



VBWIM Will Host Dinner at BGAV

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry will meet for dinner on Nov. 8, 2001, in conjunction with the annual Baptist General Association of Virginia. The program will feature an address by Dr. Tracy Hartman, adjunct professor of Christian ministry at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond speaking on “**Women’s Styles in Preaching, Teaching, and Being.**”

The dinner will be held at Lake Ridge Church, Woodbridge. Directions will be available at the VBWIM table in the Exhibit Hall. Cost for the dinner is \$10. For information, email dianesmith@vbmb.org Send reservation form to Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, P.O. Box 70970, Richmond VA 23255.

Scholarship for Women Established at RTC

Anne Thomas Neil, former Baptist missionary, and Estelle McCarthy, Presbyterian educator, were honored Sept. 15 at Grace Church in Richmond with a scholarship fund bearing their names. The scholarship was established by the Center for Women in Christian Leadership, which opened in 1993 to support the education of women for service in the church. Although the center closed this year, its influence will continue through the scholarship. Including an endowment gift of \$10,000 and gifts received recently, the total amount of the principal has reached \$29,000.

The Center established a scholarship fund for female students who show promise as emerging leaders in the church. Students of the Richmond Theological Consortium are eligible for the scholarship. The Richmond Consortium includes: Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Virginia Union University’s School of Theology and Union Theological Seminary/Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Additional gifts may be directed to The Center for Women, Inc., P.O. Box 15565, Richmond VA 23227. [See related story on page 9.]

Synergy Volume is Ready

This is it! A book including all ten years of *Synergy* is ready and will be on sale in the Exhibit Hall at the BGAV. A special project of the Steering Committee, the compilation is a venture of faith, a record of the goals and achievements of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry over the past ten years. Women ministers will find its articles and resources fascinating and useful. Supporters of the organization will be amazed and cheered by what women have done in charting their own course and in sharing their pilgrimage with each other. Secure your copy now by purchasing at the BGAV exhibit, or order from VBWIM. Box 70970, Richmond VA 23255. The cost is \$15.

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Ex Cathedra

Networking

by Judith B. Bailey

Throughout history the power of women is relative to the networks they develop. In other words, the formal or informal gathering of women, for growing and preparing food, in sewing circles or professional associations, has significant implications for their ability to determine their lives. Isolated women find it more difficult or even impossible to have much power. Networking is particularly important for women in non-traditional roles who may find themselves in a culture they do not understand and in which they have no voice.

Networking is a major component of our plan for Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry. We had a very stimulating and exciting gathering of twenty women on September 8 in Richmond. In October Susan Blanchard hosted a brunch in Fredericksburg for women in that area. Plans are under way for a group to meet in the Roanoke area. Our goal is to have gatherings of women in every area of the state to enable networks of strength and support. Getting together with others who share similar vocations, struggles and joys is simply fun! These occasions also yield important information and contacts for our professional lives. At the September brunch one of our recent seminary graduates found out about a church position for which she is now being considered. So many job opportunities never make the "want ads." It helps to know people who know people.

Another aspect of networking is the establishment of a web site for VBWIM that will host a discussion group for members and give articles and news that appear in *Synergy*. A powerful means of communication, the site will go up by the first of the year, thanks to the work of our webmaster Brian Barrier and a committee working with him: Alana Woolley, Deb Schoenfeld and Sheryl Johnson. The web address is: www.baptistwomeninministry.org.

Though one does not necessarily associate networking with reading books, the publication of ten years of *Synergy* in one volume provides a kind of passive interaction with people through their written words. In preparation for publishing this volume I read twenty-three issues of *Synergy* within a two-day period. With the deadline looming, I devoted myself to reading ten years of lead articles, interviews, editorials, news, biographies, humorous quotes and membership forms that constitute most issues. As I read I became increasingly interested and excited about the content. I found not only well-written, thoughtful articles but also important history and reliable resources for personal and professional use. Surprisingly, I experienced community as I read and renewed acquaintance with those I have known over the years.

We will have the volume ready by the time the Baptist General Association meets on November 8. Copies will be for sale at \$15 each. New members and members who renew in November will receive a 20% discount. We are dedicating the volume to Barbara Jackson who has been editor of *Synergy* for all of the issues.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry is alive and well. Its history is really quite remarkable; its future is incredibly bright. We look forward to future opportunities to be who we are, together.

The Rev. Judith B. Bailey is co-pastor of Taylorsville Church

Georgia Baptist leaders restrict women's meeting

Georgia Baptist Women in Ministry organization moved its October meeting from a Georgia Baptist Convention conference center after being advised the gathering would be monitored for content and shut down if deemed offensive by convention officials. The group decided to relocate their meeting to First Baptist Church of Morrow, Ga.

According to a letter to the GBWIM, the group would be allowed to meet at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center only if it met specific guidelines.

Chief prohibition was mentioning or promoting the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or distributing their materials, displaying any tone of sympathy or general support of CBF, or making any negative remarks about the Georgia Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist Convention.

Also banned, the promotion of women serving as senior pastors or the use of feminist terms in worship. Another objection was the scheduling as speaker Molly Marshall, former professor at Southern Seminary and now at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas.

SYNERGY, the newsletter of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, is published in Richmond, Va. Membership is \$20 per year (\$10, students). Memberships and manuscript submissions should be mailed to P.O. Box 70970, Richmond, VA 23255. ©2001 Steering Committee: Judy Bailey, chair; Helen Wood, secretary-treasurer; Barbara Jackson, newsletter editor; Susan Blanchard; Judy Freeman; Ellen Gwathmey; Sheryl Johnson; Brenda Lee; Sandra Hack Polaski; Betty Pugh; Deborah L. Schoenfeld; B.J. Seymour; Diane Smith; Leslie Straw; Mary Lee Sturgis; Alana Woolley. ©2001

The Russian Goddess of Folk Tradition

by Jenny Charlton Barrier

Russian embroidery motifs embody a folk tradition that reveal links to a long buried religious past. Examples of the exquisite embroidery, surviving from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, show a figure of a woman in the center, with either her hands upraised or lowered to her sides. Sometimes her upraised hands hold large flowers, birds, or sun discs. Surrounding her might be horses or lions. Occasionally these animals carry smaller female figures on their backs. The female figure might ride a double-headed bird, boat or horse. Many times the borders of the embroidery are of plants and flowering vegetation.

