

JUNIA

A Bible Study
and
Storytelling Resource
For the Church



- by Susan E. Crane

— About the Author

The Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane served as a Commissioned Woman Interim from 2000 to 2002, a special program of *Interim Ministries-ABC*, in partnership with American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM), the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MABB), and the American Baptist Churches of selected Regions.

Rev. Crane was assigned to the First Baptist Church of Gardiner, Maine as Interim Pastor. Her duties also included advocacy for women in ministry throughout the American Baptist Churches of Maine. Working with women in preparation for ministry—and with churches "not ready" to call women to be their pastors—convinced Dr. Crane that a Bible Study resource was needed to help both pastors and lay leaders in local churches to understand that God does call women into pastoral ministry.

From March through June, 2002, Rev. Crane served the American Baptist Churches of Maine (ABCOM) full time as an Advocate for Women in Ministry, visiting churches in character as Junia, and writing and testing the Bible Study resource at two different churches. Ordained in 1977, Rev. Crane has been the pastor of churches in New York State and Massachusetts; presently, she is Pastor of the Henderson Memorial Baptist Church in Farmington, Maine.

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JUNIA

A Bible Study

And

Storytelling

Resource for the Church

By the Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane

This resource is dedicated to the memory of

Heidi Lynn Fuller

whose commitment to equipping *all* the saints for the work of ministry
continues to be a blessing.

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FOREWORD

The ministry of women in Maine is significant. Women preachers and teachers shape the life of American Baptist Churches of Maine for Christ and His Kingdom. Amazingly, it is an often untold story, hidden in the archives. It is a story that needs to be told and celebrated.

I'm appreciative of Dr. Susan Crane's work, *The Junia Project*. It is a timely work that informs and cultivates local churches as they look to pastoral leadership. God's call to serve is a deeply personal and communal experience. Those hearing God's call, evaluate their gifts in terms of the ministry needed and submit to Christ's Lordship. They serve out of a love for Christ and His Church. God's calling for a woman to pastoral leadership is difficult. For a woman to think clearly about God's calling requires Biblical study, prayer, and a willingness to enter into a cultural quagmire. Many who reject women in the role of pastor do so out of perceived truth, rather than Biblical conviction. Dr. Crane's work provides women contemplating God's call with a Biblical witness. She also confronts contemporary convention by calling in good Baptist fashion, Christ's people back to Biblical study as the rule of faith and practice.

Local churches are often a product of our culture. Search Committees will benefit by the Biblical study and reasoning that Dr. Crane has provided. While it may appear that Dr. Crane's work is an argument for women in ministry, it is a call to something deeper, a call to faithfulness. The pastoral office is created by Christ and staffed by Christ. Without a calling, the office if filled will not instruct or lead a people to deeper commitment to Christ. Local churches need to hear God's call and recognize Christ's voice in the mouths of called men and women.

Dr. Crane is not a crusader for women in ministry. She is an advocate of Christ's call and her work challenges the local church to think Biblically about pastoral ministry. Practically, God's pastoral calling to women in Maine is a hard call. Those churches willing to investigate and then open themselves have benefited in the calling of their pastor. I thank those women and churches who have undertaken seriously the Biblical study and opened themselves to God's calling of women.

Finally, The American Baptist Churches of Maine benefits from women in ministry. Their perspective and their sense of call continue to challenge our staff and local churches to take seriously God's call. If God is calling, who dare stand against Him? So often, many of us like the saints of old look upon the outward frame and not upon the heart. It is quite human to do so. After all, human frames are within our view. God's perspective is quite different. He alone knows the heart and so frames the call.

Thank you again to Dr. Susan Crane for her Biblical work and advocacy among the American Baptist Churches of Maine and to *Interim Ministries-ABC* for their willingness to provide the financial assistance that enabled Dr. Crane to begin her work among us.

— *The Rev. Dr. Alfred J. Fletcher*
Executive Minister, The American Baptist Churches of Maine

May 25, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Junia Project Bible Study*!

I was inspired to develop this resource during a transitional period in pastoral ministry. Not long after moving to Maine, in 2000, *Interim Ministries-ABC* assigned me to serve as the interim pastor of an American Baptist church as a "Commissioned Woman Interim"; my responsibilities would also include advocacy for women in ministry throughout the American Baptist Churches of Maine (ABCOM).

In this capacity I encountered—for the first time in 25 years of pastoral ministry—a strong Bible-based resistance to women in ministry. While I understood that there are ways to interpret difficult Bible passages that support women in ministry, I wanted to find some way to help sincere Christians share that understanding. I wanted to do so in a way that would take the Bible, and people with different opinions about what the Bible says, seriously. I am grateful to those who supported my quest by funding "the Junia Project" in the spring of 2002. This Bible Study Resource and its companion, *A Letter from Junia*, published in 2003, are the result.

While reading David Scholer's booklet, "A Biblical Basis For Equal Partnership," I came across the fact that a woman named Junia was a first century apostle recognized by both Paul (Romans 16:7) and the early church fathers. Why had I never noticed this before? I did some research. My mind started racing. What would Junia have to say to the churches of today about women's role in the first century church? One morning I sat down to write what she might want to say, if Junia had written a New Testament epistle. I kept on writing until 2:00 the next morning. *Something "bigger than me" was happening!* I was "on fire" to become Junia's witness to ABC churches in the 21st century. *A Letter from Junia* has been revised many times since that morning, until at last it tells a plausible story of one woman who did serve as a minister of the gospel in the very beginning of the Christian movement.

As I worked out Junia's story, I had to grapple with many difficult Biblical passages. This prompted me to prepare a Bible study resource to help pastors and lay people take a critical look at the difficult passages so often used to exclude women from pastoral ministry. I reasoned that since these passages are in the Bible, then we should be able to interpret them in a responsible way, even if they don't seem to say what we want them to say—in English. Intensive study of the writings of several evangelical scholars convinced me that indeed this was true; there is more than one responsible interpretation for these passages, especially when we seek to understand the texts in their cultural and historical contexts.

Making new discoveries was exhilarating! Turning them into a resource that non-scholars could learn from was the next big challenge. I developed six study units and tested them in two different churches—during Wednesday evening Bible study meetings, and later in two Saturday workshops. The study resource has since been used as the curriculum for a high school-age Sunday School class, a church women's group, and as a course for the ABCOM Institute for Ministry. The *Junia Project Bible Study* has also been revised more than once, and I have written a leader's guide based on my actual practice in leading groups through this study.

Practitioners of intentional interim ministry know that churches are more likely to consider making important changes during an interim period than at any other time in the life of the church. During such interim periods the question of women in ministry will often become an issue, even if it never has surfaced before. I hope the *Junia Project Bible Study* will be of help to churches considering the Biblical questions regarding women in pastoral leadership.

I offer the *Junia Project Bible Study* to you—as a gift from God. May you grow in understanding and help the church of Jesus Christ to keep growing in love.

Grace and peace,

The Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane

Pastor, Henderson Memorial Baptist Church

Farmington, Maine

Advocate for Women in Ministry

The American Baptist Churches of Maine

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *Junia Project Bible Study*, and its companion *A Letter From Junia*, was made possible through the collaboration of many American Baptist partners. In early 2002, when my assignment as a Commissioned Woman Interim was about to end, the Rev. Rhonda Cushman, Interim Director of *Interim Ministries-ABC*, encouraged me to put some of the ideas I had been sharing with her into a formal proposal. We decided to call it "The Junia Project." The Governing Board of *Interim Ministries-ABC* committed their continued support for a period of four months, as did as did the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. The American Baptist Churches of Maine, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Alfred Fletcher, made a significant financial contribution, as did American Baptist Women in Ministry. The Heidi Fuller Fund supplied a grant for materials and expenses. This enabled me to work on both advocacy and the development of a Bible study resource, full-time, for a period of four months.

There are many people I wish to thank for helping the JUNIA PROJECT RESOURCES: *THE BIBLE STUDY* and *A LETTER FROM JUNIA* become a reality:

- The Rev. Dr. Aida Besancon Spencer, New Testament professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, who graciously served as my consultant on Project Junia, provided invaluable assistance by sharing her knowledge of the Bible, the history and culture of early Christianity, as well as her invaluable expertise in Biblical interpretation from the evangelical perspective. She carefully read and commented on several versions of the manuscript to suggest corrections and improvements. Aida is the author of *BEYOND THE CURSE: Women Called to Ministry* and Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA, and a member of Christians for Biblical Equality. Thank you, Aida, for sharing your knowledge and helping me speak in a clear, but gentle voice.
- All the women in Maine who have said YES to God's call and pursued preparation for ministry, against the odds. Our Watchcare group has been a blessing to me. Thanks to Shirley, Sally, Cathy, Barbara and Bea for listening as I worked my way through the first attempts at teaching the tough passages.
- All the wonderful people who faithfully engaged the scriptures and participated in the Junia Project Bible Study at the Steep Falls Baptist Church and the Penney Memorial United Baptist Church, both in Maine. Your feedback helped me fine-tune the Bible study resource. Your honesty in examining the texts and your joy at discovering new interpretations was a real inspiration!
- The Rev. Phyllis Chaffee, who encouraged me (beginning in high school) to find my voice and fulfill my call. When I came to Maine in 2000, without a call, it was she who told me about the interim position in Gardiner. Thank you, Phyllis, for being a model of courage and a life-long advocate for women in ministry.
- The Rev. Howard Washburn, who served as Executive Director of *Interim Ministries-ABC* and helped pilot the Commissioned Woman Interim program, with the cooperation and financial assistance of ABWIM (American Baptist Women in Ministry) and MMBB (the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board). Thank you for your friendship.
- The Rev. Valentine Royal Thomas, who is always out there on the front line advocating for women in ministry, listening to our stories, absorbing our hurt and anger, crying out for justice, without ever failing to believe in God's great faithfulness.

- The Rev. Rhonda Cushman, whose encouragement made the Junia Project a joy to fulfill! From the start, Rhonda caught my excitement. She believed in the potential and saw Project Junia as a true 'mustard seed.' She worked with me on funding possibilities, advocated with many partners, persisted in the process of publication, and kept the faith even in the darkest moments. Rev. Cushman did the final editing on this resource.
- The Rev. Mary Mild, for her careful, thorough reading and helpful suggestions as this resource was readied for publication.
- The Rev. Dr. James G. Munro, current Executive Director of *Interim Ministries-ABC*, for seeing the project through to completion, and for continued support of women in ministry.
- The Board of Directors of *Interim Ministries-ABC* for believing in the potential good this project could do, and for committing funds to support it. And for demonstrating your courageous support of women in ministry by committing to keep alive the Commissioned Woman Interim Program. Thank you for your support of Project Junia and of so many other women who ably serve as interim pastors of churches in transition.
- American Baptist Women in Ministry and the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board for financial support and benefits contributed to the CWI program.
- The Rev. Dr. Alfred Fletcher, Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Maine-ABCOM, who wasn't even looking to have a Commissioned Woman Interim stir things up in Maine, but met with me to consider the possibility. Concerned that, in order to be effective in Maine, any advocacy would need to come from an evangelical viewpoint, he agreed to have me put my bridge-building skills to work. He truly believes that God does call women and men into ministry and continues to be a sincere advocate himself. At the beginning of 2001 there were 8 women serving as pastors of ABC churches in Maine; thanks to the support of Al Fletcher, that number reached 15 in 2002.
- The Rev. Heidi Lynn Fuller—Project Junia is dedicated in memory of her. Heidi and I started out in ministry together in New York State, supporting each other as new women pastors. Heidi's pastoral ministry was cut short by ovarian cancer, but her wonderful spirit continues to equip saints for the work of ministry. My thanks to her widower, Stuart Mitchell and to the Heidi Lynn Fuller Fund, for their prayers and financial support of Project Junia.
- My husband, Gary Wolcott, who has always believed in me and has seen me through more than one dark valley until the next call became visible. And my children, Kelly, Josh, and Ben, who represent a growing generation, who know from experience that pastors come in two genders.
- My parents, Richard and Elizabeth Crane, who gave me the gift of a childhood faith, prayed for me when I lost it, and rejoiced with me when faith found me. Their love for me and support for my ministry continues to be a blessing.

The Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane

May, 2005

NOTES FOR THE BIBLE STUDY LEADER

The *JUNIA PROJECT BIBLE STUDY* is an inductive study in six units. It is designed to help people discover truth in God's word by searching for answers to critical questions. Group participation is essential, so these Leader Notes are being offered to help you, the leader, guide your group on a journey of discovery.

The *Junia Project Bible Study* will present information which enables us to see that, from the beginning of the Christian Church, God has called and gifted women for leadership and ministry. The *Junia Project Bible Study* presents alternatives to traditional interpretations of certain passages, which are often used to keep women out of pastoral ministry. People will draw their own conclusions, of course, but this study provides the knowledge to determine a responsible understanding, based on research and teachings of respected evangelical scholars.

Someone may ask, "Why can't we just read the Bible in English and understand it for ourselves?" Rick Warren has a good answer to that question: "The Bible was originally written using 11,280 Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words, but the typical English translation uses only around 6,000 words. Obviously, nuances and shades of meaning can be missed."¹

Each of the units in this study includes explanations of original Hebrew or Greek words. Understanding the nuances of the original terms makes it possible to discover new interpretations that are still true to God's word. You might want to begin this study with a discussion on what we believe about the authority of the Bible, based on 2 Timothy 3:16. If we want to understand the truth of God's word, we need to get as close the original as possible.

Planning and Preparation

As you embark on this journey, you as the leader will want to plan for practical realities, including *available time, amount of material to cover, the size of your group, and basic supplies, equipment, and space*, as you plan your schedule and prepare to lead.

You will notice that the amount of material to be covered in each unit varies. Each unit's lesson plan includes a statement of estimated total time required.

How many sessions will it take? If your Bible study group has a leisurely hour and a half at each meeting you may be able to cover all of this material in six sessions. If you have only 45 minutes for a Sunday School class or Wednesday evening Bible study, you may need to expand the number of sessions to seven, eight, or more.

You could also use this resource effectively for a couple of day-long learning events or for a weekend retreat, using all the resources in this book, including the Bible Study, the imaginative "*LETTER FROM JUNIA*" and the presentation of "*A VISIT FROM JUNIA*."

¹ Rick Warren, *THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), p. 325.

The size of your group will also affect your planning. If your group has 8 or fewer members, much can be done in the whole group. If your group has more than 8 members, you will want to make more use of smaller groupings of 4-8 persons.

The specific lesson plans that follow will help you design a learning experience for each unit. Each plan includes the teaching information you will need to write on a flipchart, whiteboard, or blackboard. (If you like Powerpoint and have the equipment and know-how to use it instead of the flipchart, please feel free to do so!)

People will gain the most from this study if you invite participants to look up these passages in their own Bibles and compare with the texts in the Bible study. Each participant should have a copy of this book, or at least a copy of the *BIBLE STUDY* pages from this book, to write in; although I have had couples that shared a book. *Permission is granted for you to make photocopies of the Bible Study pages for distribution to learners in your study group.*

Since this study may challenge (in a gentle way) some people's traditional assumptions about marriage, couples have told me they were glad they took the course together. Unless otherwise noted, scripture texts quoted in this study are all from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible. Participants are usually amazed at how widely other versions vary in their translations of the original Greek terms used in these difficult passages about women and ministry. Time allotted for discussion, as well as discovery, will help round out the experience, so the study also has a positive impact on the culture of the church as a whole. *Blessings on your journey of discovery!*

Unit 1 - The Story of Creation and the Fall

Lesson Plan

Summary: In Unit 1, we learn that when God created "man," the original word means "people." We learn about the difference between God's intention for us at creation and the way our human relationships were broken by disobedience. This unit helps us see through the myths our culture has taught us about Adam and Eve and asks us to consider the quality of relationship God would like redeemed men and women to have.

To the Leader

This is a long unit. Questions 1-21 will take approximately 45 minutes to cover, even with you as teacher moving the class right along. If that is all the time you have, plan to spend two sessions on Unit 1. Cover Questions 1-15 in Session 1 and do questions 16-25 in Session 2. This plan will give you time for introductions and group building as you begin this study.

