

a voice for women in baptist life

Vocare

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BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY
advocating • connecting • networking

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

In June, Baptist Women in Ministry will host several gatherings and a workshop during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's General Assembly on June 24-26, 2010, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Get these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. Be watching for more information!

JUNE 24
BREAKFAST & WORSHIP
At Providence Baptist Church

JUNE 24
BOOK SIGNING
This is What a Preacher Looks Like

JUNE 25
WORKSHOP
"True to Your Voice: Women
Preaching with Courage"

JUNE 26
BREAKFAST with Lauren Winner,
author of *Girl Meets God*
Co-hosted with the Cooperative
Baptist Fellowship



Lauren Winner

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.



MARTHA STEARNS MARSHALL MONTH OF PREACHING

3 WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH BWIM

Sign up for
our *monthly*
E-Newsletter
by emailing
pamdurso@bwim.info.

Be on the look for our
updated website at
<http://www.bwim.info/>

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In February 2010, BWIM sponsored its **FOURTH ANNUAL MARTHA STEARNS MARSHALL MONTH OF PREACHING**, and Baptist churches were encouraged to invite a woman to preach during the month. The Spring issue of *Vocare* will include a list of participating churches and their preachers.

On February 7, 2010, **MANDY MCMICHAEL** (second from the left) preached at Pintlala Baptist Church in Pintlala, Alabama. She was presented with a Martha Stearns Marshall certificate. As of February 9, the list of participants included seventy-eight churches.

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THIS IS WHAT A PREACHER LOOKS LIKE

by Pam Durso



In the beginning, there were T-Shirts—bright aqua-colored T-Shirts that read “This is What a Preacher Looks Like.” In 2008, Baptist Women in Ministry produced and distributed the T-Shirts during the celebration of the organization’s twenty-fifth anniversary, and I must say the T-Shirts were a big hit. They were colorful and fun and stirred up conversation. Baptist women bought them and proudly wore them. Mothers purchased them for their daughters. Seminarians were seen wearing them in class. Husbands ordered them as gifts for their wives. Church leaders gave them to women who preached in their churches. And several fathers inquired as to whether the T-Shirts came in toddler sizes. The T-Shirts were a hit.

I have pondered a bit about why the T-Shirts were so popular, and one conclusion is that a simple cotton T-Shirt let us as Baptists “say” out loud and embrace the truth that there is not ONE look for Baptist women preachers. We are a diverse lot. We have many looks, many preaching styles, and many voices.

We are young and . . . older. Our voices are soft and loud, prophetic and pastoral,

humorous and sincere. We are veteran preachers and new to the preaching world. We live in all geographic regions in the United States and in places all around the world. We come from a variety of Baptist faith traditions, and we hold theological positions across the entire spectrum. We serve on church staffs, in campus ministry, as denominational leaders, and as theological educators. We are African American, Asian, Latina, and Caucasian. We are sisters, wives, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and friends. When it comes to “This Is What a Preacher Looks Like” T-Shirts, one size surely does not fit all. Baptist women preachers are truly a diverse group.

Late in 2008, Smyth and Helwys editor, Keith Gammons, contacted me about putting together a collection of sermons using “This is What a Preacher Looks Like” as the title. As I gathered sermons from Baptist women preachers and began reading them, my conclusion about the popularity of the T-Shirts was confirmed.

As I read sermons and more sermons and

then even more sermons by Baptist women preachers, I was struck by the great variety in those sermons. We surely do not all sound alike. Some of us are narrative preachers. Others are expository preachers. Still others tend toward being topical preachers. We preach from different places in life. We each bring our own voices, our own stories, our own experiences to our sermons.

In the midst of this collecting and reading of sermons, I finally realized that what a preacher looks like is—all of us. Only when we expand our vision and embrace the truth that all of us who are followers of Christ are preachers of the gospel—only then will we know what a preacher looks like. Only when we hear all the voices—women and men, young and old, black and white and brown, conservative, moderate, and liberal, strong and weak, seasoned and inexperienced—will we have a clear picture of what it means to be a preacher of the gospel. Indeed, only then we will know what the body of Christ looks like. To be fully the body of Christ, we need each other. We need to hear each other.

The book, *This is What a Preacher Looks Like*, which has thirty-eight sermons, will be available in May. So be expecting more information about it soon in the BWIM e-newsletter and on the BWIM website. The T-Shirt is still available. The cost is \$10 plus shipping. E-mail pamdurso@bwim.info if you want to order one!



