

STATE OF WOMEN IN BAPTIST LIFE • 2015

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Baptist Women in Ministry

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BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

advocating • connecting • networking

STATE OF WOMEN IN BAPTIST LIFE

UPDATE

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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.

Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) in 2016 celebrates thirty-three years of supporting and resourcing Baptist women who are called and gifted for ministry. At a historic gathering held in 1983 in Louisville, Kentucky, thirty-three women dreamed into being a new organization that would give support and encouragement to Baptist women ministers. For most of its years, BWIM was led by volunteers and survived on a limited budget. In 2006, a Transition Team spent a year reevaluating the organization and offering recommendations for its future. In addition to recommendations about leadership structure and funding, the Transition Team asked that BWIM produce a report titled the *State of Women in Baptist Life* to bring attention to the progress made and identify the ongoing needs of Baptist clergywomen. Based on that recommendation, the BWIM Leadership Team commissioned, published, and distributed four *State of Women in Baptist Life* reports—in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2010.

Eileen Campbell-Reed and I co-wrote the first three reports. Each report had a unique focus of research and included statistical information related to Baptist women's roles in ministry and leadership. The 2005 report provided a historical overview of the ordinations of and ministry positions held by Baptist women ministers. The 2006 report, based on an on-line survey titled the *State of Women in Baptist Life Attitudes Survey*, offered insight into the attitudes of Baptists about the roles of women in society and in the church. The 2007 report highlighted the history of Baptist Women in Ministry, which in that year was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. Amy Shorner-

Johnson and I co-wrote the 2010 report, which featured information and stories about recipients of BWIM's Addie Davis Awards.

In the fall of 2015, the BWIM Leadership Team, believing it was time to update the research, commissioned a new report. I asked Kevin Pranoto, who was at the time serving as the BWIM intern, to assist with the research and writing of this new report. The first section of the report is based on Kevin's interviews of nine women ministers, six of whom were called as pastor by churches in 2015, and three who struggled to find opportunities to serve in pastoral positions. The second section of the report, which I wrote, includes information and analysis with regard to ordinations, theological education, and pastoral leadership.

Released on June 22, 2016 at BWIM's Annual Gathering in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the *State of Women in Baptist Life, 2015* calls for Baptists to celebrate the progress made but also gives needed attention to the work that still must be done within churches, organizations, and institutions when it comes to gender equality. My hope is that the 2015 report will generate much conversation about rethinking hiring policies and practices, working together for gender balance in our Baptist circles, and creating cultural atmospheres that embrace and benefit from the leadership of women.

Pamela R. Durso
Executive Director

WOMEN CALLED TO PASTOR: THEIR STORIES

by Kevin Pranoto and Pamela R. Durso

The landscape for Baptist women called to pastor is changing, and although that change has been slow, it is happening. In the past few years, an increasing number of Baptist churches have called a woman to serve as pastor, and by 2015, the call of a woman pastor was no longer an extraordinary occurrence or the exception. For those who affirm women's giftedness and support women in the pulpit, 2015 turned out to be a banner year. More than a dozen women were called as pastor, and many of them were young, under the age of forty. While most had previous ministerial and/or local church experience, for some, the call was their first as pastor of a church.

Six of the women called to pastor in 2015 are highlighted in this report: Courtney Allen, Jamie McCallum, Emily Hull McGee, Stacy Nowell, Kyndall Rothaus, and Jennifer Wilder. Their stories are varied, yet they share many of the same experiences.¹ For most, the journey to pastoring began early in their lives; several of them struggled with understanding their calling; and others doubted whether a church would ever call them. Despite the internal and external struggles endured, they overcame their insecurities and doubts and made themselves available to the calling of God through the church. These six women now serve as pastor of churches across the United States, churches that affiliate with the Alliance of Baptists, American Baptist Churches-USA, and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The reality of Baptist life, however, is that giftedness and readiness for the pastorate does not always result in a woman being called by a Baptist church. Some women endure great heartache because of an extended search process and the relentless rejection they encounter via letters and emails. Three women, whose journeys have been challenging, are also highlighted in this report: Jane Hull, Carol McEntrye, and Jorene Swift. Their stories are ones of tremendous resiliency despite facing great odds in their pastoral searches.

The *State of Women in Baptist Life, 2015* offers the following narratives as a glimpse into the life journeys, the callings, and the search processes of nine women ministers. Their stories are reflective of the greater narratives found in Baptist life and are instructive for all who care about and support women called by God to pastoral ministry.

YOUNG WOMEN CALLED AS PASTORS, 2015

Courtney Allen

In May 2015, Courtney Allen was called as pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, which affiliates with the Alliance of Baptists, American Baptist Churches of the South, and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Courtney grew up at Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, a church where both men and women held leadership roles. Barbara Oliver, whose ordination was one of the earliest of a Baptist woman in Mississippi, was the first woman minister that Courtney encountered, and Barbara had great influence on Courtney's life.

While she was a student at Vanderbilt University, Courtney's mother reminded her that as a little girl she had once announced that when she grew up she was going to be a minister, *the pastor*.

Although Courtney did not remember saying these words, she admitted that becoming a pastor had always been in the back of her mind.

After college, Courtney returned to the Gulf Coast. Hurricane Katrina had left much devastation, and Courtney spent her days doing community development work. This experience led her to apply at Wake Forest Divinity School and provided an answer to what had been a challenging question on seminary applications: "Why do you feel called to vocational ministry?" Courtney now had her answer: "I know and I believe in the power of being present with people through their joys and through their pains."

While a student at Wake Forest, Courtney questioned whether or not there was a place for her in the church. Her deepest desire was to minister among the most marginalized people, but she did not know if she would be able to find a church that would provide her with that opportunity. However, during her seminary internship in a historically African-American congregation, Courtney witnessed exactly what she had envisioned. The female senior pastor of that church was willing to get into the nitty-gritty of the lives of those in her congregation, and the experience became a major turning point for Courtney.

Upon graduation in 2010, Courtney sought to discern her next steps in ministry. Knowing that she was not called to be a children or youth pastor, the landscape of opportunities for church ministry seemed very slim. She hoped to continue working with people on the margins, helping to build bridges between them and a local church. She eventually found a church in which to live out her calling: First Baptist Church in Dalton, Georgia. Beginning in 2011, Courtney served there for four years as minister of missions, but she still carried in the back of her mind the dream that she would one day pastor a church. She also carried with her the belief that she would not be called as pastor until she married or had a family. Being a single woman pastor did not seem to be an option.

In September 2014, Courtney attended the fall meeting of Baptist Women in Ministry's Leadership Team. Sitting across the table was Judith Bailey. During a time of sharing, Judith announced that her church, Grace Baptist in Richmond, would soon begin the search for a pastor. She also noted that she was on the pastor search committee and would welcome recommendations. Meredith Stone, who was sitting next to Courtney, nudged her and said, "Courtney, you need to write down the name of that church." Courtney wrote Grace on a piece of paper, but she did not think much more about it in the days following. She was content in her ministry in Dalton and was not sure she was ready yet to leave. A few weeks later, Pam Durso called Courtney and asked for her résumé to send to Grace, telling her that the church would be a great place for her and she would be a wonderful pastor for Grace. In November, Pam sent Courtney's résumé to the committee.

