



Baptist Women in Ministry Met in Richmond to Celebrate and Mark Anniversary

Baptist women from across the country met in Richmond in June for their fourteenth annual worship, luncheon and business meeting. The association held its meeting in conjunction with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly, which was in Richmond this year.

A large group of women and men gathered at the Marriott Hotel first for worship and then for lunch and business. Many of those present knew each other from their committee work and attendance at past Women in Ministry conferences. But there were many newcomers as well who came to demonstrate their identification with the goals of Women in Ministry

Worship centered on the theme "Together on the Journey" and featured worship leaders Ronda and Rodney Stewart-Wilcox, Ken Sehested, all of North Carolina, Becca Gurney and Ann Shelton Tucker of Texas, and others. Music was offered by Holly Irvin and Michelle Harman-Gulick, both of Richmond.

Following the worship, participants joined for lunch and the business session. The group heard reports, adopted a budget and welcomed as special guests Addie Davis, the first woman to be ordained in the Southern Baptist Convention, and Tom and Audrey Clifton. Tom Clifton is president of Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, where the new offices of Baptist Women in Ministry are located.

Baptist Women in Ministry also sponsored a breakout session at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Virginia Women in Ministry members Ellen Gwathmey, Lisa Allison and Betty Pugh, all of Richmond, held a panel discussion on "Women's Ways of Relating." The three women shared their views and fielded questions on leadership styles, inclusive language, networking and ordination.

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IN MY OPINION

Ex Cathedra

by Ellen Gwathmey

Exciting things are happening to Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, and I am glad you are a part. Here are some of the things we are doing.

- ☉ In addition to the yearly meeting in November and the spring conference, VBWIM now holds a breakfast meeting at the annual Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia conference.
- ☉ *Synergy*, as you may have noticed, is back on track.
- ☉ During the national CBF annual meeting in Richmond in June, VBWIM led a breakout session entitled "Women's Ways of Relating."
- ☉ The steering committee met in July to plan the coming year.
- ☉ Members have just received their very first member packet, which includes a membership card, a list of membership benefits, two bibliographies (one on women in history and one on women's ways of relating), and a list of members and supporters residing in their areas.

I hope members will use this list to get to know women ministers and members in their areas who are new to them and to reacquaint themselves with friends who have recently moved into the area. In looking over the list, should you notice the absence of someone who needs to be included or the name of someone who has moved, please notify the steering committee, so that appropriate changes can be made.

If you are not yet a member, I hope you will complete the form found on a page in this newsletter and add your name to the roster of supporters of women in ministry. The member packet will be forthcoming.

If there is no regional group of women in ministry near you, I encourage you to be the catalyst in forming one. Even if there are only two of you, you can be a mutual support group for each other.

- ☉ One of the membership benefits is an invitation to participate in steering committee work and statewide planning. Dues-paying members will now receive copies of the minutes of the preceding steering committee meeting, as well as notification of upcoming meetings. The next steering committee is Monday, September 23 at 1 pm. At present, the steering committee has two all-day planning sessions (usually in January and July) to make long-range plans, and several shorter meetings to finalize those plans.
- ☉ Plans are afoot for the fall and spring meetings, the annual conference, and future issues of *SYNERGY*. The committee is looking forward to your ideas, presence and involvement, as we plan VBWIM's future. It is an exciting time to be a woman in ministry in Virginia, and we want you to take an active role. Join us, won't you?

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

SYNERGY, the newsletter of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, is published in Richmond, Va. Membership is \$20 per year (\$10, students). Manuscript submissions should be mailed to **SYNERGY** Editor, 9211 Whitmont Dr., Richmond, VA 23294.

Editorial Board: Lisa Allison, Rhonda Biller, Ginny Brown, Ellen Gwathmey, chair, Holly J. Irvin, treasurer, Barbara Jackson, newsletter editor, B.J. Seymour, Patti Sunday-Winters, Alana Woolley. ©1996

Together On the Journey: Baptist Women in Ministry

by Ronda D. Stewart-Wilcox

Thirteen years ago this spring some Southern Baptist women had a vision. They met in small groups and talked about how great it would be to have a group that recognized and supported women in ministry. Addressing one of those small groups in Louisville, Kentucky, in March 1983, Nancy Hastings Sehested, then pastor of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, Georgia, outlined a goal, a strategy, and the tactics for such a group. The goal, she said, should be "that we encourage women to fuller ministry in the life of our churches and denomination." The strategy is to create a network of support and encouragement for women in ministry. And the tactics include a newsletter, a resumé service, and conferences.

Thirteen years later, **Baptist Women in Ministry** is 12 years old and is offering a newsletter, a resumé service, conferences, and more. It has grown from an exciting, uncertain vision into a vibrant, sure reality.

Having begun life as *Southern* Baptist Women in Ministry (SBWIM), the early years were busy not only advocating for women but reacting to the many challenges that the Southern Baptist Convention was putting before women. The persistent efforts by some in the SBC only confirmed the great need for a prophetic voice within the denomination advocating for women called by God to ministry and supporting women busy doing the work of ministry. But all things change, and SBWIM saw a need to be more than a lonely voice within the SBC. At the annual meeting in July last year, they dropped the "Southern" and became Baptist Women in Ministry, following the same goal and strategy within a larger context, all of Baptist life.

