



Synergy

a process of becoming, of creating and transforming

VIRGINIA BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

VOL. I, NO. 2

Newsletter Named *Synergy*

syn-er-gy (sin-ur-jî) n. [Gk. *synergos*, working together]

SYNERGY. A metaphor for the role women in ministry see for themselves. Synergy speaks of process: of becoming, of creating and transforming.

Synergy is a word of rich meaning, denoting far more than simply working together. With synergy, the effect is more than the sum of the parts. All entities interact and have an effect on each other, so that the results are magnified and amplified or even altered.

In the realm of science, synergy is apparent in chemical compounds, muscles, drug interactions, building girders and similar combinations.

As an operational word for our use, synergy symbolizes women working together to secure their calling in meaningful places of service. It also signifies women working with men in relationships of equality and mutual assistance. It symbolizes the intentional effect the presence of women will/can have in church life and professional standards as well as in the working out of God's plan.

Synergy as a concept lends itself well to women's agenda of inclusive relationships and language, innovations in worship, and creative approaches to the problems of today's world.

We solicit your participation in the content of the newsletter.

Submissions are welcome. Send to Editor, 9211 Whitemont Dr., Richmond, VA 23294

Spring Workshop Set For May

The annual Spring Workshop will be held May 2, 1992, 8:45 to 3:30, at Grace Baptist Church in Richmond. Linda Weaver-Williams will preach on the conference theme: **Articulating Our Own Theology**. The program will include several seminars, a film and closing worship. Lunch will be provided.

Seminar leaders include Isabel Rogers, B.J. Seymour, Katha Mills, Anne Rosser, Sarah Sellers and June Clifford.



Linda Weaver-Williams

The program will focus on the need for women ministers in church, academic and agency settings to do theology as an on-going process as they confront new information, biblical insights, ethical decision-making and realistic professional relationships.

This program celebrates the fifth year of programming for VBWIM. It continues in the tradition of hard-hitting approaches to difficult issues.

A new feature this year will be a display of books of interest to women in ministry, many of which will be for sale and available there.

The Cross of Christ: A Perspective in Transition

by Betty Pugh, minister of church and family life, Grace Church, Richmond.

As a child I was fascinated by the crucifixion scene, very much in the same way that the horror of the holocaust gripped me. There was something in me that wanted to know more.

As we approach Lent my questions about the traditional significance of the cross have finally found words. I share with you my questions and reflections, born out of a desire to appropriate faith with integrity and honesty.

Throughout Christian history theologians have interpreted the meaning of the cross. Though variously nuanced they say: Jesus is the substitute Savior, the ransom for sin, the ultimate sacrifice and intermediary of grace for sinners.

The life and work of Jesus finds culmination at his death because he died for us to make things right with God. He suffered the punishment that we deserved. He did it obediently, passively, as lamb to the slaughter. The message is clear.

For some, this particular understanding of Jesus is distasteful and invalidates Christianity as an acceptable system of belief. For instance, Mary Daly wrote: "Christology chains women to an oppressive past that offered only passive roles of victim, scapegoat or subordinate. Can such a Savior help women by dying a violent death on the cross?"

Many feminist writers answer this question with a resounding No! They encourage us to take up our tents and leave the patriarchal, male-dominated tradition of the church.

Yet others, like myself, are compelled to take up our crosses, not tents, and remain in the system. All theology is

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IN MY OPINION

Thoughts on the Baptist Hymnal

by Wanda Fennell, minister of music, Grace Church, Richmond

Many people have asked, "What do you think of the new Baptist hymnal?" For months I refused to look at it, so annoyed was I by the hymnal committee's decision to organize and arrange the hymns according to the articles of the Baptist Faith and Message. My curiosity prevailed, however, and I finally picked up a copy.

The new hymnal shows improvement over the 1975 model. Fine new hymns have been included, and there are many more resources for Advent than in previous Baptist hymnals. Songs suitable for young children are also included.

