



# Associated Baptist Press

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October 11, 2001

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES (01-85)  
Nashville, Tennessee  
OCT 24 2001

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### CBF missionaries reported safe

By ABP staff

ATLANTA (ABP) -- The Atlanta-based Cooperative Baptist Fellowship reported Oct. 8 that all its missionaries were safe following a weekend of American and British bombings in Afghanistan.

Most CBF personnel in Southeast Asia traveled over the weekend to less sensitive areas, said Jack and Anita Snell, associate coordinators for Asia teams.

Other missionaries are on alert. Those in the Mideast and North Africa have worked out evacuation -- in some cases having already bought tickets to leave in an emergency, said CBF missions leader Jim Smith.

CBF usually leaves the decision whether to remain in a country up to the individual missionary, said Gary Baldrige, co-coordinator for global missions. "We realize the tension between staying to give incarnational witness on site and leaving temporarily to lessen the danger to local friends and to the missionary."

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### Church faces ouster over woman's ordination

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (ABP) -- A credentials committee in a Florida Baptist association is calling for removal of a church with an ordained woman on its ministerial staff.

Santa Fe River Baptist Association will consider a recommendation at its annual meeting Oct. 14 to withdraw fellowship from Parkview Baptist Church in Gainesville. A credentials committee report charges the congregation violated both the Bible and the association's constitution by ordaining Lynn Williams to the gospel ministry in January.

Williams, minister of education and students at Parkview, was ordained Jan. 7. In response, three churches petitioned to have the congregation removed from the association's membership.

The committee will recommend dismissal of Parkview, citing three "areas of concern."

First, the committee said, is "degradation of ministerial ordination" by applying it to a "subordinate" church office to pastor. "This has created within the church's ministry an ordained office having no biblical support both distinct from and beneath the pastorate, and thus a graded ministry entirely foreign to the biblical doctrine and practice."

Second, is "the ordination of women to the gospel ministry" itself. The committee report says ordination of a woman is "wholly without biblical command, apostolic precedent or support in Southern Baptist confessions, and is contrary to the overwhelming weight of Southern Baptist history and the established norms of Southern Baptist practice."

The third "and greatest" concern, according to the report, is that Williams' ordination "has served to further identify Parkview Baptist Church with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and its published agenda, which disrupts the harmony of our association and brings into question well-founded and long-established Southern Baptist doctrine and practice."

In an e-mail addressed to several "friends," Parkview Pastor Greg Magruder warned that the report would mean that no church can have ordained people other than the pastor and deacons and that no woman could ever be ordained.

Magruder said witnesses defending the church told the credentials committee was told this was not a CBF issue, but committee members responded that was a lie. Magruder described as "arrogant and scary" the committee's suggestion that anyone with a contrary view is violating God's word.

Magruder said the struggle in the association and Southern Baptist Convention isn't really about ordination but "between fundamentalism [and] the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"So where is Parkview?" Magruder asked in an earlier e-mail. "I wish we knew. We thought we were SBC, but suddenly we are pushed out and adrift."

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-- By ABP staff

## **State Women in Ministry group moves meeting amid restrictions**

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Georgia's Baptist Women in Ministry organization moved its Oct. 26-27 meeting from a Georgia Baptist Convention conference center after being advised the gathering would be monitored for content and shut down if deemed offensive by convention officials.

According to a letter to the meeting's coordinator from the GBC's executive director, the group would be allowed to meet at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center only if it met guidelines including no criticism of the Southern Baptist Convention or support for the SBC breakaway group Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Specifically forbidden, according to a letter dated Sept. 12 from GBC Executive Director Robert White were:

- Mentioning or promoting CBF.
- Distributing materials aimed at raising funds for CBF.
- Any "tone of sympathy or general support" of the Atlanta-based CBF.
- Negative remarks about the Georgia Baptist Convention or Southern Baptist Convention.
- Promotion of women serving as senior pastors, in deference to the "Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the SBC in 2000. To promote views contrary to the doctrinal statement "would be a frontal attack" on the state and national conventions," White wrote.

-- "Strange communication" involving the use of feminist terms in worship.

The last directive, White said, related to an article that appeared last summer in Baptist Press about a national Women in Ministry meeting. "I find it difficult to believe that anyone from our tradition would refer to 'Mother God' or 'Goddess Sophia' and such," White wrote conference planner Laura Willis. "I certainly do not believe that you ... would tolerate such activity. However, the administration committee was gravely concerned and even angered about our hosting this conference at Norman Park."

White said the administration committee, which discussed the matter at a recent meeting, also objected to the primary speaker for the meeting, theology professor Molly Marshall from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas. Marshall, a former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., resigned several years ago over conflict with the school's conservative president, Albert Mohler.

White said he had instructed observers that "should anything untoward occur in the meeting, they are to shut the meeting down immediately."

After receiving White's letter, the group eventually moved the meeting to First Baptist Church of Morrow, Ga. A Georgia Woman's Missionary Union camp was considered as an alternate site but abandoned after White reportedly advised Georgia WMU leader Barbara Curnutt that it "would not be in the best interest of WMU" to host the event.

Wendy Joyner, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Americus, Ga., and president of the BWIM of Georgia, could not be reached for comment.

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-- By ABP staff

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