

# THE STATE OF WOMEN IN BAPTIST LIFE ▶ 2005

Commissioned by Baptist Women in Ministry  
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## Baptist Women in Ministry UPDATE

### OUR VISION

*Baptist Women in Ministry will be a catalyst in Baptist life, drawing together women and men, in partnership with God, to illuminate, advocate, and nurture the gifts and graces of women.*

### LEADERSHIP TEAM 2005-06

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The Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) organization has undergone a great many changes in recent years. In response to a call for change from our constituency, BWIM appointed a Transition Team in the summer of 2003 to evaluate the organization and to offer recommendations for the future. The Transition Team worked for 18 months and made the following recommendations:

- To make networking, connecting, and advocating the primary functions of BWIM.
- To streamline the leadership structure of the organization from a Board of Directors to a smaller Leadership Team consisting of the positions of Coordinator, Past Coordinator, Recorder, Treasurer, Networking Leader, Connecting Leader, Advocating Leader, and Funding Leader.
- To designate the Past Coordinator as overseer of the nominating process and to be assisted by a committee of three to five approved by the Leadership Team.
- To develop a Speaker's Bureau.
- To change the BWIM website to [www.BWIM.info](http://www.BWIM.info)
- To rename BWIM's newsletter *Vocare: A Voice for Women in Baptist Life* and to update the newsletter's appearance.
- To restructure BWIM from society membership into a donor-supported organization.

- To produce an annual report on "The State of Women in Baptist Life" in order to validate the ongoing needs of Baptist clergywomen, bring to light growth and losses, and illuminate nationwide trends.

In May 2004, BWIM moved its headquarters to Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia. In October 2004, the BWIM Board of Directors approved the recommendations brought to them by the Transition Team. At the annual meeting held in July 2005 in Grapevine, Texas, members of the BWIM organization voted on the recommendations presented by the Transition Team and approved by the Board. All recommendations were accepted and adopted, and the new Leadership Team for the 2005-2006 year was introduced at the meeting. During the past year, the Leadership Team has focused its time and efforts on these priorities: sending a new monthly e-mail update, updating the logo and quarterly newsletter, and commissioning the "State of Women in Baptist Life Report."

We think the report offers clarity and insight into the progress women have made in Baptist life, and it also demonstrates how far women still have to go. Be assured that BWIM will be there advocating all the way!

*Rachel H. Shapard*

Rachel Gunter Shapard  
*BWIM Coordinator*

# Assessing the State of Women in Baptist Life

by Eileen R. Campbell-Reed and Pamela R. Durso

*“One of the most significant recent developments in the life of religious organizations in the United States is the movement of women into the ranks of ordained clergy.”<sup>1</sup>*

Women have long been the majority of members of churches in America, including Baptist churches of all kinds.<sup>2</sup> Social, political, and theological changes in recent decades have slowly shifted the church roles and leadership available to Protestant women including Baptist women. This report offers a snapshot of the current status of women’s leadership in Baptist life during the year 2005. More than 130 years and thousands of ordinations have transpired since the first Baptist woman was ordained in 1876.<sup>3</sup> Where do things stand now for women who sense a call to minister among Baptists?

The *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* identifies and describes 31 Baptist groups or conventions in the United States.<sup>4</sup> This report includes information about the leadership of women in one third of those groups. Because Baptists historically have maintained congregational polity and voluntary association among the churches of their conventions, societies, and conferences, efforts to collect, maintain, and publish statistical information vary greatly from group to group. Additionally, decisions about call, ordination, and training for ministry remain largely in the hands of local congregations and the individuals who serve them. Consequently, these Baptist polity and identity issues make assembling an accurate and coherent picture of the state of women in Baptist life a challenging, if not impossible, task.

The perspective of this report rests firmly in the moderate-to-progressive constellation of Baptist organizations in the southern United States. Institutions that make up this constellation are those that parted company with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), some gradually and others more abruptly beginning in the 1980s. Baptist Women in Ministry as an organization tends to be a gathering place for women related to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), the Alliance of Baptists (AB), and various state Baptist organizations as well as some individual women who are affiliated with Southern Baptist institutions and a few who are identified primarily with American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC-USA). Thus, these groups are the central focus of the information included here, but other groups are noted when clarifying information about them was available.

In this report, assessments are offered about the status of women’s leadership in the areas of ordination; theological education; service through missions, chaplaincy, and the local church; institutional leadership; and as newsmakers in 2005. Statistics suggest one sort of picture, while comparisons with other Baptists and other Christian groups provide a larger context in which to understand the specific findings. Analysis and conclusions based on the findings point to future directions for research and analysis that need to be taken up in the years ahead.