Because of the way the process began, Courtney felt less intentional about preparing for the search and more like she was thrust

into it. But she discovered that “once I started the conversation with Grace, it was like the floodgates had opened. This thing that I had been dreaming of and called to for much of my life was really a possibility.” Throughout her search, Courtney sought to remain authentic to who she was in her conversation with the committee, and because she would not be the first woman pastor of the church, she never felt the need to defend her gender.

The process did at times feel overwhelming for Courtney, mainly because she set up impossibly high expectations for herself. But after six months of conversations, she preached at Grace in May 2015 and was called as the church’s pastor. In July 2015, Courtney Allen began her ministry as pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Richmond.

Jamie McCallum

In June 2015, Jamie McCallum was called as pastor of Belfair Community Church in Belfair, Washington, a congregation affiliated with the American Baptist Church-USA. As the granddaughter of a Baptist preacher, Jamie grew up seeing her beloved grandfather lead a church, preaching and providing pastoral care, but she never imagined herself as a minister. At the age of sixteen, while on a spring break mission trip to Mexico, Jamie realized, “there was something much bigger that God was inviting” her to do. In college, she devoted her life fully to missions, feeling affirmed in that calling while at Oklahoma Baptist University. Yet she struggled with doubts as to whether it was right for her as a woman to be a minister, even if her church was on the mission field.

After college, Jamie served as a journeyman missionary in Egypt and Syria for two years and then returned to the states and in 2009 enrolled at George W. Truett Theological Seminary. There she experienced a “real, unmistakable call to pastoring and to the church” in which God asked her to trust and to throw herself fully into her calling.

Before finishing seminary, Jamie began serving as associate pastor for youth and congregational life at First Baptist Church of Waco, Texas. During her four years there, she felt a strong yearning to preach. Every Sunday morning at 10:45, that yearning made her heart ache. Knowing that she would need the help of others to find a pastorate, Jamie began to network and to share with others her desire to pastor. She attended Texas Baptist and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship days at Truett, making personal connections. She sent her résumé to churches, but after many rejection emails, she concluded, “My goodness, who is ever going to want me? All my advocates, all the people who actually know me and have seen my ministry, are all in Texas, and Texas is moving very slowly in the process.” Jamie continued in her search, but it was difficult and often left her feeling discouraged. At times, she felt “forgotten by God.”

In October 2014, Jamie attended a Texas Baptist Women in Ministry retreat and experienced a turning point. She realized that there was indeed hope. A couple days later, Jamie met with a pastoral representative from the American Baptist Churches (ABC) in the Northwest, who told her of great need for pastors in that area. This conversation set Jamie’s heart on fire, and she realized that she did not have to give up her passion for missions in her pursuit of pastoral ministry.

Just over two months later, the regional director of the ABC in the Northwest contacted Jamie with a list of eight churches that needed pastors, some bi-vocational and some full-time. Within a week, Jamie responded, identifying four of the churches that seemed like a good fit for her. She soon heard from all four of those churches

and scheduled Skype interviews with them. For each of these four churches, the idea of having a woman pastor was brand new, and they all admitted that such a transition would not be easy. Jamie was most drawn to Belfair Community Church in Belfair, Washington, a larger, more established, and healthier church, which caused her to doubt that they would seriously consider her. Jamie thought, “They are not going to be desperate enough for me.”

As her process moved forward with Belfair, the church was clear about their anxieties. They had never had a pastor as young as Jamie, and they were concerned about her singleness and gender. Everything about Jamie seemed new and risky to them, but they kept the conversation going. During her meetings with the search committee, she was questioned about her theology of women in ministry, her abilities with conflict resolution, her singleness, and her leadership skills. Jamie was prepared to answer their concerns. During the process, she leaned into her Truett professors for support, reaching out to them for advice and encouragement for the interviews. In May 2015, Jamie visited Belfair to meet with the committee, and then in June, she spent time with church members, preaching in view of a call. The congregation responded with excitement and called her as their pastor. In August 2015, Jamie McCallum moved from Texas to Washington and began service as pastor of Belfair Community Church.

Emily Hull McGee

In March 2015, Emily Hull McGee was called as pastor of First Baptist Church on Fifth, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, which affiliates with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. She is a third-generation Baptist minister, the daughter of parents who are both pastors. As a child, Emily never felt that there were areas in life or in the church that were off-limits for her. She believed that everything was possible, but she never considered that she would be a minister. Instead Emily focused on music and singing. She attended Furman University and then moved to Chicago to pursue a music career. While living among a community of artists, she found herself often sitting in bars with people who had grown up in the church but no longer felt welcomed. They engaged in deep theological conversations, and Emily realized that “there was a huge gap between the people who had a deep desire to know God and be in relationship with God and the church for whom many people think is the barrier between God and them.” In her wrestling to find someone who could address that need, she sensed that God was calling her to ministry.

Emily returned to the South, studied at Wake Forest Divinity School in North Carolina, and after graduation in 2009 was called by Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, as their first minister to young adults. Highland was a perfect fit for her gifts and passions, and Emily was energized by her work. In June 2014, during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s General Assembly, Emily’s professor at Wake Forest, Bill Leonard, approached her and said, “I’m going to start putting your name out, and I’m not exactly asking for your permission.” Not long after, he recommended Emily to First Baptist Church on Fifth in Winston-Salem.

In August 2014, Emily received a phone call from a member of First Baptist’s pastor search committee, asking that she allow her résumé to be considered. Emily laughed at the request. After all, she was a woman, was thirty-three years old, was progressive in her theology, and was pregnant. She had serious doubts as to whether she would be given serious consideration, but because she was content

in her position at Highland, she thought that she had nothing to lose so she agreed to talk with the search committee.

Of her conversations with the committee, Emily said, “It was a gift for me that I was not looking to leave my church, so I felt free to speak openly about who I am and how I feel God at work in my life. . . . I didn’t feel inhibited because I had security in that I didn’t have to say a certain something or gain approval to get the job.” Emily was grateful for the honest search process, believing that it was not only healthy for her but also healthy for the church.

During her process with the search committee, Emily realized how fortunate she was. Throughout her life, her mother, Jane Hull, had served as a model for her. Emily also felt fortunate that the committee, while they asked good questions about her age and her gender, never asked that she defend herself as a woman minister.

The changing and vibrant demographic of the downtown Winston-Salem community had led the committee to search for a pastor who could relate to the changing population. They were drawn by Emily’s experience working with people in their twenties and thirties in an urban setting. At the recommendation of the committee, Emily preached in view of a call at First Baptist in March of 2015. She was nine months pregnant. The church unanimously voted to call her, and in July, after giving birth to her daughter and taking her maternity leave, Emily moved with her family to Winston-Salem and became First Baptist’s first woman pastor.

Stacy Nowell

In March 2015, Stacy Nowell was called as pastor of First Baptist Church, Huntersville, North Carolina, which affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Although Stacy did not grow up in a practicing Christian household, during her junior high and high school years, she began exploring faith on her own. She often attended church with her friends, and during her high school years, faith in Jesus became the defining feature of her life. Soon after she felt called to ministry. As a new Christian, she felt confused by her call, mistaking it as a general open call that God extended to everyone.

During her college years at Baylor University, Stacy first joined a church that taught that women could not be senior pastors. At the same time, she studied the scriptures regarding women in ministry in her religion classes and realized that her professors were supportive of women pastors. She eventually discerned her own sense of calling as she prayed, studied scripture, reflected on God’s work through her service, talked with her philosophy professor, and had coffee with Dorisanne Cooper, who was then pastoring Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco. Stacy graduated from Baylor feeling as if there was a “question mark over her head,” but she was confident she had been called to some form of Christian ministry.

