

VISIONS



June / July '05

The Diaconate MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



Allie Callaway
Kilpatrick-Hill

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MILLEDGEVILLE has ordained fifteen women as deacons since 1982. Three women have served as Chair of Deacons, and six women have served multiple terms. Within this context, my becoming a deacon was not unusual. However, for me it was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life as well as an unusual one for my family. Although we had thirty-nine Baptist ministers in the Callaway family by 1953 and countless more since then (not counting Callaway women who married ministers and whose sons were ministers) and many, many deacons, we do not know of any other women deacons.

The Deacon Family Ministry program was the deacon ministry that meant the most to me and the role I felt had the greatest impact. I had twenty families, the majority of whom I had not met previously. Through letters, phone calls, birthday cards, home visits, hospital visits, and church contacts, meaningful relationships developed and continue to this day. Being with families through such life experiences as illness, deaths, marriages, births, and turmoil brings such depth to relationships.

Our deacons implemented communion services in the home for its home-bound members and in nursing homes for our residents there. We would include family members who were present. For our members who could not participate in church communion services, this was most personal and meaningful. One of my family ministry members was a widow who lived in the country near her daughter. I learned that she had just been diagnosed with cancer, so I took her some flowers. She exclaimed: "I'm glad to have flowers when I can see and enjoy them!" Her two daughters were with her. When I asked if she would like to have communion, she and her daughters all wanted to participate. A few days later she died. Her daughters were most appreciative for the communion experience with their mother.

Serving as the Chair of Deacons was quite an experience and stretched me considerably. I appreciated the fellowship with the deacons and spouses, *(continues to page 4)*

Context, Conflict, Constitution, and Complexion



Clay Bowden

Oddly enough, female deacons or deaconesses, are not new to the church. Women serving in Christian diaconal capacities are historically

recorded as early as the third century, with their ordination historically recorded as early as the fourth century, and are referenced in Reformation period literature. Even early Baptists, like John Smyth who founded the first Baptist congregation in history, wrote in 1607 that deacons could be either men or women, allowing the

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CONTEXT

Like many or most of us, I grew up in the context of a Baptist church with exclusively male deacons. That tradition grew out of a widely accepted interpretation of Scripture which ignored the context of the society to which those Scriptures were originally written and which examined the Scriptures apart from the context of the whole passage in which the texts are found.





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Frankly speaking



Recently I received a phone call from a woman in Atlanta. She wanted to know why so many of our Baptist churches elect women deacons. In her view this should not be allowed in a Baptist church because “women should not teach men.” When I probed a little deeper concerning her motivation, I found that she was not a supporter of CBF and did not like what these churches were doing. She made it very clear where her denominational loyalty rested, and it was not with us.

So why do so many of the churches that support CBF have women deacons? The primary answer clearly has to do with their Baptist identity. They have women

deacons because, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, committed members of the local body of believers choose to elect them. They are not bound by denominational resolutions or creeds. As free and faithful Baptists, they are able to locate their authority to do this in the trusting relationships that exist within the congregation. Like the early church, they make decisions on what seems to them to be the will of God. (For an excellent statement of a local church’s understanding of this see

(continues to page 5)

From our moderator

In 1979, Becky, our sons Steve and Scott, and I moved to Northern Virginia, where I worked in the Pentagon. Our search for a church home ended at Parkwood Baptist, in Annandale. We loved Parkwood. It was a Bible-believing Baptist church that reached out into the community and made a difference. Our pastor, Bill Corder, had a deeply-held love for God and people that showed in everything he said and did. Parkwood was like Bill — a warm, loving church that welcomed newcomers and offered them opportunities to serve. Many of the people with whom we served at Parkwood remain close friends.

While searching for a church, we learned a lot about Parkwood, but one key fact eluded us until after we joined — the church had women deacons! That really surprised us. We’d never been in a church that “did it that way,” and I was concerned about the Biblical basis. I talked to Bill, who gave me a brand new article, “What About Women Deacons,” from the spring 1979 issue of *The Deacon*.

In just 18 pages, Dr. Charles Chandler summarized relevant Scripture, discussed American and Baptist history and experiences with women deacons, and addressed advantages and disadvantages



of including women as deacons. After some independent

prayer and study, I agreed with two of Dr. Chandler’s key conclusions: One cannot build an ironclad case for or against the ordination of women as deacons based on a study of the New Testament, and this is an area in which local churches must make their own decisions.

Did Parkwood make the right decision? Absolutely! Most of our members really believed that we are all one in the body of Christ, which has no second-class members, and women should be free to respond to God’s call without regard to man-made restrictions on their service. Our women deacons served God, the church, and the church’s people. They were valuable members of a team. They did not use their positions to try to “take over the church,” and I never heard a man say that he felt threatened by the presence of women at deacon gatherings or any other church activity.

