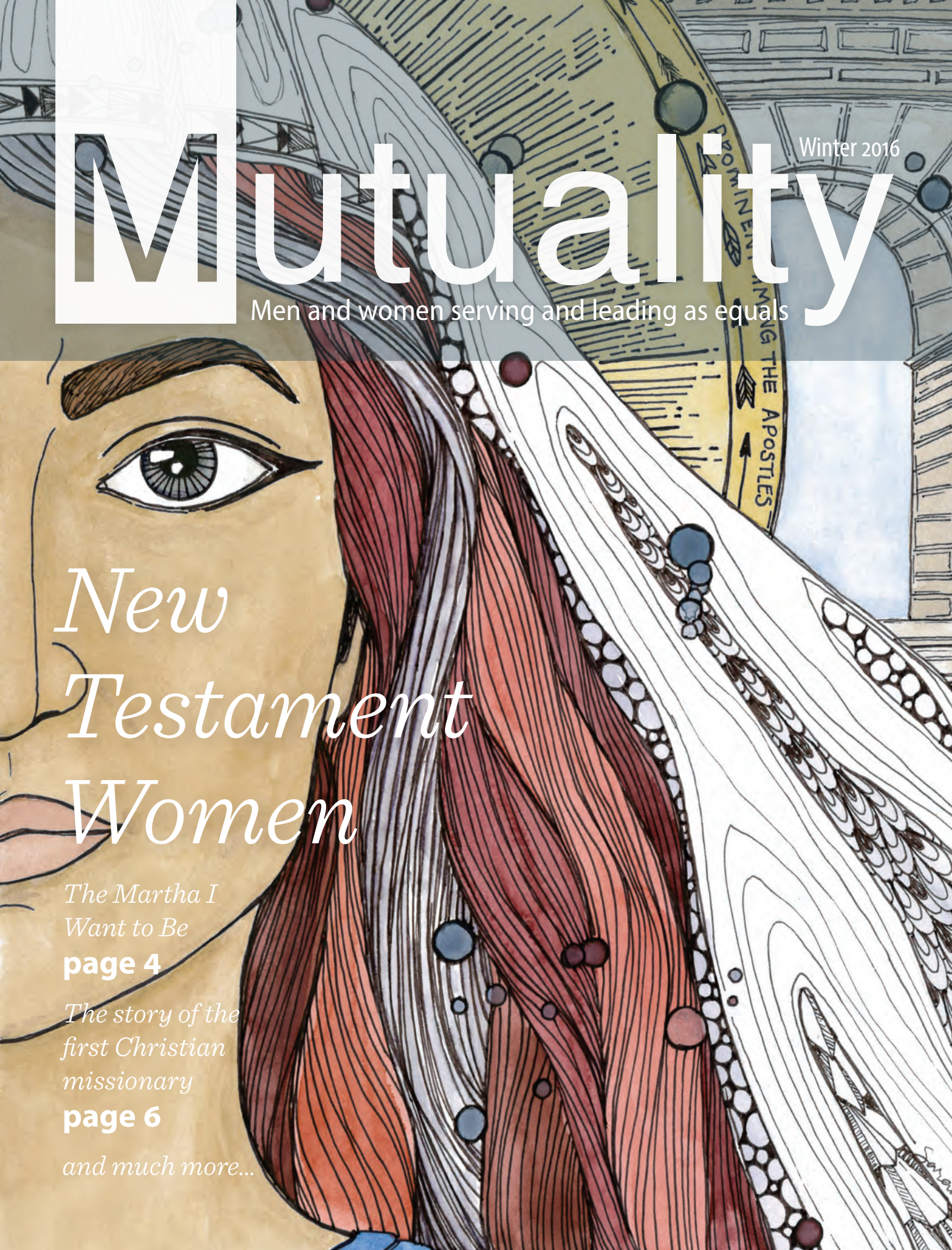




Mutuality

Winter 2016

Men and women serving and leading as equals

New Testament Women

*The Martha I
Want to Be*
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*The story of the
first Christian
missionary*
page 6

and much more...

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"Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (Rom. 14:19, NRSV).

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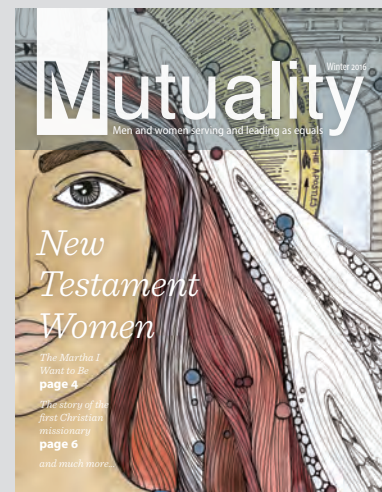
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ON THE COVER: "Junia," by Sara Beth Baca, at facebook.com/SarahBethArt.

Mutuality (ISSN: 1533-2470) seeks to provide inspiration, encouragement, and information about the equality of men and women within the Christian church around the world.

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Seeing Women, Finding Equality

Sometime around AD 112, Pliny, the governor of Bithynia (in present-day Turkey, a little east of Istanbul) wrote a letter to the Roman emperor, Trajan, asking for advice. His concern? What do with Christians. In his words, “I have never before participated in trials of Christians, so I do not know what offenses are to be punished or investigated, or to what extent.”

Pliny’s letter reveals how Rome viewed Christians, but it also tells us a lot about the early church. When I was assigned this short letter as a reading in college, one comment caught my attention. After learning that Christians took part in mostly innocent behavior, Pliny wanted to investigate further: “I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.”

What? Two female slaves who were called deaconesses?

At the time, my interest in biblical gender equality was in its infancy, but I was pretty sure women’s leadership in the church was a modern innovation. But there they were, two deaconesses, in literally the earliest Roman document we have referencing Christianity!

Why did no one ever talk about this? Why was it not one of the first things I saw in my reading on the subject? Did people not know, or did they not care? This was my first exposure to what I would later learn was a pattern of Christian blindness to the women of the early church. Sometimes the blindness is simple ignorance, other times it is willful.

Consider the wild ride Junia (Rom. 16:7) has been on over the centuries. The church father Chrysostom marveled at her devotion to God, but within a few centuries, scholars had decided that she was a he. How? In Greek, a name’s ending changes based on its role in a sentence, so the form of Junia in the Greek manuscripts is *Iounian* (Junian). This is the form we’d expect for the extremely common female name, Junia. But it would also be the correct form of the otherwise-unknown male name, Junias. Since this person was called an apostle, some reasoned it must have been a man, Junias. Today, most scholars agree that Junia was a woman. However, now that she’s finally Junia again, some have decided that she must not have been “outstanding among the apostles” as we always thought, but only admired by the apostles. One has to wonder, is there anything we won’t do to erase women leaders from the Bible?

Where they aren’t erased, biblical women are often misrepresented. The Samaritan woman is remembered as a serial adulteress, when it’s just as likely her five marriages

were the result of things beyond her control, like infertility or the death of husbands. We remember that Mary chose Jesus over chores, but we fail to teach that by taking the position of a rabbi’s student, she challenged gender norms, and Jesus affirmed her.

One way or another, the existence and importance of the Bible’s women are erased from the evangelical consciousness.

The list of New Testament women who are ignored, minimized, demonized, or erased doesn’t end there. There’s Phoebe, Priscilla, Lydia, Euodia and Syntyche, “the chosen lady” of 2 John, the women who financed Jesus’ ministry, and many more. One way or another, the existence and importance of the Bible’s women are erased from the evangelical consciousness.

