

### Three Illustrations of Gifted Female Servants Excluded from SBC Leadership

#### 1. Colonel Paige Heard, Regimental Army Chaplain, West Point Military Academy

Paige served Christ as a Southern Baptist endorsed United States Army Chaplain beginning 1996 until her retirement in 2016. At the time I became acquainted with her, Paige was only one of five female Southern Baptist chaplains left in the United States Army. Eight years after Paige began serving our country as an Army Chaplain, the trustees of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention voted to stop endorsing female chaplains. Major Heard had been endorsed prior to the 2004 prohibition and was 'grandfathered' in. Paige told me via phone that her heart "*ached for the Southern Baptist Convention and the stance her convention on gifted women serving.*" On the one hand, Paige said, Southern Baptist churches are training girls in G.A.'s (Girls in Action) and Acteens that they are to listen to the voice and calling of God and serve Him. Yet, when those same girls fulfill the call of God on their lives, the very Convention who trained them then turns their collective back on them.

The trustees of the North American Mission Board voted in 2004 to stop endorsing female chaplains. It is interesting to note that the North American Mission Board had initially said they would not appoint 'ordained' women. But when they learned that the Army did not require ordination for a woman to serve as Chaplain, just an endorsement from NAMB, the trustees scrambled to stop the practice of endorsements in 2004. In explaining "why" the trustees would no longer endorse 'women' to be chaplains for the Army, the NAMB Chairman of the Trustee Board said, "*we will not endorse a woman where the role and function of the chaplain would be seen the same as that of a pastor.*" What is harmful about a woman being in a role that is "seen the same as that of a pastor?" **It has to do with authority.**

One Southern Baptist pastor told me that any female who functions in the role of a pastor is in 'rebellion to God.' The Bible compares rebellion to witchcraft (I Sam. 15:23). I served for over a decade on a law enforcement task force that investigated crimes that involved the occult, including that of witchcraft, satanism, and shamanism. I can say without equivocation that I've seen the black arts up close. To call a woman ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit, a person who is in 'rebellion to God' is an offense to those of us who understand what true rebellion to God is all about.

#### 2. Southern Baptist Missionary Joanna P. Moore (1832-1916).

In 1863, Joanna P. Moore (1832-1916) was appointed the first female Baptist missionary to the Home Mission Field by the American Baptist Convention, an original member of the Triennial Convention (1814), the forerunner of the Southern Baptist Convention (1845). According to the Home Mission Monthly Magazine, Joanna Moore arrived for her first mission assignment on Island #10 in the Mississippi River. She ministered among former African American slaves who were now being protected by the Union Army. These former slaves had their own male pastors, mostly illiterate men who faithfully shepherded their fellow Christians in the plantations of the south. These African American plantation preachers had never heard or thought it was wrong to get drunk occasionally until Joanna P. Moore arrived. She faithfully taught these pastors the Scriptures, especially expounding I Timothy 3:3 and the biblical prohibition against drunkenness. The pastors reformed their conduct, ceasing their occasional habit of getting drunk, and were better pastors due to the influence of Joanna P. Moore.

At the 2018 Southern Baptist Convention, I went to a microphone and asked Dr. Al Mohler, President of Southern Theological Seminary, the following question:

“Dr. Mohler, in light of several Southern Baptist women writing to me and telling me that Southern Baptist male divinity students are encouraged by seminary professors to walk out when female students fulfilling M.Div. requirements exegete the Scriptures out loud, and personally knowing that there have been unjust terminations of Hebrew and Old Testament professors in our Southern Baptist seminaries because they are females, and observing the lack of competent, gifted women in leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention, ***was it sinful for Joanna P. Moore to teach those male pastors the Word of God, and should she have remained silent and let those pastors continue in their drunkenness?***”

### **3. Dr. Sheri Klouda, Hebrew Professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.**

Dr. Sheri Klouda served as Professor of Hebrew at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, from 2002 to 2006. In 2003, Paige Patterson became President of Southwestern Theological Seminary. Patterson eventually released Dr. Klouda from her faculty position at the seminary because she was a woman. I've written extensively on Dr. Klouda and the dark days she endured. Shortly after her termination, Sheri's husband had his leg amputated, and then in 2014, he died from his heart condition. Dr. Klouda relocated away from the south and from her family of origin to find work. There are not many jobs for a woman trained to teach Hebrew.

Sheri has rarely spoken publicly about what happened at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary during her tenure. Because of my knowledge of her situation, and my firm belief that the Southern Baptist Convention has been going down the wrong path in its views and treatment of women, I made a promise to do all I could to move the Southern Baptist Convention toward a more New Testament understanding of the equality of women. Christians who believe the Bible should be on the cutting edge of encouraging and empowering women. Sheri expressed the struggles she had at SWBTS this way:

“While some of the women studying at seminary appreciated having a female role model on the faculty, after Dr. Patterson became SWBTS President, I was instructed to avoid counseling women or building an entourage, a following, so that it would not appear as if I were encouraging other women to pursue my path and seek to teach at an academic institution. I was also instructed not to speak at faculty meetings, and while I was asked to work on restructuring the curriculum and reading list for the doctoral program at the seminary, my name was officially kept off of any materials related to that restructuring. My involvement in any work related to curriculum or other seminary work was unofficial and kept quiet.

In May 2004, as soon as classes were over, I was summoned to the Associate Dean's office. He told me that President Paige Patterson wanted me to actively seek a new academic community as soon as possible. I asked him what I had done, and if there wasn't something I could do to stay at the seminary. I expressed to him that I had done everything to stay below the radar, and that finding another job is not that easy. I asked how long I had to find another job, and the dean told me that there was no specified time limit, but he indicated that I needed to leave before it was time for me to come up for tenure.

The dean also told me that the seminary would do everything it could to help facilitate a transition, but that Paige did not want me to speak a word about this to anyone. Continuing to teach at the seminary in the meantime relied on my total silence. I was also instructed that if I consulted or mentioned anything about an attorney, that the conversation would stop there. In essence, I was being dismissed from the dream job at Southwestern Theological Seminary because, though I was a gifted female believer who believed the Scriptures and loved to teach Hebrew, I was a woman – and could not sit in the “position of authority” over men or in any form or fashion “look as if” I was teaching men the Scriptures.”