

a voice for women in baptist life

Vocare

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**BAPTIST WOMEN
IN MINISTRY
LEADERSHIP TEAM**

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BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY
advocating • connecting • networking

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AIMEE DAY JOINS THE BWIM STAFF



ON AUGUST 8, 2011, through what was certainly the work of the Spirit, Aimee Day joined the BWIM staff as executive assistant.

Aimee is a 2009 graduate of Kennesaw State University. She majored in communication with a focus in public relations. Aimee just began her first semester as a student at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta. Her plans are to pursue a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in Christian Social Ethics.

For the past two years, Aimee has been working with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia. Her good work there and her giftedness as a writer, organizer, encourager, and minister truly make her an answer to prayer.

Get to know Aimee—read her posts on the BWIM blog, e-mail her with your questions and information, and pray for her as she begins two new journeys—one with BWIM and one as a seminary student!

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.

SACRED TRAVELS

by Pam Durso



Veronica Miles

ON JUNE 22, 2011, friends and supporters of Baptist Women in Ministry gathered at Bayshore Baptist Church, Tampa, Florida. Most who were present had traveled far from their homes to be part of what were sacred moments of worship, conversation, celebration, and laughter.

Worship was creative and yet simple. We sang. We prayed. We listened to profound and passionate words preached by Veronica Miles, assistant professor of homiletics and Christian Education at Wake Forest Divinity School. Her words were ones of challenge and a call to travel the road of reconciliation, to find wholeness, and to experience the presence of God. Her words flowed out of the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. For those of you who missed hearing Veronica's sermon:

Jesus demonstrates the timeliness of his message by the reconciling love that he offers this woman of Samaria...

You see . . .

Jesus never called the woman a Samaritan miscreant,
never denied her living-water on the grounds of her womanhood or Samaritan ethnicity,
never spoke a word that diminished her worth.

No! He simply narrated her story back to her so that she would know that he heard her and knew her,
spoke her secrets back to her because he loved her.

And in that moment,
she was so filled with love and gratitude,
so enlivened and empowered
that she could not hold her peace.

Leaving her water pots at the well,
she returned to the city:

I imagine her running back to the city and through the streets,
beckoning all who would, to come see a man,
convinced beyond any shadow of doubting
that the man with whom she had spoken at the well

BWIM OFFERING SUPPORTS THE WORK OF LEENYA LAVANYA

At the 2011 worship service, an offering of \$1,078.46 was collected to help support the work of Leenya Lavanya, who is often called the Baptist Mother Teresa. Leenya has given her life to being a servant among the poorest of the poor and to ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of the marginalized in Indian society. In 1992, she founded ServeTrust, a non-governmental organization. Headquartered in Narasarpot, in the Southeast Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, ServeTrust seeks justice and offers care and love to commercial sex workers, orphans, and HIV/AIDS victims.

To learn more about Leenya's ministries, visit <http://www.servetrust.org/index.html>.



was not only a prophet come from God,
but the Messiah whom the Samaritans
had greatly anticipated.

This prophet of God and Messiah to the
people
was bearing within his being the water
of reconciliation
to quench the thirst of all who would
drink.

The service ended with the sharing of communion. Two memories I will always carry with me from that worship service are of a young teenager, Steve Graham's granddaughter. She had come with him to our worship service. Little did they know that our communion that day would involve receiving and serving with each person participating as both the recipient and as the server. Steve's granddaughter stepped out into the aisle ahead of him, and she moved into the line, receiving the bread from the person in front of her and then dipping her bread into the cup. She then took the loaf of bread and offered it to her grandfather. I wish I had a picture of her sweet smile and of that moving moment, but even without a picture, I will not forget. That image is one I will keep with me.

