



VIRGINIA BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Summer 2002 • VOL. 11, NO. 1

RESERVE THE DATE NOW!

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry Announces Fall Conference

Saturday, September 28 2002

8:30 AM — 2:30 PM

Turnbull Room, BTSR campus

“Survival Skills for the Long Haul”

SESSIONS ON:

- ✕ Money Management, led by Barb Ditmyer
- ✕ Self-Care, led by Ann Charles-Craft
- ✕ Women’s Leadership: Balancing Authority and Nurture,
led by Rhonda VanDyke Colby
- ✕ Closing Worship, led Amy Holtz and Wendy Crowe

Cost: \$20. Member discount \$18. Student rate \$10

Lunch is included in fee

Child care available upon request ahead of time

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Ex Cathedra

Milestones

By Judith Bailey

Tucked away in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* in February was a small article entitled "Women in House Mark Milestones." The gist of the article is that there are now 15 women serving in the Virginia House of Delegates; for the first time a Republican woman holds the chairmanship of a committee; the first Republican woman has been appointed to serve on the powerful Rules Committee; and last but not perhaps most telling, the women now have their own restroom. The former men's lounge located off the floor of the House now has both a men and women's restroom. This \$125,000 renovation means that women no longer have to leave the chamber to use a restroom.

Often the seemingly unimportant issues have deeper symbolism. As significant as the election of women and their legislative leadership is, I resonate with the practical issue of having their own conveniently located restroom. It means that they are there to stay.

Having their own designated space may seem insignificant relative to their political achievements. However, the perceived small things indicate a lack of acceptance of women in leadership roles whether they are legislators or ministers.

For instance, have you had the experience of serving on committees in which only the male ministers are asked to pray? Do you constantly hear only male pronouns for people and for God? Do you attend meetings in which the Chair ignores what a woman says only to affirm the same idea later voiced by a man? Do you hear people refer to obviously mature women as "girls?" These are small slights or insults— one might argue, don't get bogged down. And yet, these everyday occurrences remind us that we still have a long way to go before women are accepted as full partners in ministry.

Certainly we too can celebrate our milestones. For thirteen years we have been an association; for ten years we have published *Synergy*. We have sponsored many conferences and provided opportunities for networking and professional growth. We have formed lasting friendships and have had a wonderful time. But what about next year, or the next? The continuity of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry depends upon each generation.

And so, whatever your interests or area of ministry, I invite you to be a part of VBWIM as you respond to God's call in your life. We are an association of women with a wide variety of vocations and avocations, from musicians and educators to pastors and stay-at-home moms. The make-up of the Steering Committee indicates our diversity. Among the 16 members there is a campus minister, registrar, Ph.D. student, hospital chaplain, one college professor and two seminary professors, children's minister, director of development, retired librarian, psychotherapist, WMU administrator, technical manager, free-lance writer and co-pastor. If you consider your work to be ministry, or even if you simply want to support other women in ministry, we welcome you into Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry.

Please send in your membership form (see page 11) with your check for \$20 or \$10 for students. Also, check out our website: www.baptistwomeninministry.org. We are adding new information each month. Please note the "members only" discussion and job postings.

Judith B. Bailey is co-pastor of Taylorsville Church and chair of VBWIM

Synergy Volume For Sale

Synergy 1991–2001 is for sale. The first newsletter was published in November 1991. In 2001 all ten years of *Synergy* issues were compiled and published in a single volume. Books are still in stock and available for order.

A special project of the Steering Committee, the compilation was a venture of faith, a record of the goals and achievements of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry over the past ten years. Women ministers and supporters of the organization will find articles and resources in the volume fascinating and useful. The book is both history and information. It contains articles on topics of interest to women, such as staff relationships, calling and ordination to ministry, personality profiles, and much more. You will find book lists and other resources, word studies, conference reports, record of staff changes, ordinations, graduations and honors.

Secure your copy now. Order from VBWIM, Box 70970, Richmond, VA 23255. Please use the form on page 11. The cost is \$15 (\$12 for members). ❖

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. ©2002

God in the Garden

by Barbara Jackson

Perhaps you've read the book that credits kindergarten with the socializing process (*Everything I Need to Know ...*). Most readers of this journal, however, perhaps would credit their early years in Sunday school as formative in their understanding of the goodness of God and the development of their Christian character. Remember "God so loved ..." and "Be ye kind ...," and so forth?

In a recital of formative influences I nominate gardening. For me there is nothing better to reveal truths about God and the world than to involve oneself in growing things.

I came to gardening naturally, noting especially the examples of grandmothers, aunts and mothers who created beauty—who bloomed where they were planted. When my husband and I moved into various residences and finally into our own house, in each place I craved a setting of peaceful serenity and beauty. I came to realize that achieving such an idyllic spot was up to us—no yard man or estate manager was in the budget!

And so, I reveled in dirty fingernails, sore muscles, the feel of loamy earth sifting through my fingers, the execution of a vision of landscape perfection, and the creation of beauty through the colors and shapes, the play of textures and shades of green among shadows and sunshine, and the re-creation of a paradise for wildlife.

In the process some truths emerged.

Cultivation. I learned that if I planted in the full sun something that required dappled shade or protection from harsh rays, it would not thrive. The plant would shrivel up or die. Likewise, if I planted something that needed sunshine in a shady place it likely would not bloom and eventually would simply disappear. The same dichotomy exists for wet or dry, swamp or desert. The gardening handbooks call it cultivation requirements. Another form of cultivation is the loosening of earth around a plant so that its roots can spread and grow. The lessons are apparent: in life people thrive when their basic needs are met. Humans require a certain caloric and chemical intake, shelter from extreme heat or cold, appropriate garments, habitation adapted to climate, symbiotic interaction, stimulation by antagonists, caretaking and nurture—just to name a few requirements we humans have in common with plant life!