On a more personal level, I’m married to a deacon, and find that I have “tolerated” it well. Becky was nominated at Parkwood,

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From our associate coordinator for congregational life



March Mission Madness drew nearly 600 youth and adults from across the state and state line (Alabama) to Americus, Georgia, to explore the 2005 theme, Make a Prophet. Participants engaged in opportunities both educational and experiential in nature. Youth groups visited Koinonia Partners, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity International and worked through the New Horizons Habitat affiliate to do home and yard improvements. Worship for the weekend, as well as a variety show titled *Americus Idol*, was held at the historic Rylander Theatre.

The highlight of the weekend for the youth groups was getting to know Habitat homeowners. A team from FBC Columbus, Georgia, worked alongside a single mother homeowner and her children to wash down their vinyl-sided home. The mother said she had forgotten the real color of her house! Another group from Central Baptist, Newnan, felt as if they really helped jump-start a family in

cleaning up their home and yard. Both youth group and homeowner took great pride in working together!

On behalf of CBF of Georgia, I would like to say a big word of thanks to Fellowship Baptist Church, Americus, for preparing lunch for the March Mission Madness crowd, to our worship leaders, Ryan Clark and Jen Van Camp, to all those at the New Horizons Habitat affiliate who helped secure mission projects, and to Scott Ford, who always does such great work to coordinate this event!

Plan now to come to Morrow or Warm Springs in 2006 as we celebrate 10 years of March Mission Madness!

—Devita Parnell, Associate Coordinator
for Congregational Life



MMM



More pictures online!

—March 11-13: <http://homepage.mac.com/robertscottford/mmm2005A>

—March 18-20: <http://homepage.mac.com/robertscottford/mmm2005B>

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia 2005-2006 Scholarship Application Process



Application for Seminary Studies

- Student must be enrolled at an accredited institution, not restricted to Baptist institutions.
- Student must demonstrate a connection to CBF of Georgia.
- Student must show potential for leadership within CBF.
- Student may re-apply annually.
- Application process to include three letters of reference from:
 1. CBF of Georgia Reference (i.e., pastor, someone to affirm CBF of Georgia connection and leadership potential)
 2. Seminary/Work Reference
 3. Personal Reference (a non-relative)
- Application essay (two-page limit to accompany completed application form) must address:
 - Faith Journey and Vocational Calling
 - Ministry Goals
 - Current Relationship to CBF of Georgia



Application for Undergraduate Studies

- Student may apply during junior year of college for scholarship in senior year.
- Student must be enrolled at an accredited institution, not restricted to Baptist institutions.
- Student must demonstrate a connection to CBF of Georgia with preference given to individuals actively involved in CBF of Georgia churches.
- Student must show potential for leadership within CBF.
- Application process to include three letters of reference from:
 1. CBF of Georgia Reference (i.e., pastor, someone to affirm CBF of Georgia connection and leadership potential)
 2. School/Work Reference
 3. Personal Reference (a non-relative)
- Application essay (two-page limit to accompany completed application form) must address:
 - Faith Journey and Vocational Calling
 - Professional Goals
 - Current Relationship to CBF of Georgia

Award amount, not to exceed \$2,000 annually, will be determined by the number of applicants. Applications will be received twice annually: 1. October 1, 2005 (for Spring Semester) 2. April 1, 2006 (for Fall Semester) Awards will be presented directly to recipients.

For more information contact:

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Diaconate *(continued from page 1)*

the deacon prayer chain, the prayer time before church services, and the ministry to the church. It was a period of many challenges and personal and spiritual growth for me. I was on my knees in prayer more than ever before in my life!

I believe strongly from my observations and experience that women do bring special qualities to the diaconate and to the faith community as leaders in servant ministry. For example, women are usually natural nurturers which is a crucial ingredient in the deacon family ministry; they are generally more concerned with process rather than task orientation; and women deacons provide an alternative where some family members relate more easily to women than to men.

I am very grateful to my church for providing me this special opportunity for ministry and spiritual growth.

—Dr. Allie Callaway Kilpatrick-Hill is a graduate of Southern Seminary and was a minister's wife for 47 years. She was Professor of Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Georgia for almost 25 years and is now Professor Emerita. She has completed a two-year course in Spiritual Direction since her retirement.

Moderator *(continued from page 2)*

but was initially reluctant to serve. She finally consented, with my support, only after she became convinced that God was calling her to serve in that manner. She served with distinction.

For me, the bottom line is this: I have two infant granddaughters. I do not know God's plan for them. I do know that I have no right to tell them that there are positions of Christian service to which God will not call them because they are women. To put it another way, how dare I even think about limiting God and the power of the Holy Spirit?

—Al Shauf, CBF of Georgia Moderator

Missions Update

Merge

On Sunday, March 27, 2005, Merge (Atlanta's Church for the City Center) held its first public worship gathering. The service was a mix of liturgical readings, sacred hymns, modern praise songs, and inspirational secular music. Chris Raffield (bottom right photo) delivered the devotion, and the group celebrated communion. A total of twenty-four people were a part of the gathering.



TOP: Chris and Erin Raffield welcome guests and discuss the new church.

BOTTOM LEFT: Jeremy Lewis, student at Candler School of Theology, visits with one of the guests.

BOTTOM MIDDLE: Beth Parlier, Candler student, leads the music for the service.



