

THE STATE OF WOMEN IN BAPTIST LIFE ▸ 2007

Commissioned by Baptist
Women in Ministry

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BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY
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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.

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A TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE of Baptist Women in Ministry

INTRODUCTION

Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) in 2008 celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary.¹ Since the 1983 founding of BWIM, the status of women in Baptist life has been through many changes. In some seasons, it has flourished. In other seasons, women's status in Baptist life has seemed to languish on the vine. In the past twenty-five years, Baptist women have made modest gains in leadership and contributed to the renewal of Baptist life in many sectors. Most notably, Baptist women (and men) committed to the equality of all God's people have helped reshape and reenvision the church generally, and Baptist churches in particular, as more inclusive, more creative places of worship, spiritual formation, and service.

Baptist women have not made these contributions without struggle. In the last quarter century, they have faced opposition, difficulties, and challenges, both from detractors who do not share their vision for ministry and church, and at times, from within their own ranks. Challenges have been numerous and sometimes overwhelming to the organization and to individual women in ministry.

This year's *State of Women in Baptist Life* highlights the contributions and notes the struggles of both the organization and the movement of women toward more expansive expressions of ministry. In Part I, the report offers a retrospective of the last quarter century. Part II makes comparisons between the status and leadership of women in Baptist life "then" (1982-83) and "now" (2007-08). Part III provides updates from state women in ministry groups.

PART ONE: A HISTORY OF BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY—THE ORGANIZATION

The history of the status and leadership of women in Baptist life since the ordination of Addie Davis by Watts Street Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation, in 1964, may be conceived as having five distinct eras or seasons, and three main cohorts of women giving leadership to the organization.² The first season of *Formation* is the time before the organization's existence (1964-78), when the idea of women's professional ministry was just beginning. The next short season of *Founding* (1979-83) is the time when the organization came into being. The third era is defined by much *Fighting* at every turn (1984-95). The season that followed is a time characterized by uncertainty and became a season of *Formulating* new ideas and exploring organizational purposes (1996-2003). The final and current season is one of *Flowering* (2003-08), in which a new generation has taken the helm of the organization and is leading BWIM into new ways of advocating for women in Baptist life.

Three cohorts of women can be detected among the leaders of the organization over the last quarter century: Founding Midwives, Freedom Fighters, and Future-Focused Leaders. Each group has contributed a unique vision and leadership to the organization. Over the last quarter of a century that leadership has taken many forms. Some of the major contributions to Baptist life have come in the form of renewal for worship and in providing opportunities for women to exercise leadership and to recognize it in young women. In each season, the organization has provided a forum for advocacy for Baptist women. Challenges and disagreements in every era have included maintaining funding, sustaining communication with the constituency, and staffing the office, while making all decisions through volunteer-based leadership models. Through all the changes of place, leadership, and focus of the organization, the sheer fact of the group's continued existence may be one of its most enduring contributions.

THE FOUNDING MIDWIVES: Baptist Women Enter Ministry from 1964 to 1983

The first small cohort of "Founding Midwives" is made up of pioneering women who were first to enter ranks of professional ministry and who envisioned and founded what would become the BWIM organization. The organization was first called Women in Ministry, Southern Baptist Convention (WIM, SBC) and in 1986 was renamed Southern Baptist Women in Ministry (SBWIM). In 1995, the organization dropped "Southern" from its name and since that time has been Baptist Women in Ministry.

Every one of the "Founding Midwives" was the "first" at nearly everything she did professionally. These women became the matriarchs of the movement of Baptist women ministers. While they were the Founders, they did not disappear in the seasons that followed. Many became advocates and encouragers who have contributed in every season.

A Season of *Formation*, 1964–78

Southern Baptist piety prepared women to hear the call of the world for ministry and the call of God to "full-time Christian service" as the same call. Girls in Southern Baptist churches studied the Bible, attended GA (Girls' Auxiliary, then Girls in Action) camp, Vacation Bible School, and weekly church worship services. They heard missionaries from around the world testify to the sustenance of God through difficult times. Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) prepared girls and young women for service of all kinds, teaching them to pray, to go, to give, and to serve. Young girls took these lessons to heart.

Southern Baptist culture was inundated with calls to evangelize and to serve a needy world. Girls grew up singing verse after verse of "Wherever He Leads I'll Go," while their pastors waited for someone to respond to the altar call. These girls memorized scripture, sang, and prayed their hearts out. Why then should anyone be surprised when they expressed their desire to attend seminary, to preach the word of God, or to become ministers? Southern Baptist girls had been absorbing these messages, and imagining themselves in those roles, all of their lives.

Feminism and the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s both extended and challenged Southern Baptist piety. Although the women's movement was seen as a threat by many Baptists, for young women growing up and coming of age in that time, the culture's embrace of women's rights extended their belief that God called *everyone* to service. This belief prompted many young Baptist women to answer their own calling with increasing clarity and forthright purpose.

The feminist movement challenged the rules and roles of the church and its exclusion of women from certain areas of leadership, and the combination of extension and challenge worked for hundreds of Baptist women to support a deeper call to reform and renew the church. In some cases, renewal and reform were indirect and accomplished by simply showing up Sunday after Sunday, crisis after crisis, and Wednesday night supper after supper. Women who answered the call to ministry quietly changed the face of pastoral presence in scores of Baptist churches across the South. By the late 1970s, the slow growth of numbers of women entering ministry began to mushroom and opposition from some

Southern Baptists was not far behind.

Over the past twenty-five years, hundreds of women and men participated in the founding, organizing, and sustaining of BWIM. In its earliest years, numerous women contributed to the successful establishment of the organization. The names and contributions of thirteen of those women are below and are representative of the many other women without whom BWIM would not have survived or flourished. Although these women are part of the cohort of Founding Midwives, many of them made their contributions to the organization throughout the other seasons of change and growth.

Sarah Frances Anders was for many years professor of sociology, Louisiana College, Pineville, Louisiana. She has been the record-keeper and historian of the Baptist women in ministry movement.

Libby Bellinger, president of SBWIM in 1988, wrote a history of the organization, "More Hidden than Revealed: The History of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry," which was published in Walter B. Shurden's *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement*.³ In 1994, she compiled a collection of sermons, many of which had been preached at annual SBWIM meetings, and published them in *A Costly Obedience: Sermons by Women of Steadfast Spirit*. She is now assistant director of the Central Texas Senior Ministry in Waco, Texas.

Reba Sloan Cobb, with **Betty McGary Pearce** (later Betty Winsted McGary), called for the creation of a Center for Women in Ministry, and they served as first co-editors of *Folio* (1983-87). Both women served on the S/BWIM board in later years. And both served in several other church and community ministry positions. Cobb is currently the funding leader on the BWIM Leadership Team. McGary died January 3, 2003.

Anne Davis, convener of first gathering of WIM, SBC (1983), was assistant professor of social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. She trained hundreds of women to be Christian social workers and later was appointed dean of the Carver School of Christian Social Work. She retired in 2003, and died November 9, 2006.

Nancy Ellett (later Nancy Ellett-Allison) served in 1985 as secretary of WIM, SBC, and as associate pastor at Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. She was also a Ph.D. student in pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She is now pastor of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Debra Griffis-Woodberry was one of the first women to pastor a Southern Baptist church. She spoke at the first WIM, SBC gathering in 1983, served on the steering committee for the second meeting, was pastor of Broadneck Baptist Mission, Annapolis, Maryland, and in December 1984, became the first ordained woman ever approved for assistance by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB). She is now pastor of Disciples United Methodist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

Molly Marshall-Green (later Molly T. Marshall), served on the WIM, SBC steering committee (1985-87) and was editor of *Folio* (1987-88). She became in 1984 an assistant professor of Christian Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. After achieving tenure at Southern Seminary and teaching for almost a decade, Marshall became the center of an extended controversy with the new seminary president, Albert Mohler. She resigned in 1994 and the next year began teaching at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, in Kansas City, Kansas, which eventually became the new home of BWIM. In 2005, Marshall was named president of Central, making her the first woman president of a Baptist seminary in the United States.

Anne Thomas Neil, second convener of WIM, SBC (1984), served as a Southern Baptist missionary to Africa for thirty years, and she then became a counselor and later professor of missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Neil also chaired the Women in the Church Committee for the Alliance of Baptists and co-authored, *The New Has Come* with Virginia Neely. In 2007, Neil's story was published in *Journey Without Map: Words of Hope for Changing Times*.

Ashli Cartwright Peake, convener of WIM, SBC for three years (1985-87), was the director of program development for the Missouri Baptist Convention and adjunct professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She is now interim pastor, Oak Grove Christian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Nancy Hastings Sehested, advocate for formation of an organization for Baptist women ministers, served on several early taskforces, wrote for *Folio*, preached at WIM, SBC gatherings, and was in the early 1980s associate pastor of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia. Sehested currently serves as senior chaplain at Marion Correctional Institution, a maximum-security prison in Marion, North Carolina, and as co-pastor of Circle of Mercy, an ecumenical congregation in Asheville, North Carolina.

Lynda Weaver-Williams was a member of the first WIM, SBC steering committee, the preacher at the 1987 meeting, and co-pastor with her husband of Goshen Baptist Church, Goshen, Kentucky. She completed her Ph.D. at Southern Seminary and was a founding board member of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR). She is now instructor of Religious Studies and affiliate faculty of Women's Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Carolyn Weatherford (later Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler) was the WMU executive director (1974-89) and outspoken supporter of the early movement to form an organization for women in ministry. Her leadership inspired support and funding for S/BWIM, and she has served two more terms on the BWIM board. She was also an elected coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and was among the founders of Global Women.

A Season of *Founding*, 1979-83

In the 1970s, several national gatherings were sponsored by Southern Baptists with the purpose of focusing on women's role in the church. In 1974, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission (CLC) sponsored a conference, "Christian Liberation for Women," at Glorieta Conference Center. A book on the topic soon followed.⁴ The editors of the *Review and Expositor* and *Baptist History and Heritage* both dedicated an entire volume of their journals to the topic of women.⁵ In 1978, the "Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations" called together Baptist scholars, clergywomen, denominational bureaucrats, and the media. These preludes to the founding of an organization laid important groundwork for the beginnings of WIM, SBC, but ultimately the group had to form outside the official structures of the denomination.

In June 1982, WMU, in response to the growing needs of Southern Baptist women serving in all areas of ministry,

sponsored a "Women in Ministry Dinner." The dinner was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, just prior to the SBC annual meeting. Anders presented a paper on the status of women in ministry, and she concluded her remarks by calling for the formation of a network of fellowship and support for Baptist women ministers. Leaders of the WMU responded to her challenge and pledged to provide assistance in this new venture.⁶

Four months later, in October 1982, at a conference on "Issues Affecting Women" in Charlotte, North Carolina, nine Southern Baptist women gathered to discuss the need for a formal organization for women ministers. Following the discussion, Sehested presented a report that called for national and regional conferences to be planned for Southern Baptist women ministers and for a newsletter to be produced and disseminated.