The other option is to cover 1-21 in your first session, assign Q22-25 as homework, and spend 10 minutes at the beginning of the next class (Unit 2) discussing answers.

Opening Prayer

Questions 1-4: this section as a whole group even if your group is larger than 8. Bulleted points in the study are for you to teach. Use a flipchart or whiteboard to teach Q3. Write this information on the flipchart ahead of class:

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." -Neil Armstrong

Underneath it use a different color to write:

"That's one small step for *ISH* and one giant leap for *ADAM*." -Hebrew

Underneath that use a different color marker to write:

"That's one small step for *ANER* and one giant leap for *ANTHROPOS*." -Greek

Important point: *ADAM* is not the name of the man God created—not at first, but a term for the people God created in God's own image! Notice the purpose God gives them both.

10 minutes

Questions 5-7: Read aloud Genesis 2:7 (always read passage from the study, NRSV; people can compare to other versions as you read, if there is time). Number 5 transitions us into the second or expanded version of the creation story in which *ADAM* is alone. Many scholars see the Genesis 2-3 account as a second creation story, from the "J" or Jahwist tradition. Evangelical scholars believe that the Genesis 2-3 account is an expansion of the creation story in Genesis 1, since they reject the theory that there may have been as many as four different authors of the material in Genesis. If you mention this difference, be sure to help people understand that the whole Bible is "inspired by God and is useful for teaching (2 Timothy 3:16)."

Ask the group to answer Q6. Have them read ahead in their own Bibles up to 2:15; then read aloud Genesis 2:15-17(NRSV) and ask the whole group to find the answer to Q7.

5 minutes

Questions 8-11: Have people keep reading Genesis 2:18-20 in their own Bibles; there will be many answers to the 2nd part of Q8—all contain different nuances. This is a teaching session for you to lead. Read #9 to the group and explain the bullets. Important: naming in

Hebrew requires 2 words; the man is not naming the woman here (e.g., calling you on the phone is not the same as naming you). Use the bullets in #10 to teach about the 'EZER *KNEGDWO* (nobody will know if you are pronouncing it wrong!) and then ask the group to describe "a helper as his partner" (Q11).

5 minutes

Questions 12-15: Read #12, Genesis 2:21-23(NRSV). Ask the participants to circle correct answers in Q13; have them share which answer is not supported by the text. Ask them what their off-the-cuff answer is to Q14, both parts. Then, read the bullet. Ask the whole group their answers to Q15, both parts. Then, read the bullet and invite discussion.

10 minutes

(Break here if doing this unit in two sessions)

Questions 16-20: Read aloud Genesis 3:1(NRSV). Q16 is an opinion question. Read aloud Genesis 3:2-3(NRSV). If everyone has a study book, people can take turns reading passages. Q17 will require the group to look back at God's original instructions to *ADAM* in Genesis 2:15-17. Discuss as a group. Read Genesis 3:4(NRSV) for Q18. In order to find the 3 answers to Q19, someone needs to read all of Genesis 3:6 from the Bible; the 1st part of the verse is not printed in the study. The 2nd part of the verse in NRSV is in the study. The key is that the woman wanted to be like God. Discuss the answers to Q20 (in the text).

10 minutes

Question 21: Ask someone to read Genesis 3:11-17 aloud. Read the bullets and ask people to search for the answers to Q21. Important: God does not curse the woman or the man.

5 minutes

Questions 22-24: If time permits, divide into small groups of 4-6 people each. Have one group find the answers to Q22, using their Bibles, and the bullets for extra help. Have the other group do the same for Q23. Then, ask each group to share their answers with the whole class. Did anyone gain a new perspective on these passages?

10 minutes—5minutes in small groups; 5 minutes for reporting

Question 25: Still in the same small groups, invite people to discuss their answers to Q25— a, b, and c. These are opinion questions with important theological implications. Wrap-up by inviting anyone to share new insights with the whole group. Closing Prayer.

15 minutes

Total time estimated for Unit 1 is 70 minutes

Unit 2 - The "Order of Creation" and "Headship"

Lesson Plan

Summary: In Unit 2, we look at the theological concept of "headship." Several New Testament passages refer to the "order of creation," which is often used to justify the subordination of women and the refusal of some churches to allow women, whom God has called, to serve in pastoral ministry. Unit 2 shows that the term "head" used by Paul is not the word for "ruler," challenging the traditional idea that husbands are supposed to have authority over their wives, and men over women in the church.

To the Leader: This is a shorter unit on two difficult passages; new insights can have implications for our understanding of Christian marriage. The study helps determine by what authority we serve God.

If you made the decision to begin this session with the Q 22-25 from Unit 1, then you can reduce the time for Unit 2 by turning Q1-6 into a mini-lecture on 1 Corinthians 11:1-3; in this case, you would lead the group through the first part of the unit in 12 minutes rather than 25 minutes. If you choose this option, you must provide the answers for them to write in their books and the interpretation. The session would still begin with some group interaction (on the Genesis material) and close with group work (on the rest of 1 Cor. 11).

Opening Prayer

Introduction to Unit 2: You may wish to include at the beginning or close of Unit 2 with a mini-lecture on the current theological struggle among evangelical Christians regarding the ordination of women. *Notes for this lecture are included at the end of this lesson plan.*

Begin the study in your workbook by reading 1 Corinthians 11:1-3 from an NRSV Bible. Have a flipchart ready to show the following analogy:

God is to Christ: as a husband is to his wife : or as a man is to a woman
--

The analogy Paul is making in 1 Corinthians 11:3 is that the relationship of Christ to God is similar to the relationship of a wife to her husband. See if the group can generate any ideas on how these pairs might be similar. Remember to point out that this analogy is offered as part of a discussion about choosing to do what is least offensive to others in church. What did Paul mean when he said that the husband is the head of his wife? Some preachers elevate this phrase to a theological precept called "headship" and believe that a husband should have authority over his wife. But, read aloud from Paul's direct teaching on Christian marriage - Ephesians 5:21(NRSV), which calls for a willingness to be mutually subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

10 minutes

Questions 1-3: Ask the group to discuss this question in pairs for about 2 minutes. Then invite comments from the class; theological biases may begin to show here. Allow all opinions. Then review the information in bullets. The following Greek words should also be listed on the flipchart for this unit:

<p>KEPHALE - the physical head of the body ARCHE - head as in ruler or source</p>

Point out that Paul did not use the term *arche*, even though Genesis 3:16 indicates that a wife will be ruled over by her husband as the result of their disobedience. Paul used *kephale*, perhaps to indicate the close connection of husband and wife—two people knit together by the love of Christ, whose relationship reflects the image of God. Now, have someone read aloud Ephesians 5:21-33. Even though wives were the legal responsibility of their husbands in ancient times, Paul encouraged Christian spouses to have a mutually loving relationship. Ask the pairs to discuss their thoughts about Q2 and Q3—opinion questions. It is essential that you welcome all opinions; opinions will vary and all should be respected.

10 minutes

Questions 4-6: These questions ask whether a husband being the head of his wife gives him the authority to rule over his wife. Ask the pairs to read and discuss Q4, Q5, and Q6 in the study book, then invite people to share their insights with the whole group.

5 minutes

Questions 7-9: First, read aloud 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 from an NRSV Bible. First, read aloud 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 from an NRSV Bible.

Lead the participants through questions 7, 8, and 9, allowing some time for people to discuss Q8 in particular.

Q7 notes precede the question.

Q8 is followed by notes from scholars; then repeated with room for answers at the end.

Q9 gives 2 other Bible references to check.

After 10 minutes, invite each group to share with the whole group what they learned from studying their own questions regarding the interpretation of this passage. Try to summarize the discussion by applying what people have said to the question of women in ministry. Offer a closing prayer.

20 minutes

Total time estimated for Unit 2 is 45 minutes

Unit 2 Mini-Lecture:
Current struggles among evangelical Christians
regarding the Ordination of women.

Since at least 1975, evangelical Christians have been divided over whether or not it is "biblical" for women to serve the church as pastors. For many years, the Southern Baptist Convention ordained women for all roles of ministry including pastoral ministry, then reversed themselves in 2000, so women could no longer serve as pastors of Southern Baptist Convention churches.

Polarization occurred after the 1986 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (theme: Male and Female in Biblical and Theological Perspective). Two different evangelical groups emerged: 1) Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) and 2) The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW). CBE believes that God calls gifted persons into all aspects of public ministry, regardless of gender. CBMW believes that the Bible places restrictions on the public ministry of women and insists on male leadership in the home and in the church.

CBE has an egalitarian theology: God intends that men and women mutually support each other in all dimensions of life, including the church and ministry. CBMW holds to a complementarian theology, which is hierarchical and traditional. The disciples of John Piper and Wayne Gruden believe that God created male and female equal, but designed woman to complement man by subordinating herself to his leadership.

Among Baptists there are those who take both positions. However, the policy of the American Baptist Churches USA is egalitarian, while the policy on women in ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention reflects the complementarian position. (For more information, see *WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* by Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo (Intervarsity Press, 1985).

Unit 3 - Jesus, Purity Laws, and Women

Lesson Plan

Summary: In Unit 3, background information explores the evolution of women's role during Old Testament times and the development of the purity laws. By the time of Jesus these laws were used to treat women as unclean and keep them out of the sanctuary. Women were rarely educated in the Law of Moses and were part of the covenant community only through their husbands or fathers. In light of these cultural restrictions, re-read some familiar stories and see how truly radical was Jesus' treatment of women.

Opening Prayer

Background Information Presentation: Copy and distribute the two-page outline of background information and present this material at the beginning of Unit 3. This information highlights some feminine theological concepts and women leaders of the Old Testament.

To encourage more participation, you might ask one or more class members to consult a Bible Dictionary beforehand and be prepared to make quick presentations about *Miriam*, *Deborah*, and *Huldah*.

After the fall of Jerusalem and the Exile, attitudes toward women became highly restrictive, based on priestly interpretations of the Law of Moses, especially the purity laws. Women became second class Jews and were considered inferior to men. Use the background notes section about Women in the Old Testament (Post-Exile) to give a mini-lecture about how the status of women had deteriorated by the time of Jesus. After this presentation and discussion, divide into two groups.

15 minutes

Questions 1-6: Group 1 will begin by reading aloud Mark 5:25-34. Before answering Q1-6, the group should review the notes provided in bullets and be prepared to look up passages in Leviticus. Answer the questions together as a group, in order, to gain a fresh perspective on a familiar story. Allow 20 minutes.

Questions 7-13: Group 2 will be responsible for more reading. Start with Luke 10:38-42 and read the notes to learn why sitting at the feet of Jesus was a radical thing for a woman to do. Then read John 4:7-18, 27 aloud. Answer Q8-10 as a group, using the text and the notes about Samaritans. Finish by reading John 4:27-30 and 39-42; answer Q11-13 to see how Jesus broke the social rules of his time and chose a woman to serve as his first evangelist. Allow 20 minutes.

20 minutes

Summarize

Bring Groups 1 & 2 together to summarize by sharing the answers to each part of the study. Offer a closing prayer.

10 minutes

Total estimated time for Unit 3 is 45 minutes

Unit 4 - The Women Who Followed Jesus

Lesson Plan

Summary: In Unit 4, we again read familiar passages with different lenses. We discover that there were named women, and others, who followed Jesus all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, and that there were more than 12 disciples. This unit pries apart 3 stories about the anointing of Jesus and shows how they were melded together to create the myth of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute, for which there is no Biblical basis. A Bible crossword puzzle helps name the women who were there with Jesus.

Opening Prayer

Questions 1-2: Read aloud Luke 3:1-3 from an NRSV Bible, while participants follow along in their own Bibles. Find and record the answers to questions 1 & 2 together as a group.

Question 3: Ask someone to read Mark 15:40-41 aloud, to find out how long the women at the cross traveled with Jesus and the twelve.

Question 4: Ask someone to read Luke 24:1-8 aloud, to confirm that the women were with Jesus when he prophesied his death and resurrection.

Question 5: Read Luke 9:1-18 to see that women were not always mentioned among the disciples, even when they were present.

10 minutes

Questions 6-9: Divide the class into four "Gospel Groups" (one group each for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), to meet in small circles without leaving the room. Have each Gospel Group locate and record their responses to Q6-9 for just their assigned Gospel story. (The answer to Q9 for Luke is "no one"). After 10 minutes, ask each Gospel Group to report their answers for the other groups to record. (Remain in Gospel group circles) **15 minutes**

Questions 10-11: Answer these questions together as a whole group. Share the bullet information about Mary Magdalene. Ask the group how Mary Magdalene is portrayed in art (films, operas, paintings)? Explain that her reputation for being a reformed prostitute actually has no scriptural basis and comes from a sermon preached about her in which three different stories about the anointing of Jesus were melded together. **5 minutes**

Questions 12-13: Have each gospel group find and record the answers to Q12-13 in their own gospel stories and then return to the large group with information to contribute.

5 minutes

Questions 14-20: Work through these questions as a whole group, drawing on the research done by each gospel group for the answers. Keep this moving; it can get boring if you belabor the point. The last few questions are opinion questions, but now can be based on the Bible record. **10 minutes**

Closing Prayer & Homework: Suggest that people find the answers to the crossword puzzle, "Women in the Gospels," at home this week. (Answers may be checked at the bottom of the page.)

Total estimated time for Unit 4 is 45 minutes

Unit 5 - Women Ministers in the Early Church **Lesson Plan**

Summary: In Unit 5, we find evidence of women's participation in the community of disciples who become the first apostles of the newborn Christian church. In the early church women were given gifts of the Spirit to lead and minister; a Bible crossword puzzle helps you name them. *A LETTER FROM JUNIA* is a companion piece for this unit, which helps to bring to life the first century female apostle, Junia (who was honored by Paul in Romans 16:7). Unit 5 shows that women did preach in the early church, under the authority of the Holy Spirit. It explains why Paul asked women to keep silent and what he really meant by the term often translated as "subordinate" in our English Bibles.

As people gather, suggest that they start reading Acts 1-2 and keep their Bibles open.

Opening Prayer

Questions 1-6: Work through the answers to Q1-6 together as a whole group, including the reference to the prophecy in Joel (text is printed in the study). **10 minutes**

Question 7: Ask for 2 volunteers to do a mini-research project on the different leadership roles played by both men and women in the early church—apostle, deacon, bishop, elder. They should read and summarize the information about each role provided in the study guide and be prepared to share their findings with the whole group. At the same time, have the rest of the class divide into 2 groups—one to find the Down answers, and the other to find the Across answers to the crossword puzzle, "Women in the Early Church." After 15 minutes, have each group share the answers with the whole class. **20 minutes**

Introduce Women and Silence using the notes in the study and in **Question 8**. Prepare a flipchart of Greek vocabulary terms ahead of time:

<p><i>APOSTOLOS</i> - apostle, one who is sent to witness <i>DIAKONOS</i> - deacon, servant, minister <i>EPISCOPOS</i> - bishop, overseer <i>PRESBYTEROS</i> - elder, presbyter, priest <i>AKATASTASIA</i> - disorder <i>SIGAO</i> - voluntary silence <i>LALEO</i> - to talk <i>HUPOTASSOMAI</i> - a voluntary attitude of being responsive to the needs of others</p>

Questions 9-15: Begin by reading aloud 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36(NRSV). Work through Q 9-15 as a whole group. Be sure you have filled in your own answers beforehand, because you will need to teach as you go along. There are 3 important Greek terms to clarify—2 refer to being silent; the other is the term for subordinate. The nuances of these words make all the difference for understanding. Bullets provide the information you need to communicate in your teaching. End this section with a minute for each person to re-phrase what Paul was saying about the attitude women should have toward others in church. **15 minutes**

Question 16: Ask if there is a volunteer who would like to write a letter to Paul, as described in Q16, and bring it in to read to the class at the beginning of the next meeting?