Taliaferro Success Story

Jimmy Lewis was the guest speaker for the chapel service at Shorter College and later spoke with Angelicia Harper. Angelicia is in her second semester at Shorter after graduating from Taliaferro County. She is adapting to college life and achieving excellent grades. Angelicia is now realizing her dream of attending college as a result of the gifts from Shorter College and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia.



Frankly Speaking

(continued from page 2)

the article posted at <http://www.midwaybc.net>.)

Of course the woman from Atlanta wanted to know why we would want to do something that violated scripture. I wanted to know what scriptures she had in mind. She pointed me to a couple of scriptures that she thought made her case. I responded that the evidence was inconclusive even in those cases. The texts she cited can and have been interpreted in many ways throughout Christian history. Then I asked her what she did with Romans 16:1 where Phoebe is clearly a deacon in Cenchrea. Here is what she said: "There is absolutely no evidence in Scripture that God ever chose women to be leaders, and when there is, it is an exception to the rule."

Then I asked if she knew that by the third century women deacons were accepted in many parts of the Christian world. There are even job descriptions of their responsibilities. Furthermore,

when Baptists emerged in church history around 1609, they recognized the equality of men and women in leadership roles within the church. Listen to Charles Deweese, executive director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, when he speaks of this: "In 1609-12, they prepared statements of faith favoring women deacons, with full equality in nomination, election, ordination, and duties." Though this equality of men and women declined in England after this period we should never forget that it was there at the very beginning of Baptist life. (For a more complete history of women deacons read Dr. Deweese's upcoming book, *Women Deacons and Deaconesses: 400 Years of Baptist Service*. Copies are available through the BH&HS website: www.baptisthistory.org or email Dr. Deweese at cdeweese@TNBaptist.org.)

Finally, I said to her that the most influential church leaders in my life were two women from my home

church. They were the first to encourage me to seek an education, they were the first to affirm God's calling in my life, and they were the first to teach me what a deacon should be and what a deacon should do. I have no doubt they were deacons in God's sight, even though the church failed to honor them with the title.

So why do so many of the churches that support CBF have women deacons? The primary answer clearly has to do with their Baptist identity.

After a brief lecture from the woman about how wrong I was to think such, I asked her a question: "Why are you violating scripture by teaching these things to a man?" There was a moment of silence, and she said: "I am not teaching you — I am merely suggesting." I, for one, have been grateful to the many women deacons who have done more than merely suggest. I am grateful to those like Phoebe who have taught us what it means to be a deacon.

—Frank Broome,
CBF of Georgia Coordinator

CBFGA Recognizes Georgia Churches with Women Deacons

NOTE from the editor: The following is not an all-inclusive list. The names listed were derived from a survey of state churches. We apologize for excluding anyone desiring to be included. We will gladly include your information in the next issue of Visions if you email ncopeland@cbfga.org; mark the email "women deacons."

Oakhurst Baptist Church of Decatur, based on our research, was the first CBFGA church to ordain women deacons in 1972.

Cherokee Heights (later New Heights) Baptist Church of Macon, began ordaining women as deacons in 1999. Harriett Smith was the first to be ordained, and they have ordained women every year since. Mary "Frankie" Moore was the first woman chair of deacons in 2003.

Dahlonega Baptist Church has ordained three women. The first was Becky Buckheister in 2000. Dorothy Brock and Judy Palmer have also served as deacons at Dahlonega Baptist.

Druid Hills Baptist Church of Atlanta ordained Mary Saunders as their first woman deacon in 1979. Since that time, one-third to one-half of their deacon body has been made up of women. They have had three female chairs: Danna Smith, 1995-1996; Denise Koehl, 1998-1999; and Gaye Williams, 1999-2000.

Fellowship Baptist Church of Americus elected Lib Willoughby in 1974 as the first woman deacon. Nine women deacons have been ordained and six have served as chair. The six women who have served as chairs are: Joan Bush (1978-1979 and 1979-1980); Nancy Ruth Rushin (1993-1994 and 1994-1995); Lib Willoughby (1996-1997); Martha Buhler (1995-1996 and 2000-2001);

Saranne Peacock (1997-1998, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005); and Gayle Stembridge (1998-1999). Other women to serve as deacons have been Agnes Robinson, Mary Jo Anderson, and Dee Cole Vodicka.

First Baptist Church of Cave Spring elected their first woman deacon, Doris Carnes, in 1997, and has had several other women deacons over the years. Doris was chair 2003 and 2004 and the present chair is also a woman, Diane Minschew.

First Baptist Church of Chamblee elected their first female deacons in 1990. Beth Ann Boland, Edith Bond, Celeste Massey, and Cecelia Prator were ordained in 1990. The church relocated to Alpharetta in October 1993, and was renamed Johns Creek Baptist Church. Johns Creek Baptist Church has ordained the following female deacons: Marsha Janofsky in 1997, Jean Albright in 1998, Leslie Morgan and Trudy Woodard in 2000, Sue Bowron in 2002, and Brenda Turpin in 2004.