In 2003, following college, Stacy enrolled at Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta. During her seminary years, she “intellectually and emotionally reconciled herself to the fact that God could call women and that God was calling her specifically to serve on a church staff as a minister.”

Harrisonburg Baptist Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia, in 2009 called Stacy as associate pastor. From the beginning, she made it clear to the congregation and staff that her deepest desire was to serve in the capacity of pastor. Her pastor, Jack Mercer, assured her that he would mentor her toward that end. When he resigned to move to a new church, Stacy served as interim pastor and loved the work. She soon began her search for a pastorate. Over the course of ten months,

she sent her résumé to about fifteen churches. Mentors helped her make connections to these churches. Jack Mercer, Ron Crawford, president of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, and Bill Wilson, director of the Center for Healthy Churches, were part of Stacy’s “mentoring trifecta.” They coached her during the search process, served as references, and sent out her résumé to churches. Stacy had five or six serious conversations with churches during her search. Working with search committees for her “was a lot like dating and breaking up.” When either Stacy or the search committee decided that they should not continue in their conversations, it was “an emotional roller coaster” and often was very painful.

When the pastoral position opened at First Baptist of Huntersville, the congregation prayerfully determined that they would not place any parameters on God, and this dually-aligned church freed their search committee to find the best candidate. As the committee narrowed its search, its members began conversations with Stacy, who sensed their affirmation and kindness, felt their genuine desire for her to succeed, and appreciated their efforts to care for her during the process. Stacy did not feel as if she had to defend her gender in any of her conversations with the committee. The only discussions that they had with regard to her being a woman were about family planning and maternity leave.

Even though the process with Stacy went smoothly, the search committee was nervous that the church vote on calling her might not pass. As a result, committee members worked harder than usual in preparation for her call Sunday on March 22, 2015. But their concerns were unfounded. The church voted overwhelmingly to call Stacy as its next pastor.

Calling a woman pastor was a major surprise to both the search committee and the congregation, but they felt strongly that Stacy was the right person. After joining the church staff in May, Stacy soon realized how risky it had been for the Huntersville church to have called her, and she spent time during her first few months helping the congregation make the transition with her.

After only four months of service, Stacy unexpectedly had to have major surgery, forcing her to take a four-week leave from her church duties. During her health crisis, church members, who had been skeptical and hesitant about having a woman pastor, began changing their minds, and through shared casserole meals and loving encouragement, the congregation affirmed Stacy in her role as pastor.

Kyndall Rae Rothaus

In May 2015, Kyndall Rae Rothaus was called as pastor of Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, which affiliates with the Alliance of Baptists, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and Baptist General Convention of Texas. Kyndall grew up attending Southern Baptist churches in Oklahoma, never encountering women in ministry. Despite having no female models for ministry, she was from a young age interested in the church and ministry.

Kyndall attended Southern Nazarene College in Bethany, Oklahoma, where she studied theology and ministry, not knowing where that major would lead her. She was drawn to the pastoral classes, where she encountered and wrestled with the idea that women and men are equal, and she received affirmation and support from her professors and classmates when she expressed a sense of calling. Her home church, however, discouraged her from this call. In her senior year of college, she took her first preaching class with two other women. Hearing those two women preach ended her

internal battle. She recognized that “They were so clearly gifted and it would be tragic if they couldn’t use their voices.” This realization marked a turning point for Kyndall, causing her to finally believe in her own calling to preach and pastor.

Following college, Kyndall enrolled at George W. Truett Theological Seminary. About 90% of her Truett professors were male, but they treated her as an intellectual equal and encouraged her to use her voice. Their support helped her believe that one day she could become a pastor despite never having met a woman pastor. With their support, Kyndall sent her résumé to churches after she graduated in 2011, and she was called to pastor her “dream church,” Covenant Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas.

Kyndall’s call to Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, came at a time when she felt “safe and secure at Covenant.” In the spring of 2015, Lake Shore’s pastor search committee contacted her, asking her to submit a résumé. Kyndall was reluctant. She was not looking for a new ministry position, and she felt some guilt over the fact that this opportunity came to her unexpectedly. Kyndall noted, “I know so many women who have had to work so hard to find a position that I almost feel bad . . . I didn’t have to go looking, and I would be giving up one good ministry position to take another good one.” When she expressed this hesitancy, Kyndall’s mentor told her, “How would you know if God is up to something new if you don’t even listen?” Little by little, Kyndall opened herself up to the possibility of ministry at Lake Shore.

The church had a long history of ordaining women deacons and women ministers and had previously had a woman pastor. Kyndall knew that she did not have to be concerned about her gender being an issue. She sent in her résumé, and in May, Kyndall preached in view of a call. Lake Shore voted that same day to call her as their next pastor. In September 2015, Kyndall Rothaus left her beloved first congregation and began her ministry as pastor of Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco.

Jennifer Wilder

In June 2015, Jennifer Wilder was called as pastor of Broadview Baptist Church, in Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, which affiliates with the Alliance of Baptists, American Baptist Churches-USA, and District of Columbia Baptist Convention. Jennifer grew up in western North Carolina and attended a Southern Baptist church. During her college years at Furman University, she considered a career path as a medical professional but soon realized that she wanted to work in a helping profession. She immersed herself in the social service field.

Jennifer’s first call experience occurred during a study-abroad trip in Latin America, where she visited a church that had great influence on its community despite gross injustices that were taking place. She responded to that call by saying, “Yes” to church ministry, with the caveat that she wanted to be part of a church that has “real impact in real lives addressing real injustices.” After returning home, Jennifer sought to find churches and individuals who were engaged in community ministry. She also looked for women pastors to serve as her mentors, and she looked for denominations that ordained women.

In continuing to pursue her calling, Jennifer attended Union Theological Seminary in New York, and after graduation in 2013 was ordained by the United Church of Christ (UCC). Later she discovered the Alliance of Baptists and asked that the Alliance recognize her ordination as a way of honoring her Baptist past.

Jennifer began her most recent search by working with both the UCC and Alliance of Baptists. For about six months, Jennifer worked on her résumé, reflecting on her call to ministry and identifying her passions. She then asked that her résumé be sent to smaller churches, hoping to be a solo-pastor or co-pastor. Jennifer spent time over-preparing for future interviews so that nothing would surprise her when it came time for the face-to-face conversations. She worked on intentional networking, talking with friends and colleagues, meeting new people, and attending conferences. By telling others about her interests and desires, she was able to schedule interviews with some churches. The beginning period of her search proved to be exhausting and at times left Jennifer spiritually drained. Adding to that exhaustion was Jennifer’s full-time job, one that she enjoyed and one that allowed her the privilege of not having to take a position that she was not passionate about.

Jennifer’s active search process spanned from November 2014 to May 2015. During those months, her résumé was sent to forty-five churches with about thirty of those being sent through the UCC placement program. She also sent fifteen résumés to churches affiliated with other denominations, including Baptist churches. For Jennifer, the season of searching was “heavy.” Divulging intimate areas of her life, writing her life down on paper for strangers to read, and living through long periods of waiting for responses was draining.

