker asked the tree, "Why are there no pears on your branches but instead there are apples?" The tree replied, "All the trees around me produce apples so I decided I would produce apples, too." And the caretaker answered, "Do you not know you are a pear tree? If I had wanted more apples, I would have planted another apple tree."

"... the temptation is the same: to produce the fruit that is expected of us by others instead of the fruit we were planted by God to bear ..."

I know God has blessed me with many gifts and has blessed me with the desire to put those gifts into good use. I could be out there serving a church and doing a fine job. Instead, I spend my "40 hours a week" reading and reporting on 400-page books, translating chapters from Hebrew, and wondering why I have decided to put myself through this. I keep telling myself that they would not have let me in the program if they did not think I could do the job. And I keep telling myself that if God had wanted more apples, God could have planted another apple tree.

A pear tree bearing apples surely is a novelty, but we are not called to be novelties. I know sometimes that's how we as women in ministry feel. But no matter how others may view us, we need to be true to the calling for which we were created. The apple trees may stand for many things—other women in non-clergy roles, men in ministry, or even other women ministers.

Regardless, the temptation is the same: to produce the fruit that is expected of us by others instead of the fruit we were planted by God to bear.

I now have a nickel I cannot spend. That 1958 5¢ piece wouldn't buy much in 1999 anyway, but its monetary worth—or lack thereof—has nothing to do with why I'm holding on to it. (Though 5¢ still buys a cup of coffee at Wall Drug, South Dakota.) It will sit on my desk as a reminder that some things are worth waiting for. This nickel is worth more than simply its face value and has become something more than what one sees on the surface.

May the same thing be said of us ... and our pears.

Sheryl Johnson, a graduate of the University of Richmond and Union Seminary, is a PhD candidate at Union Seminary in Richmond.

Women Ministers ‘Go Home Again’

by Robert O’Brien

Virginia minister Lynn Hyder took a look around after she stepped from the pulpit and chatted with the pastor of Fernwood Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C.

“The walls of the sanctuary are still standing,” she joked in mock relief.

But the lighthearted remark communicated the struggle of women in ministry to find acceptance in Baptist pulpits.

Fernwood’s walls also stood when LeJeanna Raymond and Tiffany Greer Hamilton took their turn with Hyder in the pulpit in early 1999 in three days of Lenten services at the church.

Indeed, no lightning flashed from above in disapproval of three women seminary students preaching in a Baptist pulpit on successive days.

But hope had flashed in the hearts of the three young South Carolina natives because of a rare chance to preach in their home state.

“I really appreciate Fernwood for giving us a chance to preach and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) for affirming our gifts and preparing us to use them,” said Hyder, minister of Christian education at Williamsburg Baptist Church.

“Preaching at Fernwood gave me hope that there’s a place for women in ministry in the South—and that I could come back home,” added Hamilton, former minister of youth and children at First Baptist Church, Gretna, Va., and now on the staff of First Baptist Church, Clemson, S.C.

“I saw the three young women grow in their confidence as preachers after the Fernwood experience,” said Charles Bugg, BTSR preaching professor. He arranged with Pastor Randy Wright for the three students to preach there to demonstrate their skill.

Looking back on their experience, the three women say they got a tremendous boost from hearing lay people—even some who had never heard a woman preach—tell them they had spoken profound words that had an impact on their lives.

“That did more to affirm them in ministry than all the words I could say in a semester,” said Bugg, who directs BTSR’s Center for Preaching and Worship and sees the Fernwood experience as a model for other churches to follow for female and male preaching students.

The model worked at Fernwood, where the women’s preaching earned an invitation for BTSR to send students of both sexes to preach each year.

“It’s affirming to hear God speak through whomever God chooses,” Wright said. “I heard people going away saying, ‘Golly, seminarians are preaching well!’—not ‘Golly, women are preaching well!’ That’s refreshing, and it speaks well for the students and their BTSR training.”

Wright says it also involves good experience with Jean Pruett, a former church staff minister, who preached several times a year at Fernwood, and the emphasis of the three young women’s preaching.

Hyder, Raymond and Hamilton—like Pruett—all stand firm in their conviction that God has called them, as women, to ministry.

But they have another thing in common with Pruett and with their preaching professor. They all believe that preaching and ministry—of men or women—should spring from love and the Word of God, not from anger, defensiveness, an ax to grind, or an agenda about any issue.

They understand and empathize with the pain that reflects itself openly in the ministry of some women struggling to answer God’s call.

