



## VBWIM WILL JOIN Virginia Baptist Ministers' Discussion Group for Conference at Roslyn February 22-23

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry is pleased to have the opportunity to join the Ministers' Discussion Group in their annual conference and to share in the presentations by Phyllis Tribble on the topic **Scriptural Subversions**. She will present four major addresses, "A Journey with Jonah," "The Sacrifice of Sarah," "A Mosaic for Miriam," and "A Quest for Ecclesiastes."

Dr. Tribble is known for her contributions to Biblical scholarship and her leadership in articulating the role of women in religious life. She is a speaker not to be missed.

Also on the program, Holly Irvin and David Angel will lead worship.

Phyllis Tribble, Ph.D., is Baldwin Professor of Sacred Literature, Union Theological Seminary, New York. A native of Richmond, Virginia, she graduated in 1954 from Meredith College, N.C., and received her Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.) in 1963. She has taught in a number of universities and seminaries during her distinguished career. She is the author of *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* and *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*.

The conference is to be held at Roslyn Conference Center in



Phyllis Tribble

Richmond, and opens with registration at 1 p.m. on Monday and closes with lunch at 12:30 on Tuesday. Accommodations and meals are provided at Roslyn. Outlook Book Service will have a bookstore open for sales and browsing.

For students and women ministers for whom the cost is prohibitive, VBWIM will make arrangements for accommodations in private homes in the Richmond area. Please contact Betty Pugh. Directions and program outline may be secured from Barbara Filling when making reservations.

### INSIDE

3 In My Opinion

3 Ordination

4 Women In the News

5 Spotlight

6 Saints & Heroes

6 Humor

7 Ex Cathedra

7 Gleanings

9 Bookshelf

10 Book Review

10 Calendar

## Editorial:

### Ordination? Not me!

by Barbara Jackson

I ask myself, is ordination important? Well, of course. Why else are churches and factions lining up on one side or the other of the issue? Why else is the ritual so closely guarded and why has it been perpetuated for centuries? Why else has it become part of the armament raised to keep women in their places? And why is it that women in religious life have decided they need it now?

And, to put it bluntly, why am I not ordained? I am a seminary graduate, a former denominational “servant.” I too have ministered to people’s heartfelt concerns. I have embraced theological questions and pored over scripture.

Robert Frost and his memorable phrase “the road not taken” come to mind. For me ordination never happened. Why not? Well, frankly, it was not a hot issue back when seminary was fresh and goals were more important than titles.

The situation is different now. The crisis in the denomination has risen up to hit us in the face. The focus on women as an issue—one of several that divide the sheep from the goats!—has awakened us to the threat. The reality is, we are under siege.

In the face of the barriers raised to women, it seems that the ordination question is truly an issue now.

We celebrate the new heroes who push down the barricades and make a stand. We applaud the ordinations of Sarah and Jennifer (see page 3) and other new ministers. We gloried in the ceremony and public acknowledgment attendant upon the ordinations of our friends B.J. and Alana and Anne and others. Such events evoke a sea of emotion. Ordination is too important to take lightly.

In our understanding of calling, we state unequivocally that all believers are called. We affirm the ministry of the laity and note that calling is not limited to the  
*(please turn to page 9)*

### Survival Tips for the Newly Ordained

by Judy Bailey

In a recent conversation with Lynda Weaver-Williams about the ordination of women for ministry in Baptist churches, we shared our joy for those whose gifts for ministry have been recognized and affirmed. We also shared our concern that women be prepared for their non-traditional roles. While each person has to learn for herself, we thought of several suggestions which we have found to be valid through our own experience and the experience of others. In keeping with the popularity of self-help books, I offer these survival tips.

**1. There is nothing new about being a woman minister.** From Mary Magdalene on, there have been thousands of women who have served as ministers, though we may not know their names. It is very natural for women to assume leadership in this way.

**2. Continue to live as the unique person you are.** Don’t conform to the status quo. We need your voice and your understanding of what is important.

**3. Find a support group.** It is easy to feel “odd,” lonely and different when you are a woman minister. You need the fellowship and the understanding of others who are going through some of the same struggles.

**4. Don’t think that you are “different” or “above” the limitations that affect other women.** Realize that no matter how blessed you may be, your strength lies in seeing reality for what it is and in identifying with other women. Their struggles are inevitably your struggles, whether you can see direct effects or not.