Closing Prayer

Total estimated time for Unit 5 is 45 minutes

Unit 6 - Not-of-this-World Christianity

Lesson Plan

Summary: In Unit 6, Christianity is seen in context as the counter-culture of the ancient world. Ancient divisions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, are overcome in Christ, making us a new creation with potential for transforming the entire social order. This unit examines the words of 1 Timothy 2:12 in light of the history and culture of Ephesus, where Timothy served as pastor. A new translation is offered, from the Greek text—one which does not prohibit women from teaching, nor does it require church leaders to "have authority over" anyone, but be as servants.

To the Leader: This is a longer than usual unit, but with advance preparation of flipcharts, you can move through the material steadily. There is a lot of material to prepare—and for people to absorb, but most people are glad to learn there *is* a different way to translate/interpret the Bible verse most often used to keep women out of pastoral ministry.

If you only have 45 minutes, you might want to break after Q11, and save the rest (20 minutes) for a second session. You might also want to consider a presentation from the Apostle Junia as a closing celebration. Invite someone with dramatic ability to read through *A LETTER FROM JUNIA* and prepare the interview questions for *A VISIT FROM JUNIA* as outlined in the Presentation Notes. The presentation takes about 25 minutes, so it could follow the completion of Unit 6 during a second session.

Or, *A VISIT FROM JUNIA* could be planned for the whole church, to take the place of the sermon during Sunday worship, or during a weekend retreat or special evening program. Junia is the perfect vehicle for summarizing the Bible study in dramatic form, offering a message the whole church needs to hear.

Opening Prayer

Questions 1-5: Ask someone to read Galatians 3:27-28 aloud. Ask someone else to bookmark Galatians 2:16, another to look up Colossians 3:10, another to find 1 Timothy 2:11, another Acts 2:18, and yet another Acts 18:24-26. (Write the scripture references on cards or Post-It Notes and hand them out as people arrive). Together as a whole group, work through the answers to Q1-6, using the notes and bullets to teach about the great social divides of the ancient world, and how Christianity challenged those divisions.

10 minutes

Introductory Material on Ephesus: You will need to provide this information in a short lecture, highlighting the factors (such as local goddess worship and Gnosticism) contributing to the problem of false teaching at the church in Ephesus, where Timothy was pastor. This background is essential for understanding that 1 Timothy 2:12 is not actually a prohibition against women in ministry, but a way to refute Gnostic teachings.

10 minutes

Questions 6-8: Work through the answers to Q6-8 together as a whole group. A flipchart vocabulary sheet will help people keep the terms and definitions straight.

GNOSIS - secret knowledge
HESUCHIOS - a meek and quiet spirit; a quiet, orderly life
ANER - husband or man
GUNE - wife or woman
HUPOTASSOMAI - a voluntary willingness to be responsive to the needs of others
DIDASKEIN - to teach
AUTHENTEIN - to have authority over? OR to pretend to be the author of?

Be sure to point out the paraphrase of 1 Timothy 2:11, and the note which follows, at #8.

10 minutes

Question 9: Read 1 Timothy 2:12(NRSV) from the study and ask the questions which follow. The focus in this section is on women teaching men. One of your Post-It Note volunteers should have the answer for Q9a. Be ready with a second flipchart page containing the following Greek phrases, one with the English translation underneath. Explain that if Paul had wanted to prohibit women from teaching men altogether, he would have written:

OUK EPITREPO GYNAIKI DIDASKEIN ANDRON

which means - *nor do I permit a woman to teach a man*

But this is what Paul actually wrote:

GYNAIKE DE DIDASKEIN OUK EPITREPO, OUDE AUTHENTEIN ANDROS

(Notice the 's' on the end of *andros*, rather than an 'n'; *andros* is the subject of a different verb, not the object of 'teach'.) What a woman is not permitted to teach could be *authentain andros*—an infinitive used nowhere else in the Bible. *Authentein andros* may refer to the false teaching (Gnostic) that woman is the author of man. **5 minutes**

Questions 10-11: Read 1 Timothy 2:12 again; in this question the focus is on women having authority over men, as *authentain* is traditionally translated. Q10 outlines various interpretations offered by scholars for this confusing term. Ask someone to read David Scholer's thoughts, and someone else to read aloud Aida Spencer's ideas. Then read the translation/interpretation of Richard and Catherine Kroeger in Q11. This theory believes that 1 Timothy 2:12 was written to refute common Gnostic teachings, a theory that is further supported in verses 13-15. **5 minutes**

(Break Here if you have planned a second session for this unit)

Questions 12-14: Divide the class into 3 groups. Assign Q12 to Group 1, Q13 to Group 2, and Q14 to Group 3. Each group should research/record the answers to their own question(s). After 10 minutes, gather the class again, and have each group share its answers with the class. Point out how these answers also seem to refute Gnostic teachings.

15 minutes

Question 16: Prepare in advance your own version or paraphrase of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, based on what you've learned. Share this with the class as one possible way to read the passage without having to prohibit women from doing pastoral ministry.

Closing Prayer

Total estimated time for Unit 6 is 60 minutes

Section I

Junia: A Bible Study

— by the Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane



UNIT 1 - THE STORY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

Objective: To discover what the original Bible text says about man and woman in the Creation stories, so that we can determine a responsible interpretation of these passages, as they relate to contemporary questions of women's role in marriage and ministry.

Scriptures: Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:4-24; Genesis 3:1-24

Opening Prayer

1. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 1:26-31.

In Genesis 1:26(NRSV), what do the missing pronouns tell us about God?

Then God said, "Let _____ make humankind in _____ image, according to _____ likeness..." (NRSV)

- *ELOHIM* is the name God is called in this passage. *ELOHIM* is plural, but it takes a singular verb.
- Some scholars believe there are two creation stories in Genesis. In one God is called *ELOHIM*; in the other God is called *YAHWEH*. Others see the Genesis 1 & 2 accounts being continuous, with one being an expansion of the other. There are many names for God in the Old Testament, but only one God.

2. Can you think of any other plural concepts we have about God?
-

ADAM—Man or People?

3. Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon in 1969, reflecting, "*That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.*"¹ If we were to substitute Hebrew words for MAN and MANKIND, the sentence would look like this: "That's one small step for *ISH* and one giant leap for *ADAM*. In Greek, the substitution would read: "That's one small step for *ANER* and one giant leap for *ANTHROPOS*."

¹ Neil Alden Armstrong, *BARTLETT'S FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 15th Edition, 1980), 910:145.

Discuss with the person beside you - What would "generic mankind" look like, if you were to draw a picture of him, or them?

4. In Genesis 1:27, notice the parallel ways *ADAM* is described:
*So God created ADAM in his image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

What does the last line tell us about the nature of *ADAM*?

- *ADAM* is created in God's image, but as the author explains, *ADAM* is actually a 'they', because God created humans both male and female. The Hebrew word *ADAM* can best be translated into the English phrase generic man—or PEOPLE of both genders.
- To avoid confusion between "the man" God created and a singular person of the male gender, I will continue to use the Hebrew term *ADAM*. You may wish to substitute the word PEOPLE for the word 'man' in the story, to help you better picture what God created.
- At this point in the story *ADAM* is not yet the proper name of the first man; it is simply the common name of the human creatures God has made in his likeness. The first use of Adam as a proper name is not until Genesis 5:1, where it states, that "God named their name Adam."
- In Genesis 1:28, God blesses them (both are present) and asks them to fulfill two purposes:
1) Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;
2) and have dominion over...every living thing that moves upon the earth.

The Creation Story Expanded

5. Genesis 2:7 (NRSV)
*Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground,
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;
and the man became a living being.*
- The man God creates in this version is the same *ADAM* as in Genesis 1, except that this *ADAM* is not yet male and female; this ADAM is alone.
 - In the second chapter of Genesis (2:4), the name *YAHWEH* is introduced. *YAHWEH* is translated 'Lord God' in NRSV and Jehovah in KJV. *ELOHIM*

is translated as 'God'. *YAHWEH* is a more mysterious name, which means "I am who I am" or "I will be who I will be." This is the same *YAHWEH* who meets Moses in the burning bush.

6. From what material is *ADAM* formed?
-

- The Hebrew word for ground, soil, or dust is *ADAMAH*. See the play on words? This interplay between the man and the soil will continue. After the Fall, the relationship between the man and the ground will deteriorate.

Off Limits!

In Genesis 2:15-17(NRSV):

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.

7. Who is present when God gives the instructions about the forbidden fruit?
-

- In this passage God addresses *ADAM* with the singular 'you' ('thou' in the KJV; 'ye' is plural).

A Helper As His Partner

8. So far in Genesis, everything God has made is good. In verse 2:18 God notices something that is not good:
-

So God decides to do what for *ADAM*? (List all versions of this phrase)

9. Meanwhile, the Lord God forms all the living creatures and brings them to *ADAM* to name. (Genesis 2:19-20)

- *ADAM* is given the power to name each animal and bird. In ancient cultures naming was sometimes associated with having power or dominion over the object named.
- In Hebrew naming involves a formula of "calling + the name"—both terms are necessary.

10. Not surprisingly, *ADAM* decides that none of these creatures will alleviate his loneliness. Genesis 2:20 (NRSV)

...but for the man there was not found a helper as a partner

- The Hebrew term for helper is 'EZER, 'one who helps.' In the Old Testament 'EZER is used 13 times in reference to God and 4 times in reference to military help or protection. 'EZER is the word used in Psalm 121, when the Psalmist says, "My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth." The kind of saving help the Lord our God gives us is very different from the kind of help we expect from an assistant, a child, a servant or a beast of burden.
- The Hebrew for the phrase as a partner is *KNEGDWO*, which means a helper who would be "in front of" or visible to Adam, not beneath or behind him. When the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek around 250 BC, *KNEGDWO* was translated into the Greek word *HOMOIOS*, which means "of the same nature, like or similar." The Lord God plans to form a helper for *ADAM* who will be "equally great or important, as powerful as, equal (to)."²

11. What word or words would you use to describe the kind of helper God plans to form for *ADAM*?

12. God forms the 'EZER *KNEGDWO* in Genesis 2:21-23 (NRSV)

*So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.*

² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and eds. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), p. 569, as quoted by Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond The Curse* (USA: Hendrickson, 1997), p. 26.

Then the man said,
"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

13. As soon as ADAM sees the Woman in front of him, he realizes she is:
(Circle all answers that you think the text supports)
- a) someone who is like himself
 - b) an equal partner
 - c) someone he must rule over
 - d) someone who can help him fulfill God's command to till and keep the garden
- [a, b, d]

14. Does Adam name Eve in Genesis 2:23? _____

If so, does that mean he has dominion over her in the same way he has dominion over the animals?

- ADAM recognizes her as being like him and calls her Woman. He now sees himself as Man—as in male, no longer generic. Now, there is a gender distinction. In the traditional naming formula the verb 'to call' and the noun 'name' are both used together, as in Genesis 2:20, when ADAM 'calls the names' of the animals. In Genesis 2:23 ADAM calls or identifies her as a woman and calls himself a man, BUT he does not call her name Eve until after the Fall in Genesis 3:20.

15. Many people believe that men should have "headship" over women, because of the order in which they were created. Is Man (male) really created before Woman (female)?

In Genesis 1? _____

In Genesis 2? _____

- The terms for Man and Woman in Hebrew are *ISH* and *ISHAH*. Even in the Genesis 2 account, there is no male before there is female, just as in Genesis 1:27.
- In the first Creation story, ADAM (male and female) is/are the crown of God's creation. They are the last of God's creations, not the first, and the most important, because they are created in God's image.

The Temptation

In Genesis 3:1(NRSV), the serpent asks the woman

*"Did God say,
'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'"*

16. How do you think the woman knew the answer, since God gave these instructions to ADAM before the woman was formed?

17. In Genesis 3:2-3(NRSV),

*The woman said to the serpent,
"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden;
but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit
of the tree that is in the middle of the garden,
nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"*

Does her answer agree with the original command given to ADAM? How does it differ?

18. In Genesis 3:4(NRSV), the serpent deceives the Woman by twisting God's command to give it a different meaning.

*But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die;
for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,
and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

- The serpent uses the plural 'you;' translated 'ye' in the KJV.

How does the serpent twist God's original warning?

19. In Genesis 3:6, the Woman decides there are three things about the tree that make it good. What are they?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Therefore, still in Genesis 3:6 (NRSV),

*...she took of its fruit and ate;
and she also gave some to her husband,
who was with her, and he ate.*

- The woman took the fruit and ate, because she wanted to be like God.

20. Where was the man while the woman was being tempted? Did he object?

Who was responsible for disobeying God? Only the woman?

Truth or Consequences

- God confronts the Man and Woman in Genesis 3:11—first the Man and then the Woman. The Man reacts by blaming the Woman God gave him. And the Woman reacts by blaming the serpent.
- Nevertheless, the Man does admit, "I ate."
- And the Woman admits the "serpent tricked me, and I ate."

21. Whom or what does God curse as a result? (Genesis 3:14, 16, 17)

a) _____

b) _____

- While God does not curse the Man or the Woman, God does hold them accountable for their disobedience. The consequences are related to the work for which God made them in the beginning. Each participant is directly responsible to God and receives a separate punishment. These punishments are only similar to curses in that "future generations cannot eradicate them by their good deeds."³ Only Christ will be able to redeem us from this so-called "curse."

The Fall - The Woman's Consequence

The man and woman were created to live in right relationship with the Lord God. Now that they have desired to "be like gods" themselves, knowing good and evil, they fall out of right relationship with God, with the creation, and

³ Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, (USA: Hendrickson, 1985), p.35.

even with each other. The consequences of their disobedience reflect this "falling out."

Before The Fall, the woman, along with her husband, had two purposes:

- 1) To be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.
- 2) Have dominion over ...every living thing that moves upon the earth.
(Genesis 1:28)

After The Fall, these two purposes become more difficult to fulfill.

- a) For the Woman, God will increase her pain in childbirth, yet her desire shall be for her husband, and he shall rule over her. (Genesis 3:16b)
- The Woman's purpose is still the same, only now childbirth will be hard work (*ESEB*). The command for them to have dominion over living things has been skewed by the woman's attempt to be like God. Now she will be ruled over by her husband, as a result of the fall.
 - Before the fall, the man was commanded to "not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2: 17)." Because he listened to his wife, rather than obeying God, the equal relationship he enjoyed with his wife changed to one in which she is to be ruled over by her husband.

22. "Is this the way God intended for them to live when they were first created?"

_____ Why or why not? _____

- Both Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:18 imply that God intended the man and woman to live in a relationship of love, equality and mutual respect, together reflecting the image of God.

23. In your opinion, is the power imbalance between the man and the woman according to "the order of creation", or is it a result of The Fall?

The Fall - The Man's Consequence

The Man's consequences are both described in Genesis 3:19 (NRSV)

*By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust and to dust you shall return.*

24. What are the Man's consequences for disobeying God's command?

- 1) _____
- The man (*ADAM*) is alienated from the ground (*ADAMAH*) he came from. Now he too will have to work hard (*ESEB*) to grow food. His source becomes his ruler, just as the woman's source becomes her ruler.
- 2) _____
- In *Genesis 2:17*, the Lord God warned *ADAM* that he would die, if he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The final consequence of the fall for *ADAM* is mortality.

The Fall - The Consequences for Male/Female Relationships

25. What are the consequences of The Fall for husbands and wives?

- _____
- Only after all the consequences of the fall have been communicated to all parties, does Adam "call his wife's name" Eve (*Genesis 3:20*).
 - a) Since God did not create men to rule over women, do you believe that the redemption of Jesus on the cross should have any effect on human relationships? _____
 - b) If so, is this redemption of human relationships an accomplished fact? Or is our redemption a work in progress?

 - c) Do you believe Christ can make of us a New Creation? If so, could it be possible for a Christian husband and wife to reflect in their marriage the unity and mutuality originally intended by God?

Closing Prayer

UNIT 2 - THE "ORDER OF CREATION" AND "HEADSHIP"

- Objectives:**
1. To explore Paul's use of "order of creation" theology in the New Testament as it applies to Christian husbands and wives.
 2. To examine contemporary interpretations of "headship" in comparison with Paul's original intent as shown by his choice of terms.
 3. To consider where the authority to serve God comes from—man or the Spirit?