After this meeting, Sehested conferred with numerous Southern Baptist women and consulted with influential Southern Baptist leaders.⁷ Her work resulted in nine women

and men meeting in December at the offices of the SBC's CLC. As a result of the meeting, the CLC agreed to initiate a new program that would encourage and support women ministers, and the commission gave the responsibility for this new work to staff member Lela Hendrix.⁸

Those gathered also concluded that a gathering for Baptist women ministers should be held prior to the June 1983 SBC meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. To organize that gathering, Anders, Cobb, Neil, Sehested, and Weatherford called for a planning meeting on March 20-21, 1983, in Louisville, Kentucky. Thirty-three women attended that March meeting: Becky Albritton (OH); Pat Ayres (TN); Pat Bailey (KY); Linda McKinnish Bridges (KY); Harriett Clay (NY); Reba Sloan Cobb (KY); Jeni Cook (TX); Anne Davis (KY); Pearl DuVall (GA); Velma Farrell (NC); Nancy Foil (KY); Lela Hendrix (TN); Cindy Harp Johnson (KY); Molly Marshall-Green (KY); June McEwen (KY); Barbara McNeir (VA); Karen Conn Mitcham (KY); Anne Thomas Neil (NC); Carol Noffsinger (KY); Brenda Paddleford (NC); Betty McGary Pearce (KY); Nina T. Pollard (KY); Verna Quirin (IA); Inez Register (SC); Nancy Hastings Sehested (GA); Linda Stack (NC); Evelyn Stagg (MS); Susan Taylor (GA); Lynda Weaver-Williams (KY); Carolyn Weatherford (AL); and Jenny Graves Weisz (NC).⁹

At the meeting, the women participated in times of fellowship and worship, and they listened to an address by Sehested titled "Southern Baptist Women in Ministry: Vision, Goal, Strategy, and Tactics." In her remarks, Sehested suggested that the new organization encourage women to fuller ministries in churches and in the denomination; provide an avenue for sharing "the joys and struggles as disciples of Christ;" instill in women courage, insight, and strength; explore, discuss, and form new paradigms of leadership, paradigms that encourage empowerment rather than control.¹⁰

During a business session, Cobb and McGary presented a proposal that called for the creation of a Center for Women in Ministry, which would provide a newsletter, counseling, and resume services. At that same business meeting, a taskforce was formed to plan for the June meeting. This taskforce, which included Anders, Cobb, Davis, Hendrix, Neil, Sehested, Weatherford, and Weisz, met in Birmingham, Alabama, on May 5, 1983 at the WMU building. Davis was elected moderator, and Cobb was elected recorder. Together the group composed a purpose statement and planned the June meeting.¹¹

Seventy-five people attended the first meeting of WIM, SBC, as the organization would be called. Davis convened the two-day meeting, announcing that this organization should be independent and should speak to its own needs and not be tied to an agency of the SBC. The theme of the meeting was "We Have This Treasure," based on 2 Corinthians 4:7-12. Speakers included Griffis-Woodberry, Neil, Sehested, and Christine Gregory. In her presentation, Griffis-Woodberry

asserted that "Cultural mores, attitudes, and expectations about who women are constitute the greatest obstacle blocking women from actualizing their calls to vocational ministry. Confusion abounds when women express calling to a culture that has not the ears to hear it."¹² During the business session, the participants adopted a purpose statement that noted that the organization should "provide support for the women whose call from God defines her vocation as that of minister . . . and to encourage and affirm her call to be a servant of God."¹³ Participants unanimously agreed to meet again prior to the 1984 SBC meeting in Kansas City, and they selected a sixteen-member steering committee that was charged with planning that 1984 gathering.

The same month in which this first gathering took place, the Center for Women in Ministry, located at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, published the first issue of *Folio: A Newsletter for Southern Baptist Women in Ministry*. Cobb and McGary served as the editors. The newsletter was not yet the official voice of the newly formed WIM, SBC, but the articles and information included in the newsletter centered on the June 1983 meeting and on the subsequent developments, including the formation of state groups for women in ministry. Soon after the June 1983 meeting, Southern Baptist women ministers began to organize on the state level. Women in Ministry, North Carolina was formed in the fall of 1983. Similar groups were soon meeting in Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Texas.¹⁴

The steering committee elected met at Dogwood Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, on October 21, 1983. During a five-hour meeting, they elected Neil, chair; Weaver-Williams, secretary; and Griffis-Woodberry, treasurer. These leaders along with the other nine women present suggested that the membership of the new organization include (1) women with ministerial identity who were engaged in ministry in the SBC; (2) women who had been ordained by Southern Baptist churches; and (3) friends who are supportive of women in ministry.¹⁵ The steering committee also planned the 1984 meeting that would take place in Kansas City, Missouri.

THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS: SBWIM from 1984 to 1995

Many of the "Founding Midwives" were instrumental in starting the WIM, SBC organization and the Center for Ministry. But a new generation of younger women also stepped up and served as leaders of the organization. Thus, this cohort of "Freedom Fighters" was made up of both "Founding Midwives" and young women who had answered a call to ministry, enrolled in seminary, and sought ordination in the 1980s, during the height of the Southern Baptist controversy. These younger women had entered SBC seminaries just as fundamentalists were appointing conservative

ANNUAL MEETINGS

YEAR	THEME	PLACE	PREACHER(S)
1983	"We Have This Treasure"	Pittsburgh, PA	Nancy Hastings Sehested
1984	"Exercising Our Gifts"	Kansas City, MO	Susan Lockwood Wright
1985	"Voices of Hope from the Exile"	Dallas, TX	Molly Marshall-Green, Nancy Ellett-Allison
1986	"We Preach Not Ourselves"	Atlanta, GA	Janet Fuller
1987	"Living toward a Vision of Shalom"	St. Louis, MO	Lynda Weaver-Williams
1988	"Differing Gifts According to Grace"	San Antonio, TX	Jann Aldredge Clanton
1989	"Stories of Faith: A Rich Tapestry"	Las Vegas, NV	Catherine Allen
1990	"Welcoming the Stranger"	New Orleans, LA	Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler
1991	"Be Strong and Courageous"	Atlanta, GA	Nancy Ammerman
1992	"Where Are We Headed?"	Fort Worth, TX	Carolyn Hale
1993	"Behold I Have Set Before You an Open Door"	Birmingham, AL	Nancy Hastings Sehested
1994	"A Future Hope: Dwelling in Possibility"	Greensboro, NC	Amy Mears
1995	"A House of Prayer for All People"	Fort Worth, TX	Angela Ferguson
1996	"Together on the Journey"	Richmond, VA	Ronda and Rodney Stewart-Wilcox Tom and Audrey Clifton, Eleanor Harwell, Samuel Pagan, Ken Sehested
1997	"Blessing and Promise: Celebrating the Gifts of God"	Louisville, KY	Colleen Walker Burroughs
1998	"And the Spirit Will Dance"	Houston, TX	Dawn Darwin Weaks
1999	"Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh . . ."	Birmingham, AL	Dellanna O'Brien, Bill Leonard, Melissa Lamm
2000	"Tapestries of Grace: Patterns of Service"	Orlando, FL	Carolyn Gordon
2001	"New Things I Declare: Glimpses of I AM"	Atlanta, GA	Amanda Humbert, Len Sehested, Elizabeth Clement
2002	"Woman, You Are Set Free!"	Fort Worth, TX	Reba Cobb
2003	"We Have These Treasures"	Charlotte, NC	Amy Mears
2004	"Rooted in the Past: Grounded for the Future"	Birmingham, AL	Suzanah Raffield
2005	"Vocare: Leading Lives Worthy of Calling"	Grapevine, TX	Laura Fregin
2006	"In a Different Voice"	Atlanta, GA	Karen Massey, LeAnn Gunter, Michelle Brooks
2007	"Secret Springs"	Washington, DC	Tracy L. Hartman

trustees for those schools. Those appointments resulted in the faculties of the schools becoming more conservative. The new male leaders, both of the convention and the seminaries, were not interested in the cause of women in ministry, and in fact, these leaders were often hostile to the idea of women ministers. At some of the seminaries, young women students organized marches and stood in protest in chapel balconies. They wrote letters to the editors of Baptist state newspapers. Stories of their “rebellion” soon filled Baptist news releases, which detailed the conflicts that ensued when women asked for equal consideration, or to be heard, or for ordination. During these years, SBWIM leaders spent much of their energy responding to theological and political battles in the SBC.

A Season of *Fighting*, 1984-95

On June 9-10, 1984, at the second gathering of Southern Baptist women ministers in Kansas City, Missouri, 250 women and men of all ages and all areas of ministry attended.¹⁶ The meeting was convened by Neil, and the speakers, Weaver-Williams, co-pastor, Goshen Baptist Church, Goshen, Kentucky, and Elizabeth Barnes, a recent Ph.D. graduate in theology from Duke University, focused on the theme “Exercising Our Gifts.” In her address, Barnes proclaimed, “As women who engage the needs of our time with God, we need to keep ourselves mindful that our gifts belong not just to us personally, or even to us as women, but to our church and our age. We are inspired by the God who includes us fully, to engage fully, in the work.”¹⁷ The meeting’s preacher was Susan Lockwood Wright, pastor, Cornell Avenue Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois. In addition to large group sessions, the participants attended a dinner and a business meeting, and they took part in small group times. New steering committee members were elected at the business meeting to replace the previous members who had completed their two-year terms.

In the days immediately following this second gathering, messengers at the SBC meeting voted to adopt a resolution titled “On Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry.” The resolution, in part, stated: WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that women are not in public worship to assume a role of authority over men lest confusion reign in the local church; and WHEREAS, While Paul commends women and men alike in other roles of ministry and service, he excludes women from pastoral leadership to preserve a submission God requires because man was first in creation and woman was first in the Edenic fall. . . . Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That we not decide concerns of Christian doctrine and practice by modern culture, sociological and ecclesiastical trends or by emotional factors; that we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral

functions and leadership roles entailing ordination.”¹⁸

Most likely, the intent of the resolution was to discourage Southern Baptist women from pursuing ordination and to pressure Southern Baptist churches into refusing ordination to women. The effect of the resolution, however, was that many women and many churches became even more committed to their belief that God calls both women and men into ministry and that Southern Baptist churches, because of the historic Baptist doctrine of local church autonomy, could and should ordain those within its congregation whom God had called and gifted for ministry. The resolution, which for Baptists is supposed to be non-binding, also had an impact on agency policies. The HMB, for example, took the resolution into consideration as it revisited policies regarding chaplaincy endorsement and missionary appointment.

At the fourth gathering, held in Atlanta, Georgia, in June 1986, participants voted to rename the organization, changing the name from WIM, SBC to Southern Baptist Women in Ministry. They also adopted a constitution; began using a designation of officers, including president, vice president, recorder, treasurer, and program coordinator; and expanded the steering committee to eighteen members who would serve three-year terms.¹⁹

At a 1987 SBWIM meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri, Sarah Frances Anders presented a statistical report, which confirmed at least 460 clergywomen in the SBC, including 18 pastors, more than 36 associate pastors, 4 associational missionaries, and more than 20 campus ministers. Almost half of the women were ordained and were serving in Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky.²⁰ That year the steering committee met twice, and at one of the meetings, the president, Libby Bellinger, participated in a joint press release with a group of moderate Baptists. Bellinger’s participation in this event was the first indication that SBWIM would join forces with the moderate movement within the SBC. In 1987, several SBWIM leaders were involved in the founding of the Southern Baptist Alliance (later the Alliance of Baptists), and in 1988, this new organization included SBWIM in its first budget.

Two years later, just prior to the 1990 SBC meeting in New Orleans, more than 500 people attended the SBWIM annual gathering. During the business session, participants approved a merger of SBWIM with the Center for Women in Ministry in Louisville. Another significant event occurred just two months later, on August 23, 1990. More than 3,000 moderate Baptists, including SBWIM leaders and members, gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, to attend the Consultation of Concerned Baptists.²¹ That meeting was the beginning of what would be called the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). At the second meeting held by this group, in May 1991, more than 6,000 Baptists representing 1,556 churches gathered for fellowship and worship. Several SBWIM members were involved in the planning of the meeting,

and Carolyn Cole Bucy, president of SBWIM, spoke at the gathering. The next year, SBWIM for the first time held its annual gathering prior to CBF’s General Assembly rather than prior to the SBC annual meeting.

Several important events marked the end of the *Fighting* season for SBWIM. Very significant were the forced departures of Molly Marshall, associate professor of Christian theology, and Diana Garland, dean of the School of Social Work, from Southern Seminary in 1994 and 1995. Those departures marked with both symbolism and substance the finality of the SBC’s position in opposition to women in the pastorate. The modest gains that had previously been made in SBC seminary enrollments and faculties during the *Fighting* season were soon reversed and to date have not been recovered. The 1995 SBWIM annual meeting was highlighted by the historic vote to change the name of the organization from SBWIM to Baptist Women in Ministry.²² The vote was 63-1 in favor of the name change.

A Season of *Formulating*, 1996-2003

As Southern Seminary lost its symbolic status as a place that encouraged women preparing for ministry, faculty and students began leaving Louisville by scores. The seminary had become the new emblem of change in the SBC, an emblem that repudiated women’s leadership in the church.

