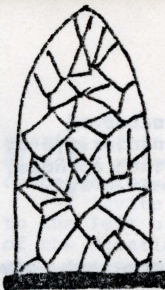


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NEWSLETTER

OF SPECIAL INTEREST
TO SOUTHEASTERN WOMEN

1984

VOL. II, NO.3

AFTER THE CONVENTION

We huddle together like newly-made orphans.
Shivering in the coldness of our own isolation,
 we seek each other's warmth.
We look in each other's eyes
 and there see the fear,
 and confusion,
 and hurt
 that we ourselves have felt so deeply,
 so recently.

We speak of practical politics,
 of staying and of going.
Yet even as we speak,
 we hear once again that quiet and persistent voice
 that calls out from beyond reason.
In our weakness, we are drawn to its strength.
In our confusion, we are drawn to its confidence.
In our rejectedness, we are drawn to its acceptance.
In our pain, we are drawn to its healing love.
And in our drawing near
 we rediscover
 faith.

-Peggy Haymes,
M.Div., '85

"Exercising Our Gifts" was the theme of the annual meeting of Women in Ministry, SBC held June 9-10, 1984, in Kansas City, Missouri, preceding the meeting of the SBC. Not only was the theme preached about and reflected on, it was acted out as women presided, preached, sang, prayed, and shared their individual stories.

Viewed from a variety of perspectives the participants did not fit any stereotype. I guessed the age range to be from the late 20's to the early 60's. The avenues of ministry included the following positions: Associational Consultation in Church Growth and Education, Minister of Religious Education, Pastor, Student, Homemaker and New Mother, Chaplain, Chair of Athletic Department (from a co-ed Baptist College in Texas), Director of Christian Social Ministries, Associate Minister, State WMU Staff. I talked with women from 13 states. Some of them were ordained and some of them were not.

Furthermore, the group was not all women! Men who had been present for all sessions were especially evident in the Sunday morning worship service when we had to carry in chairs and open doors to accommodate the crowd of 250. I overheard one man remark to his two friends at the conclusion of the service: "We could not have had a finer worship experience anywhere!"

The worship service did indeed set the stage for us to focus on the God who had called us together. The sermon of that hour by Susan Wright and the presentations earlier in the meeting by Linda Weaver Williams and Elizabeth Barnes spoke both the challenge and the comfort of God's will.

A highlight of any gathering is seeing friends. I enjoyed seeing friends from my seminary days of 20 years ago. In those days I did not know any woman who felt called to be a pastor. We have served as missionaries, student workers, professors, chaplains, ministers of children's work denominational servants, etc.

It occurred to me when Baptist Tel Net was launched late in the week at the convention that 20 years ago I did not know anyone who felt called to serve God through the technology of satellite communication. BTN is a new way of telling the old, old story. Likewise, God is calling more women to pastoral ministries today because "in the fullness of time" God has always spoken in new ways.

At the meeting in Kansas City I was happy to be a part of a host of women who have been busy responding to God's call in the past and a part of the women who today are pioneering new territory. In spite of the resolution passed at the convention denigrating all women and denying the fact that God is calling some women to pastoral roles, the women I talked with remain committed to the theme of the meeting: "We will be faithful to the God who has so graciously called and gifted us."

WELCOME!

As a member of the newsletter editorial staff and the Steering Committee of the Women's Resource Center, I extend a warm welcome to all new students at Southeastern Seminary and to all returning students.

To acquaint you with our Center's philosophy here is its statement of purpose:

The purpose of the Women's Resource Center, as a function of the Christian community, shall be

to provide support for women
to make resources available
to foster understanding among men and women

so that women and men alike will grow toward fulfillment in all areas of Christian life and ministry. (Revised by the Steering Committee of the W.R.C. on July 12, 1984)

According to Brenda Kneeece, this newsletter is "an effort to provide a network for the sharing of information about enrichment activities both on and off our campus, about events directly related to women's issues, about resource persons and materials, and about other concerns for all members of our seminary family."

I invite everyone to stop by the center, located in the Appleby classroom building to the left of the chapel entrance, or call me at 556-1283 (or any of the other members of the Steering Committee listed in this newsletter).

Again, welcome to Southeastern. Please come by or call so that we may get to know each other.

Sincerely,
Kathy Allen
Middler MDiv, SEBTS

THE 1984 SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, KANSAS CITY
John Steely, Professor, SEBTS, Wake Forest, NC

Before saying anything about the convention itself, one should recognize the FORUM. (An alternative meeting to the Pastors' Conference, held Monday afternoon just prior to the convention, the FORUM was attended by approximately 2,000 persons, had six major addresses, music and even a collection. As one of the platform members said, "How Baptist can you get?" Forum tapes are available. Three cassettes - tapes, postage and handling: \$15 - all orders should be prepaid. Address: SEC FORUM, 211 N. Woodlawn Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63122.) This event was of equal significance with the convention and at the FORUM an affirmative attitude toward women in ministry surely was evident.

The issue of greatest importance for women in the Convention itself was the resolution "On ordination and the role of women in ministry," which was passed Thursday morning, the last day of the convention. Three resolutions bearing on this topic had been submitted to the convention and automatically referred to the Resolutions Committee. The text of the resolution has been published, so there is no need to repeat it here. As far as content is concerned, it will suffice to say that it employs dubious exegesis in an attempt to support its case against the ordination of women. The "whereas" elements in the resolution should be carefully read and examined.

This is all the more important because the chair ruled that those "whereas" elements were not subject to debate or discussion until after the "Therefore, be it resolved" had been dealt with. Time allotted for this resolution expired, however, before any opportunity was allowed for questioning the highly questionable assertions on which the conclusion was grounded. Therefore the resolution as a whole cannot be claimed to have had even minimal discussion.

It is only fair to say that the chair repeatedly noted that a resolution of the convention has no binding force, but is only the opinion of a majority of the messengers present and voting at a specific time and place. Therefore those who see the resolution as setting a stone wall before them should take heart; no such stone wall exists that did not already exist before the convention.

One other observation about women and the convention: the participation of women in the convention program appeared to this observer to be significantly less than it has been in the past few years. It perhaps is to be attributed to the same orientation in the Resolutions Committee and the Program Committee, an orientation that would clearly define and significantly limit women's share in the major functions of the Southern Baptist Convention.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
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Debra Collins 556-6372	John Steely 556-1478
Vivian Jones 556-1993	

CALENDAR

* August 25, 1984
STEERING COMMITTEE
WORK RETREAT

* September 6, 1984
WOMEN'S FORUM-SEBTS
To be announced

* October 14-16, 1984
THEOLOGY IS A VERB II
Binkley Baptist Church
Chapel Hill, NC
Call or come by WRC
for details.