## Ordination of Women

As early as 1882, Northern Baptists (now ABC-USA) began ordaining women. On July 9, 1882, May C. Jones was ordained by the Baptist Association of Puget Sound in Washington. From 1883 to 1891, she pastored six Baptist churches in the state. Another Northern Baptist woman, Frances Townsley, was ordained in 1885, but the number of Northern Baptist women pastors remained low, with only 16 Northern Baptist women being ordained between 1882 and 1920.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1970s, the numbers of ordained women began to increase after the American Baptist Convention in 1965 adopted a resolution affirming the equality of women and advocating the ordination of women.<sup>6</sup> Yet, the overall percentage of women pastoring American Baptist churches has remained in single digits.<sup>7</sup> In 2003, when 410 women were serving as pastors, they made up only 9% of all ABC-USA pastors.<sup>8</sup> In its 2005 annual report, the American Baptist Women in Ministry, affiliated with the ABC-USA, stated that 403 Baptist women served as pastors or co-pastors, an increase of 13 over 2004. Of these women, 374 served as pastors and 29 served as co-pastors.<sup>9</sup>

In the South, Baptists did not begin ordaining women as pastors until August 9, 1964, when Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, ordained Addie Davis, making her the first woman to be ordained in a Southern Baptist church. Following her ordination, Davis could not find a Baptist church in the South to pastor, so she moved to Vermont and then to Rhode Island to pastor Baptist churches in those states.

In 1972, Druecillar Fordham became the first Southern Baptist woman pastor and its first African American ordained woman. In the early 1970s, she served as pastor of Christ Temple Baptist Church, an ABC-USA church, in New York. When her

*In 2005, 60 women were ordained to ministry and 102 served as pastors, co-pastors and church planters in churches affiliating with AB, BGAV, BGCT, or CBF.*

church was recognized on October 5, 1972, as a full member of the Metro New York Baptist Association, a Southern Baptist affiliated association, Fordham, who had earlier been ordained, became the first woman to pastor a SBC-affiliated church.<sup>10</sup>

From 1964 to 1997, Sarah Frances Anders, a professor of sociology at Louisiana College and keeper of statistics and information about Baptist women, documented 1,225 ordinations of Southern Baptist women, an average of 37 ordinations per year.<sup>11</sup> The number of ordinations per year increased slowly in the first years of the twenty-first century, and in 2005 alone, 60 women reported having been ordained by Baptist churches affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists, the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), or CBF.<sup>12</sup>

## Women Pastors and Co-Pastors

In 1997, Anders identified 85 women serving as pastors and more than 100 serving as associate pastors. In 2005, 102 Baptist women served as pastor, co-pastor, or church planter in churches affiliated with the Alliance, the BGAV, the BGCT, or the CBF. Of these women, 66 served as pastors, 34 as co-pastors, and 2 as church planters. The states in which these women served and the numbers of women serving follow:

Virginia .....	16	South Carolina .....	3
North Carolina .....	12	Massachusetts.....	2
Texas.....	11	Mississippi .....	2
Georgia.....	11	New York.....	2
Tennessee.....	6	Ohio .....	2
Alabama.....	4	Wisconsin.....	2
Kentucky .....	4	Connecticut .....	1
California .....	3	District of Columbia.....	1
Illinois.....	3	Indiana.....	1
Pennsylvania .....	3	Michigan .....	1
Florida.....	3	Minnesota.....	1
Maine.....	3	Missouri.....	1
Maryland.....	3	New Jersey .....	1

Never before have so many Baptist women officially served as pastors and co-pastors, and yet statistically the great majority of Baptist churches affiliated with the Alliance, BGAV, BGCT, and CBF have not called women to serve as pastor. In 2005, the Alliance had 118 affiliating congregations, with 26 women pastors and co-pastors, which is 22%. That same year, CBF had 1,854 affiliating churches, and not all 102 women pastor churches affiliated with the CBF. Thus, at best only 5.5%

of CBF churches in 2005 were led by women. In 2005, the BGAV had 1,411 churches with 16 women pastors or co-pastors, which is 1.1%, and the BGCT had 5,900 churches with 11 women pastors or co-pastors, which is .19%.

During 2005, Jeanette Holt, associate director of the Alliance, assisted 26 churches in searches for pastoral staff. She attempted to send at least one woman's résumé in response to each request for a candidate packet. In 2005, three churches that requested placement assistance called a woman as pastor or co-pastor. Two of those churches called American Baptist women. In 2005, Clarissa Strickland, CBF associate coordinator in leadership development, estimated that 386 candidates sought placement as ministers through the CBF reference and referral system. Eighty-three (22%) of those candidates were women, and 14 of those women were specifically seeking the position of senior pastor. One woman, Elizabeth Ashley-Pritchett, was called as a co-pastor with her husband, Micah, to Englewood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri. In Strickland's work in reference and referral since 2001, she has facilitated the placement of three women as senior pastors and three couples as co-pastors.

African American Baptist groups traditionally have opposed ordaining women as pastors. In the 1990s, ministers within the various national African American groups displayed little enthusiasm for the ordination of women. A survey revealed that 57% of Progressive National Baptist pastors and 74% of National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., pastors opposed female ordination.<sup>13</sup> In 1997, the official reports of the two major African American Baptist groups, the National Baptist Convention of America and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., stated that no church within their convention had a woman pastor.<sup>14</sup>

The Original Free Will Baptist denomination began ordaining women as early as 1876, and the denomination had 70 women who pastored churches between 1780 and 1920.<sup>15</sup> In the 1950s, Free Will Baptists began to exclude women from leadership positions, and although an official position has not been taken against female pastors and women's ordination, in the past 50 years women have rarely been offered leadership opportunities in the churches, nor have they been approved for ordination. Only one of this denomination's seven conferences in 2005 included any ordained women serving in its churches. A second conference, however, in early 2005 restructured its licensing process in hopes that all potential ministers, regardless of gender, would be given serious consideration.<sup>16</sup>