Our failure to recognize these women is tragic in its own rite. But our blindness to the Bible’s women also means we see only a partial picture of the Bible and church history. This in turn distorts our view of God, ourselves, and our community. It allows us to swallow the lie that God and church tradition prefer men to women.

Though volumes have been written on New Testament women, there is always more to discover. If you’re new to the subject or even if you wrote some of those volumes, I hope this issue of *Mutuality* will let you see the New Testament’s women (and our God) in a new way.

(Speaking of seeing New Testament women, I’d like to call your attention to the beautiful painting of Junia that graces the cover of this issue, courtesy of artist Sarah Beth Baca. Check out more of her work, including her series of women in the Bible, entitled “Full Image,” at facebook.com/SarahBethArt or at society6.com/sarahbethbacaart.)

In Christ,
Tim Krueger



The **MARTHA** *I Want to Be*

by Becky Castle Miller

Someone had to make Jesus dinner.

Or at least that's what Martha of Bethany thought, "distracted by all the preparations that had to be made" (Luke 10:40). Maybe she didn't know Jesus could go without food for forty days or that he could feed thousands with a little bread and fish. So she needed to make him dinner, and her sister Mary wasn't helping.

I relate to Martha here. I've just had three events in three days, and my kitchen is still a disaster, dishes sliding off precarious stacks. In the chaos of details, I yelled at my family to join in, ignoring spiritual values in pursuit

of religious obligations. I would have demanded help from Mary too.

When Jesus tells Martha that Mary has chosen the better thing—sitting at his feet to learn—he dismantles the cultural expectation that a woman's place is in the kitchen. Theologian Craig Keener writes that in the first century, rabbis "dismissed the trustworthiness of women's witness, and, with the possible exceptions of . . . the women followers of Jesus, women seem never to have been accorded the role or status of teachers or their disciples."¹ Jesus sets up a different value system and affirms a woman's right to assume the position of a rabbi's student, which, according to N.T. Wright, is exactly what Mary was doing by sitting at Jesus' feet.² In Jesus'

words, I think Martha heard more than a gentle correction; I think she heard an invitation to become a disciple.

I grew up religious, with heavy cultural limits on women added to Jesus' teachings. I kept my work in women's spaces, confused by my growing desire to participate fully in the public rooms—of the home and the church—with the men. Over the past three years, I have studied to understand the Bible more accurately, and I have heard Jesus' invitation to me, a woman, free to learn and teach on equal footing with men. The Martha in Luke is the Martha I've been most of my life, but the Martha in John is the one I want to become.

Martha seems to have responded to Jesus' invitation to become a disciple,

Martha's story contains the gospel story. In these glimpses of her life, Jesus' identity is revealed, his death and resurrection are promised, and both discipleship and eternal life are offered to his followers.

because in the next story from her life, she shows faith, theological understanding, and a close relationship with Jesus. In John 11, Jesus delays responding to the sisters' request that he heal their brother Lazarus, who dies before Jesus arrives. When Martha hears he is getting close, she runs out to meet him, saying, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). After this questioning, though, Martha displays her faith: "I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask" (John 11:22). Jesus tells her that her brother will be raised up, and she offers her knowledge: "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).

Jesus teaches her more and gives her hope: "You don't have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. . . . Do you believe this?" (John 11:25, MSG) Martha's statement of understanding is powerful: "Yes, Master. All along I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who comes into the world" (John 11:27, MSG).

Martha questions Jesus again when he tells the mourners to roll away the stone covering Lazarus's tomb. She argues with him that the body will smell. Jesus doesn't seem bothered by her challenges.

While the Gospels say Jesus loved the whole world, they don't often say that he loved specific individuals. However, here is one: "Jesus loved Martha" (John 11:5). The honest dialogue in this scene captures the kind of relationship I want to have with God, one in which I can ask hard questions and still be loved.

In the final story told from Martha's life, she hosts another meal for Jesus. The mention is short. At the dinner, "Martha served" (John 12:2). Mary is again at Jesus' feet, while Martha is again serving. I believe this serving is voluntary, not expected. It is celebratory, not stressed. This time, Martha doesn't stop Mary. They each serve the Master in their own way.

Martha's story contains the gospel story. In these glimpses of her life, Jesus' identity is revealed, his death

and resurrection are promised, and both discipleship and eternal life are offered to his followers. The primary goal of evangelism, according to theologian Scot McKnight, is to get one question on the table: "Who do you think Jesus is?"³ McKnight says that the gospel "summons people to confess Jesus as Messiah and Lord."⁴ I tell Martha's story to grieving friends, and in telling her story, I get to tell Jesus' story; I get to evangelize. This tale of a woman puts the question on the table and gives the answer.

Who is Jesus? He is the promised one, the King. I want to grow as a student of Jesus, like Martha did, in faith, knowledge, relationship, and service. I want my life story to preach the gospel, just like Martha's does.



Becky Castle Miller is the discipleship director at an international church in the Netherlands and blogs about emotionally healthy discipleship at medium.com/wholehearted.

She conveys her five kids around town on bikes and studies theology in the middle of the night via the live streaming program at Northern Seminary.

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1. Craig Keener, "Man and Woman" in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 589.
 2. N.T. Wright, "The Biblical Basis for Women's Service in the Church," *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 7.
 3. Scot McKnight, lecture in the class Introduction to New Testament Interpretation, Northern Seminary, Lombard, IL, September 1, 2016.
 4. Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 149.



Samaritan Sinner, Celebrated Saint:

The story of the first Christian missionary

by Bronwen Speedie

When I was a child, a popular Australian women's magazine had a regular section on "Great Women of History," telling the stories of women who changed their country or the world, from Catherine the Great of Russia to scientist Marie Curie and suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst. These mini biographies helped to awaken in me a lifelong interest in the true stories of the lives of women who stepped outside of the roles society defined for them.

But the lives of many of the Bible's women are not always so easy to uncover as those from more recent history. Often, we have very limited details available from Scripture—maybe a single sentence or paragraph. Many of the Bible's women are known to us only by their relationship to a particular man (Jephthah's daughter in Judges 11) or their place of origin or residence (the Shunammite woman of 2 Kings 4). Often, their stories are fascinating fragments that seem to hold the promise of so much more, if only we had the rest of the story.

The story of the Samaritan woman of John 4 is something of a paradox. It is one of the Bible's longest stories about a woman (and contains

the longest conversation Jesus is recorded as having with anyone), and yet she is known to us only by her ethnic and religious identity. John provides some details of her past and present, but no clues about whether her encounter with Jesus continued to bear fruit into her future. Despite the powerful response to Jesus that resulted from her witness, we hear no more within the New Testament of this Samaritan village's conversion to belief in Christ.

Given all we don't know, what can we discover about this woman whose faith was worthy of a whole chapter of John's gospel? How could she have had so many marriages? How is Jesus' approach to her unusual? And what happened after the events of John 4?

Unraveling False Assumptions

Throughout my life, I have heard the Samaritan woman presented as a shameless sinner. But is her marital status proof of her own wrong choices?

We don't know why she had five husbands. My own grandmother has outlived three husbands, but

It seems he saw something in her heart that defied what could be seen from her situation and status.

probably in quite different circumstances. My grandmother's husbands were quite close to her own age, but it's likely that the Samaritan woman married much older men. Even today, Samaritan women (yes, there are still Samaritans today) are often betrothed in infancy. In a first-century society with a life expectancy of twenty-five years, a young Samaritan woman could have outlived several older husbands.

Although Samaritans today interpret the Levirate marriage law (that a deceased man's brother is to marry his widow) as forbidding marriage to the husband's brother but instead encouraging marriage to another blood relative, it is uncertain how long this has been the case. It is possible that in New Testament times, Levirate marriage to a late husband's brothers was practiced. If a woman's first husband was relatively old, his brothers may also have died within a reasonably short period.