At a revisioning retreat held in Little Rock, Arkansas, in November of 1995, the BWIM board of directors discussed an offer from Central Baptist Theological Seminary to move the offices and archives of BWIM to Kansas City, Kansas. In 1996, the organization, after expressing much gratitude to Crescent Hill Baptist Church for so generously housing and supporting BWIM, moved the offices to Kansas City. The move expanded the reach of the organization to women and supporters west of the Mississippi River. It also created some unexpected tensions with American Baptist women in ministry. The timing of both dropping “Southern” from the name and moving the organization to the campus of an American Baptist seminary signaled to some American Baptists a disregard for the history of tension in the relationship between the SBC and the American Baptist Churches (USA).

The attempts between 1999 and 2002 to move the organization to a new level by employing paid leadership proved to be a challenge for BWIM. From the beginning, leaders of the organization had envisioned embodying new models of leadership, models of collaborative, shared, and less hierarchical organization. They had also struggled to gather enough funding to support a full-time staff. All the early employees of BWIM were part-time, over-qualified, and underpaid. The four-year attempt to make the vision of shared, full-time leadership a reality included support from the BWIM board. With the leadership of BWIM president, Raye Nell Dyer and past-president, Becca Gurney, a special “Reimaging Retreat”

was held in Nashville, Tennessee, in August 2000. New and previous BWIM leaders were invited to lend their wisdom to the effort. One of the lasting outcomes of the retreat was the crafting of a vision statement: “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.” The first ever full-time executive director, Susan Miller was finally hired in November of 2001. Kim Snyder was employed as the office manager.

Despite the planning and the vision, several factors converged, which did not allow the attempt to produce a sustainable model for the time and place. The following factors contributed to failed experiment: a down-turn in the economy following September 11, which caused most non-profits to scramble for financial support; internal (and perennial) differences of vision about how the elected board and the paid staff should relate; several public relations challenges; the illness of Snyder; and the geographical distance from the main constituency of BWIM. Another significant difficulty faced by BWIM leadership was the continued criticism of the organization by its own constituency. Some members of the organization expressed dissatisfaction because BWIM was perceived to be too liberal. Others contended that BWIM was too conservative, and still others asserted that the organization focused too much attention on women pastors and ordained women. All of these challenges were exacerbated by changing Baptist identity and denominational landscape during these years. By 2003, the twentieth anniversary of BWIM, the attempt to support full-time paid leadership had come to a close. It was time again to rethink the direction and purpose of the organization.

THE FUTURE-FOCUSED LEADERS: BWIM, 2003 to 2008

The final cohort of women who have led the BWIM organization, the “Future-Focused Leaders,” began their training for ministry after 1995, and the majority of these women did not attend Southern Baptist seminaries. Rather they received their theological training at the newer CBF-affiliated institutions. The first formed of these new schools, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) graduated its first class in 1994.²³ Many of these “Future-Focused Leaders” grew up with little first-hand knowledge of the SBC schism or the beginnings of WIM, SBC. This cohort of women recognizes that they are beneficiaries of advances by earlier women in ministry, yet they continue to face a variety of challenges related to their vocations. They have to make choices in light of a complicated Baptist legacy. They also contend with resistance and stereotypes when seeking places of service and offering their leadership in Baptist life. In the years after 2000, they became the leaders of BWIM, bringing fresh energy and new perspectives on supporting women in ministry.

A Season of Flowering, 2003-08

In 2003, several events converged, and the BWIM board, led by its president, Karen Massey, decided to appoint a Transition Team to help rethink the purpose, direction, and geographical location of BWIM. That year marked the twentieth anniversary of the organization. The attempt to have a full-time executive director was not working financially. Central Seminary was making financial cut-backs and was considering a move to a new location. The Transition Team met with the BWIM board, surveyed the constituency of the organization, and revisited every aspect of BWIM's work and purpose, including the organization's name and the newsletter. Team members included Raye Nell Dyer, Eileen Campbell-Reed, Linda Hicks, David Olive, Karrie Oertli, Suzanah Raffield, Rachel Gunter Shapard, and the BWIM board officers Karen Massey, Terry-Thomas Primer, and Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler.²⁴

The results to the Transition Team's survey demonstrated continuing needs for advocacy, networking, and connection for women in ministry. The number one concern of all those surveyed was helping the women graduating from seminary (and all women called to ministry) to find ministry positions. The work of the organization was clearly not complete, although the modes for doing that work stood in need of revision. The changes that came out of the Transition Team's eighteen months of work included a move of the organization to the campus of Mercer University's McAfee's School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, and a change in board structure reducing the number of elected board members to a Leadership Team of eight members. The decision was also made to restructure the organization from a membership-based group to a donor-supported organization. Finally, a new name for the newsletter was adopted: *Vocare: A Voice for Women in Baptist Life*.

The women who are leading the organization presently have followed through on many of the recommendations of the Transition Team. They have commissioned three "State of Women in Baptist Life" reports. They have instituted a speaker's bureau, and changed the organization's newsletter. They have also sponsored the Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching and helped scores of women, men and churches celebrate the gifts and graces of women.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BWIM: Giving Voice through Leadership and Worship

Over the course of the last twenty-five years, the women who have made up the membership of BWIM faced numerous challenges and encountered significant obstacles, but these women answered those challenges and obstacles by finding hard-working, volunteer leaders to guide the organization, by introducing other Baptists to creative worship styles, and by providing financial

assistance to the next generation of Baptist women ministers through the presentation of Addie Davis Awards.

Conveners, Presidents, and Coordinators

Scores of dedicated women and a handful of supportive men have been elected to lead the BWIM organization. Sixteen women have served in the top leadership position of BWIM since its founding in 1983. These women were volunteers, freely giving of their time, energy, and abilities. Some women served only one year, some served two, and two served multiple years. Following is a list of the women leaders and their position title. The title given to that top position has changed several times since 1983.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

YEAR	TITLE	NAME
1983	Convener	Anne Davis
1984	Convener	Anne Thomas Neil
1985	Convener	Ashli Cartwright Peake
1986	Convener	Ashli Cartwright Peake
1987	Convener	Ashli Cartwright Peake
1988	President	Libby Bellinger
1989	President	Betty Winsted McGary
1990	President	Carolyn Cole Bucy
1991	President	Pam Tanner
1992	President	Carolyn Hale
1993	President	Terry Huneycutt
1994	President	Mary Zimmer
1995	President	Kathy Manis Findley
1996	President	Kathy Manis Findley
1997	President	Becca Gurney
1998	President	Becca Gurney
1999	President	Raye Nell Dyer
2000	President	Raye Nell Dyer
2001	President	Karen Massey
2002	President	Karen Massey
2003	President	Karen Massey
2004	President	Karen Massey
2005	Coordinator	Rachel Gunter Shapard
2006	Coordinator	Rachel Gunter Shapard
2007	Coordinator	LeAnn Gunter Johns

Annual Meetings and Worship

One of the enduring contributions of the BWIM organization has been to offer innovative services of worship on an annual basis. The first year's service included only 75 participants, but some annual worship services in the 1980s and 1990s were attended by 500 or more worshippers.

The most provocative innovations in BWIM-led worship services were the obvious: the services were led consistently by

women. Men have not been excluded, but they appeared only in small numbers as worship leaders. In the early 1980s, and even to the present, the annual worship of BWIM is the only dependable opportunity that some Baptists have had to experience worship that features women's preaching, praying, and serving communion. The use of language has been another innovation in BWIM services, and at times, this innovation has been the most controversial aspect of the service. In many of the services of the last twenty-five years, the use of language that is inclusive of all human beings and non-gender specific in its references to God, has predominated. Some years the services have explored a variety of images for God, including feminine images. The use of such language elicited debate and criticism as well as affirmation and praise from worshipers and the media. Other years the use of language has been intentionally traditional in an effort to honor certain regional constituencies. This choice also drew ire as well as appreciation.

Other innovations in worship have included the use of non-traditional hymns and service music, and the commissioning of several hymns by composers such as Peggy Haymes, Eleanor Harwell, and David Mears. The services have at times included liturgical dance, shared preaching, and the offering of communion. A vivid example of creativity was the use of doors in SBWIM's ten-year anniversary service. The doors were opened, unhinged and made into communion tables as part of the service itself. Worshipers walked through the "open doors" to receive the bread and cup.

Addie Davis Award Winners

The idea for giving an award to young women in ministry began when BWIM honored Addie Davis on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of her ordination. In May 1994, the first offering was approved and more than \$5,000 was collected.²⁵ The early intention of the BWIM board for the Addie Davis Award was to give public recognition to as many

young women preparing for ministry as possible. As the award evolved, the purpose changed slightly with the hope of providing a more substantial financial award to two recipients each year, one for pastoral leadership and one for preaching. More than twenty-five women have been recognized for their pastoral gifts with the Addie Davis Award.

THE SHAPE OF A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

Since 1983, the organization has been housed in three locations (Louisville, Kentucky, Kansas City, Kansas, Atlanta, Georgia). It has had three different names (WIM, SBC; SBWIM; BWIM), and has had numerous polity and structural changes during its twenty-five-year history. Because BWIM has been mainly a *volunteer* organization, it has an ever-evolving set of ideas and projects by which to embody its vision. The purposes, however, have remained fairly singular: to support, encourage, and advocate for women to answer God's call in their lives within the Baptist world.

Funding

During the early years of the organization, the WMU often provided a meeting place for planning sessions and also financially assisted by providing funds and printing services. In 1988, SBWIM began receiving financial support from the newly formed Southern Baptist Alliance. Contributions of \$5,000 to \$7,200 were given on a regular basis for several years.²⁶ From its earliest years in existence, CBF included SBWIM in its annual budget. CBF has continued providing funds for the ongoing work of BWIM and has become the most generous and loyal financial supporter. Over the years a number of individuals and churches have been consistent and generous supporters of the organization as well, including BWIM in their annual budgets.

ADDIE DAVIS AWARD WINNERS

1998	Kelly Bazemore, Tammy Condrey, Jennifer L. Dundas, Joy Heaton, Jana Stewart Kinnersley, Gloria Jean Ortega, Rachel A. Stephen
1999	Veronice Miles (preaching) and Virginia Dempsey (pastoral leadership)
2000	Kimberly L. Hardegree (preaching) and Ellen Holden DiGiosia (pastoral leadership)
2001	Nikki Finkelstein-Blair (preaching)
2002	Andrea Dellinger-Jones (preaching) and Belinda Creighton-Smith (pastoral leadership)
2003	Susan Burnette (preaching) and Shirley Ramsey Luckadoo (pastoral leadership)
2004	LeAnn Gunter (preaching) and Holly Sprink (pastoral leadership)
2005	Martha Kearse (preaching) and Teresa Pugh (pastoral leadership)
2006	Stacy Cochran (preaching) and Debra Anne Carter (pastoral leadership)
2007	Shelley Hasteley Woodruff (preaching) and Renee Kenley (pastoral leadership)

Organizational Locations and Staff

Just as the organization has been led by three different cohorts of women in ministry, BWIM has also had three homes in three cities. The following highlights some of the staff who gave leadership and service to the organization in each of those locations. With only one exception, those who have worked for BWIM have been part-time employees.

Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky

A host of women and men, most of them volunteers, helped write, edit, lay out, print, address, and mail *Folio*. Women like Nell Magee, who worked in campus ministry for the SBC, collected ordinations and news about women, which were printed in "Ovations." A number of women and one man have served as the organization's Center administrator. For the first three years, Reba Cobb and Betty McGary Pearce prepared and edited *Folio*. They had assistance from a number of Southern Seminary students and members of Crescent Hill Baptist Church. Nancy Howard, Molly Marshall-Green, Kelley Milstead, Wyc Roundtree, Linda Wilkerson Ericson, Allison Warford, Rachel Keeney, Cheryl Cadell-Shippey, and Cathy Butler were among the regular contributors and assistants between 1983 and 1987. In 1986, McGary resigned to become the minister to adults at South Main Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. During 1987, Cobb left SBWIM to take a job in the office of Kentucky's State Attorney General.