Competition. A gardening fact of life. Everybody knows you have to remove weeds if desirable plants are to win out in the competition for nutrients and space. If you buy a plant you might read on the tag to plant 12" apart. That means you must allow 6" radius from stem to the outer edge of the plant. Without the space the plant competes with the surrounding plants and will fail to reach its potential. If you go to the woods and find a mature oak or beech tree standing you will notice that under the tree there is little or no small vegetation. That is because the giant tree takes all the earth's nutrients to itself. Equally, the huge tree got that way because it won the contest for nutrients—survival of one at the expense of many. In life, the winner for rewards and recognition is often the one who sees an advantage, proceeds through the open door, perceives opportunity and takes risks.

Deep and wide. The size and shape of a plant is usually mirrored by its root structure beneath the earth. The most durable

plants are the ones with many-branched, healthy roots. The plant that is watered every day, long after an initial settling-in period, develops many surface roots that will not survive the severe summer heat. The plant that is watered long and deep but not so frequently will develop deep root systems because the roots have to reach out and down to take up the water. Perhaps the lesson here is that adversity contributes to the growth of character and helps one's potential develop. Another possible lesson is that spiritual depths born of meditation and communion with God provide a reservoir from which to draw.

Selection. Out of nature's bounty the earth itself limits what and how much will grow. Every year when I am tending to my spring chores by weeding and planting, the maple trees send down their thousands of helicopter-rotor seeds. And because I am weeding and planting, some of the maple tree seeds take root in the prepared soil. Even if my yard had room for many maple trees, only a few would live. But because I don't want any more trees and I don't want trees competing with impatiens and daylilies in their beds, the few that take root must be removed. God gives us so much more than we need! Balance and thanksgiving to God for God's bounty are the operative principles here.

Divide and multiply. I love to share my plants. Out of bounty comes abundance. Every time I share a plant with someone the plant that is divided is stimulated to produce more. Some plants even require frequent divisions—if not occasionally divided they will shrink and eventually disappear. We call the garden created from plants received from others a "friendship garden." What a lesson for life! Sharing is so fundamental to healthy community the process is seen everywhere we turn.

Resurrection. Some plants have built-in storage and are not so dependent on roots—though roots are necessary even so. Examples are bulbs and tubers like the lily, daffodils and daylilies—and even the lowly potato. The lily has long been a metaphor for resurrection. The bulb buried deep carries within its shape the beginnings of new life that will shoot up in spring when warmth and sun angle are just right. From the dead of winter life begins anew each spring.

GOD IN THE GARDEN

While deer and voles love tulips and hostas and will nibble them down to nubs, daffodils are left alone. The reason is that daffodil bulbs secrete an unpleasant taste that is actually poisonous and the critters leave them alone. On the other hand, squirrels and birds help disperse seeds of fruit they love. Animals and plants and humans have a symbiosis that is part of God's plan of caring and sustenance.

Gardening is cooperation with God. When I dig and plant and weed and water I am one with God. The earth is my sanctuary, the canopy of trees my cathedral. The bird's song is my hymn. The act of watering is my baptism. My face turned to the sun or sheltered in shade is my posture of prayer. The reaping of God's fruit is my communion. Thanks be to God for unspeakable gifts. ❖

Barbara Jackson is editor of Synergy, member of River Road Church, Richmond, and loves to grub in the garden.

A World of Hushed Tones

by Robert O'Brien

A hurtful episode took place in the closing weeks of 2001 that reveals again how some Baptists choose to treat women.

Basically, a Georgia Baptist leader threatened to suppress Baptist Women in Ministry of Georgia, who were scheduled to meet in Georgia convention facilities. The women moved to a local church after he told them he would place a monitor in their meeting and have them shut down immediately if they said anything that disagreed with the Georgia or Southern Baptist conventions, sounded supportive of CBF, or expressed a view contrary to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message statement's stance against women serving as senior pastors.

It's one thing to disagree on Biblical interpretation about the role of women. That's acceptable. It's another thing to treat women as an enemy who have no right to a point of view. That's oppressive. Women aren't just the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of men. They aren't a group with an agenda. They are human beings, created by God and struggling with their own pilgrimage and how they should follow the call of God. A very conservative pastor once admitted that he finally understood that when his own beloved daughter said, "Daddy, God is calling me into ministry." With tears in his eyes, he asked: "How could I tell her that wasn't true?"

Indeed, how could he—or anyone else—tell her that? Would anyone want to stand before God and admit to that? That pastor, now deceased, stands before God without that on his conscience.

Another Baptist leader, talking about his daughter's call to ministry, exclaimed: "The word has become flesh, and she's living in our house."

The Georgia action may have been motivated by fear of political reactions of other Baptists, rather than a condemnation of women, but it was handled hurtfully. It evoked a number of e-mails that all basically asked the same question, "Do Baptists have our own Taliban?" Many Baptists would recoil from that analogy, but many others would say the Georgia episode and many other events create that appearance.

Sadly, the Georgia episode is mild compared to the way some Baptists treat women who have a differing opinion or appear to be on the verge of having one.

■ Women seminary students have related how some male students have hooted derisively at female students with the "gall" to feel a call, and generally made their lives miserable.

■ Women ministers have related that some male pastors have turned their backs when women ministers entered the room or their chairs when a woman addressed a meeting they attended.

■ News reports have shown how some associations have evicted churches that exercised their privilege to ordain or call women. Hateful and vitriolic words and actions have left wounds.

■ Some state conventions and associations have shunned and isolated women from service. That happened in Florida, where a woman, with a long career in ministry, was shunned after her church ordained her for a non-pastoral role.

Many Afghan women threw off their veils and Afghan men

shaved their beards when the Islamic Taliban fled from cities in Afghanistan, with no more power to enforce their oppressive religious rules.