Today, Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) continues the same tactics that Nancy Hastings Sehested envisioned in 1983. *Folio* is published quarterly and is an excellent resource for articles of support and encouragement as well as keeping up with what other women doing ministry are up to. The resumé service continues. Anyone wanting to participate by sending a resumé or by requesting a resumé need only contact the BWIM office in Kansas City, Kansas. BWIM offers a biannual retreat for renewal.

BWIM has two new projects: Women in the Pulpit and Project Integration. Women in the Pulpit seeks to enlist women interested in supplying pulpits and to enlist churches willing to seek women supply preachers and then serve as a resource center to put the two together. Project Integration is a bibliography project intended to create extensive bibliographies around numerous themes that focus on the literature and work by and about women. The complete bibliographies are available on the World Wide Web. The expectation is that these bibliographies will be helpful to professors as they teach their subjects in colleges and seminaries and helpful to students as they complete research projects.

BWIM also seeks to relate to the various state women in ministry groups. As with most things Baptist, BWIM, is not "over" the state groups, but seeks to work with them.

BWIM is organized with a board of directors, with members of the board coming from various states. Liz Emrey of Charlottesville, Va., is a current board member. The board is headed by an

executive board. The members of this year's executive board are Kathy Manis Findley of Little Rock, Ark., president; Beth Link McConnell of Columbia, S.C., vice-president; Betty Winstead McGary of Beaumont, Tex., treasurer; Eileen Campbell-Reed of Cartersville, Ga., recorder; and Winnie Williams of Clemson, S.C., membership chair. The board of directors meets about three times a year, generally coinciding their meeting times and places with either an Alliance of Baptists meeting or a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meeting.

The entire membership was invited to the annual meeting which met prior to the annual Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) meeting this year in Richmond.

If you are interested in knowing more about BWIM or if you would like a subscription to *Folio*, please write or call the BWIM office, now located on the campus of Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas. The address is Baptist Women in Ministry, 741 North 31st St., Kansas City, KS 66102. Telephone: (913) 321-6864. Membership dues are: \$20 for students or retired; \$30 for single; \$45 for couple. A subscription (only) to *Folio* is \$15.

The Rev. Ronda D. Stewart-Wilcox is co-pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Statesville, N.C., a past board member of BWIM, and a past steering committee member of VBWIM, and will soon be a member of North Carolina Women in Ministry.

The Addie Davis Offering

You are invited to contribute to The Addie Davis Offering, which is observed annually in August, the month of her 1964 ordination to the ministry of the Gospel. Addie Davis, a Virginian who now lives in Covington, was the first woman in the Southern Baptist Convention to be ordained. The offering will be used to provide for women's preaching conferences, scholarships for theological education and stipends for continuing education.

To contribute, make checks payable to BWIM and designate the purpose. Mail to the address below.

To join BWIM or subscribe to *Folio*, write or telephone:

Baptist Women in Ministry
741 North 31st St.
Kansas City, KS 66102
Telephone: (913) 321-6864.

“Come to the Table”

A Worship Service

by June Hardy Dorsey

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 made a contribution. The conference closed with worship using the following format.

The Setting

A table to hold the materials to be used in the worship ... a vase or pot of flowers for beauty ... pots or baskets for planting ... ribbons and colorful paper to decorate the pots ... pebbles and potting soil ... seed packets or bedding plants ... a container of water ... newspaper to make a mess on. Participants should face each other in a group to facilitate easy interaction. Music may be chosen ahead of time and used during periods of silent meditation between each action. Worship leader may choose appropriate scripture or readings to enhance the solemnity of each step.

Introduction

Worship leader: Come to the table. The invitation calls. Come to the table!

Perhaps it is a rough hewn wooden table laden with steaming plates of country vegetables, succulent and brilliant with late summer colors. Reds, greens, yellows and oranges as abundant and rich as the flavors they surround.

Perhaps it is an elegant table draped in fine linen and set with splendid china, lustrous antique silver, the crystal gleaming in gentle candlelight. An offering of superb delicacies prepared by a master chef, each ingredient selected with care, each garnish a work of art.

Perhaps it is a familiar kitchen table on a rainy school night with last night’s leftovers hurriedly reheated because there was an accident on the freeway and everyone is late for homework and gymnastics and the PTA meeting but it is still family dinner and somehow it is still good.

Or a table in the dining hall where the food is really not as bad as some say and where you sit and with whom you sit is a matter of utmost importance but where gradually you begin to feel at home and by your senior year, you forget what the anxiety was all about.

Or maybe the table isn’t really a table at all, but a cloth spread on the ground at that favorite, secret picnic spot, or a smooth flat rock on the edge of a mountaintop overlooking a valley full of wild flowers.

Or an unusually shaped table in a faraway country, where the exotic appearance of the food piques the curiosity and gives even those who are reluctant the courage to “try just one bite” and to fall in love with this new cuisine—only to return home wondering if such a concoction can be recreated with ingredients from the local market.

