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Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry Will Host Dinner Meeting in Salem

Colonial Avenue Baptist Church in Roanoke will be host for the annual dinner meeting of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry on November 15 at 5:30 pm, to be held in conjunction with the Baptist General Association of Virginia meeting this year in Salem.

The program will feature Maurice Graham leading a discussion on Gender Differences and Development. Maurice Graham, associate pastor of Bon Air Church in Richmond, presented a workshop on this topic at the Spring Conference of VBWIM in May of this year. The discussion will provide opportunity for those in attendance to explore issues, express opinions and perhaps learn some helpful information on gender issues and ways men and women relate.

The dinner will feature a menu with a grilled chicken entree. Cost is \$10. About 15 minutes away from the Convention Center, the church is on a direct route. Deadline for reservations is November 5.

VBWIM Announce 1995 Spring Conference

March 24-25 is the date for the Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry Spring Conference. On the theme: *"In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Inheriting Our Past,"* workshop leaders and speakers will explore heroes, models and lessons from those who came before—both Biblical and historical figures.

The program will begin Friday afternoon, include dinner and evening worship, and conclude Saturday noon. Details will be announced later.

You are cordially invited to Dinner
Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry

November 15, 5:30 pm

Colonial Avenue Church, Roanoke

.....

Menu

Grilled Chicken with Baked Potato

Vegetable and Salad

Assorted Desserts

IN MY OPINION

Editorial

Bucking the System

by Barbara Jackson

If you don't believe that women are under siege in today's world, take a look at what is covered in the popular press. Women's issues are a hot topic. Nearly every day's newspaper has an article or editorial dealing with women in the military or business world or academics. Even the cartoons get in on the act. Did you see the *Frank and Ernest* cartoon strip last year in which the little kids reported that in Sunday school they learned about how Adam shifted the blame to Eve? Or the *Dennis the Menace* strip where Margaret told Dennis and Joey that girls can be anything they want, even president someday, whereby Dennis replied, that's great, girls can be what they wanna be ... except a member of our club!

Last week's paper reported women sailors going to sea to face possible combat as sailors or pilots. The male interviewee said, they have had the same training we have had; they can do anything a man can do. And every day the editorial page features someone's opinion of women's function in today's world.

A few weeks ago the *New York Times Magazine* featured interviews with would-be Citadel cadet Shannon Faulkner and Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison. Both articles were sympathetic and portrayed strong women who have faced discrimination with courage. Toni Morrison has achieved fame and respect by her accomplishments. Shannon Faulkner is too young to have achieved career goals, but in confronting legal obstruction, obscenities and sexual slurs she has achieved a maturity and firmness beyond her years—all because of her determination to buck the system. A pattern emerges. A few decades ago some of us applauded the heroes of the civil rights movement because of their efforts to buck the system.

The religious world is not exempt from the stretching required when the status quo is challenged. I call your attention to recent developments in Baptist life—the forced resignation of Molly Green from Southern Seminary being the most visible. Other heroes who come mind are pastors Nancy Sehested and Julie Pennington-Russell, who faced ostracism along with their churches because of their gender. Our sister denominations, notably the Methodists and the Episcopalians, face the same kind of struggles we do over ordination and women in pastoral and leadership roles.

These remarks bring me to the subject of the interview in this issue of *Synergy*. Jan Fuller Carruthers too was the butt of slurs and name-calling as she faced institutional oppression from the Home Mission Board in 1986 as an ordained woman minister. Jan has moved on to another life and put that unhappy period behind her. Recently she said she did not know that any good came out of

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Ex Cathedra

by Ellen Gwathmey
convener, VBWIM

Autumn, along with vivid color, crisp air and a quickened pace, always seems to hold a surprise in store for me. This year it was the pleasure of visiting with missionary friends I had not seen in 20 years. These were the people who had taken a young college graduate, treated her as an equal, taught her a new culture and walked with her a while on her journey of faith.

In their world I found a place where knowledge and experience determined who held leadership roles. As different situations arose, different leaders emerged to see the projects through to completion. Women and men ministered together, co-equally. This was my introduction into the adult working world.

In the few hours we had together, we talked practically nonstop and covered a wide range of subjects from catching up on people and places to theology to outreach strategies to diet and fashion. We found where we had grown, where we had gained in wisdom and where we needed yet to grow. It was a time of joy, of reflection, and of renewal. I have been in touch with some of my "faith" roots, and I am the richer for having revisited them. I have emerged with greater enthusiasm and awe for what God can do in our lives.

May you find time as well to reflect upon and renew your commitment to God's call.

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

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Collegueship or Man vs. Woman?

by Ronda D. Stewart-Wilcox

It seems to me that ever since Adam blamed Eve for his part in eating the apple, there has been a kind of war going on between men and women. This century especially has seen a good deal of strife between men and women.

The women's movement of the early days of this century had as one of its foremost goals obtaining the vote for women. Since then, the women's movement has moved forward and stepped backward, all the while challenging the identity and roles society has assigned to women.

Much has changed since the turn of the century. Society has a different view of women, though we still are familiar with the old stereotypes. Women are much more forthrightly involved in society than before. Women are respected for abilities and accomplishments that were once considered suitable only for men.

Yet within the women's movement, not all women agree on the exact goals and strategies for their challenge to society. Gayle Graham Yates, in her book, *What Women Want; The Ideas of the Movement* (1975), identifies three ideological strands of the movement: the feminist, the women's liberationist, and the androgynous.

- **The feminist ideology** asserts that while women are equal to men, in current society women are subordinate and secondary to men. The enemy is the socioeconomic attitudes and institutions of society. Change comes through political pressure, action, and activism. The goal is to integrate.