In 1987, Marshall-Green took the lead as *Folio* editor and continued to have help from students and church members, as well as consultation from McGary, who was SBWIM president in 1988-89. After two years, and growing responsibilities at Southern Seminary, Marshall-Green stepped down as editor, and Cobb returned to edit *Folio*, with the assistance of many others. She continued as publisher of *Folio* from 1989 until 1991, when Mary Zimmer was hired as the SBWIM Center administrator and editor. Zimmer was assisted by Nancy Morgan, who continued to help with many editions of *Folio* during the years that the SBWIM office remained in Louisville.

In the remaining years in which SBWIM was located in Louisville, other Southern Seminary students and women in ministry served in the role of Center administrator and editor of *Folio*, including Amanda Hiley, Laura Ingram Lemley, and Melinda Fillingim. Don Polaski was a regular assistant in the production of *Folio* as well.

Central Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas

The first Center administrator in Kansas City was Pam May, who was hired in 1996. She worked to organize the archival material, to maintain communication with a constituency that mostly resided in the Southeast, and to build a new constituency west of the Mississippi. In 1997, Rachel Keeney, who had contributed to *Folio* in the Louisville days, became the editor of the newsletter. Several guest editors also contributed to *Folio* during this time. May resigned in 2000, and Mark Braden became the interim administrator. During 1998 and 1999, Susan Miller edited an insert in *Folio*, called "Weaver's Cloth," which provided prayers, litanies, and other worship resources.

The BWIM board, with leadership from president, Raye Nell Dyer, in 2000 moved toward hiring an executive director. The following year President Karen Massey and the BWIM board hired Susan Miller, who filled the role from 2001 to 2003. During that same time, Kim Snyder served as the office manager, and several women served as editors and contributors to *Folio*.

McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, Georgia

Since BWIM's move to Atlanta, Georgia, several McAfee students, former BWIM president, Karen Massey, and former BWIM coordinator Rachel Gunter Shapard have worked to produce *Folio* and to attend to the office needs. The format for producing *Vocare*, the newsletter's new name, has become one of the main tasks of the volunteer Leadership Team. The current office administrator who staffs the BWIM office is Sarah Holik.

ministers, and women pastors and co-pastors is explored and documented. Such data provides a tangible means by which to measure progress made by women in Baptist life. Information about theological education and the comparison of enrollment, graduation rates, and faculty appointments also provides insight into that progress. Finally, this section gives an overview of the past twenty-five years of news stories concerning Baptist women and a list of books about Baptist women that have been published in the past twenty-five years.

PART TWO: THE STATE OF BAPTIST WOMEN "THEN AND NOW"

To truly appreciate the challenges and progress made by Baptist women in the past twenty-five years, one must look back at the situation and status of Baptist women "then" in 1982-83 and compare that to "now" in 2007-08. The following section first provides information and statistics with regard to the ordinations of Baptist women. Next, women's leadership within the Baptist denomination, including their service on governing boards and as chaplains, campus

ORDINATIONS

Following the 1964 ordination of Addie Davis, no other woman was ordained until 1971, but between 1971 and 1978, according to Leon McBeth, as many as fifty-nine women were ordained by Southern Baptist churches.²⁷ The majority of these women served as chaplains or in institutional roles.

Available records, including data collected by Sarah Frances Anders, information found in BWIM files, *Folio* news stories, the BWIM Registry, and the *1982 Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, indicate that at least 23 Southern Baptist women were ordained in 1981 in 10 states and 1 foreign country (Liberia). The next year 46 women were ordained, and in 1983, the year in which BWIM was organized, 35 women were ordained. The largest number of the ordinations in 1981, 1982, and 1983 took place in North Carolina and Kentucky. By 1986, Anders had identified 232 Southern Baptist women who had been ordained, and by 1993, she estimated that over 1,000 had been ordained.

Near the end of the twentieth century, the SBC adopted several resolutions condemning the ordination of women, and most churches solely affiliated with the SBC no longer ordained women. Thus, the ordinations of women within Baptist life in the South in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century took place in churches that were affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists (AB), the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), and CBF. The data on these ordinations comes from the BWIM Registry, the BWIM monthly e-newsletter, and e-mail requests. Based on that data, 85 women are known to have been ordained in 2005. In 2006, 49 women were ordained, and in 2007, 73 women were ordained. The largest number of ordinations took place in Georgia and North Carolina. Below is a list for 2007 of the states in which women were ordained and the numbers of women ordained per state.

ORDINATIONS IN 2007

GA	18
NC	15
TN	13
TX	11
VA	4
SC	3
AL	2
KY	2
SD	2
MO	1
OH	1
WA	1

The comparison of ordination information from 1981-1983 to 2005-2007 reveals that the number of ordinations taking place in recent years is twice as many and sometimes almost three times as many as those recorded in earlier years. The comparison also demonstrates that there has been a slight geographic shift in ordinations. In the early 1980s, most ordinations took place in North Carolina and Kentucky, state homes to Southeastern and Southern Seminaries, known at that time for their progressive stances on women in ministry. As those seminaries became more conservative in the early 1990s, the numbers of ordinations in Kentucky declined significantly, but in North Carolina, ordinations increased and have continued to increase in recent years. This increase is tied closely to the founding of three new moderate Baptist divinity schools in North Carolina. In 1992, Gardner-Webb University's Christopher White School of Divinity in Boiling Springs, North Carolina, opened and was followed by the establishment of Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek, North Carolina, in 1996, and Wake Forest University's Divinity School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in 1999. The other state that in recent years has led in ordinations is Georgia, where another of the new moderate Baptist divinity schools, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, was founded in 1996. North Carolina and Georgia are also home to the two longest-standing Baptist Houses of Study at Candler and Duke. Thus, ordinations both in the early years and in recent years seem to be closely tied to the presence of progressive Baptist seminaries.

The recent rise in the number of Baptist women being ordained has led to a dramatic increase in the total number who have been ordained since 1964. The *State of Women in Baptist Life, 2006* noted that among Baptists in the South as many as 1,825 ordinations of women had taken place. Given the additional known ordinations in 2007 and the ordinations not yet documented on the BWIM Registry or otherwise recorded, that estimate may be adjusted to at least 2,000.

DENOMINATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Elected Governance Boards

In 1991, Sarah Frances Anders reported that women had never made up more than 13 percent of the total of elected boards of the SBC. The total number of elected leaders ranged between 700 and 864 during the years between 1970 and 1990.²⁸ A comparison of elected members on selected SBC boards in 1982 and 2007, shows a few small increases and decreases among the different agencies. However, the overall percentage of 13 boards and agencies was relatively unchanged at 10 percent.

In comparison with other Baptist governing boards, the SBC nominates and elects the lowest number of women to its boards. In other Baptist groups, however, women are

represented at rates significantly higher than 1982. Yet, women still are not represented in a way that is equal to their membership in the organization, which is usually more than 50 percent.

Chaplains and Counselors

In 1982, the SBC had on its rosters the names of over 1,500 endorsed chaplains. Among those listed were 19 women. The field of chaplaincy and the role of endorsement became battlegrounds over the next two decades. Eventually the SBC refused to continue offering endorsement to women who were ordained for ministry by their local churches. Endorsements of ordained Baptist women have been offered by newer endorsing bodies. Since 1998 the CBF has endorsed 178 women. The AB has endorsed 77, and the BGCT has endorsed 79, and 66 of them remain on active status with the BGCT.³⁴

Campus Ministers

One of the roles of ministry open to Baptist women during the early 1980s was ministry with college and university students. In 1982, the SBC sponsored 865 campus ministers in the U.S. and Canada. Of those, nearly a quarter of them were women (213 or 24.6%). In 2007, the number of SBC campus ministers had dropped slightly to 834. The number of women dropped more substantially to 121 (14.5%). In 1982, the SBC's national Student Ministries was without a secretary (director). Currently, the SBC collegiate ministry program is led by Linda Osborne. In moderate Baptist life efforts to engage in ministry with university students have mostly been thorough local congregations, with a few notable exceptions. Some women who are identified with AB and CBF have continued to offer ministry to university students, but funding from AB and CBF has been

SBC AGENCIES' ELECTED BOARDS

1982 ²⁹					2007 ³⁰				
GOVERNING BODY	YEAR	TOTAL ELECTED MEMBERS	TOTAL ELECTED WOMEN	PERCENT	GOVERNING BODY	YEAR	TOTAL ELECTED MEMBERS	TOTAL ELECTED WOMEN	PERCENT
Executive Committee	1982	67	7	10.5%	Executive Committee	2007	83	7	8%
Annuity Board	1982	58	1	1.7%	Guide-stone	2007	37	0	0%
FMB	1982	80	19	23.8%	IMB	2007	90	13	14%
HMB	1982	82	17	20.7%	NAMB	2007	58	8	14%
BSSB	1982	82	8	9.8%	LifeWay	2007	57	12	21%
SBTS	1982	63	3	4.8%	SBTS	2007	43	1	2%
SWBTS	1982	36	1	2.8%	SWBTS	2007	39	2	5%
NOBTS	1982	36	1	2.8%	NOBTS	2007	40	1	2.5%
SEBTS	1982	30	2	6.7%	SEBTS	2007	30	2	6.6%
MBTS	1982	35	1	3%	MBTS	2007	35	3	8.6%
GGBTS	1982	35	4	11.4%	GGBTS	2007	39	3	7.8%
Christian Life Commission	1982	30	6	20%	Christian Ethics & Rel. Liberty	2007	34	7	20.6%
Com. On Boards	1982	49	2	4%	Com. On Nominations	2007	70	10	14%
TOTALS		743	80	10.8%			655	69	10.5%

FMB - Foreign Mission Board; HMB - Home Mission Board; BSSB - Baptist Sunday School Board; SBTS - Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; SWBTS - Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; NOBTS - New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; SEBTS - Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; MBTS - Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; GGBTS - Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary; IMB - International Mission Board; NAMB - North American Mission Board

GOVERNING BOARDS OF BAPTIST GROUPS

GROUP	GOVERNING BODY	YEAR	TOTAL ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS	TOTAL ELECTED WOMEN	PERCENTAGE
AB ³¹	Board of Directors	2008	31	14	45%
BGCT	Executive Board	2008	104	25	24%
CBF ³²	Coordinating Council	2007	65	25	38.5%
SBC ³³	Executive Committee	2007	83	7	8%

CHAPLAINS AND COUNSELORS

GROUP	YEAR	TOTAL ENDORSED CHAPLAINS & COUNSELORS	TOTAL WOMEN	PERCENTAGE
AB ³⁵	2007	147	77	52%
BGCT ³⁶	2007	431	66	15%
CBF ³⁷	2007	575	178	30%
SBC ³⁸	2006	2,715	215	8%

minimal. Although they do not offer campus ministry per se, since 1993 Passport Camps have been a consistent outlet for college and seminary students to engage in ministry, by leading youth and children's summer camping experiences. Over those 15 years, a majority of the camp staff, including camp directors and pastors, have been women.³⁹

WOMEN PASTORS AND CO-PASTORS

In recent Baptist life, women have had more opportunities in local church ministry than did their predecessors. They now serve on church staffs as ministers of education, music, youth, children, and missions, and some women even serve as pastors. But Baptists in the South were slow to call women as pastor. In 1964, following her ordination, Addie Davis had to leave the South in order to find a Baptist church that would honor her calling to the pastorate. One woman, however, was called as pastor of a Southern Baptist church in the early 1970s. Antioch Baptist Church near Wadley, Alabama, called Ruby Welsh Wilkins as its pastor in 1971. She served the small, rural church for 13 years (1971-1984), but because ordination was so controversial in her association, Wilkins and her church members chose not to pursue ordination for her. By the early 1980s, 14 women are known to have been serving as pastors or co-pastors of churches affiliated with the SBC.⁴⁰ Following are the names of the 14 women,

their church names, and their city and state location:

- Paula C. Dempsey, pastor, Mintz Baptist Church, Roseboro, North Carolina
- Debra Griffis-Woodberry, pastor, Broadneck Baptist Mission, Annapolis, Maryland
- Molly Marshall-Green, pastor, Jordan Baptist Church, Sander, Kentucky
- Karen Conn Mitcham, co-pastor, Wolfcreek Baptist Church, Battletown, Kentucky
- Esther Tye Perkins, pastor, Pine Bluff Baptist Church, near Columbia, South Carolina
- Judith Powell, pastor, Antioch Baptist Church, Enfield, North Carolina
- Loretta Reynolds, pastor, Jordan Baptist Church, Carroll County, Kentucky
- Anne P. Rosser, co-pastor, Southampton-Bainbridge Church, Richmond, Virginia
- Mary A. Thornberg, pastor, First Baptist Church, Brattleboro, Vermont
- Helen Lee Turner, pastor, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Barbourville, Virginia
- Margaret Bateman Via, pastor, Preddy's Creek Baptist Church, Virginia
- Lynda Weaver-Williams, co-pastor, Goshen Baptist Church, Goshen, Kentucky

Ruby Welsh Wilkins, pastor, Antioch Baptist Church,
Wadley, Alabama
Susan Lockwood Wright, pastor, Cornell Baptist Church,
Chicago, Illinois

By 1993, ten years after the founding of BWIM, 51 women were serving as pastors,⁴¹ and in 2007, the number of women identified as pastors or co-pastors was 113. Of the 113 women serving in 2007, 75 served as pastors and 38 served as co-pastors. The states in which these women served and the numbers of women serving follow:

WOMEN PASTORS AND CO-PASTORS, 2007

VA	18	CA	3	CT	1
NC	17	FL	3	DC	1
GA	13	IL	3	IA	1
TX	11	ME	3	IN	1
TN	6	SC	3	MI	1
PA	5	MA	2	MN	1
AL	4	MD	2	NJ	1
KY	4	MS	2	WI	1
OH	4	NY	2		

In the two previous *State of Women in Baptist Life* reports, lists of women pastors and co-pastors by state were provided, and for the third year, Virginia led in the number of women pastors or co-pastors with 18, a decrease of 2 from 2006. North Carolina moved from third place in 2006 to second place, increasing from 12 to 17. Georgia dropped from second place to third, decreasing from 14 in 2006 to 13 in 2007, and Texas dropped from third place to fourth, decreasing from 12 to 11.

In 2006, 117 women pastors and co-pastors were identified as serving in churches affiliated with the AB, BGAV, BGCT, and CBF. In 2007, that number decreased to 113, and all four of the Baptist bodies experienced a decrease. The AB decreased the most (2%), while the other organizations had slight decreases (BGAV .1%, BGCT .014%, and CBF .3%).

WOMEN PASTORS AND CO-PASTORS

GROUP	YEAR	TOTAL AFFILIATING CHURCHES	TOTAL WOMEN	PERCENTAGE
AB	2007	123	30	24%
BGAV	2007	1,408	18	1.3%
BGCT	2007	5,600	11	.196%
CBF	2007	1,900	113	5.9%

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Throughout the twentieth century, Baptist women enrolled in and graduated from Southern Baptist seminaries. In 1902, in response to the need for theological education for female missionary appointees, a trustee committee at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary authorized the seminary to allow women to enroll as students.⁴² From 1902 forward, women's names were officially noted in seminary documents, and women were allowed to take examinations.⁴³ They were not, however, granted academic credit for their coursework, and they had to sit quietly during class.⁴⁴

In 1904, Southern implemented a new curriculum for the women. The curriculum included the standard survey classes, classes in which women sat alongside men students. The women, however, were no longer allowed to take Greek, Hebrew, Homiletics, or the Pastoral Duties course. Instead, additional courses were provided for the women in Music, Domestic Science, Elocution, Personal Work, and Practical Skills.⁴⁵ In 1907, the WMU officially assumed responsibility for the female students at Southern and established the Woman's Missionary Union Training School (WMUTS).⁴⁶ Female students now matriculated officially at the Training School. The new curriculum and the official establishment of the Training School allowed women more freedom to participate fully in all classes, even the co-educational ones, and resulted in their academic work being rewarded with a degree. These new developments, however, segregated the women in many ways. Women were now enrolled in a separate school, were no longer given choices about course selection, and were required to take "gender-appropriate" courses in which they learned basic nursing skills, sewing, cooking, housekeeping, and table setting.⁴⁷

What would become the second Southern Baptist seminary began in 1905 as the Baylor School of Divinity in Waco, Texas.⁴⁸ Several women attended the earliest classes at the school, and by 1907, twenty-six women were enrolled.⁴⁹ In 1908, the seminary separated from Baylor and was renamed Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In its first year, Southwestern enrolled about twenty-five women,⁵⁰ and thus, from its inception, the school allowed women to

enroll as students and take classes.⁵¹

The seminary was moved to Fort Worth in 1910, and the number of women enrolling each year continued to increase.⁵² While women were welcomed at Southwestern, they faced the same segregation that women faced at Southern. A separate department, which would be called the Woman's Missionary Training School (WMTS), was established that same year. The WMTS's first catalog was included in the 1909-10 Southwestern catalog, which established a curriculum for women that mirrored the requirements for the Bachelor of Theology degree, with the exception of the language courses. The female students were also expected to take courses in domestic science, kindergarten, child problems, nursing, and women in mission work.⁵³ In time, both Training Schools merged with the seminaries.

From 1917 to 1957, four other Southern Baptist seminaries were founded, and from the beginning of each of these schools, women were admitted as students and were allowed to pursue degrees. None of the newer school established a separate women's department. WMU leaders at one point discussed the possibility of building a women's training school at Southeastern, but they concluded that "the idea seemed superfluous."⁵⁴

In the first forty years of the twentieth century, women made up a significant percentage of the total student enrollment at Southern Baptist seminaries, but those percentages began declining in the 1950s. Statistical information from Southwestern Seminary demonstrates this steady decline. Southwestern's student body was comprised of 48.3% women in 1920, 42.4% in 1930, 41.6% in 1940, 27.4% in 1950, and 13.3% in 1975.⁵⁵ Similar declines were experienced in the other Southern Baptist seminaries. Female enrollment in those six schools declined from 17.1% in 1950 to 10.6% in 1970.⁵⁶

While the declining enrollment rate of women suggests a slow evaporation of acceptance for women's service to the church, a closer look reveals a more complex picture. In part, the declining enrollment rates should be understood as a reflection of the trend toward greater professionalization and specialization of ministry during the middle decades of the twentieth century. This trend created a growth in men's attendance in seminaries. During the same decades following World War II, women were not encouraged to obtain education but to stay home and care for families. The closing of women's training schools at Southwestern in 1934 and the reorganization and renaming of the Training School at Southern to the Carver School of Missions and Social Work in 1952 and eventual merger of Carver with Southern in 1963 impacted the enrollment figures for women at both schools.⁵⁷

A major shift in theological education for women in Baptist life (and most of America's denominations) can be observed after 1970 when women's enrollments again began

to rise. In 1970, 628 women were enrolled in the six SBC seminaries, making them 10.7% of the total 5,848 students. By the academic year 1978-79, the total enrollment of students had almost doubled, and the number of women had tripled. Women made up 17% of the student bodies at SBC seminaries.⁵⁸ In 1990-91, the same time in which CBF was organized, Carolyn Plampin surveyed numerous seminaries and found that women made up 21.7% of the student enrollment at the SBC schools.⁵⁹ In 2005, women made up nearly the same percentage of the total student body of SBC schools as they had 15 years earlier. The following discussion highlights the changing situation of women's theological education in Baptist life in the SBC and the newer CBF-related schools.

Women's Enrollment and Graduation Rates at SBC Seminaries

By the late 1970s, three Baptists seminaries were having the greatest impact on preparing women for ministry of various kinds. Southern Seminary in Louisville and Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest had the reputations of being most open to women preparing for all roles of ministry. Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth was enrolling the largest numbers of women. Women's enrollment and graduation in these schools over the last three decades first rose noticeably and later dropped back to earlier levels.

At Southern Seminary, in the academic year 1976-77, there were 2,105 students enrolled, and of those, 437 were women (20.8%).⁶⁰ In 1985-86, the school's enrollment had increased to 2,439, and the number of women increased to its highest rate at 656 (27%).⁶¹ Thus, between academic years 1976-77 and 1985-86 the school had a net increase in total enrollment of 490, an increase of 23.8%, and a net increase of 242 women students, an increase of 55.4%. A significant portion of that growth in the enrollment of women during the decade can be attributed to the opening of the Carver School of Christian Social Work in 1985. The year Carver opened, 91 of its new students were women and 47 were men. In the decade from 1976 to 1986, more women also began enrolling in the school of theology. In 1976, 79 women (5.8%) were theology students. That number grew to 262 in 1986 (16%). The growth of 183 women enrolled in the theology program in that ten-year period at Southern shows a dramatic increase of 232%.

In 1986, a slow decline in overall enrollment began at Southern Seminary, and enrollment continued to drop for another decade. By 1990-91, the total enrollment was down 350 from its 1986-87 high, and the number of women students was down 228 in that same five-year period. After declining further, the enrollments began to rise again at some point after 2000. Yet by 2005, enrollment numbers had not yet fully recovered to the high points of 1985-86, and the number

of women enrolled had not recovered at all. In 2005, women at Southern Seminary represented 18% of the student body, and by 2006, the percentage had dropped further to 14%.

At Southwestern Seminary, while the percentage of women students has increased, the total number of women students enrolled at the school has dropped. In 1982-83, the school enrolled 845 women in three programs, making them 18% of the total student enrollment.

That percentage held relatively steady through 1991. By 2005, the female student population was 200 less than it had been in 1983. However, the number of women enrolled in 2005 (611) represents a greater percentage of the total student body (2,331) at 26%.⁶²

The declining educational opportunities for women at Southern Baptist seminaries is also evidenced by the decreasing graduation rates of women. In 1980 and 1981, Southeastern Seminary graduated 494 students in its various programs. Of those graduate, 12% were women. In May 1982, the percentage of female graduates exceeded 20%, and for the next five years the percentages fluctuated between 13% and 21%. After seminary president, Randall Lolley announced his resignation in the fall of 1987, the percentage of female graduates reached a high mark the following semester. In May 1988, one in four graduates was female (25.3%). From that point forward, the percentages of female graduates declined as did the overall numbers of graduates. In the fall of 1991, the numbers of women graduating from Southeastern Seminary dipped below 10%, and in the fall of 1994, the percentage fell to 5%. Between the Fall of 1998 and the Spring of 2000, the numbers rose, and women made up a little more than 10% of those graduating classes. In those same years, however, the number of women earning the Master of Divinity degree was between zero and 7%. Most of the M.Div. degrees earned by women in those years were with specialties in education, counseling, or women's ministries. Other female graduates were earning degrees in the Master of Arts and undergraduate degree programs.⁶³

Graduation rates at Southwestern Seminary also reflect that women students there did not pursue theology degrees. In 1975, only 4 women were listed among graduates from Southwestern's School of Theology (1.4%). That same year, 74 women received degrees from the School of Religious Education (29%). In 1992-93, Southwestern Seminary awarded to women one doctorate in theology and 24 other theology degrees (15.6%), and the school presented 110 religious education degrees to women (33%).⁶⁴

While the numbers of women enrolling and graduating from Southern Baptist seminaries has declined in recent years, women made up an average of 22% of the student bodies of the six seminaries in 2005. At those seminaries, women students are welcomed to pursue any of the degrees offered, including the Master of Divinity degree, but certain restrictions do apply. For example, at Southern Seminary, only male

students are allowed to enroll in the Ministry of Proclamation and Preaching Practicum courses. Women students are required to substitute the Ministry of Teaching and other suitable courses for the preaching courses.⁶⁵ At Southwestern Seminary, women students must substitute Women's Ministries in the Local Church for the Foundations for Christian Ministry and substitute Expository Communication of Biblical Truth for Introduction to Expository Preaching.⁶⁶