When will Baptist women be able to throw off the veils that enshroud their hearts, minds, and freedom of expression as they explore what God wants them to do? When will Baptist men of compassion uncover their courage to stand with them as advocates of their right to have a direct path to God as believers of worth?

It's one thing to disagree on Biblical interpretation. That's allowable. It's another thing altogether to say that women have no right to explore their own call or discuss issues deemed "off limits." That's unacceptable, regardless of biblical interpretation, either in a free society or in a body of believers that claims to be under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

How long will women have to live in a world of hushed tones—so some man won't overhear, take offense and seek to "protect" us from them? "Hey guys, this is reality," one Baptist woman said. "Some of us get used to it. Some of us just get tired of fighting about it. It's difficult to get women to express themselves publicly."

Any system that suppresses its followers—women or men—with fear and intimidation is sub-Christian in its application. Perfect love casts out fear. Any system that has to omit areas of Scripture to win its point of view is sub-Christian in its application. It doesn't "rightly divide the word of truth."

Recently, when some teachers asked children of different ages to define love, four-year-old Billy sounded like he had a direct word from God. "When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different," he said. "You know that your name is safe in their mouth."

How do Baptist women feel when they hear their names, their gender and their aspirations discussed? Do they hear the love of fellow believers on pilgrimage to understand the unsearchable riches of God's grace? Or do they hear derision, scorn and anger that is so locked into a system of thinking that no other input is allowed. Can women, on the other hand, consistently cloak their own words and actions in love, despite the pain and rejection they feel? That may be the hardest thing to do in following Jesus Christ.

An ultraconservative Southern Baptist leader, getting candid in a discussion, once admitted that fundamentalists too often lack love in their zeal. His fellow minister said nothing to break a sudden silence that made response unnecessary. Only the "sound" of a noisy gong and clanging symbol, echoing from 1 Corinthians 13 broke the silence, as the two men looked each other in the eye. Any system or person of any description that lacks love—has nothing. ❖

Robert O'Brien of Richmond, Va., is editor of Mainstream, national journal of the Mainstream Baptist Network. This appeared in the January 2002 issue, online at www.mainstreambaptists.org

NEWS BRIEFS

Global Women is New Force

by Bob Allen (ABP)

A “misogynist missiology” in the Southern Baptist Convention prompted formation of a new missionary-sending organization led by and focused on women, according to a leader of the movement. “The SBC no longer represents women or reaches women,” said Catherine Allen, a founder of the new group Global Women. She commented during the first national convocation held in February of the Mainstream Baptist Network—an organization that claims to represent traditional Southern Baptist views while rejecting fundamentalism that the group believes dominates the SBC.

Allen, a historian who has written books on women’s involvement in missions, said missions has been the “main thing” that has held Southern Baptists together, but for many Baptists today missions is no longer the main thing. In a recent survey, missions ranked ninth out of 10 priorities among Southern Baptist churches.

Historically, Allen said, women were a driving force for Southern Baptist missions. Women in 1888 defied tradition by organizing Woman’s Missionary Union as a female-led auxiliary to the SBC for support of missions. Allen, a former long-time employee of WMU, said that also is changing. She quoted a former convention president as saying publicly that Southern Baptist missions must be “de-feminized.” “We have had a defective doctrine foisted upon us,” she said. “There is a misogynist missiology at work.”

Allen said traditional missionary-sending organizations tend to neglect women. “Women who most need to hear the gospel are not going to hear it,” she said. “If they happen to hear it from a Southern Baptist missionary, it will be a gospel that puts them in their place.” She referred to recent SBC edicts that women should not preach the gospel and must submit to their husbands in the home. Allen said women are “being silenced” on the mission field, citing a “dwindling” proportion of women in foreign missions.

In a third disturbing trend, Allen said women “are leaving the first love of missions and the church.” The percentage of women in membership of Southern Baptist churches is now below the norm for evangelicals, she said. “Women’s work for women was the hallmark of the great successes of our Baptist heritage,” Allen said. Today, however, “There are twice as many unevangelized women in the world as there are Christian women.” “The question before us is not simply whether we [women] have the freedom to proclaim the gospel,” she said, “but whether they [women] have the freedom to hear the gospel.”

Global Women, a missionary-sending organization led by and focused on reaching women, formed last year because founders “saw what had to be done, and we did it,” Allen said. Some have criticized the group as competing with WMU. “Global Women is a new kind of mission agency,” Allen said. “It’s not a replacement for anything. It’s not like anything else.” Global Women will “support women regardless of marital status” and will “cooperate with any missions organization that treats women decently.”

A third of the world’s women haven’t heard the gospel message, making them the largest unreached-people group on Earth. They also suffer disproportionately from poverty, abuse and other ills. “In the cries of women we hear the voice of God,” she said. ❖

Adapted from Associated Baptist Press

Global Women Issues First Publication

Voices: A Newsletter of Global Women released the first newsletter of the new organization [see article this page]. The attractive, 8-page color publication includes articles describing the organization and its purpose, feature stories, book lists on missions and global interests, statistics, partnership missions opportunities. To be placed on the mailing list, to participate in chosen networks for prayer a/o information, or to join as a member, write Global Women, Box 530624, Birmingham, AL 35253 or e-mail globalwomengo@cs.com ❖

Mainstream Baptist Continue Growth

Mainstream, the journal of Mainstream Baptist Network is in its second year of publication and is a journal of news, opinion and commentary. Robert O’Brien of Richmond is the editor. Bill Wilson of Waynesboro, Va., is one of the national co-chairs. In its mission statement, the organization affirms the priority of Christ, encourages unity around missions and traditional Baptist ideals, promotes Baptist principles, opposes the influence of politico-religious fundamentalism, and honors diversity and ministries of all persons. One of the purposes of the organization is to serve as a prophetic voice and to provide a forum for diverse opinions. ❖

Baptist Center for Ethics Offers E-news

EthicsDaily.com is a Baptist web site with relevant information on ethics and culture: news, features, columns, sermons and book reviews. Log on daily or sign up for the e-newsletter to go to your own e-mail address. Sign up at EthicsDaily.com ❖

Center for Baptist Heritage & Studies Publishes New Resource

Freedom for the Journey, a new book by Dr. Phyllis Rodgers Pleasants, will be released in September. In a resource book designed for several group sessions, the author charts the freedom to assemble, freedom to study Scripture, freedom to follow and freedom of religion. The book is designed as a group resource for Baptist churches’ heritage emphasis, new member classes, and individual reading. A companion CD with PowerPoint assists the facilitator.