Wherever the location and whatever the setting, the invitation of “Come to the table” presupposes an event, promises nourishment and fellowship to all who heed the call.

For it is at the table that we learn who we are and about those with whom we share the table. Through conversations and comments, stories and discussion which surround the table, we learn. Peals of laughter ... groans of consternation ... serious words spoken in solemn, serious tones ... quiet whispers.

We learn what our companions think about politics and religion, spring break and breaking up. We learn at the table about the killer physics exam and who has what plans for the weekend, who has read what book, seen what movie, attended what lecture or knows the latest about the neighborhood.

It is at the table that we learn to chew with our mouths closed, keep our napkins in our laps, pass what is in front of us and ask to be excused before leaving. These manners teach us that we do not exist at the table (or in the world) alone and that we must exercise consideration for those with whom we share the table.

Consideration is at the center of our worship experience today—consideration for the earth and God’s bounty, gratitude for the nurturers, celebration of those who sowed and tilled and cultivated the soil and conserved its fruitfulness.

You are invited to gather at the garden table. A garden table (as all good gardeners know) is essential in the planting and nurture of one’s plants.

Today as we gather to celebrate our mothers’ gardens, we embark on an experience in gardening and growth that will open our hearts to God and help us learn about our role—maybe our calling—to create and cultivate for the future and to celebrate those who cultivated and conserved God’s bounty from the past.

1. Preparation

Worship leader: *Preparation of vessel.* The vessel represents ourselves. As we prepare the vessel, we continue in worship and prepare ourselves to be open to God’s leading in our lives.

People: The group is instructed to select a pot, papers and ribbon, and to decorate the pot. Each person then exchanges the decorated pot with another person. During musical interlude each person meditates on the miracle of individuality and blessing of sharing.

2. Confession

Worship leader: *A foundation of stone.* Small pebbles are placed in the base of the planters to ensure drainage and proper aeration. Confession of sin and brokenness is foundational to our openness to God in our lives. Drop pebbles in the container one by one, silently confessing your sin and asking God’s forgiveness.

People: Each person receives the pebbles, places them in pots. During the musical interlude each silently prays with a confession of sins. Worship leader completes the act by offering the assurance of pardon.

3. Thanksgiving

Worship leader: *Soil.* Integral to growth of plants, that rich substance full of minerals and ore, natural resources, a precious commodity. *Soil.* We are reminded of the parable of the sower. *Soil.* What makes the soil rich in your life? We give thanksgiving to God about what makes our lives rich.

People: Fill the pots with the potting soil. Turn to the persons nearby and spend a moment telling one another about the things in life that enrich one's personal "soil." During the musical interlude we give thanksgiving to God for his bounty, his riches.

4. Awareness

Worship leader: *The flowers.* Colorful, intricate, fragile, tenacious. Seeds. Tiny, yet holding the beginnings of the whole, full of promise. We are reflective of the creative nature of God.

People: Select a flower or seed packet. Place the bedding plant or seeds in the pot. Cover with the soil. During the musical interlude reflect upon the creative nature of God—God creating in you, God creating in the earth. How are the two inextricably bound together. Talk about this. Share ideas.

5. Commitment

Worship leader: *Water.* All planting is in vain without water. Water represents our commitment to care for the earth God has given us. Water represents the nurturing act. Water represents sharing and compassion and ministry. Water one another's plants, representing the need we have for one another—in caring for each other and in caring for the earth.

People: Pass the container of water around the group and share the act of watering. In the musical interlude, reflect of the ideas of sharing, commitment and ministry.

Close

Worship leader: *Sunshine and rain.* The manifest demonstration of God's bounty, God's providence. Pray a prayer for going out secure in the knowledge of God's love.

June Hardy Dorsey is director of St. Thomas Day School, Richmond

Seminaries Simmer!

Midwestern's Coppenger insults women

Midwestern Seminary president Mark Coppenger said in an April 11 chapel service at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary that women pastors are contrary to God's intent in creation and an affront to home and family. Coppenger called women's ascent into pastoral roles one of the raging heresies and confusions of the day. Citing I Tim 2:11-15 he stated that the Bible teaches women to be submissive to men, and that righteous women will be saved through childbearing. Parodying Paul, Coppenger said, "You women have a problem.... You go home and raise a family and you may just see God." (adapted from ABP)

BTSR president affirms women in ministry

Tom Graves, president of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, responded to the attack on women by Midwestern's Mark Coppenger. Graves said, "... we are committed to the training of God-called women and men, and are about the business of preparing all for the various ministries of the church." He went on to say, "It is sad to witness attempts in Baptist life to exclude and demean women. Such efforts are lacking in Christian compassion."

About a third of the students at BTSR are women, as are a third of the faculty. Its graduates include a number of female church staff members as well as three female pastors, two of whom are in Virginia.