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 11:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33

Opening Prayer

The "Order Of Creation" & "Headship"

There are two places in the Letters of Paul where the "order of creation" is cited to clarify Christian behavior or correct false teachings. The order of creation is used by some Christians to justify the subordination of women, as if God had originally intended for women to be lesser than men, and not equal, as we have seen. (1 Timothy 2:13 will be addressed in Unit 6.)

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul encourages the Corinthians to "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." This follows a discussion about choosing to do what will be least offensive to others in the church. He then uses the order of creation to describe the links between men, women and Christ, in hopes that they will see the importance of doing "everything for the glory of God. (1 Cor.10:31)" If God is the source of Christ, and Christ is the source of man, and man is the source of woman, then all are interconnected. To give glory to God, men and women in the church must also treat one another with honor and respect, choosing not to offend by the way they dress and behave.

What Did Paul Mean By The Term 'Head'?

Paul gives a theology lesson in 1 Cor.11:3 (NRSV), based on the order of creation, which might not have been familiar to the Greek Christians.

*For I want you to understand that
Christ is the head of every man,
and the husband is the head of his wife,
and God is the head of Christ.*

- *ANER* and *GUNE* are usually translated husband and wife here, but may also be translated man and woman instead, since the discussion is about head-coverings for men and for women, not for husbands and wives.

- Nevertheless, even if Paul is saying that a husband is the head of his wife, then this "headship" does not necessarily imply that a husband should have authority over his wife. See Ephesians 5:21 (NRSV), where Paul gives advice to husbands and wives about Christian marriage:

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

1. What do you think it means for a husband and wife to be subject to each other?
-

- The term Paul uses for 'head' in 1 Corinthians 11 is *KEPHALE* (kef-ah-LAY), and not *ARCHE* (ar-KAY). *ARCHE* means both ruler (as in archbishop, headmaster) and source (as in archaeology, headwaters). Based on our study of the relationship between husband and wife after the fall, Paul might well have used the term *ARCHE*, but he chose to use *KEPHALE* instead.
 - *KEPHALE* is the term used for the physical 'head' of the body. Christ is the head of the body, his church. *KEPHALE* also denotes leadership, but not the kind of leader who rules over his subjects. In the military, a *KEPHALE* leader is part of a team, the one who leads the company into battle rather than just giving orders. He is the physical 'head' of his company. In ancient times, a wife was under the jurisdiction of her husband; a husband was legally responsible for his wife.
 - As *KEPHALE*, or HEAD, a husband was as attached to his wife as your head is to your body. Together, a Christian couple is one unit, knit together by the love of Christ. Together, a Christian husband and wife reflect the image of God, as God intended at creation.
 - In Ephesians 5:21-33, Paul asks wives (who already are under their husbands' jurisdiction) to be subject willingly as they are to the Lord. He asks husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. What is described is a mutually loving relationship.
2. In light of Paul's use of the term *KEPHALE* rather than *ARCHE*, do you think husbands should exercise authority over their wives?
-

3. Since wives are no longer considered the property of their husbands in the USA today, and are now citizens in their own right, how should we now interpret "the husband is the head of his wife"?
-

4. Is there Biblical justification in 1 Corinthians 11:3 for men to have authority over women in the church?
-

- 1 Corinthians 11:3 has traditionally been interpreted to mean that a wife should be under the authority or "headship" of her husband, just as a man is under the "headship" of Christ, and Christ is under the "headship" of God. While wives were under the authority of their husbands in the ancient world, Paul may be offering a correction to this way of thinking. In 1 Cor. 11:11-12 (NRSV), Paul turns this point of view "on its head," so to speak.

Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God.

- *CHORIS* (here translated "independent of") generally means "without, apart from or without relation to." *CHORIS* frequently means "different from", so the verse could be translated this way: "In the Lord woman is not different from man nor man from woman."⁴
5. If God is the author of life, then where should the authority be?
- a) In men?
 - b) In God?
 - c) In Christ?

6. What does it say in Matthew 28:18? To whom has "all authority in heaven and on earth" been given?
-

- The term for authority in Matt.28:18 is *EXOUSIA*, which does mean 'the power to rule and be obeyed.'

⁴ Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, *IN MEMORY OF HER*, p. 229, as quoted by Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo in *WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: A Biblical theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1995), p. 113.

Dress Code For Men And Women In The Church At Corinth

In 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Paul uses the order of creation to resolve a controversy about "head coverings" (*KATAKALUPTO*) in the church at Corinth. In the early churches both Jews and Greeks were coming together to worship, bringing with them two very different cultures. Paul was constantly trying to build bridges between the two cultures.

- Jews (both men and women) had a custom of wearing a prayer shawl (*TALLIT*) while praying or prophesying, because they believed they were in the presence of God. Out of respect they would cover their heads to separate themselves from the glory or radiance of God (*SHEKHINAH*, Hebrew). The prayer shawl would hang down (*KATAKALUPTO*) from their heads and served as a visible sign of humility. Jewish wives wore a veil over their heads when out in public, as a sign that they were married (just as we wear wedding rings).
 - Greek men wore their hair cut short; this was the custom. Greek wives, on the other hand, were required to cover their heads or wear a veil when out in public, as a sign that they were married. Only female courtesans (educated women who were teachers of men and often became their sexual consorts) shaved their heads or had their hair cut short.
7. Paul suggests that a woman should consider covering her head, when praying or prophesying (or preaching) in church, because it is "natural" or customary. That way she will not offend anyone or disgrace her head. To justify his recommendation, Paul claims woman is the glory of man, who in turn is the glory of God (reflecting the order in which they were created according to Genesis 2). Then he brings this argument full circle by reminding the Corinthians that, on the other hand, man is only born through woman and all things come from God. Nothing in his argument suggests that men should have authority over women, or women over men. Instead both men and women should seek to glorify God from whom all things come.
8. Clearly, both women and men were offering spiritual leadership in the early church—prophesying (or preaching) as the Spirit inspired them (1 Cor. 11:4-5). In Paul's opinion, is a woman authorized to prophesy without the need for a man to serve as "a covering" (i.e., to be the authority for her)?

Paul gives his answer in 1 Corinthians 11:10 (NRSV):
*For this reason a woman ought to have [a symbol of]
AUTHORITY on her head, because of the angels.*

- Please note that [a symbol of] is assumed by the translator; there is no such word or phrase in the original text. Translators have added this to help make sense of the word authority in this context. Paul uses the Greek word *EXOUSIA*, which means the liberty to exercise power.
- David M. Scholer explains that "1 Corinthians 11:10 is rarely translated accurately in English (most often one finds 'a sign of authority' or 'veil'), but Paul asserts that women have authority, using his normal word which always means the active exercise of authority (and never the passive reception of it)."⁵
- Paul is saying that a woman should have authority on her own head. In other words, a woman who is inspired by the Holy Spirit to pray or prophesy should have the freedom to decide for herself about whether or not to cover her head. Of course, she needs to be aware of the cultural message she might be sending, if she chooses not to cover her head, but the choice is hers.
- If Christ is the head of his body, the church, then his call is also the source of our authority.

9. What do you think Paul means by "because of the angels" in 1 Cor.11:10?

- *AGGELOS* means messengers sent by God, whether human or not.
- For other New Testament references to angels, see Galatians 4:14. The angels may have been visitors from other churches the Corinthians should take care not to offend.
- See also Hebrews 1:14. If angels are "spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation," then the women who were praying and prophesying in the Corinthian church ought to be respected as messengers whom God has authorized and sent for the salvation of the elect.

Closing Prayer

⁵ David M. Scholer, *A Biblical Basis for Equal Partnership: Women and Men in the Ministry of the Church* (Valley Forge: ABWIM, 1997).

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR UNIT 3

Women & the Feminine in the Old Testament (Pre-Exile)

In the early days of the Old Testament, women had more status than they did after 587 BC. Although Israel lived in a patriarchal world, Israel was informed by a faith that believed men and women both reflected God's image in equally important ways. There was evidence of polygamy, but in the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, we also see that marriage is portrayed as a holy companionship, similar to the first relationship between Adam and Eve. A man might father many children, but only the ones born of his wife become his heirs. Marriage is based on love, not social standing or convenience.

- *TORAH* is a feminine Hebrew word meaning 'instruction, teaching', often translated 'the Law.' The giver of the *torah*, or divine instruction is God.
- *HOKMAH* is the Hebrew word for Wisdom, and is personified as a woman in Proverbs. Wisdom is seen as a prophet (Proverbs 1:20) and as "more precious than jewels" (Proverbs 8:11). In Proverbs 8:22-53, Wisdom tells us that God created her at the beginning and she was there "like a master worker" when he created the earth.

Women freely exercised their spiritual gifts and were respected as leaders and PROPHETS:

- *MIRIAM*, sister of Moses and Aaron, led the victory celebration at the Reed Sea (Exodus 15:20)
- *DEBORAH* was a judge who, with her general Barak, successfully led the Israelite militias in a battle against a superior Canaanite army in the plain of Esdraelon. When the fleeing Canaanite general, Sisera, took refuge in the tent of Jael, she waited until he slept and then drove a tent peg through his temple. Deborah also "sat in the gate" as a law-court judge to mediate disputes and resolve legal issues. (Judges 4,5)
- *HULDAH* was a prophet during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. When the forgotten Book of the Law (probably the scroll of Deuteronomy) was found in the temple in 621 BC, Josiah sent the priests and leaders of the nation to consult with Huldah. Huldah read the scroll and prophesied that God would bring disaster on Judah, because his people had abandoned their God and worshiped other gods. She also prophesied that Josiah would die in peace without seeing their demise, because of his penitence. So Josiah read the book in the temple and renewed the covenant with God, beginning a time of religious reform. (2 Kings 22:8-10)

Women in the Old Testament (Post-Exile)

When Jerusalem fell and the people were exiled to Babylon in 587/586 BC, they believed God was judging them for their lack of faithfulness, just as their prophets had foretold. The priests were determined to return to Jerusalem someday (they did, 70 years later) and to make sure that God would never have to judge his covenant people again. The Old Testament writings were probably collected during the Exile and the laws clarified to ensure Israel's ritual and social purity, which radically changed the status and role of women in Israel.

- Laws about *RITUAL PURITY* focused on circumcision as the sign of the covenant, so after the Exile, "a woman gained status in the Jewish community primarily through marriage to a circumcised male and by bearing sons who would subsequently be circumcised."⁶
- Blood of sacrifice on the altar became the means of atonement for sins, both in circumcision and with animal sacrifices. All other blood (especially blood that could not be controlled) became ritually unclean (e.g., menstrual, postpartum).
- A Women's Court was added to the Second Temple during the reign of Herod the Great (first century BC). The Women's Court was 15 steps lower than the sanctuary) to distance women from God's presence in the Holy of Holies, which was located behind a curtain at the front of the sanctuary (called the Court of the Israelites—for men only). Women were not permitted to attend festivals when ritually unclean.

Cultural Consequences of the Purity Laws

- Vows of women no longer valued. Women could no longer testify in court.
- Women were not to speak with strangers or be seen in public with men.
- Women had to be double-veiled outside their homes.
- Women were not encouraged to be taught Torah or be educated. Women became 2nd class Jews, little more than slaves...they were considered the property of their fathers or husbands.

The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man.

Let her accordingly be submissive. -Josephus

Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good. -Sirach

⁶ Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo, *WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: A Biblical theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 1995), p.105.

UNIT 3 - JESUS, PURITY LAWS, AND WOMEN

Objectives: To learn how the religious purity laws at the time of Jesus' ministry affected women on a daily basis. To understand that the way Jesus treated women elevated their status and demonstrated a radical disregard for the taboos against women and blood.

Scriptures: Mark 5:25-34
Luke 10:38-42; John 4:7-42

GROUP 1: Read Mark 5:25-34 aloud in your group.
Answer Questions 1-6 together and be prepared to share your findings with Group 2 after 20 minutes.

The story of Jesus' healing the woman with a 12-year hemorrhage is part of a longer pericope (a passage of scripture), which begins with Jairus asking Jesus to come heal his daughter and ends with Jesus raising the 12-year-old from death. In both stories Jesus touches (or is touched by) an unclean female (one who is bleeding, the other is dead). Both stories are about Jesus' desire and power to bring about new life and wholeness for women and girls. The entire pericope is repeated in Matthew 9:18-26 (somewhat condensed), and also in Luke 8:40-56. This pericope is important, not only for the healings, but also for the deliberate taboo-breaking behavior.

- During menstruation (Leviticus 15:19-31) and following childbirth (Leviticus 12:2-5) women were excluded from the cult (could not touch anything holy, enter the sanctuary, or be considered part of the covenant community). If she gave birth to a male child, she was unclean for seven days, the child was circumcised on the eighth day, and her blood purification would last 33 days more. *For a female child the times would double.*
- A woman with a discharge was considered ritually unclean, and this impurity was contagious—anyone who touched her would also be unclean until evening. After each time of a woman's impurity, a priest would have to make atonement for her by sacrificing both a sin offering and a burnt offering (two turtledoves or two pigeons). These and other rituals were designed to keep unclean people from defiling the tabernacle.

1. This woman had been suffering with a hemorrhage for twelve years (Mark 5:25). Put yourselves in her place and try to imagine what life was like for a woman with this condition in 1st century Palestine.

What normal human experiences had she been unable to participate in, because of the purity laws?

2. Why do you think she came up behind Jesus in the crowd and touched his cloak?

What was she afraid of? What did she believe?

3. The woman was immediately aware that her hemorrhage _____ and her body was _____. Jesus was aware that _____ had gone forth from him and asked, "Who _____ my clothes?" The woman came to Jesus in _____ and _____ and told him the whole truth. Why was she afraid?

4. According to the purity laws, what impact would the woman's action have on Jesus? See Leviticus 15:19. Does Jesus act as if he had just been made unclean?

5. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, he tells them to go and show themselves to the priests, because now they are clean and may re-enter the holy places (Luke 17:14). Why does Jesus not give the woman he healed from a twelve-year hemorrhage the same advice? See Leviticus 15:25-30 for the answer.

- She would not be ritually clean for 7 more days.

6. There is a Holy Land site, which commemorates the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage. The site consists of a large rock in the road, situated directly in front of the door to a synagogue.

a) In what ways did the purity laws deny women access to God for a fairly large portion of their lives?

b) Did Jesus ever do or say anything to keep women separated from God's holiness?

c) In what ways are women still denied access or prohibited from serving God?

.....
GROUP 2. In the next 20 minutes, answer the questions below (7-13). Be ready to share your answers with the rest of the group.

7. Read Luke 10:38-42 aloud in your group. While Martha busies herself with the task of serving Jesus a complicated meal, Mary "sits at the Lord's feet and listens to what he is saying."

Why is this such a radical thing for Mary to do?

• In the first century "to sit at someone's feet" was another way of saying "to obtain a formal education." The rabbi or teacher would sit on a raised place to teach, while the students would sit on mats on the floor in order to be in a lower position, looking up to the teacher with respect. Mary was having more than a casual conversation with Jesus. She was learning from his word, despite the fact that Jewish women were usually denied a formal education of the Torah.

8. Read John 4:7-18, 27. What three social rules did Jesus break by addressing the woman at the well? He should not have addressed her, because...she was a _____, a _____, and Jesus knew she was living with a man who was not her husband.

9. In John 4:10, what does Jesus offer the woman at the well?

10. Read John 4:16-26. Why does the woman think Jesus is a prophet?

a) What question does she ask him to resolve?

b) What truth does Jesus teach her about worship?

c) What belief does she venture to share with the prophet in verse 25?

d) How does Jesus confirm the truth of what she has dared to believe?