Seventh Day Baptists in the United States have approximately 70 conference-registered churches, 23 non-conference registered fellowships, and 5,000 to 6,000 individual members. The first ordination of a Seventh Day Baptist woman was that of Experience Fitz Randolph Burdick in 1885. Since her ordination, at least 15 other Seventh Day Baptist women have been ordained. In 2005, four of the 127 Seventh Day Baptist pastors were women. Three of these women held full-time pastoral leadership positions, and one was an associate pastor.<sup>17</sup>

## Baptist Women Serving in Other Denominations

While gifted and called women in most Baptist denominational traditions have experienced some limited success in finding churches to pastor or co-pastor, hundreds of other Baptist women have left their denominations in order to fulfill their call to ministry. Twenty-first century Baptists are all too familiar with this trend of Baptist women moving into Disciples of Christ, Methodist, Presbyterian, and other denominationally-affiliated churches. While this trend is an obvious and well-known one, no firm numbers of the women who have transitioned to other denominations is available.

This trend, however, is not just a recent one. Women have been walking away from the Baptist faith for centuries in search of more tolerant and affirming denominations. In 1766, Mary Callender, daughter of the Baptist pastor and historian John Callender, left the Baptist faith, united with the Society of Friends, and eventually became a Quaker preacher.<sup>18</sup>

## Women on Church Staffs

Few Baptist churches had multiple staff members until the mid-twentieth century. Large urban churches, however, were an exception. In the last years of the nineteenth century, some large city Baptist churches began hiring women to serve as “Bible women” or “local missionaries.” The tasks assigned to these women included visitation, Sunday School canvassing, and counseling with women.<sup>19</sup>

In the early twentieth century, Baptist churches began to employ women to direct specific ministries of the church. Most notable of these churches was First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, which in 1913 hired Charra Barlow to direct the youth work. The next year, the church hired Bertha Mills to direct the nursery, and she remained on their staff for 44 years. Director of education was another position open to women during this period. In 1918, Jessie Synder Payn, a widow with three children and a grade-school education, felt called to church work. She completed her high school diploma work and enrolled in the Bachelor of Religious Education program at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Upon her graduation in 1923, she served churches in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Fort Worth. Other staff positions held by women during the first half of the twentieth century included church visitor, organist, and assistant organist.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1960s, numerous churches throughout the South began to employ women staff members. These women were generally identified as directors: music director, youth director, education director, and children’s director. They were not ordained, nor were they well-paid. A 1970 article on Southern Baptist women church staff members reported that many of these women were leaving church staff positions because they received lower salaries than their male counterparts, had no secretaries, and were given smaller benefit packages.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1980s and 1990s, some churches began changing

position titles held by women staff members. No longer were women considered simply *directors*; they were instead called *ministers*. With a new understanding that the role of minister was larger than just that of pastor, some churches, mostly in North Carolina and Virginia, began ordaining women as youth ministers, children’s ministers, music ministers, and education ministers.

By 2005, the number of Baptist women serving on the staffs of Baptist churches had exploded. Because denominational bodies in the South do not keep records or statistics with regard to church staff members, no firm number of women serving Baptist churches is available, and any estimate of women serving would surely be incorrect. The information that is available comes from an informal survey completed in early 2006. In response to an e-mail request, 370 names of Baptist women church staff members were gathered. These women were primarily from states in the South.<sup>22</sup>

Following is numerical and statistical information about these 370 women. The percentage reflects the portion of women responding to the survey:

Position	Number	Percentage
Preschool and/or children’s ministers	113	31%
Music ministers	61	16%
Youth ministers	59	16%
Associate pastors	41	11%
Education ministers	33	9%
Missions ministers	14	4%
Senior adult ministers	11	3%
Other positions	38	10%
Total	370	100%

The other 10% of women responding to the survey reported filling staff positions such as minister of congregational care, minister of congregational health, counselor, family life minister, lay ministry coordinator, parish nurse, ministry associate with small groups, and minister of spiritual formation.

The ABC-USA keeps records with regard to church staff members, and in 2005, 170 women served as associate pastors in American Baptist churches.<sup>23</sup> Information from the 2003 report indicated that women made up 32% of ABC-USA associate pastors; 81% of children’s ministers; 25% of evangelism ministers; 57% of senior adult ministers; and 22% of youth ministers. That year the names of over 2,000 women appeared on the ABC-USA Professional Registry Mailing List.<sup>24</sup>

## Women Chaplains and Counselors

When women’s ordination began to expand in the 1980s, one of the most common paths to service for Baptist clergywomen became chaplaincy and pastoral counseling. Of the 1,225 ordinations confirmed by Anders by 1997, 306 of those ordained women (25%) were serving as chaplains.<sup>25</sup> In the Baptist groups

surveyed, women clearly fared better in chaplaincy than in the pastorate in terms of making up a percentage of the whole. Even in denominations that do not typically ordain women to the pastorate, chaplaincy appears to be an open door for service. For example, in the Baptist General Conference, the list of 67 endorsed chaplains includes the names of four women.<sup>26</sup>