“It’s frustrating to feel that people won’t give you the chance to use God’s gifts because you’re not male,” says Raymond, who earned a BTSR master of divinity degree at BTSR in 1998. She is associate pastor for youth at Lamberth Memorial Baptist Church in Roxboro, N. C., where her husband, Jeff, is pastor.

“But if you come to the pulpit with anger or a feminist agenda, you damage the cause of women in ministry,” emphasizes Raymond, a former staff minister at Westhampton Baptist Church in Richmond.

And you shouldn’t change denominations because being a Baptist woman in ministry is difficult, adds Hamilton, a 1999 BTSR graduate. “Some people encouraged me to leave Baptists, and I’ve had opportunities. But you don’t leave something just because it’s difficult. I’m happy with being a Baptist and with Baptist tenets.”

Hyder, former minister of youth at Louisa Baptist Church and in her final year at BTSR, takes this view: “The first time I ever preached at Louisa, my parents came up from Beaufort, S.C. After the sermon, I waited for Daddy’s reaction.”

The idea was new to her 70-year-old father, but he had adopted a wait-and-see attitude about her career choice.

“You preached from the Word,” he told her, “and that’s all I can ask of anyone—man or woman.”

Hamilton has come a long way since she grew up under the preaching of her beloved grandfather, the late Dan Greer, at Washington Avenue Baptist Church in Greenville, S. C. She can only speculate about the reaction of a man who wouldn’t have dreamed that his granddaughter would follow in his footsteps.

Her father believes that, once the issue of women ministers became personal with someone he loved, her grandfather would have gravitated to her support like the rest of the family has done.

Family members say Hamilton preaches like her grandfather, a respected pastor and former president of South Carolina Baptists. She has all his sermons, uses many of his Scripture references, and preaches in the same story-telling style.

“My family now sees it as a great spiritual heritage—Papa and me,” Hamilton says with a hint of emotion.

Her grandmother was reflective after hearing her Fernwood sermon. “I didn’t know a woman could do that,” she said.

Now she knows.

Robert O’Brien is global missions correspondent for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and lives in Richmond.

RESOURCES

Sources in Literature

Grief Observed

By Connie Showalter

Jesus was observed as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—and so are we all. Grief is an inescapable part of the human experience. We face the loss of many things that we love, but the most devastating loss is that associated with bereavement—the loss of people we love. At one time or another we all lose those who are close to us—parents, a brother or sister, a spouse, a beloved child, and many times friends we hold dear. In each of these circumstances we are thrust into the depths of grief, our own or that of others. Therefore we must consider what it is, and how we may deal with its devastations.

We are a death-denying society. We do not talk about it; we indulge in futile attempts to disguise it with euphemisms and cosmetics; and we cannot face the fact that it is an inevitable fact of our lives. We are born and so someday we will die. L.D. Johnson, in his book *The Morning After Death*, recounting his grief experience following his daughter's death, says *d-e-a-d* is today's most obscene four-letter word. People do not use it—especially about anyone they know. (p. 119)

A great deal has been written about the course that grief takes and how people have lived with it and through it. From many varied perspectives very similar themes resonate. Grief is about love, and moves on to life.

At the present time a slim little volume called *Tuesdays With Morrie*, by Mitch Albom, has been on the bestseller list for more than 120 weeks. It is the account of an old man, a college professor who is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease, and his former pupil, who hold weekly sessions to talk about what matters. Morrie says repeatedly that when you learn how to die, then you will know how to live. Things take on a new importance, or become of new consequence; values alter, and one appreciates and uses the things that are there. He illustrates this with the view from his window—what he sees and appreciates and treasures but can so easily be ignored by the casual passer-by. Love becomes the center of existence. The immense popularity of this simple book is indicative of the chord it strikes and the need it ministers to in the public psyche.

C.S. Lewis, the Cambridge don and theologian, kept a journal of his brief experience at the death of his wife. He finds himself shattered, alienated from all that is around him and from God. How can this be? He struggles with his loss and, bit by bit, he is aware of pleasant memories of his beloved, of shared happiness. Ultimately the door to God which has seemed so firmly locked and barred begins to crack open—and finally an awareness of God's presence and the message: "Peace, child, you don't understand." (p. 81)

The whys are never answered, but in time acceptance and peace come. Lewis's final conclusion is that because of love for his wife and above all for God, there is nothing to do but go forward attempting to obey the two great commandments: to love God and to love and serve your neighbor. And he remembers always that her last words were, "I am at peace with God." (p. 89)

Lewis feels very strongly that much of what we feel and deplore in grief is for ourselves—our loss, our guilt, our aloneness. Grief is

centered upon ourselves, not upon the person who is dead. Our world is shaken. We have not any knowledge of theirs. Johnson does not agree totally with this point of view. His daughter was young, beautiful, full of promise, and he insists that much of his grief is for the life of which she was deprived. Both points of view are interesting and of considerable validity.