First Baptist Church of Columbus has the following women deacons: Cindy Sparks, Cheryl Tate, and Peggy White, all elected in 2002. Kim Jenkins was elected in 2003, Faye Melton in 2004, and Judy King in 2005.

First Baptist Church of Dalton ordained their first women deacons in 1983, Dot Reich and Stella Boyles (both are still active church members). Debra Haney, now FBC Business Administrator, served as chair in 2001.

First Baptist Church of Forsyth elected Mary Wade Mitchell and Carey Russell in 1985. Carey served as chair in 2003. There are currently two women deacons on the board. Other ordained



"I am often more of a thinker and a doer than a talker. For much of my life this has caused me

some discomfort and left me feeling lacking when it came to relating to other people, especially in a room full of people. Eventually I recognized that I was more comfortable with individuals, but still wished for more ease in conversation and openness. Coupled with this was a very strong sense of privacy, both mine and anyone I met. I was slow to approach, hesitant to ask too many questions, and hasty to retreat if I picked up on any uneasiness.

"Imagine my surprise in recent years to realize that I was particularly gifted to enter into some of the most private places of some people's lives without hesitation and with the assurance

that it was the right thing to do.

"When I was first asked to be a deacon at First Baptist Church of Christ of Macon, I could not accept. There was enough tension related to Frank's ministry at that point that he did not need an ordained wife right then. I grieved, but I became a deacon, of sorts, anyway when I began to care for two elderly sisters (not mine) who had no other family to watch after them. For several years I visited them, balanced their checkbooks, and cut their hair. Jane's dementia became so severe that she would stand in the shower with soap in hand and ask me what to do next. Olive had a debilitating stroke, and with a friend we decided against further treatment for her. I was with both women at their death — a very sacred place.

"A friend at work had back surgery. I

told her that I was coming to the hospital to wash her hair while she was flat in the bed, if she would let me. She protested, not knowing how it could be done, but when it was over, she knew I would do it again.

"I have had long and serious conversations with a student assistant saying something no one else would: 'You are not acting like the person you tell me you are. You can do better than this'. She knows I will be honest with her and that I believe in her. She is changing.

"A high school friend of my son's died almost three years ago at the age of 15 or 16. I attended his funeral with Truitt and several of his friends. At lunch, afterwards, I looked around the table and realized that his friends were Jewish and Hindu. In talking with them, I had to explain what a

(See Broome page 11)

women deacons: Jackie Keadle (1988), Gail Young (1991), and Cathryn Futral (2000).

First Baptist Church of Ft. Oglethorpe elected their first woman deacon, Mary Anna Paulson, in 1988. She also served as chair of the deacon board from 2000-2001. Ft. Oglethorpe has ordained ten women. They currently have two women on the deacon board.

First Baptist Church of Hawkinsville has two women deacons, Martha Anderson and Melva Stevens. Both were ordained in 2003.

First Baptist Church of Christ of Macon elected women deacons for the first time in 1986. Their names are: Deigie Andrews, Carolyn Martin, and Beverly Penley. First Baptist has had one woman chair, Connie Jones (2003-2005). Thirty-five women have been elected as deacons since 1986.

First Baptist Church of Marietta has had women deacons for nearly twenty years. The first women deacons were Marguerite Borders and Nancy Ryle. Elaine Sheldon was the first female chair of deacons for the term 2002-2003.

First Baptist Church of Milledgeville elected Louise Nelson and Ann Pate Lastinger as the first women deacons in 1982. Louise served as chair in 1992, Meldra Harris Panchelli served as chair in 1997, and Allie Callaway Kilpatrick-Hill in 2000. First Baptist has ordained fifteen women since 1982.

First Baptist Church of Rome elected women deacons for the first time in 1977. They were: Virginia Powell, Mary Reynolds, Jane Tucker, and Margaret Whitworth.

First Baptist Church of Savannah first elected women deacons in 1974. They were Rose Usher and Mary Louise Claiborne. They have had three women to be elected chair: Jane B. Jennings in 1988, Florrie Kirkley in 2000, and Nancy Lazard in 2003. FBC has ordained fifty-eight women deacons.

First Baptist Church of Warm Springs elected their first women deacons in 2003. The first were Cindy Fuller, Jerry Levins, and Merrie Money. Merrie Money was also elected this year as the first female deacon chair. FBC has ordained six women deacons in the last three years. Women are now about one-half the total number of active deacons.

Garden Lakes Baptist Church of Rome ordained Bernice Swann as its first female deacon in 1995. She also served as the chair of deacons from 2000-2001. Garden Lakes has ordained nine women deacons since 1995.

Harlem Baptist Church has had women deacons for about twenty years. The first, Phyllis Henecy, presently lives in Augusta. There are two women serving on the current deacon board.

Highland Hills Baptist Church of Macon first elected Mary Brown in 2000. Other women who have served are: Lyn Hicks in 2001, Alisa Rehberg in 2001, and Devita Parnell in 2005. Lynn Hicks served as chair in 2004.