Is it possible that she was divorced five times? It's highly unlikely. If she had been repeatedly divorced, the chance of being married again would be slim. At least today, divorce is strongly looked down upon in the Samaritan community. It could have been different in the first century, but some evidence suggests that divorced women have, in the past, been put to death.

Not being wholly reliant on a man for financial support, my grandmother has sometimes waited over a decade before marrying again. But the financial circumstances of women in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Western countries are very different from those of ancient Samaria. By this stage of her life, the Samaritan woman may have had no living male relatives to support her. To survive financially, she may have had to grasp at any opportunity that was offered, however undesirable. Living with a male provider and protector

outside of marriage may have been a desperate measure for survival.

Was the Samaritan woman living in a sinful situation? Yes. May she have been outcast from the women of her village as a result? Highly likely. Was it necessarily her fault? Quite possibly not. And Jesus seems to see past this. Although he opens a discussion about her marital status, he is not recorded as telling her to repent. It seems he saw something in her heart that defied what could be seen from her situation and status.

Worth Beyond Circumstances

Jesus had a way of seeing the person and not just their circumstances, and as a result, he often broke the cultural taboos—eating with a tax collector and sinner, healing the servant of a hated Roman centurion, and dealing with

To survive financially, she may have had to grasp at any opportunity that was offered, however undesirable. Living with a male provider and protector outside of marriage may have been a desperate measure for survival.

lepers. Jesus breaks many rules in this encounter—rules about men (and particularly rabbis) speaking publicly to women, about Jews having dealings with Samaritans, and about the righteous consorting with sinners.

Even today, women are forbidden from entering a Samaritan synagogue in case they begin menstruating and render it unclean (there is no women's section like in the Jewish counterpart). Many Jewish rabbis of Jesus' time would cross the street rather than walk near a woman, but Jesus crossed into unthinkable territory for this "divine appointment" with a Samaritan woman.

Walking two or three days out of your way to avoid going through the "unclean" Samaritan territory was the norm for Jews in Jesus' day. But a respected rabbi walking into Samaria to talk to a woman about theology? Unheard of! A Jew would not eat or drink from the same vessel as a Samaritan, but here is Jesus, sitting on a Samaritan well, asking a woman to draw water for him to drink from her vessel. Kenneth E. Bailey, in *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, points out that unlike the wells Westerners may imagine, there is no wooden bucket permanently attached to a Middle Eastern well—you supply your own foldable leather bucket. Jesus' request makes it necessary that he would drink from the Samaritan woman's bucket. His message is implicitly, "I am willing to

His message is implicitly, "I am willing to make myself unclean in order to create the opportunity to have this conversation with you. You matter enough to me."

make myself unclean in order to create the opportunity to have this conversation with you. You matter enough to me."

An Iranian friend pointed out to me another common Middle Eastern cultural rule that Jesus broke. On entering a village in that region, a person is expected to present themselves to the village leaders before going about their business. (Is this perhaps the cultural background to Jesus' instruction to the Seventy in Matthew 10:11–14—if the village leaders reject you, don't break cultural rules by entering there?) Jesus, however, rather than approaching the village leaders, approaches one of the lowliest and most rejected members of this village community and starts his mission to the Samaritans from this upside-down circumstance.

Throughout the Samaritan woman's adult life, men—five husbands and another partner—have always wanted something from her. In the kitchen, the bedroom, and probably side by side in the fields or whatever her husband's industry was, she would have been expected to serve her husband's needs. Jesus starts out with a need, too—a simple request for a drink of water—but ends up offering her something far greater, which will satisfy her deepest need eternally.

Missionary and Martyr?

I rarely reach the end of a good book without asking, "But what happened to these characters next?" To lovers of sequels such as myself, sometimes the Bible can be a tad frustrating in the very brief glimpses it gives into the lives of many of its people, without providing the answers to "what next?" However, traditions handed down by Eastern Orthodox Christians may give us a glimpse of "the sequel" in the Samaritan woman's life.

It is important to note that Orthodox hagiography (biographical stories of the lives of saints) is not "history" in the way we might understand it. Much of it has been handed down orally over the centuries and has been greatly embellished. But often, a kernel of truth lies behind the stories.

Many Jewish rabbis of Jesus' time would cross the street rather than walk near a woman, but Jesus crossed into unthinkable territory for this "divine appointment" with a Samaritan woman.

Given that the disciples were away buying food for most of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman and were therefore not eyewitnesses, I wonder whether preservation of this story in such detail is testament to the ongoing faith of this woman and her involvement in the early Christian movement beyond Samaria. Did she spend time with John or with someone close to him, giving him her version of events to later include in his gospel?

The Orthodox believe that the apostles baptized the Samaritan woman at Pentecost, and that she took the baptismal name Photini (alternately, Photeine, Photina, or in Russian, Svetlana), meaning "the enlightened one." She converted many people, including her five sisters and two sons. Her mission was not just to her native Samaria. She is believed to have journeyed as a missionary to Carthage in North Africa with one of her sons, her sisters, and other Christians. Photini is always viewed as the chief figure in this missionary movement, despite the presence of mature Christian men such as her son Josos (or Joseph).

While in Carthage, Photini was said to have received a vision of Jesus, calling her to go to Rome and confront Emperor Nero, one of the cruelest persecutors of the church. With her family and a contingent of African believers, she set sail for the imperial city. She confronted Nero with an unwavering faith in Christ, which led to the torture and imprisonment of

herself and her followers. The gory descriptions of torture are where the story most obviously enters the realm of legend, in keeping with the popularity of graphic tales of torture and martyrdom surrounding figures in the early church, highlighting the person's strong faith in the face of the vilest oppression.

Most of these accounts end with Photini being martyred by being thrown into a dry well. The sweet irony of this story is, of course, that having found "living water" in Jesus Christ beside the well in Sychar decades earlier, her death was no miserable ending, but rather a glorious beginning of her eternal life in Christ.

So significant was Photini's life and mission believed to be that Orthodox give her the title "equal to the apostles," a special title given to some saints whose outstanding service in spreading Christianity is believed to be comparable

to that of the Twelve. It has only been given to a small number of saints throughout the centuries, including Mary Magdalene, Thecla, Constantine, and Saint Patrick of Ireland. Many of these saints were women.

Photini's scandalous past and her gender may have made her unclean and outcast in Samaritan society, but they were no obstacle in the body of Christ. In Jesus, she found unconditional forgiveness, a place of honor and leadership in the community of believers, and a surprising legacy in history.



Bronwen Speedie is the founder of the ministry God's Design – Perth (godsdesignperth.org), which aims to bring clarity, healing and encouragement in Christ through the message of biblical equality. She works as a school chaplain, sings in a Christian a capella choir, and is a tad obsessed with her garden roses.

Photini's scandalous past and her gender may have made her unclean and outcast in Samaritan society, but they were no obstacle in the body of Christ.

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Put *That* on Your Résumé

by Valerie Geer

We proclaim the message of the truth of the resurrection
In the tradition of Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary
the mother of James
In Luke 24

We conduct business and pioneer churches
In the tradition of Lydia
In Acts 16

We instruct others thoroughly in the ways of God and
risk our lives for the gospel
In the tradition of Priscilla
In Acts 18

We nobly preside as ministers of churches
In the tradition of Phoebe, diakonos of the church of Cenchrea
In Romans 16:1–2

We work hard on behalf of others
In the tradition of Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis
In Romans 16:6 and 12.