Phyllis Rodgers Pleasants is professor of church history at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. For information on ordering call Virginia Baptist Historical Society at 804-289-8434. ❖

Mercer University Offers E-news on Baptist Issues

Walter Shurden, director of the Center for Baptist Studies at Mercer, has inaugurated a new electronic bulletin containing materials related to Baptist life. The e-newsletter contains articles from invited guests, books on contemporary issues, books about Baptists, “Baptistiana”—journal articles of interest to Baptists, and bits of Baptist history.

To subscribe to the free e-mail or to access the web site, go to www.mercer.edu/baptiststudies ❖

BOOK REVIEW

Anita Diamant. *The Red Tent: A Novel*

NEW YORK: PICADOR, 1997

reviewed by Connie Showalter

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant is a delightful book, a pleasure to read. And a most unusual one—setting off a series of speculations and imaginary images of what life might have been like in the time of the Patriarchs, and causing one to become much more involved in an old and familiar story.

We all know that Jacob had twelve sons for whom the tribes of Israel are named, but we may not know that he had a daughter named Dinah. *The Red Tent* is Dinah's account of the ancient story from *Genesis*. It is an intriguing, complicated and compelling story told with grace and restraint from the view of a woman who was a part of it all.

The red tent was the place of retreat and refuge for the women of the tribe when they were menstruating, pregnant, or nursing infants. The women spent a great deal of time in the tent, their children there with them. Jacob had four wives who were related and part of a total family, an extended family. All four wives were daughters of Jacob's uncle Laban by different wives.

Jacob fell in love with Rachel and arranged to marry her, but Laban forced him or tricked him into first marrying Leah, the older sister. Zilpah and Bilhah, the other wives, were the daughters of lesser wives of Laban and are sometimes referred to as the handmaidens.

Rachel was Jacob's great love, but she had great difficulty bearing children. She became, however, the skilled midwife of the group and was later to train Dinah in her art. Rachel bore Joseph after many years of marriage and died in childbirth when Benjamin was born. Leah had seven sons and the daughter, Dinah. Zilpah had two sons and Bilhah had one.

Dinah tells the story of what life was like among the women. She paints each of her mothers (aunts) as women of skill and strength and shows how they wove together all the myriad of things that must be done to feed, clothe and care for the large family in so primitive a world. One is impressed by the varied skills and the obvious division of responsibilities.

Most impressive of all, however, is the intensity of the relationships between the women and their mutual concern and support for each other. They are all involved in the care of the children, and the children reap many benefits and much security from the total group. It is a beautiful illustration of bonding among women with mutual concerns and also of the need for intensity of relationship between mother and child. It is a vivid portrayal of what women mean to each other and how they meet each other's need in all kinds of situations. For example, such mutuality led the childless Rachel to become the skilled midwife and herbalist who ministered to the group. Dinah and Joseph are near to each other in age and are close playmates until Joseph must leave the women and go to live with the men.

Diamant deals with the Bible story carefully and in detail. One of the most revealing accounts is Jacob's return with all his flocks

and family to meet his brother Esau. The lives and families of the two brothers were very different. Esau and his family lived differently and observed different rituals.

A fascinating portrait is drawn of Rebecca, Dinah's grandmother, who has become a priestess with a retinue of followers or serving women called the Deborahs. She is a healer, and people come from great distances for her powers. Esau is old, feeble and blind, and seemingly incidental to Rebecca, but not to either of his sons. They are loyal and devoted until his death at a very advanced age, after the family has gone into Egypt and lived in Joseph's domain for many years.

Depicting the violent episodes of Dinah's life, Diamant makes these characters into living people and the biblical story real and vibrant. Even where there is no clear pattern to follow from the traditional account, she creates for Dinah a life that is satisfying and worthy as she lived out her life in Egypt, where Dinah found a quiet but rewarding love in her husband and her services as a midwife.

The emphasis on women's relationships and interdependencies is important and has probably been responsible for the book's great popularity and its long stay on the bestseller lists. The narrative encourages us to flesh out the familiar people of *Genesis* and see them in human form and to understand and to empathize with their dilemmas, their problems and their struggles. The book is a worthy story, a "good read" that fuels the imagination. It is also worthy of careful and serious attention for its word pictures and its messages.

Moreover, it is rewarding upon re-reading! ❖

Cornelia H. Showalter is a former guidance counselor for Richmond Public Schools, a Sunday school teacher and member of River Road Church in Richmond.

A LITTLE HUMOR

From the Internet

Most of us have now learned to live with voice mail as a necessary part of our daily lives. But have you ever wondered what it would be like if God decided to install voice mail?

Imagine praying and hearing the following: Thank you for calling Heaven. For English, press 1. For Spanish, press 2. For all other languages, press 0. Please select one of the following options: press 1 for requests; press 2 for Thanksgiving; press 3 for complaints. Press 4 for all other inquiries.

I am sorry. All of our angels and saints are busy helping other sinners right now. However, your prayer is important to us and we will answer it in the order in which it was received. Please stay on the line.

If you would like to speak to God, press 1; Jesus, press 2; Holy Spirit, press 3. If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm while you are holding, press 4.