- **The women's liberationists** assert that women are pitted against men and/or that they are better off separate from men. The enemy is men, capitalism and the family (which imprisons women in narrowly defined roles). Their primary strategy is social conflict leading to segregation.

- **The androgynous ideology** asserts that women and men are equal to each other. The problem is a loss of legitimacy of traditional male and female roles. The enemy is cultural value orientations and

institutional structures. The strategy for change is cultural conversion leading to pluralism.

As the women's movement matured, there arose a response from a segment of American men. Though there was the negative response from men, as from women, there was another response as well. This response, known as the Men's Movement, began in the early 1970s. As with the women's movement, there are different strands of thought within this particular gender movement. Tom Williamson, author of *Men Freeing Men; Exploding the Myth of the Traditional Male* (1985), defines two of these strands.

- **Feminist men** believe that men have historically oppressed women and minorities and fully support the ideas of the women's movement. This group of men gather in order to figure out ways to end all forms of "male chauvinist" behavior in their lives and in society.

"It's not really a new idea. Jesus showed us the way."

- **Non-feminist men** believe that men and women are both to blame for the problems of society. They criticize all elements of sexism, particularly sexism against men.

In the 1990s a third strand has added a new twist to the men's movement. The **mythopoetic movement** says that much of what women have said about men and their relation to society is true, that men have dehumanized women and minorities. This group also recognizes that society (men and women) has dehumanized men. The primary issue of this movement is for men to get in touch with their feelings about their fathers, other men and patriarchy. Unlike the first two strands, this movement believes that one must become introspective in order to bring about societal change.

Collegueship. This past year I have been a part of something new, not yet a movement, for there are so few of us and there is no network of like-minded individuals. A group of us, men and women, met on a regular basis that past year to talk about a not-so-new idea. My husband, Rodney, and I have frequently used the term "gender reconciliation" to describe this idea. It is also collegueship.

In essence, we affirm the humanity and value of both genders and affirm that the Christian faith calls for both men and women to follow Jesus in bringing in the Kingdom of God. We recognize that men too have been dehumanized by stereotyping. The rigid definition of roles and expectations deny men their feelings, their relationships, and the opportunity to use talents and gifts in arenas that have been labeled female.

Our group is new. We are not yet definite in our goals, though we do know we want to help make peace between men and women in such a way that affirms each one's uniqueness and humanity.

We do not seek to make men and women all the same. We think that part of our wonderful uniqueness is being male or female.

We do not have any plans of action. I suspect that being politically active will not be what we are. We simply are beginning to talk, to share, to study, and to seek how we can make peace between men and women, how we can really listen to each other and recognize and affirm the wonderfulness of the differences in each other.

It's not really a new idea. Jesus showed us the way. Paul often tried to help his churches find the way.

The group has taken a first step. We have agreed to avoid participating in language, jokes and humor or actions that dehumanize or degrade men or women. It doesn't seem like a lot, but already I am seeing men and women in a new light. And they look much better than they did before!

These ideas, research, and work my husband and I did together are part of an as yet unpublished paper, "The Place of the Gender Movements in Christian Marriage."

*The Rev. Ronda Stewart-Wilcox
is minister of education,
May Memorial Church, Powhatan*

WOMEN IN THE NEWS

New Positions and Changes

Judy McConnell is minister of music and youth and interim administrator at Community Fellowship Church in Gate City.

Jean Thiel is minister of music at Hampton Church in Hampton.

Dianne Glenn has been named pastor of Neriah Church in Lexington.

C. Anne Davis has completed her sabbatical with Virginia Woman's Missionary Union and returned to her post as professor at Southern Baptist Seminary.

Patti Faesy has resigned as associate pastor at Ravensworth Church, Annandale, to become campus minister at Indiana State University.

Karen Stanley was named headmistress of Stony Point School, Richmond. She was formerly minister to children and families at First Church, Richmond.

Karla J. Gee is minister of youth and children at Colonial Avenue Church, Roanoke.

Melissa Fox, a recent graduate of Midwestern Seminary, is music director at First Church, Herndon.

Susan Heck is minister of music at Mill Creek Church, Fincastle.

Karen L. Jeffcoat, a student at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, is minister of youth and children at Walnut Grove Church, Mechanicsville.

Dana Frady, a graduate of Southern Seminary, is serving as interim associate at the Oregon Hill Baptist Center in Richmond.

Ginny Brown, a student at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, has been named minister of youth at Lyndale Church, Richmond.

Debora Conner Brooks is minister of music and worship at Arlington Church, Arlington

Ordinations

Wanda Jane Burton was ordained to the gospel ministry on Sept. 18, 1994, at Ginter Park Church in Richmond. She is currently seeking a ministry position in Virginia.

Karen Alcott was ordained to the gospel ministry by Craddock Church in Portsmouth.

Appointments

Mildred Bryant and husband Eugene were appointed by the Home Mission Board to South Central Los Angeles.

Susan Mason and husband Marshall were appointed by the Home Mission Board as church planters in Michigan.

Anne Teagarden and husband Grant were appointed by the Home Mission Board to serve in Arlington, Virginia.

Sharon Favazzas and husband Rick, of Woodbridge, were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, to serve in Indonesia.

Robin Martin and husband Don, of Richmond, were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to serve in England.

Lee Shaw and husband Tim, of Richmond, were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board for Botswana.

First SBC Ordained Woman is Honored

Addie Davis of Covington, Virginia, was ordained 30 years ago at Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., the first woman minister to be ordained in the Southern Baptist Convention. On August 7 this year the church celebrated the anniversary of that ground-breaking event with a service honoring her.

