



## “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Inheriting Our Past” is theme of Spring Conference

“It is our stories and the stories of those who have gone before us that give us identity,” states Ellen Gwathmey, associate at River Road Church, Richmond, and current chair of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry. This year’s spring workshop is designed to give opportunity for women to tell their own stories and hear the stories of significant women in history.

The VBWIM 1995 conference is scheduled for March 24-25 at Second Baptist Church in Richmond. On the theme: “In Search of Our Mother’s Garden: Inheriting Our Past,” workshop leaders and speakers will explore heroes, models and lessons from those who came before—both biblical and historical figures.

The conference begins Friday afternoon with registration from 4 to 6 pm and dinner at 6, followed by worship and program. The program features Fred Anderson, executive director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, who will share in his inimitable way insights on the role of women in history. His topic is “Unsung Heroines—Past and Present.” In addition, a dramatic presentation will spotlight specific women heroes through the ages.

The Saturday morning program will give more of an in-depth look at the contributions of our “fore-mothers” and give opportunity for individuals to tell their own stories as well as acknowledge their own mentors and role models. Judy Bailey, campus minister at the University of Richmond, will be the final speaker and will offer an interpretation of the theme. Following worship, the program will conclude with lunch.

Cost for the conference is \$25 (\$15 for students), which includes three meals. Registration deadline is March 17.



*Fred Anderson, executive director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society*

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# IN MY OPINION

## Ex Cathedra

by Ellen Gwathmey,  
convener, VBWIM

In ministry classes in seminary, the professors told us that while we ministered to others not to forget to minister to our families and to ourselves. We need to take care of us, or we would not be of use to our congregations. Remember to play, to laugh, to love yourself—we were advised.

They also told us in seminary to take time for reflection and meditation. In the midst of studies and papers and examinations, we must not neglect our spiritual journeys. They told us that if we thought we were too busy then, just wait until we found ourselves in ministry twenty-four hours a day. "Finding time" would take on an entirely new meaning. They told us, and we listened, but only some of us truly heard.

As caregivers we are continuously in preparation for the next lesson, the next worship service, the next conference, the next visit, the next crisis. We may spend hours reading and reflecting upon scriptures, texts and commentaries. All this time is spent, however, with others in mind.

Yet what of our personal pilgrimages? Are they to be neglected, pushed aside for the greater good? The answer, of course, is obvious; for if we do not continue our journeys, we are not fit to guide, walk beside, encourage others in theirs. When we give and give and take no time for spiritual rejuvenation, we become a dry place. We should be a reservoir so that we may minister out of our overflow.

Setting aside time for personal reading, reflection and meditation means organization of time. It takes planning: getting up a little earlier, going to bed a little later; creating a quiet hour in the middle of the afternoon. It means finding someone to be your minister and mentor. It means having eyes that see and ears that hear—using our senses to be open to the opportunities around us. It means spontaneity: taking a moment to listen to the water trickle over rocks, stopping for a minute to watch the Canada geese graze in the meadow, pausing to smell the wood smoke coming from your neighbors' chimney, walking and tasting the clean bite of snow in the air, noticing the fairy-tale icing on the pines after a snowfall.

In God's world there is abundance to enlarge the heart "three times its size" if we but take a moment now and again to pause and exist on another plane. From there it is only a small step to reflecting upon what we have seen and heard and then sharing it with other pilgrims along the way.

They told us time would be precious but that the pilgrimage was a demanding one, and it was worth any amount of juggling of schedules that had to be done. They told us ... and they were right.

*The Rev. Ellen T. Gwathmey  
is minister of visitation and outreach at  
River Road Church, Richmond*

## Editorial

### "Be still and know..."

by Barbara Jackson

In thinking about the theme of this issue of Synergy, I commented to a friend that I did not know anyone I considered really spiritual. My remark evoked some reaction. In thinking about it, I realized that I was, of course, mistaken. My problem was I mistook mysticism or self-abnegation for spirituality. Those approaches to life in the spirit can be elements of spirituality, to be sure, but there is more to it than that. What then does spirituality mean—both in definition and as implication? And what of women's spirituality in particular?

Anne Carr says spirituality is a holistic approach to life, but distinguishes meanings for men and women. [See inset, page 3]

With these definitions in mind, we might reexamine ourselves. Are you contemplative? That is a valid path. The medieval mystics and the modern-day Thomas Merton are admirable models. Yet mysticism as a way of life does not suit many people. Personally, I prefer a path of activism.

The programs of Richmond Hill retreat center in our own city of Richmond have given us models as we strive to develop our own spiritual lives. Many have entered a path of deliberate spiritual growth with a personal guide or a plan for self direction.

Meditation and prayer? Although I believe in the efficacy of prayer, I seldom get on my knees. My prayer is more often the quick breath of thankfulness or intercession for someone in trouble.

Other approaches to the divine are efficacious. I admire Quakers and share many of their values, but I probably could not be a good Quaker: to sit and wait for the spirit of the Lord to speak sends my thoughts wandering! The ritual of worship is important to me.

*(please turn to page 4)*

**Synergy**, the newsletter of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, is published in Richmond, Va. Subscription rates are \$20 per year (\$10, students). Manuscript submissions should be mailed to Synergy Editor, 9211 Whitemont Dr., Richmond, VA 23294.

**Editorial Board:** Wanda Fennell, Ellen Gwathmey, chair, June Hardy Dorsey, Holly J. Irvin, treasurer, Barbara Jackson, editor, Sonya Park-Taylor, B. J. Seymour, Ronda Stewart-Wilcox. ©1995

## A Postcard to Myself

by Sonya Park-Taylor

*Physical illness is a desert. As the Hebrew mothers and fathers mined for spiritual truth in the desolate sands of the desert, so too do we search for God amidst our physical pain. The solitude of illness is a place where most visit at some time. Others reside there. Each visitor experiences the harsh terrain uniquely, yet many of the markers found along the way are universal.*

*Once returned to the appointment-filled days of everyday life, however, the traveler realizes that the nuggets of truth gathered in the desert seem less vivid. It is the starkness of the desert sun which makes Reality clear. It is from the edges that the whole is more clearly perceived. We lose sight of Life when busy in the midst of living. So during this most recent sojourn in the desert, I take snapshots, jot down notes, and send back a postcard to myself.*

When I realize my helplessness in the shadow of physical imperfection, when I have tired of my attempts to control, influence, and lasso my body back into health, I face the choice between defeat and surrender. The former is the easier. Defeat tempts me to toss the shattered pieces of my life and let the winds of fate carry the shards where they may. Defeat whispers, "It's not worth it. You're exhausted. Give up now." Defeat calls for the easy and painless death of my soul.