The embroidery adorned such things as shirts for the first day of haying, shifts for a woman's wedding day, ritual towels which were used to bind a couple together in a marriage ceremony and then hung from beams for a woman in labor to pull on, and even shrouds. The female figures were once interpreted to be dolls or dancing girls. However, most modern scholars now believe them to be goddesses, vestiges of an earlier great goddess religion.

This carryover of pre-Christian elements into the practice and faith of a Christian people is known in Russian as *dvoeverie*, or double faith. Officially, Russia had an easy transition from paganism to Christianity, but earlier ideas and beliefs remained as elements in a folk tradition. While other countries also intertwined pre-Christian with Christian traditions and heritage, as may be evidenced in the European holiday traditions, "the Russian case is extreme," maintain Linda Ivanits: "The Russian peasant, more than his European counterpart, was isolated culturally and, in many instances, geographically, from the mainstream of his nation's development." (Ivanits, p. 4)

What were these traditions which mingled with the newer Christianity? Who was this goddess who still lives in the embroidery of the peasants? What can we learn from her?

The movement of the goddess into Russian folk traditions and folklore yielded several distinct characters who took up her various aspects. Following Hubbs in her book, *Mother Russia: the Feminine Myth in Russian Culture*, the three main figures we will examine are the *rusalki*, who represent the virginal or maiden aspect of the goddess; Baba Yaga, who shows the goddess as the elder or crone; and Mother Moist Earth, who shows the life-giving side of the goddess. This triple image of the goddess is not unique to Russia; her images have been found from as early as the seventh millennium BCE in the Çatal Hüyük settlement in Anatolia and may be discerned in many European cultures.

The image of the *rusalki* is complex. In southern Russia and the Ukraine, they were portrayed as beautiful naked girls who would emerge from underwater to dance, sing, and entice villagers back to their watery homes where the villagers would drown. Other portrayals show the *rusalki* sitting in tree branches, from which they would pounce on passing villagers, tickling them to death. In northern Russia the image was much less attractive; the *rusalki* were ugly with unattractive hair. Despite the differences in their

appearance, both in the north and the south, the *rusalki* were seen to be the souls of unbaptized babies or drowned maidens.

Even into the twentieth century Russian peasants celebrated in late June Rusal'naia Week, associated with the *rusalki*. Two aspects of the *rusalki*, fertility and death, can be seen in the celebration. A birch tree was selected for veneration and decorated with cloth and garlands. Girls wove garlands that they would throw into a nearby river; if a girl's garland sank it was believed that she would soon die. During Rusal'naia Week funeral rites were sung for those who had died prematurely. At the end of the week there was a burial ritual; in many cases an effigy of a *rusalka* was taken to a field or river and then burned, drowned, or torn apart. The ritual of the birch tree has been interpreted as an attempt to transfer the green growth of the tree, one of the first to produce leaves, to the grain in the fields. The burial ritual shows the rebirth of nature.

Several modern interpreters see in the *rusalki* holdovers of a time when women had more freedom. One such modern reader sees the *rusalki's* unbound hair as reflecting a time when women had more sexual freedom. As sexual monogamy prevailed, the *rusalki* in her freedom began to be viewed negatively. Hubbs sees the *rusalki* as representing both uncontrollable nature and the power of the feminine within the village: "As spirits of unbaptized children or drowned girls who were freed by death from the constraints of patriarchal marriage, the *rusalki* remained forever young and at liberty, challengers to the social and religious order." (Hubbs, p. 35)

In both interpretations, the *rusalki* were able to express freedom that the women in the culture had lost. In all her forms, the *rusalka* shows the maidenly, virginal form of the Goddess.

The elder or crone aspect of the Goddess can be seen in the folk figure of Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga lives in a clearing in the depths of the forest in a hut that stands on chicken's feet. The door to the hut faces away from the nearest village and the fence surrounding the clearing is made of human bones. Human skulls flashing with fire adorn the top of the fence. When Baba Yaga moves, she rides in a mortar and propels herself with a pestle, and with a birch broom

Russian Folk Religion

sweeps away her tracks. The mortar, used to grind grain and to prepare flax, also symbolically represents the womb; conversely, the pestle symbolizes the phallus. As she travels, she creates life, which she can then destroy with her birch broom.

The figure of Baba Yaga in folklore can be both beneficial and destructive. To the worthy she might give magical items, such as balls of yarn that unroll to show the path, rings, or scarves.⁸ She can aid someone on a quest by giving information or secret knowledge. More often Baba Yaga is someone to be feared or tricked. Suppliants who arrive at her hut must be wary; her stove is ready to roast those who come rashly or unprepared. Frequently she will set impossible tasks for those who need her favors, reserving an empty spot on her fence for the skull of those who do not succeed.

(please turn to page 4)

Jenny Barrier ... from page 3

Baba Yaga is interpreted to be a corruption of the ancient killer-regeneratrix goddess, who was caricatured by missionaries and preachers in order to fight the power of the goddess. In the thirteenth century, the bishop of Vladimir's invective shows that the cult of the goddess was still strong: "You still cling to pagan customs and believe in witchcraft. You pray to them and ask for gifts as though they ruled the earth by permitting rain, sunshine, and by making the land fertile." (Hubbs, p. 41)

Through attacks such as these, the overt worship of the goddess moved underground into folktales. The goddess became wrathful, demonstrating the evil side of Baba Yaga. This transformation can be seen in the etymology of her name. "Yaga" has its roots in the word for grudge. "Baba" is a derogatory title for a married woman; interestingly, it is also now used as slang for a prostitute.