RESOURCES

The Bookshelf

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

Prepared by Alana Woolley

Issues of leadership, power, and negotiation are not easy issues for most women. These books look at the issues from a variety of perspectives. Some are directly related to ministry and church settings. Others are from a more secular view but provide needed insight into how we function in our world.

- Willhauck, Susan and Jacquelyn Thorpe. *The Web of Women's Leadership: Recasting Congregational Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

Based upon the concept that the church is or should be committed to the principle that "all of God's people are called to share equally in mission and ministry," the authors attempt to provide a different model of leadership, the model of a web. It is a move away from a traditional hierarchical understanding of leadership. It is a look not at what the church is but what the church could be.

- Schaper, Donna. *Common Sense: About Men and Women in the Ministry*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1990.

Donna Schaper takes a look at ministry by focusing on the areas of security, power and authority. She shares personal experiences that call us to embrace our humanity and leads us to acknowledge the power of God in our own lives and in our own ministry.

- Everist, Norma Cook, ed. *Ordinary Ministry, Extraordinary Challenge: Women and the Roles of Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Both clergy and laywomen come together to discuss ministry from the perspective of women. In twenty-one different essays, women discuss many different styles and types of ministry. The variety is amazing. There is discussion of parish health ministry. The ministry of justice in a prison is presented. We are drawn to see

A Little Humor ... from page 6

To find a loved one who has been assigned to Heaven. Press 5. Then enter his or her Social Security number, followed by the pound sign. If you receive a negative response, please hang up and try area code 666.

For reservations at Heaven, please enter J-O-H-N, followed by the numbers 3-1-6.

For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, life on other planets, and where Noah's Ark is, please wait until you arrive.

Our computers show that you have already prayed today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow.

The office is now closed for the weekend to observe a religious holiday. Please pray again on Monday after 9:30 a.m.

If you are calling after hours and need emergency assistance, please contact your local pastor. Thank you, and have a heavenly day. [Anonymous] ❖

Suggested books may be useful in preparation for the Fall conference on "Survival Skill for the Long Haul."

that ministry is not one kind in one type of place. We can all use our gifts to minister where we are and where God leads us to be.

- Wessinger, Catherine, ed. *Religious Institutions and Women's Leadership: New Roles Inside the Mainstream*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996.

At the writing of the book, Catherine Wessinger was associate professor of the history of religions and women's studies at Loyola University in New Orleans. Fourteen women scholars contributed to the volume depicting the new inclusion of women in the role of professional ministry. It contains groups of essays concerning Protestant women, Catholic women, and Jewish women. Most essays give the historical view of the particular religious group. The Baptist perspective is presented in an essay by Carolyn DeArmond Blevins. At the back of the book, the editor gives a chronology of key events in women's religious leadership in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States.

- McKenzie, Vashti M. *Not Without a Struggle: Leadership Development for African-American Women In Ministry*. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1996.

Vashti McKenzie begins by giving a historical perspective concerning female leadership in religious institutions, her basis for looking at female leadership styles and biblical role models. She provides principles of leadership and ministry to help not just African American women ministers but all women in ministry. She has recently published a new book, entitled *Strength in the Struggle: Leadership Development for Women*.

- Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Kathleen Jamieson interviewed hundreds of women to learn the ways that they cut through traps and restrictions. This is not a theological book or a book about ministry. But it is about the world in which we all live. It was the winner of the San Francisco Review of Books Critics' Choice for 1995-1996.

- Jamieson, Penny. *Living at the Edge: Sacrament and Solidarity in Leadership*. London: Geoffrey Chapman Mowbray, 1997.

As an Anglican Bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand, Dr. Penny Jamieson has experienced what it is to be an "outsider" who becomes an "insider". In this, her first book, she looks at the problems of revolutionaries who win power. She discusses the ways that power can be used for the good of the whole community rather than a selected few.

- Kolb, Deborah M. and Judith Williams. *The Shadow Negotiation: How Women Can Master the Hidden Agenda That Determine Bargaining Success*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 2000.

From the perspective of the business world, Deborah Kolb and Judith Williams help women to recognize "unspoken attitudes, hidden assumptions, and conflicting agendas." Women are presented with a "whole new way to think about the negotiation process." The authors help women to see how their strengths can work to their advantage rather than to their disadvantage. ❖

Alana Woolley is a telecommunications consultant.

WORD STUDY

THE LAST WORD

Liberal-Fundamentalism-Free

by Barbara Jackson

How in the world did the L-word come to be a dirty word, a term of scathing disdain? For the longest time I was pleased to think of myself as liberal, both in the sense of generous as well as in the sense of open-minded and progressive. But somehow, along the way, I found out that to be a liberal (noun) was not a good thing, nor was liberal (adjective) apt to be celebrated in the popular mind.

One example. Back in the post-World War II era the American culture was characterized by the fear of communists around every corner, the so-called Red Scare. Some good men were defeated for high office simply by smear campaigns that branded them “pink,” that is, too liberal. It was a shameful period in American history.

In the cycle of things, America is now again in a time that favors conservatism, in politics and economics as well as in religion. Our own denominational identity has been torn asunder by the resurgence of a conservative religious culture that redefined who we are.

We note in passing that in the name of conservatism the Jerrys have brought shame and destruction to our good name. The “Moral Majority,” the movement created by one of the Jerrys, steered an insidious overlay of religiosity to the political process and brought a change in government power. The irony is that the Republicans adopted and bought into Democratic principles so that who can tell anymore which side anyone is on.

More recently, two more Jerrys have weighed in, one with demands for a Baptist creed for missionaries that strains the meaning of missions, calling and soul freedom, the other with public statements that denigrate and demonize people of another culture. In citing the Jerrys I must not fail to acknowledge the role of some other notables who engineered the destruction of a denomination, stole its assets and set about creating a milieu of religiosity amidst false teachings and blatant propagandizing. What they have created could not be recognized by those early Baptist founders of the 16th century. Personally, I disavow them all. As James Dunn put it, I am a recovering Southern Baptist—struggling to attain some semblance of sanity in my religious identity. Maybe the 12 steps would be in order! Well, enough editorializing.