On Samaritans

- Samaria was a part of Palestine some Jews avoided traveling through on their way to Jerusalem. Jewish attitudes toward Samaritans in the first century were racist, even though Samaritans were a branch of Judaism. Samaritans differed from the Jews who worshiped in Jerusalem at the Temple in several ways: 1) they worshiped on Mt. Gerizim; 2) they accept only the Pentateuch (first five books) as scripture; 3) their application of the Sabbath and dietary laws was even more literal than for other Jews.
- During the Exile, Samaritans remained in their homeland and continued to worship God. The Assyrians brought captives from other lands to live among the Samaritans. 2 Kings 17:24-41 describes what was believed to be the apostasy of the Samaritans, well into New Testament times.
- When the exiles returned, after 70 years, a group of Samaritans led by their governor Sanballat opposed Nehemiah's attempts to rebuild Jerusalem. The Samaritans are still a distinct group today, and continue

to practice their ancient rites on the holy site of Mt. Gerizim, near the modern city of Nablus.

11. Read John 4:27-30 and 39-42. This woman is probably not the most respected person in town.

a) Why do you think the people listen to her?

b) What is the result of the Samaritans encounter with Jesus? (John 4:42)

12. If Jesus had treated the woman at the well according to the social taboos of his culture, how might the story have been different?

13. The next evangelist to visit Samaria is Philip (one of the seven deacons named in Acts 6:5). In Acts 8:12, what is their response to the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ?

a) They were _____, both men and _____

b) It is possible the Samaritans were already familiar with the name of Jesus. If so, who was the first evangelist to introduce them to the Messiah?

After 20 minutes Groups 1 & 2 come together to share your discoveries.

Closing Prayer

UNIT 4 - THE WOMEN WHO FOLLOWED JESUS

Objectives: To learn about Mary Magdalene and other women named in the Gospels, who followed Jesus and were among the first witnesses to his resurrection. To consider the "Question of the Three Marys."

Scriptures: Luke 8:1-3
Mark 15:40-16:11; Matthew 27:55-28:10;
Luke 23:49-24:12 and John 19:25-27; 20:1-18
Luke 7:36-50; Luke 8:2; and John 12:1-8

Opening Prayer

The Women Followers

1. As Jesus went through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God, who traveled with him?
 - a) the _____ (Luke 8:1), as well as ...
 - b) some _____ (Luke 8:2)
2. Three women are named and described:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____

They were with him as he traveled through the region of Galilee.

3. Now look at Mark 15:40-41. What does Mark tell us about the women at the cross? How far had they traveled with Jesus?

4. Read Luke 24:1-8. The two men in dazzling clothes ask the women if they remember how he told them, "...while he was still in _____, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they _____ his words..."
5. Compare with Luke 9:22. Jesus foretold his death and resurrection, with the same words. Is the women's presence specifically mentioned there? _____.

According to Luke 9:18, who was there with Jesus? _____.

- Unless the Twelve are specified, disciples may include women followers.

Women at the Cross, at the Tomb, at the Resurrection

Divide into four groups and assign each group to a Gospel. In gospel groups, take about 10 minutes to respond to questions 6-9 from one gospel only. Re-gather to share answers and discoveries with everyone.

6. Who were the women at the cross? Compare Mark, Matthew, Luke, John.

Mark 15:40

Matthew 27:56

Luke 23:49

John 19:38-42

*Salome may be the mother of James and John (the sons of Zebedee).

7. Which women saw where the body of Jesus was laid?

Mark 15:47

Matthew 27:61

Luke 23:55

John 19:38-42; 20:1

8. Who were the women at the tomb early on the third day?

Mark 16:1

Matthew 28:1

Luke 24:1, 10

John 20:1

9. Who actually saw the Risen Christ on Easter morning?

Mark 16:9

Matthew 28:9

Luke 24:10-12

John 20:16

10. According to Luke, Jesus makes three Easter day appearances to:

- 1) _____ (Luke 24:13, 18,31)
- 2) _____ (Luke 24:34)
- 3) _____ and their _____ (Luke 24:33, 36)

Were the women present for any of these appearances? See Luke 24:33.

11. An APOSTLE is one who is commissioned or 'sent' to deliver a message. Luke describes the Twelve as both disciples and apostles. Three out of four gospels agree that the first person to see the Risen Christ was _____. Why do you think she is known as "the apostle to the apostles?"

- A *bas relief* in the cathedral of *Vielle Major*, *Marseilles*, *France*, depicts *Mary Magdalene* preaching the gospel to the *princes of Marseilles*. The altarpiece was carved in 1481. According to *Provencal* tradition, this part of *France* was evangelized during the first century by a group of believers who arrived by boat (with no oars or sails). They had been put to sea this way during a persecution in *Palestine*. The group included *Mary Magdalene*, *Martha* and *Mary and Lazarus of Bethany*, *Salome* and *Mary the mother of James* and their servant, *Sarah*, as well as *Maximian* (one of the 72 disciples). Although no sure historical basis has been

determined for this missionary activity, there is some evidence that this area of southern France was evangelized in the first century.⁷

Question of the Three Marys

For Questions 12 and 13, divide again into your four gospel groups. After 5 minutes, return to share your discoveries with everyone.

12. WHO anoints Jesus? Mark 14:3-9 Matthew 26:6-13
Does she have a name?
What do we know about
her?

Luke 7:36-50 John 12:1-8

13. WHERE does this take place? In whose home? Mark 14:3-9 Matthew 26:6-13

Luke 7:36-50 John 12:1-8

14. The "unnamed woman" in Mark and Matthew anoints Jesus' head.

The woman in Luke is also unnamed, but she anoints Jesus' _____.

According to Mark and Matthew, this occurs in the home of "Simon the leper," but in the home of "Simon the _____," according to Luke.

The woman in Mark and Matthew is simply unnamed, but in Luke, she is identified as "a woman in the city, who was a _____."

- These are not necessarily referring to the same woman.

15. In John 11:2 Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus) is identified as "the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair." The anointing does not occur in John's Gospel, however, until the next chapter (John 12:1-8)—six days before the Passover, and after Lazarus

⁷ Carla Ricci, *MARY MAGDALENE AND MANY OTHERS: Women Who Followed Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p.151.

has been raised from the dead. The fact that John explains who she is before he tells the story may indicate that there was already confusion about the woman who anointed Jesus prior to the writing of John's gospel near the close of the first century.

16. Could John's "Mary of Bethany" be the same woman who anointed Jesus' feet in Luke 7:36-50?

- This is not likely, because Mary is clearly part of the family of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, who live in Bethany. Luke has Jesus visiting Martha's home in chapter 10:38-42. John brings Jesus together with Martha, Mary and Lazarus in chapter 11. Luke would not have confused Mary (Martha's sister) with a "woman in the city, who was a sinner."

17. Was the "sinner" in Luke 7:37 necessarily a prostitute, as is commonly assumed? _____

- The term used in Luke 7:37 is *HAMARTOLOS* "one who misses the mark."
- The Greek word for "prostitute" or "harlot" is *PORNE*.

18. Could the unnamed "woman who was a sinner" (Luke 7:37) be the same as Mary Magdalene from whom "seven demons had gone out" (Luke 8:2)? What do you think, and Why or Why Not?

- Luke first mentions Mary Magdalene in Luke 8:2, only two verses after the story of the unnamed woman whose many sins were forgiven (Luke 7:36-50). If she had been the same woman who anointed him, it seems likely Luke would have specified the connection.

19. Mary Magdalene has often been portrayed in art and drama as a prostitute whose sins were forgiven; she is often pictured with a jar of ointment, as if she anointed Jesus. What do the scriptures really tell us about Mary Magdalene in Luke 8:2?

- Many people jump to the conclusion that Mary was a sinner, because she had seven demons, and being a sinner, that she was also a prostitute.

20. In your opinion, is Mary Magdalene probably the same person as Mary of Bethany? _____

Closing Prayer

Optional Activity: SOLVE THE "WOMEN IN THE GOSPELS" CROSSWORD PUZZLE, page 51

UNIT 5 - WOMEN MINISTERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Objectives: To realize that women were present during the transition time between Easter and Pentecost and were an integral part of the early church. To understand the variety of leadership roles women filled. To understand why Paul instructed women to be silent in church.

Scriptures: Acts 1,2
1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Opening Prayer

The Acts of the Apostles

- The book of Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Written by Luke, the physician, to Theophilus (lover of God), the book of Acts tells the story of the beginning of the church, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the missionary journeys of Paul. Luke continues to note the presence of women among the believers, just as he reported women among Jesus' disciples or followers.

1. Read Acts 1:12-14. "they" includes the disciple/apostles, together with

In Acts 1:15, how many of these believers were waiting and praying in Jerusalem?

2. Jesus instructed the apostles not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. In Acts 1:8(NRSV) Jesus promised,

"But you will receive power when the _____

has come upon you; and you will be my _____

in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

3. In Acts 2:1-4(NRSV) Luke tells us "they were all together," when the Holy Spirit gives them the ability to speak in the languages of those visiting Jerusalem for the Festival of Pentecost (Jewish festival celebrating the Giving of the Law to Moses)

Who is 'they'? _____

4. Read aloud Acts 2:12-18 (NRSV). Peter explains that what is happening is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32).

*In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your _____ shall prophesy,*
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and _____,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

Would this scripture be fulfilled, if the Holy Spirit had been poured out only on men? _____

(* "To prophesy" means "to speak for God", "to preach".)

5. In Acts 5:14(NRSV), believers were being added to the Lord in great numbers, both men and _____. In Acts 8:3 Saul persecutes the believers by dragging off both men and _____ to prison.
6. Whose four daughters all had the gift of prophecy? See Acts 21:8-9

7. In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul offers a list of leadership capacities made possible by gifts of the Spirit: apostle; prophet; evangelist; shepherd/pastor/teacher (whose job it was to equip the saints—church members—for a work of service and to edify or build up the body). Here is a dictionary of Greek titles, naming leadership roles recognized by the early church.

Using your own words, write in definitions of each role:

APOSTLE - _____

- *APOSTOLOS*, apostle, missionary—someone who has been sent—a delegate of Jesus Christ and messenger of the gospel. Originally, the apostles were those who had known Jesus and followed him; their mission was to bear witness to his resurrection. The post-Easter apostles included at least the Twelve and James. Over time the concept evolved.

Paul considered himself the least of the apostles (1 Cor.15:9), because he had persecuted the church; but he was still an apostle, because he had seen the Risen Christ (1 Cor.9:1; Acts 9:1-5) and was sent to share the gospel with the Gentiles. In Antioch others were recognized as apostles, because of their spiritual gift for preaching and teaching (Acts 13:2). At the direction of the Holy Spirit some were called and set apart for ministry; hands were laid on them for prayer and they were sent out to preach. Paul recognized one woman, Junia, as being notable among the apostles. (Romans 16:7).

DEACON, MINISTER - _____

- *DIAKONOS*, the Greek term means servant. From the Greek term developed the English term deacon. Paul addresses his Letter to the Philippians (1:1) to the saints, bishops and deacons, and describes their qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8. Paul calls ministers of the gospel *diakonos*, including Christ, Apollos, Epaphras, Timothy, Tychicus, and himself. Phoebe, who delivered Paul's Letter to the Romans, is the *diakonos* or minister of the church at Cenchrea. Because she is a woman, translators have called her a deaconess, which is not a Greek word. The term used for Phoebe is the same *diakonos* used for male ministers.

BISHOP, OVERSEER - _____

- *EPISCOPOS*, translated bishop or overseer, one who cares for others. Rarely mentioned in the New Testament, this was a function of the early apostles (Acts 1:20) as they cared for the believers in Jerusalem; some churches had overseers within the local congregation. Not until the 2nd century did the office of bishop become part of a hierarchical system of church government. By the 3rd century bishops were treated like monarchs.

ELDER - _____

- *PRESBYTEROS*, elder or presbyter, meaning an older person entitled to respect. The term was borrowed from the Jewish synagogue, which was governed by a group of presbyters. After the office of bishop came into being, presbyters governed in their local churches under the guidance of the bishop. Catholic historians translate *presbyter* as *priest*, meaning a fully ordained clergy person.

Women and Silence

There is evidence in the Bible, in art, and in early church history that women were called and gifted to function in all these capacities, and did so. As the church grew, a higher level of organization was required. Once Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire (313), the church moved from believers' homes into basilicas, from the private to the public arena. According to "the Greco-Roman system of gendered virtues, men were assigned the virtues of courage, justice, and self-mastery. These were public virtues, essential for participation in the life of the community. Women were assigned the virtues of chastity, silence, and obedience."⁸ Women were no longer welcome as leaders once the church entered the public arena.

8. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is one text often used as an argument against women preaching, teaching, and leading in ministry. Scholars note that verses 34-35 are in parentheses and appear to be misplaced. Some ancient authorities did put verses 34-35 after verse 40, as an example of how "all things should be done decently and in order." Did Paul write these verses, or did a copyist insert them? If Paul did write these verses, do they really mean women should refrain from preaching? (See 1 Corinthians 11:5 for evidence that women did prophesy in the church.)

1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 (NRSV)

*(As in all the churches of the saints,
women should be silent in the churches.
For they are not permitted to speak,
but should be subordinate, as the law also says.
If there is anything they desire to know,
let them ask their husbands at home.
For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.
Or did the word of God originate with you?
Or are you the only ones it has reached?)*

9. It seems the Christians at Corinth are too eager to use their spiritual gifts all at once, creating a chaotic worship service. In 1 Cor.14:40, Paul insists that:

-
10. In 1 Cor.14:5, which gift is more important—prophecy or tongues? Why?
-

⁸ Karen Jo Torjesen, WHEN WOMEN WERE PRIESTS: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity (Harper San Francisco, 1993), p.115.

11. In 1 Corinthians 14:12 and 26, Paul wants them to use their gifts for what purpose?

12. In 1 Corinthians 14:29-32, Paul gives instructions for those who prophesy to take turns and be silent when one prophet is speaking, "for God (v.33) is a _____."

- *AKATASTASIA* is the Greek word translated 'disorder.' Paul also uses this word to describe some of the violent mobs he faced. It is a strong term Paul applies to the worship at Corinth; things were out of control, due to the competition to express their spiritual gifts, rather than be edified by them.

13. What kind of silence does Paul call for in the midst of the tumult of Corinthian worship?

- *SIGAO* (pronounced: si-GAH-o) was the Greek word for voluntary silence, the kind we ask for when we want people to quiet down and listen.

How would you re-write verse 34 to reflect this kind of silence?

14. Why were the women singled out; why are they not permitted to speak?

- *LALEO* is the term Paul uses for "speak" in verse 34. There are 30 different words for "speak" in the Greek language. Five of them mean to preach or proclaim, but Paul does not use any of the five. *Laleo* is a word that just means "talk." Apparently, women were talking in the worship service, adding to the confusion. Paul does not ask women to refrain from preaching, but from *laleo*.
- Remember, women were not usually educated in ancient society. They had never been taught how to be quiet and listen in school. Now that they were allowed to worship with their husbands, they probably had a lot of questions to ask.

15. Why should women "be subordinate, as the law also says" (1 Cor.14:34)?

- *HUPOTASSOMAI* is the Greek word translated *subordinate*. Subordinate in English has unfortunate connotations, because it implies being dominated or under supervision. But *hypotassomai* means a voluntary attitude of being responsive to the needs of others. Paul uses the same word for the whole church in Ephesians 5:21, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."
- While we are aware of no ancient law, which requires women to be subordinate, cultural expectations of women were such that Greek wives were expected to practice the virtues of chastity, silence, and obedience. A woman's honor was her shame. Paul is definitely not speaking here of the Law of Moses.
- Alternatively, John Bristow suggests that Paul may be referring to the law of love—the new commandment Jesus gave his disciples to "love one another even as I have loved you." Practicing the law of love would certainly encourage a voluntary attitude of being responsive to the needs of others.⁹

How would you re-phrase what Paul has said about the attitude women should have toward others in church?

16. Imagine that you are a leader in the Corinthian church. Write a letter to Paul about what happened in worship last Sunday (describe the disorder). Tell Paul how you plan to handle the situation (using the ideas he has put forth in 1 Cor. 14).
-
-

Closing Prayer

Optional Activity: SOLVE THE "WOMEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH" CROSSWORD PUZZLE, page 53

⁹ John Temple Bristow, *WHAT PAUL REALLY SAID ABOUT WOMEN* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 65-66.