After a career in education, becoming dean of women at Alderson-Broaddus College in W. Va., Davis enrolled at Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and joined Watts Street Church. Upon graduation, unable to secure a pastorate in the South, she was called as pastor in Readsboro, Vermont, an American Baptist church. While Southern churches were unwilling at that time to call a woman pastor, in the North women ministers were not so uncommon. She was ordained by Watts Street.

She served eight years in Vermont and then was pastor in Rhode Island for nine years. She returned to her home town of Covington, Virginia, upon her mother's death thirteen years ago. She now serves as one of three pastors at a 100-year-old rural church attended by Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians.

In the anniversary service at Watts Street Church, Addie Davis preached a sermon based on love. Other women ministers and deacons, former pastors and colleagues shared in the service, which included communion served by Davis and a fellow woman minister.

Spokesperson for the church said those involved in the affair were unaware of its significance at the time, but only later realized "we had done something important."

From Addie Davis in 1964 to 1973 there were less than a dozen women ministers in the convention. By 1993, there were more than 1,000 ordained women ministers, of whom only 23 serve as senior ministers. The SBC has about 15 million members.

(adapted from Baptists Today, 8/8/94)

Jan Fuller Carruthers

Interviewed by Kelly M. Sisson

“Now I understand why we need women in ministry. The New Testament was written for people being oppressed, the minorities, those who had to justify their existence. Women will teach us those texts again. They will tell them like they were meant to be told, and help us hear them like they were meant to be heard.”

These were the words of Frances Fuller, missionary to Lebanon for the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, after hearing her daughter, Jan, address a sympathetic audience of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry, meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1986.

Jan Fuller Carruthers, chaplain at Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia, is now telling those stories “like they were meant to be told” to young women who are hearing them “like they were meant to be heard.”

“I love my job!” These women know I care about them. I love watching them grow up ... I am free to tell them the truth about who I am,” says Fuller-Carruthers, who is now in her seventh year at the school. “I can be whatever kind of Baptist, Christian, PERSON I can be, and I don’t have to fit anyone’s system of ‘shoulds’—what I should do, what I should think, what I should be.”

“I am free to tell them the truth about who I am.”

But back in 1985, Jan Fuller wondered if she would ever find that freedom. A chaplain to Baptist students at Yale University, she became a focus of the controversy over women’s role in denominational life, particularly the issue of ordination and qualifications for Home Mission Board appointment as chaplain. The experience was devastating, and healing was a long time coming. And yet ...

Jan’s own story is one of survival and freedom.

Jan and her four siblings were raised in the Middle East by missionary parents, Wayne and Frances Fuller. “To grow up in a culture where I was a minority—to learn to think and speak in another culture, and to love that culture, was a gift to me like no other. A part of me will never be at home in the States. I am at home and a stranger in



both places ... It is the feeling of being an alien wherever I am,” describes Fuller-Carruthers.

“My parents’ commitment and career in missions gave me an appreciation for diversity. It has definitely helped me work with students and drawn me to minority experience in a way like no other.”

Remembering what it was like to grow up in a war zone, Jan recalls memories of the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1970 Civil War. She recalls one summer of tanks parked across the street from their home and shooting all around, when her family stayed inside their home the entire time for safety reasons. “I remember playing games by candlelight. Our windows were painted blue to deflect light. We ate what we had stored in the freezer—chickens and strawberries,” she laughed. “We had strawberries every way imaginable! To this day, I don’t eat one without thinking about that summer.”

It was during her years as an undergraduate at Hollins College when Jan knew there was something special God wanted her to do. But she clearly avoided the M-word!

After completing her English degree, she returned to Lebanon and taught school. Jan

recalls what it was like to go to school in a war zone—dodging craters and driving around dead bodies along the road to and from work. Several close friends died in the fighting, and there was constant concern for safety. “When you are in a war zone, you build up thick skin, a false numbness. You are in a survival mentality, and you don’t feel much. But once you are back in safety, the feelings all come rushing.”

The next year Jan entered Yale Divinity School, and confronted the impact of culture shock. “I didn’t study at all my first semester in seminary, but I did well because of my Southern Baptist training... There were days when I would awaken for an early morning class, and I couldn’t remember what language I supposed to be speaking—Greek, Arabic, French... It was a time of rehashing a year of war and grief and decompressing stress.”

While at Yale, Jan was Baptist volunteer campus minister and associate pastor intern at Trinity Baptist Church in New Haven, Connecticut. During that time ordination was what she knew she needed to do. For her church the fact that she was a woman was no big deal. She entered the process, and both of her parents took part in the ordination service.

During her third year at Yale, the position for a full-time Baptist chaplain on the campus was approved by the Home Mission Board, and the New England Convention requested that Jan be appointed full-time missionary. Appointing Jan to the position became a test case for the Atlanta-based office on the appointment of ordained women .

Jan was back in a war zone, only this time she was the target. For more than a year, promises were made and broken, decisions were delayed or avoided altogether. Though some people were supportive, many blamed her for the controversy created around her appointment. She remembers, “A lot of people said things to me like, ‘if you hadn’t been so uppity...,’ or ‘if you had stayed in your place...’ I was even called a ‘power-hungry usurper,’ as if this was all my fault! I never wanted this controversy. I just wanted to be left alone to minister in peace.”

The original decision by the HMB board of directors declined the appointment because she was ordained, but they reversed

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(Jan Fuller Carruthers...from page 5)

their decision the next day and confirmed the appointment of Jan as chaplain to Yale University Baptist students. They also named a committee to study the board's policy.