David Dellinger with his daughters, Andrea (left) and Katelyn

THE FATHER OF THE REVEREND

by David A. Dellinger

My wife and I recently returned from celebrating our oldest daughter's birthday and visiting the church she now pastors, Millbrook Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. We are still amazed at the sequence of events that led to her pastorate. As I drove, we recalled the journey that we have taken as a family since Andrea originally accepted her call to ministry. At times it has not been easy.

As her father, Andrea's successes and struggles have elicited a full spectrum of human emotions in me. I have been proud and humbled on most days, but on others I have been angry and eager to protect her. I must admit that at one point I thought that all I needed was five smooth stones and a sling so that I could help her handle confrontations with people who thought or acted like there was no room in ministry for women.

About three years ago, Andrea and I had one of our "heart-to-heart" talks. She was literally sick with discouragement. By that point, she had enjoyed ministry positions in several churches, working with children, youth, and families. Andrea had also experienced two long interims. She served as the only full-time minister while her congregations looked for a senior pastor. Over time, though, it became more difficult for her to believe that she would ever have a pastorate herself. She said, "Dad, I may never be a senior pastor or be asked to preach much, but if I do this to the best of my ability, maybe I will have a daughter who will be able to do these things."

I wanted to encourage her, even if I had my own doubts. Andrea and I talked about some of her painful experiences and recalled what God had already done in her life. As a young teenager, Andrea took carefully-outlined sermon notes in notebooks that I bought her. Soon she would fill them, file them away, and ask me for another one. I knew this interest was unusual at the time, and I would come back to it on many occasions over the years. I reminded Andrea of how uniquely she loved God's word at such a young age. Sometimes I would actually look at the row of notebooks on the shelf and think how strange it was that God worked in such a way. Her many sermon notes encouraged us to remember that God has always been guiding her life. When we later talked about the notes, Andrea could never quite articulate why she wrote them or why they were important to her. But her notes were

all there on the shelf, as a cornerstone for our family. Of course, not everybody appreciated the notes like we did. One Sunday morning after church, Andrea teased our pastor that he had done a better job on that particular sermon the last time he delivered it. He replied that he had never preached that sermon before. Andrea brought out her notebook, flipped to a certain page, and showed him the notes she had taken several years earlier on the exact same sermon!

Andrea's copious note-taking occurred simultaneously with another significant event: her first cousin, Kimberly, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Andrea rallied around her dear friend, but Kimberly was not doing well, and the doctors told us we "should accept the fact" that someone we loved was dying. Kimberly lost her sight and suffered partial paralysis, but twenty years later she is still living. Her recovery was miraculous, baffling her doctors. The whole family learned first-hand that God still performs miracles. Andrea concluded that a God who performs miracles deserves her service.

Andrea's seminary experience, and our memories of it, reinforced our confidence that God has been directing her journey. Her time at McAfee School of Theology was more than preparation; it was also validation that her gifts could be used in ministry. Surely God puts special people in our lives for a purpose, and what a special assortment of folks taught at McAfee when Andrea arrived! While there, she even had opportunity to study with John Claypool and Barbara Brown Taylor. Because she demonstrated a gift for preaching, her mentors and professors encouraged her to use this gift, rather than to "rethink" it.

I have come to appreciate the struggle Baptist women in ministry face. I am grateful for their day-to-day work and for the dads who encourage them. As a male Baptist myself, I must acknowledge that more Baptist men are probably opposed to women in ministry than affirming of it. Most of these men, however, do not know my daughter, or the female co-pastor at my church, or the female ministers who may read this article. If the church is to survive, we men must open our minds and wrap them around the knowledge that God gifts women for ministry, and we must make places for these gifted ministers of God to carry out the mission they have been given. After all, it is we who will benefit.



FINDING MY WAY BY GETTING LOST IN THE JUNGLE

by Ruth Clowater



I have finally learned the secret to doing God's will—at least it seems to be working for me! The secret? Learning not to think too much. Instead, I allow myself to dream. Dreaming can be great fun, and besides, it is free. Some dreams come and go, without a second thought. Others stick around for awhile. When they do, I ask myself: does making the dream a reality sound like “work” or like fun? I left a career where I “worked,” and now I want to have fun by serving God with everything I have. So, if the dream sticks with me, and it seems like a good idea and it sounds like fun, then I start believing that it might actually be from God. If it is, then my job is to wait for God to start opening doors.