A classic in the literature on this subject is Rabbi Harold Kushner's *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Like Johnson, he has suffered the loss of a child, but not by sudden accident but by a long, slow degenerative disease. The question *Why?* is inevitable. None of these men finds an answer to this question. We cannot know—we do not understand. But they come together from different points of view to some shared observations.

Grief must be faced—complete with its sense of isolation, guilt and anger. To deny grief is only to accentuate and postpone its consequences. We must accept our loss. We can do this best when surrounded by friends who care and share our pain, or at least know that it is there. "Job's comforters" have little place in this, for they only make matters worse. We need to talk, to share, to weep, to know that it matters to others—and that in time life will go on. Things will not be the same, but pain will diminish, faith will return, and deep lessons will have been mastered.

L.D. Johnson talks at some length about the positive aspects of grief. The thinking and talking about the past can be very useful in resolving conflicts, defusing guilt and calming anger—all of which are often a part of the circumstances surrounding loss. Grief can help us put these things into proper perspective. Grief can be a great teacher of values, of the meaning of life, and above all how we may be of use to others when they are stricken with sorrow. Out of grief comes concern for life and for the living.

Kushner writes at length about the fact that we have no real explanation for the tragedies that befall us. He is adamant that God does not cause them. Instead, God gives us the strength to cope and to survive our misfortunes. In our distress we discover people around us, God beside us, and strength within that makes it possible for us to survive. He also points out how his own experience helps him to deal with and be of comfort to others in distress.

Grief is inevitable in life. It cannot be avoided, but it can be helped by the comfort of our presence, our willingness to listen without judgment, our attentions to the needs of the grieving and our prayers for God's mercy and healing. We must not forget the promise of the second Beatitude; "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

Connie Showalter is a former special education school teacher, now retired, and is a member of River Road Church in Richmond, a Sunday school teacher, former deacon and active layperson.

RESOURCES

Professional Survival Tips

Working For Positive Change

by Kitty Johnson

[Kitty Johnson was the speaker at the November annual dinner meeting of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry in Richmond.]

One of my friends came up with this joke. It is a little sexist, so you gentlemen don't be offended. What if the three wise men were three wise women? They would have asked directions, gotten there on time, delivered the baby, cleaned the stable, baked a casserole, and brought appropriate gifts.

What we're going to talk about is "Working for Positive Change." The many hats people wear in this day and age can be very stressful. I have had the privilege the last couple of years of being a supervisor for the interns at BTSR. One of the things we work on is what do you do in your spare time. And they sort of look at you, "Spare time? The Lord has called me. I have no spare time." Unfortunately, because you don't take spare time for yourself some of you don't last very long in the ministry. And that's really a great waste of a resource. People burn out, they become bitter, and a lot of education and call has gone down the drain. All because though we are called we don't take care of ourselves.

I don't know if you are familiar with a woman whose name is Beverly Sawyer. She's a Methodist. We won't hold that against her. She wrote a book called *Singer of Seasons: Prayers*. It begins in one section with:

Help us to understand the dynamics of commitment, to learn how to receive what we give, to learn how to sing as we work, and to be honest about our limits, and confident of your limitless concern and gracious giving of life. Help us to listen to your advice about how we should live our lives, not like a business shrewdly considering investments and returns but like wildflowers who by simply being ourselves share a beauty that surpasses humanity's most artistic labors.

In regard to this topic, there was a timely article in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, which I do read for local gossip. In November of this year there was an article called "The On The Job Habit." And it begins with a pastor in Texas who, it says, always eats breakfast with his son. And he goes to his son's basketball games. But he's always at his office by eight-thirty and he doesn't come home until at least ten o'clock.

Now I know some of these people because in my profession I deal with many professional staff persons. This dedication is not unusual. But because of it people become flat, they become depressed or they drop out of the ministry. I think every one of you here can think of someone that has happened to. The article goes on to say that we work almost two thousand hours a year. This is just in the workplace. We work more than any other industrial country. We work more even than the Japanese. We are very productive

However, there was a review of a book in there called *The Overworked American*. That book says we are seeing job stress, stress in our everyday life, and breakdown in family life. It also reports sadly that many people like their work more than anything. They like it more than relationships, more than their families. They complain about the amount of work they do, but if you ask them what they do to replace it, they don't know.