### Endorsed Chaplains and Counselors – 2005

Group	Total endorsed chaplains & counselors	Total Women	Percentage
Alliance of Baptists <sup>27</sup>	89	46	52%
American Baptist Churches (USA) <sup>28</sup>	466	132	28%
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship <sup>29</sup>	489	138	28%
Southern Baptist Convention <sup>30</sup>	2,523	195	8%

Following the SBC’s adoption of the 2000 *Baptist Faith and Message* (BFM), which limited the role of pastor to men, and the 2001 motion at the SBC’s annual meeting to stop endorsing ordained women as chaplains, the number of SBC women endorsed as chaplains and counselors has declined. The policy was sealed in February 2002 when the SBC’s North American Mission Board (NAMB) voted to cease endorsing women for chaplaincy roles if they were ordained or asked to be ordained. The NAMB voted to stop endorsing women chaplains in cases “where the role and function of the chaplain would be seen the same as that of a pastor.”<sup>31</sup> This decision essentially brought an end to females being ordained by the SBC as military chaplains, due to requirements by military and some federal agencies for both ordination and endorsement.<sup>32</sup> However, it is not entirely clear what the impact has been on ordained SBC women serving as hospital chaplains and pastoral counselors. Since 2002 there has been significant growth of the number of endorsements, including women by CBF and BGCT. From 1998 to early 2002, CBF endorsed 138 persons. By the end of 2002, the number of CBF endorsements had nearly doubled, with 130 new or transferred chaplains and counselors. In the subsequent three years, the number of CBF-endorsed chaplains has more than doubled again.<sup>33</sup>

## Women Missionaries

For nearly two centuries after John Smyth and Thomas Helwys helped form the first known Baptist church, the Baptist faithful were concerned with many things on both sides of the Atlantic, but the idea of “missions” was not chief among them. Beginning in 1792, when William Carey traveled to India as the first Baptist missionary, a movement to share the gospel globally was taken up with enthusiasm. Women quickly found a role in supporting and eventually in leading the missionary enterprise. In 1800, Mary Webb of Boston formed one of the earliest missionary societies made up of Baptists and Congregationalists.<sup>34</sup> The nineteenth-century explosion of interest solidified Baptists as champions of the missions cause, and by the twentieth century, missionary service had become the most acceptable and accessible place of ministry for women in Baptist life. Lottie Moon, Ann Hasseltine Judson, and Annie Armstrong head a long list of women who gave their lives to missionary service, and because of their efforts, they are now household names among Baptists. In the twenty-first century, missions is still an avenue of ministry for many women.

Nearly every Baptist group surveyed continues to include a women’s group, whether in the form of an auxiliary or convention department. Primarily, these groups provide missions education and support, and some groups also include auxiliaries for ushers, nurses, or minister’s wives.

The SBC is one of the largest Protestant mission-sending agencies in the world, with a claim of over 10,000 personnel on the field. The role women have played in this missionary enterprise following the passage of the 2000 BFM and the requirement that all missions personnel sign that document is increasingly unclear. A survey of the published list of North American missionaries, which the NAMB said totals 5,126, included the following: 2,000 short-term volunteer missionaries and 1,415 “Family and Church” missionaries.<sup>35</sup> The directory published in the 2005 *SBC Annual* listed by name a total of 1,681 NAMB missionaries, of which 158 (9%) were women. Whether any of these women were also counted among the 1,415 “Family and Church” missionaries is unclear, but if those two designations are added together and compared with the total number of missionaries, then 31% of the NAMB missions force in 2005 was comprised of women appointed to full-time service. The International Mission Board (IMB) reported 5,050 missionaries on the field including those in short-term and long-term service. The IMB reported 2,695 women, making up 53% of appointed missionary personnel.<sup>36</sup>

At the end of 2005, CBF supported 148 global missions field personnel. Of those, 73 (49%) were women. Global Missions accounts for more than half the CBF’s annual budget, and from 1999 to December 2004, Barbara and Gary Baldrige served as global missions co-coordinators. Barbara Baldrige continued as sole coordinator until announcing her resignation effective in May 2005.

In 2005, ABC-USA had a total of 496 missionaries and staff

in the United States and abroad, including church planters, national and international missionaries, development workers, and global consultants. Women make up only 18% of the church planters but were an impressive 54% of international missionaries. An overall total of 175 women (35%) work in the area of missions among American Baptists.<sup>37</sup>

## Women's Leadership in Baptist Agencies

In recent years, the SBC has elected fewer women to its governing boards, while the Alliance, CBF, and American Baptists have increased their commitments to include women more equitably in both elected and hired positions. In 2005, two of these groups elected women as their leaders: CBF elected Rev. Joy Yee as moderator, and the Alliance elected Rev. Cherie Smith as its president. The SBC has never elected a woman as convention president. In 2004-05 a lay woman, Peggy Johnson, served as president of ABC-USA.

