



## AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

### How Did I Get Here?

**Special points of interest:**

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- Current stories about Women In Ministry (pages 2, 3, 4, 11)
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*By Rev. Dr. Darla Dee Turlington, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Westfield, NJ*

What are the odds that a Southern girl who went to church on Christmas and Easter would wind up as the Senior Pastor of a Baptist church?

High odds, but God orchestrated it.

Young Life leaders brought the good news to my Florida high school, and I learned to love the Lord and developed a passion for the Bible.

A new husband pursuing graduate law school brought me to New York City, and I found I could study the Bible full time at Union Theological Seminary.

A liberal seminary brought me critical tools of Biblical study that made scripture more meaningful than ever, and I just kept studying it, earning a PhD in New Testament.

A thorough look at church history brought the realization that God designed the church as the vessel for Christ's continued ministry on earth, and I became an active lay person in a Manhattan congregation.

Ten years of lay ministry, seven of them after earning a Master of Divinity, brought the sad conclusion that my home church would not recognize my calling.

A move 12 miles west geographically (but a million miles perceptually) brought me to a church where I matched the job description for a Minister of Christian Education and Evangelism --- an American Baptist Church open to women in leadership, with a male Senior Pastor supportive of women in ministry.

Every member of the church did not approve of female pastors, but they all accepted my role. My male mentor and I did not agree on everything, but he gave me opportunities to lead and learn and validate my call. And, when Rev. Robert L. Harvey retired, he recommended me as his successor.



Rev. Dr. Darla Dee (Dee Dee) Turlington

As the millennium turned, this Southern C&E female cracked the glass ceiling and was installed as Senior Pastor of a church with 300+ members on the rolls. It was against the odds, and it was possible because of---

- the ABC tradition of encouraging women in ministry,
- a successful male minister committed to supporting women in ministry, and
- an accepting congregation willing to risk a woman in ministry.

These still are the things that open doors for women. Look for places where these things have taken root, and plant yourself there. You surely will bloom!

## Words Of Wisdom For The Journey



*“What have I learned from my journey that might be useful to you?”*

Dee Dee asks, “What have I learned from my journey that might be useful to you?”

You can’t do it alone.

1. You must rely on God, which means maintaining regular devotions, no matter how busy life becomes. Meditation or some other spiritual discipline that provides stability, reassurance, and divine affirmation helps during dry seasons. Step out of role and just be God’s beloved child.

2. You must rely on sisters in the Lord, which means finding (or forming) a small group of women in ministry to meet together for support and accountability. Be sure it is a group that laughs a lot!

3. You must rely on people in positions of influence, male and female, in the local church and in the denomination. So get yourself to gatherings of colleagues, denominational meetings, and regional offices; volunteer for pulpit supply, leading workshops, and serving on committees. Networking really does help; plus, it keeps you informed and leads to valuable friendships.

You can’t do it all at once.

1. Whatever ministry is open to you, do it excellently and with enthusiasm, appreciation and conviction. Keep learning and growing yourself, even if others don’t recognize your accomplishments or qualifications.

2. Don’t be touchy about titles, degrees, and credits, but quietly insist that they be used and given when you suspect gender discrimination is at work. The respect they imply must be earned in person, as well as on paper.

3. Look for a mentor, male or female, as long as you relate well and he/she is widely respected.

4. Discern if opposition to you as a woman in ministry comes from ignorance, fear of change, or a competitive spirit. Each should be addressed differently: teach the ignorant (from the Bible),

befriend the fearful (sincerely), and avoid or confront the competitive, depending upon how much he or she means to you (the more they matter, the more worthy they are of confrontation, costly as it is). And don’t forget that every now and then opposition to a particular role for you is legitimate – you may not be suited for it, apart from your gender.

