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### VBWIM Winter Workshop was a Winner!

What do soil and water, thyme and basil have to do with women's history? Inquiring women wanted to know! Women from around the state met on a snowy day in February at River Road Church in Richmond to ponder the topic "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Inheriting Our Past."

Keynote speaker Judy Bailey, campus minister at University of Richmond, interpreted the theme by emphasizing the importance of acknowledging those who came before and the equal importance of carrying the torch in our own time. [A synopsis of her speech is printed in this issue.] Fred Anderson, director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society and a friend and supporter of women in ministry, told stories of unsung heroines—Virginia women of earlier days who made significant contributions to Baptist life. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's revolutionary ideas about women's role in society were recreated by Betty Jean Seymour, professor of religious studies at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, in a dramatic monologue.

The group shared in a creative worship experience led by June Hardy Dorsey, director of St. Thomas Day School in Richmond. Using the garden motif, Dorsey wove the actions of planting, fertilizing, watering, and sharing with one another with appropriate scriptures, music and meditation.

A conference on the same topic planned for last year was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. Those persons who waited a year for the celebration had cause to rejoice—in the camaraderie, the warmth of friendships and the high interest in the subject. Though a number of people were unable to make the trip because of the snow, those who came were glad they did.

### Baptist Women in Ministry will meet in Richmond in June

The annual meeting of Baptist Women in Ministry will meet at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Richmond on Thursday, June 27, at 10 a.m. The national women's group is holding its annual meeting in conjunction with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly, scheduled for June 27 – 29, 1996.

The BWIM program includes worship, a business session and lunch. Virginia women are urged to join the many women ministers from states across the country who will be present for this gathering. Details on the program and information on dinner reservations will be announced at a later date.

Although the host hotel Richmond Marriott is already fully booked, there are a number of other hotels in the downtown area and surroundings. CBF is coordinating hotel reservations through *Connections* at 800-262-9974. If individuals need help in finding housing, the Richmond members of VBWIM steering committee would be pleased to offer assistance in securing places in private homes. Please call Ellen Gwathmey at (804 288-1131) or one of the other committee members.

### Synergy Back on Track

After an absence of about a year, the Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry newsletter is back in business. Because of some personal commitments of the editor the newsletter was put on hold for a period of time. With the resumption of publication come some changes in the scope of distribution and financing. [See story on page 5]

# IN MY OPINION

## Ex Cathedra

### Easter Is Not Far Off

by Ellen Temple Gwathmey

Beneath the ice of frozen rivers, waters run ...  
    onrushing, turbulent, silent.  
Beneath the shroud of snow, tubers stir and seeds  
    burst ... unseen, unheard.  
Above the dull blanket of clouds, light pours  
    forth ...  
only the soaring eagle feels its warmth, sees its  
    splendor.

This winter has been long and hard, O Lord ...  
The cold, gray days have followed one another  
    with dreary monotony;  
the warm and abundant life of nature seems some  
    vague and distant dream.  
Such are the days when we cannot feel your love,  
    O God.  
There seems to be no future for us;  
and hearts seem as cold as the frozen river  
and our voices of praise as silent as the barren trees.

For three dark futureless days  
they huddled together behind locked doors.  
Having abandoned him, they were trapped in the  
    city, themselves abandoned ...  
full of fear, shame, grief, self-hatred and despair.

That evening Christ came to them,  
breathing peace into their hearts and gently  
    mocking their lack of faith.  
In the stillness and radiance of that presence, in  
    that roar of silence and light,  
    the ice cracked  
and the waters of mercy and love flowed ...  
infinite, abundant, unstoppable ... into the sea of  
    history.

Let us cast all at the feet  
Of him whose love aches for us,  
    He who hovers over us in longing,  
    He who waits for our turning  
That he may seize us in His arms  
And take to His own heart  
    The pain and brokenness of our lives.

Abide with us, O Lord.  
Sojourn with us as we journey with you to  
    Jerusalem.  
We shall make our ascent with you to the Holy  
    City.  
This time we shall be with you and you with us  
When together we climb Calvary and plant our  
    cross.  
This time we know that on the other side lies the  
    eternal ocean,  
And on its shore stand Miriam, timbrel raised  
    above her head.

The darkest days of Lent are just ahead.  
Easter is not far off. The darkest days of Lent lie  
    before us.  
We come to the cross and mourn  
    the death of Jesus;  
we come in sorrow and joy, for  
    Easter is not far off.

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

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**Editorial Board:** Rhonda Biller, Ginny Brown, Ellen Gwathmey, chair, June Hardy Dorsey, Holly J. Irvin, treasurer, Barbara Jackson, editor, B.J. Seymour, Ronda Stewart-Wilcox, Patti Sunday-Winters, Alana Woolley. ©1996

## Thematic address

### “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Claiming Our Past”

by Judith B. Bailey

Last Spring, as I was reading about the cult of domesticity and the assignment of women to private lives at home while men assumed the public roles of work and politics, I wrote these words: “My entire life has been a debate between public and private.” I was influenced to be private by my mother, who after marriage did not work outside her home. But, my mother’s only sister was an unmarried teacher whose life as a professional woman was more public. These two models have influenced me to try to fulfill the roles of wife, mother and professional woman, always negotiating my way, always debating how I can do all that I want to do.

The two “mothers” in my life gave me the rich soil of stability, love and encouragement in which to grow, yet my growth was limited by the culture in which I live. And even though I have benefited tremendously from the women’s movement of the ’60s and ’70s, I was so shaped by the time I was in college that it has taken years to reach a clear professional self-identity and to pursue what Alice Walker describes, in her essay *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*, as “that which my soul must have.”

As I have struggled with my own identity as a minister in a male-dominated church, I have searched for role models from the past, for historical clues for understanding—in short, for what is termed “a usable past.”

In my studies I have made exciting discoveries about the 19th century female itinerant preachers who facilitated the conversions of thousands of individuals during the Second Great Awakening. In revival and evangelical church services women were on an equal footing with men. Yet these women were ignored in church histories and excluded from leadership and ordination in the new denominations.

Catherine Brekus of the Chicago Divinity School has identified over 100 women who were preaching in evangelical circles between 1740 and 1845. Both black and white women formed a significant part of an evangelical culture that sanctioned women’s religious leadership. (*Let Your Women Keep Silence in the Churches: Female Preaching and Evangelical Religion in America, 1740 – 1845*, p. 7)

During the first four decades of the nineteenth century, they preached to thousands. They were not religious radicals who stood on the fringes of 19th century religious culture, but they were supported by many of the most influential clergymen in their denominations. They became famous for their success at saving sinners and establishing new churches. Yet they were written out of their denominational histories in the late 1830s and 1840s.