**5. Don’t sell yourself to the system.** Ask yourself the question, “Is this job killing my spirit?” Trust your own discernment of God’s leadership in your life. Have the courage to leave if you need to do so.

**6. Stay focused on the God who has called you into service.** Find ways to nurture your spirit and your intellectual abilities.

**7. Be the best professional you can be.**

**8. Don’t expect others to take care of you.** You must take responsibility for yourself as an adult. By the way, you can!

**9. Take time for yourself away from your work.** You don’t have to prove your worth by working all the time. Believe in God’s free gift of salvation and in God’s grace.

**10. Be physically active and emotionally healthy.** Exercise, play, laugh, enjoy yourself!

*The Rev. Judy Bailey is Baptist campus minister,  
University of Richmond*

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

**Editorial Board:** Judy Bailey, Wanda Fennell, Rebecca Glass, Ellen Gwathmey, Holly J. Irvin, Barbara Jackson, editor, Sharon James, Betty Pugh, chair, B.J. Seymour. ©1993

# FEATURES

## “Try Not to Shrink”

by Sarah Sellers

On November 1, 1992, I was ordained to Christian ministry by Beale Memorial Church, Tappahannock, where Robert C. McKinley is our pastor. Only a year ago I was called to this fellowship as minister of music and pastoral assistant.

In reflecting on the experience of ordination, I thought of several mile-markers in the pilgrimage. After having been at Beale a few months, I was asked by Dr. McKinley to be clear about my feelings regarding ordination. He pointed out that while I affirmed and encouraged the ordination of others, I changed the subject when it might be applied to me.

Like most Baptists, I was taught about the priesthood of believers, that God calls every girl and boy to be disciples, to be baptized and to develop their gifts for various types of ministry. While in college, I knew that women, even Baptist women, might be hospital chaplains. Even so, most areas of ministry did not require ordination. Also, there were many women, more gifted than this pilgrim, who would never be ordained.

In seminary I celebrated with friends who were being ordained, while my list grew longer with reasons I would not seek ordination. There were moments when I thought perhaps if I had a Ph.D., became more articulate and carried myself like some of my professors, then I would be emotionally ready to sit before an ordination council.

One day in clinical supervision, Dr. Wayne E. Oates asked me to be clear about this matter. I told him it was not something I took lightly, and I did not intend to pursue ordination as if it was just another certificate. He told me that God had ordained me many years ago, and the patients and families I saw ordained me by allowing me to be their chaplain or pastoral counselor. He said it was a good tradition, not always practiced, for ministers to work and wait to be approached about ordination. This was wonderful: I already felt like an ordained minister and I had much encouragement and support from the seminary faculty.

Dr. Oates went on to say, “When a church approaches you and requests ordination based on your ministry skills, I expect you not shrink back from it.”

When I told Dr. McKinley about this conversation with Dr. Oates, I made it clear that I was willing to be ordained. Before long, the deacons had discussed and brought it before the church. By summer, the Rappahannock Association was

(Please turn to page 8)

## “Ordination Procrastination”

by Jennifer Metzger Turner

“What took you so long?” she asked as she shook my hand that Sunday morning last June.

Indeed, why had I waited over four years after graduating seminary to make this decision? And what did the decision really mean anyway? I had asked myself these questions many times. But there I was, finally, standing at the front of Pine Street Baptist Church sharing my desire to be ordained.

I shook what seemed to be a thousand hands of people who were “so proud” and “wished me well.” But I realized that many of them did not understand what I was doing any more than I did.

“Will you be going to seminary now?”

“Where will you be pastoring?”

“We’ll hate to lose you to another church.” “Does this mean you’re a real preacher now?”

I was overwhelmed by the questions and exhausted from trying to answer them. “Nobody understands!” I told my

husband that afternoon, “not even me.”

But of all the questions, the one that concerned me the most was: why had I waited?

After much prayer and soul-searching I believe I have come up with some important reasons for my delay.

First, there was and somewhat continues to be a lack of understanding of the need for ordination. Why should some be “set apart” to the ministry while others are not? We are all called of God to be ministers. With the help of God and several others, I have reached a new understanding. Ordination for me is no longer a *setting apart* but a *joining together*. It is a time when congregation and individual join together to celebrate the calling to salvation and servanthood which is common to all Christians and to celebrate the unique calling and gifts that the Lord has given to an individual for a specific ministry. With this understanding my service of ordination on November 15, 1992, was one of joy and commitment to service for me *and* the church body.