Liberal

Look at the word *liberal*. What does it mean and what has been its role in the history of ideas and nations? The word and its related concepts are laden with important themes in Western thought and specifically in the history of religion and culture.

Liberal comes from the Latin *liber*- free, *liberalis* (adj.), and is related to the Greek *eleutheros*, free. Both are kin to the Germanic *leodan*- to grow, *leod*- the people, and ultimately to the Sanscrit *leudh*- to mount, grow. Other English words from the same root are liberty, liberality, liberate, liberation, libertine (freethinker, one who flouts convention), libertarian, illiberal (bigoted, not broad-minded), to deliver (set free), livery (garb or equipment provided, delivered to retainers), and Liberia (African country founded by freed slaves).

Most senses reflect the meaning “freeborn,” i.e., not a slave. Liberal or generous was an attribute characteristic of a freeman, who had a high social status and by extension was noble,

gentlemanly. This sense from Greek and Roman times survives in the term liberal arts. *Liberal arts* were the branches of learning suitable for free persons of high rank and requiring the exercise of mental faculties: literature and history, music, art and the sciences, while slaves learned a trade or did manual labor: the *servile arts*.

The political meanings attached to liberalism derive from the Enlightenment. *Liberalism* is defined as a “political and social theory that favors representative government, freedom of the press, speech and worship, the abolition of class privileges, the use of state resources to protect the welfare of the individual, and international free trade.” (Norton, p. 11) The theory was further modified in recent centuries by the idea of universal suffrage and state intervention to assure a minimum standard of living and ameliorate poverty.

In contrast, *libertarianism* is the political theory that upholds individual rights above other considerations and rejects the idea of the state as having a legitimate power to interfere even for the common good.

Women’s liberation refers to the women’s movement: the campaign for social, political and economic equality with men. *The New York Times* advises its writers that “sexual equality is no longer exotic, and its advocacy does not necessarily warrant the label feminist or feminism . . . and when referring to the women’s movement, be specific about the goals and actions involved. Avoid the outdated *women’s liberation*, except in a historical reference. *Lib* and *libber* are condescending,” they warned. (NYT p. 206) And so language continues to be an issue as the populace has either embraced or decried inclusive language and political correctness.

Early efforts in the 19th–20th centuries fought for women’s rights to own property, to have access to higher education, and to vote. Since achieving the vote, the emphasis of the movement has shifted to economic issues and equal employment opportunities. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission formed in 1964 to end discrimination in hiring. The National Organization of Women (NOW) was founded in 1966 to work for women’s rights. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress in 1972 but failed to be ratified by the necessary number of states.

**“Liberalism in theology accepts the premise
that religion must make sense
if it is to survive.”**

Early proponents of women’s rights were Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. More recent theorists on the popular front were Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, and Gloria Steinem. In the field of women in religion, innovative thinkers include Rosemary Reuther, Mary Daly, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Letty Russell, and Phyllis Trible— just to name a few.

Liberalism in theology accepts the premise that religion must make sense if it is to survive. It is expressed by “respect for the authority of reason and experience in religion, an openness to culture, a willingness to adapt theological expression to cultural forms, and continuing flexibility in interpreting the sacred texts and practices of its tradition.” (Musser & Price, p.285) Such premises

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led to the acceptance of biblical criticism and the historical critical method. Barth, Schleiermacher, and Hans Küng are primary proponents.

A second expression of liberalism in theology is a humanistic view of mankind, with Schleiermacher and Tillich as chief spokesmen. A third area is the understanding of the origin and continuation of the universe in scientific terms (e.g., evolution and astrophysics) and the adaptation of the doctrines of creation and providence to fit scientific data. This area continues to be a battleground and has fueled a resurgence of fundamentalism and the teaching of creationism.

And finally, liberalism views morality as grounded in the human situation and knowable outside divine revelation; such a view does not deny the importance of religion as it affects motivation and personal dedication to right behavior.

Liberation theology refers to an offshoot of liberal thinking in theology that emerged in the 1960s in Latin America among Roman Catholic clergy. The impetus was the struggle of the poor against oppression and the need for a transformation of society. God is seen as the god of the poor and whose redemptive acts are moved by compassion and love.

Fundamentalism

The opposite of liberality is *conservatism*, which when taken to extremes is *fundamentalism*. These expressions of religious thought place the authority of sacred texts or practices above reason and experience, are literalistic in interpreting texts and are antagonistic to culture.

While conservatism can be termed a world view or perhaps even a personal tendency, *fundamentalism is primarily a movement* that seeks to prevail among people of faith both in the culture at large and within specific denominations. The movement arose early in the 20th century in opposition to “modernism,” so defined as the acceptance of liberal theology, secularism, Darwinism, and the historical critical method of analyzing scripture. In beliefs, fundamentalists espoused biblical inerrancy and dispensationalism.

Fundamentalism today is not, however, strictly an anti-modernist theology. Its primary characteristic is an active and strident militancy and judgmental attitude toward all who differ.

Among the more recent expressions of fundamentalism are the rise of the religious right on the political scene, campaigns against gay rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and abortion rights. And in the public schools, fundamentalists continue to fight secularism and work on behalf of school prayer and creation science. In the home they seek to uphold the ascendancy of male over female.

Fundamentalists used the issue of inerrancy to capture the organizational structure, assets and power of the Southern Baptist Convention and to purge its agencies and seminaries of non-inerrantists. Fundamentalism has also had an effect upon some other denominations. Lutherans are one.

The strident spirit of fundamentalism infects other religions as well, though not quite the same way as the Christian variety. We note especially the death sentence on Muslim author Salman Rushdie, who had to go in hiding and seek asylum in the West.