All this, however, does not override disappointment over other concerns, notably the issue of language. In his introduction, editor Wes Forbis lists four areas of consideration: references to God, the message of salvation, militaristic references and archaic language.

Concerning references to God, the editor states: "There is no question but that all references to Deity would reflect Judaeo-Christian tradition." Therefore all masculine references to God remain intact, and there seem to be few hymns containing images of the feminine nature of God.

Forbis writes, "Regarding the message of salvation, new hymns should reflect the spirit of Galations 3:28." Is he saying that inclusive language was the standard for these new hymns? Let us praise God from whom all blessings flow! The new hymns do reflect more inclusive language than some of the old favorites. At least two from the 1975

hymnal have been altered for that purpose: "We Are Called to be God's People" by Thomas Jackson and "Stir Your Church, O God, Our Father" by Milburn Price.

While most of the old hymns have not been altered, in some instances specific verses have been omitted. The offensive reference to "savage tribes" in "Jesus Shall Reign" has been deleted.

In considering militaristic language, the committee made no changes, stating, "the texts refer to spiritual warfare and were amply referenced by scripture." Perhaps the committee did not wish to incur the criticism heaped on hymnal committees of other denominations when they attempted to omit "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

The treatment of obscure or archaic language is interesting. Forbis writes, "In those familiar hymns which are in the 'spiritual memory banks' of worshipers, no changes would be made," but in less familiar hymns some changes would be allowed. Strangely enough, "Jesus Loves the Little Children," which is certainly in the memory banks of many worshipers, has been altered:

*Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Every color, every race,
All are covered by His grace;
Jesus loves the little children of the world.*

It is laudable that the committee ignored its own rule and deleted the archaic, offensive language in this song. It is unfortunate they did not feel the same freedom in repairing well-known hymns with sexist language.

It is understood the hymnal had to meet the approval of those in control of the Sunday School Board. The hymnal also had to sell. Despite limitations, they produced a pretty decent hymnal under what I imagine must have been restrictive conditions. Perhaps the hymnal would have been less masculine in orientation had there been more women on the committee. Fewer than 20 of over 125 committee members appear to be women's names. Surely a better balance might have been achieved.

For those who find **The Baptist Hymnal** wanting, the 1989 Presbyterian hymnal is a wonderfully inclusive devotional and worship aid. There is even an ecumenical edition titled **Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs**. I hope I live long enough to see a Baptist hymnal equally consistent in affirming that all people are created in God's image.

News Briefs

A local **Women in Ministry** group has been established in Roanoke. Call Carol Johnston (703-774-1684).

Likewise, a local **Women in Ministry** group has begun in the Richmond area. This group will meet for informal conversation and lunch at First Baptist Richmond on the 3rd Monday of each month. For information call Lucy Dorr (804-355-8637).

Interest has been expressed in beginning a similar group in the Tidewater area. For information, call Becky Glass (804-591-0513).

The Southern Baptist Women in Ministry Annual Meeting will be held on April 30, 1992 prior to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly in Ft. Worth, rather than at the SBC in Indianapolis.

Synergy, newsletter of the Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry is published in Richmond, Va. Subscription rates are \$20 per year. Subscriptions should be mailed to **Synergy** Editor, 9211 Whitemont Dr., Richmond, VA 23294. Editorial Board: Judy Bailey, June Hardy Dorsey, Wanda Fennell, Barbara Jackson, Sharon James, Betty Pugh, B.J., Seymour, Linda Weaver-Williams. ©. 1992

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Elizabeth Barnes has been named associate professor of theology and ethics at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, to begin in the fall of 1992. She comes from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., where she has taught since 1983.

Donna Satterfield has joined the staff of Main Street Church, Petersburg Assn., as minister to youth.

Chrystal Kern has been named director of youth ministries at Hull's Memorial Church, Fredericksburg Assn.