Another reason I procrastinated was that I feared ordination would close the door to missionary work with the Home Mission Board, SBC. Ever since my sophomore year in college I have had a desire to be involved in inner-city ministry. I felt that working for the HMB as a Baptist center director was the ministry for me. During my second year in seminary I began to realize that ordination and HMB employment might not be a possible combination, so I put off my ordination.

(Please turn to page 8)

## ON ORDINATION

# WOMEN IN THE NEWS

## New Positions and Changes

**Carol Davenport** is the new associate minister of Beaver Dam Church, Albemarle Association. She is a graduate of Southern Seminary.

**Carolyn Fedder** has been named director of outreach programs for Peninsula Association.

**Suzy Hamrick** is director of church planting for the Peninsula Association.

**Susan Thiede**, a graduate of Southeastern Seminary, has become minister of youth at Forest Lawn Church, Pittsylvania Association.

**Kathleen Westrip** has joined the staff of Franconia Church, Mount Vernon Association, as music director.

**Vivian R. Wheeler** has become the interim pastor of Nomini Church, Rappahannock Association.

**Betty Law** has retired from the SBC Foreign Mission Board as vice president for the Americas. Law cited recent changes in board philosophy and attitude for her early retirement.

**Leila Cox**, administrative assistant to the vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, has resigned to become administrative assistant at Smyth & Helwys, a Baptist publishing house in Georgia.

**Shirley Robertson** retired in December as director of Special Education Ministries for the Virginia Baptist General Board. She has served Virginia Baptists for over 30 years.

**Charlotte Teas**, formerly minister of children, singles and outreach for West End Church in Petersburg, has been named editor of *Lad* magazine for the SBC Brotherhood Commission.

## Ordinations

**Jennifer Metzger Turner** was ordained to the Christian ministry on November 15 by Pine Street Church, Richmond, where she is minister of outreach. She is a graduate of Southeastern Seminary.

**Sarah Sellers** was ordained to the Christian ministry on November 1 by Beale Memorial Baptist Church in Tappahannock, where she serves as minister of music and pastoral assistant. She is a graduate of Southern Seminary.

## Honors and Accolades

**Evelyn and Bill Berry** received the SBC Home Mission Board's 1992 Clovis Brantley Award. The award recognizes individuals or couples who represent the best in mission dedication and service. Bill Berry is retired director of Oregon Hill Baptist Center in Richmond. Evelyn Berry is current director.

**Lynda Weaver-Williams** was a featured preacher for the annual Virginia Baptist Pastors' Conference in Virginia Beach, held prior to the General Association in November.

**Loresa Heyward** of Bonsack Church, Roanoke, was named secretary-treasurer of the Virginia Baptist Youth Ministers Association at its annual meeting in Virginia Beach.

**Anne Rosser** was elected president of the Virginia chapter of the Alliance of Baptists. She recently retired as associate pastor of Hampton Church.

**Suzanne Buckingham**, minister of music at Amelia Church, received the Church Musician of the Year Award from the Virginia Baptist Church Music Conference.

**Becky Proctor**, associate minister of education and youth at Rosalind Hills Church, Roanoke, was named alumni vice president for Virginia for the Baptist Seminary at Richmond.

**Jill Crainshaw**, pastor of Neriah Church in Lexington, was named vice-president of the Virginia alumni of Southeastern Seminary

## Appointments

**Nancy Whitmore**, director of the Church Hill Cooperative Baptist Ministry in Richmond, has been appointed as home missionary by the Home Mission Board. She is a graduate of Southern Seminary.

**Darlene McNeill** and husband Joseph were appointed as new missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, to serve in Brazil. Darlene is a native of Roanoke.

**Betty Smith** and husband David were appointed by the Home Mission Board to serve as church planters in Newport News. Betty is from Radford and David is from Roanoke.

**Sarah Ballew** and husband Larry were appointed by the Home Mission Board to serve as church planters in Rhode Island. Sarah is from Charlottesville.

## Graduations

**Southeastern: Emily L. Smith** of Maidens, M.Div.

**Southern: Amy Carter-Stewart** of Farmville, M.Div., and **Amy Mathis** of Fairfax, M.Div.

**Southwestern: Jeanne M. Dudley** of Roanoke, M.A. in RE; **Anne E. Hamilton** of Charlottesville, M.A. in RE; and **Marcia G. McQuitty** of Newport News, D.Ed.