I also watched as Rebecca Caswell-Speight, minister to children and families at Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, stood beside the communion table as one of our servers. In a sling wrapped around Rebecca was her sweet baby daughter, who was content and smiling. By the end of communion, Rebecca's older daughter needed to stand by her mom, and so she did. And that snapshot will stay with me—the snapshot of a young mother minister standing by her daughter, holding her other daughter. I am thankful to churches who call, support, and encourage young minister mothers!

After our time of worship, we shared a wonderful Cuban lunch and then listened to and laughed along with Susan Sparks. Susan is the pastor of Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York. She is also a standup comedian. Susan is warm and friendly, kind and gracious—as well as brilliant and funny. She made us laugh. She made us think. She told stories of her own calling to ministry and her travel from the courtroom to seminary to the pulpit.

For those of you who joined us on June 22, I hope you took away good memories as well. For those of you who were not able to join us, go ahead and get next year's BWIM gathering on your calendar. We will gather at Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, on Wednesday, June 20, 2012!



Susan Sparks

ADDIE DAVIS AWARD WINNERS, 2011

EACH YEAR BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY PRESENTS TWO ADDIE DAVIS AWARDS: one for Outstanding Leadership in Pastoral Ministry and one for Excellence in Preaching. Nominations for the awards are collected from seminaries and divinity schools, and this year two separate committees worked independently to select the top nominee in each category.



*Pam Durso &
Griselda Escobar*

The intention of Addie Davis Awards is to give public recognition to gifted women who are preparing for ministry, and because of BWIM's commitment to support and affirm women seminarians, the award now has a substantial financial component. Each award winner receives \$1,000, and each woman nominated receives \$100.

The 2011 winner of the Addie Davis Award for Outstanding Pastoral Ministry is Griselda Escobar, a May 2011 graduate of Logsdon Seminary, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and a 2006 graduate of Baptist University of the Americas. Griselda is currently completing CPE and serving as a chaplain at Trinity Mother Frances Hospitals and Clinics in Tyler, Texas.

Griselda was born in Monterrey, Mexico, the oldest of five children. She moved with her family to Los Angeles when she was eight years old, leaving behind her extended family and

her country. In California, she experienced family illnesses, poverty, and frequent moves, but the faith of her family sustained them. Both Griselda's parents were Assembly of God pastors. Eventually, Griselda made her way to Texas to attend Baptist University of the Americas and then to Abilene to study at Logsdon and along the way, she intentionally chose to become Baptist.

While a student at Logsdon, Griselda's gift for telling stories, her fresh perspectives, her warm personality drew other students to her—and allowed her, as her professor, Dan Stiver wrote, “to stretch the envelope at times with her classmates. . . she always had insights into our theological and philosophical topics that were challenging at the same time they conveyed faith and conviction.” Dr. Stiver also wrote, “The significant hardships that Griselda has faced have taken her through a deep spiritual odyssey that has resulted in a refined, deep, and now theologically developed faith that gives her wisdom beyond her years.”

Robert Grigsby, the director of pastoral care at Trinity Mother Frances, wrote in his recommendation that Griselda has become a leader among the interdisciplinary staff with whom she works. The staff looks to her for emotional and spiritual support when they encounter particularly difficult cases, and she helped them refocus their energy and continue with the hard tasks of caregiving. Griselda also ministers to fragile, hurting families, offering loving and gracious care to parents of critically ill newborn babies. She is an amazing minister and leader.

ADDIE DAVIS AWARD NOMINEES, 2011

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

JEANNE CROSS
Duke Divinity School

OLIVIA MAE DAWSON
*Baptist Theological Seminary
in Richmond*

REBECCA HEWITT-
NEWSON
Wake Forest School of Divinity

ALLISON KENTLE
Truett Seminary

NOELLE OWEN
McAfee School of Theology

EXCELLENCE IN PREACHING

JESSICA GODFREY
*Gardner-Webb School of
Divinity*

KATE HANCH
*Central Baptist Theological
Seminary*

JANE HULL
McAfee School of Theology

ERIN JAMES-BROWN
Logsdon School of Theology

KRISTA MANUAL
*Baptist Theological Seminary
at Richmond*

ARLECIA SIMMONS
Duke Divinity School



Pam Durso & Kyndall Renfro

The 2011 winner of the Addie Davis Award for Excellence in Preaching is Kyndall Renfro, who is a May 2011 graduate of George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Her winning sermon was titled “Sight for Sore Eyes”—based on the story of Jesus’ healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17.