Susan Cruise has become assistant to the pastor of Blacksburg Church, Highlands Assn. Also in the same church, **Gail Taylor** will have responsibilities for senior adult ministries.

Daphne Almarode has joined the staff of Rivermont Church, Danville, as minister of youth and children.

Rebekah Leibe has accepted a position with Broadus Memorial Church, Richmond, as minister of music. She comes from a similar position with Bedford Church, Strawberry Assn.

Jennifer Metzger Turner has joined the staff of Pine Street Church, Richmond, as minister of outreach to serve with her husband Philip Turner, who is pastor. She was formerly minister of youth at Mechanicsville Church, Dover Assn.

Betty McKinney has joined the staff of Keystone Church, Lynchburg Assn., as minister of music.

Catherine R. Coleman is director of music and organist at Madison Heights Church, Lynchburg Assn.

Carolyn Davis has accepted a position as minister of music, Hillcrest Church, New River Assn.

Karen Johnson has joined the staff of Calvary Church, Newport News, as organist. She was formerly organist at International Baptist Church in Stuttgart, Germany.

Gail Newby Durvin has joined the staff of Grace Church, Richmond, as minister of outreach and communication.

Michelle J. Largena has joined the staff of Big Bethel Church, Peninsula Assn., as director of youth.

Carol G. Turner is minister of music at Westhampton Church, Richmond. She was formerly at Woodland Heights Church, Richmond, in the same position.

Becky Tingler has joined the staff of Lynn Haven Church, Roanoke Valley Assn., as minister of music and adults.

Teresa Majors, minister of education at Skipwith Church, Richmond, has been named interim pastor.

Kathryn Bullard, retired as executive director of Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia in January. She has held this position since 1975.

Beverly Dietzschold, former minister of children at First Church, Charlottesville, died of cancer October 27.

Vicki Gappen Lumpkin was ordained to the ministry August 18 by Haymarket Church, Potomac Assn., where she serves as minister of education and youth.

Linda Kay Dexter Swann was ordained to the gospel ministry on August 25 by Rapidan Church, Shiloh Assn., where her husband Ted, is pastor. She has accepted a position as pastor of Lower Rapidan Church, Shiloh Assn.

Janet Given was ordained to the ministry by First Church, South Boston, Dan River Assn., where she serves as minister of music.

Dora Bortey of Springfield has received the Rice-Judson Award of Southern Seminary, where she is seeking the Master of Divinity degree. The award is based on leadership, scholarship and commitment to missions.

Shirley Robertson received the "Distinguished Christian Educator Award" from the Virginia Baptist Religious Education Assn. She is the director of Special Education Ministries for the Virginia Baptist General Board.

Kay Hardage, director of Church and Community Development, Albemarle Assn., was elected president, Midwestern Seminary Alumni Association.

Becky Glass, campus minister, Christopher Newport College, was elected president, Southeastern Seminary Alumni Assn.

Becky Proctor, associate minister of education, Rosalind Hills Church, Roanoke, was elected vice-president, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond Honorary Alumni Assn.

Lynn Turner of First Church, Richmond, was elected first vice-president, Va. Baptist Youth Ministers Assn.

Anne Rosser, associate minister, Hampton Church, was named vice-president of Southern Baptist Alliance, Virginia chapter. Also **Alice Gaventa** of Winfree Memorial, Richmond, and **Connie Stinson**, associate pastor, Memorial Church, Arlington, were named members of the state council.

Margaret Allen of Richmond has been appointed missionary by the Home Mission Board. She is director of weekday ministries at Bainbridge Church and associate director of Hillside Center, Richmond Association. She has served five years as associate director of South Richmond Center.

Recent HMB appointments as US-2 missionaries include: **Melissa Douglas** of Richmond to Texas; **April Gray** to Annandale and **Lisa Ladd** to Roanoke.

