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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 14, 1977

77-47

**Women in Ministry: Ordination  
Is Not the Only Avenue**

By Mary Neal Jones

GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--Women in the ministry? Men say its okay. Other women are more hesitant to accept it. Other ministers are resistant. But these and other barriers can be overcome.

Those observations came from seven church-related women professionals from three different denominations who spoke at a conference on women in ministry at Furman University, a Baptist school here.

Sue Fitzgerald, one of the first women ever ordained by a Southern Baptist congregation, said she found little opposition among men to her ordination in 1973, but that women had to win over.

"Women had to change their views, but they came around after seeing me in action," said Fitzgerald, who was asked by her church to accept ordination while serving as minister of education.

The key, Fitzgerald said, is "winning them over with your own personality . . . listening . . . caring . . . treating persons without regard to sex. Screaming at the system," she said, "takes neither confidence, wisdom, nor insight. Helping takes intelligence, patience, prayer, love and humor."

Preaching, marrying, burying, administering communion and teaching, Fitzgerald, former minister of education at Mars Hill (NC.) Baptist Church, has become, in her mid-career years, director of the Center for Christian Educational Ministries at Mars Hill College. She assists limited-staff rural churches in western North Carolina.

Anna Marie Feltner, minister of education at the First Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., takes a dim view of the negative opinion of other women regarding her ministry. "If they do not accept me, that's their problem," said Feltner, who is not ordained.

After more than 20 years in the ministry, she feels no need for ordination. "When I entered the education ministry it was unheard of for women to be ordained. Only in the past . . . (few) years has it been offered (by a few churches) in our denomination. I will not ask for ordination. My people know I am their minister."

While it may be more difficult for women to enter the pastoral and educational ministries, the chaplaincy is wide open, according to Elaine Hickman, 26 year-old chaplain resident at Baptist Medical Center, Birmingham. "I got really fed up trying to find a job as minister of music," said Hickman, who was ordained in 1976 by East Baptist Church, Louisville.

The chaplaincy offered her a way. Hickman found that men in hospitals would break down and cry with her but not with male pastors. She feels that women in ministry offer a desirable alternative to male counselors.

Opportunities for women are also brighter in the mission field, according to Eveline Miller, Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria with her husband, Paul H. Miller. She is not ordained.

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"Anything a man can do on the mission field, a woman can do," she said. "You don't need to be ordained. The mission field is the world and the sky is the limit." Miller said. That out of more than 2,700 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, 1,450 are women and of those women, 250 are single.

Susan Henry-Crow, serving her first pastorate, was ordained and admitted to the United Methodist pastorate after seminary. Other clergymen often ask her, "How do your people accept you?" According to Susan, "That means the ministers were having trouble accepting me."

Susan, whose last name is a combination of her maiden name and her husband's name, manages to serve two rural churches while maintaining a home that includes a small child. Her husband will finish seminary this spring and they do not know at this point where their two careers will take them.

Susan said churches are often "matriarchal societies" and that a female pastor can collide head-on with a woman who is a powerful figure in the church. Susan tries to avoid the appearance of "a heavy authority figure." She said the ministry can be "a heavy authority trip for men," but that women in the ministry would do themselves an injustice to assume that role.

Edna Mason, a Presbyterian, waited 26 years before she could realize her dream for full-time Christian service. She chose ordination in 1974 because she wanted to do the full range of pastoral work. As one of this country's few women ministers, Mason sees the danger of taking oneself too seriously "because you're an oddity." Though the pastorate is her "first love," Mason is currently serving as program director at Montreat (N.C.) Conference Center.

The conference, which involved some 10 hours of vigorous discussion, was attended by about 50 persons--half female students interested in ministry.

Points were made about the current oversupply of clergy serving as a deterrent to any young person entering the ministry, especially women. The women panelists discussed career conflicts with husbands, loneliness and weariness as part of the overall picture of women in ministry. They agreed to the last man, er, pardon, woman, that overcoming such problems is worth it for the joy of serving God.

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Visa Problems Eliminate  
Hong Kong as Youth Site

Baptist Press  
3/14/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--The 9th Baptist Youth World Conference, originally scheduled for Hong Kong, will meet instead in Manila, Philippines, because the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) could receive no assurances that youth from Eastern Europe, Taiwan and Cuba would be granted visas to enter Hong Kong.

Daltro M. Keidann of Brazil, chairman of the BWA Youth Committee, announced the change following a vote of the committee in Washington.

A BWA spokesman said lack of assurances on the visas from British and Hong Kong officials necessitated the move of the conference, which will meet in Manila, July 19-23, 1978. It meets every five years.

The BWA has a long standing policy that its world meetings will be held only in locations open to all prospective participants. The policy was invoked previously when an invitation to the Baptist World Congress, quinquennial BWA adult gathering, to meet in Miami in 1960 was refused because there were no assurances that black participants would be welcome. The Congress, however, met in Miami in 1965, when such assurances were received.

The Philippine government promised to waive all visa restrictions to welcome participants from every nation to the 1978 Baptist youth gathering, expected to attract some 5,000 persons from at least 60 nations. BWA constituency includes 32.9 million baptized members in 114 nations.