The third aspect of the triune goddess can be seen in the veneration of Mother Moist Earth. This manifestation of the goddess is so important that Fedotov says:

"In Mother Earth, who remains the core of Russian religion, converge the most secret and deep religious feelings of the folk. Beneath the beautiful veil of grass and flowers, the people venerate with awe the black moist depths, the source of all fertilizing powers, the nourishing breast of nature, and their own last resting place."

Mother Earth was seen as the womb and breast from which all life generated. She nurtured and protected the family as well as the nation. At times she was seen as a person, her body made of roots as bones and vegetation her hair. In her womb were buried the dead. Those who were not buried in her ended up in limbo.

Russian peasants had many rituals associated with Mother Earth. They would swallow a mouthful of earth when making an oath. When a village was threatened by a plague against livestock, the peasants would plow around it in order to release the earth's life-giving forces. In some areas, before dying the elderly would ask the forgiveness of the earth. The members of one fourteenth-century sect from the city of Novgorod confessed their sins to the earth instead of to a priest. This custom continued even after the sect disappeared.

Women were closely connected with Mother Earth. In times of drought, women would sleep in the fields wearing only their shifts in order to hear from the earth when rain might come. The role of woman as mother mirrored that of the earth. Women performed the rituals of both birth and death. Children were born on the ground or a straw mattress to show their relationship to the earth. When a person was dying, she was placed on either the ground or straw to aid in the movement back to the earth.¹⁸

At this point it must be asked how the Goddess who was maintained in Russian folk tradition applies to Baptist women doing ministry in Virginia. After all, we are time zones away from the Russian forest both in actual physical distance and in thought. Modernity has removed the folk tale from its role of providing guidance and wisdom to being an entertaining story for children. What could possibly apply to us?

These images of the triune goddess, which are found in folklore and folk belief in the form of the *rusalki*, Baba Yaga, and Mother Moist Earth, create a mythical landscape in which women and women's voices convey wisdom. From the fact that these stories

were told and retold and from the presence of towels embroidered with the goddess images, it is evident that the goddess provided some kind of positive influence for Russian peasant women.

Perhaps the power of the folk tradition was that it pointed to a time and place where women's contributions were valued, providing a hope that life could be better or an ideal toward which women might strive. Another appeal must have been the reality that women were the conveyers of the traditions. In the Christian context of their lives women were relegated to the background; no women were ever allowed behind the iconostasis in the Orthodox Church. The only outlet allowed women within the confines of Christian faith was veneration of Mary or other women saints. In contrast, the rites and rituals of folk belief were maintained by women. Women became the unofficial priestesses of an unofficial religion.

These Russian peasant women can teach us. We are given the example of generations of women who struggled to find a voice to express their reality. We can imagine woman after woman sitting by the fireside embroidering images and passing their wisdom to the next generation. These were women who in many ways had been silenced by their circumstances and by their gender, and yet, using what means they had, they expressed what they saw to be truth. In this way they demonstrated that women had value.

Of course, our reality and faith are much different from that of these Russian peasant women. None of us believes in a cannibalistic deity who lives in a hut nor do we eat dirt when ratifying oaths.

However, there is still something which we can learn from them. We, too, as women in ministry, are called to use our voices to express our unique faith. Just as it was for the peasant women, this can sometimes be difficult. These women were forced to be creative in order to express their beliefs. We, too, are called to use our creative voices to express and pass on our faith as we minister to others.

Sources: Fedotov, George. *The Russian Religious Mind*. Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1946. Gadon, Elinor W. *The Once and Future Goddess: A Symbol For Our Time*. Harper&Row, 1989. Gimbutas, Marija. *The Language of the Goddess*. HarperCollins, 1989. Hubbs, Joanna. *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture*. Indiana U. P., 1988. Ivanits, Linda J. *Russian Folk Belief*. M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989. Kelly, Mary B. "The Ritual Fabrics of Russian Village Women." *Russia: Women: Culture*. Gosciolo and Holmgren, eds. Indiana U. Press, 1996. pp 152-176. Rappoport, Philippa. "If It Dries Out, It's No Good: Women, Hair and Rusalki Beliefs." *Slavic and East European Folklore Association Journal*, vol.4, no.1 Spring 1999 pp. 55-64. Online: <http://www.virginia.edu/~slavic/seefa/RUSALKA.HTM>

Jenny Charlton Barrier is youth minister at Dover Church, Richmond, a student at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, and a former Journeyman to Russia.

Interview: Barbara Jackson

by Bonnie Atwood

Approaching Barbara Jackson's home, a visitor immediately notices an unusual yard, packed with art and growing things. There are beautiful creations—God-made, man-made, woman-made, and things crafted by the hands of children.



It is the same inside her home. It's a home packed with life. There's the old Singer sewing machine—the kind with the treadle. There's a piano, covered with family photos in little, decorative frames. The walls have abstract art, and shelves are packed with books, records, and tapes. Statues of birds perch on the fireplace mantle. The natural wood of the furniture and all the earth tones are an interesting backdrop for the American flag in the hallway.

Barbara Jackson's life is packed with beautiful things.

A big part of that life has been her commitment to *Synergy*, the newsletter of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry. Barbara has spent ten years on this labor of love. With payment in satisfaction but not in dollars, Barbara has been publisher and editor as the newsletter has grown from a very simple four pages in 1991 to the professional-looking document of record that it is today.

She's a modest person, and she thinks a while before she speaks, but Barbara's enthusiasm shows through when she recalls a very special turning point in her life. It was the day that Judith B. Bailey, one of the founders of VBWIM, took her to the computer lab at the University of Richmond. A student named Andy gave her a taste of desktop publishing, and she was hooked.

"I was so excited," said Barbara. "I've got to learn how to do this!" And learn she did. She started out on a borrowed computer until she could buy a Macintosh of her own. Was it hard?

"No! It was easy!" she insists. She started using her skills to create other newsletters and brochures for various organizations, family histories, and even design large books, like *Across the Years, A History of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, 1875-2000*, by Fred Anderson.