Surrender, however, is fraught with danger. Surrender asks that I hand myself to an Other, with no knowledge of what the Other will require of me. Surrender asks that I let go of my defenses, strategies and hard-won ground. Surrender asks that I give up my desires, even when they are godly desires. Surrender, difficult the first time, is still difficult the second, third and fourth time. In a moment of

contrition I can call up my armies of autonomy and control and hand them over to God. The next morning, however, I awake self-satisfied and one-by-one reclaim my old possessions. True surrender is constantly renewed. It requires not God as my co-pilot, but God as my pilot. Surrender requires a trust in God that leaves me defenseless and open to a host of possibilities for hurt and disappointment.

I learned in Sunday school that it is okay to be angry at God—as long as we keep talking to God. We can express our anger at God; God can take it. Perhaps then it is just as okay to be disappointed in God. Scripture and the Spirit assure us that our Father remains faithful, that our Mother knows her children's pain. Regardless, having surrendered and still facing an imperfect and broken world, sometimes I feel abandoned and alone. Caught between guilt (I do not sense God's Presence; I must not have enough faith) and denial (I am not disappointed: I did not expect God to rescue me, anyway), I am pierced by the words of God's own divine human son: "*Eloi, Eloi, Lema sabachtani?*"

Indeed, my God, why have you forsaken me?

We feel forsaken, yet God says we are not. Henri Nouwen writes that we are called to wait on God in hope. We find waiting frustrating, however, because in waiting we expect our wishes to come true. When this does not occur, we become disappointed. I struggle, then, to choose surrender and not defeat. To quell my desires, even when the desires are just. To bear disappointment, knowing Christ suffers it with me. To understand waiting. And to know hope.

*Sonya Park-Taylor is executive director of the Center for Women and, with her husband Ted, is co-minister to second-generation Korean-Americans at Emmaus United Methodist Church in Richmond. In 1989 she was diagnosed with lupus, a chronic autoimmune disorder characterized by unpredictable flare-ups and remissions.*

### Spirituality is ...

Author Anne Carr in her book *Transforming Grace* describes spirituality as "the whole of one's spiritual or religious experience, one's beliefs, convictions, and patterns of thought, one's emotions and behavior in respect to what is ultimate, or to God." (p. 201) She says that spirituality is holistic, encompassing all one's relationships to all of creation: the self, others, society, nature, work and leisure.

In other words, it is a fundamentally religious orientation to life. Spirituality names the interior life of Christians, especially prayer, but also the practice of the Christian life in everyday affairs, including lifestyles, attitudes, ideas, values, habits, activities, images, stories, beliefs, even emotions and bodily expressions.

Women's and men's spirituality are dichotomized in terms of the dominant personality and cultural traits that presuppose the one gender to approach life in terms of nurturing and relatedness and the other in terms of objectivity and autonomy.

Further, a *feminist* spirituality is different from women's spirituality as contrasted with male. A feminist spirituality is one that includes a critical stance toward inherited patterns and assumptions about gender differences that deny women opportunity for self-actualization and self-transcendence. (Carr, p. 207)

Feminist spirituality recognizes the uniqueness of each individual as she tells her own story and affirms each one as she strives to make her own choices. Feminist spirituality seeks the authentic freedom to be faithful to one's own experience.

## Who Is Like God?

By Kathy Fogg Berry

Spirituality ... definitely not a four-letter word, yet among evangelical Christians sometimes treated with as much taboo. Until recently, that is. Finally more and more Christians are sitting up and taking notice of this too often neglected aspect of Christian life.

What is spirituality? Basically, it means of the Spirit. It means desiring to be physically, mentally and spiritually close to God.

You may be disappointed if you try to look up spirituality in the dictionary because no definitive definition is given. I think that's good, though, because spirituality is not easily defined.

Though I certainly am not an authority on this issue I'll attempt to share what developing my spiritual life has entailed.

At two weeks old I began attending Monument Heights Baptist Church here in Richmond ... with my parents, of course. Growing up in that church offered me years of Christian love and nurture. There I was accepted and cared for in innumerable ways and daily experienced God through friends and family. Amidst that good, however, came a sincere though shallow understanding of my responsibility toward my own Christian growth. Although my prayer life was fervent—modeled after my parents' examples—I was not satisfied.

I can remember massive feelings of guilt. Guilt because I felt I didn't measure up on an unseeable measuring rod that

dictated what a good Christian should do. Although others shared Christian truths they'd discerned, I didn't know how to or why I needed to discern these for myself. I only knew that discerning God's truths was something I should be doing.

Although I did grow to cherish the Bible and embrace Christianity for myself, something was missing. Well-intentioned spoon-feeding only created a cavity in my life. Everyone assumed I was a spiritual person, while I took for granted the Faith of our ... uh ... Father (Mothers, too)!

Gradually Christianity blossomed in my life and became my own faith. Then my life progressed to include Southern Seminary, missionary appointment, writing for numerous denominational publications, church involvement, etc.

Through all I've gradually come to see how Christian growth occurs as I continually seek closeness with God through

- reading the Bible and trying to discern God's will for my life
- reading what others have to say about their Christian journey
- reflecting on and welcoming God's presence in my life through prayer, reflection and meditation ... not just talking to God, but listening
- learning how to be in community with other Christians striving to follow God
- establishing Christian friendships that hold me accountable for developing my spiritual nature.

Although I strive to develop these things, I have certainly not "arrived." Spiritual development involves a lifelong commitment.

When our family moved to Richmond five years ago, we felt God was leading us to move into Richmond Hill, an interdenominational prayer retreat center in inner-city Richmond. In that Christian community with 12 other people I learned more about spiritual development than I'd ever known. For example, I learned to appreciate the role of a spiritual director, someone who helps you focus on your spiritual nature.

Living in community like this is not something every Christian will feel called to do. But developing your spirituality should be a goal for us all.