At least four of the Southern Baptist seminaries now offer degrees designed especially for women. In March 1997, New Orleans Seminary began the first women's studies program, which offers a Bachelor and a Master's degree in Women's Ministries.⁶⁷ Southern, Southeastern, and Southwestern seminaries also offer degree programs in some type of women's ministries or women's studies. Five of the six seminaries have certificate programs for minister's wives, which offer such courses as Basic Christian Doctrine, Marriage and the Family, and Woman to Woman Ministry.⁶⁸ Southern Seminary offers a Seminary Wives Institute, which features courses such as Embracing Femininity, the Ministry of Hospitality, and Playing Hymns.⁶⁹ The Southwestern Seminary on-line catalog notes that the school "is making an investment in student wives," and thus, it offers a "unique program that combines practical, spiritual, and academic studies." Available courses include Orientation to Homemaking, Nutrition, and Wife of the Equipping Minister.⁷⁰ Golden Gate Seminary has a certificate program titled Partners in Ministry Training, which is "designed to equip students for leadership ministry in a supporting role." The certificate is available to all lay people, including "student spouses, students, alumni, and friends. . . . It is, however, primarily designed for seminary student wives."⁷¹

Despite the offerings of new women's ministry and women's studies degree programs, the numbers of women students enrolled in and graduating from Southern Baptist seminaries have dropped in the past 25 years. So where have all the women students gone? Although no simple answer may be given for that question, clearly a greater number of Baptist women have chosen to attend the newer non-SBC affiliated divinity schools and seminaries and the Baptist Houses of Study. Other women have chosen to pursue their educations for ministry in non-Baptist institutions. The following highlights the enrollments and graduation rates of women who have chosen to attend CBF-affiliated theological institutions.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

In the Fall of 2007, the fourteen seminaries, theology schools, and Baptist studies program affiliated with CBF had a combined enrollment of 2,145 students. The enrollment of women students at those schools ranged from 23% to 53%. Those same schools graduated 136 women (40.4%). Following are the Fall 2007 enrollment and graduation statistics of these theological institutions.⁷² The enrollment and graduation numbers for each

FALL 2007 ENROLLMENT

CBF Schools	Total Students	Female Students	Percentage
Baptist Seminary of Kentucky	44	20	45%
Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond	151	78	52%
Baptist University of the Americas	204	72	35%
Baylor University's Truett School of Theology	401	118	29%
Campbell University Divinity School	232	94	41%
Central Baptist Theological Seminary	115	52	45%
Duke University's Divinity School	97	43	44%
Emory University's Candler School of Theology	72	38	53%
Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity	191	52	27%
Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology	118	27	23%
International Baptist Theological Seminary	138	39	28%
Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology	237	124	52%
Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School	32	11	34%
Wake Forest University's Divinity School	113	57	50%

SPRING 2007 GRADUATION

CBF Schools	Total Students	Female Students	Percentage
Baptist Seminary of Kentucky	4	2	50%
Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond	43	20	47%
Baptist University of the Americas	22	7	32%
Baylor University's Truett School of Theology	47	20	40%
Campbell University Divinity School	53	21	47%
Central Baptist Theological Seminary	13	6	46%
Duke University's Divinity School	28	6	21%
Emory University's Candler School of Theology	16	9	56%
Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity	35	7	20%
Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology	14	3	21%
International Baptist Theological Seminary	21	8	38%
Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology	35	19	54%
Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School	2	0	0%
Wake Forest University's Divinity School	23	8	34%

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, and include the numbers enrolled in all professional degrees. The enrollment and graduation numbers for Duke, Emory, and Texas Christian include only Baptist students.

In 2007, CBF schools had a total of 2,145 students, of which 825 were women (38.5%). In 2006, CBF schools had a total of 2,087 students, of which 806 were women (38.6%). The schools with the greatest increase in women students from 2006 to 2007 were Baptist Seminary in Kentucky (40% in 2006, 45% in 2007); Duke University's Divinity School (40% in 2006, 44% in 2007); and Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology (20% in 2006, 23% in 2007).

In the Spring of 2007, CBF schools had 336 graduates,

of which 136 were women (40.4%). The school's percentages ranged from 0% to 56%.

Seminary Faculty

During the twenty-five years of BWIM's existence, the faculty make-up of Southern Baptist seminaries has had little change, with only a slight increase in the number of women appointed to the faculties from 19 (6.3%) in 1982 to 32 (8.4%) in 2007. In 1982, most of the 19 women faculty members taught in the areas of religious education, social work, church music, or field education. Only two women taught in the schools of theology, and both were adjunct professors.

In 1984, *Folio* reported that on Southern Seminary's 125th anniversary the board of trustees appointed the following women to new posts: C. Anne Davis was named

dean of the newly created school of Social Work; Mozelle Clark Sherman was appointed professor of church music; Molly Marshall was made assistant professor of Christian theology; and Pamela J. Scalise was appointed assistant professor of Old Testament. During the 1980s more women were added to all of the SBC seminary faculties. As the boards of the SBC changed in the late 1980s and early 1990s to reflect the more conservative direction of the denomination, appointments of women in schools of theology halted. Two heated battles at Southern Seminary ended in the forced resignation of Molly Marshall-Green in 1994 and the firing of Diana Garland in 1995. Southwestern Seminary had its share of heated battles with regard to female faculty in more recent years with the dismissal in 2004 of Karen Bullock, associate dean of Ph.D. studies in the School of Theology, and the denial of tenure in 2004 to Sheri Klouda and the subsequent termination of her contract in 2006. Klouda, assistant professor of Old Testament languages, filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against the seminary that was dismissed by the court in 2008. These disputes reflect the changing attitudes of Southern Baptist leaders about the authority of women in church, home, society, and the seminary classroom.

Since their founding, the new CBF-affiliated divinity schools and seminaries have intentionally sought to be more gender inclusive in their hiring practices. In 2005, the CBF facilities included 96 women (25.5%) of the total faculty teaching in those schools. Statistics available for 7 American Baptist seminaries in 2005 listed 151 faculty members. The number of women teaching in the ABC-USA seminaries was 59, or 39%, consistent with the advancement of women in other areas of ABC-USA boards, agencies and church ministry.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BAPTIST WOMEN IN THE NEWS

The S/BWIM organization rarely missed an opportunity to report and comment on the news. Because *Folio* and *Vocare* have typically been issued four times a year, the quarterly news cycle was a manageable time frame for collecting, commenting on and publishing news of interest to Baptist clergywomen and their supporters.

Top News Stories from *Folio* (1983-2005) and *Vocare* (2006)

The top news items from 1983 to 2006 have been selected for the insight they give on prevailing attitudes and concerns about women in the last quarter century. The stories offer some issues involving the BWIM organization itself. Like Baptist clergywomen, BWIM has rarely in its history been free of controversy. Not only did BWIM make it a priority to report and comment on controversies about women's issues in Baptist life, the organization often found itself in the media

spotlight, usually at the center of some perceived conflict. Without a full-time public relations staff, BWIM made creative use of volunteer time and expertise to answer the media. Following in narrative form are those top news items. A few years lacked major stories of interest, but most years held more than one significant event.

In 1983, the most significant event for women in Baptist life was likely the founding of the organization WIM, SBC, and three Resource Centers in Louisville, Kentucky; Wake Forest, North Carolina; and Pineville, Louisiana. The first meeting of the group in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, was attended by 75 people. *Folio* also reported increased enrollments in SBC seminaries and noted that regional meetings of women in ministry were held. Seven state Baptist conventions faced resolutions about women's ordination, which was by far the most controversial issue discussed in those fall convention meetings.

The SBC's annual meeting in 1984 produced that year's leading story. Messengers to the convention passed Resolution No. 3, "On Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry," which denounced the ordination of women ministers. *Folio* included responses to the resolution by pastors, men and women, WMU officers, and the six presidents of SBC seminaries. The controversy surrounding this resolution spilled over into 1985 and continued to be the dominant news story in *Folio*, including one story on the interpretation of meaning of the resolution by the leaders of the HMB. Eventually, the HMB participated in a study of women's ordination as it related to missionary appointment and funding.

The stories that dominated the 1986 issues of *Folio* were the aftershocks of conflict at the 1984, 1985, and 1986 SBC meetings. The response of *Folio's* editors was to offer more resources, to provide more profiles and stories of women in ministry, and to publish various theological, biblical, and pastoral reasons to support women in ministry. The biggest news of 1986 came in October when the HMB voted to stop providing financial assistance to new churches that employ an ordained woman as pastor. The HMB also voted not to change its policy about female candidates seeking missionary status or chaplaincy endorsement based on ordination. The WIM, SBC board responded with a public statement of protest.

In 1987, one news summary in *Folio* declared a growing "backlash" against women in ministry appeared to be underway since the adoption of the 1984 resolution. Stories in 1987 continued to focus on fallout from the HMB decision not to fund new church starts with women pastors. The CLC voted to pull two pamphlets about women in Baptist life from circulation and destroy them. This decision brought a blistering protest from Libby Bellinger. Also that year Prescott Memorial Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, called Nancy Hastings Sehested as pastor. The church was subsequently chastised when the Shelby County Association withdrew fellowship.

The news event related to women in Baptist life, which

drew the most attention in 1988, was the Centennial Celebration of the WMU. The findings of the SBC Peace Committee were also released during the summer of 1988. Those findings met with mixed reviews. Prior to the SBC meeting in San Antonio, Texas, Bellinger preached "Home By a Different Way" at "The Forum," a gathering of moderate Baptists.

In 1989, *Folio* ran an open letter from Sehested to the HMB, which had withdrawn its support of the Eleventh National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations because Sehested was scheduled to speak during the workshop. The Foreign Mission Board (FMB) in June of 1989 rejected Katrina and Greg Pennington from the candidate selection process because of her ordination. Ironically, the FMB just six months later appointed an ordained woman, Patricia Chiu Lee, as a missionary to Japan. Finally, in 1989, *Folio* noted that women were serving as presidents of three state conventions—in the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Virginia.

The merger of SBWIM and the Center for Women in Ministry in Louisville, Kentucky, was the dominate story of 1990. Constitutional changes were made to allow for the two autonomous entities to join together in order to strengthen the work of both. The next year, a headline in *Folio* read: "Church Calls Woman Pastor: Loses Building." The church, Jefferson Street Baptist Chapel in Louisville, Kentucky, called Cindy Weber as pastor on August 18, 1991, and on September 30, the executive board of the Long Run Baptist Association voted to stop allowing the church to meet in an association-owned building.

In 1992, *Folio* reported that for the first time its meeting would be held prior to the CBF General Assembly rather than prior to the SBC annual meeting. A news story in 1992 also noted that the AB had elected Ann Quattlebaum, a family therapist, as president and that Pat Ayres, a laywoman from Austin, Texas, had become moderator of CBF.

The tenth anniversary celebration of SBWIM's founding was the highlighted story throughout 1993. The inaugural event of the decade celebration was a worship service at the AB Convocation in February. The celebration continued during the SBWIM annual meeting held prior to the CBF General Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama, in May.

In 1994, *Folio* reported that messengers from Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church in San Francisco, California, were not allowed to participate in the California Southern Baptist Convention because the church had called Julie Pennington-Russell as its pastor. The next year *Folio* featured stories about the forced resignation of Molly Marshall, the termination of Raye Nell Dyer from her role as Baptist Student Union director at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston because she had been ordained by South Main Baptist Church in Houston; and the firing of Diana Garland at Southern Seminary. Another significant news story in 1995 was the vote of the membership to change the name of the

organization to Baptist Women in Ministry.

The top story in 1996 was the move of the BWIM office to Kansas City, Kansas. Central Baptist Theological Seminary invited the organization to relocate to its campus, and in April of that year, the office was moved under the direction of Pamela J. May, who was hired to be the Center administrator, and BWIM president, Kathy Manis Findley.

In 1997, *Folio* reported that the organization had begun to provide financial support to women and organizations. BWIM contributed to the support of a pastoral internship position for a woman at BTSR, and BWIM provided ten \$100 scholarships for women interested in pursuing continuing educational opportunities. The other major news story in 1997 was that BWIM would begin in 1998 presenting Addie Davis Awards each year to deserving women seminarians.