### Baptist Governing Bodies – 2005

Group	Governing Body	Total Elected Board Members	Total Elected Women	Percentage
Alliance of Baptists	Board of Directors	28	15	54%
ABC-USA	General Board	131	51	39%
CBF	Coordinating Council	69	24	35%
SBC	Executive Committee	80	7	9%

Equity of employment for women in these same Baptist organizations is a bit more difficult to gauge because of the variance in the number of employees and unavailability of statistics related to pay, benefits, and supervisory responsibility. Some general observations, however, are possible. The Alliance in 2005 employed two full-time staff members: Jeanette Holt and Stan Hastey. CBF listed 60 employees on its website, of which 32 (53%) were women. Only three women have been hired at the level of division coordinator in the organization's 15-year history, although a number of women have held the associate coordinator role, including 10 in 2005. The ABC-USA website lists three groups of national employees in addition to missionaries and national ministry support staff (which are included in the Missions section of this report). Employees of the national staff, Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board and American Baptist Foundation total 37. Of those, 14 (38%)

listed are women.<sup>38</sup> In the SBC, none of the commissions, seminaries, boards, or agencies of the convention is directed by a woman except, of course, the Woman's Missionary Union, which is headed by executive director Wanda S. Lee.

## Women and Theological Education

In 1765, Baptists associated with the Philadelphia Association established Rhode Island College (Brown University), the first theological institution focused on educating Baptist ministers in the colonies. During the next 150 years, numerous other Baptist colleges and seminaries were begun. In the nineteenth century, wives of ministers often sat in on classroom lectures; however, education of Baptist women for the task of ministry was not available until 1881 for Northern Baptists, 1891 for African American Baptists, and 1907 for Southern Baptists.<sup>39</sup> The various training schools prepared women for domestic duties, missionary roles, social work and leadership of women's mission organizations. Only after 1970 did women enroll in seminaries in significant numbers.<sup>40</sup> By the 1980s, the numbers of women students had risen dramatically, and women made up approximately one-third of the student bodies in all American seminaries.<sup>41</sup>

### Women Students

The Association for Theological Schools (ATS) is the national accrediting body for theological education in the United States and Canada. As part of its work, ATS maintains careful statistics about the composition of every accredited school. For the year 2004, the number of women students in Master of Divinity programs in ATS-accredited schools was 31%. The number of women enrolled in other master's level programs made up 55% of that enrollment. Overall, women accounted for 36% of the students enrolled in ATS schools.<sup>42</sup> The number of women students increased incrementally between 1993 and 2002, remaining steady since that time.

**CBF Schools**—CBF has established partnerships with 14 theology schools and seminaries, with a combined enrollment in 2005 of nearly 2,000. Following are the Fall 2005 enrollment statistics of these theological institutions, including total enrollment, women enrolled, and women as a percentage of the total.<sup>43</sup> The enrollment numbers for each of these schools, with the exceptions of the Baptist Houses of Study at Duke University, Emory University, and Texas Christian University, include all students, Baptist and non-Baptist. The enrollment numbers for Duke, Emory, and Texas Christian include only Baptist students.

## CBF Schools

School	Total Students	Female	Percent
Baptist Seminary of Kentucky	45	13	29%
Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond	150	79	53%
Baptist University of the Americas	208	71	34%
Baylor University's Truett School of Theology	385	125	32%
Campbell University Divinity School	208	87	42%
Central Baptist Theological Seminary	130	69	53%
Duke University's Divinity School	94	35	37%
Emory University's Candler School of Theology	68	35	51%
Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity	148	39	26%
Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology	115	20	17%
International Baptist Theological Seminary	126	32	25%
Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology	209	111	53%
Wake Forest University's Divinity School	100	33	33%
Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School	13	3	23%
	1,999	752	38%

**ABC-USA Schools**—Following are the Fall 2005 enrollment statistics of theological institutions affiliated with the ABC-USA, including total enrollment, women enrolled, and percentage of women enrolled.<sup>44</sup>

## ABC-USA Schools

School	Total Students	Female	Percent
American Baptist Seminary of the West	68	35	51%
Andover Newton Theological School	403	261	65%
Central Baptist Theological Seminary	130	69	53%
Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School	150	90	60%
Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology Virginia Union University	331	160	48%
	1,082	615	57%

**SBC Seminaries**—Following are the Fall 2005 enrollment statistics for the six SBC seminaries, including total enrollment, women enrolled, and percentage of women enrolled:<sup>45</sup>

## SBC Seminaries

SBC Seminary	Total Students	Female	Percent
Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary	949	252	27%
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	409	86	21%
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary*	1,793	361	20%
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary	1,300	262	20%
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary	2,236	405	18%
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	2,331	611	26%
	9,018	1,977	22%

\*Reflects 2004 enrollment. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary had only Internet classes available to students in the fall of 2005 due to Hurricane Katrina.

In 2005, theological institutions that partner with CBF had a percentage of women students that was slightly higher than the national average at 38%, and the percentage of women at ABC-USA seminaries was dramatically higher with 57%. The six Southern Baptist seminaries had a significantly lower percentage, with 22% of their students being women.