We exercise persistence to secure what our loved ones need
In the tradition of the Syrophoenician woman
In Matthew 15

We give sacrificially because we understand the big picture
In the tradition of the widow
In Luke 21

We perceive the significance of the times and honor Christ
In the tradition of the woman of Bethany
In Matthew 26

We minister and lead in our churches
In the tradition of Nympha and Chloe
In Colossians 4:15 and 1 Corinthians 1:11

We faithfully teach and shape ministers of the gospel
In the tradition of Lois and Eunice
In 2 Timothy 1:5

We evangelize our communities with sincerity and confidence
In the tradition of the Samaritan woman
In John 4

We suffer for and testify of Jesus, leaving the gospel as
our legacy
In the tradition of the apostle Junia
In Romans 16

We abound with deeds of kindness and charity and work
with our hands to bless others
In the tradition of Tabitha
In Acts 9:36–41

We descend from priests, tell forth Jesus as Messiah, and
embody the favor of the LORD
In the tradition of Elizabeth
In Luke 1

We dedicate ourselves to God day and night and speak of
him to all those who seek redemption
In the tradition of the prophet Anna
In Luke 2:36–38

We assert Jesus' righteousness before public officials
In the tradition of Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife
In Matthew 27:19–20

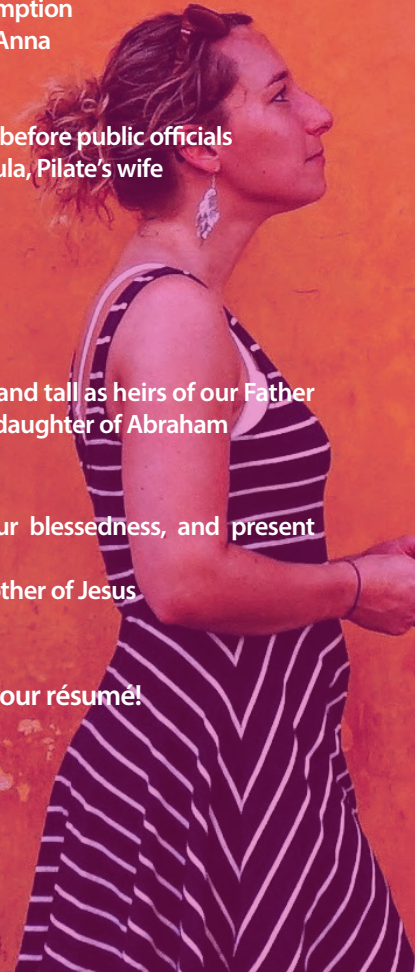
We fund ministries
In the tradition of the women
In Luke 8:2–3

We publicly glorify God and stand tall as heirs of our Father
In the tradition of the afflicted daughter of Abraham
In Luke 13:10–13

We exalt the Lord, declare our blessedness, and present
Jesus as Messiah
In the tradition of Mary, the mother of Jesus
In Luke 1

... and you can put *that* on your résumé!

Find Valerie Geer's biography on p. 16



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*“Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man,
nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man,
so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:11-12

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THE ELDER AND THE LADY:

A look at the language of Second John

by Margaret Mowczko

There are several women mentioned in the New Testament who in the past have had their ministries downplayed. Even today, some question whether Phoebe was deacon of her church (Rom. 16:1–2), or whether Junia was really an apostle. Junia and a woman named Nympha have even had their gender obscured, and are given masculine names in some older English translations of Romans 16:7 and Colossians 4:15, respectively.

But there is another New Testament woman whose ministry and identity have been diminished to such an extent that some do not even recognize that she was a real person. She is the woman who was a recipient of the letter we know as 2 John. In this article I take a look at the text of 2 John. I especially look at the words the letter-writer uses to identify the people he mentions.

“Lady”

Following standard letter-writing protocol, 2 John opens with the sender identifying himself and the letter’s recipients. The sender refers to himself simply as “the elder;” he doesn’t give his name. He then mentions the recipients, also without naming names. The first recipient mentioned in 2 John is the “chosen lady.” Many have assumed that “chosen lady” is used as a metonym, or metaphor, for a congregation, and does not refer to an actual person. This is despite the fact that no congregation is referred to as a “lady” (Greek: *kuria*) in the New Testament or in later writings.¹ On the other hand, many women are addressed, or referred to, as *kuria* in ancient papyrus letters and documents that still survive today.²

Kuria is a term that was often used for a high status woman. The masculine form of the same word, *kurios*, is often translated into English as “lord” or “master,” indicating the status associated with this term.³

While *kuria* occurs only twice in the New Testament, both times in 2 John, the word occurs in other Jewish and early Christian literature. For example, it is used in direct address by Isaac to his mother Sarah in the *Testament of Abraham* (circa 100 AD), and by Perpetua’s brother and father to their sister and daughter, respectively, in the account of Perpetua’s martyrdom (202 or 203 AD). It is used by Hermas (a freed slave) when addressing his female former



owner, Rhoda, in the *Shepherd of Hermas* (circa 100 AD). Furthermore, Hermas frequently calls a woman who appears to him in visions as *kuria*. In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (circa 150 AD), Thecla is referred to as *kuria*, or “mistress,” in relation to her maidservants. *Kuria* also occurs several times in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament in use during the early church period (Gen. 16:4, 8, 9; 1 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 5:3; Psalm 123:2; Prov. 30:23; and Isa. 24:2).

It is a common word in pagan writings, too. In a manual of Stoic ethical advice called *The Enchiridion* (135 AD), the Greek philosopher Epictetus writes that the title *kuria* was used by men trying to flatter young women. Clearly, *kuria* is not a rare or obscure word.

Sarah, Perpetua, Rhoda, Thecla, and the “ladies” mentioned in the Septuagint, were high status women; some were in charge of their own households. The lady greeted in 2 John is also, most likely, a high-status woman and a householder.

“Chosen”

The lady in 2 John is described as “chosen.” In a few New Testament letters, the adjective “chosen” (sometimes translated as “elect”) is used to describe someone mentioned in opening or closing greetings and addresses. Specifically, three individuals are described as “chosen” in New Testament letters: the lady in 2 John 1:1;⁴ the sister mentioned in the closing greeting in 2 John 1:13;⁵ and Rufus, who is mentioned in the closing greetings in Romans 16:13. “Chosen” is also used to describe the recipients of 1 Peter. Furthermore, “chosen” is used a few times, more generally, to describe those “chosen by God;” this phrase in many

cases refers to Christian believers (e.g. Tit. 1:1; Col. 3:12). The lady in 2 John, and her sister, are Christian believers.

“Children”

The chosen lady is not the only recipient of the elder’s letter. The lady’s “children” are also recipients. Some have taken the word “children” literally and assume the lady was the *natural* mother of these “children” (2 John 1:1, 4 and 13). But this is not how the author of John’s letters uses the word.

The participation of women in congregations and in missions, at all levels, was vital, valued, and acknowledged in New Testament letters.

In each of John’s three letters, “children” usually refers to Christians: to *spiritual* children or disciples.⁶ A comparison of 2 John 1:4 with 3 John 1:4 illustrates this. In 3 John 1:4 it says, “I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my *children* are living according to the truth” (CEB). Compare this with 2 John 1:4: “I was overjoyed to find some of your *children* living in the truth . . .” (CEB, italics added).

“Church”

The fact that the lady and her children are distinctly addressed makes the idea that the lady is a church untenable: if the “chosen lady” is a metonym for a church, who then are her “children”?

Some have suggested that the “lady” represents a church and the “children” represents the congregation, but this idea does not correspond with how churches functioned in the first century. In fact,

“church” and “congregation” are both translations of the same Greek word, *ekklēsia*. A congregation was a church, and a church was a congregation.