So I have learned not to think too much. If I had not learned that lesson, I would not be doing what I am doing now. Back in 2002, the company I worked for went bankrupt, and my first thought was to get another job, not to start a ministry. I finally enrolled at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond but only because my job search was going nowhere. Since I had nothing else to do, I would take a couple of classes, just until I found a job again.

Over the semester break that winter, I made my first trip to Costa Rica. I had a wonderful time, made some great friends, but I still was not thinking about Costa Rica in terms of living there. I returned to Virginia and continued to juggle seminary studies with a job search. Meanwhile, I made two

more trips to Costa Rica. On the last one, I remember clearly the day that I was sitting along the shore of the Caribbean, the gentle, rhythmic sound of the waves sweeping away the clutter that had accumulated in my mind. Suddenly, it was as if one of those waves lifted up and came crashing down over my head. In an instant, I sensed that God was calling me. It was abrupt, it was certain, and it was the furthest thing from my own mind!

Once again, I began to think too much. What am I going to do? How will I support myself? I knew I was supposed to go, but that was about all that I knew. I put my home on the market. Meanwhile, I wrestled with God. “God,” I said, “you know me, and you know that I am not one to beg money from churches or anybody. I do not even know what it is you want me to do. I have enough money of my own that I can live on for a year. So, God, you have got a year. I just hope that I do not have to come back home when the year is up, looking like a fool, and having to start from scratch. *I'm too old to start all over.* Amen.” That was my prayer—pretty much verbatim.

In 2004, I moved to Costa Rica and spent six months with a family in a town of about 10,000. They were great, but I was miserable. I am not a “city” person. Then I fell in love with Carlos Espinoza, who is now my husband. He is not a city person either. We moved to a small house that he had built in Arbolitos, a tiny

pueblo in the jungle along the Nicaraguan border. The eldest of fourteen, Carlos had built the house so that his younger siblings could attend high school in Arbolitos. He never anticipated living in the house himself, but since neither of us had a steady income, we decided to move there temporarily, or so we thought.

We were not in Arbolitos for long before, when almost without knowing it, dreams of what a ministry there might look like started coming into focus, and they were especially clear during my afternoon siesta in the hammock that serves as our living room sofa. Now, four years later, we have built a learning center, complete with a library and computer lab. We travel the river in our floating library, loaning books to the children in the many tiny pueblos that dot the landscape along the shores of Sarapiquí River. We are immersed in the life of region and in the lives of our neighbors.

We now also in the early stages of a new project, the Sarapiquí Institute for Ministerial Excellence. The vision is to offer theological education and resources to pastors and ministry leaders who do not even have a high school diploma. It will be a huge undertaking, but I believe that it will flourish into whatever it is that God wants it to be, just as I feel that I am finally doing exactly what it is that I am supposed to be doing. And it all happened when I finally learned not to think too much.



JESUS CALLS

by *Charity Roberson*



Jesus Calls is the annual women's retreat for college students in North Carolina. It was first held a decade ago when a group of women in ministry decided to provide a safe place for collegiate women to explore their calling to ministry. In the last few years, the focus of the weekend has shifted in response to a need for a state-wide collegiate women's retreat, but the heart of the retreat remains the same. It is a safe place for young women to explore exactly what God has created and called them to be.

The latest retreat, held November 8-9, 2009, was staffed by Jennifer Ingold Asbill, Whitney Edwards, Kristen Muse, Charity Roberson, and Elesha Thraser, and sponsored by North Carolina Baptist Campus Ministry, North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union, and North Carolina Baptist Women in Ministry. Campbell University Divinity School provided funds for special treats for the girls throughout the weekend. Students were led in breakouts that included information on nurturing relationships in our virtual world, establishing a healthy body image in our celebrity-obsessed culture,

finding balance in life, and maintaining one's identity in relationships. The young women also explored several scriptural passages about women. Fun activities included a Halloween Rerun party with costumes and games themed from television shows and a chic flick night with plenty of retro candy and popcorn followed by an impromptu dance party.

All of the weekend pointed to the truth that no matter who you are, Jesus has called you. He has not called you despite the fact that you are a woman but he has called you as a woman. Sunday's morning scripture study began with the invitation: "I want to present the way that I read some of the scriptures used to limit how women can lead. You can choose to believe with me, you can choose to think about it some more and do your own study, or you can leave here thinking that I am completely wrong. I just ask that you hear me out."