Before our son was born we selected a name for him—Micah. In Hebrew this means "Who is like God?" (Now that he's a teenager, I understand why the question mark is there!) But seriously .... We named him Micah because of what the Old Testament prophet had to say and how he said it. And we liked the word's meaning.

That question from Micah sums up my life's goal, to be like God. As Christians we must constantly try to be like God. That's where developing one's spirituality becomes a must.

Realizing that I certainly don't affirmatively answer that question with my life, I nonetheless hope to get closer to doing just that. One day perhaps when I ask myself *Who is like God?* I'll honestly be able to answer, ME.

*Kathy Berry Fogg is a writer and World Mission Conferences coordinator for the Foreign Mission Board, SBC. She and her husband Bill were formerly missionaries with the Home Mission Board in New York City and elsewhere.*

### (Editorial...from page 2)

Yet, spirituality entails more than prayer and worship and good works.

The spiritual person is one who knows that the world is wonderfully made and who knows he or she is made in God' image. The spiritual person sees something of God in the other.

The spiritual person will thrill to the beauty in a flower or a mountain vista—for God is there. In understanding the laws of nature or mathematics or in experiencing the satisfaction of a puzzle

worked or a problem solved, the spiritual person participates in the order of God's universe—God shows himself and allows us to participate in that order.

The relationships of family or friends or mentor/learner show the hand of God as we interact and know love. Creativity expressed through the gifts of the spirit as we put hand to task bring us to God—for God is source of the gifts.

Though we may be babes in the spirit, the depths await us to be probed. Difficulty, disappointments, illness, problems—all

serve to demonstrate the need to rely upon God for strength, for personal integrity, for vision and hope. Yet one should not wait for adversity to develop a spiritual approach to the divine.

God is to be found in natural beauty and the earth ... in created innovation ... in relationship ... in service and good works ... and God may be found in home and hearth.

Think on these things.

*Barbara Jackson is the editor of SYNERGY.*

## Sermon: Finding God as the Beloved

by Stephanie Ford

Reading the love poetry in the Song of Songs is a spiritual experience. We are struck by the intensity and deep passion of these lovers and may even wonder how such passion got in the canon in the first place. Yet, although the Song of Songs is a wonderful gift to us, we only tend to hear these lovers' voices at weddings or as an allegory for the relationship between Christ and the Church. The metaphor invites even more imagination, however—for it is the passion of erotic love that births creation and play and joy, and as the mystics have told us for centuries, this song of lovers invites our souls into the cherished bridal chamber of God.

The image of God as lover speaks to the truth of my heart—it is a living, breathing metaphor for one of the deepest realities of my spiritual journey: that God is the Love of my life.

Still, I have some reservations about talking about God as Lover, as the intimate companion of the soul, of Christ as Bridegroom. First of all, mine is a female voice, and a heterosexual one—and therefore limited. Moreover, the God-Christ image for me in this reflection is “he,” though I know God can certainly speak in a woman’s voice as the Beloved to a man. A final reservation: some have experienced sexual abuse and find this sensual, erotic imagery even repulsive. Yet, who of us can speak about God and not encounter such limits?

Even as a young girl, I was a very romantic and curious soul! I always wondered: What did Cinderella and the Prince do once they got to the castle?! “Happily ever after” always seemed rather vague to me. Yet, my youth was still of a generation in which information about sex was learned at slumber parties or from forays into the “adult” sections of bookstores when my parents weren’t looking.

I was, therefore, still very innocent at 20, when as a junior in college I had a deeply spiritual experience, when I first named God as lover. Our college chaplain emphasized the rich traditions of church history, and so I found myself—on my

own—attending a local Episcopal church. Having been brought up Baptist and then in a charismatic church, I was awestruck in this old stone church, watching the procession of the cross, kneeling in prayer, my eyes centering on the altar and cross. Here was mystery and reverence I had really only felt before in yearly Christmas Eve services! I found myself alone with God in the communion of saints.

But it was when I stood up to walk down to the altar to receive communion that I truly found my soul immersed in a love I can hardly describe—I was a bride and I was walking down to the altar to receive the ultimate gift of the Bridegroom—a gift of sacrifice and deep love. I felt a passion welling up in my soul that began in the deepest places of my body. At the time, I felt a little guilty for these feelings—was I being sacrilegious to feel this way about God?

Though Freud might have a different answer, I came to realize that sexuality and passion can indeed be part of love for God, and God for us. For God did indeed create sex and the beautiful diversity of reproductive styles in creation. And it was the Song of Songs, this mystical book of poetry sandwiched between Ecclesiastes and the book of Isaiah, that first confirmed to me that sexuality and sensuality are divinely inspired and blessed—and meant to be experienced at many levels of body and soul.

I have met the Beloved many times since—in a breeze that caresses my cheek, in a crowded bus in mainland China when the love of God flooded my entire body and radiated like warm light into the busy streets. I have laughed with joy at the welcoming scent of magnolias on a summer night in North Carolina. And I have certainly touched the Beloved in the very real meaningful encounter with another human being. Yet, I have also met the divine Lover in the quiet, dark, and deeper-than-the-five-senses place of contemplation and silence. And recently, jogging in a little park nearby, I have seen the Beloved’s smile in a small albino squirrel that plays among the oak trees there.

And it has been just in the last two years in finding friends among the mystics, who offer rich allegory and imagery for their experience of passion for God, that I have discovered that my introductory experience

in a small Anglican parish is one that has been shared and cultivated across the ages.

Origen was the first to allegorize the Song of Songs as God’s intercourse with the soul (rather than as Christ’s relations with the Church). Later in the 12th century, Bernard of Clairvaux developed a mystical theology of spiritual marriage: asceticism as preparation for the mystical kiss, contemplation as the foretaste of heaven, where God fills up the soul not only with “the light of knowledge, but also with the fire of love.” Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and many others speak of this same mystical passion with God.

But I am particularly struck by Mechtild of Magdeburg, a beguine of the 13th century, and her soul’s dialogue with the Bridegroom and with her own mind, which she names her “senses.” Christ, the beautiful youth, woos her to a secret meeting in the woods, to a mystical dance.

Her soul is delighted. But her senses are worried—can anyone survive intercourse with the Holy of Holies? They plead with Mechtild to consider her options. Why not revere the Virgin Mary, see a spiritual director, study the apostles’ teaching some more, or seek the suffering of the martyrs for a mystical experience? Or, they beg her, pray to the angels or meditate on the image of yourself as mother Mary nursing the infant Christ. But her soul answers her senses with an emphatic “no.” She says, “It is a childish joy to suck and rock a babe. But I am a full-grown bride ... I must go to my lover’s side.”

