

tive, Bible believing Christians, but as Koreans. In Korea, as in most of the Orient, leadership is man's business. The traditional role for women was to marry, have children and keep a good and happy home. . . . [F]or women to be given positions of responsibility and authority in the church was more revolutionary than establishing the cell system itself.

The promise of the Holy Spirit giving the ability to prophesy was not a promise to just men but also the women. . . . I had also noticed that women were more loyal and faithful than men in the ministry of Jesus. . . . In all the years I have been teaching the cell system, I have found my female associates have been loyal and reliable. My advice to you then is, "Don't be afraid of using women" in leadership.¹³

I agree.

Notes

1. In my 1989 book, *Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians* (Collins-Dove, Australia, Harper-Collins, USA, about to be reprinted by Wipf and Stock), much of what I wrote is predicated on the premise that the first Christians met in house churches. For documentation on key points in this essay, see this book. For more detail, see the definitive study on house churches by Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004). See also Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y.

McDonald, and Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress, 2006), 144–63.

2. Ephesus seems to be the exception. When Paul left the synagogue in that city, Luke says he lectured in a hall owned by Tyrannus (Acts 19:9).

3. In Pisidian Antioch, they seem to have had more than one ruler of the synagogue, which is very unusual. It seems the office was shared in that city.

4. On women house church leaders, see Gehring, *House Church*, 210–24.

5. So Acts 18:18, Rom. 16:3, 2 Tim. 4:19.

6. Giles, *Patterns of Ministry*, 27–48.

7. In the New Testament, the term *presbyteros*/"elder" refers to an older man who provides communal leadership. The term *episkopos* refers to what someone does, i.e., give oversight, supervise. Most, if not all, *episkopoi* would have been senior persons, but not all elders necessarily were house church leaders. See further my *Patterns of Ministry*.

8. Philo, *The Special Laws* 3.170, in *Philo of Alexandria*, trans. David Wilson (New York: Paulist, 1981), 280.

9. John Chrysostom, *The kind of women who ought be taken as wives*, 4, in *Women in the Early Church*, trans. Elizabeth A. Clark (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1983).

10. I use the word "proclamation" deliberately, although Paul uses the word "prophecy." Prophecy in the apostolic age took many forms, and, in writing to the Corinthians, Paul makes it the primary term to designate Spirit-inspired rational communication in the congregation.

11. David Yonggi Cho, *More than Numbers: Paul Y. Cho Shares the Secrets of Church Growth* (London, UK: Bridge, 1984), 36.

12. Cho, *More than Numbers*, 36.

13. Cho, *More than Numbers*, 37–38.



The Gate

Linda Guderian

I stand at the gate.
I look back at what was.
I look forward at what should be.
My name is woman, and so I wait.
I stand here with my Bible
And read the signs that form the gates' barrier.
It is made of Scripture fragments.
1 Timothy 2 is the whittled stake that holds it up.
Slivers of Ephesians 5 block my view.
And splinters of 1 Corinthians bar my way.
God, what did you mean them all to say?
What answer can I give?
I wonder why?
I hold the whole of Scripture in my hand.
I don't understand

Why these few shavings of passages block my way.
And so here, in today, I wait.
I converse with Hulda, Deborah, and Junia.
I contemplate Priscilla and all the women who walked this way.
Where was their gate?
What allowed them to lead, to speak, to prophesy?
And I wonder why I must wait
Here at the gate.
I see those with braided hair and gold and pearls.

They walk past me; they have no gate.
I see men in suits and ties, yet
Not all lift their hands in prayer.
No gate.
I can't go on ahead,
I can not lead, I must be led.
But I have things to say, words to give.
God speaks to me.
No title, no pastor, no female chair.
They say I don't belong up there.
The chairs are all taken
by suits and ties.

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