[As a result the HMB affirmed a long-standing policy that ordination is not a requirement for missionary service, but voted not to give financial support to any woman who is pastor of a local church. Seen as a compromise, the policy permits the appointment of ordained women as missionaries and endorsement of women chaplains but prohibits the future use of HMB funds to support a woman pastor. *SBC Today*, Nov. 1986]

"I am still not sure it was a victory because of what I went through," Jan contends. "I had been bruised and beaten up. I felt like I was being abused.... I knew it was only a matter of time. I would always be abused in that system, and that is why I ultimately left.

"I knew they didn't really want me; and the longer I stayed, the more bitter I would become." In July 1987, Jan became the chaplain at Hollins College.

When asked about her healing process Jan responds, "Getting away from it helped.... Counseling was the best investment I ever made. And too, some people were healers—those who didn't tell me they knew 'just how I felt,' but gave me permission to feel and to tell my story without having to have a happy ending or moralize about it."

Jan and her husband, Keene Carruthers, are the parents of a fifteen month-old adopted son, Samuel, who was born in Lebanon. "It is significant that Samuel is a Lebanese child being raised American. He is the embodiment of my own experience brought full circle."

The story of their hopes for a child and the search for Samuel is a story of prayer and intercession and miracles. After many years of trying to conceive and the roller coaster experience of fertility treatment, they considered adoption. Jan's parents explored options for adopting a child from Lebanon. After several promising incidents, which yielded only false hopes, they learned of an abandoned baby, only a few hours old, discovered in the ruins of a bombed out house. Next came the weeks and months of dealing with Lebanese authorities. Finally, Jan's mother was

(Editorial...from page 2)

it, and did not quite understand when people said she had been an inspiration to them.

I don't agree with that assessment. On the contrary, it was such experiences that helped convince women in the religious world that they were under attack and that they had to fight back.

I was present at the 1973 Southern Baptist Convention in Oregon when a resolution was presented criticizing the women's movement as unbiblical and affirming submission as women's proper role. That was only a portent of things to come. At the 1984 convention in Kansas City a resolution gave a biblical rationale for the hierarchy of men over women: God requires submission because man was first in creation, while woman was first in the Edenic fall. That translates to read: woman is the cause and source of sin.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I took great offense. I was reared to believe

allowed to fly to Roanoke to deliver her new grandchild to the waiting parents.

The story of Jan and Keene's pilgrimage to adoption was the subject of a recent feature article in the *Roanoke Times & World-News* (9-19-94), in which Jan says, "I have no doubt that God had this child in mind for us. Samuel is a constant reminder to us that God is good, that God wants good things and helps good things happen.... God has blessed us in an incredible way. We have tasted of God's goodness and joy. I hope this feeling will never go away."

The gift of a child has focused Jan's attention toward the future and has brought a new era to her life.

Addressing her present situation Jan says, "Discussions about my denomination almost never come up ... but, if I am a Baptist, I haven't found where I fit yet.... I am an eclectic Christian. The world is too small for those labels that denote denomination. I am more interested in finding people living life with integrity—whether they are Muslims, Jews, Christians....

"The purpose of the New Testament message was to set people free from the things that chained them or held them down.... That is the kind of freedom I

that God created male and female equally, and that "all have sinned...."

For me, that SBC resolution was a defining moment. My calling and my very being were denigrated and discounted as a thing of value.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry is dedicated to the idea that women have to help themselves. While we treasure the support of men of good will who affirm our calling and help to shape a climate of acceptance, in reality, the burden is ours. Women have to prove themselves over and over again. Whatever we do we have to do it well. It is in the combined strength we share as we work together that we find the individual strength to persist.

And so, I hail Jan and Nancy and Julie and Molly and all the others who have taken the heat. Their experiences made visible for the rest of us the reality of the opposition and confirmed our resolution. We shall continue to buck the system!

Barbara Jackson is editor of SYNERGY

want. I am a better person, a better Christian, since I ceased to work for Baptists."

She has brought to closure that unhappy experience. She reminisces, "People have said to me, the fact you survived gives us such hope. But I don't see how it helped. I closed a door. It didn't fix anything."

Jan Fuller Carruthers has moved so far from that experience—from Baptist life and controversy, and is now involved in her ministry at Hollins, and with her family and the new life entrusted to them. Life is good. God is good.

The Rev. Kelly M. Sisson is pastor of Glade Baptist Church in Blacksburg.

**Every Day is a god, each day is a god,
and holiness holds forth in time.
I worship each god,
I praise each day splintered down,
and wrapped in time like a husk,
a husk of many colors spreading,
at dawn fast over the mountains split.**

—Annie Dillard, Holy The Firm.

BOOK REVIEW

The Song of Songs: A New Translation and Interpretation by Marcia Falk

Reviewed by Anne Rosser

Dr. Marcia Falk is a scholar's scholar. Writer of the commentary on the Song of Songs for the new *Harper's Bible Commentary* (1988), James Mays, ed., she has opened up and illuminated this ancient biblical text so long neglected by American Christianity.

Falk's current book on the Song of Songs, published in 1990, include her sparkling translation and interpretation of the Song with a key to the biblical text, all of her working notes, and a translator's study. Following the last chapter of the study are end notes and an extensive bibliography.

Approach. Early on, before the actual translation of the text, Falk makes two important points concerning the book's name and her approach to translation. She says in the preface, "Although Solomon's name is mentioned in the Hebrew title [and thus occurs in most English translations], this title was bestowed not by the Song's original author or authors but by later compilers, who were likely also responsible for giving the text its semblance of structural unity. In its earliest stages, the Song was probably not a unified work at all but several lyric poems, each having its own integrity." Indeed, most scholars today agree that the Song's authorship cannot be determined nor can the actual date of composition be verified. Some believe that the love lyrics that make up the song were composed by several poets over a long period of time (950-200 B.C.E.). The actual compilation was closer to 200 B.C.E.