*Rev. Turlington is Senior Pastor of The First Baptist Church of Westfield, NJ, a congregation of 175 active members with a \$400,000 budget, a 40,000 square foot facility, and six staff members. She earned a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1988 and an M. Div. from Union in 1979. She has served FBC Westfield since her ordination in 1991, as Minister of Christian Education and Evangelism through 2000, before becoming the first female senior pastor in Westfield. She has been an adjunct professor at nearby schools, remains a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, and has been active in leadership of the national and regional Ministers Councils, the Baptist Principles Fellowship of NJ, the Raritan Association of ABCNJ, and the Westfield Ministerium. She is married to retired attorney R. Donald Turlington Jr. and has one 21 year-old son.*

## My Experience: Executive Minister Liliana Da Valle

After 10 years as Area Minister in Massachusetts I transitioned to the role of Executive Minister in Rhode Island thinking that the ministry would be very similar. I was well acquainted with the ins and outs of regional ministry then, and quite experienced in congregational life support. I did not kid myself into believing it would be the same workload; on the contrary, I was aware of a totally new dimension I had to engage. I am referring to the denominational, ecumenical and inter-faith involvement we as American Baptists value so much.

Now that three years have gone by, I can see the scope of regional ministry in a more accurate light. We are here to serve the people of God so they can build the Kingdom together. We support and promote healthy pastors and healthy churches; we oversee our common mission endeavor; we announce the good news of the gospel both in word and deed; and we embrace those who are hurting. Regional ministries are also stewards of the legacy left by our predecessors in the form of traditions, principles, and financial resources.

I am honored to be an Executive Minister and I feel that God called me to this very specific appointment with a purpose. God did not call me to keep alive an institution, but rather to bring new life to His people.

*The Rev. Dr. Liliana Da Valle became the Executive Minister of ABCORI in January of 2007. She came to work as an Area Minister in Massachusetts in May of 1997, after seven years of being a co-pastor with her husband, Horacio R. Da Valle, in Los Angeles, CA. In previous years she has been a counselor for battered women and a hospice chaplain.*

*Liliana was born and raised in Argentina. She has been married for 35 years and has four children and nine grandchildren. She graduated from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity, and from Andover Newton Theological Seminary with a Doctor in Ministry degree. Her passion is to work in multicultural ministry.*



Rev. Dr. Liliana Da Valle

*"I am both honored and excited to see what God will be doing in us and through us in the Greater Indianapolis Region. I've already been able to experience first-hand several churches that are taking seriously the call to be Christ's hands and feet in their communities."*

- Rev. Joan Friesen

## Rev. Joan Friesen Called As Executive Minister of ABCGI

Friesen's new position was announced in a press release from American Baptist News Service on September 21, 2009.

The release stated, Rev. Joan Friesen has been elected to serve as the next executive minister for ABC Greater Indianapolis (ABCGI).

"Rev. Joan Friesen brings a variety of skills and experiences well suited for ministry with the American Baptist Churches of Greater Indianapolis," said Dr. Wayne M. Paulsen, interim executive minister of ABCGI.

"I am delighted that she has accepted this call and I believe that she will provide the needed leadership to help the region move ahead with both promise and possibility," Paulsen said. Friesen

comes to this position after serving since November 2007 as director of church relations at Redwood Glen (a San Francisco Bay Area Christian Camp and Conference Center).

Prior to that, she served as minister of mission support in the American Baptist Churches of the Northwest and as a consultant to the America for Christ Offering Committee of the Board of National Ministries. Friesen is a graduate of Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon and American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley, California.

In October as she anticipated the move to her new region, Joan wrote these words in a pastoral letter to ABC of Greater Indianapolis:



Rev. Joan Friesen



## Rev. Joan Friesen Called... (continued)

"I want to publicly add my thanks to Wayne Paulsen for his great work during this interim time. I hope many of you will be able to give your thanks in person to Wayne and Julie this coming Sunday at the celebration honoring his ministry and that of Donna Simmons and her contributions to our regional life. I so appreciate their paving the way for me... I'm looking forward to meeting you all over the weeks and months to come, to wor-

shipping with your church, and to discovering what God has in store for the American Baptist Churches of Greater Indianapolis as we serve together."

## News: ABWIM is up for the Challenge

By Mary H. Young, Ed.D

As an educator who serves at one of our American Baptist Seminaries and works with both new and veteran women in ministry, I am encouraged by the denominational efforts on behalf of our women in ministry. My recent attendance at a Roundtable meeting of persons committed to such advocacy and education for women proved that the denomination has taken seriously its care of women who are responding to God's call.