I see this a lot in my profession. People who go to law school are of a certain type. We're very high achievers. We have to get good grades to get in. We have to have high LSATs. If you have seen the movie or television program, "The Paper Chase," that is pretty good representation of what life is like in law school. One of the people I graduated with—his children are grown now—went home to dinner every night, then he went back to the office. He worked half a day Saturday and half a day Sunday. And he's very successful, and he also has cancer. He is my age.

You say, all of us should be productive. But how productive should we be? That's a question you're going to have to address, particularly those of you who are in the ministry, otherwise known as one of the helping professions. So I have developed a check list. I call the list "tips for survival."

Time off

First of all, you have to take some time away. I interviewed one pastor and I asked him about his vacation plans. He said he'd already had a vacation, that he had been on a trip with a youth group, and the personnel committee had counted that as his vacation. Right! I have had people tell me that trips they take with members of their church, usually youth or senior adult group or maybe to a convention, that's their idea of a vacation. In other words, you're not getting away from your profession.

You need to learn to take time for yourself. That's very hard, particularly for those of you in smaller churches. Somebody is very ill. Somebody dies. You've gone to the river for the week. What do you do? That's a real issue. However, when you don't take time to restore yourself, you're not going to be able to be able to have a positive ministry in your church. So there are prices. That is something you should discuss in your church. Vacation is vacation. You need to find people to cover for you under those circumstances.

Time away

You can also take short trips. Short trips are kind of like day trips. I have a few of those that I take. We have a really neat place in Richmond called Blumendaal. A couple of days a month I go there and I sit in the gardens. If I feel very rich I eat in the tea house. Sometimes I take friends with me. All of you have some place in your area where you can take short trips. Once again you have to program it.

Sometimes a short trip is just being home alone. For those of you who have children that can be very difficult to arrange—but it can be done. When you're at home you get to do something that you like. The phone rings, do you pick it up? No, the answering machines serve a purpose. You can listen to little plaintive voices on the answering machine, but if you're in your quiet time you don't pick it up. So think of quiet times, short vacations, times for yourself. They can be very restorative.

Time for yourself

A lot of you have some kind of artistic talent. I didn't know I could be a photographer. My mother was an artist. However, artists are people who don't make very much money and don't have very much power. I wasn't sure I wanted to be one of those people. The year that my mother died I got to do a little introspective work on myself. I

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Kitty Johnson ... from page 7

discovered that yes, I'd always wanted to be a photographer. All of you have some type of talent that provides release. The community colleges give art lessons. Some of you write. Some of you do poetry. Take time.

It is very difficult sometimes for a professional to do art because you have a tendency to judge it by the standards of your job. And you think, I don't really want to do that because I can't do it well. This is not something you are supposed to do well! You don't have to do it really well if you do it for yourself.

Deal with the drudgery

We have all those unpleasant jobs that tend to overwhelm you. My most unpleasant job is mail. I hate mail. It piles up on the dining room table. When the piles get too bad I move it to the den. You can shut the door, you don't have to look at it. Now I do take the bills out and I take out the personal letters. But the rest of it just piles up. You know there are things in there lurking you don't really want to deal with. So mail is my unpleasant task. I have a carrot and stick approach. If I do the mail, then I get to do—and I fill in the blank. Sometimes it's read a book, sometimes it's go for a walk, but there's something pleasant involved. You can do a lot of these unpleasant things in short bursts.

Time management

Where are the priorities? Every morning I get up about seven-thirty and have trained myself to go downstairs and to stare at the calendar. This is before you have the orange juice, before you make the coffee. You have to look at the calendar—what is in it for today? There are some days that are a disaster in the making. You have really made a mistake in time management. You are doomed before you begin. That's something all of us have to work on because it's very hard to say no. Women are very good about commitment. We should look at our calendars!

So, time management. What's important to you? What are the things you want to do really well? Where do your talents lie? What are your callings? Think about time management. There will be some days that will be absolute disasters before you even walk out the door. Learn from those days. I have gotten a little better about time management—not quite so depressed when I get up in the morning and look at that calendar.

Health

One of the things you need to program in is—a really nasty word—I never cared much for exercise. However, exercise has its purpose. Now, my family is into what I call punishment exercise. My husband loves to run the marathons—that's a marvelous form of exercise but it's not for me. My daughter is into long-distance running and kick boxing. My son is in the military and he survived. That's not my idea of exercise.