In New Testament times, many congregations were small, comprising one or two dozen people, and they mostly met in homes. In some cities and regions there might be a network of house churches, with each network being overseen by elders or overseers. The chosen lady was, most likely, the host and leader of a congregation that met in her home.⁷ It

was to this lady and to her congregation that the elder writes.

Women were active in New Testament churches. They were involved in a variety of ministries. Some were prophets, deacons, or missionaries. Others, like the Chosen Lady, were hosts, patrons, and leaders of local congregations. The participation of women in congregations and in missions, at all levels, was vital, valued, and acknowledged in New Testament letters. Today it is important to recognize that these women were not an anomaly. Women ministers were a feature of New Testament Christianity.



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subject of Christian egalitarianism for her website newlife.id.au.

1. A related but distinct word, *to kuriakon*, meaning “the Lord’s household” (i.e. a Christian congregation), is known from the third century, but not before. See E. A. Mathieson, *The Perspectives of the Greek Papyri of Egypt on the Religious Beliefs, Practices and Experiences of Christian and Jewish Women from 100 CE to 400 CE*. Doctoral thesis (2006) Macquarie University, at <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.14/290184>, p.194

2. See the database www.papyri.info.

3. Accordingly, *kuria* is translated as “gentlewoman” (the counterpart of “gentleman”) in 2 John 1:1 of the CEB.

4. *Kuria* occurs in 2 John 1:1 and 5, but the CEB and NLT have not translated the second literally. The woman is described as “chosen” only in verse 1.

5. Phoebe of Cenchrea and Apphia of Laodicea are each called “sister.”

6. The plural of *teknon* (“child”) occurs in 1 John 3:1, 2, 10a, 5:2; 2 John 1:1, 4, 13; 3 John 1:4 (cf. 1 John 3:10b).

7. It is believed that the chosen lady lived in a city in Asia Minor. Adolf von Harnack, for example, writes that the chosen lady held “a prominent position in some unknown church in Asia.” Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, vol. 2, trans. James Moffatt (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 224.

Jesus' Feminine Self-Presentation in the New Testament

by Valerie Geer

It is a matter of Christian doctrine that God is neither male nor female; God is spirit. The Scriptures, however, use both male *and* female imagery to talk about God's identity and activities. At the same time, it is also true that God incarnate was a Jewish *male*. This means Jesus used only male imagery to reveal himself to us while he was on earth, right? Wrong.

Jesus inhabited a male body, but his self-presentation was not exclusively male. In fact, when we consider the female imagery of God from the Old Testament, it should not surprise us that Jesus, the image of the invisible God, revealed himself in the New Testament using both male and female imagery.

Let's consider four ways Jesus fulfilled and appropriated Old Testament mothering imagery of God in his New Testament self-presentation.¹

1. Jesus laboring on the cross is like the Old Testament portrayal of God as a woman laboring in childbirth.

In Isaiah 42:14 God declares, "For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant." In this text God is portrayed

as a woman getting ready to birth a new reality for her children, one characterized by light instead of darkness and smooth paths instead of rough ones (42:16). The imagery focuses on the intense, gut-wrenching pain of the woman in labor. Dr. Lauren Winner remarks that this text "was written in the wake of this catastrophe [exile], and the text aims to assure the exiled people that God has not abandoned them," but is laboring for them.² She goes on to explain:

Isaiah gives us this groaning woman as a picture of the sovereign God, the God who is in control of redemption: God chooses to participate in the work of new creation with bellowing and panting. God chooses a participation that does not fight the pain, but that works from inside the pain.³

When similar metaphors of a laboring woman are used elsewhere in the Old Testament, the emphasis is on trembling, writhing, crying, panting, or gasping, painting a picture of the extreme anguish of the times.⁴ In Isaiah 42:17, the anguishing times and the agony of God have to do with Judah's exile to Babylon, but the overall tone is certainly one of salvation and restoration brought about by a laboring God through the Spirit-empowered, justice-bringing "servant" referenced in the first verse of the chapter.

How committed is God to Israel? How much does God love them? What will God do to bring about their restoration and salvation? The answers to these questions are, in part, found in the simile of a laboring woman who sacrifices her own body, laboring with much pain at great cost to herself, to deliver her child. The

How committed is God to Israel? How much does God love them? What will God do to bring about their restoration and salvation? The answers to these questions are, in part, found in the simile of a laboring woman who sacrifices her own body.

agony, self-sacrifice, and love demonstrated by God for Israel is like that of a laboring woman.

And the writhing, panting, laboring Jesus on the cross is the fulfillment of the redemption of God. Jesus as Redeemer in the New Testament is rooted in the mothering imagery of God in the Old Testament.

2. Jesus' ministry of comfort and compassion in the Gospels fulfills the mother God imagery of Isaiah 66:12–13:

For this is what the LORD says: "I will extend peace to her [Jerusalem] like a river, and wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem."

God's care for Israel can be seen through how God comforts, nourishes, carries, and brings peace to her, just like a mother does for her child. Does Jesus offer comfort and compassion? Yes. Take Matthew 9:35–36 as one of many examples. John Joon-Young Huh cites Jesus' healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the issue of blood as two examples of the comforting presence of God made manifest in Jesus' ministry.⁵ He writes: "Jesus' mother-like composure allowed a safe space for the hemorrhaging woman and Jairus to overcome their anxieties and grow in their faith."⁶

Does Jesus bring peace? Yes. In Mark 4:39, he quiets the storm. In John 14:27, he says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Colossians 1:20 reminds us that God reconciles all things to himself "by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Does Jesus act like a mother toward her children, dandling them on her knee and delighting in them? Yes. In Matthew 19:14, he welcomes the children to himself.

Or, consider the many followers of Jesus in whom he expressed delight and pleasure, such as John the Beloved and Mary Magdalene. The compassionate, peace-bringing, comforting ministry of Jesus fulfills the female imagery of the God of the Old Testament.⁷

3. When Jesus commanded his disciples to eat his body and drink his blood at the Last Supper, he called upon the Old Testament imagery of God who nourished and sustained life like a nursing mother.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! (Isaiah 49:15)



The mothering God of Isaiah 49:15 is one whose swollen breasts necessitate her remembrance of her baby's need for nourishment. In the same way, communion reminds us of our union with Jesus' body for nourishment. Jesus' own offering of his flesh and blood for the life-giving sustenance of the church is consistent with Isaiah's nursing mother imagery.

Jesus described himself in John 6:31–35 as the true manna, the bread that came down from heaven (a reference to Exodus 16), and told his followers that those who partake of him will never be hungry or thirsty again. Interestingly, rabbinic tradition often likened the manna God provided in the wilderness to breastmilk, pointing out that both have nourishing qualities.⁸

Later in John 6, Jesus also said: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them" (6:56). At the Last Supper in Luke 22:19–20, Jesus held up the bread, telling the disciples to eat it, saying, "This is my body given for you." Likewise, he held up the cup of wine and told them to drink, likening it to his blood that would be spilled for them.

The imagery of being sustained and nourished by someone's flesh and blood is a uniquely motherly metaphor that pregnant and nursing mothers experience. There is no time in human life when a person actually is nourished by the flesh and blood of another person, except in pregnancy and nursing.

Therefore, Jesus' self-presentation in communion is a distinctly female one.

4. Jesus' self-presentation as a mother hen is uniquely female.

In Matthew 23:37, Jesus stands over Jerusalem and weeps, saying:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

The agony and sorrow that Jesus expressed was at his own people's rejection of him as the Messiah.