Maranatha Baptist Church of Plains has had one woman deacon, Sue Askerzada. She is presently serving the last year of her three-year term. Sue has also served as the chair.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Macon elected their first woman deacon, Auve' Perry, in 1998. Bethany Clough, Vicki Hinson, Laura Kurish, Tricia Whitby, and Janet Walton are currently serving on the deacon board. R. Kim Jones is also an ordained deacon at Mt. Zion.



"I will tell you that the year I served as deacon chair was one of the most challenging of a life of many challenges. I came to feel that God called me to that position at that particular time and used me in that position. The senior minister left shortly after I took office. It was very clear that I needed to work closely with the associate minister, James Richardson, and assistant minister, Jodie Wright. We did, our diaconate worked as they had never done before, and we have been a different church since. The membership supported our leadership. We have worked side by side, men and women, to do the work which we consider our mission in this community and the world. We continue to explore our calling and discover our strengths as individuals to see how best we can serve as First Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia, Cuba, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and other parts of the world."

—Jane Jennings, Deacon, First Baptist Church of Savannah

Oakhurst Baptist Church's first women deacons were Sue Woolf and Rachel Gill in 1972. Patisue Jackson was the first woman chair in 1983. This year's chair is Elise Phillips, and the chair for next year will be Rene Kirlin. Oakhurst has ordained at least fifty to seventy-five women deacons since 1972. Oakhurst is located in Decatur.

Rocky Creek Baptist Church of Forsyth has had women deacons since 1988. Sue Bunn was the first, and she also has served as chairperson. Presently there are two men and five women on the active deacon body.

Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church of Atlanta elected women for the first time in 1992. The nine women elected were: Lou Anderson, Jayne Bedingfield, Teresa Bell, Catherine Capps, Barbara Goldsmith, Ouida Sara, Leah Stephens, Claire Willingham, and Beth Wright.

Tabernacle Baptist Church of Carrollton elected their first women deacons in 1990. They were: Joyce Hallman, Agnes Burson, and Barbara Swaynham. In 2002, Marsha Solomon was elected as chair. Tabernacle has ordained a total of twenty-three women as deacons and currently has sixteen women of the fifty-six deacons now serving.

Trinity Baptist Church of Moultrie elected their first woman deacon, Joyce Barber, in 2000. Jane Tomlinson was elected in 2001 and Kay Green in 2002.

Several other Georgia churches have elected women as deacon chairs: **FBC of Gainesville's** first female deacon chair, Lydia Park, was elected this year; **Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Stone Mountain**, elected Susan McCullar as deacon chair in 2001 and their current deacon chair is Jenny Brannan; **Memorial Baptist of Savannah** elected Ellen Murray as deacon chair; **North River Baptist Church**, Roswell, elected Anne Ledford to serve two years as deacon chair. **The Oaks in Lyons**, **Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta**, and **Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta** have all elected women to their deacon boards over the years.

Resource Wise

Resources for Deacon Ministries

One of the purposes for deacon ministry is to establish Christian community together. Given the pace of our lives, this is no small feat. Even involved and faithful deacons can become isolated in their ministry without encouragement and spiritual nourishment from other deacons. Sometimes we get so focused on the tasks of deacon ministry we overlook the importance of spiritual formation and development within the deacon board.

SOME IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Personalize your deacon ordination service. Mail printed invitations to friends and family of ordination candidates; ask each candidate to provide a brief written statement about her/his calling that can be incorporated into the ordination sermon; provide framed certificates of ordination; and celebrate with a reception.

Identify a theme for the year which can be developed in your meetings. Possibilities would include Spiritual Gifts, Evangelism, Servant Leadership, Testimony, etc.

Begin each year of service with a **Deacon/Spouse Retreat.** This does not have to be overnight — can be Friday night, Saturday morning. Find a location away from the church, but close enough to be accessible. Allow time for fun and fellowship, introduce the theme for the year, utilize an outside facilitator (pastors of other churches are a good resource — look for one who will be a good fit for your deacon board and who can develop your theme effectively).

Consider organizing deacons' meetings around the

telling of stories. Begin with a **Personal Story** of individual calling or faith journey; follow with a **Congregational Story**, i.e., about a "slice" of church history or influential laypeople who have gone before; and ground them both in the larger, **Biblical Story**, providing theological reflection. When stories are "layered" in this way and are effectively interwoven, at least two things happen: deacon community is strengthened, and spiritual energy is generated that nourishes the ministry. (Charles Olsen elaborates this model more fully in *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders* [Alban Institute, 1995].)

Offer a **Deacon Ministry Team** — a smaller group within the board where support, learning, and spiritual connection can occur in a more informal and personal manner. This will not appeal to everyone, but for new deacons it can offer important encouragement, and for those who want to "go deeper," it can be vital.

At the end of the day, deacon ministry is not as much about performance as it is about building relationships — with God, with each other, and with the families we serve.

—Connie Jones is Chair of Deacons and Church Council at the First Baptist Church of Christ, Macon, Georgia. She also maintains, along with her husband, Warren, a private practice in Marriage and Family Therapy.