Kyndall is a native of Oklahoma and as a child, she had no awareness that women could preach or that she could preach. But she did love speaking in public about her growing faith. When she was in college at Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma, she began to explore the issue of women in the pulpit, began struggling with her own sense of calling, and finally, as a senior in college, took her first preaching class and finally reached what she describes as a “place of peaceful rest.”

After college, she enrolled at Truett Seminary and had a preaching class with Hulitt Gloer. In his nomination for the preaching award, he wrote, “Kyndall is as creative both in content and delivery as any young preacher I have ever known. Her sermons are marked by the kind of careful use of language that

characterizes the work of preachers who know the power of words to shape the consciousness of the hearer. . . . She is a wordsmith; indeed, I would say that she is poetic in her use of language.”

Dr. Gloer also wrote, “There is great depth in her sermons that reflect the kind of exegetical and theological work necessary to faithful proclamation. And at the same time she is able to make the deepest truth accessible to her hearers.” And finally he noted, “Kyndall is one of the finest students I have had in thirty years of seminary teaching. . . .she sets the bar, going above and beyond that which is expected. She is loved and respected by our faculty and her student peers because of her outstanding work, her deep faith, and her commitment to Christ and the church, and her warm, gracious personality.”

As Baptists, we are a blessed people—for our future is in the hands of ministers such as Griselda and Kyndall.

*Kyndall Renfro,
pastor of Covenant
Baptist Church,
San Antonio, Texas*



I CALL IT SURPRISE

by Kyndall Renfro

I AM LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW at the trees outside my new office. Piano music floats down the hallway. My husband came by to see me, and he can never resist an open piano. Except for us, the church is empty (it is a Thursday morning), and my life is full of unopened possibility. There is anticipation in the air like Christmas morning, except it is 110 degrees outside. The air conditioner is blowing, so that helps. I can think Christmas thoughts even in Texas heat.

I am a brand-spanking new pastor, and if I were to name the journey that brought me here, I would call it Surprise.

First of all, it is always a Surprise when a Southern Baptist girl hears the call to preach. Sometimes her family and church are badly surprised, and, bless their souls, they do not quite

know how to handle the shock. Fortunately, a few people are wonderfully surprised in the best of ways, and these people become the mentors and friends who recognize a Call when they see one, and their brave acceptance is the light to her path. Most of all, it is a huge Surprise to her.

Even when she starts to suspect where this journey is headed, she tells herself these dreams are silly. Only, when a girl is infected with God's dreams, no amount of logic can make her rational again.

When she finally accepts where this journey is headed, she braces herself for a long and difficult road. She does not yet know that following the faithful path will be both treacherous and breathtakingly beautiful. She does not yet know what Surprises lie ahead . . .



In college, I was surprised to discover how much I loved theology. I was surprised to hear my professors talk about female pastors. I was even more surprised to discover I could change my mind about things.

In seminary, I was surprised to find myself working as a resident chaplain at Baylor University. I had been certain that I was not lively or funny or friendly enough to work with college students, but someone wise convinced me to try it anyway. I learned then that I could pastor.

I surprised myself when I agreed to work as an interim pastor, even though I was already a student and a chaplain. I was surprised to find I could do the job and that I really did have pastoral instincts in place to help me find my way.

When I graduated, I assumed I needed a buffer after seminary before any church would call me to pastor. My gender made

the job search challenging enough, and my young age only made it worse. But as it turned out, it was only three months after graduation when a wonderful congregation in San Antonio, Texas, welcomed me as their new pastor.