Former Carver School dean is honored

Diana Garland, who was fired as dean of Carver School of Church Social Work by Southern Seminary's president Albert Mohler, has been named to a position with Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Also, she is the recipient of the 1996 "Whistleblower Award" given by the National Association of Social Workers. Garland was fired after she stated publically that Mohler's restrictive policies were endangering the Carver School's accreditation. The school was later closed.

Southern Seminary loses two more professors

Frank Tupper and Carey Newman resigned from the faculty of Southern Seminary after disagreements with president Al Mohler. The controversy with Tupper centered on a book Tupper wrote on his experience of dealing with his wife's cancer and death. In the book he raised questions about the limits of God's power that were construed as contrary to the Calvinist view of omnipotence and were branded heresy. Newman was fired because he favors women in ministry and differed with Mohler on the firing of Diana Garland. Ten other faculty members are leaving Southern, bringing the total of departures since 1992 to more than 40.

Criswell College president resigns

A dispute over theology between W. A. Criswell and the president of Criswell College, Richard Melick, has led to Melick's resignation. Melick believes that the church is raptured after the tribulation, a fierce seven-year period that is to precede Christ's return. Criswell on the other hand espouses a premillennial pre-tribulation view, that the church is raptured before the tribulation. Melick affirmed his continued admiration for Criswell.

[Ed. note: *It seems that quibbles over unknowables is more important than relationships. Perhaps the tribulation is now! In any case, the sharks are eating each other. To mix metaphors, just another case of throwing the baby out with the bath water.*]

BTSR announces new faculty

Three new faculty members will assume their positions in the fall. They are Cecil Sherman who will teach pastoral ministry, Charles Bugg, pastor from Charlotte, N.C., and former professor of preaching at Southern Seminary, and Sandra Hack Polaski. Polaski is a Ph.D. graduate of Duke University and has taught at Furman University, Elon College and St. Mary's College in North Carolina.

IN MY OPINION

Editorial

by Barbara Jackson

In Virginia, Baptist women and men consider themselves fortunate in that we live in a climate free from the Baptist bickering and animosity experienced by so many in other locations. On the whole the mainstream of Baptist life is committed to the principles of our Baptist heritage which our ancestors suffered to secure.

In Virginia, because of the autonomy of the local church, women can be called to serve a church in any capacity as the church wishes. And because of the priesthood of the believer, a person is rarely required to subscribe to a particular theology or specific doctrine contrary to his or her deepfelt convictions. And because we are people of the book, we can claim the promises of Joel 2:28 and Galatians 3:38, and exult in the example of Jesus who gave women a place in his ministry.

And in Virginia we have a seminary that is open to women. While one seminary president insults women and another precludes their capacity to be minister, the president of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond openly affirms women who wish to prepare for ministry and promises to support them in the development of ministerial skills.

Yet other sections of our country find the situation intolerable. Because the climate in Louisville is inhospitable to the preparation of women for ministry, national Baptist Women in Ministry has welcomed the offer of Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City and has relocated there in new quarters.

The gravity of the situation was made clear to me recently as I participated in the national Baptist Women in Ministry meeting. There were present women who had been wounded and who felt marginalized by what had happened at Southern Seminary. In other areas of the country, some individuals had lost their jobs because they dared to seek ordination. Others felt stifled by limited opportunities to thrive and

grow. Some have dubbed that phenomenon the "stained glass ceiling!" I call it sin.

One particularly poignant moment came in the CBF breakout session conducted by members of Virginia WIM. The subject under discussion at that point was ordination, why seek ordination, why was it important. One woman who with her husband had ministered in Christian education for 12 years became emotional as she spoke of his ordination. As she put it, she had always dreamed that they would become ordained together, but his had happened recently and hers did not. What was sad was not just her tears, but the idea that she had put her dreams on hold while he moved ahead, not just that she was on the sidelines but that he did not know the depths of her disappointment even as she rejoiced in his holy occasion.

Yet though many who worshipped and broke bread together at the Marriott had a history of shared frustrations and disappointments and a camaraderie based on common experiences, and others were with that group for the first time, we all felt like kin. We shared a calling, a faith, a purpose. And we were all going back home to do whatever we do every day.

The main impression that I came away with was a sense of closing a chapter and getting on with life. BWIM has moved from Louisville to a more congenial home, filled with the promise of new opportunities and new constituencies. It has a determination to embrace positive change. The Carver School is no more. Women with vision will not attend Southern or Midwestern or Southeastern.

We have new places where we are welcome, where women will get encouragement and a real education with no closed doors, no prescribed line and no proscribed paths. I call that victory.

Barbara Jackson is the editor of SYNERGY.

Positions Open

Associate pastor for adults. Desire a man or woman who has MCE degree or equivalent and proven experience with a growing Sunday School. A "second hat" might include singles, visitation, or family life. Thalia Lynn Church of Virginia Beach is a strong moderate church of 1,600 resident members and unlimited growth potential. Send resume to Dr. Mark J. Olson, Pastor, Thalia Lynn Baptist Church, 4392 Virginia Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23462.