## Evelyn Berry

director of Oregon Hill Baptist Center, Richmond

### Interviewed by Ellen Gwathmey

Evelyn Berry's office has games, books, goody bags and other supplies that she uses in her position as director of Oregon Hill Baptist Center, located on South Pine Street in Richmond. She also has a copier, paper cutter, phone, desk, filing cabinet, etc.—those things one expects to find in a typical office. Here is where the program planning, the paperwork, the listening, the counseling, the enlisting of volunteers, the comforting and confronting take place. Here is a comfortable place which encourages openness just as its occupant's caring attitude encourages confidences.

This white-haired wife, mother and grandmother grew up in Jacksonville, North Carolina, in a church active in community outreach. As a child she felt called to ministry. In her teen years she visited prisons and taught backyard Bible camps at trailer parks with her church youth group. At Meredith College she was active in the Baptist Student Union and volunteered in Baptist centers and summer missions.

She remembers one summer spent in the mountains where "you had to look straight up to see the sun" and only the women came inside the church building. The men listened in at windows and doors. During much of this time she was often a guest speaker—preacher, really—at area churches. "It was the eleven o'clock hour; I was in the pulpit; and though they never called it that, what I did was preach." No one ever told her she couldn't minister because she was a woman.

It was in her home church in Jacksonville that she met Bill Berry, the man who became her husband. Bill came to the church as minister of education. They were married and

moved to Richmond when Bill accepted the invitation of Tabernacle Church to be their minister of education. After their daughter started school, Evelyn began volunteering at Oregon Hill and later was invited to become part of the staff. When Bill joined the staff as director, he and Evelyn functioned as a team at work as well as at home.

In 1978 Evelyn Berry was appointed by the Home Mission Board as home missionary assigned to Oregon Hill Baptist Center. Five years ago, upon Bill's retirement, she became the center's director.

Oregon Hill Center seeks to meet the physical, social, spiritual and intellectual needs of a community of about a thousand people. There are programs for all ages—from preschool through senior adult. Located in the center are a food pantry and a clothes closet. This is a place to come for counseling, help with family problems and financial aid.

One of the most popular programs is Wednesday evening family time, where there is something for everyone. Program topics address concerns of the

family and offer suggestions for strengthening these ties. Another popular program is the senior adult covered dish suppers. For some this is the only time they get out and see other people.

Evelyn Berry has worked at Oregon Hill for 26 years. Her husband has retired; her children are grown and in ministry themselves. Son Bill is state

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**"It was the eleven o'clock hour; I was in the pulpit; and...what I did was preach."**

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RA director for Virginia and Ellen is a children's minister in South Carolina. Her grandchildren Micah and Amber are a delight to her. Her other family—her Oregon Hill family—continues to fill her days with joys and sorrows as she works tirelessly to help develop a sense of community.

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

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### (Gleanings ... from page 7)

**Women's ordination** continues to be an issue for both Catholics and Anglicans within their own ranks. It was major topic for debate at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in November, with no clear consensus or decision reached. For the Anglicans, the Rev. Jane Dixon became the third woman to become a bishop in the worldwide Anglican communion, with her consecration at the National Cathedral in November.

Also, the Church of England voted in November to ordain women as priests, thus aligning that synod with the 12 (out of 28), such as those in the U.S., that ordain women. However, that vote in England does not allow women bishops.

**Virginia Baptists** can expect further developments with the announcement of plans to form a conservative (i.e., not moderate) statewide organization. Watch for the unfolding story. It is expected that there will continued erosion of funding for BGAV ministries and a funneling of funds to other causes.

**WMU** action to support CBF projects in addition to their traditional funding promises new controversy and a heightening of the division in the SBC. Watch for this unfolding drama. There is surely more to come. For instance, Dellanna O'Brien was recently disinvited to speak at a South Carolina event. What next?

# 'SAINTS' AND HEROES'

## Saints and Heroes: Julian of Norwich

Herewith we feature women who were forces in their own day, yet are relatively unknown outside of theological or historical circles. The traditional historian consistently dealt with politics, war and economics. Even when interpreting religious or cultural trends, history has ignored women in favor of the activities of the larger society. Men and women working in feminist theology have sought to recover the voice of women in the church, bringing to light the likes of Julian of Norwich. We know Mother Teresa of our day. And surely we know of Lottie Moon, in our own tradition, whose decisions were influenced by the feminist movement of the previous century. There are thousands more whom we will never know because the "world took little note of them." (Ed. note)

### Julian of Norwich

by Barbara Jackson

Mystic, writer, wise women and spiritual counselor to thousands, Julian of Norwich (b. 1342) was an  *anchoress* , one who chose a life of solitude and prayer, electing to live in a cell "anchored" to the church in Norwich, England, now known as St. Julian and Edward Church. A contemporary of Chaucer in the 14th century, she is the first English woman whose work survives.