Surprise! That is how August came to feel like Christmas.

Of course, it was more like the long unfolding of a good mystery novel than it was like ripping the wrapping paper off a present. First, I heard about this church in need of a pastor, and someone said I could be a good fit. I read the church website and fell in love immediately. Resume and reference letters were sent, but I knew this was too good to be true.

I waited. I hoped a little, but not too hard.

The church sent some me questions. I answered. I waited. It felt like a long time.

Then they asked for a phone interview! That was great news, except I have a small voice that sounds like a ten-year-old on the phone. There were eight committee members on the phone, and I couldn't see their faces. I had no idea what they were thinking while I was talking.

Finally there was a personal interview. I entered the church for the interview, and I was allowed to be myself: scrawny, soft-spoken, uncharismatic me. I did not know for sure if they liked me, but I came as myself and that was what mattered.

The morning after the interview, my husband and I walked the prayer paths and the labyrinth behind the church. We were peaceful and silent together, and I dreamed dreams. Then I tried to surrender the dreams to God. If they were truly dreams from God, I knew God would give them back to me in God's own time.

And now, here I am, sitting in my office, looking out at those same trees along the prayer path. Some of my friends tell me they knew all along it would end up like this. As for me, I am still soaking in the Surprise.

On September 11, 2011, Kyndall Renfro began as pastor of Covenant Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas.

BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY NEWS

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

In June 2011, Bonnie Oliver Brandon, Reba Cobb, and Amy Shorner-Johnson rotated off the Baptist Women in Ministry Leadership Team. They have been extraordinary leaders, contributing their time, energy, and vision, and they are already greatly missed. Thanks be to God for these gifted and giving women, who have served so well.

Rotating onto the Leadership Team are Emily Hull McGee, Stacy Pyle, and Carolyn Staley. Emily serves as minister to young adults at Highland Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky. Stacy is the associate coordinator for congregational life and ministry development at Cooperating Baptist Fellowship of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, and Carolyn is associate pastor for discipleship and missions at Pulaski Height Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas. Welcome to these three new members of our team! Exciting days are ahead for BWIM!

MARTHA STEARNS MARSHALL MONTH, 2012

Baptist Women in Ministry invites all Baptist churches to make plans now to have a woman preach on any Sunday in February 2012. The number of participating churches in the Martha Stearns Marshall Month has grown since 2007, when 54 churches participated. In February 2011, 185 churches celebrated God's gifting of women. So SAVE THE DATE! Invite a woman to preach ANY Sunday in February.

BWIM BLOG

BWIM has a blog that features a variety of writers and topics. Some of the posts have practical advice. Some are inspirational. Some are just fun. Some are informational. Would love to have you as a reader! So go ahead, check out the BWIM blog at www.bwim.info/blog.

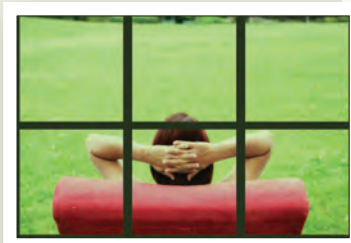
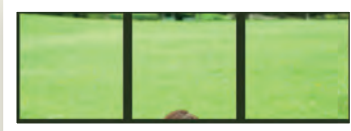
KENTUCKY BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

A meeting of Kentucky Baptist Women in Ministry will be Tuesday, November 8, 2011, at Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky. The meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. with fellowship and a time of discernment as this BWIM chapter is re-established. At 10:00 a.m., the Georgetown College chapel will feature as its speaker Pam Durso, executive director of Baptist Women in Ministry. At noon, a networking lunch will be served. Cost is \$8 (students eat free). To register, visit the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship website—<http://www.kybf.org/women-in-ministry-day/>