She works at home. Her husband, Lloyd Jackson, is retired, and their three children are grown, with families of their own. Of the seven grandchildren, two live in Massachusetts, and the other five are in North Carolina.

So, when Barbara discovered desktop publishing, you might say it was another example of "synergy"—everything just sort of came together.

As the organization and the newsletter grew and developed, the look of *Synergy* developed as well. The first publication, dated Fall 1991, carries the simple banner that simply says in block letters: "Newsletter." A fairly simple cross is to the left.

Today the newsletter is aptly named "*Synergy*," a name suggested by Judy Bailey, with the subhead line: "a process of

becoming, of creating and transforming." The logo, designed by Barbara Jackson, is now a cross, transposed over an oval bearing the letters "VBWIM." The headline font was selected by Barbara as well. It's called "Slabface," and it's strong and bold, with a look of motion, almost like lightning.

And lightning might be a fitting symbol for the VBWIM. Established in 1988, in the midst of controversy in the denomination, this organization has been a lightning rod for change. At a time when the role of women was hotly debated, several women came together to form the group. The original steering committee was made up of Judith Bledsoe Bailey, B.J. Seymour, and Lynda Weaver-Williams. At that time, there were perhaps only three Baptist women pastors in Virginia. Today there are 21.

And *Synergy*, which is currently mailed out to over 600 people, will serve as a permanent historical record of the organization. The collection of these newsletters is being published as a one-volume book.

This book will be more than a list of interesting facts, more than a history of the organization. It will be an exploration of ideas, of themes. Barbara Jackson, a lover of words, has helped to shape many issues of *Synergy* as a look at a distinct concept. "Feminism Revisited" is a theme of one newsletter. There's one about "Calling." And there's one on "The Millennium." Barbara describes the newsletter as a "tool—a tool for personal growth."

The issue on Feminism (Vol. 2, No. 3) leads off with a very thoroughly researched article by Dr. B. J. Seymour, a professor of religious studies and chair of the Department of Religion at Randolph-Macon College. Articles by other writers add to the theme of feminist theology in church life.

The word "feminism" is used confidently and positively. The women decided that feminism is "not a dirty word," said Barbara. "There are different strains of feminism out there." She said that the organization has a good relationship with Baptist leaders in Virginia. There have been few incidents of hostility, but there was one that brought a chuckle.

She said that the group had set up a table with books on subjects that could be called "women's studies." An angry man was looking at the display as his wife tried to pull him away. He told her that he wanted "to see what train these people are riding."

Each issue of *Synergy's* various themes includes research on the subject, resources about the subject, and word studies. Take the issue on "The Power of Call," (Vol. 8, No. 1). That particular issue includes approximately seven articles on the subject of calling. Here is a poetic excerpt from one of Barbara Jackson's pieces about the "blessing" of calling:

"...A calling is good. The woman minister who is called is blessed. But so are a lot of good people who live ordinary lives. Their lives are good because they have found a passion and pursue their course..."

One senses that Barbara Jackson has truly followed her calling.

Bonnie Atwood is editor of Capitol Connection, a magazine for promoters of good government in Virginia.

BOOK REVIEW

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History*.

New York: Modern Library, 2000.

reviewed by Alana Woolley

Most, if not all, of us share the sense that our world changed forever on September 11, 2001. One byproduct of the events of that day is a heightened interest in understanding the Islamic religion. Our knowledge of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam cannot be complete without knowing the historic background of these religions.

To provide a historic background to the religion of Islam, the Modern Library worked with scholar Karen Armstrong to develop a short, readable history in its Modern Library Chronicles series. This series also contains an excellent volume on the Catholic church by Hans Kung.

Armstrong's ability to tell a story will hook you from the very beginning. Chapter 1, "Beginnings," starts by describing the spiritual vacuum felt by the Arab world in the seventh century. It was in this context that the prophet Muhammad received his revelation for the Arab scriptures, the Quran (or Koran). This chapter covers the period from 570-661 CE.

The development of Islam from 661-935 CE is covered in chapter 2. The section describes the struggle of Islam to determine its true nature and identity in the context of political discussions and struggles. As is true in all religions, there were differing points of view concerning the role of Islamic life in the realities of history.

Chapter 3, "Culmination," explains the growth and expansion of the Islamic faith from 935-1500 CE. It studies the move from one unique political structure to the expansion of Islam to many countries and many political contexts.

"Islam Triumphant" is chapter 4's discussion of the Islamic military empires. It was at this time 1500-1700 CE that the major Islamic powers turned away from the egalitarian tradition and built absolute empires.

The last chapter "Islam Agonistes" develops the historic context for the conflict between the western world and the eastern world. Armstrong's description of this conflict provides us with insight to the current conflict between the Jews and Arabs of Israel and Palestine.

This is a book of history and not specifically about theology. But it gives an important historic background to the beliefs of Islam. It will set the context for further study of Islamic beliefs.

Along with the historic overview, this book contains several other helpful elements. At the beginning of the book is a 22-page chronology, starting in 610 when the prophet Muhammad received his first revelation of the Quran in Mecca. The chronology functions as an outline for the historical descriptions in the main body of the book. Throughout the book are ten maps that help to provide the geographical context for the events being described.

In the back of the book are two handy references. The first lists and defines key figures in the history of Islam, a handy reference both while reading the book and for future review. The other reference is a glossary of Arabic terms. This allows you to understand the terms without having to consult a separate dictionary.

Also included is a bibliography of books for more extensive study. Topics covered are: the prophet Muhammad; Islamic history; Islamic philosophy and theology; Islamic response to the modern world; Islamic fundamentalism; Islam and women; and western perceptions of Islam. This bibliography is a significant resource for helping us to develop a better understanding of this major world religion.

While the focus of this volume is Islam. Karen Armstrong also has written two other volumes exploring the interplay of Judaism, Christianity and Islam; *The History of God* and *The Battle for God*.