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Nouwen, Henri, *The Wounded Healer* (Image Books, reissued March 1979). Nouwen argues that our effectiveness as ministers comes out of our "woundedness" and not our "successes."

Olsen, Charles M., *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders* (Alban Institute, 1995). Encourages church leadership to become a core of spiritual leaders within the congregation and proposes a worship format for business and committee meetings.

(continues to next page)

Newsletter for Deacons now available

(Excerpt from CBF News Release by Gay Campbell, CBF Communications)

CBF, in partnership with Transforming Solutions, is proud to provide churches with a monthly newsletter as a resource for deacon ministry. An opportunity to revitalize deacon ministry and help deacons and churches transition into serving multi-generations in their congregations is now available through a partnership between Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Congregational Life Initiative and Transforming Solutions, directed by Eddie Hammett, who has served more than thirty years in churches and convention leadership.

Hammett believes deacons have a great opportunity and responsibility in today's rapidly changing world to provide spiritual leadership through modeling spiritual disciplines and missional ministries.

Sign up to participate in the deacon ministry partnership by contacting Bo Prosser, CBF Coordinator for Congregational Life, at 770-220-1631 or email bprosser@thefellowship.info. Churches can also contact Eddie Hammett at 828-685-9630 or Eddie@transformingsolutions.org.

Visit the following webpage on CBF's website to access the newsletters: <http://www.thefellowship.info/CL/FF/CMResources/Deacon.icm>.

(continued from previous page)

Palmer, Parker, *Let Your Life Speak* (Josex-Bass Publishing, 2000). An insightful and moving meditation on finding one's true calling.

Travnikar, Rock, *The Blessing Cup: Prayer-rituals for Families and Groups* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, August 2002). Contains mini-worship services for special occasions and for the seasons of the church year.

Thompson, Marjorie J., *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1995). A "nuts-and-bolts" approach to deepening the spiritual life.

Wilkes, C. Gene, *Jesus on Leadership* (Tyndall House Publishing, October 1998). Seven principles to assist leaders with everything from humbling their hearts to building a team for Christ.



Other Resources

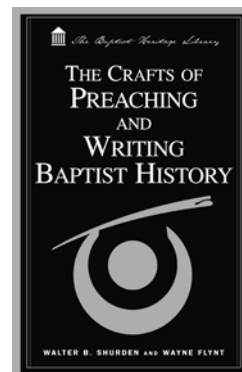
NEW BOOK ON BAPTIST WOMEN MINISTERS

Courage and Hope: The Stories of Ten Baptist Women Ministers, edited by Pam and Keith Durso. Place your order today so that you will receive one (or more) of the first copies. Pam is associate director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society.

In *Courage and Hope*, the following ten women share freely and honestly about their relationship with God, their calling to ministry, and their struggles with finding the right places and the right times to live out their callings: Addie Davis, Elizabeth Smith Bellinger, Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, Sue Fitzgerald, Ida Mae Hays, Margaret (Meg) B. Hess, Alma Hunt, Molly T. Marshall, Ella Pearson Mitchell, and Ruby Welsh Wilkins. This volume is a breakthrough book in Baptist studies. Women in ministry have been subjected to unrelenting negative attacks in the past 25 years. This book undercuts such attacks simply by revealing in a positive fashion what God has done and is doing in the lives of ten women ministers. Each story is absorbingly inspiring.

BOOKLET from THE BAPTIST HISTORY AND HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Baptist History and Heritage Society is also taking orders for a booklet that was released last year. *The Crafts of Preaching and Writing Baptist History* by Walter B. Shurden, founding executive director of The Center for Baptist Studies at Mercer University, and Wayne Flynt, distinguished university professor at Auburn University. Baptist preachers, writers, students, and professors will find this to be an excellent and highly practical resource.



To order these resources call 800-966-2278 or send an email request to Pam Durso at pdurso@tnbaptist.org.

CBF of Georgia... enabling the people of God who are committed to historic Baptist principles to carry out the Great Commission under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a fellowship where every Christian has the freedom and the responsibility to exercise God's gift and calling.

Context, Conflict, Constitution, and Complexion

(continued from page 1)

church to elect and ordain both genders into the diaconate ministry role. In 1611, Thomas Helwys, who pastored England's first Baptist congregation, compiled the first Baptist confession of faith, which allowed men and women to be deacons (Article 20). As early as the 1770s, Baptist deaconesses are noted in America, Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Things began to change in late-1800s America; deacons evolved into more administrative, managerial roles. And by the 1840s, a term evolved which unfortunately holds fast today: "Board of Deacons." This term hit its apex in the 1950s when deacons became corporate church managers rather than servant-ministers.

It is important and interesting to note that as the deacon role shifted in the 1800s, to a managerial rather than ministerial model, there were comparatively fewer women serving in the diaconate. Why, then, should it surprise us that as churches evolve back to the Biblical model of deacons serving in ministry to the needs of people, women are feeling called and being found qualified to resume duties of the deacon?