When she was thirty, Julian suffered a severe illness, during which time she experienced a dramatic, mystical vision. After her recovery, she considered herself a changed person, now devoted to God and his mysteries. She became an anchoress, a recluse who renounced the world, living her days confined to her cell.

The product of her visions and mystical experiences of God were recorded as "showings" and are preserved in her book  *Revelations of Divine Love* . She became widely known during her lifetime and attracted a large following of persons seeking her wisdom and counsel.

She lived during a chaotic period of history, which included the Plague, the Hundred Years' War, a peasant revolt, and the Great Schism of Christendom. "In the midst of this despair," said Linda Loving, "she spoke incredible words of hope."

In her works we see what would be called today a feminist strain: she refers

*I understood that  
our sensuality is grounded  
in Nature, Compassion  
and in Grace.  
This enables us to receive  
gifts that lead to  
everlasting life.  
For I saw that in our sensuality  
God is.  
For God is never out of  
the soul.*

—*Revelations of Divine Love*

to both God and Christ as mother, and used mothering metaphors to express the actions of both Jesus and the Godhead.

She wrote, "The human mother will suckle her child with her own milk, but our beloved Mother, Jesus, feeds us with himself ... by means of the blessed sacrament." There is much more—hear and read the sources.

On March 2, Julian of Norwich will be portrayed in dramatic form by the Rev. Linda Loving, a Presbyterian minister in Chicago. The program is sponsored by the BSU of the University of Richmond and will be held in the Chapel at 8 p.m. The public is invited.

*Barbara Jackson is the editor of Synergy*

For additional information see:  *Meditations with Julian of Norwich* , B. Doyle, ed., Bear & Co. 1983; and  *Julian* , J. Janda, Seabury Press; "The Christian Past: Does It Hold a Future for Women?" E. McLaughlin in  *Womanspirit Rising* , Christ & Plaskow, eds., Harper & Row, 1979.

## A LITTLE HUMOR

**Church Bulletin Slips:** This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends ...

Tuesday at 4 p.m. there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk come early ...

On Thursday there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All those wishing to become little mothers, please meet the pastor in his study ...

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Smith to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

**Cartoon quip:** "A clean desk is the Devil's workshop, that's my motto."

**Overheard:** The pastor is, of course, the shepherd of his flock. The little crook on his staff is the associate.

**Said the politician:** "I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

**And more politics:** Politicians have three hats, one they wear, one they toss in the ring—and one they talk through!

**Basic economics:** "I think banks should have higher interest—they're so boring the way they are now!"

**In the garden:** Adam: Do you love really me? Eve: There's no one but you.

## Gleanings from the News

### Out From the In-Basket:

**Year of the Woman.** *Newsweek's* feature on the "Year of the Woman" (Dec. 28, 1992) included an article by Susan Faludi, author of *Backlash*. She pointed out that the phrase itself is damning in that it imposes a deadline, a containment, a sense that the struggle is over. She goes on to say: "Just because women regained their voices and their ire doesn't mean they gained ground.... The Years of Women have come and gone and come again," she says. "Maybe there will be a year when men take a stand, shoulder to shoulder, with women." She nominates a new slogan: "A Hundred, and Many More, Years for Humanity."

**The Religious Right.** Look for the religious right to revamp their campaign, in the wake of the election rebuff of rightist candidates. Look for inroads on local politics, especially school boards (to influence curriculum choices, e.g., creationism, sex education, prayer in schools, etc.). Also, look for slick public relations and sophisticated use of media. As an example, note the current television commercial for "pro-life," featuring the beautiful children who were not planned: "Life, it's a beautiful choice." The same slick PR talent will be put to other issues that divide the right and the left, the conservatives and the liberals (or moderates). Beware! Television is a powerful weapon.