Other Armstrong writings include memoirs of her early life as a Catholic nun, a book about Paul's impact on Christianity, and a book on Genesis. I would recommend to you, not just this specific volume, but any work by Karen Armstrong.

The Rev. Alana Woolley is a telecommunications consultant and is a member of River Road Church, Richmond.

A LITTLE HUMOR

The president of a HMO was given a ticket for a performance of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony." Since he was unable to go, he passed the invitation to one of his managed care reviewers [an efficiency expert]. His report:

MEMORANDUM

1. For a considerable period, the oboe players had nothing to do. Their number should be reduced, and their work spread over the whole orchestra, thus avoiding peaks of inactivity.
2. All twelve violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication, and the staff in this section should be drastically cut. If a large volume of sound is required, this could be obtained through use of an amplifier.
3. Much effort was involved in playing the 16th notes. This seems an excessive refinement, and it is recommended that all notes should be rounded up to the nearest 8th note. If this were done, it would be possible to use paraprofessionals instead of experienced musicians.
4. No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passage that has already been handled by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the concert could be reduced from two hours to twenty minutes.
5. This symphony has two movements. If Schubert did not achieve his musical goals by the end of the first movement, then he should have stopped there. The second movement is unnecessary and should be cut. In light of the above, one can only conclude that had Schubert given attention to these matters, his symphony would probably have been finished by now.

—copied from the Internet

Information Sheet on Islam

By Chaplain (MAJ) Charles Reynolds

This paper covers general information about Islam. One must be aware that there is as much diversity in Islam as there is in Christianity. One should be cautious in applying this information to a specific group of Muslims especially fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban.

What is Islam ?

Islam is the third largest religion in the World. For a fifth of the world's population, Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life covering family, the body, humanity, social, business. Muslims believe that Islam is not a new religion, but is the same truth that God revealed through all His prophets even of other religions. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness, and the majority have nothing to do with the terrorism which has come to be associated with their faith.

What does 'Islam' mean?

The Arabic word *Islam* simply means 'submission', and derives from a word meaning 'Peace,' (salaam). In a religious context it means complete submission to the will of God. 'Allah' is the Arabic name for God used by both Arab Muslims and Arab Christians.

The Islamic Way of Life

The Islamic way of life is about "Harmony" with the created universe. Humans are just another creation of God along with the heavens and the earth, the sun, the moon—all in harmony together. Islam provides specific guidelines all people are to follow in their daily lives. Its guidance is comprehensive and includes the social, economic, political, moral, and spiritual aspects of life. The Qur'an (Holy Book) reminds man of the purpose of his life, of his duties and obligations toward himself, his family and relatives, his community, his fellow human beings, and his Creator. People are given fundamental guidelines about a purposeful life and then confronted with the challenges of human existence so that he may put these high ideals into practice. In Islam, a person's life is regarded as a holistic and integrated unity and not a collection of fragmented and competitive parts. There are no separate "sacred" and "secular" realms, for all are united within the nature of the individual.

The Muslim World

The Muslim population of the world is around one billion—30% of Muslims live in the Indian subcontinent, 20% in sub-Saharan Africa, 17% in Southeast Asia, 18% in the Arab World, 10% in the Soviet Union and China. Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan comprise 10% of the non-Arab Middle East. Although there are Muslim minorities in almost every area, including Latin America and Australia, they are most numerous in the Soviet Union, India, and central Africa. There are 6 million Muslims in the United States

Five Pillars (Practices) of Islam

1. Shahadah—"There is no God but Allah."
2. Salat—five daily prayers.
3. Zakat—tithe for charity.
4. Ramadan—month of fasting (in commemoration of Mohammed's receipt of the divine revelation, the month of fasting is to show devotion and obedience, to be aware of the plight of the poor, to express appreciation for what God has provided.)
5. Hajj—Pilgrimage to Mecca.

Six Basic Beliefs

1. Belief in one omnipotent and omniscient God.
2. Belief in God's angels
3. Belief in God's revelations. The Qur'an is the final and only perfect revelation; it is uncreated and is the literal word of God.
4. Belief in God's messengers. Shi' is also belief in the infallibility of the imams (religious leaders).
5. Belief in the Last Day, the Day of Judgment. Many Muslims believe in a messianic figure, who will come at the end of time and usher in an era of justice before the Day of Judgment.
6. Belief in God's determination of all affairs in his creation. God's power is unlimited and His decrees irreversible, therefore good and evil are the result of God's decree and fore-ordination.

Other Muslim Beliefs

Muslims believe: • in the eternal existence of God (like other religions such as the Christian and Jewish faiths); • God has created everything and owns everything; • God is described as "Merciful and compassionate" (caring) but also given to anger; • God has sent messengers (Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed) throughout the millions of years (since Adam & Eve); That Mohammed was his last messenger to humanity; • That the Qu'ran is the holy book and the words of God; • That there is a purpose of our existence (to gain the hereafter); • The god-fearing believers (mumin) who give themselves entirely to him (Islam) are God's friends and he will bless them in this life and the world to come. God is nearer to them than the jugular vein; • The Qu'ran graphically teaches that enemies (kafir) will be punished. Idolatry is the key issue. Those who are astray are enemies as well; • Jews and Christians are considered people of the book and not kafir. They are allowed to continue their worship as long as they pay taxes.

Muslims do not believe:

That Jesus was the son of God but simply a messenger. No one is deserving of worship other than God. Muhammad taught monotheism as the original state of man.

What is the Qu'ran?

Muslims believe the Quran is the revealed Word of God, and is the prime source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects that concern us as human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship, and law, but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures.

What about Muslim women?

Islam sees a woman, whether single or married, as an individual in her own right, with the right to own and dispose of her property and earnings. The groom gives a marriage dowry to the bride for her own personal use, a safety net in case of a divorce. Muslim women keep their own family name rather than taking her husband's. Both men and women are expected to dress in a way which is modest and dignified; the traditions of female dress found in some Muslim countries are often the expression of local customs.