READY TO RESPOND: A RETREAT FOR FEMALE STUDENTS EXPLORING GOD'S CALL TO MINISTRY

Co-sponsored by the Texas Baptists Women in Ministry Department and Baptist Women in Ministry, the Ready to Respond retreat will bring together women students from Howard Payne University, Hardin-Simmons University, and University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

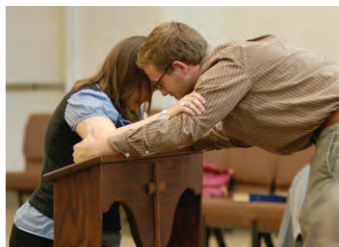
The retreat will be held November 11-12, 2011, at the Heart of Texas Baptist Encampment in Brownwood, Texas. For more information, email Pam Durso at pamdurso@bwim.info.



Ruth Perkins Lee was ordained on March 28, 2010, by First Baptist Church, Auburn, Alabama.



Lauren Waggoner was ordained on May 2, 2010, by Parkway Baptist Church, Duluth, Georgia.



Lyndsey Cogdill was ordained on May 22, 2011, by First Baptist Church, Henderson, North Carolina. (Lyndsey is on the left.)



Courtney Allen was ordained on August 7, 2011, by Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi.



Kate Hanch was ordained on August 21, 2011, by Holmeswood Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri. (Kate is the center)



Meri Suzan Benson was ordained on July 10, 2011, by Second Baptist Church, Corpus Christi, Texas.



ORDINATION

by Pam Durso

EARLY IN 2011, Kristina Brown, minister of community ministries and communications, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, contacted me about the ordination process. After her serving the church for a number of years, several members began to ask about ordaining her. I was blessed to walk with her through some of that process, providing resources requested and talking with her about Baptist history and polity and about some of the more standard ordination practices in Baptist life. In July, Kristina sent an excited email, letting me know that the congregation had voted to ordain her, and she asked, “Can you help me with ideas for putting together an ordination service?”

That request began an enjoyable journey for me. I made a call on facebook and sent emails, asking for ordination worship bulletins. I quickly received over a dozen, and I received a few bulletins via snail mail, including some from my friend, Karen Gilbert, who has kept copies of bulletins from all the ordinations she has attended over the years. Karen included a note, apologizing for taking a while to send the bulletins—but she had pulled them out and read them, remembered and been inspired again by the beauty of those ordination services, and then she had taken time to pray for each of the women who had been ordained!

Like Karen, I was deeply moved just by reading the ordination bulletins. I found such deep faith, such strong commitment to calling, and such creativity. I gathered the bulletins and sent them to Kristina, and she wove together her own special day of ordination, inspired by Baptist women who had walked the journey before her.

Following her ordination on August 21, 2011, Kristina sent me the charge given to her and to her church by her pastor, Mike Smith, and she also sent a beautifully written poem that was read by her friend, Kory Wells. I asked Kristina if she would share those “gifts of words,” and she agreed. I hope you will find joy and inspiration as you read both—which may be found on pages 10 and 11.

To the left are some wonderful images from recent ordinations of Baptist women. These photos for me speak to the sacredness of ordination, the joy experienced, the friendships shared, and the affirmation given.

Ordination Service of Kristina Brown

August 21, 2011



*Mike Smith &
Kristina Brown*

CHARGE TO FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE AND KRISTINA BROWN

by Mike Smith

When I think of the history of First Baptist Church and the story of Kristina Brown, I believe I see God at work.

The church has been faithful to Kristina. From her childhood down to this day, the church has given her opportunities to serve God and others, to grow through such service, and to prepare for additional service. At each step of the way, the church has affirmed her particular gifts and seen in her, sometimes, more than she saw in herself. How we arrive at a night like tonight always contains elements of mystery, but I think it right to say the church shared the journey with Kristina and often paved the road on which she walked.