In a time of expansion, a time of celebrating individual freedom and heartfelt religion as opposed to “head” religion, women were



Judy Bailey and Fred Anderson

accepted as exhorters and preachers, and literally helped create and ensure the establishment of denominational churches. They were needed as “labourers” in the field. Yet as the denominations became more established, more socially acceptable, they closed the doors on the women who had helped make their existence possible.

The life of Nancy Towle (1796 – 1875) is a case study demonstrating the ambivalent effect of American Evangelical Christianity upon women. When she was twelve years old in 1808, she said, “a revival of religion commenced in my native town, for the first time; and my mother and elder sister became the happy subjects of God’s converting grace.” This began a time of reflection and secret prayer for her, but she did not obtain “a knowledge of salvation through the remission of my sins” until she was 22 years old. At that time, in a service conducted at the Inn at Northampton, New Hampshire, “during the admonitory address of a Clarissa H. Danforth, preaching on Romans 1:16 (I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ), that light, life and joy sprang up, as mine, alone to share and as mine, for ever more.” (*Vicissitudes Illustrated in the Experience of Nancy Towle, in Europe and America*, p. 8)

She was very happy and zealous, and dreamed that she would one day “become religious and bear testimony to the work of God’s grace over the earth. But these things,” she writes, “I studiously kept, and pondered within my own bosom.” (p. 9) The sense of call did not go away, though she felt inadequate to such an important undertaking. She describes a longing to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” but she could not disclose her secret to anyone. Seized with self-doubt and fear, she searched the Scriptures and found support for female prophecy and preaching. After a period of about two years she eventually became resolved that she had no choice but to preach the Gospel.

She moved forty miles from home, took a teaching position in a school and attended meetings of Freewill Baptists where she was

(Please turn to page 4)

# 'SAINTS' AND HEROES'

(Judy Bailey ... from page 5)

supported and encouraged by other Freewill Baptist women who were preaching, Almira Bullock, Hannah Fogg, Judith Prescott, and Mrs. Quimby. Her first sermon, in Stratham, New Hampshire, was a failure, but she was so convinced that God had chosen her that she continued to preach, eventually becoming quite eloquent.

She traveled thousands of miles in the Untied States, England and Ireland. She preached in many different communities of faith: Freewill Baptists, Christian churches, Methodists, Friends meeting houses, town halls, school houses, jails, on the street, in the fields—wherever there was gathering of people to hear the gospel.

Throughout the 12 years that she was an itinerant evangelist she had to contend with people who believed that females should not preach. Some would confront her directly, most would just not let her preach in their building. She struggled with them, but determined to keep on, depending upon her sense of authority from God to preach. She did have her defenders, one layman who told a minister who had rebuked her that “You could not hold candle to that woman; you never preached such a sermon yourself as she did, nor you never will.”

When she was thirty-six years old Nancy Towle published her memoirs. Her opportunities to preach were decreasing, though she felt “more fit for my Master’s work than ever before.” She recognized the “growing evil of excluding female gifts” from the church of God, which she saw as “one principal means of immense loss to the Church of the Lord Jesus throughout.” Her stated aim in publishing her life’s experiences was to encourage those women who would succeed her in the Lord’s vineyard.

After having her book printed in 1832, she tried to establish a magazine entitled *The Female Religious Advocate*, but it didn’t succeed. We have no other record of a public life for her. She came home to Hampton, New Hampshire, and moved in with her widowed sister-in-law, where she lived to be 80 years old.

The window of opportunity opened and closed, for Nancy Towle and other women. But these women preachers were intentional about writing and publishing as much as possible. Many wrote in religious magazines of the period. They kept journals.

## Unsung Heroines—Past and Present

At the February conference of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, Fred Anderson presented stories of Virginia women who accomplished much for Kingdom work in Virginia but whose stories are not often told. Among the many whose lives he recounted, several stand out.

He told of **Mary Dabbs Jeter**, pastor’s wife, teacher of young people, leader in community and church causes. Her husband was pastor of Grace Street Baptist Church in Richmond during the Civil War years. As president of the Ladies’ Aid Society she led its members in active mission service and in support of a Chinese Bible woman. She served on the boards of the home for unwed mothers and of the Baptist Home for Aged Women and aided the work of the Foreign Mission Board in fund-raising through Mite Boxes and by encouraging women in missionary support. She was truly an outstanding woman in Baptist life. Significantly, when J. B. Jeter and A. E. Dickenson bought the *Religious Herald*, she became a silent partner, active in the day-to-day operation of the paper as editorial adviser. She was also editor of and contributor to two sections, the Home Circle and the Children’s Department.

**Nannie Helen Burroughs** was born in Orange County in the late 1800s and grew up in Washington, D.C., where she sought a teaching position but was turned down because of her race. Becoming active in Baptist life, she was invited to speak at the 1905 Baptist World Alliance in London. She was lauded by the London papers as sensational. That event set the stage for her work as public speaker on behalf of missions and education. She became corresponding secretary of the woman’s organization of the National Baptist Convention and led in that post for 40 years. She founded a training school for women and girls and edited *The Worker*, a training magazine used in churches. Her public speaking at both white and Negro gatherings were powerful demonstrations of her gifts and commitment to the church.

Fred Anderson regaled his listeners with story after story of notable Virginia women who served in both great and small ways, with hospitality, fund-raising, teaching, leadership—and even church planting. The two women mentioned here are but a sampling of the many stories that could be told.

(For further reading on the contributions of women to Virginia Baptist life, see *DAUGHTERS OF DESTINY*, a booklet published by Virginia Baptist Historical Society in 1994. Order from the society at P.O. Box 34, University of Richmond VA 23173.

They wanted to be remembered; and they wanted to help smooth the way for future women.

My life is enriched by getting to know Nancy Towle, and other women who asked some of the same questions I ask, who struggle with the same theological arguments and gendered institutions. It is good to know them, to be in awe of the depth of their spirituality, the strength of their commitment, and their willingness to endure incredible hardship because they loved the Lord Jesus and wanted to share God’s saving grace. They cared about us and the ongoing struggle.

There are obvious differences between their time and ours, and women have made

considerable progress. However, the importance of institutional structures cannot be overemphasized. With few exceptions, they were refused ordination and a pastoral role. They had nowhere to go professionally, even after they had secured thousands of converts for the new denominations.

In order to cultivate the heritage they have left us, it seems to me that Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry must continue to encourage and support the ordination of women, continue to publish what we are doing in *SYNERGY*, and continue to meet others in a community of support and professional identity.

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

## VBWIM Expands Synergy Coverage

by Barbara Jackson, SYNERGY editor

We hope you like SYNERGY. We think it ought to go to more people—to spread information about what women ministers are doing and thinking, to promote various events, and to help raise the level of understanding about gender issues. And we think it is downright interesting. For these reasons and more, plans are in the works to send SYNERGY to an identified audience of friends and supporters.