Human Rights

Racism is incomprehensible to Muslims, for the Qu'ran speaks of human equality in the following terms: "*O mankind! We created you from*

(Please turn to page 10)

THE LAST WORD

Networking: Web and Spider

by Barbara Jackson

On a vacation this summer we emerged from our cottage to find an exquisite spider web hanging in a corner and attached to the eaves and porch post. The web was a full 18 inches across, beautifully constructed, and adorned with a few moths unlucky enough to have flown into its trap. The web was heavy with morning moisture, and the weight of the dew was pulling it downward so that it lost its roundness. A breeze caused it to waft back and fro. The sight brought back memories of a long-ago camping trip and watching one night with our children while a spider created a similar web. The next morning it was gone. A web is a structure of great moment—for the spider and the moth—and for us.

One of the avowed purposes of Women in Ministry as an organization is networking. What this means is an opportunity to establish lines of communication that perhaps may develop into friendships, leads on job openings, occasions for sharing ideas or deep-felt concerns, hurts and triumphs, as well as joint endeavors to promote the aims of the group as a whole.

Networking with its current meaning is one of those words that has come into vogue in the last several decades. But its roots are deep. The idea of net and weaving a net go deep into our psyche. Let us examine the word and some other words related to it.

The net

Scholars who study anthropology and mythology tell us that numerous ancient artifacts display netting incised or painted on pottery or bone, many of which show images of deity, such as the ancient great goddess or the Greek Artemis. The association of netting with deity affirms deity as life generating and life sustaining, for netting, while constructed of threads, had meaning beyond its components. While the net was used to bring in fish and give sustenance, it also symbolized mankind's attempts to capture enlightenment.

Other occasions for the net as symbols of catching or capture are found both in mythology and in literature. The Greek god Hephaestus (Latin Vulcan) catches his unfaithful wife Aphrodite with her lover Ares (Mars) and casts a net of wire over them to expose them to scorn. The Norse goddess Ran uses a net to gather up those who have died and then carries them off to her personal realm. The Polynesian trickster Maui caught the sun in a net and stole its fire in order to give it to humanity. In Persia the net is the symbol of the mystic, who seeks to capture enlightenment with it. In India the net-like web of the spider is a symbol for cosmic order as well as the illusory world of the senses.

And in Luke we have the account of the miraculous catch of fish on the lake of Gennesaret, which resulted in Peter and the others leaving their nets to follow Jesus. Jesus said, "...henceforth, you will be catching men" (Luke 5:11).

The word "net" comes from the ancient Indo-European (IE) root *ned-*, to bind or tie, and from Latin (L) *nassa*, a wicker basket for

catching fish. Basic meaning is a catching device made of twine. The word can be traced through Latin and Germanic roots to yield many useful English words. Some of these are nettle (a nautical rope), node and nodule, noose, dénouement (to unknot), nexus, annex, and connect. "Net" meaning bottom line, unadulterated or pure is an entirely different word from another root. From it comes "neat," meaning trim and tidy or unmixed (as a drink).

Web and Weaving

A second cluster of words relates to "web and weaving." Both words come from the IE root *webh-*, to weave. Related words are wasp, wobble, wave, wafer, and waffle. A second sense, to take a zigzag course, derives from the IE *weib-*, source of the English words vibrate, whip and wipe (the idea of moving back and forth), as well as veil—the root of Germanic *wif* (woman or wife).

The woven cloth (its threads closer together than in netting) has provided from time immemorial clothing (for modesty, warmth, protection), decorative textiles (for adornment and pleasure), and even wealth (silks, tapestries, and the like).

The art of weaving has been linked to womankind since the dawn of civilization. The female has had the gender-specific task of spinning thread, weaving cloth, fashioning clothing and hangings. As noted, the creative work of female hands has been valuable for the creation of wealth. The Bible and archeological records give various instances of foreign emissaries presenting woven goods of silk or wool to the king as good faith gifts, goods assuredly produced by women.

Weaving is so much a female task that one of the tools of spinning, the distaff, is still used to refer to females or the female side of a family. Distaff is a contraction of *dise* (bunch of flax) and staff. The spindle is a forerunner of the spinning wheel, and essentially is a stick on which to wind the thread as the fibers are pulled and twisted from the distaff into a thread by the movement of the weighted spindle. The spindle and the distaff form an image universally representative of womanhood and characteristic of the feminine attributes of creativity and continuance of life.

"The message in these words is the interconnectedness of life, the interdependence we share with each other, the importance of community and friendships."

The spinster is a pejorative word for an unmarried woman, an adjunct to the household, a second woman after the wife, the one with limited responsibility for children but unlimited time for the arduous tasks, such as spinning. Originally, the word simply denoted a young woman who must master the art of spinning and create for herself her marriage chest of household linens. But by the 17th century the English word held negative connotations.

There are few women today who know how to spin, but many women engage in needlework of one kind or another: knitting, crocheting, embroidery, needlepoint, basketweaving. These offer modern women an outlet for creativity and making a beautiful adornment for self or home or for sale. Native American basketry, for instance, is often quite valuable and costly for the collector.

Thread

A third cluster of words relates to “thread.” The thread is what is created on the spindle and then used in weaving or netting. Thread derives from IE *terh-*, to rub, turn, twist. The roots yield the English words: throw, thresh, threshold, trite, attrition, contrite, return, detour, contour, throwing, and trauma. And of course, thread. Cognates include: tribulation, detritus, detriment, and diatribe.

The thread is rich in worldwide symbolic significance. In the Upanishads, the thread (*sutra*) links this world to the other world. Also, the word *tantra* derives from the notion of thread and weaving and denotes the interdependence of all things. The warp and the woof and the forward and backward movement of the shuttle across the loom, represent the notion of time and space intersecting in a cosmic dance.

The symbolism of the thread associated with the labyrinth or maze give expression to the idea of fate guiding the passage through life. The thread and the labyrinth come together in the symbolism of the spider’s web, seen as a mandala with its creator sitting at the center.