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"We regret having to move the conference from Hong Kong," said Robert S. Denny, general secretary of the BWA. "Baptists and tourism leaders there had been most helpful in initial agreements for the meeting.

"Our decision was necessitated by the British government's inability to promise visas for delegates from socialist countries. We meet only in locations where everyone is welcome."

The BWA Executive Committee, meeting last November in Valley Forge, Pa., instructed the BWA staff to seek another place for the youth conference unless the Hong Kong visa matter could be clarified.

Denny, Roy Bielich of Japan Air Lines and Betty Smith, BWA youth secretary and conference coordinator, visited Manila in early March to inspect hotel and conference facilities and talk with tourism officials before making their recommendation for that site.

Miss Smith said that Manila offers adequate hotel space and that the conference center is one of the nicest in the world.

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'Fabric of Freedom' Gets  
Freedoms Foundation Award

Baptist Press  
3/14/77

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's musical, drama, "The Fabric of Freedom," has received the Valley Forge Honor Certificate Award from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa.

The drama, commissioned by the board in observance of the national Bicentennial, was performed by student summer missionaries of the Home Mission Board in 20 different areas, including Walt Disney World. The troupe traveled over 5,000 miles and made 64 appearances during the summer months of 1976.

T. R. Parlier, who coordinated the board's Bicentennial project, will accept the award for the Home Mission Board on April 8. U. S. Sen. Herman E. Talmadge (D.-Ga.) will make the presentation for the Freedoms Foundation in Atlanta.

The lyrics and book for the musical drama were written by Ed Seabough of the Home Mission Board and the music by Bill Cates, a composer from Nashville, Tenn.

The drama opened before 900 young women at "Kaleidoscope '76," a meeting in Virginia Beach, Va., last June, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union for Baptist Young Women.

Seven scenes--from Valley Forge to present-day Philadelphia--comprised the musical, one of eight Bicentennial projects commissioned by the board.

The cast of seven students included: Brad Cleveland of Ball, La., Charles Gilliland of Louisville, Ky., Shelton and Carol Harden of Louisville, Ky., Javier Hernandez of San Antonio, Tex., Patti McConnell of Atlanta, Cynthia Morris of Greensboro, N. C., and Debbie Pritchett of Hull, Ga. Two technicians, Mark Sandlin of Brownwood, Tex., and Mike Power of Waco, Tex., accompanied the troupe. Tom Bowles of Waco served as director-manager.

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C. T. Paschall  
Dies in Nashville

Baptist Press  
3/14/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--C. T. Paschall, father of H. Franklin Paschall, pastor of Nashville's First Baptist Church and former Southern Baptist Convention president, died in Baptist Hospital here of an apparent heart attack.

Services were to be at First Baptist Church, Paris, Tenn., with burial in Maplewood Cemetery, Paris.

Paschall, 85, was a native of Calloway County, Ky., but had lived most of his life in Paris, where he farmed.

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Baptists Die in 'Quake In  
Romania, Relief Needed

CHICAGO (BP)--Contacts with relatives and friends of members of the Romanian Baptist Church here reveal that one entire family and two Baptist seminary students are among the dead in the recent earthquake that stunned Bucharest, Romania, and eastern Europe.

Pastor Alexa Popovici of the Romanian Baptist congregation said his members have made eight or nine contacts with Bucharest. He said Peter Belicov, a retired professor at the Baptist Seminary there, and his entire family were killed when his home collapsed. The seminary also suffered some damage, including fissures.

Two seminary students, Nicolae Morocos and Ioan Rusu, were killed when a building fell on them.

Other church leaders have died, according to reports from Bucharest. Hundreds more are injured, particularly in Bucharest, Ploiesti, Brasov, Craiova and Alexandria. Many more are homeless, according to initial reports from personnel of the Baptist Union of Romania.

Church buildings which received major damage were those in Ploiesti and the Popa-Rusu church building in Bucharest, where a German-language congregation as well as Romanian-language church meet. The buildings cannot be used until extensive repairs can be made. Severe damage reportedly occurred to a Baptist church building in Alexandria, although there were conflicting reports as to its extent.

Baptist Union President Cornel Mara of Brasov traveled to Bucharest to help coordinate ministries to survivors and to families of victims.

In Washington, Baptist World Alliance Associate Secretary Carl Tiller made an immediate appeal. He asked that collection of relief funds be made a "high priority."

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., has appropriated \$25,000 in relief funds.

Gerhard Claas, secretary-treasurer of the European Baptist Federation (EBF), urged all member unions to make a relief appeal to their members. "Since so many people are suffering it is impossible to estimate their number," he said. Baptist unions in the German Federal Republic and Switzerland announced plans to contact their churches immediately to send gifts EBF's Hamburg office.

Claas is going to Bucharest to survey medical and relief needs and to assess property damage. He hopes to arrange for financial gifts to be transferred to Romanian Baptist churches without intermediary exchange, for quicker distribution to those stricken by the tragedy.