Second, because all translations are, by necessity, interpretations, Falk has based her interpretations on linguistic investigation and literary analysis. The translator's study, which composes one-half the book, includes six chapters covering the translation process, literary structure, types of love lyrics, the *wasf*, contexts, themes, and motifs, and notes to the poems.

A word about Dr. Falk's scholarly qualifications. Falk is a gifted poet and Hebrew scholar with an affinity for Yiddish poetry. In that connection, the late, great Yiddish poet and storyteller, Isaac Bashevis Singer, highly complimented her work: "I thought until now that the Song of Songs could not be translated better than the King James Version. Marcia Falk really managed to do an exceptional poetic job. She has great power in her language." Prominent theologian Moshe Greenberg, professor of Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, writes: "A very affecting and successful set of lyrics whose effect on me more than once was to uncover new possibilities in the original

Hebrew.... Marcia Falk's combination of unslavish fidelity to the received Hebrew, her poetic understanding, and deftness at translation is ... unique. Dr. Falk has done a great thing for the Song."

The Poem. Falk has determined that the Song is made up of 31 separate lyric poems. Thus, in the key to the biblical text preceding the actual translation, each of the 31 separate poems is listed by number alongside the chapter and verses in which it occurs in our Bible.

In the past two and a half millennia, there have been at least six different interpretations of the Song: 1) an allegory of love between God and the people of Israel (a Jewish view) or an allegory of love between Christ and the church (a Christian view); 2) a drama having two main characters and a secondary chorus of voices; 3) a cycle of wedding songs; 4) a liturgy derived from an ancient fertility cult; 5) a structurally unified love poem; 6) A collection or anthology of love poems.

While the first four interpretations are no longer considered valid by modern scholars, the last two enjoy widespread credence in the scholarly community today. Falk holds to number 6, and has extensive research to establish her claim.

Falk described the types of love lyrics in the Song of Songs. By definition, a lyric is musical or songlike. Derived from the Greek *lyra* meaning "lyre", a lyric is originally a poem sung to musical accompaniment. "The relationship between poetry and song was undoubtedly a close one for the ancient Hebrews and is very likely related to the oral tradition from which the Song of Songs derives.

"Even beyond the time of its composition and compilation, the Song was orally transmitted by the Jews, who continue to this day to chant it ritually on the Sabbath of Passover. In many Jewish communities,

the Song is chanted weekly, just prior to the onset of the Sabbath.... Indeed, in Israel today, composers and musicians continue to set the Song to new melodies, reconfirming its place in Hebrew oral culture."

Falk delineates six types of lyrics that can be found in the Song:

- 1) the love monologue—a poem spoken by the speaker to and/or about a beloved, in which the beloved is the implicit audience;
- 2) the love dialogue—a conversation between two lovers;
- 3) a monologue spoken by the speaker in a love relationship to an audience outside the relationship;
- 4) a monologue spoken by an unidentifiable speaker (probably a group) to an unspecified audience, about erotic subject matter, either direct or symbolic;
- 5) a dialogue between the speaker and a group of speakers, about erotic subject matter;
- 6) the composite poem—a love monologue within which other speech, including both monologues and dialogues, is recorded.

Language. The most remarkable quality of these love lyrics is the unabashed reciprocity and mutuality revealed in the love dialogue between the man and woman. There is no trace of sexism as we know it today or patriarchalism in the verbal exchanges. The language is intimate, sensual, and clearly erotic. The ecstasy and joyful abandon so characteristic of genuine human love are celebrated in the highest and deepest sense. (cf. p. 119) The woman, like the man, is free to initiate the love play.

How refreshing to see this completely nonsexist view of romantic love in the Bible! How did this gloriously egalitarian text find its way into the Hebrew canon, otherwise so steeped in patriarchalism? Perhaps scholars someday will be able to tell us.

In chapter three, Falk pays tribute to Dr. Phyllis Trible, formerly of Richmond and now Professor of the Hebrew Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York. From her seminal work, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Falk quotes, "[In the Song of Songs] neither male nor female asserts power or possession over the other.... There is no male dominance, no female subordination, and no stereotyping of either sex." (p. 202)

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THE LAST WORD

Woman and Man

by Barbara Jackson

What does it mean to be a woman? How does movement, vibration, veil and breath speak of women? What does it mean to be a man? Or a member of mankind? A look at the etymology gives us a hint.

A **woman** is a female human being. **Woman** and **women** are compound words from the Germanic *wyfman* (wyf, female and man, human being). The Germanic *mann* means the generic human being or **mankind** or **humankind**, as well as the male human, and does so even today in German as well as English.

Although **man** as used in English has a gender-specific usage as well as the generic, the women's movement has rejected the generic usage and, in the interest of political correctness, has encouraged business and academic changes in reference to women.

It is thought by some that **man** is derived from the Indo-European *man-* (to think), which is also the source of the Polynesian *Mana*, the immanent controlling power of the universe, and the related Sanscrit word *manus*-person.

A related word in German is *Mensch*, also **mankind**, and is often used in English or Yiddish to designate admirable human qualities. An admired person, male or female, may be called a "**real mensch**." Other derivatives are **mannequin** (little man), a model of either sex, **manhandle**, to move by human force not machine, and **to man**, to supply with people of either sex.

For those who wish to be sensitive in language, it is okay to substitute **to staff** or, alternatively, you may interpret **to man** as meaning to give a hand, as in the words related to **manual**.

This group of words derive from the root for hand. In these words, such as **manual**, **manage**, **maneuver**, **manifest**, **manicure**, **manure**, **manufacture**, **emancipate**, **command** and **manuscript**, the *man-* root in this case is clearly hand. Although the IE roots are different, however, there may be a connection, in that it is a man/person who has hands!