Knots are a related phenomenon. The Celtic knot, so often used in religious and decorative art, represents the continuity of eternity. In Greek myth, the three Fates spin, measure and cut the thread of life and thus control destiny.

The spider

And so we come to the fourth cluster of words: the spider and spider web. The spider is the weaver of the web. The spider’s life is an allegory of the opposing forces of weaving and killing, creating and destroying. In symbolism, the spider presides over the cycles of life and weaves the thread of destiny. Yet it can also be sinister, a dangerous beast of prey, an object of fear, even phobia.

The spider has been associated with creation in many mythologies worldwide: the great goddess of Europe, Spider Woman of the Pueblo Indians, Spider Grandmother of the Kiowa Indians, and the Anansi of Ghana, transported to the new world and incarnated as a voodoo Spider Woman. In all cases she weaves the world into being by secreting the thread and fashioning her brainchild.

And we ourselves recite “Come into my parlor, said the spider to the fly ...” and sing “The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout.” We learn as children to fear the spider— only later as adults do we appreciate the spider for its ecological role in controlling insects.

Networking. Net ... web and weaving ... thread ... the consummate weaver, the spider, who weaves the world into being.

The message in these words is the interconnectedness of life, the interdependence we share with each other, the importance of community and friendships.

A network is a good thing.

Sources: Biedermann, *Symbolism: Cultural Icons*, 1992. *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 1985. Partridge, *Origins*, 1983. Stevens, *Ariadne’s Clue*, 1998.

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

A New Thing!

by Betty Pugh

On Saturday evening, September 15, 2001, after our country had witnessed repeatedly the senseless acts of violence and destruction in New York and Northern Virginia, I struggled with what it would mean for the Center for Women to gather for their “last hoorah!” We had dreamed and hoped, planned and executed our intentions, which were honorable and good, but seemed trivial in the wake of the emotional torrent that was running through the country.

And yet, it seemed clear to many of us, that being people of faith was a bit different from playing a football game. And that it was important to be reminded, especially in this time, that God was about new things, new hope, new love, even when all we could see was hate.

So, we did it. We gathered for a great meal, a special service, a good word of encouragement, and we left with just a little more hope than we entered with that evening. The Reverend Dr. Katie G. Cannon, the Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Ethics, reminded us in the keynote address that we must always be looking for what God is about in our world. No more timely message could be offered for the hopes of the Center for Women or for the world.

I celebrate what we have done in establishing this scholarship, and I thank all the women who throughout the history of the Center for Women have made their mark upon it and upon all of us. Yes, we would have probably loved a center that could provide the more traditional, programmatic kinds of support that it was known for in the past. But we must also be sensitive and aware of other ways that God can work in and through us, even in our weakness, even when we don’t feel like we’ve done enough, even when we think that we might have failed.

I am so thankful for the hundreds of people who gave what they could to this effort. At present, including an already given gift for the endowment of \$10,000, the Center’s scholarship is approximately \$29,000. If you were not able to give a gift and would like to do so, additional gifts may still be received and a check can be mailed to: The Center for Women, P. O. Box 15564, Richmond, Virginia, 23227.

God is always about a new thing. The problem is that we are just not watching and paying attention to how it is happening in our midst. Sometimes, it happens because of us, sometimes in spite of us, but all the time, it happens because God loves us and is luring us constantly toward new life, redemption, and re-birth.

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

NEWS BRIEFS

Islam ... from page 7

a single soul, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another.” (49:13)

How do Muslims view death?

Like Jews and Christians, Muslims believe that the present life is only a trial preparation for the next realm of existence. Basic articles of faith include: a day of judgment, resurrection, heaven and hell.

What does Islam say about war?

It is important to be aware that the real meaning of *Jihad* is not holy war against unbelievers as Muslim extremists believe. Its literal meaning is “struggle” or “the expenditure of oneself for God Most High.” Islam permits fighting in self-defense, in defense of religion, or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes. Islam lays down strict rules of combat, which include prohibitions against harming civilians and against destroying crops, trees and livestock. As Muslims see it, injustice would be triumphant in the world if good men were not prepared to risk their lives in a righteous cause. The Quran says: “*Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors....If they seek peace, then seek you peace.*” War, therefore, is the last resort, and is subject to the rigorous conditions laid down by the sacred law.

Suicide in Islam?

—Forbidden- Suicide people are promised dwelling in Hell because they refuse God’s will and destiny.

Who is a martyr in Islam?

—Someone who dies defending his home, his family, while doing something for the sake of God, or in a holy war (Jihad). Fundamentalists would classify terrorist bombings as martyrdom not suicide.

Do Muslims not value life?

Muslims believe in the Hereafter. The reward and dwelling is in the afterlife. Life is a drop in the ocean compared to the hereafter.

Chaplain Charles Reynolds is a graduate of University of Richmond, Golden Gate Seminary and Princeton, was a Journeyman and later pastor in California. He has served as chaplain in Bosnia and elsewhere. He is now a chaplain instructor in the U.S. Army.

McCall Oral History Powerful and Prophetic; Shows Early Support of Women in Ministry

by Robert O’Brien

A new book, chronicling Duke McCall’s up-close and personal eye view of four turbulent Southern Baptist decades, is available from the Baptist History and Heritage Society.

Duke K. McCall: An Oral History has been called “must reading” by those who have seen the volume of McCall’s candid and insightful responses to penetrating questions from Baptist historian R. Tonks.

“Powerful and sensitive memories drive this volume,” comments another Baptist historian Charles Deweese. Graciously McCall shares his soul. His no-holds-barred responses to penetrating questions hide nothing. Be prepared to laugh, to cry, to admire perhaps, at times, to dissent.

“The section, ‘How to Deal with Controversy,’ sharpened in the line of fire, is worth the price of the book. And McCall’s analysis of recent Southern Baptist controversy reeks of the prophetic. This is a choice contribution to the literature of free Baptists.”

McCall, retired president and later chancellor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, took an early position on the value of women in ministry and their presence in Baptist seminaries. He reports that the seminary’s trustees agreed to adopt a policy in 1956 to admit women to the School of Theology.