But exercise is not so bad. Exercise is walking. Exercise is yard work, a bike ride, even a walk around the shopping center. In our neighborhood every house has a magnolia tree. One of my neighbors was complaining. I said, Hey, look at it as a form of aerobics. In the spring you have leaves, in the fall you have pods. There are lots of people who are paying great amounts of money to someone else to do all of the bending, raking and stretching that

you're doing. So I have the magnolia tree. Housework—it gets done intermittently. We try to keep kitchens and bathrooms clean. Occasionally we do the rest of the house. But vacuuming isn't bad. A lot of time I have my most innovative thoughts while vacuuming.

Exercise isn't so bad. Just pick your sport. It doesn't always have to be traditional.

Food

Then we come to the big Baptist temptation—food! Well I never met a baked good I didn't like. I learned very early on to bake sugar cookies and ginger snaps and oatmeal bread and all the things you are not supposed to eat when you get to be my age and your metabolism vanishes. Food can be a health hazard. But there are ways of coping with it. To begin with, I feel sorry for you who are in churches. You have pizza parties with the youth and you have church dinners where you have ten different kinds of fried chicken. And you have to deal with all of that and they watch you to see if you eat it or not.

There are different ways to deal with it. If I know I am going to be so tempted I try never to go hungry and so I eat before I go. I'm very good about spreading it around the plate. And I have discovered if you talk to people a lot then you don't necessarily have to eat and they don't pay much attention. When people bring me things my way of disposing of it is to put it in the freezer. That seems to work. Somehow a piece of chocolate cake that is cold is not as good as fresh baked. You have to watch out for food. Food is a real issue.

Social support

To a certain degree that's what this group is about. It's very difficult for many of you in this profession. You have lots of people around, interaction with church members, groups you are dealing with—not necessarily people you can open up to and reveal you deepest dark secrets. So you may find yourself to a certain degree hungry for companionship. You have to make some intentional efforts to look for that. Sometimes it is within a support group, a group of people who agree to get together and what is said is private. Sometimes you have to cultivate groups away from the church. Sometimes you have to be innovative and meet people you don't necessarily think you would have a relationship with. I have several neighbors who turned out to be quite interesting and stimulating to talk to. It's important to you as individuals, particularly if you don't have family or family who are not here. Some of us don't even get along with our family. They just don't understand our lifestyle.

All of you joke about my dog habit. But a companion animal isn't such a bad thing. I know a couple of people in the ministry who are very fond of their aquariums and take great pleasure from looking at them. Some people get cats. Always get two, that way they'll completely ignore you. There are ways to fill the need and fill the void.

But what I really want to say is you have to be very careful to take care of yourself. And that's very hard for people like you to think about because you're used to taking care of other people. But unless you take care of yourself you're not going to be able to take care of other people.

As Garrison Keillor says, you have to be ready to take your emotional pulse, you have to be well, do good deeds and stay in touch. Thank you very much.

Kitty Johnson is a lawyer, active in Baptist life, and in 1999–2000 was moderator of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia. She is a member of Monument Heights Church in Richmond.

THE LAST WORD

“In the Latter Days”

By Barbara Jackson

The obvious word for the day is **millennium**. Now that the momentous moment has come and gone we wonder what all the fuss was about. Just wait and see, we may have to go through all the hype over again when the real millennium comes on Jan. 1, 2001! By now everyone knows that year one began with a one and not a zero, so two thousand years later is 2001. Yet there is something magical in seeing the zeroes roll over—just as we stare at the odometer to see it roll over to sixty thousand (or one hundred sixty thousand, like my car). And so it was not so amazing after all to watch television on New Year’s Eve and view the succession of celebrations around the world as the sun moved inexorably across the meridians.

What is amazing to consider is that the whole world now dates events according to the Christian calendar. The global village is now a reality. From the Pacific Islands to China to India, Africa and the Muslim countries, then on to Europe and North and South America, everyone celebrated the two thousand years since *Anno Domini*, the year of our Lord. Truly astounding! Buddhist and Hindu and Muslim and Christian and a few atheists and pagans to boot—all acknowledge the dominance of the Christian world in ordering time.

The two thousand years since Christ’s birth, however, is a mere raindrop compared to the vast ocean of universal time. The brief time humans have inhabited the planet represents about four or five million years—in itself a mere fraction of the age of the planet, more like ten or twelve billion years. You notice I am a little vague on the precise timing! Who knows—give or take a few billion.