When we began Synergy in the Fall of 1991, the thinking was that it would be a piece for members, a benefit of membership that would encourage people to sign on, pay yearly membership dues and help us keep up with each other. Well, the fact is that membership enrollment has always been too low to accomplish that goal. Paid membership each year has always been fewer than fifty persons, men and women. And interestingly enough, the names of those persons vary from year to year, depending on which workshop or dinner a person attends. If everybody who has ever attended an event maintained membership each year, we could boast over two hundred out of a total mailing list of over six hundred persons identified as a woman in ministry or supporter. Obviously we need to do a better job of member relations.

We would like for SYNERGY to go to all six hundred. But only if it is wanted. Rethinking the purpose of the publication leads to an expansion of its scope and an experiment in distribution. We propose to offer SYNERGY to our mailing list at no cost for this year—and maybe thereafter, if this works. The hitch is that each person must let us know if he or she wishes to continue to receive it after this first free issue. We include a response form in this issue so that you may let us know if you desire to continue receiving SYNERGY.

Included on the form is a place to sign on as a member. But it is not necessary to do so in order to receive the newsletter.

**We do want you as a member, however.** We believe the organization has something to offer Baptist women who perceive what they do as ministry, whether professional

## Women's Leadership Symposium

by Lisa Allison

What happens when fifty women gather for the weekend on a mountain top in early Fall? What happened was a Women's Leadership Symposium, a conference designed to empower women as leaders in their home, church, business and community. In September 1995 at Camp Little Cross Roads, women from several states came together to feel, intellectualize and experience various aspects of the quality of women's leadership. Sponsors of the event were Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia, Center for Creative Leadership of the Virginia Baptist General Board, and the Center for Women, all based in Richmond. Such issues as community building, spirituality, woman's ways of leading and personal vision were addressed both in large and small groups.

Large groups were led with expertise and sensitivity by Anne Davis, former dean of the School of Social Work at Southern Seminary, Elianah Jordan, spiritual director at Richmond Hill Retreat Center, Roberta Damon, pastoral counselor at Richmond's First Baptist, and Bob Dale of the Virginia Baptist General Board. Not one of us will forget Roberta Damon's emotionally wrenching story of personal pilgrimage or Anne Davis' discussion of community

or lay. We believe you have something to offer in keeping the issues of women in ministry before the public and helping to shape public opinion.

Let us hear from you. The next issue of SYNERGY will be this summer, with an expectation of publishing three a year. The count for the summer issue will depend on how many people we hear from.

So much for SYNERGY. Let me make a pitch for membership. We propose to make a paid membership worthwhile as well:

- New members will receive a copy of our latest bibliography of books on women's studies. This one is on women in religious history. [See page 11 in this issue for a description.]

building as core values around which diversity circulates. We will remember Elianah Jordan's definition of spirituality being interconnectedness with God, self, others and creation. Bob Dale introduced us to the paradigm shift of leadership from domineering authoritarians to intuitive orchestrators.

Small groups met in order to process the information and evaluate the impact of leadership skills in the woman's spheres of influence. Four small group facilitators, Judy Bailey, Charlyne Meinhard, Cheryl Arflin, Kay Congdon, exercised exceptional leadership qualities in directing the group discussions. In the small groups women discussed but more importantly experienced community building, deep spirituality, women's leadership, and personal vision.

What happens when fifty women gather for the weekend on a mountain top in early Fall? It is still happening. The four groups continue to meet during this academic year. Their goal is to create teaching modules on women's leadership for use in the church, business, home and community. They will formulate action plans to result in audience-specific delivery systems, a resource for women interested in visionary Christian leadership.

What happens when ...? Anything can happen and let's pray that it will.

*Lisa Allison is director of the Center for Women, Inc.*

- Members will receive a discount on the cost of attending the VBWIM dinner at the BGAV and conferences or workshops during the year of membership.

- Members are invited to attend the planning sessions of the VBWIM steering committee and to participate in decisions and assignments for the various events. We want to expand involvement to a wider group of interested people.

- Members will receive a printout of the mailing list so that they may be in touch with those in a particular geographical area for networking and fellowship.

In summary, we want you for a member. But even if not, we want to keep in touch through SYNERGY. —BJ

## Calvinism and the American Mythos: A Faulty Vision. Part II

by Molly Marshall

[Molly Marshall delivered a series of lectures on Calvinism at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in April, 1995. Molly Marshall, who is now professor of theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, was formerly on the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where she was asked to resign because of conflict with president Al Mohler and her views on the school's Abstract of Principles.

Calvinism emphasizes God's sovereignty and predestination. At issue is the extent to which Southern Baptist theological heritage includes Calvinist ideas.

The following article, excerpted from her second lecture, was slated for publication in SYNERGY last year and was postponed. Although the occasion is past the subject continues to be timely and a matter for considerable debate in Southern Baptist circles.]

There have always been diverse attitudes toward Calvinism. It has sparked more than one war and has defined disputations, thus contributing further to the fractiousness of fellow Christians. Perhaps no one exalted this system higher than Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He claimed that it did not spring from Calvin, but from "the greater founder of all truth ... Jesus Christ himself." Jesus has been saddled with many things; surely this must be the most onerous!

The first two generations of Southern Baptists received nurture and zeal from a theological system they called *the doctrines of grace*, [an era lauded by those who encourage a resurgent Calvinism.] "... This understanding of God's infinite majesty and the pure gratuity of his saving activity defined Baptist faith and practice. Subsequent generations succumbed to the theological famine which plagued twentieth-century American Christianity. Perhaps by God's good providence a reminder of the grace that formed us will inspire a restoration ..." [Nettles, *Founders Journal*, p. 6]

... ..

### The Shape of Baptist Confessionalism

[Following this introduction Marshall proceeded to review Baptist confessional tradition from its beginnings in the Charleston Association in 1767, when that group adopted the Regular Baptists' Philadelphia Confession, but only with certain conditions. The records report:]

*After considerable debate as to the propriety of having any confession of faith at all, the report of the committee was received with the following explanation: 'To prevent the confession of faith from usurping a tyrannical power over the conscience of any, we do not mean that every person is bound to the strict observance of everything therein contained; yet that it hold forth the essential truths of the gospel.... Upon these terms we are united, and desire hereafter, that the names Regular and Separate be buried in oblivion ...'*

The phrase "Baptists are not a creedal people" has almost become an axiom within our tradition, and yet its meaning is not at all as univocal as some would imply. Certainly it means that Baptists have resisted religious conformity, from whatever source; it means that Baptists have retained the Bible as the [norm] for all our teaching and instruction; and it means that to no creed has infallibility ever been ascribed. No one creed was seen to be beyond revision ... all are provisional; none can say it all without distortion.