Thus Mechtild goes off to meet Christ, but He asks of her one more thing—the complete surrender of her self. Mechtild worries, “But Lord, what shall happen to me then? Christ responds, “Thou art by nature already mine! Nothing can come between Me and thee!” In letting go of the ego defenses of fear and shame, Mechtild finds her endless desire realized in Him.

And so Mechtild writes of the “blessed stillness” as “He gives himself to her, and she to Him.” And though she continues to live in a very real world in service to the sick and the poor, Mechtild is comforted—for she says, “Where two lovers come secretly together, they often part without parting.” She leaves this spiritual tryst carrying this sense of profound love into her everyday life.

*(Please turn to page 6)*

(Stephanie Ford...from page 5)

Whether Mechtild's visions of Christ the Lover would survive on the psychoanalyst's couch is an honest contemporary question. But perhaps we might also call into question our modern overabundance of rational spirituality. Teilhard contends that it is from the erotic "storehouse of passions" that the "warmth and light of the soul arise, transfigured." He goes on to say that if we would learn how to tap our enormous sexual energy, "for the second time in the history of the world we [would] have discovered fire." Sacred fire.

So then what does this image of God as lover and of ourselves as lovers of God say to us? First of all, there is delight in the realization. As writer and spiritual guide Alan Jones has said, "God is crazy about us, deeply and madly in love with us." Or we can hear even older words from Meister Eckhart, who says, "God is foolishly in love with me. He gives it to me suddenly, he gives it to me wholly, he gives it to me perfectly, he gives it to me all the time, and he gives it to all creatures."

One of my favorite movies is a simple love story entitled "Say Anything." In the movie, the character played by John Cusack has fallen desperately in love with the beautiful Iona Sky. But dad doesn't approve, and so daughter finally gives in to parental pressure and stops taking her lover's phone calls.

One night during their separation, in a scene reminiscent of *Romeo and Juliet*, Cusack drives his car not far from her open window. Taking out his stereo, he stands with a desperate, silent passion, holds up the stereo and plays a beautiful love song to her. "In your eyes," the song intones, "the light, the heat. In your eyes, I am complete. In your eyes, I see the doorway to a thousand churches. Oh, I want to touch the light and heat I see in your eyes."

And so God stands outside our window. Waiting for, longing for, desiring the very presence and attention of our souls. And his love is a love that will not die, a love of endless, fiery passion. And though these words sound strange to our modern, rational ears, God is continually seeking intercourse with our souls.

As we let go of the literalism of fundamentalism—and abandon the tired forms of dry devotionals, we can hear the call of the Lover God to imaginative, intuitive play with life itself, to the intimacy

## Find the 16 Books of the Bible

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu, kept people looking so hard for facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others, it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you.

Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea, so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now for there are really sixteen names of books of the Bible in this story. Find all 16 books!

—copied

of solitude, to the deep, pulsing energy of the stars.

And what about our passion for God? Though we are careful students of New Testament and Greek, we may still have missed the unwritten, unvoiced, but certainly lived beatitude of Jesus himself: "Be ye passionate for God." It was this passion that reverberated in the ears of a certain rich young ruler when he heard, "Sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and come, follow me." It was a passion for a new kingdom—a kingdom where the poor would be blessed and the last put first. But it was also a passion that took Jesus to places of silence in the wilderness, to an intimacy of presence with God.

And it is the passion for silence, for being with God that we so desperately need now. I know; my life is also crowded with too many "have-to's." And it is so easy, when we talk about God in Bible studies, hymns and sermons, to think that we have met Him. Moreover, when our old ways of thinking about God begin changing and in some cases dying, we may even wonder how to pray: "Where are you, God? What do you even look like anymore?" But this is precisely where we need a lover's passion. We must not give up our search for him; like the love in the Song of Songs, we must go and search the streets until we find him. For the paradox is that, like the playful hide-

and-seek lover, God longs to be found. We may need to find a new way to pray, but we must not give up the search.

I think we also need to ask the question: What does this metaphor say to our world? My sense is that people's deepest concern today is the longing for love. I think most people are searching for that perfect lover, someone to fill an ultimate longing and hunger. Just listen to the radio. Singer Michael Bolton finds that even the word love does not adequately describe the feeling. He sings, "I said I loved you, but I lied. Cause this is more than love I feel inside. Love can never ever feel so strong."

Our experience of God as lover is not only private. For unlike human lovers who quite rightly seek a hidden intimacy away from the world, the divine *eros* breathes through all of life. And it is this sense of being passionately loved by the God of the universe that can give us the courage to believe in change for the world, to believe in hope for all living things. My view as a lover of God has not narrowed my vision; it has actually enlarged it. The passion for God becomes compassion—to love the world with the same intensity that God loves—since, as Sallie McFague points out; God is passionately connected to both the joy and the suffering of all being.

We are called to be lovers of God. It is a passion worth living and dying for.

*Stephanie Ford is a student at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.*

# BOOK REVIEW

## Care of the Soul: a Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life. by Thomas Moore

reviewed by Connie Showalter

*Care of the Soul* is a most unusual book. In a period of secular cynicism, this guide to depth and sacredness has been in the *New York Times* bestseller list since its publication, first as a hardback and now for over a year in paperback.

Author Thomas Moore, like his predecessor of the same name, seems to be “a man for all seasons.” He studied for the priesthood, but left the church to pursue studies in philosophy, music, art and theology. He is a practicing psychotherapist and has written several books, including a new one called *Soul Mates*.

When Moore first left the monastery and was working in a scientific laboratory, a colleague told him that he would always be a priest. He denied it then, but writes that later he came to realize that he would always do the work of a priest, which is caring for the soul—his own and that of others.

*Care of the Soul* is a book to be read, slowly and deliberately, pausing to consider the ideas offered and to ruminate upon how they relate to one’s own experience. Much seems obscure at first glance, and very vital upon serious consideration.

In this age of self-help books and expectations for quick solution to our difficulties, in *Care of the Soul* Moore explains that he is offering a guide, not to problem solving, but to a way of giving life depth and value. The tool for this task is the imagination, and it is something that must be done individually and personally.