**God's Work in the Military.** An editorial by Howard Fast in the *Times-Dispatch* a few weeks ago reflected on the Dec. 23 MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, which dealt with the military mission in Somalia. The television guest panel included an Episcopalian bishop, a rabbi, a Muslim, a Quaker, a nun and a Southern Baptist (Richard Land). The

## From the Chair

### Being Salt for the World

by Betty Pugh, coordinator, VBWIM

During this season of Epiphany one of the focal lectionary passages is a teaching moment in the gospel of Matthew following the sermon on the mount. Jesus tells his listeners, "You are like salt for all humankind. Therefore, do not lose your saltiness. If you do, you are as worthless as salt that has lost its saltiness."

I read this passage and see unique significance for women who see what they do as ministry. Oftentimes, women are encouraged to be more like sugar, that is, sweet, amiable, affable and compromising. It is a part of what women have done for centuries in order to hold families together, keep husbands at home, and regulate middle management in large corporations. But being like salt means something altogether different. It means a willingness to courageously add just the right zest to a filling and fulfilling life.

The analogy goes as far as you would like, for we all know when we

have eaten something with too much salt and the food is ruined. And we all know that monitoring our salt intake is important to our body's internal balance and to the systems we seek to change.

We as women are somewhere between the sweetness of sugar and the saltiness of sodium. And let's face it, we are encouraged to be more sugary. We always discover that fact when we attempt to spice life up a bit and challenge some things—at home, work, church, or just in the world.

My prayer for you is that you may have the wisdom and insight in this coming year to know that a little salt is sometimes just what is needed. And that mixed with the sweetness, compassion and love of Jesus is just the right recipe to share during this season of Epiphany, when we are called to manifest God's glory in the fullness of all its many seasonings. *Bon appetit!*

*The Reverend Betty Pugh is minister of church and family life, Grace Church, Richmond*

question: "Was the American incursion in Somalia God's work?"

Fast contrasted the responses of the four denominational spokesmen with those of the Quaker and the nun. All four men were vigorous in their certainty that they knew what was God's work and what was not. To them God's mind was open book. Fast noted, "Their channel to the Almighty was ... clear and unbroken."

In contrast, the Quaker said no good can come from violence, and that in his faith there was a long tradition of healing the sick and feeding the hungry, and that it could still be done that way. The nun said simply "that

those who serve God create, they do not destroy.... There are other ways and we have used them." Fast noted that she did not speak of knowing God's aims, only of what she knew and did.

Southern Baptists also have a long tradition of healing the sick and feeding the hungry. The significance of this story is that the new SBC leadership believes it has a clear channel to the mind of God. With the new breed of leadership in SBC mission agencies, we can expect to see more alliance with political goals and the aims of the religious right in the conduct of missions. Watch for it.

*(continued on page 5)*

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### Try Not to Shrink ... from page 3

forming an ordination committee, and the church voted unanimously to proceed.

Then came the ordination council. I was prepared to discuss soteriology, eschatology, theodicy and hermeneutics. The council simply wanted to know my views about ministry, who my role models have been, and my intentions for the future. The chairman of the ordination council gave the decision to the church that very afternoon.

The ordination service itself was awesome. We were all keenly aware of the Presence of God. The words spoken and sung touched our hearts and

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**“For me, it was a beginning and an end; a homecoming and a going-forth.”**

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applied to all of us. Dr. Julian Pentecost asked me to continue to set high standards but not to fail to be accepting and forgiving of myself when I do not attain all of them. He also gave this powerful reminder: “Whenever you lengthen the cords of responsibility, be sure to strengthen the stakes of personal devotional discipline.”

Dr. E. Glenn Hinson spoke to us with the same greatness and gentleness I remember from Southern seminary. He spoke about living a prayerful life (becoming a better listener) and doing ministry in a context of prayer without ceasing. Humorously, he reminded us how wonderful it is that God needs imperfect, vulnerable, human vessels to carry the Spirit. All of us were empowered with this image of being mediators of God’s “love energy” in the world.

Dr. McKinley invited all who wanted to (ordained or not) to participate in the laying-on of hands blessing. This was powerful because it immediately reaffirmed the priesthood of

### Ordination Procrastination ... from page 3

But I have discovered that neither God nor God’s calling of one’s life is bound by human organizations and their rules. In other words, there is more than one way to do inner-city ministry. A new door has opened for me as minister of outreach at Pine Street Church. The church is located in the inner city of Richmond and houses a Baptist center! I can be an ordained minister doing inner-city missions without the Home Mission Board’s watchful eye. Isn’t God something!!