This is particularly good news for the scores of women being trained in our seminaries and those in varied cultural contexts where the doors of ministry opportunities may open slowly. The pattern in my seminary suggests that the enrollment of women will increase while placement of women becomes more of a challenge. Though there are myriad variables contributing to problematic placement, the openness of congregations to accept women as pastoral leaders is certainly not keeping pace with the rate that women are graduating from professional theological programs.

There has been considerable progress made in the African American context toward openness to clergy women. My seminary rejoices and celebrates with several churches who have called one of our graduates as their first female pastoral leader. While these celebrations exist, we are

keenly aware that there are other women all over the country who will only have such opportunities if there is advocacy and support from American Baptist Women in Ministry. The Roundtable experience assured me that ABWIM is both aware of and ready to take on the challenge of meeting the needs of professional women in ministry.

*Mary H. Young, Ed.D., currently serves as Associate Dean and Assistant Professor of Christian Education at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University in Richmond, VA. She recently served as Interim Pastor at Mosby Memorial Baptist Church in Richmond and continues to be involved in denominational work. In addition to her work at Proctor, Mary serves on varied task forces and as accreditation visitor for The Association of Theological Schools in the US and Canada. She has also participated in site visits for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Mary has one daughter, Jessica, a Ph.D. student at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.*

*"The Roundtable experience assured me that ABWIM is both aware of and ready to take on the challenge of meeting the needs of professional women in ministry."*



Mary H. Young

## To Live As Though The Truth Were True

By Rev. Dr. Trinette V. McCray

**This sermon was delivered during the 2010 Together in the Lord conference in Orlando, Florida**

- *Psalm 139:13-18*
- *Colossians 2:1-3*

Psalm 139 leads us to a David struggling with issues of meaning and purpose; vitality and survival; safety and success; faithfulness and fulfillment. David who became King at 30 years old is now somewhere between 40 and 50. He finds himself in a desperate state of anxiety, perhaps experiencing apprehension and fear, whether real or imagined. He's living with an increasing sense of threat and vulnerability. The threat was leveled against his own well-being and that of his family from neighboring leaders who did not want him to succeed in his God-given mission. David is living with an increasing threat which is not only on his life but his call and mission, as well; his life and the life of an entire nation, a people, yea even a faith and eventually a Church. Like David each of our lives has been surrounded by interesting sets of circumstances.

Every calling has circumstances that come along with it. For some, fighting through gender distinctions are the circumstances of their calling. Others, privilege of race and class or the lack thereof. Some, the disappointment felt by others as they did not live up to the expectations of those who thought differently about who you are. Even others struggle to heal from abuse—sexual, physical and emotional. Others have lived from a base reality of not ever seeming to have enough—not enough money, not enough friends, not enough. The circumstances that come along with our calling are real and, you know what, so is our God. And that makes all the difference.

Circumstances are conditions or facts that come along with an event or happening, and have some bearing on it. They are determining or modifying

factors. They are the adverbs that modify our verbs—our actions. They are the adjectives that describe our existence—our authentic being. Here David's adjective was that he was anxious. His adverb is that he is stopped in his steps. And it is in this space that in Psalm 139 he deeply considers who he is. He asks questions about his real authenticity while being squeezed by pursuing enemies who are angry because David is seeing success in building a kingdom.

Oh yea, David knows how God was with him shepherding his father's sheep. God gave him the strength to kill attacking animals with his own hands. Anointed by Samuel at a young age, triumphed over giants, successful in battle, and found the grace of God as a sinner. David knows God's great grace. This Psalm is not here to show us the nature of an anxious servant. Rather it is a significant text that points us toward an all knowing and awesome God. Even more so about the deliberate design of God to secure and protect the work of God's own hands and the irreversible claim of God's purpose of a servants' life.

Like David the circumstances that surround our call can leave us anxious about tomorrow even as we have only done what God required of us. "Can we talk?" conversations with God break forth as we try to listen for the inner truths and values that are at the heart of our own identity, our identity—not the standards by which we must live—but the standards by which we cannot help but live if we are going to live our own life, our authentic selves in ministry. Like David in this very intimate and personal talk with God, we look for a place of truth, a balanced place, a God honoring place that sets our feet steady and calms our anxious heart.