He defines the soul as having to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart and personal substance. He disclaims that he uses the word in a religious sense, but the reader often senses that he does, or moves it into that dimension.

He also explains the difference between the words *cure* and *care*. His concern is for souls’ care, and he assures his reader that it is an art and a matter of great complexity, realizing that there are many facets and many

depths in all experience, and that we must use them all in caring for the soul.

The book is divided into four sections. The first a general introduction to the concepts of the care of the soul, The second, and major section of the book, deals with care of the soul in everyday life. It talks of the myth of family and children; has chapters on self-love; on love; on jealousy and envy as poisons; power; the gifts of depression; body politics of illness; and the economics of the soul—a somewhat arresting array of topics.

Part three is on spiritual practice and psychological depth, and part four is on care of the world’s soul, ending with a chapter on the social arts of life.

The underlying message of the principal section of the book is that we care for the soul as we investigate, internalize and accept the realities of ourselves and our everyday world, and that this is accomplished by analytical use of the imagination.

There are ways to look at our families and our role in them and to construct a family myth, so that we may understand who we are and be comfortable with it. We must come to love and tend the soul so that *I* may give way to *others*. As we relate to others, we move from family and self to incorporate all our experiences in relationship. The soul must communicate love and, Moore says, belonging is an active verb. We must have an openness to love in all its aspects.

Over and over, the author repeats that all experiences are not positive and pleasant, but he reiterates that there is as much value to be derived from the dark side of life as from its sunshine—and perhaps more. He points out that as children in Adam and Eve the human condition is that of suffering—of woundedness.

In the final portion of the section he talks about work as it affects our lives. We spend a great deal of our lives at our work, and it is as important in our soul care as marriage or family or anything else. We work upon our souls by ordering the things of our lives.

The third section of the book is entitled “Spiritual Practice and Psychological

Depth.” He begins by saying he has been emphasizing the soul’s need for vernacular life. “To the soul, the ordinary is sacred, and the everyday is the primary source of religion” (p. 203).

The soul in addition needs spirituality: to be at one with the everyday and the lowly. “The soul feeds on life and digests it, creating wisdom and character out of the fodder of experience” (p. 205). We need rituals to prompt us, and time for meditation. Care of the soul profits from a spiritual life, performed in the midst of everyday things, but it also demands attention, mindfulness, regularity and devotion—and some small means of withdrawal from this world. Religion is guidance for the soul.

The final section of the book has two chapters dealing with the care of the world’s soul. The first is on beauty and the reanimation of things, and the second, the social acts of life. Moore hypothecates that objects and places have soul and that we respond to them on that basis. He digresses a bit to urge careful respect for the ecology of which we are a part, and which is so often ignored and abused. The final chapter on the social acts of life is in many ways a summary of what has gone before, in which he emphasizes the beauty of everyday things, seeing simple tasks as rituals to guide our meditation, and extending the wisdom that comes with aging if we imaginatively use our experiences. He avers “the sacred appears when imagination achieves unusual depth and fullness” (p. 289).

*Care of the soul* is a book to be read carefully, over time, and perhaps reread often. It calls out the best of our imaginative and contemplative skills. It explains by calling upon what we know or sense from mythology, art, psychology and theology. Its viewpoint is not one we often encounter but must appeal to both our minds and heart (souls), providing us a very real challenge to grow.

*Connie Showalter, a graduate of Meredith College, Johns Hopkins and Virginia Commonwealth University, is an educator and member of River Road Church, Richmond, where she is Sunday school teacher and active lay leader.*

## THE LAST WORD

## “Still, Still with Thee”

by Barbara Jackson

It seems fitting to include in this word study a look at **spirit** and **spirituality**. Since etymology is often bereft of passion, we turn to the gifts of the poet to plumb the depths of meaning. Hymnody is a rich source for the insights of the poet on the meaning of spirituality to faith and is often the vehicle for adherents to both understand and experience a spiritual dimension of faith.

There are a number of hymns we might choose to epitomize the desire of the soul for spiritual oneness with the divine. “Come Down, O Love Divine” begs the Comforter to draw near and kindle the heart with holy flame. The text by Littledale (1833-1890) is attributed to Bianco of Siena (14th c.) and is set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Another choice might be “Breathe On Me, Breath of God” by Edwin Hatch (1835-1889).

In keeping with our theme of women’s spirituality, we choose to look at “Still, Still With Thee” by Harriet Beecher Stowe, set to the music of Mendelssohn.

*Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh,  
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;  
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,  
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with thee.*

Harriet Beecher Stowe is the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, one of the most influential works of literature of all time. Her book helped galvanize the anti-slavery movement and propel the country to war. She wrote over forty volumes, mostly concerned with social issues. Of her poetry, only one survives as a hymn. Based on Psalm 139:17-18, it was written at the request of her brother, Henry Ward Beecher, for inclusion in his *Plymouth Collection* of hymns.

Stowe exults in the glories of God’s world, the beauty of the morning and the solemn hush of nature. Yet she correlates the naturalness of the new morning dawning to fresh splendor with her own awakening, her consciousness of nearness to heaven and to God. Then in the final stanza a further

comparison with the glory of that bright morning when the soul awakens (death) and comes the awareness of being with God.

Although Stowe does not use the words spirit or spiritual, what she describes is clearly a spiritual experience of God presence. Let’s look closer.

The word **spirit**, **spiritual** and all its variants come from the Latin *spirare*, to breathe. The word is probably echoic, as in the intake of breath. There are many compound words, such as **aspire**, **conspire**, **expire**, **inspire**, **perspire**, **respire**, and **transpire**, the meanings of which are self-evident. Other related words are **inspirit**, **spirited**, **sprite**, and **esprit de corps**. In liturgical Latin **spiritus** refers to the Holy Spirit, formerly translated Holy Ghost.

For a more precise exploration of meaning, we look at *anima*, L. for **breath**, **spirit**. In Latin, *animus* is the thinking principle as opposed to *corpus*, body, and *anima*, soul. *Anima* too is echoic, pantomiming the intake and outflow of air. Behind the Latin words is the Indo-European root *anh-*, to breathe. Cultures around the world link **breath** and **spirit**, believing that the spirit leaves the body with the last breath.