Foreign Mission Board appointments include: **Cynthia Barnett** (and husband Michael) of Richmond to London; **Laura Gray** (and Tony) of Georgia and Bedford to Panama; **Beverly Melhuish** (and Rodney) of Richmond to Germany.

Recent FMB appointments to the International Service Corps include: **Sheri Perdew** of Vienna to Mexico; **Susan Young** (and husband Tom) to Uganda; **Karen Jeffcoat** of Smithfield Church to Peru; **Lynn Mallory** of Williamsburg to Kenya; **Kim O'Bryan** of McLean to Gambia; **Diana Woodcock-Riffle** to Asia; **Cherise Wenger** of Manassas to Malawi; **Kitty Byrd** of Newport News to Central Asia; **Noni Hartanto** of Richmond to Kenya; **Lori Myrick** (and Tim) of Colonial Heights to Indian Ocean Islands; **Dawn Shereda** (and Dave) of Richmond to Zimbabwe; **Brenda Lee** of Richmond to Central Asia; **Ethel Sullivan** (and Tom) of Woodstock to Costa Rica; **Janette Wright** (and Scott) of Brodnax to Southern Asia.

INTERVIEW

**Margaret Tyree
minister of education and youth,
Grandin Court Church, Roanoke**

by Deborah Moore Clark, freelance writer, Roanoke

"If I had a daughter, I'd like her to have a job like mine." It is apparent that for Margaret Tyree the past ten years of full-time educational and youth ministry have been good. "I haven't been hurt as a woman in ministry like some of my friends."

Margaret grew up in a close Christian home where church was always an important part of family life. The only girl in a family of four children, Margaret feels growing up with all those brothers was helpful. "I was not put down by them nor was I intimidated by them."

This childhood dimension makes it easier for her today as a minister of education. "The majority of my peers in Christian service are male. I do not feel that have to prove myself with them or try to be like them. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. I have always felt acceptance from my fellow ministers."

Likewise, Margaret grew up in a church that nurtured and affirmed her gifts. "My home church prepared me well. I grew through GAs, was given leadership positions as an older youth, and worked with the children's choir. My home church let me make mistakes. My pastor never said, no you can't do that."

Women in ministry today have few women role models. Margaret is no exception. When asked about the career mentors in her life, she named no women. Her formative years as a young adult struggling to find



answers to God's call to ministry were shaped by influential male figures.

Her home church pastor, Hugh Bumgarner, encouraged her to further her education. "I'll never forget his words to me. He said: 'Go to college and seminary if you feel that is what God wants. Even if later you no longer feel the call or do not have a place to serve, no one can ever take away what you have learned. You can always use it.'"

And go she did! Margaret excelled in her studies at Averett College and later at Southeastern Seminary. During those years other mentors helped to direct her life. She recalls with fondness the indelible influences of her campus minister and one special college professor/advisor.

Several years ago, Margaret moved to Roanoke to assume her duties at Grandin Court Church after leaving a similar position in Richmond. At Grandin Court the focus of her ministry is twofold: reaching people for Christ and developing persons within the church. She sees her role as an equiper.

As a single woman, Margaret allows the church to be her "new family" by extending the concept of family. In discussing the possibility of marriage along with her career, she says: "I have not closed that door. I think families are wonderful, and if it's God's plan for me I'll have my own someday. But if not, I know I have many Christian families that I can lean on and love."

Comfortable and satisfied with herself, Margaret says living alone can be gratifying and enjoyable. "It gives me the time I need to reflect, look inward and grow stronger." Yet as a minister, work can sometimes interfere with personal life. "I need to be careful to keep a balance. This she does through social and civic activities with friends outside the church. Balancing private time, developing a spiritual life and maintaining good health are important priorities.

Her ministry is also an important priority. She follows her calling with dedication and determination. She is outspoken about the current SBC controversy and the bias of some against the ordination and ministry of women. "The convention cannot tell me that God really has not called me to ministry in a full-time Christian vocation because I happened to be born female. My foundation is the scripture and the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. No one can take that away from me. I may not always 'be allowed' to serve in a SBC church, but I can serve God wherever He leads me. And I will!"