During her search, Jennifer had serious conversations with seven congregations, including Broadview Church. Broadview had posted their open position on the Alliance of Baptists website and had been involved in a two-year search process. As the search committee from Broadview interviewed and met with Jennifer, she felt a synchronicity with them. A lot of her quirks and uniqueness seemed to match well with the character of the church. Because Broadview had had a woman pastor before, Jennifer felt like her gender was not an issue. She did not have to be the “frontier woman,” leading the way for her church, but at the same time, because of the lack of women pastors in the Chesapeake Beach area, she knew that the church calling her meant she would be in an isolated setting. In August 2015, Jennifer Wilder became pastor of Broadview, a church she has described as “a dedicated group of people with a bold vision.”

WOMEN WHO ENDURED EXTENDED SEARCHES

Jane Hull

Jane Hull, pastor of Union Christian Church in Watkinsville, Georgia, spent most of her adult life ministering alongside and supporting her husband, David, who was pastor of churches in Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. Jane grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, in a committed Baptist family; church attendance and participation was central to their lives. She attended Furman University, graduating in 1976. Shortly after finishing college, she sensed that God was calling her to ministry. She followed that call to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where she received a Master’s degree in Music Ministry.

While at Southern, Jane met her future husband. They married in 1979. For the next thirty-seven years, Jane found places of ministry in each of the churches that David pastored. She served as minister of youth, worship leader, and director of the hand bell choir. She found contentment in those areas of ministry and never imagined herself pastoring a church. But in 2007, while attending a women’s retreat,

Jane received a new call. “It was not audible, but it was as clear as if it had been,” Jane said. “I felt called to a congregation like our very first church—a small, rural community church. It was very specific.” Following the retreat, Jane told David about her experience and shared that she was being called to pastor a church. His immediate response was “**You can’t not do it.**”

With David’s support and encouragement, Jane enrolled at McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta to pursue her Master of Divinity degree. She graduated in 2011 and spent the next three years in the search process, sending out résumés and letters, networking, and supply preaching, but Baptist churches were not responsive, and few search committees even followed up with her. Jane discovered that most of those committees chose not to talk with her because they knew her husband was pastor of a large congregation, and that reality made committees nervous. Yet instead of asking Jane about what she anticipated as the new dynamic for her family, committees just assumed that the situation would not work and did not contact her at all. Jane also realized that another hesitancy that committees had when they saw her résumé was her age. Jane was fifty-seven when she graduated from McAfee and began her pastoral search, and she recognized that despite her vast experience, many churches would not consider her because of her age.

In early 2013, a family friend introduced Jane to a Disciples of Christ congregation that was looking for an interim pastor, and in February, she began service as interim at First Christian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Even while serving that church, Jane continued with her search efforts within Baptist circles. She persevered even when there seemed to be little hope of finding a church. At times, Jane’s “stubbornness” was what kept her going, that and her confidence in her calling. Throughout the long search, Jane “never doubted her calling.” She also had great support and encouragement from friends and colleagues who urged her to keep pressing on.

In 2014, after being rejected by multiple Baptist congregations, Jane prayerfully opened up herself to the possibility of serving a Disciples of Christ church. She worked through the denomination’s requirements, gaining standing through their credentialing process. On June 8, 2014, Jane preached her first sermon as pastor of Union Christian Church in Watkinsville. In writing of her transition from the Baptist tradition to the Disciples, Jane quoted John Claypool, who left his Baptist roots after forty years to become an Episcopalian: “I find myself ‘moving to another room in God’s house.’”²

Carol McEntyre

Carol McEntyre is pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbia, Missouri. Carol grew up in a small, rural Baptist church in Tennessee and never heard a woman preach or even pray out loud in worship throughout her childhood. Although she was always interested in and drawn to God and scripture, the thought of being a minister never crossed her mind. She did not even know it was a possibility.

As a teenager, Carol decided on a career path in a helping profession, such as counseling or working in a non-profit, because she believed that would be her way of serving God. While in college at Carson-Newman University, Carol took religion classes and fell in love with the study of scripture and biblical history. She soon sensed a call to ministry, which resulted in an “existential dilemma.” She grappled with what she was feeling versus the theology she had heard preached throughout her childhood, theology that taught her that women pastors were not “of God.” During this struggle, Carol’s

professors challenged her to broaden her worldview, and she realized that “there might be opportunity” for her.

After college graduation, Carol and her husband, Michael, moved to Waco, Texas, where they both attended George W. Truett Theological Seminary. Carol pursued a dual-degree and eventually received a Master of Divinity and a Master of Social Work degree. Her first placement during her social work program was at Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco, where she was involved in congregational social work. During seminary and this placement, Carol realized that the only thing she wanted to do in life was church ministry. Two experiences led to that realization. As Carol continued to ponder whether a woman could pastor, Dorisanne Cooper was called to pastor Lake Shore, and suddenly, the idea of a woman pastor became a reality for Carol. The second experience took place while Carol was at a MissionFuge youth camp. There Carol had both a desire to preach and great doubts about whether she should or could. In a moment of solitude, she had a God-given thought: “You are not a mistake. I created you female and I called you to the ministry, and it was on purpose.”

In 2005, following seminary graduation, Carol and her husband moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where they were both on staff at First Baptist Church. Carol served as community minister. Despite being trained for this position and enjoying her ministry, she felt a sense of restlessness and realized that she was not living fully into her calling. In 2008, Carol began her search process for a pastorate. She interviewed with twelve churches in her four years of searching, which left her mentally and emotionally exhausted. She endured many rejections, and on two different occasions, Carol was the final candidate for a search committee only to have the committee chair call her and say, “The committee is not going to call you because you are a woman.” Some search committees, Carol discovered, were uncomfortable because her husband was also a minister. These committees did not like the idea of him ministering at a different church, but at the same time, the committees were not willing to offer him a place to serve alongside Carol. Despite repeated disappointments, Carol continued to search for a church to pastor, and after four years, she began conversation with the search committee of First Baptist, Columbia, Missouri. In July 2012, Carol moved with her husband and son to serve as pastor of First Baptist.

Jorene Swift

Jorene Swift is minister of congregational care at Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where she has served since September 1995. Jorene grew up in a family in which church was the center of life, and for her, church was a symbol of home. In middle school, Jorene felt her first call to ministry and committed herself to full-time Christian service, believing that to answer that call she would have to be an overseas missionary.

Jorene attended the University of Texas at El Paso and Tarleton State University, majoring in education. After college, she was a fifth and sixth grade schoolteacher. She loved teaching and was good at her job, but she sensed something was missing in her life. During her forties, she decided it was time for her to go to seminary. She enrolled at Golden Gate Theological Seminary in San Francisco, California, where her husband was on faculty. Following graduation, Jorene was called by Broadway in Fort Worth. She was forty-six years old. In her early years at the church, Jorene felt blessed “to be paid” for being a minister. It “was almost too good to be true.” Over

the course of her ministry at the church, Jorene has served in a variety of roles, including children's minister, minister of missions, and minister of spiritual formation.

From her earliest years at Broadway, Jorene received affirmation of her call. An older woman in the congregation approached Jorene shortly after she began serving there and said, "You need to become a senior pastor. That's what you need to do." The longer Jorene stayed at Broadway, the more she felt called to the pastorate. She knew that being a pastor was where her heart was. Pastoral care and officiating weddings and funerals gave her much joy. Yet Jorene knew that the road to finding a pastorate in Baptist life would be difficult.

In order to make herself more marketable, Jorene enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School. She completed her degree with an emphasis in pastoral studies, and as she graduated, she realized that now not only would her gender pose challenges in finding a pastoral position, her age would also be a factor. Ageism, she soon learned, was alive and well in the church.