We can trust this. We can trust God. Because also like David, God has chosen us to be the ones through which God would continue Kingdom building. It's a Kingdom call. We are the ones with which God invites partnership in the shaping of a world that would love God and love one



Rev. Dr. Trinette V. McCray

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## To Live As Though The Truth Were True... Continued



*“No matter how long it takes God’s purpose for us is never ‘given up.’ God doesn’t give up on us.”*

another and love themselves. It is God’s invitation.

God chose us—us to be the ones who would continue what God had started in Abraham, Sarah, and Lot; Jacob, Rebecca and Leah; Moses, Miriam, Joshua and Rahab; Esther, Vashti, and Deborah; with David, Solomon, and Josiah; Jeremiah, Isaiah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Nehemiah, Ezra and Huldah; Ruth, Naomi and Boaz; Amos, Micah, and Hosea. To stand with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Mary, mother of Jesus, Mary of Magdala; Peter, Pricilla and Aquila, John of Patmos; Roger Williams, Adoniram and Emily; Lott Carey, and George Leille; Harriet Montgomery, Lula Fleming and Carrie Bell Brown; Margaret Cowden and Valentine Royal Thomas. It would take a Jitsuo Morikawa, Clydia Nahwooksi; a Prathia Hall; William T. McKee, a Virginia Sargeant. Do you know who else? You and me.

All of whom God called and yet, just like many of us, answered that call with a nagging question of “who me?” The “who me” question didn’t originate with you nor with me. Who hasn’t asked “who me” at some point? Walked with that question? When I felt God’s nudge I was not expecting the call to ministry. I desired to be used by God but I was talking about something else, I don’t know what, but something else. And then again sometimes the question is not “who me” but “why me?” Certainly David’s questions were both.

Martin Buber says that “every journey has a secret destination of which the traveler is unaware.” We are on this journey and we can’t turn around.

We’ve come too far from where we’ve started from. We have seen too much, seen God’s hand moving obstacles, bring victories and making a way all around us. Samuel Proctor, in talking about his moral odyssey, says, “God in creation forms us partners with God in formation.” The formation, or how God shapes us, is different and unique for each one of us, but it has been happening and indeed is happening, nonetheless. God is at work in us forming and shaping us.

Howard Thurman describes this formation process this way. “The life in the seed bursts forth in root and stalk and fruit—the whole process takes place within. Many forces may operate upon it from without—cramping the roots, making the shape of the stalk into a caricature of itself—but always with whatever life there is, the built-in purpose is never given up.” No matter how long it takes God’s purpose for us is never “given up.” God doesn’t give up on us. Of this there is no doubt. Thurman continues, “This is the integrity of life, it is the commitment of life; this is the singular characteristic of all aliveness; this is the miracle, the shaping of matter from within: the materializing of vitality. The total experience seems to take place in a manner so pervasive that we look in vain for the center, the location of the secret.”

So, what is impacting David in Psalms 139 has everything to do with the external circumstances surrounding his calling. What can we see in all of this that helps us with where we may find ourselves in our ministry at this time or some other? In the times when all we have done is tried to be faithful and obedient. All we have done was to do what the Lord requires and forces press in around us to say, “no”.

First, God puts circumstances in their place. One of the things that we learn about God in our circumstances is that circumstances are the stuff that invites grace to become active in our lives. As sure as we live we are going to face circumstances. And as sure as we believe in the love of God, we will always be accompanied by the grace of God.

David prays “Help me, oh help me, God, my God, save me through your wonderful love; then, they’ll know that your hand is in this; that you, God, have been at work.” All along in the shaping of our identities, the giving of our gifts, God is at work and we are the work of God’s hands, and God’s hand is in this, whatever your this may be.

Grace takes the brokenness in us and brings us to a world that makes others whole in Jesus’ name.

God takes that very thing that you wished was not

## To Live As Though The Truth Were True...Continued

a part of your past and will leverage it to impact others in your present and future.

Grace makes us beautiful and wonderful, still. More grace welcomes us into the salvation of God, whereby we are known as the children of God. And more and more grace reached out to us and called us into the service of God. No circumstances, no grace. More circumstances, more grace.