UNIT 6 - NOT-OF-THIS-WORLD CHRISTIANITY

Objectives: To understand Christianity as the counter-culture of the ancient world. Now that women believers were considered spiritually equal and one in Christ, it became important for them to study God's word, in order to be able to counter the many false teachings that were common in their culture.

Scriptures: Galatians 3:27-28 & 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Opening Prayer

False Teachings in Galatia

Paul's Letter to the Galatians has been called "the Magna Charta of Christian liberty." Paul wrote to the church in Galatia to explain why Gentiles need not become Jews first in order to be considered Christian.

1. Judaizers in Galatia were teaching that all Christians must keep the Law of Moses, in addition to believing in Jesus Christ. Paul disagrees. In Galatians 2:16 Paul insists that a person is made right with God or justified

"...not by the works of the law, but through
 _____ in _____."

2. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3:27) What does it mean to be clothed in Christ? (See also Colossians 3:10.)
-

3. According to Galatians 3:28 since we have now "put on" Christ,

"There is no longer _____ nor _____,
 there is no longer _____ nor _____,
 there is no longer _____ and _____;
 for all of you are _____ in Christ Jesus." (NRSV),

4. Jewish men were taught to pray:
 "Blessed art thou who hast not made me a Gentile,
 Blessed art thou who hast not made me an uneducated man [or slave],
 Blessed art thou who hast not made me a woman."¹⁰

¹⁰ Palestine Talmud Ber.136b; quoted by Aida Besancon Spencer in *BEYOND THE CURSE: Women Called to Ministry* (Hendrickson, 1985), p. 64.

- Jewish men, who were circumcised according to the Law of Moses, were part of God's covenant people, which in turn, gave them the right to study Torah at the synagogue. Gentiles, slaves and women were excluded from this privilege, and therefore, were not educated (unless they received training at home).

The three great social divisions in ancient times are identified in Gal.3:28.

- a) between Jews and _____,
 - b) between _____ and free,
 - c) between men and _____.
- Paul was in no position to change the entire social order of the ancient world, but he did believe that these social divisions should no longer be practiced in the church.
 - If Gentiles did not need to be circumcised in order to become Christians (Galatians 5:6), then Christian slaves ought to be treated with respect by their Christian masters. There is no longer any difference between them, now that they are in Christ.

5. Paul also asserts that "there is no longer male and female" among the baptized. Here he does not use the word 'or', perhaps because male and female are both needed to reflect God's image and therefore should not be separated (1 Cor. 11:11-12). Of course, there are still differences between males and females, but spiritually speaking, men and women are now ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.

a) Women were not allowed to study Torah at the synagogue. How did their new oneness in Christ change this attitude for women in the early church?

b) Jewish women were not allowed to worship in the men's court at the Temple. How was this practice changed in the early church to reflect their new spiritual equality?

c) Paul was appointed an apostle to the _____.

d) On Pentecost God poured out his Spirit "even upon my _____, both men and women" (Acts 2:18).

False Teachings in Ephesus

After establishing the church at Ephesus, Paul continued his missionary journeys, leaving Timothy in charge. He writes later to encourage the young

minister in his uphill battle against false teachings common in Ephesus. (Some scholars doubt that Paul was the only or sole author, but the Pastorals are nonetheless part of the canon and therefore "God-inspired and useful for teaching" (2 Tim.3:16).

Goddess Worship at Ephesus in the First Century

- The largest temple to the Greek goddess, Artemis (Roman: Diana) was located at Ephesus. The Chief Priestess was served by hundreds of sacred priests and priestesses (called *melissae—bees*). This area of Asia Minor had been conquered by female Amazon warriors many centuries earlier. Women still enjoyed dominance over men in religious matters.
- Cybele, the Mountain Mother, was also worshiped in Ephesus. She and Artemis shared many attributes, but maintained separate identities. Pagans in Ephesus taught that women were superior to men and should rule over men. They believed Artemis was able to give birth to children without the aid of a man. Over time, these two "mothers of the living" became assimilated with Eve in the Jewish creation story, and evolved into Gnosticism.

The Problem in the Church at Ephesus

There had been Jews living in Asia Minor since the third century before Christ. Many Jews assimilated the culture around them, while the culture around them adopted and adapted the wonderful Bible stories of the Jews. According to Paul, "Certain people" were teaching "different doctrines," and occupying themselves with "myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith" (1 Tim. 1:3-6). Hymenaeus and Alexander have even been "shipwrecked" in the faith (1 Tim. 1:19-20). Hymenaeus and Philetus have been teaching that the resurrection has already taken place (2 Tim. 2:17-18). 1 Tim. 6:20 refers to the "contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge" and 2 Tim. 4:4 complains about those who "go astray after myths." These concerns cited in the Pastoral Letters all point to GNOSTICISM.

Gnostic Beliefs

Gnostics believed that matter is evil and spirit is good. Therefore, the Creator of the physical world must be evil. They believed there is a good God who created a series of emanations, called aeons, each one farther from the original God and more evil than the one before it. The last emanation created

the physical world we live in. To reach the original Spirit (sometimes called *Authentia*), one had to learn the names of all the emanations and the passwords required in order to travel through them by secret knowledge (*GNOSIS*). Since human bodies were considered evil, some Gnostics taught that we should abstain from food and sex, because the physical body only served as a tomb for the spirit. Gnostics did not believe in the Resurrection.

Gnostics distorted the Creation story by making Eve the Enlightener. They taught that *ADAM* was androgynous (both male and female, physically) until he/she was cut in two; then *she* gave life to him. Eve was the giver of knowledge and spiritual awakening. Gnostics called the serpent in the Garden of Eden 'the Instructor'. They believed that Eve ate the fruit and gave it to her husband, because it was good for knowledge (meaning *GNOSIS*, or secret knowledge; as opposed to 'the knowledge of good and evil' as described in Genesis).

The Prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12

On the basis of 1 Timothy 2:12, some contemporary Christians refuse to allow women to preach, teach adult men or be ordained to serve as pastors. What did Paul *really* say and why? Could his words have been carefully chosen to refute Gnostic teachings?

6. Paul sets the theme in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 by urging that prayers be made for everyone, "*so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.*"
 - The Greek word *HESUCHIOS* means "a meek and quiet spirit which is precious in God's sight. The verb form is also used in 1 Thessalonians 4:11 to indicate a lifestyle, which is quiet, orderly and industrious."¹¹
7. In 1 Timothy 2:8 Paul asks the men to pray, "lifting up holy hands without anger or argument," and the women to dress modestly "with good works" to show their "reverence for God."
 - Greek *ANER* means men or husbands; *GUNE* means women or wives.

Paul wants all the Ephesians to cultivate an attitude of prayerful harmony.

¹¹ Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), p. 68.

8. 1 Timothy 2:11 (NRSV)

"Let a woman learn in silence with full submission."

- *HESUCHIA* is the Greek term here translated silence. It is the same word used in verse 2 (above) to indicate the quiet, peaceable life all Christians should aspire to. It means a restful, meditative silence in which the believer is listening for God's truth—not disagreeing, but listening respectfully. *Hesuchia* was a valued trait cultivated by students preparing to become rabbis.
- *HUPOTASSOMAI* is the Greek term for submission, sometimes translated subordination. The Greek term does not in any way imply male superiority. Remember, in Christ men and women are spiritually equal. *Hupotassomai* is a voluntary willingness to be responsive to the needs of others.

Here is a paraphrase of 1 Timothy 2:11, using more respectful language.

Women should be allowed to learn quietly by listening for God: let them listen respectfully, so others too may learn.

The wonder of 1 Timothy 2, verse 11 is that Paul is saying **WOMEN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEARN**. Jewish women were not allowed to study Torah at the synagogue or Temple, but Paul realized the danger of not educating Christian women in the faith. Without knowing the word of God through the study of scripture, women in Ephesus could be easily led astray by the false teachings of pagans or Gnostics. Therefore, Paul advises Timothy to gather the believers, both men and women, to learn about the faith by studying the actual Hebrew scriptures. By studying the Bible itself, they would be able to learn the difference between false teachings and the truth.

9. 1 Timothy 2:12 (NRSV)

*"I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent (*hesuchia*)."*

Does this verse really mean women should not be allowed to preach or teach or provide pastoral leadership in the church? Or is this prohibition directed at a specific problem Timothy was having in Ephesus?

- a) In Acts 18:24-26 who is it that instructs Apollos more accurately in the way of God? _____ and Aquila.

This takes place at Ephesus, so clearly the prohibition against women teaching cannot have been universal.

b) IF Paul had wanted to prohibit women from teaching men altogether, he could have written:

OUK EPITREPO GYNAIKI DIDASKEIN ANDRON
nor do I permit a woman to teach a man.

(*ANDRON* would be in the accusative case, because man would be the recipient of the woman's teaching; however, 'man' in 1 Tim. 2:12 is *ANDROS* (genitive case) and is therefore related to the other verb (*authenthein*).

What Paul actually wrote is this:

GYNAIKE DE DIDASKEIN OUK EPITREPO, OUDE AUTHENTEIN ANDROS

In this sentence *AUTHENTEIN ANDROS* is what a woman is not supposed to teach. "The word *didaskein* (to teach) is frequently accompanied by an infinitive which defines what was taught. For instance, the disciples said, 'Lord, teach (*didaskein*) us to pray' (Luke 11:1.¹² What was it that Paul was not allowing women to teach? *AUTHENTEIN*. Given some of the Gnostic ideas being taught in Ephesus, *authenthein* could refer to the idea of woman being the author of man."¹³ That particular false teaching certainly needed to be silenced in the church at Ephesus.

10.1 Timothy 2:12 (NRSV)

*I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man:
she is to keep silent (*hesuchia*).*

- *AUTHENTEIN* is the Greek verb here translated 'to have authority over.' This term is not used anywhere else in the entire Bible. The usual term for authority is *EXOUSIA*, meaning the kind of authority one is authorized to exercise.
- KJV translates *authenthein* as 'to usurp authority.' In ancient Greek the term *authentēs* meant a murderer, one who takes life that is not his to take. But the meaning of the word evolved, so that by the 2nd century *authenthein* also meant to domineer or have power over.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to translate *AUTHENTEIN* definitively. It will be up to each believer to decide which idea makes the most sense, as we

¹² Ibid., p.191.

¹³ Ibid., A Lesson in Greek Grammar, pp. 189-192.

seek to understand 1 Timothy 2:12. IF we translate *authenthein* 'to have authority over', then Paul may be addressing the female-dominated culture in Ephesus and trying to encourage mutual submission of women and men under Christ (Ephesians 5:21). Scholer and Spencer both understand *authenthein* to mean a misuse of authority.

- David Scholer. "The term translated 'to have authority' (*authenthein*) occurs only here in the New Testament and was rarely used in the Greek language. It is not the usual word for positive, active authority. Rather, it is a negative term, which refers to the usurpation and abuse of authority. Thus, the prohibition is against some abusive activity, but not against the appropriate exercise of teaching and authority in the church. The clue to the abuse implied is found within the heretical activity combatted in 1-2 Timothy. The heretics evidently had a deviant approach to sexuality (1Tim. 4:3; 5:11-15) and a particular focus on deluding women, who were generally uneducated (2 Tim. 3:6-7)."¹⁴
 - Aida Besancon Spencer. "*Authentein* is similar in concept to the negative type of leadership Jesus portrays by the persons ruling over the Gentiles (Matt. 20:25). ...To domineer over a man here...opposes to be in silence. Women are to become a part of the entire educational process—one of "silence." Women are to be calm and to have restraint and respect and to affirm their teachers rather than to engage in an autocratic authority which destroys its subjects. Paul here is not prohibiting women from preaching nor praying nor having an edifying authority nor pastoring. He is simply prohibiting them from teaching and using their authority in a destructive way."¹⁵
11. *AUTHEINTEIN ANDROS* could also be translated as 'to be the author or originator of man.' This translation speaks to a specific Gnostic teaching, which then continues to be corrected in verses 1 Timothy 2:13-14.
- Richard and Catherine Kroeger. "The original sense [of *authenthes*] is 'one who accomplishes an act, who is its author, who is responsible.'¹⁶ ..."If we were to read 1 Timothy 2:12 as 'I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself author of man,' we can understand the content of the forbidden teaching as being the notion that woman was responsible for the creation of man. We recall that a preoccupation with controversial

¹⁴ David M. Scholer, *A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR EQUAL PARTNERSHIP: Women and Men in the Ministry of the Church* (Valley Forge: American Baptist Women in Ministry, rev. 1997), p. 14.

¹⁵ Aida Besancon Spencer, *BEYOND THE CURSE*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁶ Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN*, p. 99.

genealogies, the matter of origins, was one of the principal characteristics of the opponents in the Pastorals. In this case, we would understand the [Greek conjunction] *oude* as linking together two connected ideas [*didaskein*, to teach, and *authenthein*—what it is she should not be allowed to teach]. Then the thought might flow thus: 'I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures]. For Adam was created first, then Eve.'¹⁷

12. The Ephesian women may have been bringing up common Gnostic ideas in Bible study. If they were not supposed to claim that a woman was the author of man, then verses 13-14 can also be seen as refuting Gnostic teaching.

1 Timothy 2:13-14(NRSV)

*For Adam was formed first, then Eve;
and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived
and became a transgressor.*

- a) Are these statements in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 true to the actual scriptures in Genesis? YES? or NO?
How do they differ from Gnostic beliefs about Adam and Eve?

[According to Gnostic beliefs, Eve gave birth to Adam. Eve was enlightened, not deceived. She brought *gnosis*, not sin.]

- b) Is Paul suggesting that women are not to be trusted, because Eve was responsible for the original sin? Who is responsible for sin according to Romans 5:12-19 and 1Corinthians 15:21-22?

13. In spite of The Fall, women will be saved, but Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:15 present a difficult challenge to interpret.

*Yet, she will be saved through childbearing,
provided they continue in faith and love
and holiness, with modesty.*

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 103.

It is hard to imagine Paul suggesting that women will be saved by bearing children, when he clearly believes that we are saved by faith and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Could 1 Timothy 2:15 have been intended to refute the false teachings of the Gnostics? What do you think?

- Gnostics believed that light from the highest God had descended into the evil world by being trapped in human beings. Through secret knowledge people were supposed to ascend through the *archons* to return these divine sparks to their original source, and so restore completeness to God. Both procreation and resurrection were ways of further trapping the divine light particles in evil matter, and so postponed the ending of the evil physical universe. Since bringing children into the world was considered evil, some Gnostics taught that women could only be saved by becoming males.

14. By contrast, what are the female attributes Paul extols in verse 15?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1) _____ | 2) _____ |
| 3) _____ | 4) _____ |
| 5) _____ | |

15.1 Timothy 2:15 has also been translated "she will be saved through the birth of the Child", referring to Jesus Christ. However, the mother of Jesus is not the focus of this discussion; *she* refers to Eve. *They* in the next part of the sentence probably refers to the women believers in the church at Ephesus. That they will be saved *through* childbearing does not mean they are saved because they bear children. It means that women who bear children will also be saved, just as men are—by faith ... regardless of what the Gnostics teach!

16. It is clearly possible to translate and interpret 1 Timothy 2:11-15 without using it to prohibit women from serving in pastoral ministry. Write here your own version of 1 Timothy 2:12, using the ideas which you found most helpful.