Weekday early education center director with additional counseling, worship and ministerial duties. Desire experience in early childhood education with both teaching and administrative experience. Bachelor's degree with early childhood emphasis; some graduate or seminary work. Proven skill in teaching, administration, management, public relations, communication and interpersonal relations with both children and adults. Woodbrook Baptist Church, 25 Stevenson Lane, Baltimore, MD 21212. Tel. (410) 377-2350. Initial deadline was July 12. If interested, call to determine if open.



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.

In the last issue of Synergy we included the membership form and questionnaire. Response was good and we received a good number of new memberships. We are extending the offer another time and reminding those of you who put off responding. We especially want to hear from our old members as well as newcomers who need to check us out!

We need you and we think you need what this community of women in ministry has to offer. Membership includes discounts on the cost of dinners and conferences, lists of women ministers in your area, bibliographies and other resources, resumé service upon request, and committee involvement.

But SYNERGY is free. Paid membership is not required to receive the newsletter. But you need to let us know if you want it.

About the questionnaire: Please complete and return. We need the information to complete a statistical survey. We want to know who you are and what you do.

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 VBWM. 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.

WOMEN IN THE NEWS

New Positions and Changes

LaJeanna and Jeff Reymond are ministers to young adults at Westhampton Church, Richmond.

Ronda and Rodney Stewart-Wilcox are co-pastors of Grace Baptist Church in Statesville, N.C. Ronda was formerly minister of education at May Memorial Church in Powhatan, and Rodney was interim associate at Monument Heights Church in Richmond.

Kathy Berry is minister of Christian development at Community of Grace Church, Richmond.

Barbara L. Cooke is minister of music at Second Baptist Church, Petersburg.

Carol Hancock is minister to children at West Lynchburg Church, Lynchburg.

Appointments

Nancy Elliott, member of Second Baptist, Richmond, was named president of Virginia WMU. Also, she was featured in the *Religious Herald* in an interview by Fred Anderson.

Betty Easter was appointed missionary by the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, and was named administrative assistant to the area director in Europe.

Mary Dell Sigler, co-pastor Kilmarnock church, **Melody Moore**, member Vinton Church, **Nancy Wren**, member Churchland Church, **Margaret Wayland**, member West Main Church in Danville, and **Earlene Jessee**, exec. director, Virginia WMU, were among those named to serve on the implementation committees charged with carrying out the Strategic Plans Report and restructuring the Virginia Baptist General Board.

Jennifer Turner was named director of the Oregon Hill Center, Richmond Association in Richmond.

Ordination

Deborah Moore Clark was ordained to the gospel ministry May 1996 by Grandin Court Church, Roanoke. A 1983 graduate of Southern Seminary, she and her husband have relocated to Charlotte, N.C., where she hopes to secure a position in church music.

Graduations

Gardner-Webb University Sch. of Div.

Rebecca Gearren-Gunter, minister of youth of First Church, Hillsville, Master of Arts in Christian ministry.

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond

Karen L. Alcott, Charlottesville, MDiv.

Patricia Ann Bracken, Richmond, MDiv.

Pat Jones of Richmond, MDiv.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Jennifer Cook Mullins, Richmond, MA/Christian education,

April Phelps-Kelly, Portsmouth, MDiv.

Jacqui Renee Brooks, Weber City, MSW.

Lauri Janel Loope, Roanoke, MSW.

Margaret Elizabeth Stone, Lynchburg, MSW.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Elisa Benita Bell, Annandale, MA/RE,

Pamela Suzeete Hall, Castlewood, MDiv.

Jennifer F. McClendon, Chesapeake, MA/ marriage & family counseling.

Lorna McLemore, Roanoke, MA/ marriage & family counseling.

To give yourself space to describe your work, you may photocopy questionnaire on a letter-size sheet. Complete 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

BOOK REVIEW

Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes

by Alice Ogden Bellis

Louisville, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

reviewed by Lisa Allison

Dr. Bellis opens her book with these words, "This is a story about stories." I like that. From the first line the reader knows that this is no impassionate, impersonal theological discourse on the role of women in the Bible. It is about women's stories, their lives. Rightly, Bellis sees that stories of women in the Hebrew Bible are very powerful, their influence reaching from before the Common Era well into modern times in both positive but mostly negative ways.

Be assured, though, this book is not the "soft" commentary on women in the Old Testament that we are accustomed to, which usually characterizes them as very good women or very bad women. The book breaks scholarly, theological ground in a journey from Genesis to Post-Exile. It is a compilation of research done over the last twenty-five years by feminist and womanist biblical scholars, whose purposes are to survey the range of methods and approaches in interpreting passages that focus on, mention, or barely give passing notice to women.

Do not skip the opening chapter entitled very cleverly "Introduction." It is a valuable tool of focus for the entire work. It contains helpful definitions of feminism and womanism while exploring and demythologizing the complicated task of hermeneutics.

Hidden in the midst of all this (be careful or you might miss it) is an important goal of Bellis' writing: to contribute to change in society. To think that some people still actually want to change things with their words. Again, I like that. And don't put the book down before you've actually finished because the final chapter, "Summary and Conclusions," is also good.