God's hand is in this... whatever the circumstance. God is at work and is working it out. Our God is an awesome God, who reigns in heaven above with wisdom, power and love; our God is an awesome God. The thing that is important is not that we have a better set of circumstances. The thing that is important is that we remain and live within the will of God having a better walk in God. David was in the will of God as he writes Psalm 139.

Second, circumstances are the stuff that invites victory into our lives. God at one point says to David: "Sit alongside me here on my throne until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." The foot on the footstool represents the gesture of a conqueror. We are more than conquerors. God will place our circumstances under our feet. I like what James Baldwin once said of circumstances: "I am what time, circumstance, history, has made of me, certainly, but I am also, much more than that. So are we all."

Time, circumstance, and history had made David who he was. They combine to shape the woman or man that we are, for sure. But the truth of the matter is that at the heart of David's struggle is not in living with the truth of his external circumstances but it is living with the truth of his internal creation...of who he is. He is keenly aware of God's design of his very self, his core, his sacred center.

So, the third thing that we come to see is that, God addresses external circumstances through internal truths. The real challenge which is David's challenge is our challenge as well. It is to

go on and live as though the truth were true. I'll say it again: The real call to us is the call to live as though the truth about us were really true. It is, in fact, what gives us life. When Martin Luther came face to face with his truth, he exclaimed, "Here I stand, I can do no other." Living our truth is where we stand. We are called to stand in the place of our truth. The truth is, David as a boy killed a bear and a lion with his bare hands, with God's help. He was anointed by Samuel at God's command. He slew Goliath with a stone and a slingshot, through God's power. David knows the truth about himself. He knows that God knows.

"Lord, you have examined me and know all about me. (Why should I care about what my accusers say?) You know when I sit down and when I get up. (I am always with you.) You know my thoughts before I think them (You're in my head). You know where I go and where I lie down. You know everything I do." God, what can I say? You know...you know.

It's no news to us to know that God knows us. God knows each of us not only by name but by rein. This factor makes all the difference. David says it this way in one translation: you possessed my rein; you cover me in my mother's womb.

You possessed by reins. You did form my inward parts. The accurate translation of the Hebrew word "klithi" would simply say you made my kidneys. In the ancient Hebrew "reins" means kidneys. The kidneys were considered the seat of desires, longings; where our passion is given. David here is saying to God you gave me my passion. You gave me my desires and longings. You not only gave them to me but you own them. David had a desire for the things of God because God gave David his desire. His actions contrary to God's desire were actions made outside of God's will. I feel what I feel because you put it in me to feel this way. The cares that I carry, you knew my heart would be burdened. The things that give me joy you made my soul to feel it. That which pains me you gave me the capacity to know that pain. What excites me, you did it. What



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## To Live As Though The Truth Were True... Continued

brings me peace, God, you did it. Your hand was at work in me. Your hand is upon me. The other news is that David claimed the work of more than God's hand, but also of God's emotion; also of God's passion—of God's own heart; a man after God's own heart.

So, what does this mean?

Each of us is beautifully and wonderfully made; which means we have been distinguished by our desires, longings and passions. We each have desires, some given to all and some unique to the way God gave them to us--each one new.

That's why we are called to not be envious over the gifts and ministries that others have. Instead, look for the gifts God has given you and do all you need to do to fulfill the tasks God has uniquely qualified you to do. You are uniquely qualified and bona fide to live as your truth is true.

Our desires serve to overtake our circumstances. No outward circumstances can change—can separate us from God and God's knowledge of us. David got this when he wrote, “delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.” Remember Romans 8:37-39: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It's no accident or happenstance that we are here being who we are and doing what we do. We've been set up. Like David, our internal wiring was made to fit our external workings.

Our persona and passion meet with the purpose God has on our lives. God put it there well in the beginning. We can't waste time worrying about how we got started. Be determined about how you finish.

In Psalm 139 David releases himself to the truth that in fact he was knit together in his mother's womb by God. Not only did God give him his

passion and desires, but God covered that desire with flesh. Our outer presence exists to give presence to our internal selves. It is the vehicle given to desire to get around in.