Related English words are **animus** and **animosity**, **animate**, **animation**, **equanimity**, **pusillanimous** (mean-spirited), **magnanimous** and **unanimous**. An **animal** is a living, **breathing** creature.

**Animism**, of course, is the belief that objects in nature are endowed with spirit and can be entreated to act in human behalf. The word is widely used to characterize polytheistic nature religions.

The word **breath** is from a different root, IE *ghwre-*, meaning vapor or fumes. The Greek root *pneu-*, to breathe, yields *pneuma* (wind), hence **pneumatic** and **pneumonia**. It is this word that is used in the New Testament both for the distinctively human life and for the activity of God.

The Hebrew *ruach* is used in the Old Testament for God’s spirit. It is *ruach* that acts in creation, gives wisdom and holiness, and that inspires the prophets. *Ruach* is God’s breath inspiring humankind.

Molly Marshall has accepted a position with Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City as professor of theology, worship and spiritual formation. Marshall was the first woman tenured professor in the school of theology at Southern Seminary and was fired for her supposed aberrant theology.

**Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond** has been granted candidate status by the Association of Theological Schools, the last step before full accreditation. Now in its fourth academic year, the school has 139 students pursuing the master of divinity degree and nine full-time faculty members.

**Southwestern Seminary** has been placed on probation for two years by the Association of Theological Schools because of actions by the seminary’s trustees in firing president Russell Dilday and interfering in the school’s academic freedom.

**Southern Seminary** continues to make the news with reports of president Al Mohler’s insistence on a return to strict Calvinism and adherence to the original Abstract of Principles. The Dec. 5 *Time* magazine named Mohler as one the significant Americans who show promise to shape their generation.

**Southeastern Seminary** announced plans to form an undergraduate program which will offer a major in biblical studies and an associate of divinity degree. They estimate a beginning class of 25-30 students. In addition, the seminary announced plans to begin a Ph.D. program to begin in the 1995 fall semester.

In summary, **spirit** and **spiritual** refer to the person in relation to the creator. To be **spiritual** is to connect with one’s innate **animating** principle, to appreciate the uniqueness of oneself, to relate to others with equal appreciation for the uniqueness of that person, and to connect joyfully with the divine **spirit** that **animates**.

Sources: *The Roots of English*, by Robert Claiborne; *Origins*, by Eric Partridge.

Barbara Jackson is the editor of SYNERGY

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

## FULL PARTNERSHIP

[This is the final report from the workshops at the 1994 Spring Conference, on the theme "Full Partnership," held at Ginter Park Church in May. Other reports may be found in previous issues of SYNERGY. Maurice Graham spoke on this topic at the Fall VBWIM dinner.]

## Why We Need Both Women and Men in Ministry

by Maurice Graham

I want to examine the issue of men and women in the ministry by looking at it from the perspective of creation theology, which is what God really intended for the world to be. We often look at issues from the perspective of after the Fall, centering on God's curse to man, woman and the serpent. We must never forget that from the beginning God wanted it to be different and that He created us in His own image. The Genesis story tells us clearly and poetically that "man" alone was inadequate and incomplete. He was without a suitable helpmeet, someone who was quite different from him. So God created woman. Like two pieces of a puzzle that interlock together man and woman are different but similar, so that when they are joined we can see the larger picture.

Modern science is shedding light on the fact that men and women not only have obvious differences in their anatomies but also have marked physiological differences in their brains. The following scientific facts refer to the typical male and female population but of course will vary from individual to individual.

Men are more left-brained, which makes them more logical and task-oriented. They want to know the facts in order to solve problems. Men also can shut off their brains when they are not solving problems. This is why some women experience men as being "brain dead" when they talk to them or try to relate to them concerning anything that is not task-oriented. Men seem not to compute what they hear women saying.

Women, however, have more connective tissue between the left and right sides of the brain, making it much easier for them to move back and forth between the two sides of the brain. Even when women are resting or carrying on conversations they have high activity in the brain. They perceive more, as they are able to take in more sensory data and coordinate it with both sides of the brain. Women use the right side of their brain much more than men do. The right side of the brain contains the elements necessary for relationship skills, those of feeling, caring and nurturing. This is why women are more relationship-oriented than men. They are concerned about feelings and building bonds in relationships, which are strengthened through talking, joining, caring, enhancing and enabling.

The differences in these brain functions make men and women approach life

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**"...God always meant for men and women to be together in a partnership."**

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differently. It accounts for the orientation of the traditional family, in which the man has been the task-oriented one, who has centered on solving the problem of providing for the family. The woman has traditionally dealt with relationships, primarily family relationships.

From the perspective of creation theology, God always meant for men and women to be together in a partnership. He did not mean even from the beginning for men and women to be competitive, to be rivals or be alienated from one another. We are made and designed from the inside out with different skills, gifts and abilities. These differences are to complement each other, not for one to be superior to the other. The differences are there to balance each other and enhance one another for God's creation.

For two thousand years women have not had a place of leadership inside the church.

Today we are relooking at our theology to focus on what God meant from the beginning. We can see as women move into the ministry how God uses their gifts and abilities in a special way that previously has been lacking in our churches. This does not mean that men have been inadequate, just not complete. Women's natural abilities are in caring and nurturing. Women bring a balance into the ministry by emphasizing the importance of relationships in the church.

Relationship skills have been lacking in our churches and are the source of most of our problems. Most Baptists have what they formerly called the "five-star" church; they are program-oriented and not relationship based. The typical local church's problems involve relationships rather than areas that

men focus on, such as programs and theology.

Everyone can share stories of growing up in churches with relationship problems, which are signs of spiritual immaturity and reasons that churches do not grow. Even today we are too task-oriented when "doing church" and suffer from lack of relationship skills, because we have not brought enough women into leadership to have a sense of balance.

Women in the ministry could help the church develop balance between programs and relationships.

Recently I attended a visionary meeting with the leadership of Bon Air Baptist Church, where I am associate pastor. When the church leaders talked about the church of the past, they spoke of their struggles and conflicts, which mainly involved programs and the inability to get along with each other. In speaking of their church today, they listed many positive relationship-oriented qualities of the church and did not mention any task problems. They mentioned the great Sunday school, great music program and other areas. The leaders said they saw our church today as much more caring and relationship-oriented than in the past. I believe this change has occurred

*(Please turn to page 10)*

## Survey Yields Interesting Results

Did you ever wonder how church people really feel about women ministers? Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry conducted a survey on the role of women in Virginia churches at the Baptist General Association of Virginia last November in Salem.