In 2005, at the age of fifty-six, Jorene began her search process. She worked closely with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's congregational reference and referral specialist. Her pastor friends and colleagues shared Jorene's résumé with churches and made phone calls on her behalf. She did not personally send many résumés to churches. Conventional wisdom of the time advised against that practice. As churches reached out to her and Jorene interviewed with them, she discovered that many of those churches "weren't ready yet" to call a woman pastor. In one search process, she was among two finalists. The other finalist, a male, turned down the committee's invitation, leaving Jorene as the lone candidate. The committee, however, had mixed feelings about calling a woman, and instead of offering the position to Jorene, they reopened the search process to gather more résumés. Other committees with which she talked warned her that calling a woman pastor would result in a church split, and those committees did not want to take a chance so they informed her that she would not be considered. In many cases, Jorene had more experience and stronger educational credentials than her fellow male candidates, but as one pastor said to her during her years of searching, "churches will avoid calling a woman, even if that means they have to call a less-qualified male pastor. Churches have been calling mediocre men for years, rather than taking a risk and calling a gifted and qualified woman."

In the midst of what became a long search, Jorene found herself going back to the wisdom of her childhood: "If God calls you, it's going to just happen. Just wait, and the call will come." After years of waiting, Jorene no longer believes in this approach to searching for a position. She has watched as younger women have taken more proactive and strategic approaches to the search process, and she now wonders if a more forceful and preemptive style of search was what was needed for her to find a pastorate.

After a decade of disappointments in her search, during which she served faithfully at Broadway Baptist Church, Jorene in May 2016 submitted her resignation after accepting a new position as co-pastor of Bread Fellowship in Fort Worth, Texas. She will begin this new season of her ministry in July 2016.

CONCLUSION

The experiences of these nine Baptist women vary greatly. Each of them sensed a call to pastoral ministry, and all of them involved themselves in the search process.

The first six women highlighted in this report, all under the age of forty and all with previous ministry experience, were called as pastor in 2015. Three among the six were not actively seeking a new position but because of the nudging of others found themselves in the midst of conversations with a search committee. The other three prepared themselves for the process by intentionally networking, building a stronger résumé, and ensuring that their names were being sent to open churches.

Of these six young women, four were single; two were married. Being a woman in ministry always poses its challenges, but considering a young, single woman adds a layer of anxiety for most churches. Most congregations have certain expectations in mind when they begin a search, and very few search committees address upfront the possibility of calling a young, single minister, much less a young, single woman minister. The two married pastors were mothers. At the time Emily Hull McGee was in conversation with the search committee in Winston-Salem, she was pregnant with her second child. Just as is true for singleness not being an initial topic of conversation for committees, considering a new mother or a pregnant woman is not part of most committee's consideration. Yet obviously, each of these search committees moved past what could have been barriers to further conversations with these six women.

A common theme shared by these six women was that each one was committed to being honest and authentic throughout their search process. Three had the security of being in churches they loved and were not looking to leave. The other three very much were ready to find a pastorate and were in search mode, but all six of the women sought to be true to who they were. They answered questions honestly and spoke from their convictions.

A final shared experience for all six is that they all had strong systems of support and networks for advice, coaching, encouragement, and references. From seminary professors to previous pastors to spiritual directors and mentors, these women credited these relationships as sustaining them in their searches and in helping them to secure a pastoral call.

The three women whose searches were extended and who encountered greater difficulty in finding a pastoral position share much in common. Each of them had years of experience working in congregations, had achieved academic excellence, and had developed meaningful relationships. As time moved on without their finding a pastorate, they all felt an "inability to be heard" and experienced frustration with the search process. All of them realized that the committees with which they were talking often expressed hesitation about them based on things that could not be changed: gender, age, and family status.

A shared experience for all nine of these women is that they found the search process draining, at times physically exhausting, emotionally depleting, and spiritually painful. Being faithful to a strong call while living through months or even years of uncertainty takes a toll, even on the most prepared pastoral candidate.

The stories of these nine Baptist women are representative of the experiences of hundreds of other women gifted and called by God to pastor. Every woman minister has a unique story and call process. For some, the search process moves quickly and ends with a joyous celebration. For others, after expending great emotional energy and investing much hope, there is no celebration. Yet what we can learn from these nine ministers is to hold tightly to God's call and to seek out companions on the search journey.

THE STATE OF WOMEN IN BAPTIST LIFE

by Pamela R. Durso

Five years ago, the *State of Women in Baptist Life, 2010* concluded with these words: this “report demonstrates that incremental change is slowly occurring. . . the number of ordinations of women per year has been constant, a higher percentage of women are serving as pastors and co-pastors, the percentages of women missionaries has held steady, the numbers of women chaplains and pastoral counselors has increased, and the enrollment of women in Baptist theological institutions has shown a slight increase. While Baptist women often feel that little has changed, the reality as evidenced by the statistics is that progress, albeit slow progress, is being made.”³ What was true in 2010 is also true in 2015. Incremental change continues to occur, but the pace of change seems to be speeding up a bit.

This report, *State of Women in Baptist Life, 2015*, tracks the change that is occurring, offering a snapshot of the recent status of women’s ministry and leadership in Baptist life. Providing a snapshot, however, is a serious challenge given that Baptists historically have practiced congregational polity and voluntary association. Because of the loose connections among churches with their conventions, societies, and conferences, exact or even “pretty close” recordkeeping is problematic. Few Baptist national bodies collect, maintain, or publish statistical information about their ministers. Thus, Baptist polity makes assembling an accurate and coherent reporting of the state of women in Baptist life an extremely difficult task. The following numbers and statistics are based largely upon self-reported information gathered through sending e-mails, making phone calls, searching on Facebook, conferring with denominational leaders, and reading Baptist newspapers and websites.

As with the earlier *State of Women in Baptist Life* reports, the perspective of this report rests firmly in the moderate-to-progressive constellation of Baptist organizations located mostly in the southern United States, including the Alliance of Baptists (Alliance) and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and several state/regional Baptist organizations, including the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) and the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). In 2015, BWIM also gathered information from the District of Columbia Baptist Convention (DCBC).

The report does not include numbers and statistics from the American Baptist Churches-USA, because ABC-USA collects and distributes information about the women ministers within its denomination.

The following section first provides information and statistics with regard to ordinations of Baptist women. Next, women’s leadership within Baptist churches and denominations, including their service as pastors and co-pastors, endorsed chaplains and counselors, and field personnel and church planters, is documented and a comparative analysis is provided. This data provides a tangible means by which to measure progress. Finally, information about theological education institutions that affiliate with the CBF is provided, including comparisons of enrollment in master and doctoral programs.

ORDINATIONS

In the 140 years since the first-known ordination in the United States of a Baptist woman, a Freewill Baptist minister in Pennsylvania, thousands of Baptist women have been ordained to the gospel ministry. Keeping track of those ordinations has been a service that BWIM gladly assumed at its founding in 1983 and has continued to provide in the years since. In addition to collecting records about Southern Baptist ordinations, BWIM began tracking the ordinations of churches affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists in 1987 and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1990, the years in which those new Baptist bodies were formed. Since 2005, when the first *State of Women in Baptist Life* report was commissioned, BWIM reported that ordination information and included not only the Alliance and CBF but also BGAV and BGCT. In 2015, BWIM added the DCBC to this list and began tracking ordinations in the Washington area. For the past ten years, the data collected has come from the BWIM Registry, the BWIM monthly e-newsletter, e-mail requests, Facebook, and other social media sources. Given the potential gaps always possible in informal recording keeping, the BWIM ordination information is most likely incomplete and the statistics are not without error. Yet even with the imperfect information, trends are evident and are helpful in understanding recent Baptist life.