The recent reign of terrorism that has besieged the Western world in the name of *jihad* is another example of extremists using the precepts of God (Allah) to justify any means to an end.

The role of women in Islamic lands is a particular matter of concern. Until the recent overthrow of repressive government, women in Afghanistan had been imprisoned in their own homes, unable to have jobs or practice a profession, and required to be covered from head to toe lest some male be tempted to lust. Girl children were denied schooling. The creation of a new government following the overthrow of the Taliban and the abandonment of extreme measures of Islam gives hope for a new day.

Other examples of abuse of women in the name of religion—genital mutilation, denial of contraceptives and access to health care, as well as limitations on education—are found world wide

Fundamentalism is not to be taken lightly. It is not only a serious threat to liberal politics and liberal theology, our way of life. It is a serious threat to free and open dialogue on issues that affect both citizen and believer. Do not mistake: it is a serious threat to women.

Free and freedom

Free and *freedom* are concepts related to *liberal*. While much easier to understand and use correctly than *liberal*, *free* and *freedom* nevertheless deserve a careful examination. *Free* is one of those rich words with multiple meanings, many compounds and hyphenated words. *Free* can be adjective, adverb, or verb; *freedom* is the noun.

The dictionary lists about 50 definitions for the adjective *free*, too many to specify in this essay. Among the compounds are: *free agent*, *free association*, *freebase*, *freeborn*, *freedman*, *freedom of the seas*, *freedom ride*, *free enterprise*, *free fall*, *free hand*, *freehold*, *freelance*, *freeload*, *free love*, *free lunch*, *free market*, *free range*, *free ride*, *free-spoken*, *freestanding*, *freestyle*, *freethinker*, *free throw*, *free trade*, *freeway*, *freewheel*, *freewill*—just a fraction of the dictionary’s offerings.

The English word is related to the Germanic *freoh-*, which became *frei* in modern German. Older Germanic words are *frithr* (love, peace); *fridu* (peace); *frijon* (to love), kin to English *friend*. The Indo-European root is *priyas-* (own, dear, beloved). The word as a name is found in Frigg, wife of Odin and source of the word *Friday*. The connection of beloved and free? *Free* was a term of affection for members of a family excluding the slaves, who were not “free”—the same distinction we saw with *liber*.

Freedom in political philosophy is a condition of personal liberty requiring either the absence of restraint or a positive self-mastery and self-realization, and was a basis for the revolutionary ideas of the Enlightenment. Seminal philosophers were Locke, Mills, Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel and others. The Western view of freedom that developed during the Enlightenment derives from both the Jewish writings concerning the *process* of freeing and the Greco-Roman thinkers (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) who propounded individual freedoms for the free man. Freedom for women was not an issue for those early thinkers.

Freedom in the Bible. The Greek *eleutheria* (freedom) is found throughout the New Testament. In Luke 4:18 we read Jesus’ affirmation of his calling: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He*

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WOMEN IN THE NEWS

New Positions and Changes

Shawn Dobbins is director of preschool, children and youth at Bethel Church, Salem.

Gayle B. Ritchey is associate for family ministries at First Church, Staunton.

Cathy Swaim is minister of music at Burrows Memorial Church, Norfolk.

Dina Carrow is minister of outreach & worship at Fair Park Church, Alexandria.

Jana Wolfe is minister of music at Mount Hermon Church, Danville.

Eleanor Hartman is associate pastor at Branch's Church, Richmond.

Deann Hiatt is youth director at Villa Heights Church, Martinsville.

Marilyn Nelson is minister of community servanthood at Northminster Church, Richmond.

Laura Shibut is minister to students and young adults at Northminster Church, Richmond.

Brenda Rowe is minister to senior adults at Melrose Church, Roanoke.

Helen Riley is minister of education at Melrose Church, Roanoke.

Christine Kellett is minister of Christian education at Friendship Church, Chesterfield.

Rebecca Bound is music director at Bagby Memorial Church, Burkeville.

Tina McPherson is minister of music & worship at Groveton Church, Alexandria.

Tracee Prillaman is director of children's ministries at Branch's Church, Richmond.

Maristela Araujo is director of children and youth at Carlisle Avenue Church, Richmond.

Barbara Massey is minister to children at River Road Church, Richmond.

Kathy Shireda is outreach director for First Church, Petersburg.

Tracy L. Hartman has been named assistant professor of practical theology at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Elizabeth Newman has been named professor of theology and ethics at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Sherry Taylor is director of music at Beaver Dam Church, Troy.

Sandi Rogers is pastor for discipleship development at Columbia Church, Falls Church.

Hope Nicely is youth minister at Clifton Forge Church, Clifton Forge.

Martha Harris is youth director at Westhunt Church, Richmond.

Anna Kate Ellerman has been named minister to students at First Church, Winchester.

Holly Irvin is minister of music and youth at Monument Heights Church, Richmond.

Suzanne Gonzalez is children's director at Sunset Hills Church, Alexandria.

Autumn Boggs is minister to preschool and children at West Salem Church, Salem.

Cynthia Meadows is chaplain, Carlon Memorial Hospital, Roanoke.

Sonja Phillips is chaplain at Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury, Irvington.

Ordinations

Wendy Crowe was ordained to the gospel ministry on Nov. 4, 2001, by Ridge Church, Richmond.

Nicki Royall was ordained to the gospel ministry on Nov. 4, 2001, by Yorktown Church, Yorktown.

Colleen Swingle-Titus was ordained to the gospel ministry on Nov. 24, 2001, by Crozet Church, Crozet.

Diane Kirkland was ordained to the gospel ministry on Oct. 7, 2001, by Manassas Church, Manassas.

Karen Cooper was ordained to the gospel ministry on Nov. 17, 2001, by Way of the Cross Church, Palmyra.

Michelle Myers was ordained to the gospel ministry on Feb. 17 by Belmont Church, Charlottesville. She is campus minister for the University of Virginia and Piedmont Virginia Community College.