The other *man-* words, however, have a different root. **Manor**, **mansion**, **manse**,

menagerie, **remain**, **remnant**, and **immanent** have a root meaning of stay or dwell.

And even though **mind**, **mental**, **remind**, **monument**, **muse**, **museum**, and **music** all derive from the IE *men-*, to think, they ultimately may be related to the same root that led to the Sanscrit *manus-*, a person (perhaps) who thinks.

The Latin *homo* (generic **man**) and the English cognates **human**, **humane**, **humus**, **humble**, **humility**, **exhume** all derive from the IE and Greek roots for **earth**, but also have Semitic and Egyptian cognates. This is interesting because of the allusion to the Biblical "dust to dust" notion. On the other hand, **female**, **feminine** and the French *femme* is from the root *fe-* (to give suck to), and designates physical femininity, as in **fecund**, **fetus**, **felix**, **felicitous**.

So how did we get **woman** out of *wyfman*? In Old English the pronunciation of *wyfman* was contracted and the interior consonant dropped. Thus wi(ff)-man is pronounced wimman. It was only later that different spellings emerged for the singular and the plural.

The parallel Germanic word for male human is *wer-mann*, now obsolete. The root *wer-* survives today in **were-wolf**, **virile** and **virtue**.

Originally, **wife** as derived from Germanic sources denoted all females, and only later came to stand for the female married partner. Similarly, in modern German, the word for husband is *Mann*, while wife is *Weib*.

We need to go back a little farther, however, to get at the fundamental sense. How does *wyf* mean female? The root Indo-European word is *uib-*, meaning (verb) to vibrate or tremble or wave, and also (noun) the veiled one. We may visualize that the veil moves in the wind or from the breath behind the veil.

Some related words that stem from the same root are **vibrant** (alive), **vibrato**, (the musical tremolo), **viper**, **whip**, **to wipe** (denotes the back and forth motion), **to waive** (set aside), and **waif** (an abandoned child or animal), **to wave**, and **wave** (billow). You see what all the words have in common: movement and life—I find that singularly appropriate for the word meaning woman.

The English word **veil** itself comes from a different root, meaning drapery, ulti-

mately from *weg-*, to weave, activity historically identified with women. Also from veil, **reveal** and **revelation** refer to uncovering.

Perhaps in ancient times, the "veiled one" denoted women because they wore veils as part of the costume. A more basic idea, however, is the opposite, that women wore veils as a visible symbol of womanhood. The hat as a part of a modern fashion ensemble has its roots in the veil, and throughout history is seen in the wimple, the sunbonnet, the cloche, and so on.

In some cultures even today, the woman is veiled as an act of modesty, a public indication that the feminine allures thus hidden are reserved for the husband or the lover.

The veil can also be a symbol of female repression in those cultures where women are required to be veiled.

In biblical usage, the veil is variously employed. Leah wore the veil to trick Jacob into marrying her instead of Rachel. Moses wore the veil after receiving the law to conceal his glow from the people and alleviate their fear. The covering over the door to the Holy of Holies was called a veil. The veil to the temple was torn at Jesus' death thus exposing the Holy of Holies.

A recent television presentation, "Lakota Woman: the Siege of Wounded Knee," depicted a group of modern-day Native American men and women, who attempted to recapture their culture and learn the old ways from the elders. One scene showed the passing of the pipe and blowing the smoke into each face so the participants could partake of God's spirit.

No doubt the use of incense in the religious rituals of many faiths has much the same purpose. Native American culture sets forth the idea of the interconnectedness of all people, an idea so aptly demonstrated in this instance.

Watching the Native Americans on television, I was struck by the similarity to the idea of *ruach*, God's empowering spirit. The Hebrew *ruach* is the breath of God, the life-force, the spirit that animates and gives power. Think of woman, the mother of all living, as vibrating with life, with the essence of God's breath.

Sources: *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (1985, Claiborne, *The Roots of English*).

Barbara Jackson is the editor of SYNERGY

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

FULL PARTNERSHIP

[A report on one of the workshops at the Spring Conference, on the theme "Full Partnership," held at Ginter Park Church in May. Another report will follow in the next newsletter.]

Liturgy and Language

by Wanda Sauley Fennel

The workshop on Liturgy and Language in Worship at VBWIM's spring conference was an interesting one, at least for the leader. Participants included women and men, ordained and not ordained, young and old, students and graduates, all of whom represented a broad continuum of thought and practice on the issue of language.

For those who missed this workshop, here is a sample of ideas expressed during the too-brief time of discussion:

- From an educational point of view, we need to say what we mean in worship. Young ears who hear things literally are listening. If we mean "men," then let's say "men." But if we mean "men, women, and children," let's say *that*.
- Inclusive language takes into account more than the female/male issue. It recognizes that we are different ages and colors as well and with different capabilities.
- Hymn singing is where the water hits the wheel. You can preach inclusively, teach inclusively, pray inclusively, and rework the language of the Bible as you read it aloud. But when you tamper with the words of someone's favorite hymn, the battle will be joined.
- Grace Church in Richmond has hit upon a way of inviting persons to alter language that has found favor even with those who stand on tradition. We invite a personal response. We say, "If it facilitates your worship of God, you are invited to substitute 'all' for 'men' in stanza 2."
- People are more resistant to changing language about God than they are to changing language about people.
- Change does occur, if slowly. Don't give up.

The Rev. Wanda Sauley Fennel is minister of music at Grace Church, Richmond

Inclusive Language in Hymns

Bread For the Journey: Resources For Worship by Ruth Duck. Pilgrim, 1981. Good model for making the exclusive more inclusive. Permission granted for use in worship.

Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship, by Duck and Tirabassi, ed. Pilgrim, 1989. Texts for familiar tunes are supplied. Permission to print for worship is granted.

Inclusive Language in the Church, by Nancy Hardesty. John Knox Press, 1987. Study guide. Useful for group discussion of language issues. Bibliography included.

A Singing Faith, by Jane Parker Huber. Westminster, 1987. Texts to familiar hymn tunes. Includes permission to print in a worship bulletin for one-time use.

WomanWord: A Feminist Lectionary and Psalter: Women of the New Testament, by Miriam Therese Winter. Crossroad, 1990. Songs and psalms. Permission is granted for one-time use. Wonderful resource for personal devotion or small group study.

Faith Looking Forward (1983); **Praising A Mystery** (1986); **Bring Many Names** (1989), by Brian Wren. Hope Publishing.

What Language Shall I Borrow? God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology, by Brian Wren. Crossroad, 1990.

Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs. Presbyterian Hymnal. Westminster/John Knox, 1990. Many familiar hymns have been made more inclusive, and there are many fine new hymns. An ecumenical edition is available.

The United Methodist Hymnal. United Methodist Publishing House, 1989. Some changes in familiar texts, plus fine new hymns. Notable is a small body of hymns which focus on women in the Bible and church.

Christian Copyright Licensing Inc, 6130 NE. 78th Ct., suite C-11, Portland, Oregon 97218-2853. Tel. 503/257-2230 or 800/234-2446. Offers a blanket license to reprint songs and hymns from over 600 publishers. Fee based on size of church. License covers bulletins, song sheets, tapes, and overhead transparencies.

Resources selected by Wanda Sauley Fennel

(Rosser...from page 7)

Falk also pays tribute to an English Baptist Old Testament scholar, the late H.H. Rowley of Oxford, whose long history of interpretation of the Song of Songs served as a guide to 20th century understanding of the text.

Falk's exegesis of the ancient Hebrew text has produced some fascinating insights. In poem 4 of the Song (1: 9-11 in our Bible), "the woman's lover compares her to a mare in Pharaoh's chariotry—a puzzling image, for only stallions, never mares, drew chariots. But the Egyptians' enemies set mares loose in war to drive the Pharaoh's stallions wild—the meaning of the metaphor. The woman is *not* simply a beautiful creature; she is as alluring as 'a mare among stallions.' Seen this way, the image is striking and perhaps even daunting, for the beloved possesses a captivating power over her admirer. Yet his response is not to withdraw but to draw nearer; wanting to share love, he offers to adorn his beloved with his own gifts." Here is Falk's poetic translation of the passage from poem 4:

*Like a mare among stallions,
You lure; I am held—
Your cheeks framed with braids
Your neck traced with shells
I'll adorn you with gold
And with silver bells.*

Conclusion. Pastors might seriously consider using some of the Song's exquisitely beautiful poetry in their wedding liturgy. The ancient Hebrews had it right: we human beings are whole persons of body, mind, spirit—not divided as in Greek dualism. Western culture is the offspring of ancient Greek philosophy in that we tend to separate mind and spirit from the body—a cultural and spiritual heresy. I urge pastors and teachers to reclaim their biblical heritage of Hebraic wholeness of body, mind, spirit. The life and ministry of Jesus exuded wholeness and maturity.

Most traditional Christian wedding liturgies and masses tend to be Gnostic in their wording and meaning. That is, the spiritual aspect of marriage is separated from, and implied to be superior to, the physical aspect. The Gnostics taught that though the spirit is good, for it is of God, the body is evil and should be separated

from the spirit.

If you read the beautiful words about *agape* love from I Corinthians 13 when you officiate at weddings, by all means read a passage from the Song of Songs as well!

A word from personal experience. This reviewer is occasionally asked to officiate at wedding and funerals. In the past two months, I have had three weddings. In each of the premarital counseling sessions, we discussed in depth the meaning of marriage and its primary intent to bless rather than to control and hurt. Each marriage partner commented how meaningful the liturgy was, especially the scripture reading from the Song of Songs. We chose poem 9 (2: 8-13 in our Bible). The New Testament reading used was I Corinthians 13: 4-7.

Dr. Anne Rosser is retired and formerly was associate pastor of Hampton Church in Hampton.

Poem 9

*The sound of my lover
coming from the hills
quickly, like a deer
upon the mountains*

*Now at my windows
walking by the walls,
here at the lattices
he calls.*

*"Come with me, my love,
come away.*

*For the long wet months are past,
the rains have fed the earth
and left it bright with blossoms.
Birds wing in the low sky,
dove and songbird singing
in the open air above.*

*Earth nourishing tree and vine,
green fig and tender grape,
green and tender fragrance.*

*"Come with me, my love
Come away."*

**VBWIM are Urged to
Nominate a Woman**
by Wanda Sauley Fennell

Have you ever nominated someone to serve on a committee of the BGAV or on a Board of Trustees of a related institution or agency? I have, and they were asked to serve. The Committee on Boards and Committees takes the nominations seriously, and those nominated are frequently called upon to serve.

Which brings me to my point: one reason there are so few women serving on these boards and committees is that few are nominated. Here is an area where we can improve the female/male balance. This will not be accomplished, however, without some work on our part.

We suggest you secure a copy of the Nominee Recommendation Sheet which will be published in the *Religious Herald*. Study the form and consider who you might nominate, then contact these persons and ask if they are willing to serve. A member of the Committee on Boards and Committees recently remarked that a frustrating part of that committee's work is receiving nominations for people who are unwilling or unable to serve. We can eliminate that by contacting potential nominees beforehand.