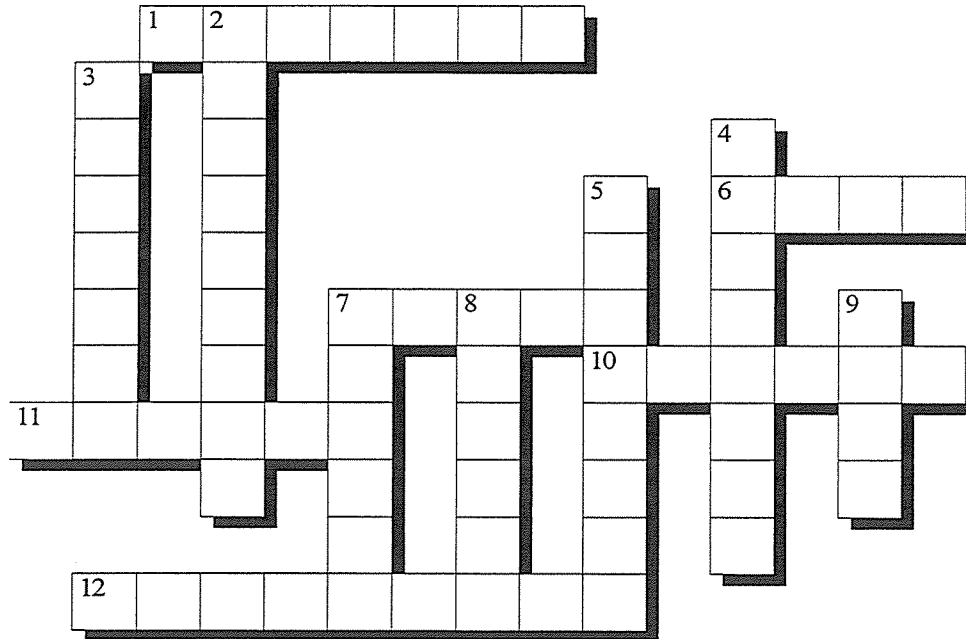
Closing Prayer

Optional Activities: Read A LETTER FROM JUNIA for a plausible story version about the first century female apostle, Junia. Share a storytelling presentation of A VISIT FROM JUNIA as a closing program.

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Women in the Gospels



ACROSS

- 1 Another mother at the cross, she is identified as the mother of the sons of _____ (Matthew 27:56). Her sons were fishermen who became disciples, James and John.
- 6 Prophet who recognized the redemption of Jerusalem in the infant Jesus (Luke 2:38)
- 7 Mary, the mother of James and _____ (Mark 15:40; Matthew 27:56) was one of the women at the cross, who had followed him in Galilee.
- 10 Among the women standing near the cross were Mary, the wife of _____ (John 19:25)
- 11 Sister of Mary and Lazarus; lived in Bethany and welcomed Jesus to her home (Luke 38-42; John 11:1)
- 12 Cured of seven demons; a follower of Jesus, she was there at the cross, at his burial, and at the empty tomb. She is known as the Apostle to the apostles. Mary _____ (Mark 15:40; Matthew 27:56; Luke 8:2, 24:10; and John 19:25)

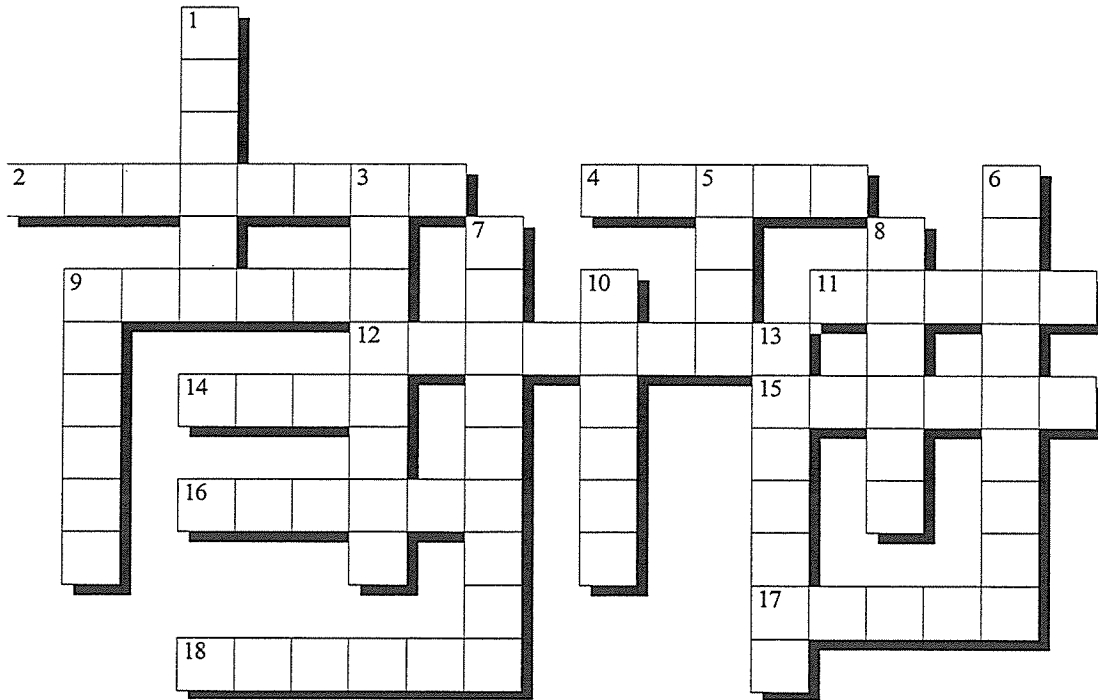
DOWN

- 2 Wife of Zechariah, mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1:57-64)
- 3 Luke includes her among those who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and provided for his needs (Luke 8:1-3)
- 4 What Mary Magdalene called Jesus, when she first saw him risen from the dead; means Teacher. (John 20:16)
- 5 Title for a follower of Jesus.
- 7 Wife of Herod's steward, Chuza; one of the women who traveled with Jesus and the twelve, providing for them out of their resources (Luke 8:1-3)
- 8 A woman only Mark names among those at the cross (Mark 15:40); she may also be the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John.
- 9 Mother of Jesus, present also at the cross (John 19:25)

Across Answers: 1-Zebedee; 6-Anna; 7-Joses; 10-Clopas; 11-Martha; 12-Magdalene

Down Answers: 2-Elizabeth; 3-Susanna; 4-Rabbouni; 5-Disciple; 7-Joanna; 8-Salome; 9-Mary

Women in the Early Church



ACROSS

- 2 To preach or bring an edifying message to the church; something women clearly did (I Corinthians 11:5)
 4 Leader of a house church in Corinth (I Corinthians 1:11)
 9 Term translated minister or servant--from the Greek 'diakonos' (Romans 15:8)
 11 Honored by Paul as a notable apostle and fellow Jew, who was imprisoned with him and was in Christ before Paul was (Romans 16:7).
 12 A worker in the Lord at the church in Rome (Romans 16:12)
 14 Paul greets her by saying _____ "has worked very hard among you" (Romans 16:6)
 15 Wife of Aquila, who traveled with Paul to Ephesus, whom Paul greets in Romans 16:3.
 16 Along with Philemon and Archippus, she was a leader of a house church that met in their home in Colossae (Philemon 2)
 17 A seller of purple dye who hosted the Philippian church in her home; the first to be baptized in Europe.(Acts 16:14)
 18 A woman Paul urged to settle a disagreement (Philippians 4:2)

DOWN

- 1 Leader of a house church in Colossae (Colossians 4:15)
 3 One of two women leaders in the church at Philippi whom Paul urged to "agree in the Lord."(Philippians 4:2)
 5 Grandmother of Timothy, who nurtured his early faith (2 Timothy 1:5)
 6 A tentmaker and teacher of Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:26)
 7 Mentioned in Paul's letter to Romans (16:12) as a worker in the Lord.
 8 Mother of Timothy who gave him a sincere faith (2 Timothy 1:5)
 9 A disciple in Joppa whose name was Tabitha or _____ in Greek; a maker of clothing; she died and was raised from the dead by Peter (Acts 9:36)
 10 Minister (Deacon) at Cenchreae who delivers Paul's letter to the church in Rome prior to his arrival (Romans 16:1).
 13 The title given to one who followed Jesus and then saw the Risen Lord and was sent to bear witness; a missionary (Acts 1:26)

Across Answers: 2-Prophecy; 4-Chloe; 9-Deacon; 11-Junia; 12-Tryphosa; 14-Mary; 15-Prisca; 16-Apphia; 17-Lydia; 18-Euodia

Down Answers: 1-Nympha; 3-Syntyche; 5-Lois; 6-Priscilla; 7-Tryphaena; 8-Eunice; 9-Dorcas; 10-Phoebe; 13-Apostle

Section II

A Letter from Junia

A storytelling resource
to complement *Junia: A Bible Study* exploring Biblical
foundations for calling women to ministry and leadership
in the church

— by the Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane

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INTRODUCTION TO A LETTER FROM JUNIA

A Letter from Junia is a work of historical fiction, modeled after the New Testament epistles and designed as a letter from the Apostle Junia written to the Church of the early 21st Century. In Jewish literature, *A Letter from Junia* would be called *haggadah*, because it is a story told about a real Biblical personage. Junia (who was an actual historical person) unveils the historical and cultural conditions of life for women in the first century. While the biographical portions of her story are hypothetical, they are plausible, given what is known about women and culture in antiquity, and in keeping with the information in Romans 16:7. *A Letter from Junia* suggests that our present conflicts over the role of women in the church are as ancient as the scriptures themselves. Junia invites us to embrace the new life Jesus redeemed us for and encourages us to live by the universal truths we find in the letters of Paul to the early churches.

According to *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Junia was "the only woman called an apostle (Romans 16:7) in the New Testament."¹ Clearly, she was not the only woman to have seen the resurrected Jesus and then be sent on a mission to tell the good news. The gospels all agree that women were the first witnesses to the resurrection. But Junia may have been the only one, or else one of only a few women, who was also ordained for this purpose by the laying on of hands. In the early days of the Christian Way, apostles were defined as witnesses to the resurrection who were sent out as missionaries. They were authorized to preach and teach, either by Jesus himself or by the laying on of hands. Paul refers to Junia as a compatriot and fellow prisoner for the gospel. He specifies Junia as a noteworthy apostle who was in Christ before he was, and sends greetings to Andronicus and Junia at the end of his letter to the Romans (16:7).

In some versions of the Bible, the name in Romans 16:7 was recorded as Junias, and was considered to be a masculine name. However, the name Junias is only hypothetical; Junias is not a name we find in ancient literature. On the other hand, the female Latin name, Junia, is found over 250 times in Greek and Latin inscriptions found in the city of Rome alone. Therefore scholars today generally interpret the name as feminine. What's more, church fathers—including Origen, John Chrysostom, and Jerome—all identify the apostle Junia as a woman. "Oh how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!"²

¹ Bernadette J. Brooten, "Junia" THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE BIBLE, Edited by Bruce J. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 405.

² Chrysostom, trans. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1956), 11.555.

The probable fact that at least one woman did serve in the role of apostle in the early church provides a light in the darkness of later confusion about the role of women as leaders in the early church. **Clearly, in the church of Paul's day, women did prophesy and lead in prayer; women often hosted the Lord's Day celebration in their own homes, served communion and led the believers in worship.** In the first generation church, women were treated as Jesus had treated them—as persons created in the image of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and set free to live a new life. Until Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, churches met in the homes of believers, where women exercised leadership. In the fourth century, the Church entered the public sphere by building basilicas and establishing a hierarchical church government. Women were no longer welcomed as leaders once the church had been brought out of hiding and had established itself as a visible entity.

Some Christians still believe the Bible prohibits women from serving as pastors.

What might the Apostle Junia have to say to those who struggle with these Biblical questions in the Church of today?

The Rev. Dr. Susan E. Crane, Advocate for Women in Ministry

A LETTER FROM JUNIA

Junia, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of new life which is in Christ Jesus,
To the Christian churches of the early 21st Century and forward:
Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I send this message from the eternal realm, where I pray without ceasing for you who are in Christ, for you who still struggle on earth as you wait with longing for the kingdom of our Lord. I thank God that the work of salvation begun by the apostles in the first century is still being completed among you who live in modern times. I trust that the same gift of God, which was in me through the "laying on of hands," is still working in you to bring about the fulfillment of God's kingdom. "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God."¹ Indeed, we hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and someday all people will become children of God." Through Christ we are all redeemed; in Christ let us all be one—equal to serve!

In the beginning, "God created humankind in his image... male and female he created them."² Because the first humans wanted to be like gods, knowing good and evil, they fell out of right relationship with their Creator.³ Sin and death became part of our human experience.⁴ As a result, the relationship between the man and the woman also deteriorated into one in which the male ruled over the female. This power imbalance in human relationships reflected the parallel brokenness in our relationship with God. This was not the way God created us; broken relationships were the consequence of our choosing to sin.

In the fullness of time, God sent his Son Jesus⁵ to earth to overcome the separation between people and God, the separation caused by sin. By giving his life in love to forgive our sins, Jesus has reconciled us to God once and for all. Because of Christ's atonement, it is now possible for all believers to live in right relationship with God once again. When the glory of the children of God is fully revealed, people will also be in right relationship with each other. We will all be one in Christ Jesus, for Christ has redeemed us by his blood to become a new creation—to live a new life, in *right* relationship with God and also with each other. "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of

¹ Romans 8:19-20, NRSV. All quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

² Genesis 1:27

³ Genesis 3:6

⁴ Genesis 3:3; 22-24

⁵ John 3:16-17

slavery."⁶ If I tell you my story, perhaps these words will come to mean as much to you as they have meant for me.

I was born into a Jewish family in the land of Judea. I can remember once going to the Temple in Jerusalem with my parents. I was just a little girl. We traveled for many days to reach the great Temple and climbed many steps to enter the sanctuary. My father went into the Court of the Israelites to worship, but I had to stay behind with my mother in the Women's Court. I was not a part of what was happening inside. I could only hear some of the prayers and sing the songs I had already learned back home. In my village at the synagogue it was the same. The girls sat with their mothers behind a screen. Even as a child I yearned to feel closer to God.

Before I reached young womanhood my family fell on hard times and no longer had the means to support a daughter, never mind accumulate a dowry that would someday make me marriageable. My father had no choice; he had to sell me into slavery. Now that I had a new owner, Junius, my name was changed to Junia, the feminine form of my master's name. That is how girls were named in those days. Even the daughters of Roman citizens were given only their father's name. If a man had four daughters, all four of them were given the same name—the feminine version of their father's name!⁷

Jesus of Nazareth began his ministry when I was still a slave in the Junion household in Galilee. Jesus came from Nazareth; he was a wise Teacher who spoke with genuine authority. He was very kind and had compassion on people who were hurting or sick. He liked poor people and treated us slaves as if we were precious in God's eyes. One day I was in a crowd, standing quite close to the Teacher. I had burned my hand in the fire that morning and the skin still felt like it was on fire. Perhaps he could see the pain in my face. I knew Jesus could heal people, but I didn't dare to ask for his help. After all, I was just a girl. I was a "nobody," and Jesus was an important man. It was against the Law for a woman to speak to a man in public. Secretly, I prayed for Jesus' healing touch. Imagine my joy when all at once the pain and burning left my fingers. I looked up at Jesus and he spoke to me. "Your faith has healed you, my daughter." At last, my prayers were answered. God was drawing me closer through the love of Jesus.

After that I never missed an opportunity to go hear Jesus proclaim the good news. I was always eager to witness another miracle. Shortly after my healing, I completed my term of servitude and was freed. I decided to follow Jesus. There were other women who followed Jesus, too. Some—like Mary Magdalene—had also

⁶ Galatians 5:1

⁷ See June Stephenson, *Women's Roots*, Chapter 2 "Antiquity."

been healed by Jesus. Others were women of means, who provided for Jesus out of their resources⁸—like Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza. Together, we did whatever we could to care for the Teacher who had given us a whole new life.

Wherever Jesus and his disciples traveled, the circle of women accompanied them. From Galilee to Jerusalem, we women were there to listen to his teachings and witness his miracles. We were there in the crowd when he rode into Jerusalem, waving palm branches to welcome our long-awaited messiah. We were there at the Last Supper, not reclining at table with the Twelve, but at other tables in the large upper room where we had all gathered to remember the Passover. Jesus' words at that meal again warned us that "the Son of man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified and on the third day rise again."⁹ Later, at the empty tomb, the angels would ask the women if they remembered how he told them these things, while he was still in Galilee?¹⁰

After the Passover meal, Jesus and his disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. The women remained in the large upper room. While he was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Temple guard came to arrest Jesus. The charges against him were all brought by false witnesses who couldn't even agree with each other, but the religious authorities were determined to have him put to death anyway. Maybe they were angry, because Jesus dared to treat women with such love and respect. I didn't really understand, but I did know I could never forsake the man who touched me with God's healing love. I had been given a whole new life. I wanted nothing more than to follow Jesus—if need be, into death.

