

Subject: Southern Baptist Women Clergy

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Prof. Wiborg:

I haven't located that article we discussed yet, but I thought you might be interested in this one from the Associated Baptist Press (October 30, 1997).

Grace and Peace,

Kip Mobley

Numbers of women clergy on rise in SBC, group claims

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (ABP) -- At least 1,225 women serve as Southern Baptist clergy, according to research compiled by Baptist Women in Ministry.

While their numbers remain small compared with other denominations and despite opposition to women's ordination in Southern Baptist Convention resolutions, Southern Baptist women made progress in religious leadership during the 1970s and 1980s, sociologist Sarah Frances Anders wrote in the Fall 1997 issue of Folio, newsletter for the organization based in Kansas City, Kan.

The most popular vocation for women clergy is chaplaincy, the article said. Twenty-five percent of confirmed Southern Baptist clergywomen serve as chaplains. At least 85 women are pastors in Baptist churches, while more than 100 serve in an associate-pastor role, Anders said.

Sixteen states have at least one woman who is a senior pastor, she said, with North Carolina being home to the largest number of women pastors. Ordained "academicians," she said, constitute less than 2 percent of the total.

Official records of the Southern Baptist Convention do not track women ministers, and counting them is difficult, Anders said. The SBC annual lists ordained ministers by name but without gender identification, and Baptist state papers often do not report women being ordained as ministers or deacons, she said.

Anders said several individuals began keeping records since the 1964 ordination of Addie Davis, the first documented clergywoman in the SBC. A 1979 count reported the number of Southern Baptist clergywomen as 58.

In the same issue, a regular feature of the newsletter, "Ovations," listed 50 names of women who were either recently ordained or had taken a new ministry position.

-- By ABP staff