About the title, *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes*, Dr. Bellis admits that she left out an important category of women found throughout the Hebrew scriptures. And all because of semantics. She could find no satisfactory word beginning with "H" to describe "victim." Her explanation:

She wrote, "In an ironic way it is perhaps appropriate that the Hebrew women who were brutally victimized remain invisible in our title. The appropriateness lies in the reality that too often such victimized women are invisible. We do not notice them in the Bible, nor in the modern world. We don't like to hear about their stories, nor to think about them. In spite of their omission in the title, they will

not be omitted in this book. Their stories need to be heard." (p. 27)

I would like to tell Dr. Bellis that through her writing I heard their stories, those of helpmates, harlots, heroes and victims. I heard and my lifelong suspicions of the redemptive value of those women's stories were confirmed. For example, there is strong evidence to reevaluate Eve not as the original "helpmate" but as "rescuer/strength." And the story of Adam and Eve may not be a narrative of human origins but a wisdom tale that explains etiology, "how things are."

A new translation of Genesis 3:16 is revolutionary. There is reason to praise rather than condemn the actions of Tamar in Genesis 38. She is a woman who takes charge of her life and proves that women are not lethal as they are presumed to be. Her story also reveals a double standard at work in the Hebrew scriptures, in that

women's minor offenses are far worse than men's major offenses.

Ruth undermines the scriptural assumption that all foreign women are bad. Despite the three strikes against her, that she is a woman, a foreigner from Moab (one of Israel's most hated enemies), and a widow, she is praised for her *hesed*, a term usually descriptive of God's steadfast love and loyalty. This chapter is especially compelling.

And what of a victim? The daughter of Jephthah (known as *Bat* by feminist scholars) is remembered as scripture tells us she would be. The horror of her death is told anew, exposing a story not about a man's radical devotion to God but a senseless disposal of life. Bellis brings *Bat*'s life and death all too close to modern listeners. When will the abuse stop? When women are considered as valuable as men.

It is at this point and many others that Dr. Bellis satisfies her goal, to bring change in society. I pray she and we will continue to do just that.

Lisa Allison is interim director of the Center for Women, Inc., of Richmond and interim pastor at South Hill Christian Church in South Hill.

A LITTLE HUMOR

To all Employees:

Due to increased competition and the keen desire to remain in business, we find it necessary to institute a new policy. Effective immediately we are asking that somewhere between starting and quitting time and without infringing too much on the time devoted to lunch period, coffee breaks, rest periods, story telling, ticket-selling, golfing, auto racing, horse selections, window-gazing, vacation-planning, and rehashing of yesterday's TV programs, that each employee try to find some time that can be set aside and be known hereafter as The Work Break.

THE LAST WORD

Logos and Legend

by Barbara Jackson

“In the beginning was the Word,” wrote the apostle John. He was referring to more than mere speech. The Greek *logos*, or word, is one of those rich words that serve a multitude of purposes and carry many meanings and nuances. It is not just a word but one that embodies a concept, an idea. It is a speech or discourse, a teaching or doctrine, a tale or narrative. Further, it is reason itself, a cause, a reckoning, an analogy. But even more pointedly, *logos* is the essential power and wisdom of God, the instrument by which God’s creative activity is exerted upon the world. It is God’s spirit.

Essayist Lewis Thomas reflected, “*Logos* combined the meaning of reason, thought, discourse, all the events in the human mind that are set in action by language, the source of world order and comprehensibility. In the Gospel of John, *Logos* was the thought and wish of God, a member of the Trinity. The word was holy.”

Of course, Christians know that. The everlastingness of God is etched in our memory bank. We sing the words of Isaac Watts, who based his immortal hymn “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” on Psalm 90:

“Before the mountains were brought forth or you formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God....For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”

The hymn captures the idea of God the eternal, the everlasting, the Word that was from the beginning and will be—long after individuals and nations have given way to new generations and new nations.

What about **legend**? We are often told, “**Legend** has it that ...” The clear implication of such a prefatory phrase is that what follows is a made-up story—make-believe, with no basis in reality. Most cultures have legends—for example, about the origin of the cosmos, of ghosts that carry their heads in their hands, why the dog circles before settling down, or where evil came from. For instance, the Greek myth of Pandora is a story of the origin of evil, a story known to

children all over the Western world. There are many such tales to explain origins and behavior, some frivolous, some serious. Aesop’s fables and the Uncle Remus stories are collections of such legends.

But what do *logos* and legend have to do with each other?

Logos and legend,, logic and law. They all come from the same root word. The Indo-European (IE) root is *leg-*, meaning to gather or collect. The idea is that of gathering ideas, gathering with the eye and choosing specific letters or ideas—ones that have meaning. In other words, reading.

The Greek *legein*, to reason, is the source for **logos**, **logic**, **catalogue** (a thorough gathering of facts), **prologue**, **dialogue**, **lexicon** (word book), **dialect**, and all **-ology** words—including **etymology**!

While *logos* is not an English word, its derivative **logic** connotes the application of reason to a sequence of facts and implies explanation, a reckoning, the application of principle. Further, in its sense of reckoning, *logos* gives us the word **logistics**, the practice of financial calculation and military administration.