Jesus feels distressed and worried, like a mother hen clucking around trying to gather her chicks, only to have them run away and be left vulnerable. A hen gathers her chicks for protection when a threat is imminent; she clucks and her chicks hear her voice and huddle under her wings for protection. The Jewish leaders and scribes of Jesus' time were like chicks who did not heed the clucks of mother hen Jesus and did not accept the salvation provided for them in Messiah.

In fact, Jesus' point was that the self-righteous, politically-minded Jewish elite had a history of rejecting and killing prophets of God. Now that the fulfiller of those prophecies, the Messiah, had come to them, like a mother offering salvation under her wings, they ran away. As Jesus stands over Jerusalem and uses the language

of a mother hen with a protective wing offered to her chicks, we are reminded of the protective wings of God in the Old Testament (Psalm 91:4, 36:7, 57:1, 61:4, 63:7, Deut. 32:11). The wings of God as a place of refuge and protection is not new imagery, but very familiar to the Jewish people. Jesus' self-presentation as a mother hen longing to gather her chicks under her protective wing is an appropriation of God's mothering activity in the Old Testament.

Jesus was most certainly *not* a woman, and God is most certainly *neither* male nor female, but spirit. Yet, Jesus most certainly *did* reveal God in female terms in the New Testament.

As people of God today, we can aspire to be like the numerous outstanding women of the New Testament because they are faith exemplars, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and effective in ministry. However, they are not our only feminine examples in the New Testament. We can also look to Jesus and find meaning in his fulfillment and appropriation of the feminine imagery of God from the Old Testament.



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1. A few examples of the many instances of God depicted as a mother in the Old Testament can be found in Isaiah 42:14; 49:15; 66:7–13; Hosea 11:3–4; 13:8; Deut. 32:11–12; 32:18; and Psalm 131:2.

2. Lauren Winner, *Wearing God*, (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 135.

3. *Ibid.*, 140.

4. Hanne Loeland, "Gendered God-Language in Second Isaiah." *Wiener Jahrbuch für Theologie* 8 (2010): 396. Accessed June 1, 2016, http://www.academia.edu/4210083/_Gendered_God-Language_in_Second_Isaiah.

5. John Joon-Young Huh, "Non-anxious Presence of Jesus Through Mother-like Composure," *Pastoral Psychology* 61, no. 4 (2012): 573–587, doi: 10.1007/s11089-012-0427-2.

6. *Ibid.*, 585.

7. Let us remember that God is also like a mother bear robbed of her cubs (Hosea 13:8). Similarly, the author affirms that men, not just women, exhibit compassionate and comforting qualities.

8. Winner, 174.

Finding the Beginnings of Female Missionaries in the New Testament

by Sarah Rodriguez



I was sitting in an anthropology class at my Christian college listening to the musings of the professor. She had been speaking about globalization, feminism, and Christianity when she suddenly posed the controversial question, should women be allowed to be missionaries? I was shocked by her question, because until that point, I had never doubted the legitimacy of female missionaries. Although I grew up in a complementarian household, I had been raised on stories of women like Gladys Aylward and Amy Carmichael, both of whom fought for women's rights and social justice while spreading the word of God.

Confused, I searched for an answer to the professor's question, and I was dismayed by some of the responses that I found. Some Christians say that only in rare situations can women preach to groups containing both women and men.

Nevertheless, they believe that these women should try to train men quickly so that the men can take over and become the leaders of the church. Moreover, some assert that women should avoid becoming missionaries unless their husbands or other men and women accompany them. Ironically, these Christians justify their beliefs by saying that there is rampant misogyny "in other countries." Finally, some of the Christians that do believe women can be missionaries stipulate that these women should only teach other women or children.

These articles base their reasoning on passages such as 1 Timothy 2:12–13 and 1 Corinthians 14:34–35. I will not spend time addressing these two Bible passages; rather, I will focus on the often-neglected biblical prototype of missionaries that appears in both the Old and the New Testaments: the prophet.

In the Old Testament, male and female prophets performed various duties. They foretold future events (like Deborah in Judges 4:9) and acted as God's official spokespeople by giving instructions and warnings (like Huldah in 2 Kings 22:16–20 and Nathan in 2 Samuel 12:1–15).

The *Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible* also notes that "[t]he prophets' task was basically to explain to their contemporaries the meaning of God's covenant, its demands as well as its promises."¹ Therefore, a prophet, whether male or female, had to understand the Law in order to explain it to others.

Due to their infrequent appearances in the New Testament, some may believe that prophets were mostly an Old Testament phenomenon. However, Joel 2:28–29 states:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters

shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (ESV)

Through the prophet Joel, God promised that the Holy Spirit and the gift of prophecy would be dispersed indiscriminately to all believers, regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic status. This prophecy is fulfilled in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts fill the people who had gathered for Pentecost. Peter realizes that the Holy Spirit's presence fulfills Joel's prophecy and reacts by preaching the gospel to all of the onlookers (Acts 2:14–42). Peter's sermon is an accordance with the final mandate of Jesus, who stated, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In summary, Joel 2:28–29 predicts that the miracle of Pentecost will result in the Holy Spirit and the gift of prophecy being distributed equally among men and women. Moreover, after Jesus predicted that his followers would receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he commanded them to perform missionary work. Therefore, one of the strongest support verses for missionary work, Acts 1:8, must necessarily include women.

Of course, the terms "missionary" and "prophet" are not identical. Nevertheless, missionaries bear a strong resemblance to prophets. While missionaries cannot necessarily see into the future or hear the voice of God directly like prophets, they can share the promises and prophecies that God has given us through Scripture. More importantly, missionaries, like prophets, must be able to accurately explain God's Word. Therefore, while different denominations dispute the existence of foreknowing prophets in modern times, most can agree that missionaries perform at least some of the duties that were formerly entrusted to prophets in Scripture.

There are a few specific examples of prophetesses who performed missional

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activities in the New Testament. One of the most prominent New Testament prophets was a pre-Pentecost prophet named Anna. Anna was an eighty-four-year-old widow who spent all of her time worshipping God at the Temple (Luke 2:36). When Anna sees Mary and Joseph presenting Jesus to God at the temple, she approaches them and then "began to give thanks to God and to speak of him *to all* who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38, emphasis added).

This passage is significant for three reasons. First, there is nothing in the passage to suggest that Anna prophesied only to women. She was in a public area that included both men and women, because she speaks to both Mary and Joseph in this place (Luke 2:38). Moreover, she spoke openly to all who waited for the Savior, and as there were presumably men who waited for the Messiah, it is reasonable to assume that Anna prophesied to men, too.

Second, Anna's story is paralleled to that of Simeon, another person who

received the Holy Spirit pre-Pentecost and prophesied about Jesus at the Temple that day (Luke 2:25–34). The gospel of Luke is noted for its inclusion of social outcasts, such as the poor, Gentiles, lepers, tax collectors, and women. Thus, this passage also could be demonstrating the equal distribution of God's enlightenment between both sexes.

Third, Anna had no husband, so there is no reason to assume that female prophets needed husbands before they could prophesy.

The New Testament also has two other brief mentions of prophesying women. First, Philip the Evangelist has four unmarried daughters who are prophets (Acts 21:9). These women are only mentioned in passing; however, they are significant because they represent women who preach and prophesy without husbands. In the other passage, Paul confirms the fact that there are women who "pray and prophesy" (1 Corinthians 11:5). Therefore, early Christians knew and supported women—both married and

unmarried—who informed others about God’s words.

This study has significant implications for female pastors and ministers today. If it is possible for a complementarian church to accept female missionaries, then why are these churches so resistant to the idea of female pastors? What is it that a pastor does that a prophet or missionary doesn’t, that makes it unacceptable for a woman to be a pastor?