CONFLICT

Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Macon made the bold, and I believe Biblical, move to allow, elect, ordain, and enjoy women serving as deacons. It began its discussion under the leadership of interim pastor, Alec Thompson. There was honest, healthy, and heated discussion on the subject of deacon gender as Thompson led the church in revising its Constitution and By-laws. Amid the discussion was conflict of opinions; yet, the end result was a Constitution that remained gender-free in its terminology regarding deacon selection.

CONSTITUTION

The Constitution simply reads:

Qualifications of a Deacon — Deacons will be men and women selected from among the resident membership at Mt. Zion, using the following articles as general guidelines:

—Maintain faithful membership in the activities of Mt. Zion for a minimum of one (1) year prior to nomination as a deacon.

—Be at least twenty-five (25) years of age, not the spouse of a current deacon, or any of the called ministerial staff or their spouses.

—Show positive commitment to Christ, to family, to stewardship, to the church's ministry, and to the deacon ministry.

—Strive to exemplify the biblical concept of deacons. (I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-7)

—Demonstrate compassion for people and concern for their spiritual needs.

—Demonstrate the ability to work well with others, the pastors, and other deacons in a shared shepherding ministry.

This recent Constitutional revision, among many other

amendments, was explained to me by the Pastor Search Committee, who interviewed me for their pastorate. I explained that I had grown up in the tradition that deacons were male, not female, yet I committed myself to search the Scriptures objectively, and research the subject hitherto never contemplated by me, while remaining sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and the congregation's interpretation of Scripture.

COMPLEXION

Each year at Mt. Zion, a woman or women were nominated but never appointed by the church family. Several years later, our first female deacon, Auvé Perry, received the affirmative support of the church, the first of now seven very qualified, devout, and exemplary female deacons who have served in the shepherding ministry of a fine church.

I presented the convictions of my own personal study of Scripture and the history of deacons in the church. There were many good questions; there was legitimate concern as to the effects of this shift; and we had to gracefully agree-to-disagree when we felt opposite convictions. We did lose two families in the process, and grieved their need to find another church home. However, while the loss of those precious relationships was significant, the number was surprisingly small.

Patience, prayer, study, conversation, and Christian grace of spirit allowed an atmosphere of peace among brothers and sisters at Mt. Zion. I believe, if we had it to do all over again, we would do it joyfully! Hindsight has made the blessing and the benefits of co-ed deacons obvious. What a beautiful balance and blend has been enjoyed in the complexion of Mt. Zion Baptist Church since the women have joined the men in shepherding Christ's sheep!

Clay B. Bowden is former pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church (1991-2004) and is presently serving as pastor of Avondale Estates First Baptist Church (2004-Present).

Opportunities (continued from page 11)

CBFGA received an acknowledgement from the **First Baptist Church of Cave Spring** for the Memorial Fund gift in memory of Tal Roberts.

In Memoriam

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of **Tal Roberts** who passed away in April. You are all in the thoughts and prayers of the CBFGA family.

Financial Picture

2004-2005 year-to-date June 01-April 30, 2005

Budget Requirement	\$511,225.00
Undesignated Receipts	\$571,620.43
Designated Receipts	\$170,183.03

Opportunities

CBF General Assembly to include chaplains, pastoral counselors

Luncheon to honor **Andrew Lester** of Brite Divinity School, Friday, July 1, 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Chaplains and pastoral counselors will have opportunities for networking, education, celebration, and fellowship at the 2005 CBF General Assembly in Grapevine, Texas.

The Assembly will feature a workshop on endorsement and dialogue led by George Pickle and Troy Petty, chair of the CBF Council on Endorsement, Friday, July 1, 3:30 to 4:40 p.m.

Register by June 20 by calling Erin Raffield at 770-220-1645 or email eraffield@thefellowship.info.

Career Opportunity

Evergreen Baptist Church, Milledgeville, GA, Part-time Music/Youth Leader, 20 hours/week; \$12,000/year

Responsibilities include leading the music and youth ministries of the church. Applicants should be vocally and instrumentally talented and gifted in leading worship. Applicants should have a heart for ministering to youth. Evergreen Baptist is a contemporary church. The music style is praise and worship. The dress is casual. This new ministry position is an excellent

opportunity for someone to develop a meaningful ministry in a new and growing church. For a detailed job description and application, please contact Todd Lowe, Pastor, at 478-456-1772, or email at bbq_padre@charter.net. Please visit www.evergreenbaptist.com.

From Our Readers

The following letters were received in response to the Interfaith Task Force's expression of sympathy on the death of Pope John Paul II.

From the Office of the Archbishop of **The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta:**

"For myself, and for all the Catholics of North Georgia, I am most grateful for your words of comfort and sympathy following the death of Pope John Paul II, our beloved Holy Father. While for us it is the death of a family member in the truest sense, the measure of the man is such that his humanity and vision have been embraced by people of all Christian communions, and of other faiths as well. In a time when world leadership could be undecided, Pope John Paul's guidance was clear and unwavering, and sprang from the belief that with Christ, we have nothing to fear. This welcoming and courageous nature made him a friend and champion to people all over the world, and the

Catholic Church follows his example as a defender of human life and human goodness. It cannot be said of many on the scale it can be said of him, that the world is left vastly improved by his own personal labors.