Julie Pennington-Russell's call to be pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, and the establishment of new women's programs at Southern Baptist seminaries were headline stories in 1998. Pennington-Russell in August became the first woman senior pastor of a church affiliated with the BGCT, and in July, New Orleans Seminary announced the first-of-its-kind certification program for women, designed to equip women to lead women's Bible studies, WMU programs, and women's ministry groups. The other big news story of 1998 was that the SBC had approved a new article on the family as an amendment to the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message (BFM). The new article stated, "A wife is to submit herself graciously" to her husband. Reactions from Baptist women ministers and lay women were included in the Fall 1998 issue of *Folio*.

The leading story in 1999 proved to be the decision for BWIM to hire a full-time leader for the organization. This decision was presented and discussed at the annual BWIM gathering, and participants at the meeting voted to adopt a budget to support a full-time employee. Also in the news in 1999 was BWIM's financial support of a female campus ministry internship at the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

The new millennium brought a dramatic story from Southern Baptists, which impacted BWIM and its constituency. The adoption of a revised confessional statement, the 2000 BFM, included not only a restatement of women's gracious submission to their husbands, but it also called for the office of pastor to be filled only by men. In addition to responses by pastors and Baptist leaders to the SBC's new confessional document, *Folio* also included letters of support from those outside Baptist life.

In 2001, reverberations from the 2000 BFM continued to fill the headlines of *Folio*. For example Memorial Baptist Church, in Savannah, Georgia voted to withdraw from the SBC. Memorial was staffed by Carolyn Hale, pastor and Jennifer Britt, minister of music and education. Other churches also found themselves in the next few years facing

consequences for their choices to ordain and hire women in pastoral roles. In 2001 Reba Cobb was named to the chief operating officer for CBF, another first for Baptist women. At the end of 2001 Susan Miller was hired as the first full-time executive director of BWIM.

In early 2002 the North American Mission Board of the SBC voted to stop endorsing women who had already been ordained, although they agreed to “grandfather in” ordained women who were already endorsed. Several important leaders of BWIM died in 2002 and 2003, including Eleanor Harwell who made the motion to drop “Southern” from the organization’s name, Len Sehested, mentor to many women, and WIM, SBC co-founder, Betty McGary.

In 2003 the BWIM organization celebrated its twentieth anniversary, during its annual meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. Later that year the BWIM board announced they would be accepting an offer from the McAfee School of Theology, and moving the offices to Atlanta, Georgia. A Transition Team was appointed to reassess all the aspects of the organization. *Vocare: A Voice for Women in Baptist Life* made its debut in November 2006.

NEWS STORIES IN 2007

The top news stories in 2007 demonstrate that much progress has been made in the last quarter century by Baptist women ministers. Women now regularly are ordained and fill pulpits on Sundays, and one woman has broken through barriers and has pastored three Baptist churches and is now pastoring a large, metropolitan church. Another woman has been elected as president of the largest Baptist state convention. Despite such progress, one woman encountered gender discrimination at a Baptist seminary and courageously fought back. Following are those news stories from last year.

“Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching”

February 4, 2007

BWIM sponsored the first annual “Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching” on February 4, 2007. Fifty-four churches in the United States and one in Japan participated. Named for Martha Stearns Marshall, an eighteenth-century Separate Baptist preacher, the Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching provided Baptist churches an opportunity to join together in welcoming women into their pulpits.

“Dismissed Professor Files Lawsuit against Southwestern Seminary”

March 9, 2007

Former professor Sheri Klouda filed a lawsuit against Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary on March 8, 2007, charging fraud, breach of contract, and defamation for terminating her contract in December 2006. Klouda, who

was hired in 2002 to teach Hebrew in a tenure-track position at the Fort Worth-based school, lost her job allegedly because of her gender. She filed the lawsuit in federal court.

BWIM Registry for Ordained and Professional Women in Ministry

April 22, 2007

BWIM, in an effort to locate and register all Baptist women ministers opened an on-line registry on April 22, 2007. The registry invited participation by both women who have been ordained by Baptist churches and those who have served or are presently serving as professional women in ministry but have not been ordained. By May 10, 617 women had registered or had been registered by a family member or friend.

“Pennington-Russell Makes History by Becoming Pastor of Large Decatur Church”

June 17, 2007

The 2,696-member First Baptist Church of Decatur, Georgia, called Julie Pennington-Russell as its pastor on June 17, 2007. Pennington-Russell had been pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, since 1998, and she had previously served as pastor of Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church in San Francisco, California.

“First Woman BGCT President Elected”

October 29, 2007

Messengers to the BGCT annual meeting elected Joy Fenner as their president. She became the first woman to serve in that role. Fenner is a former missionary to Japan, executive director emeritus of WMU of Texas, and the incumbent BGCT first vice president.

IMPORTANT BOOKS ABOUT BAPTIST WOMEN IN THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Following are 15 books on Baptist women and Baptist women ministers published from 1987 to 2008. The books are listed in chronological order from the oldest to the most recent.

Allen, Catherine B. *A Century to Celebrate: History of Woman’s Missionary Union*. Birmingham, AL: Woman’s Missionary Union, 1987.

Allen, Catherine B. *Laborers Together with God: 22 Great Women in Baptist Life*. Birmingham, AL: Woman’s Missionary Union, 1987.

Neil, Anne Thomas and Virginia Garrett Neely. *The New Has Come: Emerging Roles among Southern Baptist Women*. Washington, DC: Southern Baptist Alliance, 1989.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Bellinger, Elizabeth, ed. *A Costly Obedience: Sermons by Women of Steadfast Spirit*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994.

Adams, Sheri. *What the Bible Really Says about Women*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1994.

Scales, T. Laine. *“All That Fits a Woman”: Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907-1926*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000.

Knowles, Charles O. *Let Her Be: Right Relationships and the Southern Baptist Conundrum over Woman’s Role*. Columbia, MO: KnoWell Publishing, 2002.

Blevins, Carolyn. *Women’s Place in Baptist Life*. The Baptist Heritage Library. Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage, 2003.

Morgan, David T. *Southern Baptist Sisters: In Search of Status, 1845-2000*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003.

Trull, Joe and Audra Trull. *Putting Women in Their Place: Moving Beyond Gender Stereotypes in Church and Home*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2003.

Deweese, Charles W. *Women Deacons and Deaconesses: 400 Years of Baptist Service*. Macon GA: Mercer University Press and Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2005.

Durso, Pamela R. and Keith E. Durso, eds. *Courage and Hope: The Stories of Ten Baptist Women Ministers*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press and Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2005.

Deweese, Charles W. and Pamela R. Durso, eds. *No Longer Ignored: A Collection of Articles on Baptist Women*. Atlanta, GA: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2007.

Shaw, Susan M. *God Speaks to Us, Too: Southern Baptist Women on Church, Home and Society*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2008.

PART THREE: STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Arkansas Baptist Women

In Arkansas, Carolyn Yeldell Staley is working to organize a group for Baptist women ministers. For more information, contact her at cstaley@phbclcr.com.

Florida Baptist Women

In Florida, work is being done to organize a network for women in ministry. For information, contact Nancy Burke at burkenancyb@yahoo.com.

Georgia Baptist Women in Ministry

Georgia BWIM hosted “Singing in Harmony: A Homecoming,” on April 28, 2007, at Peachtree Baptist Church in Atlanta. Dorthea Gatlin and Devita Parnell were the featured preachers. The Church Woman of the Year award was presented to Brenda Dedmon of First Baptist Church, Roswell, and the Sara Owens Etheridge Scholarship was given to Amanda Ducksworth, Doctor of Ministry student at McAfee School of Theology. Nikki Hardeman was named president. At its fall retreat, Georgia Baptist women ministers were offered the opportunity “to get their sacred-feminine self out on the dance floor.” The retreat was held at the Calvin Center on October 5-6, 2007, and the featured speaker was Valerie Burton, regional coordinator for the CBF’s Initiative for Ministerial Excellence. For more information, contact nhardeman@cbfga.org.

Kentucky Baptist Women in Ministry

Baptist women ministers in Kentucky participate in a Peer Learning Group. Lynn Smith is the convener. For more information, contact Lynn Smith at lynnsmith@hotmail.com.

Missouri Baptist Women in Ministry

Baptist women ministers in Missouri have established a Peer Learning Group sponsored by the CBF with a Lilly Endowment grant. Eleven women meet monthly, and although the participants are mostly Baptists, it is an ecumenical group. Their coordinator is Cynthia Jarrold. For more information, contact her at cjarrold@sbcglobal.net.

North Carolina Baptist Women in Ministry

BWIM, NC held its spring convocation on March 16, 2007, in Hickory, North Carolina. Participants elected Alicia D. Porterfield as the convener and Jeanell Cox as the convener-elect. Elizabeth Edwards, Terry Honeycutt, Johnnie Faye Jackson, Tim Moore, Kathy Naish, and Karen Sherin were elected to the board. BWIM, NC presented its annual church award to Memorial Baptist Church, Buies Creek, for the church’s consistent support of women in ministry and commitment to offering women a chance to use their gifts. The Anne Thomas Neil Award was presented posthumously to Kay Simpson. For information about BWIM, NC, contact Alicia Porterfield at aporterfield@ec.rr.com or visit <http://www.bwimnc.com>.

Oklahoma Women in Baptist Life

Oklahoma Women in Baptist Life on March 31, 2007 hosted “God’s Call, The World’s Cry, My Answer” at First Baptist Church, Shawnee, Oklahoma. The keynote speaker was Colleen Burroughs, executive vice president of Passport, Inc. and founder of Watering Malawi. Max Lyall and Digby’s Belles provided the music. April Coates, a student at Duke

Divinity School, was presented with a scholarship. For information, contact Beth Davidson at BDavid1957@aol.com or 918-299-7444 or Dorothy DeBorde at d.deborde@cox.net.

South Carolina Baptist Women

CBF of South Carolina and North Carolina CBF jointly sponsored a weekend conference of learning and fellowship for Baptist women in North and South Carolina. The featured speaker was Colleen Burroughs, founder of Passport, Inc. Held at Hilton Resort at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, the conference featured sessions titled “Reflecting the Image . . . Casting the Vision” for clergy on March 1-2, 2007, and sessions for all women titled “Reflecting the Image . . . Living the Vision” on March 2-4, 2007. For more information, contact Christy McMillin-Goodwin at cgoodwin@oaklandchrch.com.

Tennessee Baptist Women in Ministry

Tennessee CBF in 2007 hired three part-time staff members to lead women in ministry peer groups. The new staff members serve as Leadership Development Specialists in Nashville, the Cumberland Plateau, and Knoxville. Tambi Swiney, a member of First Baptist, Nashville, facilitates the women’s group in Nashville and writes for TCBF publications. Emily Roberts, co-pastor of Neverfail Community Church, leads the women’s group on the Cumberland Plateau and networks with other churches in the area to support the work at Neverfail. LuAnne Prevost, member of First Baptist Church, Knoxville, works with the Knoxville women’s group and assists in expanding church support for Samaritan Ministry. The Tennessee CBF at its April 21, 2007, General Assembly meeting presented its 2007 Betty Galloway Award to Nenet Measels, director of Baptist Collegiate Ministries and associate director of Campus Ministries at Carson Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee. For more information, contact Tambi Swiney at tambi22@mac.com.

Texas Baptist Women

Women in Leadership/Ministry, a division of the BGCT, sponsored its first semi-annual *Women in Ministry Conference* on October 16, 2007, at Logsdon School of Theology in Abilene, Texas. Featured speakers included Dorisanne Cooper, pastor of Lake Shore Baptist Church, Waco, Texas, and Rosalie Beck, associate professor of religion at Baylor University. On October 30, 2007, Women in Leadership/Ministry sponsored a breakout session titled “Texas Baptist Women in Leadership/Ministry” during the annual BGCT meeting in Amarillo, Texas. For more information, contact Julie O’Teter at Julie.O’Teter@bgct.org or visit <<http://www.bgct.org/texasbaptists/Page.aspx?&cpid=4429&csrid=257>>.

Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry

VBWIM held its 2007 Spring Conference and Annual Meeting on May 11, 2007, at Grace Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. The theme for the meeting was “Life in the Balance: The Many Roles of a Woman in Ministry.” For the past few years, VBWIM has given a scholarship to a Liberian woman for study at Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary. The 2007 recipient of that scholarship was Meekie Glaywoen. For more information, e-mail Elizabeth Rickert Dowdy at liz804@earthlink.net or visit <<http://www.baptistwomeninministry.org>>.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the BWIM organization has been its sheer tenacity of presence through seasons of doubt and conflict. The organization’s newsletter and annual gatherings gave voice to hope and headway even when individual women and the denomination as a whole were suffering frustrations and setbacks. The pages of *Folio* never shrank from naming the difficulties of women pursuing a vocation of ministry, yet they never gave in to despair or defeat as the final word. The stories and the “Ovations” in *Folio* bear witness to the beliefs of women and men who have supported the organization, and more significantly *the cause* of women in ministry, beliefs that have steadily come to reality for hundreds and thousands of Baptists. The supporters of BWIM have “cherished the dream” that was named and held forth by Addie Davis. They have struggled with finances, collaboration, vision, and new models of leadership, while existing as a mostly volunteer organization. Yet though all the transitions, newsworthy moments, annual worship services, and special events, BWIM as an organization has held onto the dream of making room for all of God’s children to hear and respond to a call and to live faithfully in vocations not shaped only by human hands, but also by the Spirit of God.

Endnotes

1. The authors had hoped to report in 2008 on the findings of a survey of Baptist clergywomen. Yet, given that a twenty-fifth anniversary celebration was underway, the decision was made for this report to be retrospective.
2. Differences between cohorts can attributed in part to the influence of feminist thought on the seminary curricula. In his study of clergywomen Edward C. Lehman Jr., explores this idea as it unfolded in mainline seminaries. See *Gender and Work: The Case of the Clergy* (New York: SUNY, 1993), 134-41. Southern Baptist women would have lagged behind the three cohorts he describes (prior to 1970, 1970 to 1981 and after 1981), because feminist theory or theology was introduced later in SBC schools, particularly Southern and Southeastern Seminaries.
3. Libby Bellinger, “More Hidden than Revealed: The History of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry,” in Walter B. Shurden, ed., *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), 129-50.
4. Harry N. Hollis, ed. *Christian Freedom for Women and Other Human Beings* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1975).
5. See volume devoted to “The Role of Women in Southern Baptist History,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 12/1 (January 1977): 1-64. See also a volume devoted to “Women and the Church,” *Review and Expositor* 72/1 1 (Winter 1975): 3-69.

6. Sarah Frances Anders, “Pilgrimage Toward Equity in Ministry, SBC,” *Folio: A Newsletter for Southern Baptist Women in Ministry* 1/1 (June 1983): 1. Hereafter cited as *Folio*.
7. Betty McGary Pearce, “A History of Women in Ministry, SBC,” *Folio* 3/1 (Summer 1985): 9.
8. Anders, “Pilgrimage Toward Equity in Ministry, SBC,” 1.
9. Pearce, “A History of Women in Ministry, SBC,” 9.
10. Nancy Hastings Sehested, “Guest Editorial,” *Folio* 1/1 (June 1983): 2.
11. Bellinger, “More Hidden than Revealed,” 129-50.
12. Debra Griffis-Woodbery, “Women in Ministry: Identifying the Issues,” *Folio* 1/3 (Winter 1984): 1.
13. “Pittsburgh Recap,” *Folio* 1/2 (Fall 1983): 3.
14. “Women Ministers Organize By States,” *Folio* 1/3 (Winter 1984): 3.
15. “Women in Ministry, SBC,” *Folio* 1/3 (Winter 1984): 5.
16. Sandra Richardson, “Women in Ministry, SBC: Report On Annual Meeting in Kansas City,” *Folio* 2/2 (Autumn 1984): 3.
17. Elizabeth Barnes, “Into the Far Country,” *Folio* 2/2 (Autumn 1984): 2.
18. *Annual*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1984, 65.
19. Bellinger, “More Hidden than Revealed,” 137.
20. *Ibid.*, 141.
21. Daniel Vestal, “The History of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship,” in Shurden, *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*, 259-61.
22. “Annual Meeting Brings Change,” *Folio* 13/2 (Fall 1995): 6.
23. In 1994, BTSR graduated its first class of students who had completed the entire three-year program. The very first graduation at the school, however, was held in 1993. In addition to BTSR, the transition in seminary education for Baptist women who wished to pursue ministry also included the inauguration of Baptist Houses of Study at Duke and Emory Universities. Those programs and the founding of BTSR marked a new era in theological education and a new group of women who would become leaders of BWIM.
24. Susan Miller and Pauline Bethea were also appointed to the Transition Team, but were not able to participate in the meetings. *Folio* 22/1 (January 2005): 1.
25. “Addie Davis Honorary Offering Proposed Recognizing the 30th Anniversary of Her Ordination,” *Folio* 11/4 (Spring 1994): 3; “SBWIM Board Kicks Off Addie Davis Offering,” *Folio* 12/1 (Summer 1994): 3.
26. Bellinger, “More Hidden than Revealed,” 147.
27. Leon McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1979), 154.
28. Sarah Frances Anders and Marilyn Metcalf-Whittaker, “Women as Lay Leaders and Clergy: A Crucial Issue,” in *Southern Baptists Observed: Multiple Perspectives on a Changing Denomination*, ed. Nancy Tatom Ammerman (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 207.
29. Statistics compiled from *Annual*, SBC, 1982, 348-419.
30. *Ibid.*, 2007, 355-77.
31. Email from Chris Copeland to Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 20, 2008.
32. Statistics compiled from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship website, <http://www.thefellowship.info/Files/About-Us/cc2008>, accessed May 6, 2008.
33. Statistics compiled from *Annual*, SBC, 2007, 355-419.
34. E-mail from Julie O’Teter to Eileen Campbell-Reed May 13, 2008. Reba Gram reported that 79 females (endorsed, still living) had been endorsed, and 77 of them were endorsed prior to 2008. Of that number, 8 are on inactive status, 1 is retired, and 2 have transferred to other endorsing agencies or denominations. Sixty-six women remain as BGCT endorsed-chaplains and counselors.
35. Email from Chris Copeland to Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 20, 2008.
36. E-mail from Julie O’Teter to Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 13, 2008.
37. E-mail from Crystal Ham to Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 19, 2008.
38. E-mail from Noolie Yoon, North American Mission Board, to Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 17, 2007.
39. Telephone interview with Colleen Burroughs by Eileen Campbell-Reed, May 22, 2008.
40. The ten women and their pastoral positions were listed in the first three issues of *Folio* 1/1, 1/2, and 1/3; and in *Folio* 10/1 (Summer, 1992): 5.
41. David T. Morgan, *Southern Baptist Sisters: In Search of Status, 1845-2000* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 188.
42. W. W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953: The First History of a Great Denomination* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1954), 162.
43. T. Laine Scales, “All That Fits a Woman”: *Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907-1926* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 108-09.

44. *Ibid.*, 109.
45. “Personal Work” and “Practical Skills” were courses in which women learned methods of evangelism and “friendly visiting.” See Scales, “All That Fits a Woman,” 114, 119.
46. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 184.
47. Scales, “All That Fits a Woman,” 115-18, 125-26.
48. Alan J. Lefever, *Fighting the Good Fight: The Life and Work of Benajah Harvey Carroll* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1994), 99-101.
49. Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908-1983* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1983), 125, 138.
50. *Ibid.*, 143. That first year Southwestern also enrolled 190 male students.
51. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 206.
52. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following*, 155, 159.
53. *Ibid.*, 157.
54. Catherine Allen, *A Century to Celebrate: History of Woman’s Missionary Union* (Birmingham, AL: Woman’s Missionary Union, 1987), 284.
55. McBeth, “The Role of Women in Southern Baptist History,” 18.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Scales, “All That Fits a Woman,” 252-53.
58. Albert McClellan, “Southern Baptist Convention, The” in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, vol. 3 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1982), 2473.
59. “Update on SBWIM Project: Integrating Women into Seminary Curricula,” *Folio* 8/3 (Winter 1991): 1. The data Carolyn Plampin provided about New Orleans Seminary seems high (women making up 40% of enrollment), but this percentage may be due to the inclusion of undergraduate students in the data.
60. *Southern Baptist Theological Catalog* (1978-80), 261-62.
61. Total enrollment in 1987-88 by degree was given as 2122. See *STBS Catalog* (1989-91), 121.
62. The data collected does not provide information about what degree programs in which the women at Southwestern (or the other schools) are now enrolled, although the adoption by the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message provides some hint that pastoral ministry is not the course of study for most.
63. These graduation figures were gleaned from *Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Catalogs* from 1981-82 to 2002-03.
64. See the *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Bulletins*, 1976-77 and 1994-95.
65. See http://www.sbts.edu/pdf/Catalog08_theology.pdf#page=17, accessed May 18, 2008.
66. See http://www.swbts.edu/catalog/page.cfm?id=32&open=3_area, accessed May 18, 2008.
67. Courses in the Women’s Ministry Program include Planning Special Events for Women, Lifestyle Witnessing for Women, Public Speaking for Women, Women’s Work in the Local Church, and Women Mentoring Women. See “Women’s Ministry Program,” New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, <http://www.nobts.edu/faculty22/rkelly/women’s.htm>, accessed February 17, 2002.
68. See http://www.swbts.edu/catalog/page.cfm?id=101&open=9_area, accessed May 18, 2008.
69. See http://www.sbts.edu/academics/Womens_Programs/Seminary_Wives_Institute.aspx, accessed May 18, 2008.
70. See <http://www.swbts.edu/index.cfm?pageid=677>, accessed May 18, 2008.
71. See <http://www.ggbts.edu/catalog/display.aspx?page=132&area=submenu3>, accessed May 18, 2008.
72. Information gathered from telephone interviews and e-mails by Pamela R. Durso with representatives from each school, Spring 2008.

Eileen R. Campbell-Reed defended her dissertation, *Anatomy of a Schism: How Clergywomen’s Narratives Interpret the Fracturing of the Southern Baptist Convention*, in May 2008, at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

We are grateful for the stories, experiences, and journeys of women who have come before us. This year's edition of the *State of Women in Baptist Life* is designed to tell those individual and collective stories. On this occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Baptist Women in Ministry, we recognize and remember where we have come from. This report provides for us a glimpse at our organization's beginnings. There were dreams and visions to begin a supportive network for women in ministry in Baptist life. In various ways those visions became reality. Many of us in ministry today are thankful for the dreams that those women dared to dream. Today we are reaping the benefits because of the ministries of the women who listened and followed God's call during very difficult times for women in ministry.

Reading this report, we hope, will encourage you about where BWIM is now as an organization. As your leadership team, with your help, we are attempting to live out a renewed vision to 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." Currently, we are accomplishing this goal through our annual Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching and our Speaker's Bureau. What will BWIM look like in the future? Ask some of our Martha Stearns Marshall Day preachers. God has given them dreams and visions for ministry that are unique, yet resonate with the dreams of twenty-five years ago.

We believe that Baptist women today are still listening and following God's call to ministry, and we believe that God will continue to call other women into this incredible vocation. Thus, BWIM and the leadership team will continue the work of advocating, connecting, and networking women (and men) together in ministry. This *SWBL* edition is dedicated to all who have heard and followed God's calling into ministry and to those who have yet to hear.

LeAnn Gunter Johns
Coordinator, BWIM

SUPPORT BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

BWIM offers this report with the hope that it will provide insight and clarification about women's leadership in Baptist life. If you are a Baptist woman minister, ordained or not ordained, and have not registered on the *BWIM Registry*, please visit www.bwim.info, which will direct you to the registry. Please pass this invitation along to your friends and colleagues.

Please consider assisting BWIM in its efforts to continue offering pertinent and helpful information by making a donation to the BWIM organization, which is committed to networking, connecting, and advocating with and for women in Baptist life and those who support them. Send your donation to:

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