Although concurring that Baptists have never been *creedalistic*, Timothy George argues that "the idea that voluntary, conscientious adherence to an explicit doctrinal standard is somehow foreign to the Baptist tradition is a peculiar notion not borne out by a careful examination of our heritage."

We can concur with the logic of having confessions, provided they are seen as provisional and are not used as a weapon to drive other Christians out of the fold. George ignores the "creeping creedalism" (Dale Moody's phrase) of the past fifteen years in the SBC. And he ignores another

impulse currently at work among us: the equating of confessions with the "faith once delivered to the saints." Propositions, no matter how carefully framed and nuanced, can never fully present the personal aspect of our faith....

Some believe that if they articulate truth in just the right propositions—and follow them—they are assured of salvation. In response to this approach, Glenn Hinson has pointed out "that Christianity is not simply a doctrinal system. It is a way of life. What matters is God's grace in salvation, not doctrine." (No wonder he has been considered an arch-heretic!)

We would do well to remember the confessions that have shaped our ecclesial identity—provided we are reminded that they have only proximate authority. Rob James has perceptively argues that we must remain free in relation to these "because that is the only way the Bible ... can be our authority, rather than someone's interpretation of it." [James, p. 257]

### E.Y. Mullins: The Primacy of Religious Experience

It is the accentuation on the primacy of the personal, particularly in religious experience, that moved Southern Baptists beyond the rigidity of Calvinist theology.

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*"...to no creed has infallibility ever been ascribed."*

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Both neo-Calvinists and non-Calvinists agree that no one seriously challenged the predominance of Calvinistic theology before the arrival of E.Y. Mullins in 1899 as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Calvinistic perspective of Boyce which had prevailed since the founding of the seminary diminished rapidly after the time of Mullins.

In Mullins' chief work, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, the author's order of treatment of the basic Christian doctrines differed radically from his Calvinistic predecessors in the Southern

(Please turn to page 7)

(Marshall...from page 4)

Baptist Convention. Unlike them, Mullins emphasized the important role of Christian experience in understanding Christian doctrine, a clear move away from the arid rationalism of [his predecessors], which presumed to understand the decrees of God before the foundation of the world.... Personal religious experience with Jesus Christ, according to Mullins, provided the basic way to know God.... Mullins wrote that "it is only after the Christian knows God in redemptive experience through Christ that he is in a position to understand God...whom Jesus Christ revealed."

... Mullins rejected the belief that the Christian faith is no more than "a theory or speculation about God," or that its ultimate meaning is located in "deductions from objective facts concerning his nature and attributes." Mullins has unjustly been accused of shifting to an anthropocentric approach rather than theocentric, focusing on human freedom over against God's sovereignty. Such criticism is unwarranted, in my judgment.

Others have followed ... Mullins' stress on God's self-revelation in Jesus, which eviscerated the logic of the five points. W. T. Conner, Herschel Hobbs, Frank Stagg, and Dale Moody have each made a significant contribution to the dismantling of Calvinist theology. The driving motivation for this sustained critique was their concern that the New Testament perspectives were being subordinated to the deterministic contours of Calvinism.

Stagg reinterpreted the terms of salvation in a manner diametrically opposed to Calvinism. He wrote, "One is strangely insensitive to the throb and pulse beat of the whole New Testament if he thinks that each man's (one's) faith is determined ... in advance." He denies that God selects some for salvation because he does not believe that the NT draws this logical conclusion. Nowhere in the New Testament does there appear a God who desires or purposes the damnation of a single soul.

My beloved teacher Dale Moody vigorously attacked the Calvinist doctrines of grace (decrees) at every opportunity,

which as you recall, finally was the reason for his forced retirement as senior professor of theology at Southern. His systematic theology, *The Word of Truth*, gloried in the fact that it was the first theology by a Southern Baptist to dismiss all five points of Calvinism, including Perseverance of the Saints. He wrote, "In brief the system of Calvinism cannot be patched with new cloth. The new wine cannot be put in old wineskins. That is what too many do when they try to torture the texts of the Bible to agree with some creed or confession of the past. I cannot say this too strongly." At this point, Dr. Moody would be red in the face with his jowls shaking mightily!

***"...divine will did not imply that God has willed everything that has ever happened..."***

Concerned about retaining human responsibility, Moody defined the will of God as "the volitional element by which God's purpose guides all who hear his call." He believed this divine will did not imply

that God has willed everything that has ever happened. Rather, it acknowledged that the misuse of human freedom is responsible for many evil occurrences. Those who ascribe all to the direct will of God end up with a God who may be feared but is difficult to love." [Moody, pp. 152 – 155] Indeed, he continually pointed to the complementary role of God and humanity in redemption—a robust biblical synergism.

### **The Politics of Recalvinization**

To what purpose is Calvinism being used in the SBC today? Or, put another way, what are the effects of reigniting this particular theological controversy at this time? The concluding section of my lectures will attempt to outline the politics of recalvinization (if that is a word!). I am persuaded by Foucault that intellectual positions are never free from issues of power and sexuality [gender]. Certainly those critical coordinates of human concourse are present in the following analysis.

1) Contemporary Southern Baptist Calvinists promote an elite *cognoscenti* (a few who presume to be in the know). These are primarily academicians, i.e., Nettles, George, Erickson, and Mohler, who seek correct doctrine at the expense of our wider theological heritage. To buttress their cause,

*(Please turn to page 8)*

### **Calvinism: What's the Fuss All About?**

Calvinism takes its name from the Swiss theologian, John Calvin (1509-1564), a major figure in the Reformation. Calvinism has five major teachings: 1. Total depravity. All have sinned and cannot save themselves. 2. Unconditional election. Those who are saved are saved only because God chose to, not because of merit. 3. Limited atonement. Christ's salvation is for a limited number of people, the elect. 4. Irresistible grace. God's act of grace is so complete the elect are compelled to profess faith. 5. Perseverance of the saints. "Once saved, always saved."

While Baptists have agreed, for the most part, on three of the points, there has been considerable division on the issue of limited atonement and irresistible grace. Early Baptists in England differed on the matter of election and predestination. The General Baptists held to general atonement (Christ died for all), while the Particular or Separate Baptists held to limited atonement (Christ died only for the elect). Those lines of debate have continued over the years.

Why does it matter? Molly Marshall explains in her paper. Calvinism becomes a framework for theocratic control, misogyny and the marginalization of women and minorities. Women have much to fear from its resurgence.

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## (Molly Marshall...from page 7)

they take a part of our history, the Particular/Regular tradition, and attempt to read the whole through its lens; thus it is a one-sided recounting and results in a revisionist history. Further, claims about the purity of this theological vision fail to acknowledge the social praxis of those holding it; they were privileged, slave-holding white men, disdainful of the enthusiasms of the common Baptists from the backwoods. Our contemporary Calvinists have little room for diversity as well, as they purpose to return to the era of the “gentleman theologians.”