For perspective, consider this. The late biologist H.J. Muller (b.1890) once asked in an essay to imagine the history of life forms on earth as a rope stretching several hundred miles from New England to New York City. The line represents about four billion years, starting with the first signs of life, primeval protoplasm. It is not till the rope reaches New York City that mammals and birds and dinosaurs appear. And it is

not until the rope reaches a desk on Wall Street that Neanderthals appear and early mankind leaves flints and crockery remains for future archeologists. One foot from the end of the rope is King Tut; five inches is the Fall of Rome and the European Dark Ages; one and a half inches is the discovery of America and the Copernican theory; and half an inch is the Industrial Revolution.

Muller concludes, “A quarter of an inch from the end Darwin speaks, and man(kind) awakes to the transitory character of his shape and institutions.” The writer is long dead, but the analogy is still apt.

The words

Millennium

Millennium, of course, is Latin (L.) for thousand years (*mille-annum*). The adherents of the theological view having to do with the apocalypse and the coming reign of Christ, the millennialists, espouse a variety of theological notions (see Betty Pugh’s article on p.3). A **millenarian**, by contrast and by extension, refers to one who believes that perfection is in the picture for humans, either biological, political, or theological—perhaps even by revolution.

Calendar

Calendar is a more fruitful concept to explore. A calendar is a system of dividing time into years, months, weeks, and days, usually devised to reflect natural phenomena such as the rotation of the earth on its axis or the revolution of the moon around the earth. The word *calendar* derives from the Roman practice of posting in a public place the significant dates, the *calends*—the first day of the Roman month, for public viewing. Calendar is from (L) *clamare*, to call or cry out. Related words are claim, reclaim, declaim, exclaim, proclaim, and acclaim. Also, council (a calling together)—which may or may not conciliate!

Our modern calendar was invented in the sixth century by Dennis Exiguus (Dennis the Little), an abbot serving at St. Peter’s under Pope John I. The pope asked Dennis to project the dates of Easter based on the formula adopted two centuries

earlier: i.e., that Easter shall fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

Until Dennis, the years were calculated either from the founding of Rome or from the reign of Diocletian. Dennis decided it was not appropriate to glorify the evil Diocletian, who persecuted Christians, and so he devised a new starting date based on the supposed date of Jesus’ birth. We now know he was off by several years; Jesus was born during the reign of Herod, probably in 5 or 6 B.C.

The modern calendar was named for a 16th-century pope, Gregory XIII, who tinkered with the creation of Dennis the Little to bring it into line with known astronomical irregularities. But even today, with all the scientific advances, no one yet can come up with an entirely accurate calculation of time. Occasionally the Royal Observatory at Greenwich has to make an adjustment of a millisecond or two to bring the clock into alignment with the equinoxes (or whatever!).

The point of this excursion into history is to understand that any calendar is a human and cultural creation, and that any magical properties attributed to the millennium by which extraordinary things might be expected to happen (such as the rapture) are also a human creation. It thus seems foolish to expect some divine act at

“magical properties attributed to the millennium by which extraordinary things might be expected to happen ... are a human creation.”

the rollover to the third millennium when the calendar was devised in error and misdated and even the correct year is open to debate.

Time and tide.

Some related words include **time** and **tide**. They both refer to definite occurrences and divisions of experience, have the same etymology and basic meaning. The root

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Word Study ... from page 9

word is *da-* (Indo-European), to divide. Related words are tidings (news), tidy (seasonable or opportune), timely and untimely. Then there are the compounds like time bomb, time clock, timed-release, time-consuming, time line—to name only a few. Another kind of division is the Greek *deme* (a township) and *demos* (the people), from which we have democracy, epidemic and pandemic.

Month

Now, let's look at **month**, a division of time that corresponds to the rotation of the moon. The word derives from (IE) *me-* and (L) *mens*, to measure. Related words are from (Gk) *metron*, the meter that measures verse, length of objects, and distance, such as kilometer, diameter, and geometry.

Another branch is related to **moon** and (L) *mensis*, from which we get Monday, menstruation, semester, and menopause. Archeologists have found what may be the first calendars, antler horns with the month's days scratched. It is thought that a woman created the first known calendar to keep up with her own bodily rhythm. The words from **measure** are widespread. Besides those already mentioned we have immeasurable, commensurate, dimension, immense, parameter, perimeter, symmetry, meal and piecemeal, as well as all the moon words, such as moonbeam and moony, honeymoon, moonflower, month, Monday and moonshine.