Say there is a woman walking in a park. She meets a man who is not a believer, but there is no other male believer present who can share the gospel with the unbeliever. What should she do? Can she share the message of God’s love with this man? If the answer is yes, then can she share with two men? What about ten or twenty?

When does it become inappropriate or sinful for the woman to share God’s word? Would she be sinning if she came back each week in order to explain God’s word to the men? Would it be shameful if the men were sitting while she was standing? What if she used a microphone?

What if she were near a church, but not inside it? What if she were in the foyer, but not in the sanctuary. The point of my questioning is this: where is the line? If the line is drawn at a church building with a proper, clean sanctuary where the woman can receive a salary for speaking to a large group of people, then so be it; women will not be deterred. Women will continue to share the gospel in the rain and in the snow, in the jungles and in the deserts, in the East and in the West.

Gladys Aylward once humbly declared:

I wasn’t God’s first choice for what I’ve done for China. There was somebody else . . . I don’t know who it was—God’s first choice. It must have been a man—a wonderful man, a well-educated man. I don’t know what happened. Perhaps he died. Perhaps he wasn’t willing . . . And God looked down and saw Gladys Aylward.²

May we all be as willing as Gladys Aylward to serve God, despite the obstacles that society and culture may put in our way.



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1. Martin H. Manser, Martin J. Selman, and Stephen Travis, eds. “Prophecy and Prophets” *Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Collins, 2002).
2. Phyllis Thompson, *A Transparent Woman: The Compelling Story of Gladys Aylward* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 183.

R

eflect with us...

Caught

by H. Edgar Hix

Here I stand. Daniel never faced a den of lions like these righteous men of stones. And, I have no hope of angels, no prayer to the righteous God I have sinned against. I have lent out my hole and dug my grave in the process. My marriage is gone . . . gone . . . I hope my daughter can survive this stain. The holy men with heavy stones have encircled me.

Their chosen Judge squats down and flattens some dust. “Mordechai,” he writes, “adultery. Samuel, false witness. Jethro, theft. Eli, adultery and disobedience to parents. Itai, blasphemy. Samson, theft.” His list grows longer as every man is listed and every stone appears to get heavier and heavier.

He finally finishes and, rising like the sun, his voice full of life and heat, says, “Whoever is without sin, throw your stone.”

Mordechai drops his rock and leaves. (God and I know he should.) Samuel follows suit. Each righteous rock is left by righteous men reminded of unrighteous deeds.

Finally, it’s just him and me. The Judge of the righteous looks into my sinful eyes with understanding ones. He offers a hand and I rise to him.

“I don’t condemn you, either. You’re free. Don’t sin this sin again.”

As he leaves, a middle-aged woman comes up to me.

“Hi.” She takes my hand. “My name’s Mary Magdalene. I’m a disciple of Jesus’. He delivered me from demons, so I have some idea how you’re feeling right now: shaky, trying to grasp the moment, trying to believe the life you’ve just regained. Let me walk you home or maybe introduce you to some more of his female disciples. He thought—we all thought—you might like to have a woman to talk to.”

I nod.

CBE Declares Year of Jubilee

Since 1987, CBE has worked to empower Christians around the world to live out the Bible's call for women and men to share authority equally. Over the decades, the reach of our projects has grown beyond anything we could have imagined. Every year the CBE community—members, volunteers, donors, chapters, ministry partners—works beside us, generously supporting our mission.

To celebrate 30 years of life-changing ministry, CBE is declaring 2017 a Year of Jubilee!

During the Year of Jubilee, we're doing two big things:

1. **We're giving current members a free year of membership.** Any membership that is current as of December 31, 2016 will be extended by one year.*
2. **All issues of *Priscilla Papers* and *Mutuality* will be free online!** Normally, only members have access to the most current three years of CBE publications, but we want to spread the Bible's mandate for gender equality far and wide, so next year everyone will have access to all of CBE's award-winning content.

CBE's Year of Jubilee is part of an expanding effort to reach more Christians in new languages and in new communities. In 2015, CBE made all translations of *Still Side by Side* free on our website. This year, our partnership with the Publish4All (P4A) global network of Christian printers has allowed us to print

* Members who have paid for printed journal copies will continue to receive them. Organizational memberships and subscriptions are not affected and will continue as always.



"The Dance of Miriam" by Marc Lemaire, 2013.
Originally printed in *Mutuality* 20.2 (Summer, 2013)

nearly 5,000 books for African ministry partners! CBE also made over 200 audio and video recordings available free on YouTube and SoundCloud.

The 2017 Year of Jubilee will be a great success if you help us celebrate.

Here's how:

1. The Year of Jubilee means CBE will not charge membership fees in 2017. This will leave a budget gap of \$34,000. **Please donate to expand the reach of our research, writing, and production of both quarterly journals, *Priscilla Papers* and *Mutuality*, in 2017.** \$130 will fund one page of our journal from start to finish.
2. **Spread the word by sharing articles**—post your favorites on social media, email links to friends and family or your Bible study or small group, and put links on your church website.
3. **Share your thoughts**—we'd love to know what you think of the Year of Jubilee, and how you plan to share new issues of *Priscilla Papers* and *Mutuality* in 2017. Email us at cbe@cbeinternational.org.

“Thankfully, while searching online for answers [about 1 Timothy 2:15], I stumbled upon CBE. I became intrigued when I read an article that gave an egalitarian view . . . **Now that I have CBE, I am slowly finding my way back to God.**”

—Former CBE Intern

Happy Anniversary!

In Case You Missed It . . .

CBE's website recently got a number of upgrades! We now have an **advanced search** function that should make it much easier to find what you're looking for. Just type your term into the search bar, and the advanced search options will appear along with your results, so you can narrow your search as needed. The upgrades also allow us to host our **book reviews** and **audio and video recordings** on our site, adding to our unparalleled library of egalitarian resources!

CBE was a powerful presence at this year's annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. The theme of this year's meeting was “The Trinity.” Kevin Giles and Millard Erickson were among the high-profile egalitarian scholars who defended an orthodox view of the Trinity against a movement claiming that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father. This is used to justify the permanent subordination of women to men. Complementarian and egalitarian scholars alike have spoken out against this unorthodox teaching.



Women Leaders: The Good and the Bad

Friends met for dinner and we decided to spend the evening looking at family photos. Their six-year-old joined in the fun and after viewing dozens, we asked her which she liked the best. Eagerly she said, “The one with Sarah!” She and Sarah are the same age. Glancing at the photo, none of us noticed Sarah at first. Leaning in however, we found her, peering around her mother’s knee. While adults are not astute at spotting children behind their mother’s leg, six-year-olds know better!

Reading Scripture, we often need new eyes. Like the adults who overlooked the presence of children, we are too often blind to the prominence of women. We repeatedly fail to notice how Scripture honors women leaders who served as evangelists (John 20:17–18; Rom. 16:12; Phil. 4:2–3); deacons (Rom. 16:1–2), teachers (Acts 18:24–26), house church leaders (Acts 16:13–15, 40; Rom. 16:3–5; Col. 4:15; Philem. 1–2; 2 John 1:1), apostles (Rom. 16:7), and prophets (Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14–20; Luke 2:36; 1 Cor. 11:5, 14:5).

Moreover, we are equally blind to how select passages are misinterpreted to obstruct women’s leadership. First Timothy 2:12 is one example. Here, we find Paul writing to his closest coworker, Timothy. Like a US president and a top advisor in the Situation Room, they were managing an emergency in the Ephesian church. Namely, false teachings were proliferating among Ephesian believers (1 Tim. 1:19).