2) Reappropriating [Calvinism] is an attempt to create stability in a time when the theological consensus has eroded. Individualism, the privatization of Baptist theology, has been blamed for this erosion. Therefore, exponents of reclaiming Calvinism as our theological framework want a cadre of covenants, confessions and catechisms to secure the fundamental truths of the Gospel. Yet theirs is not the right solution, for it is too self-congratulatory.... It is too deterministic ... It is too partial a view to claim to be an encompassing theological framework....

3) Calvinism in its present form tends to be a way of rationalizing personal political machinations, claiming them to be God’s sovereign and electing will. Thus, if it is “God’s will,” then persons are not responsible for the havoc wreaked—God’s eternal purposes are being worked out; how dare anyone dissent from them? This ignores the insights of process theology which call us to acknowledge the radical partnership God beckons from humanity; that there is shared

responsibility in the groaning project of creation—not yet completed.

4) Reclaiming Calvinism is a means by which contemporary Baptists seek to ensure doctrine is fixed and unchanging. This form of confessional identity fails to acknowledge the partiality of all creeds or confessions.

It is curious that in a denomination which has been fighting over who believes the Bible the most, a strangely dogmatic approach to Christian teaching is gaining ground. Calvinism presumes to know the mind of God in ways the Bible never does; indeed, it elevates Calvin’s five points over Scripture....

5) There are many liabilities in this attempt to reprimarize the past. Returning to the “founders” does not include the stories of African-Americans, women, and other persons on the margins. It does not allow the new insights of a world more sensitive to the issues of religious pluralism. Their world was different than ours; and we need to recognize that *the Founders are dead!*

6) Calvinism has usually been aligned with a theocratic vision for government which impairs liberty of conscience. It should not surprise us that the same persons advocating the resurgence of Calvinism want to move back toward the mindset of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

7) The God of Calvinism is masculine to the core and thus contributes to the contemporary misogyny of its perpetrators. An all-controlling ... deity serves to authorize similar exercise of power among humans. As is well known, the language we

use for God has powerful effect in ordering human relations.

8) Returning to Calvinism revives a controversy that basically derails us from engaging the most pressing concerns of our day. Why do we want to revive a 17th century ruckus that serves no real purpose for our broken world? It is irrelevant, obscurantist, and plain distracting. Perhaps this is intentional, for it is much easier to debate theology in the abstract than to allow its insights to transform our actions. Perhaps it is a new Puritanism in our midst: drive out those who disagree. This would be in keeping with their theological forebear.

In Geneva, Calvin showed an intolerance toward nonconformists. Glenn Hinson has likened this quest for doctrinal purity to that of the Roman Catholic inquisitors. “Although Geneva became a haven for harassed Protestants, it also expelled many others who did not agree with Calvin’s views....” [Hinson, p. 77] And many in our day are being expelled. Perhaps Carlyle Marney’s perceptive words were never more apt: “Southern Baptists’ greatest gift to the world are the people we have run off!”

We have seen that our roots as Baptists are imbedded in the Reformed heritage; we would not want to eschew its significant insights. A return to Calvinism in our day, however, is not the way forward “for such a time as this.”

*Molly Marshall is professor of theology, worship and spiritual formation at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City*

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## Who Are Women in Ministry?

The committee and the newsletter editor have gotten many requests over the last few years for some statistics about the number of women ministers, number of ordinations, types of work, etc. Often the answers are strictly guesswork. This newsletter includes an insert which we hope you will complete and return so that we might have more accurate data.

We have, however, attempted to analyze the data we have. A look at the current mailing list of over 600 names reveals some

interesting figures. The list includes **273 women in church staff** positions. Of those, there are 10 pastors, 14 associates, 10 in social ministry, 27 music only, 22 in religious education (unspecified), 55 youth, 18 youth and music, and 21 in children’s work or children and music. An additional 96 persons are listed with an unspecified church staff position (and perhaps some of these have moved to other churches or other states and have not yet been culled from our list).

There are **24 women in denominational work** as campus ministers, WMU, VBGB,

FMB, and association professional staff. We know of **35 chaplains or pastoral counselors** in various settings, and **12 women in academic teaching or administration**. We have **22 other ordained** and **18 retired**. In addition, we have **191 women in other unspecified ministry**. Some of those we know what they do but they don’t fit the other categories. Others we simply do not know what type of ministry they do (paid or volunteer, lay or professional). The balance of the list is made up of men.

We would like to be more accurate. Please help by completing the questionnaire. Results will be printed in a future SYNERGY.



# WOMEN IN THE NEWS

## New Positions and Changes

**Melody McGlothlin** is minister of music, youth and children at Memorial Church, Pulaski.

**Susan Morris** is minister of youth at Salem Church, Sparta.

**Sylvia LaDuct** is minister of children and youth at Riverdale Church, Roanoke.

**Melissa Simmons** is minister of youth and children at Tabernacle Church, Newport News.

**Saundralynn Yates** is minister of children, youth and music at Fairfield Church, Burgess.

**Vallerie F. King** is assistant pastor for youth and music at Fairfax Church, in Fairfax.

**Maria N. Topper** is minister of music at Mount View Church in Charlottesville.

**Amy Middleton** is director of children's ministries at Colonial Heights Church in Colonial Heights.

**Michelle Paxton** is minister of youth at Parkview Church in Newport News.

**Mary M. Wrye** is minister of education at Marion Church, Marion.

**Barbara L. Cooke** is minister of youth at Jahnke Road Church, Richmond.

**Carol McCann** is associate minister at Belmont Church, Roanoke.

**Lynn Litchfield-Dangerfield** is minister of children, youth and families at Fort Lewis Church, Salem.

**Andrea Nicole Davis** is youth minister at Smyrna Church, Dinwiddie.

**Tamara Totten** is minister to students and youth at University Church, Charlottesville.

**Melissa Nethery** is minister to children and families at Derbyshire Church, Richmond.

**Jackie Allen** is minister of education at Jackson Memorial Church, Chesapeake.

**Alice Mikolajewski** is director of music and organist at Arlington Church, Arlington.

**Elizabeth Emrey** was named minister of outreach by Broadus Memorial Church, Charlottesville.

**Judith and David Bailey** are interim co-pastors of Taylorsville Church, Doswell.

**Tina Cundiff** is preschool and children's minister at First Church, Richmond.

**Jamie Dianne Wood** is director of multihousing ministries for Richmond Association. A graduate of Southwestern Seminary, she was appointed by the Home Mission Board in December.