## Women Faculty

ATS tracks the number of full-time faculty by rank, gender, race, and ethnicity. Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of women employed full-time on seminary faculties rose slightly from 21% to 22.5%. Although the Baptist seminaries surveyed do not all clearly distinguish between full- and part-time faculty on their websites, the differences are still stark. In 2005, women made up 39% of all faculty in ABC-USA seminaries, but only 9% of faculty in the SBC seminaries. In the CBF partner institutions, women made up 26% of the part- and full-time faculty.

The 14 CBF partner schools and programs included 376 teaching posts, including part-time and adjunct positions. Of that number, 96 were women, making up 26% of the total faculty. When the Baptist Houses of Studies programs and International Baptist Theological Seminary are removed from the equation and only full-time faculty in the remaining 10 schools are considered, women held 26 of 116 positions for 22% of the total. Women faculty taught in every area of the curriculum at the various schools. Yet, because of the limited number of women teaching at each school, primarily seminaries with large university resources truly have women teaching across a wide range of theological subjects. Of the 96 women teaching Baptist students at the CBF partner schools, 19 had reached the rank of professor, 20 the rank of associate, 17 the rank of assistant, and the remaining 40 women filled adjunct, instructor, visiting, or administrative faculty roles.<sup>46</sup>

Statistics available for seven American Baptist seminaries listed 151 faculty. The number of women teaching in the ABC-USA seminaries was 59, which is 39%. In 2005, Molly T. Marshall, began service as president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas. Two women served in the role of academic dean in ABC-USA seminaries. Women taught in every area of the curriculum in the schools, including Bible, history, theology, ethics, contextual education, practice of ministry, and pastoral theology. Eight women had reached the rank of professor or senior professor and the remaining faculty women filled the ranks of associate (8), assistant (13), instructor (4), adjunct or visiting (18), affiliate (6) and library director (1).<sup>47</sup>

Among the six Southern Baptist seminaries (and their affiliated colleges) 38 women (or 9%) were included in the total faculty of 417. They taught in the following areas: social work, education, intercultural studies, administration, psychology and counseling, women's ministry/studies, music, English, Spanish, college history, and written communication. Only one woman taught Old Testament languages. No women were listed as teaching Bible, theology, ethics, church history, preaching, or evangelism. Eight women had reached the rank of full professor, and the other 30 women were associate (10), assistant (12), adjunctive (6), or instructor (2).<sup>48</sup>

## Women Deacons

Baptist historian Leon McBeth estimated that in 1973 only 200 to 300 SBC churches had women deacons, and the great majority of those churches were in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Texas.<sup>49</sup> In 1976, 57 Virginia churches had women deacons. That number increased to 150 in 1984 and to 363 in 2000.<sup>50</sup> While the number of churches ordaining women as deacons has increased significantly, the overwhelming majority of Baptist churches continue to exclude women from the diaconate.

In 2005, Baptist historian, Charles W. Deweese, wrote *Women Deacons and Deaconesses: 400 Years of Baptist Service*. Included as an appendix in his book is a list of 292 Baptist churches, most affiliated with CBF but some affiliated with ABC-USA, or the SBC. Women have served as chair of deacons in each of these 292 churches, located in 25 states plus the District of Columbia and Nova Scotia. The states with the most women deacon chairs were North Carolina (78), Virginia (66), and Georgia (31).

Deweese noted that this list of women deacon chairs was simply illustrative rather than exhaustive, and he concluded, "Since the number of churches with women deacons that have not yet had a female chair is much larger than the number that have, it is extremely likely that thousands of Baptist churches, nationwide and worldwide, have women deacons."<sup>51</sup>

In 2005, the great majority of churches affiliating with the ABC-USA had women serving as deacons on par with male deacons, while a smaller number of American Baptist churches had women serving as deaconesses, a distinct role from that of deacons. Generally, ABC-USA churches have not ordained their deaconesses or their deacons, female or male.<sup>52</sup>

In 2005, most African American Baptist denominations had deaconesses who served as female assistants to the male deacons. African American Baptists generally ordain their male deacons, while dedicating their female deaconesses.<sup>53</sup>

## Baptist Women Making the News in 2005<sup>54</sup>

### **"Molly Marshall elected president at Central Seminary, makes history"**

*November 16, 2004*

In 2004, "Molly Marshall was elected president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary on November 12, becoming the first female president of an accredited Baptist seminary." She took office on January 1, 2005, and immediately had to make cuts to faculty and staff in order to shore up the financial moorings of the Kansas City seminary, which is affiliated with both ABC-USA and CBF. In the reconfiguration of staff, Marshall brought in Dean and Lisa Wimberly Allen to share the role of academic dean; and the school, which opened in 1901, began to offer seminary course in five satellite locations.<sup>55</sup>

### **"CBF elects McNeill administrator, Baldrige as sole missions exec"**

*February 18, 2005*

In February 2005, the CBF coordinating council hired two women as coordinators, making them the second and third women in the organization's history to hold upper-level executive positions. Constance McNeill was hired as coordinator of administration. She came to CBF from Central Baptist Theological Seminary, where she had been vice president for development and the chief operating officer. The coordinating council moved Barbara Baldrige from acting coordinator to global missions coordinator, a role that she and her husband Gary Baldrige had shared from 1999 until his retirement effective December 2004. Subsequently, in May 2005, Baldrige announced her resignation from the position for family and personal reasons.