Kristina has been faithful to the church, not only First Baptist Church but the church universal. She has followed Christ as best she could see her way, thrown her particular gifts into the service of the church, and strengthened the church's ministry presence in the community. She has listened for the voice of Holy Spirit within the church. Again, how we arrive at a night like tonight always contains a bit of mystery, but I think it right to say Kristina's faithfulness to the church has helped lead us here.

So, we come to ordain her, that is to set her apart as one of those women and men to whom we the church look to equip us to serve God well, set an example of life lived in humility before God, and lead us in shared, sacrificial service.

As we start this shared journey, I charge the church family to:

- continue to walk with Kristina on her journey, lending her your support through prayer, friendship, and wise counsel.
- help her as she seeks to broaden and deepen the church's ministry to the least of these and the church's partnerships with other care-giving organizations.
- speak a word on her behalf and to open doors for her among all you know.
- do all you can to provide opportunities to grow in the knowledge and expertise, that she might better serve God.
- mourn with her, when she mourns; celebrate with her, when she celebrates; care for her, when she needs special care; be the good family of God in her life.

Kristina, as you receive ordination from this your church family, I charge you to:

- practice humility all the days of your ministry, so that in word, deed, heart and thought you reveal the humble Christ to all those around you.
- practice good stewardship of your life, your energy and health and mind and body, that you might serve unhindered all the days of your life.
- pursue with diligence multiple avenues of learning, that you might maximize the scope and excellence of your service.
- practice the fine art of trusting those with whom you work, both clergy and laity, even as Christ trusts you.

- practice meaningful forgiveness, that you might deal with the inevitable disappointments and hurts of the ministry yet be unstained.
- practice worship in the company of others and in private, that God might better guide and sustain you.
- encourage and smooth the way for those who come after you, that God's work might more abound.

- minister is such a way that you reveal and model the redemptive love of God

May the Lord Who called you, bless, preserve and keep you as you minister in the name of Christ all the days of your life. Amen.

PRAISE HER

by Kory Wells

—for Kristina Woods Brown on the occasion of her ordination, inspired by Proverbs 31:10-31, an abecedarian poem in the Hebrew Bible

Above rubies, he wrote long ago. We celebrate this woman—wife, mother, daughter, best friend, sister to us all—for her worth is far above rubies. True enough, and yet comparing a woman to jewels is dated to some. Writing now, would he mention Wall Street dividends, preferred interest rates, or that lasting standard, gold? Or is there something else to compare her to, a more fitting metaphor for how she enriches our lives?

Fine chocolate comes to mind, for she has soothed me in troubled times better than Ghirardelli or Godiva ever could. A beautiful house comes to mind, for in her home I am comfortable as if I were in my own. My own never looks so good. Industrious, organized, she could run the country, I'm convinced, yet she never judges my cluttered kitchen counter—or other faults. Instead, she stirs me to expand my knowledge, my worldview, even the very food I eat. She's better than a trip abroad.

Like an heirloom quilt, she's a study in colorful character, consistent pattern, comfort. Many benefit from her work of long days and sometimes late nights, but never have I seen her temperamental. Okay, rarely—she is a real person, after all. Only a saint would do better. Like a white oak basket from her native South, her prayers, passions and priorities interweave. Form and function. Strength and simple beauty.

Quick to help, she still takes her time to listen and learn. She offers everyone respect and earns it in return. She makes a difference—in my life and yours, in the lives of strangers, in the lives of her church and community. She is caring counselor, bold advocate, talented teacher, a visionary of action. She is a hug, a laugh, a tear. What's hers is mine, unselfishly loaned—a good book, new music, once even a toaster oven. She's a leisurely visit, a thoughtful gift, a telling bumper sticker. She is one I can call in the middle of the night.

Who can find a virtuous woman? Proverbs asks. We who know her have.

X chromosomes mark her gender, but character marks her person, purity her spirit.

Years will reward her and age will become her, because she is indeed a fine woman,

zealous for life and love and the One she follows. We are blessed to walk with her on the way.



Kristina & Kory Wells

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