To women considering the ministry, Margaret offers this good advice: "Do with integrity the job you are called to do to the best of your ability. Don't try to prove yourself. Just do your best. Other things will fall into place."

Women and the SBC

by Barbara Jackson

A must-read book on the SBC controversy, **Baptist Battles** by Nancy Ammerman, is especially interesting because of her analysis of women's role in church life as a key issue dividing the right and left wings of the denomination.

Ammerman points out that though the motives and goals of the takeover are patently political, the issues that divide the sides are theological. Inerrancy is the byword, a symbol for orthodoxy. Moderates disavow inerrancy because it focuses on the book not the person of Christ—a form of bibliolatry—and because it repudiates freedom and autonomy while supporting authoritarianism and hierarchy.

On the issue of women, Ammerman observes, "Fundamentalists then had become convinced that the Bible contains clear principles of hierarchy. Women are to submit to their husbands, and members are to submit to their pastors." Therefore, for a woman to be a pastor is clear heresy.

Although women had long been involved in denominational life in various roles, she cites the increasing number of women, beginning in the 60s, professing a call to pastoral ministry, attending seminary and seeking ordination. During the 70s the role of women began to be subtly recognized by denominational leaders, thereby creating a red flag for the right wing.

With the publication of **Folio** and the organization of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry in 1983, which enabled women to identify with one another, it was clear that women in the SBC were a potent force, as well as a symbol of the divisions in the convention.

Ammerman's description of the effectiveness of women in the church

is especially notable. Some progressives saw women ministers as a "renaissance force, capable of transforming, a 'tidal wave that cannot be stopped.'" Their ideas about power, about family and work, even about God were in fact different. Primary virtues were inclusiveness in relationships and language, non-traditional worship styles, consensus rather than voting as a way of doing business. Revolutionary stuff!

Ammerman concludes her book by raising the question of permanent schism. She anticipates that fundamentalists can expect to keep the main stream intact. The progressives are acknowledging that neither their voice or threat of exit are instruments for effecting change, and a reason for staying are less clear.

She sees the future for progressives is not a re-creation of the past, but a rejection of cultural accommodation and an acceptance of pluralism. She suggests that this is the creative moment, not exile but exodus - a struggle to bring something new out of the depths of despair, a new kind of Baptist.

(*The Cross of Christ*, from page 1)

historically conditioned, and to remain in the system we must reinterpret the Christ event for this time and this day. As women who seek to build community, inclusion and reciprocity within the faith, we must do theology.

When I began my work of reappropriation of certain concepts, symbols and faith beliefs, I found it helpful to ask who Jesus was and is. If the image of Jesus as sacrificial victim is destructive for women and supports gender roles of non-assertiveness, passivity and self-abnegation, what then?

I have not been willing to let go of Jesus or the cross event. I am convinced that the significance of the crucifixion is much more than a paying of debt. Jesus was a free agent. He was an active, intentional person. He was all of this in the face of evil. He ultimately lost his life because of the way he lived, willing to risk martyrdom for the claims of the moment.

The power of the Jesus and the cross rests in his life, his compassion, presence and guidance, his intimacy with the people of his day, his understanding of freedom and responsibility, his focus on justice, his call to lives of autonomy and accountability. This is the meaning of the cross!

For many women, the desire to take up the cross derives from the solidarity they feel with Jesus. The cross is a powerful symbol for Christian women who experience the pain of exclusion and denigration in their own religious heritage. Not unlike the carpenter from Nazareth, they too suffer at the hand of the faith community they love.

I suppose if it weren't for Jesus' life and the radical act of love represented by his death, I would not be in the church. The morality, the rules, the fabricated systems would not have been enough. Maybe that's the way it should be.

Smith, Harold I.