**Brenda Jennings** is weekday education director at Mechanicsville Church, Mechanicsville.

## Honors and Accolades

**Becky Glass**, campus minister in the Newport News area, wrote the Lenten meditation "Lost and Found" in the *Religious Herald*, March 1995.

**Pam Smith**, missions services associate at Virginia WMU, was awarded the doctor of ministry degree by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Ellen Gwathmey** was named secretary for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia at its annual meeting in Lynchburg in March. She is minister of outreach at River Road Church in Richmond.

**Barbara Jackson** was reelected editor of the CBFV newsletter. She is editor of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry newsletter SYNERGY.

## Ordinations

**Amanda Atkins** was ordained by Walnut Hill Church, Petersburg, on May 7. A graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, she is associate pastor at Walnut Hill Church.

**Joyce D. Sellers** was ordained to the gospel ministry on October 8 by Castle Rock Church, Pembroke.

**June Hardy Dorsey** was ordained to the gospel ministry in October by Ginter Park Church, Richmond. A graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and formerly minister of education at Ginter Park Church, she is now director of St. Thomas Day School in Richmond.

**Donna Hopkins** was ordained to the gospel ministry on November 19 by Calvary Church, Roanoke. A graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Donna Hopkins is minister to families at Calvary Church.

**Patricia Huckaby Crump** was ordained to the gospel ministry on December 3 by Bruington Church, Bruington.

**Mary Dell and Bill Sigler** were ordained to the gospel ministry on December 31 by East Highland Park Church, Richmond. Recent graduates of BTSR, they are co-pastors of Kilmarnock Church, Kilmarnock.

**Ronda Stewart-Wilcox** was ordained to the gospel ministry on January 21 by May Memorial Church, Powhatan, where she is minister of education.

**Dawn Mayes** was ordained to the gospel ministry on November 19 by Farmville Church, Farmville.

**Jennifer Jennings Kelly** was ordained to the gospel ministry on March 31 by Broadus Memorial Church in Charlottesville.

## Appointments

**Anita and Jay Lynn** were appointed missionaries by Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to Czech Republic to teach English.

## Graduations

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond: **Lisa Carson Allison, Donna K. Hopkins, Linnea Petty, Mary Dell Sigler, Patricia Crump, Laura Lynn Litchfield, Tamara Totten**, all Mdiv.

Southeastern, North Carolina: **Kimberly Kristine Kumm**, MDiv/CED.

Southern, Kentucky: **Nita Rigau Carter, Penelope Stanley Lawon, Dolores Ann Treadway**, Cert/Min. **Kimberly Renee Meadows, Jill Thompson**, MCM; **Beryl Ann Bruggey**, MSW; **Susan D. Burks, Mariam E. Crenshaw**, MDiv. **Crystal L. Hall**, MDiv/CED.

Southwestern, Texas: **Rebecca L. Hurt, Rebecca V. Stirman**, MA/RE.

Union, Richmond: **Janell Anne Johnson**, MDiv.

*Because of the hiatus in the publication of SYNERGY, the list of staff changes and new positions is unusually long and represents about a year. Please let us know of any omissions that should be included in the next SYNERGY.*

## THE LAST WORD

### Blest Be the Tie That Binds

by Barbara Jackson

#### Religion...

When we sing the familiar hymn by the English Baptist pastor John Fawcett (1739-1817), we join our voices with millions of people around the world. Surely *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* is one of the most loved hymns in all the world. It is translated into many languages and adopted by many denominations as their own. Sung in both high church and informal group, as the benediction for communion or the farewell at funerals, it is heard in mighty organ or simple guitar arrangements, as choral anthem or solo. Because of its familiarity, congregations seldom need to see the words.

What was John Fawcett's inspiration for his simple masterpiece? The story goes that fifteen-year-old John was converted by the famous evangelist George Whitefield and determined to be a preacher himself. At age 24 John and Mary Fawcett went to the isolated Wainsgate village in the bleak Yorkshire hills of England to serve a tiny Baptist congregation. There was no house, so they "boarded around." The salary was barely enough for porridge and potatoes, not enough to feed four children, and their life there was simple though stark. But he was loved and soon his name became known.

A call came to serve a substantial church in London, with a larger salary and all the amenities of London. They made ready to leave, packed their goods, gave a farewell sermon—and realized they could not leave. Their ties there were too deep and the poor congregation's needs so great.

On the next Sunday Fawcett preached from Luke: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." Then he lined out the hymn he had written the night before: *Blest be the tie that binds*. The Fawcetts stayed on for 54 years.

The "tie that binds," **religion**, is derived from the Latin *religio*, a binding back, and *ligare*, to bind. Belief in a **religion** binds the believer to a code of ethics and to the

commands of the deity. The Latin words have the root *lig*, which ultimately comes from the Indo-European (IE) *leig-*. Related words from IE via Latin and French include: the **league** that **obliges** one **ally** to support another and on which both sides can **rely**. Also, **lien**, a binding right upon property; **alloy** that binds two or more metals; and **rally** (rebind), a gathering of the troops. Additional words from the Latin *ligare* are **liable**, **liaison**, **ligament** and **ligation**.

Degrees of **binding** give us a vivid picture of relationship and obligation: the prisoner in **bondage**, the pet on a **leash**, the astronaut on a tether, the injured with a **bandage**, the tree climber protected by **bands** of rope restraints. In **ligation**, the tying off is usually permanent; but the **liaison** officer has a relationship of mutuality that may be ended at will.

One notable image is that of the sacrificial offering, the animal which is **bound** prior to the *coup de grace*—which is not usually voluntary!

The words **bind**, **band**, **bend** (as in the **bending** of ropes or cloth **bands** around a **bundle**), the **bond** that the issuer is **obliged** to pay), and **bin** (a woven and tied wicker basket) all come from the IE root *bhendh-*, to tie. A related word **bandanna**

is from the Sanscrit, a tie-died cloth. On the other hand, a different root, IE **bheu-**, to dwell, yields **bondage** (servant), **husband** (dweller in the house) **build** (dwelling) and **bower**.

And so, the **religious** person is tied by lines of **obligation** and mutuality to his or her deity or system of belief, where devotees **rally** (congregate) together in a **league** or **legion**. Devotion or obedience can be assured by threat of punishment or promise of heavenly reward or by the satisfying, **reliable** spiritual relationship of day-to-day service.

The **religious** are not merely tied to the object of faith, however, they are bound *back*. **Re-** (*back or again*) and **lig-** (*to bind*) implies a dual action. God's initiative leads to a person's response. It is in the root meaning of the word that we see and understand the theological reality of God's revelation to humankind. The word accurately depicts the essential notions of freedom: religious freedom, intellectual freedom, and ultimately political freedom as it has developed in more recent times.