In 2015, fifty-nine ordinations of women ministers were recorded. Following is a comparative list of the states in

which women were ordained in 2010 and 2015 with the numbers of women ordained in each state. The largest number of reported ordinations in both 2010 and 2015 took place in Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina, states that have at least one CBF-affiliated seminary. Georgia has two: Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology and Emory University's Candler School of Theology. Virginia has one: Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, and North Carolina has four: Campbell University Divinity School, Duke University Divinity School, Gardner-Webb Divinity School, Wake Forest University's Divinity School. Given the recent ordination trend for Baptist students to seek ordination as

they graduate from seminary, the frequency of ordinations in Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina is not surprising.

The pace at which ordinations have taken place in the last five years has been steady with an average of forty-six occurring each year. An addition to the states with the greatest number of ordination has been Texas. From 2011 to 2015, twenty-four women were ordained by Texas Baptist churches. Texas has three seminaries affiliated with CBF: Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology, and Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School.

The *State of Women in Baptist Life, 2010* noted that by that year as many as 2,200 ordinations of women had taken place among Baptists in the South since the 1964 ordination of Addie Davis, the first Southern Baptist woman ordained to the gospel ministry. According to BWIM records, 233 women were ordained from 2011 to 2015, bringing the total ordinations by the end of 2015 to 2,433.

While tracking ordinations provides helpful insight, Baptists throughout their history have held varied understandings of ministry and recognition of clergy, and Baptist churches have not uniformly ordained ministers, especially women ministers. Thus, while the numbers highlighted in this report are significant, the reality is that thousands of Baptist women have served on church staffs and in other ministry fields without having been ordained. Tracking the numbers of unordained Baptist women who have served in ministry since 1964 would surely be an impossible task, but their contributions and service deserve acknowledgment and appreciation.

| ORDINATIONS | 2010 | 2015 |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Alabama | 1 | 1 |
| California | 0 | 1 |
| Colorado | 0 | 1 |
| District of Columbia | 0 | 1 |
| Georgia | 9 | 15 |
| Iowa | 0 | 1 |
| Illinois | 0 | 3 |
| Indiana | 0 | 1 |
| Kansas | 1 | 0 |
| Kentucky | 3 | 3 |
| Louisiana | 1 | 0 |
| Maryland | 1 | 0 |
| Michigan | 1 | 0 |
| Minnesota | 0 | 1 |
| North Carolina | 19 | 10 |
| Oklahoma | 1 | 0 |
| Pennsylvania | 1 | 3 |
| South Carolina | 0 | 4 |
| Tennessee | 3 | 0 |
| Texas | 1 | 3 |
| Wisconsin | 3 | 0 |
| Virginia | 8 | 11 |
| Total | 53 | 59 |

| ORDINATIONS 2011-2015 | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 2011 | 40 |
| 2012 | 35 |
| 2013 | 56 |
| 2014 | 43 |
| 2015 | 59 |
| Total | 233 |

| MOST ORDINATIONS BY STATE 2011-2015 | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| NC | 57 |
| GA | 52 |
| VA | 35 |
| TX | 24 |

WOMEN PASTORS AND CO-PASTORS

When the first *State of Women in Baptist Life* report was published in 2005, 102 women were identified as pastors or co-pastors of Alliance, CBF, BGCT, or BGAV churches. In 2015, BWIM also gathered information from the DCBC. By 2015, the total number of women pastors and co-pastors had grown to 174, which is a 71% increase over the last ten years.⁴ These increases indicate that incremental change is taking place. Below are the numbers of women pastors and co-pastors by year as listed in previous *State of Women in Baptist Life* reports.

| WOMEN PASTORS / CO-PASTORS BY YEAR | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|------------|-------|
| | Pastors | Co-Pastors | Total |
| 2005 | 68 | 34 | 102 |
| 2006 | 81 | 36 | 117 |
| 2007 | 75 | 38 | 113 |
| 2010 | 90 | 45 | 135 |
| 2015 | 129 | 45 | 174 |

Two states have historically had more Baptist women pastors or co-pastors: Virginia and North Carolina. In 2010, Virginia had twenty-three women serving, and North Carolina had nineteen. In 2015, Virginia continues to be the state with the highest number with thirty-nine, and North Carolina now has the third highest number with twenty-one, a total increase of two since 2010.

The state that has gained the most ground is Texas. From 2010 to 2015, the number of Texas Baptist women pastors increased from eleven to twenty-eight, and now the Lone Star state ranks second in number of pastors and co-pastors. That significant increase was in part due to better recording keeping for Texas churches by BWIM. A more strategic effort to collect Texas information began in 2012. That year twenty-five names were added to the Texas list, with a good number of those additions being women of color. Since 2012, fourteen new names have been added, and included in those additions in Texas are African American, Chin, Chinese, and Latina pastors. Most but not all of the twenty-eight Texas Baptist women pastors and co-pastors are in churches that affiliate with the BGCT.

The incremental increase in women serving as pastors and co-pastors is also evident in statistics from Baptist bodies. In

2012, thanks to help from denominational leaders, BWIM was able to identify the church affiliations of each woman on the pastor/co-pastor list. Thus, the percentages, especially the denominational percentages, have become more accurate in the last three years. Also worth noting is that many Baptist churches are dually aligned, sometimes even triply aligned.

Since 2012, the number of churches with women pastors and co-pastors affiliated with the Alliance, BGAV, BGCT, and CBF has increased, and the percentage of churches with women pastors and co-pastors has also increased. The

| WOMEN PASTORS/CO-PASTORS BY STATE, 2010 AND 2015 | | |
|--|------|------|
| | 2010 | 2015 |
| AL | 3 | 3 |
| CA | 3 | 3 |
| CT | 1 | 0 |
| DC | 2 | 5 |
| FL | 3 | 2 |
| GA | 14 | 11 |
| IA | 1 | 0 |
| ID | 0 | 2 |
| IL | 3 | 1 |
| IN | 1 | 1 |
| KS | 0 | 1 |
| KY | 5 | 6 |
| LA | 0 | 1 |
| MA | 4 | 5 |
| MD | 3 | 11 |
| ME | 3 | 1 |
| MI | 2 | 2 |
| MN | 1 | 0 |
| MO | 1 | 6 |
| MS | 3 | 0 |
| NC | 19 | 21 |
| NJ | 1 | 1 |
| NY | 5 | 6 |
| OH | 5 | 1 |
| PA | 5 | 2 |
| SC | 5 | 7 |
| TN | 6 | 6 |
| TX | 11 | 28 |
| VA | 23 | 39 |
| WI | 2 | 1 |

| WOMEN PASTORS/CO-PASTORS BY DENOMINATION, 2012 | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | <i>Affiliating Churches</i> | <i>Women Pastors / Co-Pastors</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Alliance | 139 | 43 | 30.9% |
| BGAV | 1,400 | 26 | 1.9% |
| BGCT | 5,540 | 24 | 0.43% |
| CBF | 1,800 | 90 | 5.0% |

| WOMEN PASTORS/CO-PASTORS BY DENOMINATION, 2015 | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | <i>Affiliating Churches</i> | <i>Women Pastors / Co-Pastors</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Alliance | 143 | 60 | 42% |
| BGAV | 1,400 | 38 | 2.7% |
| BGCT | 5,318 | 25 | 0.47% |
| CBF | 1,800 | 117 | 6.5% |
| DCBC | 158 | 14 | 8.9% |

| ENDORSED CHAPLAINS AND COUNSELORS — 2010 | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | <i>Total Endorsed</i> | <i>Women Endorsed</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Alliance | 142 | 80 | 56.3% |
| BGCT | 655 | 127 | 19.4% |
| CBF | 622 | 201 | 32.3% |

| ENDORSED CHAPLAINS AND COUNSELORS — 2015 | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | <i>Total Endorsed</i> | <i>Women Endorsed</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Alliance | 142 | 83 | 58.5% |
| BGCT | 650 | 130 | 20.0% |
| CBF | 704 | 282 | 40.1% |

| FIELD PERSONNEL | | |
|------------------------|-------------|-------|
| CBF | 2010 | |
| 139 | 75 | 54.0% |
| CBF | 2015 | |
| 93 | 50 | 53.8% |