A more recent usage is **logo**, short for **logotype**, a graphic image or identifying symbol used in printing and advertising.

The Latin *legere*, to read, yields **legend**, **lecture**, **legible**, **lesson** (via French *leçon*), **and college**, **elect** and **select**, **intelligence** and **negligence**. The **collect** in a worship service is what the people read together.

Legal terms derive from the Latin *lex*, law, also from *legere*, to gather or read. **Legislation** makes some **privileges** (private law, i.e., one law for the rich and one for the poor) **legitimate**. We have the **legate**, who is entrusted with the right to act, and the **legatee** who receives a **legacy**. The *lex talionis* is the law of retribution, or “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” From the French for law, *loi*, is derived **loyal**.

On the other hand, **law** and **lawyer** come from a different source, the verb to lie or be prostrate. The connection is that a **law** is **laid down**. Interestingly, **ledger** is from the same root. It is a book that is placed on a **ledge**.

That is to say, it is always in the same place, open and ready for inspection.

An interesting cognate word is the word **leech**. It derives from the Germanic *lekjas*, a speaker of magic words, an enchanter. The word denoted the medicine man, the physician. Only centuries later did the word come to refer to the doctor’s chief treatment, the blood-letting and the insects used by the doctor. In those days doctors had a meager bag of tricks and the art of pharmacology was known only by a few monks, folk herbal women and Arab physicians.

The story of **legend** is particularly interesting. In the Middle Ages the lives of the saints were gathered into books called *legenda*, Latin for “a thing to be read.” These stories of saints’ lives were intended for the moral training of children and included along with the solid facts much fanciful material, were quite popular and were widely published in the vernacular languages of Europe.

In that manner **legend** entered into common use and meant “a story handed down from early times by tradition but not verifiable as historical.” The many incredible exploits of the saints collected in such biographies led to the sense of fable or myth as not true in fact. **Myth** itself is from the Greek, *muthos*, and means simply story.

Besides their shared etymology, there is another connection between *logos* and **legend**. I speak of the “Once upon a time” genre: the nursery rhyme, the fairy tale and the animal fable. They fall into the category of the *legenda*, writings for the edification of children. These are not legends *per se* or myths of a culture, but are the works of specific authors who wrote children’s literature designed to “train up a child.”

The earliest known body of such work is the collection of admonitions, the book of Proverbs in the Bible. “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” (Pro. 1:8) No doubt the admonitions were memorized by teenage boys in the synagogue schools and quoted in exasperation by parents to children: “How long will you sleep, O sluggard?”

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RESOURCES

The Bookshelf

The Bookshelf includes study resources prepared as a handout for a panel discussion at the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly. Members of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry, Lisa Allison, director of the Center for Women, Ellen Gwathmey, chair of VBWIM, and Betty Pugh, former chair of VBWIM, led the discussion on the topic Women's Ways of Relating.

Ministry and Leadership

A Male/Female Continuum: Paths to Colleagueship, by Carol Pierce, David Wager, and Bill Page. New Dynamics Publications, 1986, 1994. Written by organization development consultants who work with human resources management and staff in business, industry, human services, educational and religious institutions. The book provides a guide for a personal journey away from dominance and subordination to greater equity and empowerment. Readable and graphically attractive, the book encourages positive change and growth for individuals on a personal gender journey. The book would also be useful as a resource guide for groups.

Common Sense About Men & Women in the Ministry, by Donna Schaper. Alban, 1990.

Congregational Megatrends, by Jeff Woods, Alban Institute, 1995.

Distorted Images: Misunderstandings Between Men and Women by Anne Borrowdale. Westminster, 1991.

Genderspeak: Men, Women and the Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense, by Suzette Haden Elgin. Wiley, 1993. Identifies

the differences between women's and men's perceptions of the world and the consequent semantic traps. Provides techniques for verbal control and mutual understanding.

Leading Women: How Church Women Can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate the Gender Maze, by Carol E. Becker. Abingdon, 1996. The author shows women how to communicate and influence decisions in a male world, names the gender traps, examines the unique perspectives that women bring to leadership in the church, and explores communication strategies.

The Male-Female Church Staff: Celebrating the Gifts, Confronting the Challenges, by Neuchterlein & Haln. Alban, 1990.

Male and Female, One in Christ: New Testament Teaching on Women in Office, by Clarence Boomsma. Baker 1993. An examination of Galatians 3:28 and I Timothy 2:11-15. The author, a scholar in the Christian Reformed Church, seeks to understand the biblical context for women's ministries as the churches in his tradition grapple with the issues of inclusion, ordination, injustice and discrimination.

Partnership: Women and Men in Ministry, by Fran Ferder & John Heagle. Ave Maria, 1989.

The Future of Partnership, by Letty Russell. Westminster, 1987. Written by a seminal thinker in women's theology.

The Partnership Way by Riane Eisler & David Loye. Harper, 1990. Sequel to Eisler's **The Chalice and the Blade**, the book gives a theoretical basis for cooperation.