When you ask someone if they might be available, remember to communicate to them that these are working committees that actually have meetings, usually in Richmond. The term of service will be several years, depending on the committee or board. Sometimes there is reimbursement of travel expense, but not always.

Keep in mind that the Committee on Boards and Committees has to strike a balance between lay and clergy representation, so think of women in both categories from all sections of Virginia. Think of those in your own church as well as those you know around the state, and don't forget to consider all age groupings. Don't forget yourself, either. If you have interest in a particular agency or committee, let someone know!

Nominations are usually solicited in the *Religious Herald* in the spring, but we want to send ours by January. We all are busy at this time of year, but this is an important matter. Please take advantage of a wonderful opportunity to move toward Full Partnership (I believe we had a conference on that topic) in BGAV ministries.

Nominee Recommendation Sheet

Committee on Boards and Committees

To all Virginia Baptists

Virginia Baptists have entrusted the Committee on Boards and Committees with the task of nominating persons to serve on committees of the Baptist General Association of Virginia and on Boards of Trustees of related institutions and agencies. In order to fulfill this task, names of Baptists throughout Virginia are needed. We request your help to find qualified persons

who are willing to serve. Below is a form for recommendation. Please give as much information as possible. Every recommendation will be given careful consideration. Submit separate forms for each recommendation. Additional forms are available from Dr. Reginald M. McDonough, P.O. Box 8568, Richmond Va 23226. You may copy this form. Thank you for your help.

Committee on Boards and Committees

April 1 Is the Deadline for Recommendations

I recommend the Following Person:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Approximate Age: _____ Layperson () Minister: ()

Occupation: _____

Holds Church Membership In: _____

Church Address: _____

Association: _____

Major Activities in Church or District Association: _____

Prior service on Boards and committees of General Association: _____

What are your specific reasons for recommending this person (i.e., their interest, expertise): _____

Check the board, or standing committee, on which you believe this person could best serve.
Check no more than two.

Boards of Trustees

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Averett College
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Baptist General Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Baptist Ministers' Relief Fund
<input type="checkbox"/> Bluefield College
<input type="checkbox"/> Chaplain Service of Churches of Va.
<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Home of Virginia Baptists, Ettrick
<input type="checkbox"/> Fork Union Military Academy | <input type="checkbox"/> Hargrove Military Academy
<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Hill Academy
<input type="checkbox"/> The <i>Religious Herald</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Baptist Foundation
<input type="checkbox"/> Associated Baptist Press
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Baptist Children's Home and Family Services, Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Baptist Extension Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Interment College
<input type="checkbox"/> Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (no nominees this year)
<input type="checkbox"/> Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs |
|--|--|---|

Standing Committees

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Liberty
<input type="checkbox"/> Churches in Uran Center
<input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions | <input type="checkbox"/> Town and country Churches
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget
<input type="checkbox"/> Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Life
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial
<input type="checkbox"/> Church-Minister Relations |
|--|---|--|

Mail this sheet to:
Catherine Johnson
1200 Peachtree Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23226

Signed: _____
 (Name of person making this recommendation)
Address: _____
City, State, Zip" _____
Telephone: _____

CALENDAR

Through December

"Daughters of Destiny" exhibit on the contributions of women to Virginia Baptist life. The Virginia Baptist Historical Society, UR, M-F, 9-12, 2-4. Visitors welcome. For guided tour, groups should make an appointment. (804) 289-8434.

November

Nov. 3-4

"Finding Meaning in Professional Life. Parker J. Palmer, Ph.D., writer and teacher in areas of community building, spirituality and social change. Address: "Self and Community: Reclaiming the Vital Balance." Thursday p.m. \$15. All-day workshop: "Leading from Within: the Spiritual Grounds of Good Leadership." Friday, includes lunch. \$50. Both sessions at River Road Baptist, Richmond. Reservations by Sept. 1. Women's Resource Center, UR. (804) 289-8020.

November 15

VBWIM Dinner at Colonial Avenue Church, Salem, 5:30. Discussion on Gender Differences.

1995

January

January 23-25

Sprunt Lectures on "Reform and Renewal," at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. Speaker is Jane Dempsey Douglass, professor and church historian at Princeton Theological Seminary. Also, address by Union professor of church history Rebecca Weaver. (804) 278-4226 or 1-800-229-2990.

February

February 16-17

"Spirituality and Wholeness: A Retreat for Women." Led by Marjory A. Bankson, author and spiritual retreat leader from Falls Church, Va. Co-sponsored with Presbyterian School of Christian Education. From 4 pm Thur. to 5 pm Fri. Donation: \$79. Richmond Hill, 2209 East Grace, Richmond. (804) 783-7903.

February 27-28

Ministers' Discussion Group featuring Dr. Walter Shurden. Roslyn Conference Center. Reservation details

later. Also, Feb. 26-27, 1996, Dr. Mahan Siler will be the speaker.

March

March 3-5.

Alliance of Baptists 1995 Convocation. Vienna.

March 24-25

VBWIM Spring Conference, on the theme, "In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Inheriting Our Past." Place to be announced.

March 31-April 1.

Virginia Baptist Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting. Manassas.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry

4200 Dover Road
Richmond, VA 23221

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Our God is Like An Eagle

If God is like an eagle who helps
her young be free,
And God is also father, then what
of you and me?
We have no fear of labels; we
have no fear of roles,
If God's own being blends them,
we seek the selfsame goal.
Our God is not a woman; our God
is not a man.
Our God is both and neither; our
God is I who am.
From all the roles that bind us,
our God has set us free
What freedom does God give us?
The freedom just to be.

—*Laurence G. Bernier, hymn text.*
quoted in *The Divine Feminine* by
Virginia Ramey Mollencott