Shawn Dobbins was ordained to the gospel ministry on March 3 at Bethel Church, Salem.

Sylvia N. Cooper was ordained to the gospel ministry on April 21 by Webber Memorial Church, Richmond.

Marnie Fisher-Ingram was ordained to the gospel ministry on May 5 by Broadus Memorial Church, Richmond.

Lisa Sean Carson was ordained to the gospel ministry May 5 by Trinity Church, Richmond, where she is associate pastor.

Tracey Allred was ordained to the gospel ministry on May 26 by Central Church, Richmond, where she is associate minister of education and youth.

Barbara Sadtler was ordained to the gospel ministry by Community of Grace Church, Midlothian.

Accolades and Honors

Judith B. Bailey and **Barbara Jackson** were featured in the *Religious Herald* (Feb. 7, 2002) in an article about Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry and the new compilation of ten years' publication of *Synergy*.

Alma Hunt, of Roanoke, was one of 37 Baptist leaders (one of 5 women) named to a new Hall of Fame sponsored by Mainstream Baptist Network at their February meeting in Charlotte, N.C. The Hall of Fame honors those who have shown courage in standing for Baptist principles and heritage.

Eleanor J. Hartman, associate pastor for adult education at Branch's Church, Richmond, has been named one of four new trustees at BTSR. She is a graduate of BTSR and was formerly associate pastor at Hilton Church in Newport News.

Graduations

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, May 2002: M.Div.: **Jenny C. Barrier, Melissa A. Cargile, Amy C. Costantini Cook, Nadja A. Croft, Christie Ann Decker, Bonita R. Decuir, Marnie Fisher-Ingram, Linda H. Gilliam, Joanna L. Harris, Bonnie Hofmeyer, Ana Y. Karim, Sonja M. Phillips, Margaret M. K. Quisenberry, Barbara Monroe Sadtler, Cara D. Tareilo Stoneham.** M.Div./MSW: **Deborah W. Higginbotham.** D.Min.: **Raygina L. Beale.**

CALENDAR

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has sent me to proclaim release to the captive and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Again, in John 8:36, Jesus says: "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." And in Galatians 5:1: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Jesus is the messenger and vehicle of liberation.

And so, the notions of freedom and liberality have played out on the stage of history, the world of nations and states ... the climes of academia and the sphere of the mind ... and in the world of the spirit and the quests of the religious for the realities of faith. The debate is over national self-determination, justice for the oppressed, civil rights for minorities, equal rights for women, access to the revealed truths of God and to the acquired truths of the educated.

Freedom is a precious gift—the hounds bay at its heels; its value must be ever guarded.

Sources: Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins*, 1990. Musser & Price, eds., *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, "Freedom", Abingdon, 1992. *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, 1999. Norton, Anne-Lucie, ed., *Dictionary of Ideas*, 1994. Patterson. *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*, Vol. 1. HarperCollins, 1991.

Barbara Jackson is the editor of *Synergy* and writer for various publications.

September 2002

- 7 Richmond area coffee. Saturday, 10:30 a.m. Followed by Steering Committee at noon. Home of Judy Bailey, 1923 Flintwood Dr., Richmond.
- 28 VBWIM Fall Conference. "Survival Skills for the Long Haul." Workshops on Financial Management for Women, Self Care, and Women's Leadership: Balancing Authority and Nurture. Includes lunch, child care and closing worship. Saturday, 8:30–2:30, Turnbull Room, BTSR, Richmond.

October

- 22-23 Solon B. Cousins Lectures. BTSR

November

- 8-9 Baptist General Association of Virginia, Virginia Beach. VBWIM display in Exhibit Hall.
- 8 VBWIM Dinner and speaker. [Details TBA]

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Membership fee is \$20 for one year (students, \$10). Members joining in summer or fall will be credited for the following year. Membership includes announcements of conferences and other events, book lists and discounts on conferences. Please enclose check with this form and send to: VBWIM, Box 70970, Richmond, VA 23255. For information, telephone Judy Bailey, 804-740-4037, or e-mail JudithBBailey@aol.com

NEWS BRIEFS

BTSR Adds Three New Faculty

Baptist Theological Seminary has named three new faculty members. They will begin with the Fall of 2002. They are Dr. Tracy L. Hartman, assistant professor of practical theology; Dr. Elizabeth Newman, professor of theology and ethics; Dr. F. Scott Spencer, professor of New Testament.

Hartman was an adjunct faculty this year. She will continue to direct the seminary's supervised ministry program and will teach other courses. She becomes the first graduate of BTSR to become a full-time faculty member. Hartman was guest speaker at the Fall dinner meeting of Virginia WIM and reported on her research.

Newman comes from the Dept. of Religious Studies at St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. Spencer was on the faculty of Wingate University in North Carolina. ❖

NAMB Will Not Endorse Ordained Female Chaplains

Trustees of the North American Mission Board, SBC, announced in February that while they will endorse both men and women as chaplains, they will not endorse women who have been ordained.

The action was defended on the basis of an understanding of ordination as "related to a man's being set aside for the office of pastor." Trustees affirmed their support for women in chaplaincy positions in institutional settings and "roles that are not that of pastor."

The action has led to announcements from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of its willingness to endorse ordained women. ❖

New Bible Translation Uses Gender-Inclusive Language

The *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) of the New Testament debuted in April 2002 amidst a stir over its usage of gender-inclusive language. The full Bible is expected in Fall 2005.

The Committee on Bible Translation representing various Protestant denominations determined to distinguish between gender-specific and gender-inclusive language based on usage and meaning as understood in the original.

The New Testament text underwent changes in 7 percent of the whole, and of those changes edits for gender accounted for 30 percent.

One example of gender-based change is found in Acts 17:22, where Paul speaks out and says, "*Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious.*" The TNIV says, "*People of Athens ...*" ❖

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