### **"CBFers elect female to top office at Texas meeting"**

*July 1, 2005*

At the CBF's General Assembly in June 2005, those gathered elected Rev. Joy Yee as moderator. The pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in San Francisco, California, had been elected as moderator-elect the previous year. She was not the first ordained woman to serve as moderator; however, she was the first female pastor to fill the role.

### **Baptist Women the Focus of Baptist History and Heritage Society Annual Meeting**

Over 180 participants gathered at the 2005 annual meeting of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, held June 4-6 at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. The meeting featured 22 papers on the topic of Baptist women, some of which highlighted the work of African American Baptist women, Seventh Day Baptist women pastors, and Separate and Primitive Baptist women. Sarah Frances Anders presented the keynote address, "Baptist Women Walking Together in America, 1950-2000."

### **"Baptist women choose first African president"**

*July 28, 2005*

At the 2005 Baptist World Alliance Centenary Congress, Dorothy Selebano of Kasigo, South Africa, was elected as president of the BWA Women's Department for 2005-2010. Donna Groover of Oakton, Virginia, was named as secretary-treasurer of the Women's Department for 2005-2010.<sup>56</sup>

At the July 29, 2005 evening worship service during the Baptist World Alliance Centenary Congress, Myra Blyth, lecturer in worship and ecumenical studies at Regents Park College, which is the Baptist component of Oxford College in the United Kingdom, was the keynote speaker. Her sermon challenged Baptists to explain how Jesus' resurrection and life translate into good news for people, both as they live their lives and as they consider eternity.<sup>57</sup>

## **“Global Women adds two new staff members”**

*October 3, 2005*

In December 2001, Global Women was organized for the purpose of providing ministry and witness by women among women worldwide. Suzanah Raffield, the organization's first administrator, gave energy and direction to the organization until June 2005, at which time she resigned in order to continue her academic study of missions and theology. In October 2005, the organization hired April Hurst as the new administrator and Meg Olive as the student coordinator.

## **“Addie Davis, first woman ordained by a Southern Baptist church, dies at 88”**

*December 9, 2005*

Rev. Addie Davis, the first woman ordained by a Southern Baptist church, died on December 3, 2005, at the age of 88. Davis graduated from Meredith College and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and was ordained by Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina on August 9, 1964; however, her ministry career was spent in American Baptist churches in Vermont and Rhode Island and in an ecumenical church in Virginia. The story of Davis's life and ministry was published in 2005 in *Courage and Hope: The Stories of Ten Baptist Women Ministers*, edited by Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso.<sup>58</sup>

## **State Organizations**

At least three states have formed Baptist Women in Ministry organizations: Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia. Other states hold periodic gatherings and events for Baptist women clergy and lay leaders. Clergywomen in some regions participate in CBF Peer Learning Networks for support and encouragement.

Georgia Baptist Women in Ministry holds an annual fall retreat and sponsors an annual spring meeting at which several awards are presented. In 2005, Joan Godsey was recognized as the Distinguished Church Woman of the Year, and Jan Thompson, pastor of Covenant Baptist Church in Cleveland, and student at McAfee School of Theology, was awarded the Sara Owen Etheridge Scholarship. For information about the Georgia BWIM, contact Karen Pennings at [Kap1003@yahoo.com](mailto:Kap1003@yahoo.com) or 478-714-0380.

The North Carolina Baptist Women in Ministry holds an annual meeting, and in 2005, Melanie Mintz served as the convener. At the 2005 meeting, BWIM of North Carolina presented its Anne Thomas Neil Award to Paula Settle and its Church Award to Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham. For information, see their website <http://www.bwimnc.com>

or contact Karen Metcalf at [childmin@tbcraleigh.com](mailto:childmin@tbcraleigh.com) or 919-787-3740.

The Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry holds a fall and a spring conference and business meeting. See their website for information, <http://www.baptistwomeninministry.org> or contact Judy Bailey at [Judith@bledsoebailey.com](mailto:Judith@bledsoebailey.com) or 804-740-4037.

In 2000, Oklahoma Women in Baptist Life was formed, and in March 2005, it held its sixth annual meeting at First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. The organization presented a student scholarship to Tiffany Kellogg, a member of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City and now a student at Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. For information about Oklahoma Women in Baptist Life, contact Beth Davidson at [BDavid1957@aol.com](mailto:BDavid1957@aol.com); Pam Barnett at [Pamela.Barnett@cox.net](mailto:Pamela.Barnett@cox.net); or Deniese Dillon at [deniese@dillonadopt.com](mailto:deniese@dillonadopt.com).

Tennessee Baptist women in ministry have regional gatherings in Knoxville, Nashville, and the Upper Cumberland Plateau. Dates are announced monthly and professional Baptist women in ministry are invited. In 2005, CBF of Tennessee presented the Betty Galloway Award to Carolyn Blevins. For more information, contact Tammy Abee Blom at [nextgen@tncbf.org](mailto:nextgen@tncbf.org).

In Texas, efforts are being made to organize. Julie O'Teter with the Baptist General Convention of Texas is heading the Texas Baptist Women in Leadership and Ministry. For more information, contact her at [Julie.OTeter@bgct.org](mailto:Julie.OTeter@bgct.org).