“You cover me in my mother's womb...you saw my bones being formed as I took shape, when I was put together there you saw my body as it was formed.”

The emotion is in the life that lives. It is our vitality. It is vital. The desires and passions that our bodies cover gives us our aliveness. No wonder in Psalm 138: David says “you will revive me.” In other words, you will give me aliveness again. You will fix my eyes on your everlasting love. You, God, will turn me around.

I know the road gets rough and the going gets tough. I know fatigue, fear and frenzy sets in sometimes. As Paul Tillich said, “A person who has never tried to flee God has never experienced the God who is really God.” But God is a God who pursues us to the last nook and cranny of our hiding places and holds us in the presence of our truth until we relinquish our will to be served by God's will in God's awesome way of loving and leading.

“In your book,” David prays “were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.” To Israel through Jeremiah, God says, “For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” “Order my steps in your Word, dear Lord. Lead me, guide me every day. Send your anointing, Father, I pray. Order my steps in your Word. Please order my steps in your word.” “Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His Word; Just to rest upon His promise, And to know, ‘Thus saith the Lord! I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee, precious Jesus, Savior, Friend; and I know that Thou art with me, wilt be with me to the end.’”

A friend of mine gave me this in one of those email circuit notes. (By Fr. J. Glenn Murray) about showing up.

## To Live As Though The Truth Were True...Continued

Woody Allen once said: “90% of life is just showing up.” In a time of twitter, e-mail, and cyber-style conversations, we know more than ever the importance of “showing up.” Today, we celebrate that God decided to show up, to dwell among us, to take up residence in the [neighborhood], to be present here and now.

Why? Why does God show up? Simple. Though we know a God who sits high and looks low; who woke us up this morning and clothed us in our right minds, we need a little bit more, right? We need the assurance that we are loved; that we are lovable; and that we belong to One who is like a mother who would never forget the child of her womb. In these doubtful days and troubling times, when people are struggling from pay check to pay check, when people are worried and wearied about the loss of job and home, when women, men, and children, civilian and military are blown to bits in Iraq and Afghanistan, when there is not only trafficking in drugs, but pornographic peddling of wandering and wondering children, when there is internecine feuding and back biting over what is a human right to health-care, when people are addicted and afflicted, worn and worn out, we need a God who shows up—here and now. Here and now!

God has shown up. How? The wonder we ponder is that God shows up through the fairly feeble and fragile bearing of human flesh. And not just any old flesh, but the most vulnerable, at risk, and messy of all flesh—the life of a newborn infant. God shows up in surprising circumstances: in the quiet backwater of Bethlehem; precariously positioned in a manger; accompanied only by farm animals and poor shepherds. In how God shows up we discover that God’s love is of such magnitude; of such perfection and totality, that gives the very self of God. In the gift of Jesus, we recognize that self-giving is the very nature of the One who lives in unapproachable light, the source of all goodness.

We now know why and how; one last question: what difference does it make? What difference

does it make? If we were looking for where we might behold God-made-flesh where our appreciation and approval, our gratitude and gratefulness for the presence and gift of Christ might originate, we need only look as far as the person next to us; or even more shockingly, in the mirror. Surprising, isn’t it? Yes, but no more surprising than God showing up in a manger. The wonder we ponder comes not only from above; but it comes through us; and dwells among us.

The wonder we ponder—Emmanuel, God-with-us, shows up in the humanity of any and every person. For we believe that God’s gift of self to a particular place and among a particular people enables and empowers, excites and incites us to discover God-made-flesh in everyone we meet, no matter where they are; no matter who they are—here and now.

God shows up in the love of small but real sacrifices that husbands and wives, and parents and children, make for each other. God shows up in the support of a friend who tells us the truth, even when that truth hurts. God shows up in the mercy to forgive those who have caused us hurt and harm, neglected and rejected us. God shows up when, rather than focusing on our narrow self interest, we attach our energy to a cause that transcends our needs. God shows up when we fight for those who are victimized by injustice. God shows up in acts of solidarity with the poor; when we treat the sick with compassion, and invite the outcast into our company.

And to this end, God shows up in our resurrection made possible through the life, death and resurrection of God’s only Son, Jesus who is the Christ.