“Very quickly the seminary moved to declare that we could not determine or stand in the way of what God was calling women to do,” he writes, adding in another chapter: “A male-dominated institution, like Southern Seminary, needs to hear the points of view of women. We made an effort to try to equalize the opportunity for men and women students.”

The book is available for \$20 from the Baptist History and Heritage Society, P. O. Box 728 Brentwood, TN 37024-0728; phone: 800-966-2278; FAX: (615) 371-7939; website: www.baptisthistory.org

Robert O’Brien is an independent writer from Richmond, writing for a number of Baptist organizations.

Fundamental vs. Fundamentalist

by Jess Smith

In this new century, we must distinguish between being fundamental and fundamentalist. “I am fundamental but I am not a fundamentalist,” said James P. Boyce, the first president and founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. To be fundamental is to believe in and declare the fundamentals of the faith as stated clearly in the Apostles’ Creed. These fundamentals are embraced by evangelicals and define the content of our faith.

But today’s fundamentalism goes beyond these truths, making it more and more difficult to be fundamental without taking on the garments of fundamentalism. For example, today the battle is not about the infallibility of the Bible. It is about the fundamentalist interpretation and appropriation of that Bible for a social and political agenda.

A summary of the fallacies of fundamentalism include:

1. the absence of a historical perspective
2. the lack of appreciation for scholarship
3. the substitution of brief skeletal creeds or confessions for historic confessions or reasoned theologies
4. the lack of concern for precise formulation of Christian doctrine
5. the pietistic, perfectionist tendencies (legalism)
6. one-sided other-worldliness (i.e., a lack of effort to transform culture)
7. a penchant for futuristic chiliasm (pre-millennialism).

Add to this list control, a sense of superiority, judgmentalism and arrogance, and one has defined fundamentalism in our day.

Fundamentalism has departed from the fundamentals. It indoctrinates rather than educates. It suppresses the pursuit of truth and substitutes a legalistic formula. It walks in conformity to a dogma that stifles healthy discussion and removes the grandeur of our Baptist heritage. It uses the Bible for ideological coercion. Fundamentalism does not let the Bible speak as the living Word of God.

(Please turn to page 11)

WOMEN IN THE NEWS

Fundamental ... from page 10

Fundamentalism is not satisfied until it dominates every sphere of life. It can brook no rival nor tolerate any question that would threaten its position. Many people in this fundamentalist crusade do not see themselves as disruptive or legalistic. They truly believe they are the "saviors" of Baptists.

Let this be clear: Baptists do not need saviors. We already have one. And it is by him that we must interpret and proclaim the Word of God. He is the criterion, standard and measure by which we must judge all things, live to the glory of God and embrace one another.

So, can you be fundamental without being a fundamentalist? Absolutely. Can you be radically in love with Christ without being legalistic? Absolutely. Can we walk together in unity without being uniform? Absolutely.

*Adapted from Associated Baptist Press. Jess Smith is pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala.**

New Positions and Changes

Betty Bradshaw is music director at Falling Creek Church, Richmond.

Betty East is youth and children's ministry director at Mt. Tabor Church, Keeling.

Susan Carole Batten-Bell is minister of music and youth at Colonial Beach Church, Colonial Beach.

Bonnie Decuir is associate minister of singles and college and career at Central Church, Richmond.

Susan Bowles is minister of music at Ridgewood Church, Roanoke.

Jenny and Scott Johnson are youth pastors at First Church, Altavista.

Lawana Harbin is minister to youth and children at Warsaw Church, Warsaw.

Cherie Cruze was named chaplain at Virginia Intermont College in Bristol. She comes to that position after previous service as campus minister in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Kayte Parker is children's minister at Pine Street Church, Richmond.

Barbara Filling is pastor of Mount Pleasant Church, Charles City.

Nikki Finkelstein-Blair is minister of faith formation and missions at Churchland Church, Chesapeake.

Ordinations

Maria Lynn was ordained to the gospel ministry on August 19 at Hatcher Memorial Church in Richmond.

Accolades

Ronda Payne, director of the Hillside Baptist Center in inner-city Richmond, was the subject of a feature story in the September 23 *Religious Herald*.

MEMBERSHIP for 2002 VIRGINIA BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

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CALENDAR

October 2001

- 19-20 "Science & Religion: Imagining the Mystery." Annual Carl Howie Cener for Science, Art, and Theology, at Union-PSCE, Richmond. [804-278-4275]
- 20 Fredericksburg-area VBWIM Saturday morning coffee at home of Susan Blanchard. [h 540-891-5251]
- 23-24 Solon B. Cousins Lectures. "Human & Divine Violence in the Old Testament." by Terence Fretheim, professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul Minn., at B TSR, at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Tues. and 7 on Wed. Call 804-355-8135.
- 25-26 Preaching Workshop #2. "Apologetic Preaching to a Postmodern World." at Va. Baptist Resource Center, 10 a.m., \$69 (or \$49 in advance). [804-915-5000]

November

- 8 VBWIM dinner at BGAV. "Women's Styles in Preaching, Teaching, and Being," address by Dr. Tracy Hartman, adjunct professor, B TSR. \$10. Lake Ridge Church, Woodbridge. For information, email dianesmith@vbmb.org or mail reservation form and check to VBWIM, Box 70970, Richmond, VA 23255
- 8-9 VBWIM exhibit in Resource Hall, Hylton Center
- 9 CBF of Virginia Rally at BGAV. [804-213-0412]

January 2002

- 28-29 Preaching workshop #3, Jan. 28-29, 2002, Dr. Tracy Hartman on "Narrative Preaching;" Additional workshops are: #4, May 20-21, (on preaching forgiveness); #5, Sept. 30-Oct.1, (advent preaching); and #6, Nov. 4-5, (preaching as pastor). For full information, call Bill Duke, Hillcrest Church, Mechanicsville, VA 23111 [804-730-1500]

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