Many Christians have been indoctrinated with very restrictive messages about women's roles in the church, but I discovered during the retreat that these college students were at least willing to listen to a new way of thinking and interpreting scripture. On Sunday morning, two freshmen came to me and expressed that the weekend had prompted them to rethink their views. After being around female ministers, they had begun to wonder about what they had always been taught, and they spent their Saturday night exploring what the Bible really says about women. They confessed to me, "You all are not what we were expecting." And I replied, "You mean we actually really do love Jesus and don't have horns growing out of our heads." They laughed, but agreed. "Thank you for giving us a new perspective." My response to their gratitude: "We wanted you to know us for who we are. We are women, completely and totally, but we also know that we are called by God. That's what we wanted you to see this weekend and hope that you can experience that in your own life."

2009 BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY SUPPORTERS

CHURCHES

Faith Baptist Church, Georgetown, KY
First Baptist Church, Asheville, NC
First Baptist Church, Conroe, TX
First Baptist Church, Goldsboro, NC
First Baptist Church, Gretna, VA
First Baptist Church, Sylva, NC
First Baptist Church Williams, Jacksonville, AL

Knollwood Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC
Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS
Northside Drive Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC
Second Baptist Church, Liberty, MO
Wake Forest Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC
Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, NC

FOUNDATIONS

Christian Missions Concern

ORGANIZATIONS

Baptist General Convention of Texas
Baptist Women in Ministry of Georgia
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida
Passport, Inc.
Tennessee Baptist Cooperative Fellowship

SEMINARIES

Duke University Divinity School

CHURCHES HONORING THEIR MINISTERS

Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, KY—
in honor of Rebecca Caswell-Speight,
Reba Cobb, Susan Reed
Farmville Baptist Church, Farmville, VA—
in honor of Julie Gaines, Sara Thompson
Fern Creek Baptist Church, Louisville, KY—
in honor of Linda Barnes Popham
Highland Baptist Church, Louisville, KY—
in honor of Kathy Collier, Carol Harston,
Emily Hull, Nina Maples, Renee Purtlebaugh
North Broad Baptist Church, Rome, GA—
in honor of Katrina Brooks

Baptist Women in Ministry is not a member-based organization but instead provides its newsletter and other resources to all who request them. BWIM's Leadership Team greatly appreciates these churches, organizations, and individuals that have supported our work!

If your church would like to honor and thank a minister on your staff in a public and tangible way, send a contribution to Baptist Women in Ministry and include the minister's name.

INDIVIDUALS

Z. Allen Abbott	Pam Durso
Mary Yangsook Ahn	Sue Fitzgerald
Mark Alcaide	Neita F. Geilker
Jann Aldredge-Clanton	Bill Gunter
Nancy T. Ammerman	Genie Hargrove
Carmen Anderson	John Haun
Robin Bolen Anderson	William Craig Henry
Patricia Ayers	Linda Hill
Judith Bledsoe Bailey	Marillia Hines
Harold Bass	Sadie Jane Huffman
Carolyn Blevins	Rebecca Husband-Maynard
Bonnie Brandon Oliver	LeAnn Gunter Johns
Katrina Brooks	Richard D. Kahoe
Caralie Nelson Brown	Wyona E. King
Kristina Woods Brown	Helen W. Landes
Charles Bugg	Judy Landon
Gary P. Burton	Day Lane
Eileen Campbell-Reed	Deborah Loftis
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Reba Sloan Cobb	Gloria and Phill Martin
Brenda Collins	Nancy Stanton McDaniel
Virginia Connally	Vera McKissic
Faye Cooley	Elizabeth Milazzotto
Delores Cooper	Helen E. Montgomery
Julia P. Coulter	Ann White Morton
Carolyn Hale Cubbedge	Robin and Lindsey Norsworthy
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Royce Rose
Ro Turner Ruffin
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Paula J. Settle
Carolyn Shapard
Rachel Gunter Shapard
Amy Shorner-Johnson
Sue Smith
Dennis D. Staley
Tambi Swiney
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Brooks Wicker
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JEWEL LONDON, founder of SOW Ministries and "The Path" internet-based devotional, preached at Good News Church in Harrow, UK (near London) on August 2, 2009.



LIBBY AND BILL BELLINGER officiated at the October 2009 wedding of Alison Mitchell and Brad Reagan at Millbrook Winery in Millbrook, New York. Libby is the associate director of Meals & Wheels, Waco, Texas.

BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY IN ACTION



ROBIN NORSWORTHY, pastor of University Baptist Church in Montevallo, Alabama, was "Mother Superior" in the November 2009 performances of the musical "Nonsense" at the Montevallo Theater.



CONSUELO CAMPBELL was ordained on November 22, 2009, by the Fellowship Group Baptist Church in East Point, Georgia.