God shows up when we show up living our truth as though it were true. This is my desire. God clears the path for us by making a way for us, showing up to clear a path for our living the truth as though the truth were true. Oh, blessed is the name of the Lord.

*Specific references for sources quoted in the sermon are available from the author.*



*“God clears the path for us by making a way for us, showing up to clear a path for our living the truth as though the truth were true.”*

(continued from page 9)

Rev. Dr. Trinette V. McCray is president of the American Baptist Historical Society. She was the first female clergy to serve as president of the ABCUSA 2000-2001. Dr. McCray is an Assistant Professor with Central Baptist Theological Seminary teaching in the Milwaukee Center, a ministry of the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin. She serves as the Executive Director of the Center for Calling and Engagement at Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee.

Her extensive use of her gifts, experiences and talents as, teacher, preacher, speaker, writer, planner, mediator,

grant writer and administrator prepares her to be available for whatever task God places upon her. She is a facilitator and trainer of the process called Conversation Café, an affiliate to the World Café model founded by Juanita Brown, and had conducted Cafés nationally. Trinette is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Her home church is Calvary Baptist Church in Milwaukee.

*“When the angels ask God, ‘Is the world finished yet?’ God responds, ‘I don’t know. Go ask my partners.’”*



Rev. Sandra Demott Hasenauer

## A Prayer for Partnerships

Rev. Sandra Demott Hasenauer, Associate Executive Director: American Baptist Women’s Ministries

### Report from ABWIM Roundtable

I prayed for partnerships this morning. Like yours, I imagine my prayer list is wide and varied from prayer concerns related to me by blood to prayer concerns for nameless, faceless people in countries I’ve never visited. But the word “partnerships” appears on my list now because I pulled an index card off a wall and committed to praying for that item in the months and years to come. The index card activity was part of the closing session of a “Women in Ministry Roundtable” conversation that occurred at the American Baptist mission center in January, 2010. There were about 40 of us gathered around the table to talk about issues facing women serving locally, regionally, and nationally, and how we might be able to better support women in ministry together as American Baptists. Participants in the roundtable included denominational bodies, regional staff, caucuses, seminaries and colleges, clergy—both women and men, and clergy spouses. Although we came from different backgrounds with diverse viewpoints, we were in unanimous agreement on one thing: women in ministry need support and we need to find new and creative ways to provide that support.

Led by the steering committee including Rev. Mary Hulst, Rev. Alice Greene, Rev. Holly Bean, and Rev. Lauren Ng, we discussed roadblocks to women in ministry and resources for supporting women that already exist—educational, human, financial, institutional, and so forth. We then moved into a time of envisioning the future—identifying functions that belong at a national level for supporting women in ministry as well as beginning to imagine new and more deep and meaningful partnerships to make advocating for women in ministry more effective in ABCUSA.

What will be the result of the Women in Ministry Roundtable? I’m not sure yet, but I have a lot of hope. In reflecting on our time together, I have been reminded of one of my favorite short stories, “Partners.” In it, the angels are witnessing God engaged in the creation of the world, and they keep asking, “Is it finished yet?” God replies “no,” each time, until God creates humankind. God tells the humans they will be God’s partners in finishing creation. When the angels ask God, “Is the world finished yet?” God responds, “I don’t know. Go ask my partners.” God has given us to one another as partners in God’s work here in the world as well. So is our work around supporting women in ministry finished yet? I don’t know—but I’ll be asking my partners.

## Resources for WIM

### Print Resources

- Dr. Augustella Clay's writings, including:
  - *Voices in Black and White: Sojourners of Truth and Justice*
  - *What if...Misread, Misfed, Misled???*
- *Junia: A Bible Study and Storytelling Resource for the Church*
  - Available from Interim Ministries, [www.interimministries-abc.org](http://www.interimministries-abc.org)