"As he worked to join us in friendship, let us at this moment, as a gift in his memory, join in our thanksgiving to God, for the blessing of Pope John Paul II's life and work. May the Holy Spirit now guide his successor, Pope Benedict XVI along the paths the late Holy Father charted, and by that legacy, bring us all into a better world."

—Wilton D. Gregory,
Archbishop of Atlanta

From the Office of the Bishop of **The Roman Catholic Diocese of Savannah:**

"Thank you for your expression of sympathy on the death of Pope John Paul II. Your words describing the Holy Father's compassion for the downtrodden and his promotion of peace are very comforting.

"Christians throughout the world have lost a true advocate of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your prayers during this time of transition."

—J. Kevin Boland
Bishop of Savannah

(continues to page 10)

CBFGA now has a toll free phone number and Fax! 1-877-336-6426 • 1-877-336-6425 FAX

Broome *(continued from page 6)*

comfort the music must have been to the young man's family. While I had listened to the hymn tunes being played, I had heard WORDS that went along with them. They had heard nothing familiar, and the funeral held little meaning to them. It was a conversation no one else could have with them.

"Most recently I cared for a colleague at work who was so estranged from his family that no one came to see him, despite his having diabetes, requiring amputation of his foot, heart disease, requiring bypass surgery, rehabilitation from both of these surgeries, and finally lung and liver cancer which, thankfully, brought a quick end to a sad life. John was irascible, he was rude, he was unkempt, but he was a mother's child, and I stuck with him. He did not have a faith, but he respected mine. The day before he died, I

said: 'You may not recognize it, but in my mind I have been God's grace to you.' It was only my faith and my understanding of what a deacon is that kept me from turning my own back on him early on in this six-month process. He died knowing that he was cared for.

"Now, for someone who doesn't enjoy crowds, who gets no kicks from meeting strangers, and who has such a strong sense of privacy, I've gotten myself into some mighty deep, personal, difficult, probing, and sensitive spaces. But they were sacred, and no one else was as comfortable going in them as I was. I found myself while learning to be a deacon."

—Susan Broome, *Head of Special Collections (Baptist and University Archives), Mercer University, Macon*

CBF of Georgia...enabling the people of God who are committed to historic Baptist principles to carry out the Great Commission under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a fellowship where every Christian has the freedom and the responsibility to exercise God's gift and calling.

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CBF GA coming up!

June 30-July 1

CBF National General Assembly

Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine, TX
Auxiliary events offered Wednesday, June 29, and Saturday, July 2.

July 17-21, 2005

Soul Feast, Lake Junaleska, NC

Features large group worship, Bible studies, and small group topical workshops. Visit www.upperroom.org for more information.

July 18-21

Campbell University's Pastor School, Buies Creek, N.C.

Messages on pastoral care and more during the three-day sessions.
For more information call 800-344-4111 ext. 1549 or email temple@campbell.edu.

August 16

10:00 a.m. CBF of Georgia Coordinating Council, Macon

August 23, 2005

Children's Ministry Network Gathering, FBC Griffin

Children's Ministers across Georgia are invited to attend this quarterly gathering for professional development. Contact Brenda Dedmon at brenda@rfbc.org or 770-587-6980 for more information.

September 18-20, 2005

Mercer Preaching Consultation

King and Prince Resort, St. Simons Island

Clyde Fant, speaker. For more information, call Truett Gannon at 678-547-6457.

October 16-21, 2005

Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation (sponsored by CBF) Camp Sumatanga, Alabama

Contact Mary Jayne Allen at mary_jayne@1stbaptistcha.org or 423-265-2257 or Rick Bennett at rbennett@thefellowship.info or 770-220-1605.

October 24-25, 2005

Like a Mustard Seed: Supporting and Celebrating Small Church Leadership, Samford University, Birmingham, AL

For more information visit www.samford.edu/groups/rcpe.

October 17-20, 2005

January 23-25, 2006

March 6-8, 2006

May 8-10, 2006

Convergence: The Minister as Leader, Calvin Center, Hampton, GA

Visit www.healthychurch.org for more information or contact Dawn Hall at dhall@wfubmc.edu or 336-716-9722. Costs: \$1,175.00, housing/meals/tuition. Scholarships available through CBF of Georgia.

October 28-29, 2005

Baptist Women in Ministry of Georgia Fall Retreat

The Calvin Center, Hampton

Speaker: Alica Kirkpatrick-Bremer

Nov. 13-14

CBF of Georgia Fall Convocation

First Baptist Church of Griffin

Speaker: Millard Fuller

2006

March 6-8, 2006

True Survivor VI, Charleston, SC

A training event for all Christian Educators and age group ministers. Cost is \$50 per person. Contact Toni Draper at tdraper@thefellowship.info or 770-220-1654.

March 17-19

March 24-26

March Mission Madness 10th Anniversary

The host churches: First Baptist Church of Warm Springs and First Baptist Church of Morrow.

events, dates, times & places