We can better understand this crisis and correctly interpret Paul’s response if we open our eyes to the influence females had in Ephesus. The city was famous for its devotion to the fertility goddess Artemis, whose temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ephesian life centered on Artemis, who accomplished her work without the help of men.

Ephesus is also where, beside Priscilla and her husband Aquila, Paul decided to build a church. In naming Priscilla first, and in telling of Priscilla’s teaching of Apollos, Scripture makes clear that Priscilla, a woman, was a gifted and active leader in the Ephesian church. Why then, would Paul build a church beside a gifted teacher, Priscilla, and later silence women teachers in Ephesus? A better understanding of Artemis of the Ephesians may provide insight.

A woman-centric fertility goddess, Artemis promised her worshippers health and wealth—that their crops and animals would increase and women would be safe in childbirth. Superior to males, Artemis not only lacked a male consort, but her powers

of reproduction did not require the assistance of men. A close look at her statue explains why. Her chest is covered with what many scholars believe are male testicles. Always featured with a three-strand necklace comprised of bees, Artemis was queen among male eunuchs.¹

In a city of spiritual matriarchs, Paul requires women leaders complicit in the false teachings at Ephesus to learn in silence. To suggest that women should learn was itself radical! Learning correct theology is the antidote to false teachings and thus Paul’s “Situation Room” strategy. He is equipping women not yet qualified to hold authority as teachers to become better theological educators in the tradition of Priscilla.

Significantly, Paul also selects an unusual word for “authority” in 1 Timothy 2:12: *authentein*. Meaning “to domineer” or “illegitimately usurp authority,” this word exposes the problem at Ephesus. Paul is objecting to the ungodly usurping of authority to propagate lies.

Just as Satan deceived Eve, so too the false teachers in Ephesus were deceiving women and promising them power over men. Thus, Paul asks Ephesian women to learn, as the rabbis learn, with a quiet and receptive spirit so that when they do teach, they will teach truth.

To understand 1 Timothy 2, we need to overcome our blindness to women. We need to see Priscilla, a wise and strong leader and teacher; Artemis, the goddess whose female-centered religion would have normalized female religious dominance; the unqualified women usurping authority and spreading false teachings; and those being deceived by those teachings. Only now does Paul’s intent in this “Situation Room” crisis become clearer. He is not forbidding women’s leadership (remember, Priscilla taught Apollos!), but is forbidding specific women from teaching until they are properly taught the gospel.

Paul practiced what he preached, limiting individuals not because of gender but only as their character and learning needed improving.

1. Mark Munn, *The Mother of Gods, Athens, and the Tyranny of Asia: A Study of Sovereignty in Ancient Religion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).

Praise and Prayer

Praise

- Long-awaited upgrades to our website are now live. You can now find recordings, book reviews, an advanced search, and more. We're working hard on uploading hundreds more resources for you to read, watch, listen to, and share.
- At the Evangelical Theological Society's 2016 meeting, egalitarians defended an orthodox view of the Trinity from those who say the Son is subordinate to the Father, which is used to justify the subordination of women to men.
- 2017 is our Year of Jubilee! We're celebrating 30 years of ministry by sharing more resources! Read more on p. 20–21.

Prayer

- Planning continues for our 2017 conference in Orlando, "Mutual by Design." Pray for inspiration for our speakers and for all the logistics to come together smoothly.
- Pray for the continued work on our egalitarian marriage resource. The project is progressing, and we look forward to releasing the book in 2017!
- Pray for our ongoing work with global partners. Since our 2016 conferences in Africa, we've seen an explosion of egalitarian momentum in Africa. Pray that we can provide the resources and support to sustain these partnerships.

Christians for Biblical Equality

Mission Statement

Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) exists to promote biblical justice and community by educating Christians that the Bible calls women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership in the home, church, and world.

Statement of Faith

- We believe in one God, creator and sustainer of the universe, eternally existing as three persons equal in power and glory.
- We believe in the full deity and the full humanity of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that eternal salvation and restored relationships are only possible through faith in Jesus Christ who died for us, rose from the dead, and is coming again. This salvation is offered to all people.
- We believe the Holy Spirit equips us for service and sanctifies us from sin.
- We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, is reliable, and is the final authority for faith and practice.
- We believe that women and men are equally created in God's image and given equal authority and stewardship of God's creation.
- We believe that men and women are equally responsible for and distorted by sin, resulting in shattered relationships with God, self, and others.

Core Values

- Scripture is our authoritative guide for faith, life, and practice.
- Patriarchy (male dominance) is not a biblical ideal but a result of sin.
- Patriarchy is an abuse of power, taking from females what God has given them: their dignity, and freedom, their leadership, and often their very lives.
- While the Bible reflects patriarchal culture, the Bible does not teach patriarchy in human relationships.
- Christ's redemptive work frees all people from patriarchy, calling women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership.
- God's design for relationships includes faithful marriage between a man and a woman, celibate singleness and mutual submission in Christian community.
- The unrestricted use of women's gifts is integral to the work of the Holy Spirit and essential for the advancement of the gospel in the world.
- Followers of Christ are to oppose injustice and patriarchal teachings and practices that marginalize and abuse females and males.

To learn more about CBE's values, history, and ministry, visit cbe.today/info

CBE Membership

CBE offers individual and organizational memberships. Membership is available to those who support CBE's Statement of Faith. Members join a community of believers dedicated to biblical equality, and who together make CBE's ministry possible. Member benefits include:

- Subscriptions to CBE's quarterly publications, *Mutuality* magazine and *Priscilla Papers* journal, including digital access to back issues
- Exclusive discounts at CBE's bookstore
- Discounted registration to attend CBE conferences

Visit cbe.today/members to renew your membership, become a member, or learn more about our membership program.

Non-Member Subscriptions

Non-member subscriptions to *Mutuality* and *Priscilla Papers* are available to libraries and individuals.

Visit cbe.today/subscriptions to learn more.

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Connect with CBE online to learn more about us, enjoy the resources we offer, and take part in our ministry.



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Recommended Reading at CBE Bookstore!



The New Perspective on Mary and Martha
Mary Stromer Hanson



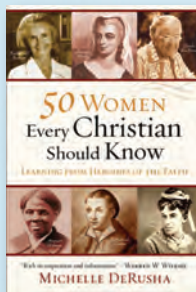
Gospel Women
Richard Bauckham



Junia: A Woman, an Apostle
David Williams



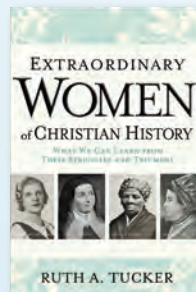
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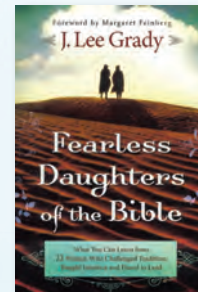
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Michelle DeRusha



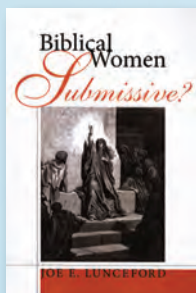
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Mary Stromer Hanson



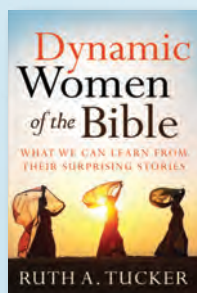
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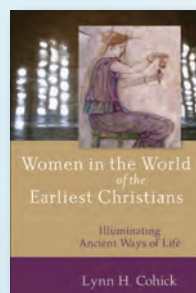
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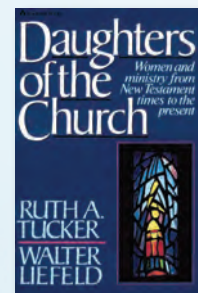
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Daughters of the Church
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