The purpose of the survey was not so much to obtain a statistically accurate poll of Virginia Baptists as to raise consciousness of the issue. Respondents were mostly women who were interested enough to come by the VBWIM booth and view the display.

There were 111 responses. Of these, 61% (68 responses) have women deacons in their churches (a fact) but, interestingly, 91% (101) would be willing to have a woman as supply preacher (an opinion). The other responses indicated their own willingness to vote to call a woman to serve in their churches: 98% (109) for a woman as minister of youth or minister of music (only 2 no's for each), and 99% for minister to children (only 1 no). Go figure!

Predictably, the responses to the categories for associate pastor and pastor

showed the most variation: 83% would vote to call a woman as associate pastor (10% no), but only 55% for a pastor (26% no). Both categories yielded some question marks and non-answers (associate – 7% and pastor – 19%), indicating either that they had not considered the issue or were not sure how they would react if actually faced with the decision. Or maybe they felt the idea was too far-fetched to merit serious consideration!

Several people penciled in comments, revealing either ambivalence or a disparity in their own views from that of the church. On the question of woman deacon, several wrote, “No, but we should.” Another: “Men deacons and women deaconesses; men ordained, women not.” “Yes, we have one.” “No, but we have had.”

On the question concerning willingness to vote to have a woman as supply preacher: “Yes, I would, but the pastor would not allow a woman in the pulpit.” or “Yes, but I don't make that decision.” These comments reflect awareness of the absence of power or influence.

On the matter of calling a woman as associate or pastor, comments ranged from: “Yes, but not right now.” to “I don't know, I think so.” Others: “If I had my way, a woman could serve anywhere.” “Yes, if it

was up to me!” “No. My husband is pastor, but if he wasn't I would say yes.” “Yes, but probably not the majority of our congregation.”

Is any analysis possible? The numbers are too small to reflect the entire range of Virginia Baptists. No doubt, there is a bias reflecting the sympathies of those who came by the Women in Ministry exhibit. Yet the results are instructive in that even apparent supporters are hesitant on the crucial issue of a woman as pastor. We might conclude that acceptance of women for the age-level and music positions is not really an issue, but that there is a long way to go where the pulpit or traditional male role is involved.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry drew a large group of about 50 men and women to its fellowship dinner on Tuesday evening in conjunction with the Baptist General Association. The dinner was held at Colonial Avenue Baptist Church in Roanoke, where Maurice Graham spoke on gender differences (see his article elsewhere in this paper).

The VBWIM display in the exhibit hall featured a photographic montage depicting women at work in various ministry roles throughout the state, the attitude survey on women's roles, and various pamphlets.

### (Graham...from page 9)

because in the last seven or eight years they have embraced women into the ministry of our church. They have been brought into the mainstream of ministry through ordination as ministers and deacons and by being chairpersons and members of key committees.

The positive influence that women have when placed in leadership in church committees and in church business meetings is easy to understand when we realize the scientific gender differences. Research shows these gender differences to be present from birth and independent of cultural upbringing. Women are less competitive and aggressive than men. They consider relationships as most important, whereas males focus on who is boss and getting the job done. Women want to maintain group functioning, making sure everyone has a say and no one's feelings are hurt. Women are more socially sensitive as

they are more willing to conform to others' opinions. They are more willing than men to change their opinions, especially when a contrary opinion is being expressed by a trusted friend. With these skills and characteristics, it is obvious what a positive impact women can have in leading church committees and business meetings. Women are more interested in people and are more accepting of newcomers. What a difference they can have on church growth!

My hope and vision is that the church will become more balanced and complete where men and women can join in partnership and ministries. Not that men and women will be identical or do the same tasks. Nevertheless, we will complement and enhance one another to make a complete body of Christ where people will see Jesus at work in what we do and how we relate. In the New Testament church both men and women were addressed as if

they were in partnership ministering in the church. Often we have warped that view by trying to add lines of authority. We have missed the focus of what God meant from the beginning of creation, that women and men were created together to have the whole image of God. Living in the completeness of that image is our most important task. My hope and prayer is that we will join and see that all God's children are created with purpose and gifts and abilities for service in the body of Christ. Let us not be biased by physical features that prevent individuals from being affirmed that God is working their lives and He has places for them in ministry.

Source: *Brain Sex: The Real Difference Between Men and Women*, by Ann Moir and David Jessel.

***The Reverend Maurice Graham is associate pastor of Bon Air Baptist Church, Richmond.***

# RESOURCES

## Listening for God

by Paula J. Carlson and Peter S. Hawkins, eds. Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

review by Ellen T. Gwathmey

Where does one listen for God? In literature the obvious places are the scriptures and works by those writers well known for their connection with the Christian tradition. One is not surprised to hear God in such writings as Augustine's *Confessions* or Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* or Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Donne's poetry or C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*. These are, after all, places in which generations have already acknowledged hearing God speak to them.

*Listening for God* is part of the Augsburg Fortress series on contemporary literature and the life of faith. Editors Paula Carlson and Peter Hawkins are at Yale University. Carlson is lecturer in the department of English and Hawkins is professor of religion and literature at Yale Divinity School and at the Institute of Sacred Music, Worship and the Arts. Both are published authors. Together they have developed a study resource which can be used by individuals or groups. The book includes ten selections, brief author profiles, and reflection questions arranged in eight chapters. A videocassette and a leader's

guide can be purchased separately to augment the book.

The challenge to the reader of this collection of short stories and essays is to pay attention everywhere, to move outside the circle of proven texts and explore uncharted territory. "Listening for God," the editors write, "then entails the risky business of the unknown and the uncertain" (p. 7). It means allowing oneself to listen to the diverse sounds of one's own culture without being sure of what one will find there. It means discovering "... that life itself is grounded in the mystery of God and shot through with divine grace" (p. 37). It means keeping track of the wonder from which one often runs or which one forgets to notice. It means having eyes that see and ears that hear.