The moon has long been associated with the female psyche—and not just because of the monthly period women experience. The moon was characterized as subtle and gentle, whereas the sun, in contrast was viewed in mythology as a male force: direct and harsh. In Greek mythology, Apollo was the god of the sun who rode in his golden chariot across the sky. The early goddess religions were lunar in orientation, while the father-god religions were solar in orientation.

[This whole subject of sun vs. moon in ancient religions is fascinating and beyond the scope of this essay. For more information see the book list following.]

Mode and medical

There are two other groups of words related to measure, **mode** and **medical**. Mode is from L *modus*, meaning a measure one should not exceed, a limit or manner of behaving. The mode words are wide-ranging: model and modality, moderate, moderator, modern, modest and modesty, modify, modulation, module, mold and matrix, commodity, accommodation, *a la mode* and *modus operandi*.

The medical words are kin to *mete*, to measure. We have medical and medicine, medicate and medicinal, remedy, remedial, and of course meter, a device that measures. Also in this category is **meditate**. Meditate is from L *mederi*, to attend to, a variant grammatical form that means to apply oneself to or to study or reflect, hence meditate.

Since meditate is clearly a religious word, it is especially interesting that through the practice of meditation one is expected to do self-reflection and self-measuring!

So in this essay we have come from contemplating the grand span of time of a million years to the infinitesimal time of the moments spent in reflection. How appropriate!

End-time

End-time is a useful concept. The millennialists, both pre- and post-, construct their theology around what may or may not happen at the end-time. The philosophy of end-time is called **teleology**, the study of evidences of design or purpose in nature. It is this idea that forms the basis of argument for the existence of an intelligent deity. Teleology is derived from (Gk) *telos* (end or goal) and *logos* (word or discourse). We recognize the root in television (view from afar) and telegraph (letter from afar), and the many other words with tele- as an element. It derives from the IE *kwel-* (far in space or time) and a related word, the Gk *paleo-* (long ago) as in paleontology, the study of long-ago life. **Eschatology** dwells on the Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead. It is from Gk *eschatos*, last or farthest.

Strategy

The roots of strategy are dual, having as combined meaning the art of devising plans or stratagems toward a goal. The first element, *strat-*, is derived from the IE *ster-* (to spread). Related English words are straw, construct, destruct, structure, and street (one of the great "constructed," i.e., paved, roads). A related word is Gk *strator*, a "spread-out" multitude or army, and the *strategos* who led it and devised its strategy.

The second root element in strategy is the Latin *agere*, to act, derived from IE *ag-*. The word originally meant to drive (animals). The Latin word yields many senses: act, action, agile, agenda, transaction, exact (driven to perfection), agitate. The Greek *agein* meant to lead as well as drive, a sense we find in demagogue, the one who led the common people. Other words include the *agon* (contest in which one drove oneself) and agony—as well as the words we focus on, *strategos*, the one who led an army, and strategy.

In a sense, to speak of *end-game* strategy is an oxymoron, for strategy presupposes a purpose already in the mind of the general or chess player. The purpose is to get to where one needs to be to accomplish the goal of winning or outwitting the opponent or advancing a cause or achieving financial security—whatever the goal is.

Devising a strategy

For a woman, to devise a strategy to fulfill one's calling, to achieve career goals, or to find a life mate or navigate child-rearing requires some preconditions. The necessary conditions might be:

- a vision of what the goal is
- education or training appropriate for the task
- a broad view of the playing field—as a general must have to move troops around
- the personal skills of calculation, persuasion, leadership or talent

Perhaps some other personal skills might be useful, such as guile and cunning, ambition, self-interest, ability to seize opportunity. At this point the discussion gets into ethics—beyond the scope of a word study!

SOURCES: Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins*; Campbell, J., *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*; Claiborne, *The Roots of English*; Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms*; Duncan, "Calendar," *Smithsonian*, Aug. 1999.

Barbara Jackson is the editor of SYNERGY

WOMEN IN THE NEWS

Positions and Changes

Susan A. Joyce is associate minister at Farmville Church, Farmville.

Pam McDermott is choir director at Farmville Church, Farmville.

June Odom is minister of youth and children at Mount Olivet Church, Beaverdam.

Teresa Gabriella is music director of Langley Church, Hampton.

Christiane D. Radano is minister of education and spirituality at Leigh Street Church, Richmond.

Donna Hopkins Britt has been named senior pastor, Calvary Church, Roanoke. She was formerly interim pastor.

Diane Kirkland is minister to children and families at Manassas Church, Manassas.