The Stained Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors, by Sally B. Purvis. Westminster John Knox, 1995. Documents the actual experience of two congregations with women as senior pastors and the changes and evolving relationships that developed.

Women Ministers: How Women Are Redefining Traditional Roles, by Judith Weidman, ed. Harper & Row, 1981.

Women in Parish Ministry: Stress & Support, by Marian Coger. Alban, 1985, 1991. Results of interviews with women pastors describing their perceptions about surviving and striving as a continuum.

Women Speak of God: Congregations and Change, by Joanna Bowen Gillespie. Alban Institute.

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Logos and Legend...from page 10

The earliest known fairy tale collection in Western thought was published in 1697 by a Frenchman, Charles Perrault, followed soon after in English by a collection of the rhymes known as Mother Goose (1744), thus setting in motion a steady stream that continues up to today—with Dr. Seuss and Maurice Sendak, Babar and Pogo. The chief characteristic of such work is the suspension of reality, a literature that deals in miracles and quickens the imagination—an understanding of make-believe as silent tutorial.

In an analysis of three centuries of the literature, we see several constants, one of which is the fairy godmother, depicted in various manifestations to Cinderella, Dorothy, and Pinocchio's Blue Fairy and others. Dare we imagine they are latter-day manifestations of Lady Wisdom, whom we hear in Proverbs 8: "I was set up from everlasting, from the first, before the beginning of the earth ..." Here again is God's spirit, the *logos*, ever reaching out to teach and guide.

Another constant is the gravity of purpose, which is to awaken in the child a

meaning to life, a way to make sense of it all. The "Once-upon-a-time" stories enable a recognition of redemptive grace, an acceptance of the guidance of helper-teacher-mentor-parent (i.e., fairy godmother, lady Wisdom, *logos*) and the knowledge that the good things of life come from God via the Spirit, the *logos*.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Sources: Lewis Thomas, *Et Cetera, Et Cetera*. Little Brown, 1990; John Goldthwaite, *A Natural History of Make-Believe*. Oxford, 1996; Partridge, *Origins*, 1983.

Barbara Jackson is editor of Synergy

CALENDAR

September

September 23

VBWIM steering committee. 1 pm, at Center for Women office, Lingle Hall, Brook Road, Richmond. For information, call Ellen Gwathmey, (804) 288-1131.

September 24 – November 12

Studies in Urban Spirituality. "The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Spirituality," by Susan Ellett, PhD. Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9. Richmond Hill, 2209 Grace St., Richmond (804) 783-7903.

October

October 29 – 30

Cousins Lectures: Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary. BTR, (804) 355-8135.

November

November 12

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

January • 1997

January 13 – 14

Conference "Women: Shaping Leadership Strategies in Ministry," Alice Mann, consultant, Alban Institute. Office of Professional Development, Union Theological Seminary (800) 229-2990 Ext. 301.

January 18

VBWIM steering committee, winter planning retreat. Details TBA.

February

February 24 – 25

Ministers' Discussion Group. Roslyn Retreat Center, Richmond. For information, call Phil Bailey (540) 675-3336.

March

March 8

VBWIM Spring Conference. 9:30 to 3 pm. Place TBA.

March 14 – 15

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia general assembly. Huguenot Road Church, Richmond. Saturday brunch sponsored by VBWIM.

Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputations ... can never effect a reform. — Susan B. Anthony

The Bookshelf ... from page 11

Women's Psychology

Critical Caring: Feminist Model for Pastoral Psychology, by Valerie M. DeMarinis. Westminster, 1993.

In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, by Carol Gilligan. Harvard, 1982. The classic study that revolutionized the ways women are perceived. The premise that women approach life on a model of cooperation rather than competition has entered the mainstream of thought in all fields from educational theory to human resources administration.

Toward a New Psychology of Women, by Jean B. Miller. Beacon, 1977.

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

Inclusive Language

Naming the Mystery: How Our Words Shape Prayer and Belief, by James E. Griffiss. Cowley, 1990. The book addresses the controversial and emotional issue of God-language and seeks to unite prayer and theology.

In Her Own Rite: Constructing Feminist Liturgical Tradition, by Marjorie Procter-Smith. Abingdon, 1990. Explores verbal and visual language, God-talk, the sacraments, and the use of imagination.

She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse, by Elizabeth A. Johnson. Crossroad, 1993. Addresses the issue of how to speak about God, and places the question of inclusive language and metaphors for God in the context of history, experience, scripture and classical theology.

What Language Shall I Borrow?

God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology, by Brian Wren. Crossroad, 1990. Exploring a theological basis for inclusive language in hymns and liturgy, Male dominance and male imaging of God are issues of faith, justice and personal identity and is a theological problem because God created humans in two coequal genders. A civilization built on male domination and female subordination is distortion and sin.

Words and Women, by Casey Miller & Kate Swift. Anchor, 1977. Rev. ed. 1991. Explores the critical importance of language in shaping and perpetuating perceptions of ourselves and our world. Chapters on the significance of naming and names in relation to power, the language of religion, and other concerns of women