A third reason I delayed was that I was waiting to be worthy of the title *Reverend*. I wanted my prayer life to be better. I wanted to be more knowledgeable of the Bible. I wanted to be rid of any ulterior motives I had for being ordained. But the more I tried to “be worthy” the more dissatisfied I was with my efforts and their results. It was while teaching a Sunday school lesson about God’s grace that I realized a very liberating truth. “God’s grace *is* sufficient.”

It was simple. I had heard it all my life. I had even used the phrase in ministering to others. But only then did I understand its full meaning and

believers, and it reminded me that it was the fellowship who gave me this blessing and challenge.

The choir and soloists sang (perfectly, to my memory). While the music poured over us, the sanctuary was filled with grace and agape. Other friends, co-workers and church members participated in the service and led us in prayer—including, especially, one that our beloved Dr. Oates had written for the occasion. The scripture texts, responsive readings, hymns and pastoral prayers connected and strengthened us in our walk.

For me, it was a beginning and an end; a homecoming and a going-forth.

power. I don’t have to be perfect to be used by God. In fact, God works best through our weaknesses. I thought of Moses and David; I thought of Sarah and Mary the mother of Jesus. All of these people had their doubts, fears and shortcomings, but God used them in all their frailty to do great things for the kingdom of God. I too am but a frail and unworthy servant but through grace the Lord can use even me to accomplish a divine purpose.

I have learned much these past three months, but perhaps the most important is that God does not call us into ministry and then leave us to struggle with the details alone. The Lord is always challenging, directing and opening doors for us—if we can just find the courage to move beyond where we are. A call to ministry is not something that can be nailed down to a certain date and time. It is rather a continuous process of saying yes to God.

There is so much more for me to learn about ministry and about God. Yes, Lord, teach me!

*The Reverend Jennifer Metzger Turner  
is minister of outreach,  
Pine Street Church, Richmond*

It was an end to my wondering whether or not I would shrink back. It was a coming home for myself in the family of Beale Memorial Church. It was a starting point as a public statement of my intention to remain in ministry. It was a time of re-creation for me to go on about my work with this blessing from my spiritual family—this blessing which continues to give me strength.

*The Reverend Sarah Sellers is minister of  
music at Beale Memorial Church in  
Tappahannock.*



# RESOURCES

## The Bookshelf

compiled by B. J. Seymour

**A Book of Common Power: Narratives Against the Current**, Donna Schaper, LuraMedia, 1989. Collection of essays, including "The Church: The Senile Old Woman?" "Children: The Macy's Parade," "Deep in the Double Bind: Men," and "Curves in the Road: the Spirit."

**Bread Not Stone, The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation**, Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, Beacon Press, 1984. In contrast to traditional Biblical scholarship done from a male hermeneutical perspective, the author presents here a feminist approach.

**Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse**, Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn, eds., Pilgrim Press, 1989. A collection of essays exploring the connections among violence, patriarchy and Christian theology. Offers alternative interpretations of "imitative self-sacrifice" (suffering) as a norm for Christian faithfulness.

**Confronting the Idolatry of Family: A New Vision for the Household of God**, Janet F. Fishburn, Abingdon, 1991.

The author argues that within the church, we have made the family the focal point of faith. This traditional understanding has been made an idol. The church itself should be the primary focus of faith.

**Culture Wars**, James D. Hunter, Basic Books, 1992. A good analysis of the divisiveness between liberal and conservative perspectives. The contrast is grounded in the question, "Where is your moral authority rooted?" For the culturally orthodox, it is rooted in the unchanging Bible; for the culturally progressive, the "truth" is truth-in-process, rationally discerned, an unfolding, rather than "the truth once and for all delivered to the saints."

**In Whose Image? God and Gender**, Jann Aldredge Clanton, Crossroads, 1990. The author is an ordained Baptist pastor and chaplain. This teaching book focuses on a discussion of language about God. She guides the reader through the historical development of concepts of God, images of God, and the importance of language about God.

**Just a Sister Away**, Renita J. Weems, LuraMedia, 1988. Deals with Biblical relationships between women, including Hagar and Sarah, Naomi and Ruth.

**Their Eyes Were Watching God**, Zora Neale Hurston, HarperCollins, 1990. A beautifully poetic, moving work of fiction. A woman's travel to self-discovery.

**The Women's Bible Commentary**, Carol A Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., Westminster, 1992. A collection of commentary-essays reflecting contemporary feminist interpretations of Biblical texts and the Apocrypha. Women authors comment upon each Biblical book. Several writers are women of Baptist heritage.

**Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care**, Maxine Glaz and Jeanne S. Moessner, eds., Fortress Press, 1991. Pastoral care traditionally has dealt with male paradigms. This book addresses women specifically and thus teaches men and women how to care for the particular needs of women.

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### Editorial...from page 2

professional clergy. In working out one's calling, therefore, ordination is not a necessary component. What functions, then, do ordination fill?

- The most obvious function is the stamp of approval that is given by denomination and congregation, that says: we accept you and your ministry. We affirm your calling. We share like doctrine; you are like us; we will listen to what you have to say and we will accept your leadership.

- In the historical church, ordination was (and is) an expression of

apostolic succession, that tenuous cord of faith and function that stretches back to the beginnings of the church. It is also a system of ownership and control that was devised by the early church to handle church properties and income and ensure purity of doctrine.

- Today, in our country, ordination is a test used by the state to determine who can perform marriages, and by the IRS to determine who is self-employed and who is employee.

- For women in ministry ordination functions as a recognition of humanity

and equality before God, a recognition that God calls and uses both women and men in carrying out his work. It is a symbol of professional competence and attainment. It is a validation of education. Ordination conveys a mantle, an acknowledgment of role. It is a pact between congregation and minister to work together in mutually defined goals.

Why am I not ordained? The answer is simply—it was the road not taken.

*Barbara Jackson is the editor of Synergy*

## The Parable of Ten Preachers by Thomas Troeger

reviewed by Becky Evans Glass

This past fall I had the privilege of taking a preaching course under Dr. Nora Tubbs Tisdale, assistant professor of homiletics and worship at Union Seminary (Va.), who was teaching at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. One of the first assignments given to our class was to read Thomas Troeger's book *The Parable of Ten Preachers*.

The setting for the book is a homiletics course entitled "Preachers in Search of their Voices." The ten preachers characterized in the book represent a diversity of backgrounds and traditions, much like the preaching class of which I was a part.

Troeger invites the reader to become the eleventh member of the class and to engage in the class discussions. Troeger's hope is that "through your imaginative participation in the class you will be helped in your own search to find your most effective voice as a preacher so that you can more effectively proclaim the gospel into the twenty-first century."

Listen to some of the voices from his class ... From Katherine, we learn the importance of the feminine

expression of the divine as well as the importance of furthering religious imagination. From an older member of the class, Jason, we are challenged to have a "note of hospitality" in our voice as preacher.

Using the metaphor of acid rain, Dorian White Elk, a Native American, says preaching can "give life and corrode life at the same time." He challenges fellow class members to "purify the rain, to cleanse our preaching voices from the acids of prejudice and superiority that have poisoned preaching in the past."

From Catherine Gonzalez we are challenged to "preach the gospel with a voice that's heart-deep and world-wide." These are voices that need to be heard!

The value of reading this book as well as the value of being a part of a preaching class at BTSR was "the impact of hearing so many different voices in the pulpit." What would Sunday worship be like if there were more opportunities to hear different voices in the pulpit?

I do believe, as Troeger wrote, that "searching for our voice as preachers is our way of honoring the word of God with integrity, it is our way of opening ourselves to the Spirit."

*Becky Evans Glass is campus minister for Lower Peninsula Area, Newport News*

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### Feb. 22-23

VBWIM Spring Conference in conjunction with Virginia Baptist Ministers' Discussion Group. Roslyn Conference Center, Richmond. Contact Barbara Filling, (804) 580-2751 or 758-4753.

### March 2

University of Richmond Founder's Week. Performance of Julian of Norwich's writings by Linda Loving, a Presbyterian minister in Chicago. UR Chapel, 8 p.m. Contact Chaplain's office, 289-8500.

### March 16

UR One-Day Doctrinal Study. Wilton Center. Contact Chaplain's Office, 289-8500.

### April 22-23

Women's Interseminary Conference, Union Theological Seminary, 3401 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227.

### May 13-14

Southern Baptist Women in Ministry Annual Meeting in conjunction with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Birmingham, AL. Contact SBWIM, 2800 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206, (502) 896-4425.

### June 13

SBWIM meeting in conjunction with SBC in Houston, TX.

### June 22-25

UR Pastors School. Program includes Nancy Ammerman, Will Campbell, Keith Parks. Call 289-4500.

### Nov. 9

VBWIM meeting in Richmond. Details later.