Anna Miller is interim minister to students at Bon Air Church, Richmond.

Lynn Hyder is minister of education at Williamsburg Church, Williamsburg.

Ginny McKinney is minister of youth at Massaponax Church, Fredericksburg.

Christi Thompson is minister to children and youth at New Highland Church, Ashland.

Marti Williams is minister of outreach at Pine Street Church, Richmond.

Sarah Herron is minister of music and youth at Bethel Church, Falmouth

Colleen Swingle-Titus is minister of youth at Crozet Church, Crozet.

Stephanie Vance is minister of youth at McLean Church, McLean.

Jenny Charlton Barrier is youth and children's director at Dover Church, Manakin-Sabot.

Kathy Nicholls is director of music at Inglewood Church, Lynchburg.

Rebecca Brown is youth director at Schoolfield Church, Danville.

Joan M. Faison is director of youth and children's work at Mathews Church, Hudgins.

Jane Mason is minister of music at Shiloh Church, King George.

Martha E. Phillips is interim pastor at Mount Vernon Church, Arlington.

Cynthia Monk is children's director at Southview Church, Herndon.

Carol Johnton has been named pastor of Troutville Church, Troutville. She was formerly interim pastor.

Katrina Wolfrey is minister to youth and children at Triangle Church, Triangle.

Bonnie Hofmeyer is minister of youth at Hunton Church, Glen Allen.

Laura C. Montfalcone is minister of youth at Bowling Green Church, Bowling Green.

Beth Vinson is minister of music at Thaxton Church, Thaxton.

Cindy Benfield is children's ministry coordinator at Bethel Church, Midlothian.

Rachel and Paige Green are youth ministers at Louisa Church, Louisa.

Mary Buckner is director of music and family ministries at Spring Hill Church, Ruckersville.

Sharon Slayton is minister of music at Keen Street Church, Danville.

Pam Barton is music director at Shenandoah Heights Church, Waynesboro.

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MEMBERSHIP for 2000 virginia baptist women in ministry

Name _____

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Place of Ministry _____ Position _____

The following information is requested for an ongoing statistical study. Please check:

Paid?	Unpaid?	Seminary Graduate?	yes	no
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Amount enclosed

Membership fee is \$20 for one year (students, \$10). Membership includes announcements of conferences and other events, book lists and discounts on conferences. Please enclose check with this form and send to: VBWIM, 8000 River Road, Richmond, VA 23229.

WOMEN IN THE NEWS

Women in the News ... from page 11

Ordinations

Charity Rouse was ordained to the gospel ministry on August 1, 1999, by Harrisonburg Church, Harrisonburg.

Susan Auders Joyce was ordained to the gospel ministry on August 8, 1999, by Farmville Church, Farmville.

Rhonda Nash was ordained to the gospel ministry on August 22, 1999, by Hull's Memorial Church, Fredericksburg.

Katrina Stipe Brooks was ordained to the gospel ministry on July 25, 1999, by Bethel Church, Scottsburg, where she is associate pastor.

Sonja M. Phillips was ordained to the gospel ministry on Nov. 14, 1999, by Mount Vernon Church, Glen Allen, where she is minister to singles and seniors adults.

Sara Anne Hancock Burgess was ordained to the gospel ministry on Aug. 30, 1999, by Upper King and Queen Church, Newtown.

Martha Phillips was ordained to the gospel ministry on March 26, 2000, by Mount Vernon Church, Arlington.

Susan and Keith Spangenberg, ordained to the gospel ministry on May 28, 2000, by Tabernacle Church, Richmond.

Accolades

Congratulations to Glade Baptist Church in Blacksburg. The church has received a grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship to develop a fine arts gallery in its sanctuary. The church will use the grant to promote the use of fine arts in worship through enhanced display and lighting, active promotion of the art gallery in local media, frequent changes of the gallery display and encouragement of artistic and religious creativity in the community. The anticipated improvements in the church's fine arts gallery will assist in contemplative worship and will encourage the use of the visual arts in a religious setting. **The Rev. Kelly M. Sisson** is pastor.

Congratulations to the Rev. Dr. Betty Pugh, who is celebrating her tenth year at Grace Baptist Church in Richmond, where she is pastor. Dr. Pugh was also honored by the University of Richmond with an honorary doctor's degree at the graduation exercises in May.

Congratulations to the Rev. Sharon James, who was named to the coordinating council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Atlanta. She is minister of education at Franklin Baptist Church in Franklin.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry
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