God extends the lifeline. We take hold. God embraces. We respond. God reveals. We give awe and service. Our grasp must be purposeful. The line will hold.

## A LITTLE HUMOR

**Frank and Ernest cartoon.** Cute little angel speaks to the God figure, seated at the Creative Design Dept. desk. "Of course Eve looks different from Adam — she's an advanced design!"

**Students' stupid science trivia.** The body consists of three parts: the brainium, the borax and the abominable cavity. The abominable cavity contains the bowels, of which there are five: a-e-i-o-u.

- Blood flows down one leg and up the other.
- Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes and caterpillars.
- A vacuum is a large empty space where the pope lives.
- To germinate is to become a naturalized German.

**Sanity test.** Do you know that one in every four Americans is unbalanced?

Think of your three closest friends. If they seem OK, then you're the one!

**International linguistic lapses.** • Sign on door of Hong Kong office: Teeth extracted by latest Methodists. • Bangkok dry cleaners: Drop your trousers here for best results. • Greece tailor shop: Order your summer suit. Because of the big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation. • Japanese hotel: You are invited to take advantage of the women who are employed to clean the rooms. • Germany elevator: Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up. • China tailor shop: Ladies may have a fit upstairs.

**Colorful Texas talk.** • He's all hat and no cattle. • It's so dry the catfish are carrying canteens. • He'll squeeze a nickel till the buffalo screams. • So ugly he has to sneak up on a glass of water.

# RESOURCES

## Women in History

The February Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry conference on the theme "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Inheriting Our Past" focused on women in religious life who have been players on the world scene. In connection with that conference, an extensive bibliography was assembled of new and old books, including both biblical studies and biography as well as women's history. We offer copies of that bibliography upon request. Write the newsletter editor to ask for your copy.

The past decade has demonstrated the vibrant state of women's scholarship. There have been many books published on gender issues, feminist theology, women's experiences and women in history. One would have difficulty in selecting a core bookshelf. Some suggestions follow. This list is by no means exhaustive.



VBWIM exhibit at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting in Lynchburg, March, 1996. Marylee Sturgis of Charlottesville looks on.

## The Bookshelf

**Her Story**, by Barbara J. MacHaffie (Fortress, 1986). Starting with women in biblical times and ending with today, MacHaffie treats each period of history with an analysis of the period, a look at key female leaders, teachers, and writers. Some were martyrs; some were honored for their contributions to Christendom. Some were denounced as witch; some were revolutionary; some demonstrated gifts for leadership within the allowed structures. A very useful assemblage of women in history.

**In Her Words: Women's Writings in the History of Christian Thought**, Amy Oden, ed. (Abingdon, 1994). An anthology of primary sources, including the writings of women of the early church, middle ages, early Protestant era, suffragists, and ending with a woman closer to today, Georgia Harkness.

**The Creation of Feminist Consciousness** by Gerda Lerner (Oxford, 1993). Dealing with the period from the 7th century to 1870, Lerner delineates paths to self-authorization through mysticism, motherhood, feminist Bible criticism, creativity, education, women's organizations, and finally, the development of women histories. One of the

earliest woman historian was Christine de Pizan, who in 1405 published *The Book of the City of the Ladies*. She reminds us of the more recent Mary Beard, who conceptualized Women's History as an academic topic and wrote four pioneering works on the subject, including *Women As Force in History* (1946).

**A Vindication of the Rights of Women** by Mary Wollstonecraft (Prometheus, 1989). Written in 1792, Wollstonecraft's document is a fundamental sourcebook for the modern women's movement. She was a part of the intellectual ferment of the late 18th century that contributed to revolution in America and France and the development of democratic processes.

**The Woman's Bible** by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1898), reprinted by Seattle, Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion, 1974. Truly a revolutionary product, Stanton was a forerunner of the development of feminist biblical criticism and such contemporary female scholars as Phyllis Trible. Her opening chapter shocked and thrilled women readers when she wrote, "If language has any meaning, we have in these texts a plain declaration of the existence of the feminine element in the Godhead, equal in power and glory with the masculine. The Heavenly Mother and Father! 'God created man in his own image, male and female.' Thus Scripture, as well as

science and philosophy, declares the eternity and equality of sex—the philosophical fact, without which there could have been no perpetuation of creation.... In the great work of creation the crowning glory was realized, when man and woman were evolved on the sixth day, the masculine and feminine forces in the image of God, that must have existed eternally, in all forms of matter and mind." (p. 14-15). And that was written in 1898!

**Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven: Women, Sexuality, and the Catholic Church**, by Uta Ranke-Heinemann (Doubleday, 1990). Although this book may not fall into the category of classic, it is instructive of the mindset that fed the various misogynies inherent in the church. Woman was perceived as unclean and a source of fear for men. Celibacy and the proscription of women in ritual worship were one result. The denial of education to women and the fixation on sex, the regulation of marriage and the denial of birth control measures were but manifestations of the perception of woman as evil as delineated by Augustine and other early church theologians and as subsequently institutionalized by the church.

# CALENDAR

## April

### April 23 –24

"Religion & Art." Lectures by Catherine A. Kapikian, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC. BTSR, Lingle Hall, Apr 23, 10 am and 7 pm, Dialogue luncheon, 12:30. Apr 24, 10 am.

### April 26 –28

"Daughters of Eve." Retreat includes Biblical icons, body movement and poetry. Richmond Hill, Richmond. \$110. (804) 783-7903

## May

### May 2 – 4

"Your Daughters Shall Prophecy: A Conference for Women Who Preach." Charleston Hilton Hotel, N. Charleston SC 29406. \$20. Baptist Women in Ministry (706) 860-4798 or 774-5800.

### May 7

VBWIM Steering Committee. River Road Church, Richmond. 2:30 pm. (804) 288-1131.

## May 14

Virginia Baptist Historical Society annual meeting. 7:30 pm, Business School auditorium, University of Richmond. "Portraits in Black & White," Samuel D. Proctor, keynote speaker. (804) 289-8434.

## May 15

Women in Leadership Conference. "Leading Through Change." Explore leadership issues, develop creative approaches. Women's Resource Center, UR. (804) 289-8020.

## May 22, 29, June 4

"Communication Skills for Women." Learn to present ideas with credibility, avoid approval seeking, ensure being taken seriously. 7-9 pm. \$75. Women's Resource Center, UR. (804) 289-8020.

## June

### June 18 – 21

University of Richmond Ministers' Conference. "Family Matters" featuring Nancy & Ken Sehested, Mahan & Janice Siler, Larry Matthews. \$99 for meals and lodging. Commuters welcome. Chaplains Office. (804) 289-8500.

## June 27

Baptist Women in Ministry annual meeting, Marriott Hotel, Richmond, 10 – 1 pm for worship and lunch. Cost TBA. Contact Raye Nelle Dyer (713) 432-7617 or BWIM (502) 896-4425.