Alliance continues to have the highest percentage and their percentage made a significant jump in the past three years from 30.9% in 2012 to 41.9% in 2015. CBF had the highest numerical increase, moving from 90 in 2012 to 117 in 2015.

CHAPLAINS AND COUNSELORS

One of the most common paths to service for Baptist clergywomen is chaplaincy and pastoral counseling. Endorsed chaplains serve in medical centers, correctional institutions, hospice organizations, police and fire and rescue departments, colleges and universities, businesses, retirement communities, pastoral counseling centers, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Civil Air Patrol and in each branch of the United States Armed Forces, as well as numerous other specialized settings. Three Baptist denominations tracked by BWIM serve as endorsing bodies: the Alliance, BGCT, and CBF. In 2010, the percentage of female endorsees for all three organizations was 28.8%. That percentage increased in 2015 to 33.1%. The total number of women endorsees grew from 408 to 495. From 2010 to 2015, each Baptist organization's number and percentage of women endorsed increased, with CBF having the greatest growth from 201 endorsees in 2010 to 282 in 2015, an overall increase of about 8%.

On March 5, 2016, CBF celebrated as it endorsed its one thousandth chaplain/pastoral counselor since it formed its Council on Endorsement in 1997. Erin Lysse, a second-year chaplaincy resident at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, now holds the distinction of being that one thousandth endorsee.⁵

FIELD PERSONNEL AND CHURCH PLANTERS

Baptist women historically have had greater access to ministry through mission service. Of the Baptist bodies featured in this report, CBF is the only one that appoints field personnel. In 2010, CBF reported that 54% of its field personnel were women. In 2015, that percentage remains essentially the same, although the numbers of both field personnel and female personnel have declined in the last five years.

In 2012 at its annual General Assembly, CBF for the first time commissioned church planters. Three of the twelve commissioned from 2012 to 2015 were women. In June 2016, eight new church planters, including one woman, were commissioned during the General Assembly held in Greensboro, North Carolina.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

In recent years, theological schools across the country have encountered the challenge of declining enrollment and decreasing student population. Since 2009, the total enrollment of all member schools affiliated with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has declined 5%. This national trend also held true overall for CBF-affiliated schools.

Following are the fall 2010 and fall 2015 enrollment numbers for the CBF-affiliated institutions.⁶ The enrollment numbers for each of these schools, with the exceptions of the Duke University's Divinity School, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir Rhyne University and Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School, include all students, Baptist and

| FALL 2010 MASTER PROGRAM ENROLLMENT | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>CBF-Affiliated Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Baptist Seminary of Kentucky | 40 | 15 | 38% |
| Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond | 94 | 45 | 48% |
| Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary | 369 | 135 | 37% |
| Campbell University Divinity School | 215 | 90 | 42% |
| Central Baptist Theological Seminary | 84 | 39 | 46% |
| Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity | 221 | 87 | 39% |
| Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary | 120 | 24 | 20% |
| Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology | 269 | 141 | 52% |
| Wake Forest University's Divinity School | 95 | 37 | 39% |
| <i>CBF-Affiliated Non-Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Duke University's Divinity School | 88 | 23 | 26% |
| Emory University's Candler School of Theology | 65 | 35 | 54% |

| FALL 2015 MASTER PROGRAM ENROLLMENT | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>CBF-Affiliated Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Baptist Seminary of Kentucky | 34 | 14 | 41% |
| Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond | 55 | 29 | 53% |
| Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary | 325 | 122 | 38% |
| Campbell University Divinity School | 160 | 69 | 43% |
| Central Baptist Theological Seminary | 195 | 105 | 54% |
| Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity | 216 | 100 | 46% |
| Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary | 119 | 47 | 39% |
| Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology | 170 | 98 | 58% |
| Wake Forest University's Divinity School | 121 | 71 | 59% |
| <i>CBF-Affiliated Non-Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Duke University's Divinity School | 85 | 38 | 45% |
| Emory University's Candler School of Theology | 42 | 18 | 43% |
| Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of LRU | 10 | 5 | 50% |
| Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School | 16 | 7 | 44% |

non-Baptist, and include all degree-seeking students enrolled in professional degrees (all Master and Doctor of Ministry students). The enrollment numbers for Brite, Duke, Candler and Lutheran include only Baptist students.

The overall enrollment in Master degree and Doctor of Ministry programs for eight of the eleven schools that provided statistics in both 2010 and 2015 has dropped slightly in the last five years.⁷ The enrollment at several schools, however, increased during that period, including Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology, and Wake Forest University's Divinity School.

The most significant increase in enrollment was that of Central Seminary, which was recognized in a March 2015 ATS report as one of the fastest-growing seminaries in North America. The report noted that student population at the Baptist seminary in Shawnee, Kansas, had increased by nearly 180% during the past five years. The school's

president, Molly T. Marshall, attributed Central's success in part to its establishment of nine off-campus sites—four of them for Korean language students and all with integrated online learning. One of Central's most successful programs, CREATE, has been fully funded to recruit and build cohorts of students. A new women's leadership initiative program is following the same model. In its second year, the Women's Leadership Initiative, located in Nashville, Tennessee, provides women students with full-tuition scholarships, a global immersion experience, courses on entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy, and personal coaching.⁸

Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology is another of the schools with increased enrollment. According to Meredith Stone, the school's director of ministry guidance and instructor of Christian ministry and scripture, "Logsdon's continued growth is partially due to the Doctor of Ministry program's increased enrollment, but

FALL 2010 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

| <i>CBF-Affiliated Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary | 38 | 4 | 11% |
| Campbell University Divinity School | 21 | 2 | 10% |
| Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity | 24 | 2 | 8% |
| Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary | 18 | 0 | 0% |
| Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology | 20 | 4 | 20% |

FALL 2015 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

| <i>CBF-Affiliated Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond | 12 | 7 | 58% |
| Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary | 36 | 2 | 6% |
| Campbell University Divinity School | 24 | 13 | 54% |
| Central Baptist Theological Seminary | 56 | 13 | 23% |
| Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity | 29 | 10 | 35% |
| Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary | 47 | 2 | 4% |
| Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology | 25 | 8 | 32% |
| <i>CBF-Affiliated Non-Baptist Schools</i> | <i>Total Students</i> | <i>Women Students</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| Duke University's Divinity School | 16 | 3 | 19% |
| Emory University's Candler School of Theology | 9 | 5 | 56% |
| Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School | 2 | 1 | 50% |

also due to a commitment to providing off-campus extension sites to make accredited Baptist theological education more accessible across Texas. In addition to the main campus in Abilene, Logsdon has five extension sites located in Corpus Christi, Lubbock, San Antonio, Dallas-Fort Worth, and McAllen. Two of those extensions (DFW and McAllen) were not yet established at the time of the last *State of Women in Baptist* report in 2010, and the San Antonio campus was just getting off the ground.”⁹