In *Listening for God* there are many stances taken with regard to Christianity. The authors range from an ordained minister, Frederick Buechner, to practicing Christians Annie Dillard, Garrison Keillor, and Richard Rodriguez, to a "fellow traveler," Patricia Hampl, to one who has forged an eclectic religion of her own, Alice Walker. There is also Flannery O'Connor, whose depth of faith and the extent to which it informed and shaped her writing was not known until essays and letters published after her death made these apparent. Finally, in this collection, is Raymond Carver, who says that although he is not religious, he

must believe in miracles and the possibility of resurrection.

The editors have taken great care in their selections to include material that avoids conventional spirituality. Between the covers the reader will find points of disagreement as well as contact and reasons to be uncomfortable as well as to feel at home.

O'Connor, Carver and Walker write short stories that culminate in revelation, but each leaves the reader to decide what it is that has been revealed. Buechner, Hampl and Rodriguez use memoir as a kind of spiritual pilgrimage, an autobiographical search that leads them beyond themselves. Dillard's essays reflect on what nature opens up about the mystery of God and all that it conceals. Finally, Keillor reminds us that humor keeps the life of faith honest by also keeping it humble and generous.

Jesus himself was a master storyteller whose stories ask so much more than they answer. They refuse to wear religion on their sleeves, so to speak, or to fit into the conventional spiritual mold of his day. What was *not* said often made people more nervous than what was made explicit. The editors of *Listening for God* show the reader that while contemporary American literature is not the predictable place to listen for God, it may be one of the most rewarding.

*The Rev. Ellen Gwathmey is minister of visitation and outreach, River Road Church, Richmond*

## Women's Spirituality Bookshelf

**Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience**, by Anne E. Carr. Harper & Row, 1888. Definitive treatment of women's spirituality issues.

**An Anthology of Sacred Texts By and About Women**, Serinity Young, ed. Crossroad, 1994. Principal documents relating to women in the major religions of the world as well as tribal religions and alternative religious movements.

**Woman To Woman: An Anthology of Women's Spiritualities**, by Phyllis Zagano. Liturgical Press, 1993. Brief biographies and excerpts from the writings of 15 women, medieval times to the present.

**A Serious Call to a Contemplative Life** (rev. ed.), by Glenn Hinson. Smyth

& Helwys, 1993. A classic study of the development of the inner life.

**The Politics of Women's Spirituality**, by Charlene Spretnak, ed. Anchor, 1982. Essays on spiritual power in the feminist movement from ancient time and in mythology to the present day.

**Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest**, 2nd ed., by Carol Christ. Beacon, 1980. Examines the connections between women's spiritual quest and the social quest for wholeness.

**She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse**, by Elizabeth A. Johnson. Crossroad, 1993. Important treatment of feminist theology.

**Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion**, by Christ and Plaskow,

eds. Harper & Row, 1979. A classic treatment of women's issues.

**Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality**, Plaskow and Christ. Harper Collins, 1989. Anthology of women's writings on spirituality.

**Ain't I a Woman!: A Book of Women's Poetry from Around the World**, by Illona Linthwaith, ed. Wings Books, 1993. Explores themes of love, injustice, oppression and class.

**Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality**, by Marilyn Sewell, ed. Beacon, 1991. Anthology of poetry organized by themes.

**Seasons of the Feminine Divine: Christian Feminine Prayers for the Liturgical Cycle**, by Mary K. Schmitt. Crossroad, 1993.

# WOMEN IN THE NEWS

## New Positions and Changes

**Peggy Compton** has been named associate area director for Middle America and Canada at the Foreign Mission Board, SBC. She was formerly missionary in Central and South America and most recently elementary teacher.

**Anna Miller** and husband Dean have accepted positions with First Church, South Boston. She is minister of education and senior adults; he is associate pastor for youth and children.

**Brenda Lee** is director of pastoral care at Northampton-Accomac Memorial Hospital.

**Jan Allred** is associate minister to preschoolers, children and youth at Lakeside Church, Richmond.

**Peggy Fox** is minister of education at Mount Tabor Church, Richmond.

**Sheryle Mitchell** is minister of youth at Ettrick Church, Ettrick.

**Wendy Crow** is youth director at Bethel Church, Midlothian.

## Honors and Accolades

**Alma Hunt**, former national WMU executive director, was honored at the dedication of the new Alma Hunt Museum of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Alabama. She resides in Roanoke.

**Margaret Wayland** of Danville, former Virginia Woman's Missionary Union president, was elected president of the Baptist General Association at the November annual meeting.

## Ordinations

**Betty J. Norford** was ordained to the Christian ministry in November by Preddy's Creek Church, Barboursville.

**Debbie Christian** was ordained to the Christian ministry by Blacksburg Church, Blacksburg.

## Appointments

**Tina Ferguson** and husband Thomas, of Pulaski, have been appointed to Togo.

**Shirin Terry** and husband Scott, of Chantilly, have been appointed to Gaza.

## Seminary graduates

Southern: **Margaret Christine Debotts** of Woodbridge, MDiv.; **Anna P. Miller** of Waynesboro, MA/Chr.Ed; **Julia Thornton Roller** of Abingdon, MA/Chr.Ed.

Southeastern: (no women listed)

Southwestern: **Carole J. White Greeley** of Colonial Beach, MDiv.; **Karen J. Sims** of Chesapeake, MA/counseling; **Rebecca Stirman** of Richmond, MA/Rel.Ed.; **Jamie Dianne Wood**, Powhatan, MA/missiology.

## CALENDAR

### March

#### March 3-5

Alliance of Baptists 1995 Convocation. Vienna.

#### March 16

Nancy Sehested, BTSR chapel speaker. Lingle Hall, PSCE. 10:25 am. 355-8135.

#### March 24-25

VBWIM Spring Conference, on the theme, "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Inheriting Our Past." Fred Anderson and Judy Bailey, speakers. Second Baptist, Richmond. Friday, registration 4-6, program 7 pm. Sat. 9-1. \$25 includes meals. 288-1131.

#### March 31-April 1

Virginia Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting. Manassas Baptist Church. Fri. 7 pm. Sat. 9:30 am.

### April

#### April 25-26

BTSR lecture series. Molly Marshall, speaker. Location TBA. 10 am each day. (804) 355-8135.

### May

#### May 5-7

"Three 20th Century Mentors" by Dr. Albert Winn on the lives and writings of Howard Thurman, Elizabeth O'Connor and Thomas Merton. \$100 donation. Richmond Hill, 2209 E. Grace St., Richmond (804) 783-7903.

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