## June 27 – 29

National Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly, Convention Centre, Richmond. Auxiliary events include Church Leadership Institute; BWIM worship and lunch; BTSR luncheon and on-campus tours; Habitat for Humanity project and rally; Whitsett Baptist Heritage Society; and other groups. Registration: CBF Box 450329, Atlanta GA 31145. Reservations: (800) 262-9974.

## November

### November 12

VBWIM dinner at Baptist General Association of Virginia, 5 pm. Details TBA.

Grace Baptist Church  
4200 Dover Road  
Richmond, VA 23221

Address correction requested  
Return postage guaranteed

*Sisters and brothers, listen.  
Make your heart crystal clear  
within.*

*You senses will be opened  
and your soul so transparent  
that we will see  
into  
the wisdom  
of God.*

*Mechtild of Magdeburg  
German mystic (13th c.)*



# VIRGINIA BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

*...an association of persons, both women and men, lay and professional, who perceive what they do as Christian ministry, and who seek to provide an avenue for mutual support, encouragement, and empowerment.*

May 1996

Dear friend of women in ministry:

This is a letter addressed to our mailing list. I hope however you will read this as a personal letter meant for you. You are identified with the general purposes of Women in Ministry because you have told us so or because of what you do. Please accept this letter as our offer to expand the limits of conventional communication. You are an important person—both for what you do in ministry and for what you mean to the larger community of women who share a common calling and commitment.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry began in 1988 with a conference on the theme *Empowerment*. In the midst of denominational turmoil and a general feeling of disenfranchisement and malaise, the gathering offered a venue for many women and men seeking a new way of connecting. Out of that initial gathering of about 75 persons, an organization took root and within a year could boast a core membership of 24 persons. And now, eight years later, with an evolving nucleus of members, the time is right to move to a new level of connectedness.

Our goal is to build a community of women and friends into a functioning and useful organization. In thinking about that goal, the steering committee realized that building an organization would not happen without a wider involvement of those who share our concerns.

And that brings me to the point of this letter—to let you know about some steps we are taking to expand the scope of communication, to offer you an opportunity to get involved, and to ask you to share something about yourself.

**First. The VBWIM newsletter SYNERGY will be available to everyone who wants it.** The receipt of the newsletter will not be tied to membership in the organization. To expand circulation demands a redefinition of the newsletter's purpose. While we intend to maintain the aim of sharing news and building community among the members, we hope to promote an understanding of gender issues and help create good will among a wider population. In other words, we shall undertake a public relations function as well.

## VIRGINIA BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY 1996-97 Membership & Synergy Response Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Ministry \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Please continue to send Synergy at no charge.  Do not send.  
(It is not necessary to be a member to receive Synergy)

Please enrol me as a member of VBWIM. I enclose the 1996 membership fee.  
(If you are already a member, please complete the questionnaire on the reverse)

Amount enclosed

Membership fee \$20 for one year (students, \$10). Membership includes, discounts and announcements of conferences and other events, participation in committee, book lists and other publications. Please enclose check with this form and send to:  
VBWIM, 8000 River Road, Richmond, VA 23229.

We are fortunate in Virginia to enjoy a wide appreciation for the gifts of women in ministry. Many churches are open to the employment of women. There are several hundred women ministers on staff in Virginia churches and in other capacities as well—such as teachers, administrators, counselors, chaplains, social workers, musicians and writers. As amazing as these figures seem, they in no way reflect the vast assemblage who serve churches in volunteer and lay capacities. Women are needed to carry out the gospel. Churches couldn't function without the gifts of women. Women have a role and they are not going away. We hope SYNERGY can help in sharing some good news about women's ministries.

**Second.** And this is where you come in. We want to know whether you wish to receive SYNERGY on a regular basis. This issue is on the house. **To get the next one, you need to let us know.** We don't want to send it out indiscriminately and add to the junk mail problem. We do want to send it to all who want it.

**Third.** We need your commitment to share the goals of the organization, to help make growth happen. We need you to join others in the pilgrimage as we come together for the occasional dinner, workshop or other gathering. We need to expand the leadership beyond Richmond and bring others into the planning process. We want to make membership worth your while even if you do not have to pay for SYNERGY. **But we do want you to join the organization.** We need the influence that comes with numbers. We need your ideas and talents. And we need to get to know you.

And what will you get for your commitment? Why should you join? We propose:

- to offer discounts on the cost of conferences and dinners to paid members.
- to send a list of other women ministers in your area to assist in networking and creating opportunity for friendships.
- to involve additional persons on the steering committee who are members.
- to prepare updated bibliographies of materials on gender issues from time to time.
- to continue to offer workshops, conferences and programs to challenge your minds and build fellowship.
- to assist in circulating resumes upon request.

**Fourth.** And finally, we need you to **let us know who you are.** Please complete the enclosed questionnaire. We will keep any personal information confidential. For several years we have been keeping some statistics on the number of women in ministry roles, types of work, education, ordination, etc. We would like to expand the statistics to a larger data base. Even if you do not want to join VBWIM or do not want to receive SYNERGY, we encourage you to return the questionnaire. We are always getting inquiries about numbers or ordination. Your cooperation will help us field the questions. We think the situation for work opportunities is getting better. Is it? Perhaps we might establish a base line this year against which to compare in future years and help prove or disprove some researcher or graduate student's thesis. We need your help to do this.

With regards,

Ellen T. Gwathmey, VBWIM chair  
Barbara D Jackson, SYNERGY editor

To give yourself space to describe your work, you may photocopy questionnaire on a letter-size sheet.  
Clip response form on reverse and send form and questionnaire to Ellen Gwathmey, 8000 River Road, Richmond Va 23229

## VBWIM Questionnaire

I. The following information is requested for an ongoing statistical study. Please check:

Paid?	Unpaid?	Seminary Graduate?	yes	no
Full-time?	Part-time?	Name of degrees:		
Ordained?	yes	no	Name of college & seminary(s):	

II. Category of Ministry (please check all that apply):

Church:

Pastor  
Associate/administration  
Outreach/social ministries  
Music (specify)  
Minister of Education (specify age level)  
Other church staff (specify)  
Church volunteer (specify)

Academic:

Teaching  
Administration

Denominational work (please specify agency):

Campus minister  
Social ministries  
Program development and training  
Publications  
Administration/business

Chaplain/ pastoral care (specify type & location):

Other ministry (specify type and location):

Retired (Please specify type of work and where):

Volunteer (describe):

III. Personal Interest in VBWIM:  
(check all that apply)

conferences, event attendance  
committee work, leadership  
financial support (member, donor)

contributor to SYNERGY (writer, ideas, etc)  
observer, moral support, friend  
academic interest in gender issues