While the enrollment at most CBF-affiliated schools declined, the overall percentage of women students at the reporting schools increased significantly from 38% in 2010 to 44% in 2015 (when comparing the eleven schools that reported in both years). This percentage of women students at CBF-affiliated schools actually exceeds the percentage of women at ATS member schools, which in 2015 had a 33% women student population.¹⁰

In the fall of 2010, the percentages of women students at CBF-affiliated schools ranged from 17% to 54%. Of the eleven theological schools reporting that year, only two had a majority of women students. Emory University’s Candler School of Theology led the way with 53%, with Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology close behind at 52%.

In the fall of 2015, the percentages of women students at CBF-affiliated schools ranged from 30% to 59%. Of the thirteen theological schools reporting in 2015, three had a majority of women students. Wake Forest University’s Divinity School enrolled 59% women students, and Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond and Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology both had 54%.

The schools with the greatest percentage increases in women’s enrollment from 2010 to 2015 were Wake Forest University’s Divinity School (39% in 2010, 59% in 2015), Duke University’s Divinity School (26% in 2010 to 41% in 2015), Hardin-Simmons University Logsdon Seminary (17% in 2010 to 30% in 2015), and Gardner-Webb University’s School of Divinity (36% in 2010 to 45% in 2015). The only school that dropped in percentages of women students was Emory University’s Candler School of Theology (54% in 2010 to 45% in 2015).

While an overall increase in women students has taken place in CBF-affiliated schools in the past five years, the percentages of women in Doctor of Ministry degree programs remains low, which again is in keeping with the national statistics for ATS member schools.¹¹

Five CBF-affiliated schools provided information about their D.Min programs. In 2010, the number of women enrolled was 12 out of the total 121 students or 10%. Those same five schools in 2015 reported enrolling 35 women of their 161 total D.Min. students or 22%, which is a marked increase over the 2010 numbers.

Since 2010, several schools, including Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond and Central Baptist Theological Seminary, have added D.Min. programs to their school’s curriculum.¹² Other schools reported information for the first time. In 2015, ten CBF-affiliated school reported the enrollment of 256 D.Min. students, and 64 of those students were women or 25%.

CONCLUSION

Taken as a whole, the five *The State of Women in Baptist Life* reports commissioned by Baptist Women in Ministry in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, and 2015 offer much insight into trends in Baptist life. The information gathered is not perfectly exact. Obtaining numbers, names, and statistics from autonomous local congregations and loosely connected denominational bodies is often more of an art than a science. Yet the information provided in these five reports is significant, and the last two reports particularly demonstrate shifts that are currently taking place within the moderate-to-progressive constellation of Baptist organizations located mostly in the southern United States.

In the last five years, the number of ordinations of women per year has leveled out at about forty-six per year, and the numbers and percentage of women serving as pastors and co-pastors has increased. A good number of the women called to the pastorate in the last few years have been younger than forty and called to healthy churches. From 2010 to 2015, the numbers and the percentages of women endorsed by the Alliance, BGCT, and CBF have increased, and as of 2015, 33.1% of all endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors were women. As for field personnel and church planters, while the total number serving and the number of women serving has declined, the percentage of women has remained steady at 53.8%. Finally, the overall percentage of women students at CBF-affiliated schools has increased significantly from 40% in 2010 to 44% in 2015.

These 2015 numbers and percentages reflect a greater openness to women ministers within moderate-to-progressive Baptist churches, denominations, and institutions. The statistics indicate that there is increasing affirmation of women’s gifts, growing willingness to call women as pastors,

and a rising commitment to gender equality. While there is yet much work to be done, the Baptist landscape is indeed changing, slowly but surely. Thanks be to God.¹³

¹The narratives of the nine women ministers are based on phone interviews conducted by Kevin Pranoto in late 2015 and early 2016.

²Jane Hull, "Another Room in God's House," Baptist Women in Ministry Blog, May 19, 2014, <http://bwim.info/being-a-minister/another-room-in-gods-house-by-jane-hull/>, accessed May 22, 2016.

³Pamela R. Durso and Amy Shorner-Johnson, *The State of Women in Baptist Life, 2010*, commissioned by Baptist Women in Ministry, Atlanta, Georgia, June 2011.

⁴Assistance in collecting and verifying the names of women pastors and co-pastors was provided by Leah Grundset Davis (Alliance), Charity Roberson (BGAV), Starlette McNeill (DCBC), Clay Price (BGCT), Steve Vernon (BGCT), and Aaron Weaver (CBF).

⁵Carrie McGuffin and Aaron Weaver, "CBF Council on Endorsement names 1,000th endorsed person," Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Blog, April 12, 2016, <https://cbfblog.com/2016/04/12/cbf-council-on-endorsement-names-1000th-endorsed-person/>, accessed May 25, 2016.

⁶Enrollment numbers were collected by the BWIM staff directly from the CBF-affiliated schools.

⁷Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School did not provide statistics in 2010, and thus, a comparative analysis is not available for this seminary.

⁸Tom Tanner and Eliza Smith Brown, "Why 100 ATS member schools have grown," Association of Theological School, The Commission on Accrediting, March 2015, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/documents/why-100-schools-have-grown.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2016.

⁹Meredith Stone, email to Pamela R. Durso, May 20, 2016.

¹⁰2015 Annual Report, Association of Theological School, The Commission on Accrediting, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/documents/2015-annual-report%20FINAL.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2016.

¹¹ATS, *2013-2014 Annual Data Tables*, "Table 2.14-B Head Count Enrollment by Degree Program, Race or Ethnicity," <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2014-2015-annual-data-tables.pdf>, accessed May 20, 2016.

¹²Jim White, "Richmond seminary starts D.Min. in contextual leadership," Baptist News Global, November 1, 2010, <https://baptistnews.com/2010/11/01/richmondseminarystartsdminincontextualleadership/>

¹³With much thanks to Keith Durso for his excellent copyediting of this report and to Alex Durso, who is perfect in every way, for her careful review of the statistics.



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Baptist Women in Ministry is committed to networking, connecting, and advocating with and for women in Baptist life and those who support them. Through its website (www.bwim.info), BWIM connects with thousands of women and men around the world. The website features a blog with three weekly posts: a devotion written by Nikki Finkelstein-Blair, stories about ministry and family relationships, responsibilities, and real life challenges shared by our friends, and a series titled THIS IS WHAT A MINISTER LOOKS LIKE. The BWIM website also has a helpful resource page that features maternity leave policies, ordination and installation service resources, placement and personnel helps, state and regional BWIM contact information as well as a list of helpful books and articles.

Each year, BWIM sponsors the Martha Stearns Marshall Month of Preaching and encourages Baptist churches to invite women into their pulpit to preach during the month of February. In 2015, 211 churches participated.

BWIM also annually hosts "Day of Discernment" events for college women. These events create intentional space for college women to reflect on and discern their God-given calling. More Day of Discernment events are on the

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