South Carolina CBF sponsors a two-part annual conference for Baptist clergywomen and lay women each spring in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, which is open to all clergy and lay women. In 2005, the conference was led by Nancy Hastings Sehested. Dates for 2007 are March 1-2 for clergy and March 2-4 for lay women. For more information, contact Amanda Atkin at [atkin@gfbccary.org](mailto:atkin@gfbccary.org); Beth McConnell at [bmcconnell@providencebc.org](mailto:bmcconnell@providencebc.org); or Christy McMillin-Goodwin at [cgoodwin@oaklandchurch.com](mailto:cgoodwin@oaklandchurch.com).

# Conclusions and Future Research Questions

Since 1882, when the earliest known ordination of a Baptist woman took place, Baptist women have slowly, but steadily, made strides within Baptist life. While the pastorate continues, for the most part, to be only marginally open to women, and growth there is incremental, a larger number of women now serve as associate pastors and in specialized ministry roles on church staffs throughout ABC-USA, Alliance, BGAV, BGCT, CBF, and SBC churches. Many women have found places of ministry as chaplains in hospitals, prisons, the military, and other organizations and agencies, although women make up only 29% of all chaplains endorsed by the ABC-USA, Alliance, CBF, and SBC. For more than 100 years, missionary service has been the most open professional ministry for women in Baptist life. In 2005, women continued to make up approximately half of the field personnel in overseas missions sponsored by ABC-USA, CBF and SBC.

Within the past 30 years, the number of local churches ordaining women deacons has grown significantly. Not only are women serving as deacons in many churches, but they have also served as deacon chairs. While thousands of Baptist churches still exclude women from service as deacons, the trend of ordaining women deacons seems to be increasing in many regions of the country.

The number of women in seminaries and divinity schools has dramatically increased since 1970. In all but one ABC-USA school, women make up 50% or more of the student population, and in the CBF-affiliated schools, women in three schools make up more than 50% of the study body. The increasing numbers of women enrolling in Baptist schools is a trend that seems to be on the rise.

Never before have so many Baptist women had so many opportunities in ministry; yet women continue to struggle to find employment in churches and often women are not considered for senior-level positions, such as the pastorate and denominational leadership roles. Thus, while Baptist women have made great strides, they still have far to go.

Future reports about the state of women in Baptist life should continue to include statistical updates to the areas identified in this initial report. Additionally, a variety of other dimensions in Baptist life might be addressed, such as a survey of the leadership by women in regional and state level Baptist groups, including the make-up of elected boards and employees. Similarly a survey of women's leadership in news agencies, commissions, and special interest groups would be useful in rounding out an understanding of women's status. A more formal survey of Baptist attitudes and perceptions regarding the role of women in Baptist life would bring increased clarity to the statistical picture. Equally important would be an attempt to collect statistics related to the (in)equity in pay and benefits for women employed in Baptist churches and institutions. Yet another area of interest would be to survey clergywomen to identify

the most pressing issues of their work. When an informal e-mail survey was undertaken in 2004 by the BWIM Transition Team, the top priority was finding employment in ministry. Finally, listing published studies and resources pertaining to Baptist women, including the views of female seminarians, and focusing on women seeking transitions to senior-level positions and retirement would each enhance the picture of the state of women in Baptist life.

## Endnotes

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28. The figures on endorsed chaplains and counselors was gleaned from the ABC website: [http://www.nationalministries.org/chaplains\\_list.cfm](http://www.nationalministries.org/chaplains_list.cfm) which lists endorsees by region, accessed May 3, 2006.
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32. Reported in *The Baptist Standard*, "SBC to cease endorsing ordained female chaplains" (February 18, 2002), [http://www.baptiststandard.com/2002/2\\_18/print/endorsing.html](http://www.baptiststandard.com/2002/2_18/print/endorsing.html), accessed May 31, 2006.
33. Ibid. George Pickle, interview by Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 12, 2006. See also Bob Nigh & Art Toalston, "BGCT's new fund for missionaries, chaplaincy board expands SBC rift" (February 27, 2002), <http://www.baptist2baptist.net/b2barticle.asp?ID=110>, accessed May 31, 2006. The BGCT reported endorsing 315 chaplains since 2002, but at press time was not able to offer a number of women included in this group.
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42. The Association for Theological Schools Data Tables for 2004, [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu), accessed May 10, 2006. Seminary degrees other than the Master of Divinity included Master of Arts and Master of Theological Studies.
43. Information gathered from telephone interviews by Pamela R. Durso with representatives from each school, April 28, 2006.
44. Information gathered from telephone interviews by Pamela R. Durso with representatives from each school, May 8, 2006.
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54. Unless otherwise indicated, these headlines and quotations are from the Associated Baptist Press ([www.abpnews.com](http://www.abpnews.com)), and the summaries are taken from information reported in those stories.
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## Support Baptist Women in Ministry

If this report has proven helpful and has clarified the present situation of women's leadership in Baptist life, we invite you to express your gratitude by making a donation to the BWIM organization. We are committed to networking, connecting, and advocating with and for women in Baptist life and those who support them. A part of this task is to continue providing accurate and timely information. To join us in this mission, please send your donation today:

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