Movers and Shakers. Revell, 1988.

Review by Ellen Gwathmey,
minister of outreach, River Road
Church, Richmond.

Once upon a time we believed in heroes. We followed those who led because we had respect for their offices. Then some thing or, rather, several things happened which caused us to lose faith.

Our society today seems intent on dethroning its heroes, pointing out their flaws and finding their "feet of clay." Where are the great heroes? Is there such a creature or is the idea of "hero a myth?"

Harold Ivan Smith believes that heroes still exist. In his book **Movers and Shakers**, he recounts the lives of nine men and women who made a difference in the world, nine who were true heroes. "Life cannot be lived without heroes. People are often more inspired by a person's way of life than by his or her words," Smith affirms.

This is indeed true as one reads Mr. Smith's biographical sketches of Lillian Trasher, Phillips Brooks, Belle Bennett, David Brainerd, Charlotte Lottie Moon, Corrie ten Boom, Eartha Mary Magdalene White, Luther Rice and Henrietta Mears. Here one finds people who were not deterred by the common basic fears of poverty, criticism, ill health, loss of love, old age, loss of liberty, or even death.

They were too busy pursuing God's dream for their lives to allow such "to block or restrain their obedience." The one fear that did taunt each one was "a fear of being mediocre, of disappointing or disobeying God," Smith observes.

The author, however, does not content himself merely with vividly recounting the stories of these nine people. He also shows us the charac-

teristics which made each unique.

Following each biographical sketch, the author lists the four or five major personality and character traits that each brought to his or her ministry, the factors which enabled each to accomplish what she or he set out to do. These were the gifts with which God endowed them.

In his book **The Church Staff and Its Workers**, W.L. Howse listed the leadership qualifications for Christian workers, such as: called of God, love of people, physical energy, sense of purpose and mission, patience and self-control, willingness to study and work, ability to adjust, ability to cooperate, balanced judgment and tact, sense of humor, ability to take criticism, strong in faith, effective in prayer. You find these qualities in the lives of the shapers and movers in this book. Life to them was a precious gift to be spent in dependence on God.

"What doth the Lord require of thee?" the prophet Micah asked. The answer came: "To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah 6:8) These nine dared to live so and thus changed the corners of the world where they were.

Their life stories can nourish our dreams, inspire our visions and encourage our obedience. When you finish this book, you will once again believe in heroes.

How to Achieve Inclusive Language Using a Non-Inclusive Hymnal

by Wanda Sauley Fennell

Feel free to alter texts which are not protected by copyright. Print the revised text in the bulletin. With a hymn that is copyrighted, you must obtain permission to alter and/or print. This means that hymns must be selected well in advance, and in many churches that will never happen. The copyright holder might deny permission or they might charge a fee.

Supplement the hymnal by printing new, inclusive hymns in the bulletin. Again, you must obtain permission to print a copyrighted text, and there may be a fee for the license to print. If the exclusive language is confined to one verse in the hymn, you might omit that one and sing the others that do not offend.

Try printing something on the order of the following in the bulletin: The congregation is invited to substitute "all" for "men" in the first stanza of such and such a hymn.

Be prepared to be yelled, cursed, and laughed at for any of these efforts.

Inclusive Hymn Collections

Bring Many Names: 35 New Hymns, by Brian Wren. Hope Publishing Co. 1989.

Praising A Mystery: 30 New Hymns, by Brian Wren. Hope Publishing Co. 1986.

Faith Looking Forward: The Hymns and Songs of Brian Wren. Hope Publishing Co. 1983.

A Singing Faith, by Jane Parker Huber. Westminster Press, 1987.

Everflowing Streams: Songs for Worship, Ruth C. Duck and Michael G. Bausch, eds. Pilgrim Press, 1981.

The United Methodist Hymnal, 1989. Nashville, 1989.

The Worshiping Church: A Hymnal. Hope Publishing Co., 1990.