### Online Resources

- American Baptist Churches USA  
[www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org)
- American Baptist Ministers Council  
[www.ministerscouncil.org](http://www.ministerscouncil.org)
- American Baptist Women's Ministries  
[www.abwministries.org](http://www.abwministries.org)
- American Baptist Women In Ministry  
[www.abc-usa.org/WhoWeAre/MinistryMission/ABCOrganizations/WomenInMinistry.aspx](http://www.abc-usa.org/WhoWeAre/MinistryMission/ABCOrganizations/WomenInMinistry.aspx)
- Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America  
[www.bpfna.org](http://www.bpfna.org)
- Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors  
[www.nationalministries.org/chaplains\\_list.cfm](http://www.nationalministries.org/chaplains_list.cfm)
- Roger Williams Fellowship  
<http://rogerwilliamsfellowship.squarespace.com/journal>

### Facebook Group Name:

**American Baptist Women In Ministry**

## Call for Resources and Stories

Please share books and other resources that strengthen and inform you, both personally and professionally.

Submit reviews and resources to Karen Pickler at [Karen\\_Pickler@yahoo.com](mailto:Karen_Pickler@yahoo.com).



A podcast about leadership in Christian ministry with women and girls, produced by American Baptist Women's Ministries.

First Interview from the Roundtable

Rev. Sandra DeMott Hasenauer, Associate Executive Director of AB Women's Ministries, has posted the newest episode to the AB Women's Ministries "Real Women, Real Leaders" Podcast series. Featured in this podcast is her interview with **Rev. Christine Smith** who speaks about issues facing women in ministry. You may access the podcast through iTunes or at <http://www.abwm.libsyn.com/>. Rev. DeMott Hasenauer will be posting other interviews with participants of the American Baptist Women In Ministry Roundtable.



Rev. Christine Smith is senior pastor of the Covenant Baptist Church in Wycliffe, Ohio. In recent months she has been engaged in a project on women in ministry which began with a survey of approximately 100 ordained women clergy from American Baptist Churches USA and other "freewill" denominations on a variety of issues around women called by God to professional ministry.

## AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA



### American Baptist Women in Ministry

American Baptist Churches USA  
P.O. Box 851  
Valley Forge, PA 19482

Phone: 800-222-3872 x2070  
Fax: 610-278-2275  
Email: [joyce.lake@abc-usa.org](mailto:joyce.lake@abc-usa.org)

Administrative staff: Ms. Joyce Lake  
Consultant to ABWIM: Rev. Holly Vincent Bean

#### WOMENWORD

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The ABCUSA Office of Women in Ministry seeks to educate, advocate, support and celebrate, on behalf of the women serving in American Baptist professional church leadership. Education furthers a better understanding of theological and biblical material supporting women in leadership roles in the church, as well as the many ways women have given leadership to the church throughout history. Advocacy seeks equal access for women to positions of church leadership in the search and call process. Support for women ministering in—and seeking—leadership positions encourages and empowers them. Celebrating the gifts of women in ministry encourages greater appreciation of those gifts within church life which, in turn, strengthens the witness of the church as a whole.

2010 is a transitional year for the Office of Women in Ministry. A Steering Committee, chaired by Rev. Mary Hulst, with Rev. Holly Bean, Rev. Alice Greene and Rev. Lauren Ng, is engaged in a reassessment of the national staffing needed to effectively address the issues ABC professional women in ministry face. A new staffing pattern—sustainable within the endowment resources available—will be proposed to the ABC General Board in November 2010 for implementation in 2011. The work continues in the Office of Women in Ministry with administrative support from Joyce Lake and consulting work from Holly Bean.

## Events

### July 12—17, 2010

Light to Live In: The Biblical Call  
to Peace Rooted in Justice

Baptist Peace Fellowship of North  
American Summer Conference

Keuka College, Keuka Park, New  
York

For more information:  
[www.bpfna.org/conference](http://www.bpfna.org/conference)

### August 19—20, 2010

Women Together: Lifting and  
Encouraging One Another

Sponsored by National Ministries

New Prospect Missionary Baptist  
Church, Detroit, Michigan

For more information contact:  
Rev. Yvonne B. Carter,  
(800) 222-3872 or  
[yvonne.carter@abc-usa.org](mailto:yvonne.carter@abc-usa.org)

### June 24-26, 2011

Celebrate! Celebrad!

The American Baptist Biennial  
2011

San Juan, Puerto Rico

For more information:  
[www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org) or  
[www.celebrate2011.com](http://www.celebrate2011.com)