After his arrest the disciples scattered; one by one they drifted back to the upper room and told us what had happened. They hid there to keep from being arrested themselves. In the morning, God gave us the strength to walk with Jesus to Golgotha, to keep a prayer vigil at the foot of the cross. We were there when they crucified my Lord. We were there when they laid him in the tomb. And on the morning of the third day a few of the women went back to anoint his body, only to discover the tomb was empty. Mary Magdalene was the first to see him alive again. And Jesus sent her—the very first apostle!—to tell the others he was alive forevermore. The Twelve did not believe her, not until He appeared to them in person, too. I did though, even before I saw Him.

A though I was a long way from home and had no idea what life held in store for me next, I was now part of a new family, the family of believers. So, I remained with the others, praying and waiting. One day our Risen Lord

⁸ Luke 8:3

⁹ Luke 24:7

¹⁰ Luke 24:6; Luke 9:22

appeared to more than 500 of us¹¹ to prove he was alive forevermore. You cannot imagine the profound sense of joy that filled us all. An intense desire kept growing in us to go out into the world and tell the truth that Jesus lives! Among the believers present that day when the Risen Lord appeared to his followers was a man named Andronicus, from Galilee. Andronicus was the son of a Jewish mother and a Roman soldier, who had grown up studying Torah at the synagogue. Like me, Andronicus was convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. Like me, Andronicus had been following Jesus almost from the beginning of his ministry, from Galilee to Jerusalem. On the way to Jerusalem, we had both been baptized and now we were betrothed. When Jesus sent the seventy-two out ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go, Andronicus and I went together as workers into the harvest field.

On the 40th day after his resurrection Jesus appeared to us on the Mount of Olives for the last time, until His Coming. He told us not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."¹² Then he commissioned us to be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."¹³ And so it was that Andronicus and I became apostles, who would indeed serve as his witnesses to the ends of the earth!

About 120 of us believers¹⁴ remained in Jerusalem, as Jesus had told us to do, just before he ascended into heaven. Then on the day of Pentecost, while we were praying together, suddenly there came a sound like the rush of a mighty wind, and we were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave us ability.¹⁵ We knew then that God's power had come to us from on high, just as Jesus promised. We knew that our awesome God had indeed fulfilled the prophecy, which was spoken by the prophet Joel:

*"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. ...Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."*¹⁶

That very day I began to prophesy to people in the street about the truth of Jesus Christ and the good news of his forgiving love.

We believers cared for one another; everything we owned was held in common. Men and women worshiped, and prayed, and sang hymns together—in the same room!

¹¹ I Corinthians 15:6

¹² Acts 1:5

¹³ Acts 1:8

¹⁴ Acts 1:13-15

¹⁵ Acts 2:1-4

¹⁶ Acts 2:17-18

We worshiped in believers' homes. Of course, we also continued to worship at the Temple each Sabbath, but on Sunday mornings we would gather to celebrate the Lord's Supper and the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. To worship this way made me feel like I was in the very presence of Jesus again . . . Jesus who had treated all people with love and respect—including women, sinners, the sick and the mentally ill. Jesus had given me a whole new life. It gave me great joy to share that new life with others.

For many the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection was truly good news; thousands repented, received his forgiveness and were baptized. Others, though, rejected the gift, because Jesus threatened their security or worldly power. More than once, our sharing of the gospel landed us in jail for a time. On one such occasion, we met Paul, the notorious persecutor of Christians, who had been radically transformed by an encounter with the Risen Christ on the Road to Damascus. As compatriots, or fellow-Jews, we quickly found common ground. Our love for the Lord also made us fellow-apostles—we because we had been part of his discipleship team from the beginning, and Paul because he had been commissioned as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul honored the power of the Holy Spirit at work in me and Andronicus; he could see how the gifts of the Spirit were bearing fruit in our ministry. Clearly, we had all been set apart for the work of the gospel. Together we prayed that night in the prison cell, seeking God's direction for our lives. Paul laid hands on us both and prayed for the continued blessing of the Holy Spirit on our ministry. He asked God to give us a spirit of power and love and self-control,¹⁷ so we might preach the good news boldly for the sake of Christ. It was time to leave Jerusalem and carry the gospel to distant shores. Andronicus and I believed God was directing us to visit Rome, where we might serve as a witness to the Gentiles. Paul also yearned to preach in Rome, but he would not arrive for several more years.

Once in Rome, we found other Jews who believed Jesus was the Messiah. Together, we helped build up the church until it became a growing community of believers. Jesus was truly good news for the Gentiles in Rome, who were there from every part of the empire. We were all kept busy teaching new converts in the faith. When Phoebe¹⁸ arrived with a letter to the Christians in Rome, we rejoiced to learn that Paul was on his way for a visit. In time, he came, and we were blessed to be able to provide for his needs. We continued to study and pray with him during his last years among us, once again as a prisoner for the Lord.¹⁹

¹⁷ 2 Timothy 1:7

¹⁸ Phoebe was the deacon or minister of the church at Cenchræe. She is believed to be the one who carried Paul's letter to the church at Rome.

¹⁹ Ephesians 3:1

It was the Apostle Paul who wrote in his letter to the Galatians, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." The first time I heard him say this, I was transported back to my childhood. I remembered how my father used to pray every day, thanking God that he was not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.²⁰ Should I still feel ashamed that I was created female? That I had been sold into slavery to pay my father's debt? And that now I associate freely with Gentile believers? Or was Paul suggesting that in Jesus Christ even these traditional ways of thinking had been turned upside down? If so, Paul's new theology about Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women was a radical departure from the cultural expectations of my day.

In the ancient world, women were under the jurisdiction of men. Women had no rights. We were considered the property of either our fathers or our husbands. Unless a woman was married, it was difficult for her to survive in my world; either she could remain in her father's house, or become a slave or prostitute. Widows and orphans were taken in by relatives or received charity. By law, women were required to live in dependence upon men.²¹ Women were not even allowed to speak to men in public; they were to remain silent. They were not encouraged to study Torah at the synagogue. For the most part, women in Judea did not run businesses, or own property, unless inherited from their fathers (in the absence of any sons). Nor could women worship inside the Temple sanctuary (Court of the Israelites), not even with their own husbands.²² In a court of law a woman's testimony did not count.

In a world like this, you can imagine how wonderful it was for me to learn that the Messiah Jesus loved *me*—a woman—loved me enough to die for me, loved me enough to give me a whole new life! I wanted to live this new life to the fullest! I wanted to follow Jesus, no matter what it might cost. Indeed, Jesus not only treated women as equals, he entrusted us with the gospel. He sent *women* to tell the truth of his resurrection from the dead! He sent women on Easter morning to tell the truth of his resurrection to the other believers. He sent the Eleven at his Ascension. And when he appeared to the 500, he sent us all out to proclaim the good news. Jesus Christ even sent me! In the eyes of Jesus, all believers were spiritually equal—men and women alike. Shortly before we arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus told his disciples, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It will not be so among you. But

²⁰ Talmud, *Tos Berakoth* 7:17; *Bab. Menahoth* 43b. Referenced by Bristow, John Temple, in *What Paul Reall Said About Women*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1988), p.20.

²¹ See June Stephenson, *Women's Roots*, Chapter 2 "Antiquity."

²² Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Women: An Overview," *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p. 807.

whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."²³

Paul took these words and applied them to every human relationship. It was his firm belief that Christ redeemed us so we all might learn to live in *mutual* submission, loving one another as Jesus first loved us all. Whether Jew or *Gentile*, slave or free, male or female, we are to live in this world with mutual respect, submitting voluntarily "to one another out of reverence for Christ."²⁴ From almost the beginning, men had ruled over women. This was not *God's* intention; but the result of human disobedience. In truth, Jesus came to redeem us from sin and death, to reconcile us to *God*. Paul believed we were redeemed to become a new creation: to live in right relationship with *God* *and* with each other. No more exercising power over others, but "in humility regarding others as better than ourselves."²⁵ In *God's* kingdom, all people will live together in *right* relationship, the way *God* created us to live. As we move toward that vision of new life, Jesus Christ invites us to leave old patterns behind and allow *God* to make all things new.²⁶

In the early church we all tried our very best to live the new life Jesus calls us to live. The Holy Spirit was evident in every believer in various ways. All were blessed with gifts; some were called to lead, to prophesy, to teach. Many of the churches met in the homes of women believers who also led the worship each Lord's Day, preaching and presiding at the Lord's Table. Even I, a freedwoman who had no home, was blessed to be one of Paul's faithful partners in the gospel ministry.²⁷ Together, we proclaimed the good news of Jesus and his forgiving love. Together, we bore witness to the amazing truth of Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection. Side by side, we worked together in the gospel; male and female, we were all one in Christ Jesus.

In those days, we didn't question whom *God* was calling into his gospel ministry—not like some Christians living in your 21st century. Every time the Holy Spirit was poured out on yet another witness, male or female, we rejoiced! We remembered Jesus' teaching that "the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."²⁸ We believed that *God* was calling both men and women to teach and preach the gospel, to pray and lead others to new life in Christ. In spite of the cultural restrictions on women in the ancient world, by *God's* grace we were able to fulfill our many callings. Nowadays, some churches exclude women from leadership, based

²³ Matthew 20:25-28

²⁴ Ephesians 5:21

²⁵ Philippians 2:3, *alt.*

²⁶ Revelation 21:5

²⁷ Romans 16:7

²⁸ Luke 10:2

on a limited understanding of the word of God. There are those who think Paul wanted women to keep silent in church.²⁹ What Paul *really* wanted was for the women to *learn* in church! He wanted them not to talk, but to listen in silence as good rabbinical students did, so they could grow in their faith. He also wanted to make sure that women were not being allowed to teach incorrect theology in church. There was a lot of that going around in Ephesus. Many believed that Eve was the author of Adam and the one who brought the knowledge of spiritual enlightenment to all humankind! Hogwash! Paul wanted women and men to learn the truth only by studying Christ's teachings, not the local culture. I urge you to do the same—study your Bibles more deeply, in search of the truth that is worthy of Christ.

For too long God has waited for people to embrace more fully the redemption Jesus offered on the cross. For too long people have been reluctant to recognize the spiritual gifts God is pouring out on both your sons and your daughters. Do not be afraid to live the new life Jesus promised, for it is the deepest desire of God's heart to love the whole world into new life.

I exhort you, therefore, return to the Lord with all your heart. Jesus did not redeem you to continue in the ways of sin and death.³⁰ So embrace the new life, which is yours through Christ Jesus our Lord. Enter into the joy of a right relationship with God; and then by his grace, be fully reconciled to one another out of reverence for Christ. For every believer is a new creation now. There is no longer male and female, since we are all one in Christ Jesus. "Do not be conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."³¹

Grace, mercy and peace be with you all. Amen.

²⁹ See I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:12

³⁰ Romans 6:1-11

³¹ Romans 12:1-2

A VISIT FROM JUNIA *Presentation Notes*

A Letter From Junia is an attempt to address some of the biblical issues people raise about women serving in pastoral ministry. When I first wrote it, I envisioned myself in costume, portraying Junia and telling her story before various churches. In the beginning, I read it from a pulpit, but discovered that it took longer to read than most people wanted to listen. Also, it was not nearly as exciting as the children's story I had already told, about all believers being "sent" as apostles. Clearly, I needed to develop a way of letting Junia tell her own story in a way that would make her come alive for people today. As prompts for telling her story in a natural way, I developed a set of questions the congregation could ask Junia. This approach was far more effective. Junia can be presented by anyone who has some storytelling ability. Following are some costume suggestions, questions from the audience, and a plausible "story line" for Junia's answers. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Junia could visit every American Baptist church?

JUNIA'S COSTUME

Junia is a first century apostle who is visiting churches in the 21st century. When I present Junia, I like to wear something that resembles first century dress. I usually wear my flax-linen pulpit robe, which is off-white in color and tied with a rope. Anything long, plain and simple will do. To create a visual reminder of the One I serve, I usually wear a hand-carved olive-wood cross on a leather thong around my neck (even though the cross as a symbol was not used in Christian art that early.) I wear sandals and carry a walking stick, so that I look like I've come a long way (from down through the centuries). Most importantly, I wear a Jewish prayer shawl (*TALLIS*). Junia was a Jewish woman who believed Jesus was the Messiah. Having been raised in the Jewish faith, she surely would have worn a prayer shawl over her head when praying with uplifted hands. Early Jewish Christians did wear a head covering when praying, to show respect for God; hence Paul's discussion of whether or not women should prophesy with heads covered or uncovered (I Corinthians 11:1-16). Paul advised that any woman under the authority of the Holy Spirit should have authority over her own head.

I wear a real Jewish prayer shawl for the Junia presentation. (You can purchase one from a Judaica supplier, but they are fairly expensive for a one-time presentation. Or, borrow one from someone who may have purchased a Tallis in the Holy Land, or from a Jewish friend.) To make a prayer shawl, start with fabric 60" long by 18" wide. A band (called a diadem) 2" wide and 22" long is sewn on to the prayer shawl in the center of one long edge. This edge is worn closest to your forehead when you wear it as a head covering. The prayer shawl also has four twisted cords (Numbers 15:37-41) at each of its four corners to remind us of God's

commandments. Take 16 strands of fine silk cord 36" long. Using an embroidery needle, thread 4 strands together through a corner of the shawl about 2" from each edge. Adjust the ends of the cords until even; twist and knot the cords at the edge of the prayer shawl until the 'fringe' is about 15 inches long. Repeat at each corner. Additional fringe may be added along both ends of the *tallis*.

PRESENTING JUNIA: Directions and Props

If I am in a sanctuary, I place my notes on the pulpit for easy reference. This frees me to move around without holding note cards. If I am in some other setting, a lectern helps. I begin my Junia presentation with a prayer. I place the prayer shawl over my head for the prayer, and offer it standing with hands raised, looking upward. Then I lower the prayer shawl to my shoulders for the story. Modern Jews say a blessing over the *tallis*. The prayer I offer as I begin is from Psalm 104:1-2.

"Let all my being praise the Lord
who is clothed in splendor and majesty,
wrapped in light as in a garment,
unfolding the heavens like a curtain."

I usually distribute some written questions to be asked of Junia to the congregation just before the presentation. There are a couple of names people usually need help pronouncing (Andronicus and Junia, for example). I also provide a script for the person chosen to introduce Junia; most people need to practice saying the term *haggadah* before reading the introduction aloud.

The presentation proceeds with Junia answering the interview questions being asked from the audience. The questions are numbered so that they can be kept in correct order; at the end of each answer, I tap my walking stick on the floor the appropriate number of times for the next question (e.g., I tap four times for question 4). At the end I invite other questions from the floor.

If I am presenting Junia as the sermon in a worship service, I also offer the Children's Story and teach the children a song in my native language, *Shalom Chaverim*. For this, I type the words to this song in 72 pt. font to print landscape (horizontally) across several pages. I then sew the pages together edge to edge and roll it up to form a scroll, which is tied with a piece of yarn. The children open this scroll and hold it up for the whole congregation to sing. We also talk about what it means to be an apostle—a believer Jesus sends out into the world to bring others to him.

All the resources for presenting Junia are included here with permission to copy and use them in your own church. Remember, Junia's story is not biographical; we don't know that much about her, but the storyline I have developed is plausible and helps bring her alive for people. Please note, the story is not written as a script to be *read*, but rather is in outline form, so the story can be *told*.

THE CHILDREN'S STORY

[Coming down the aisle with my walking stick and scroll in hand] . . .

Shalom, my friends. Can anyone tell me where I am? What village is this?

I come from long ago and far away. I grew up in the land of Israel in the days of Jesus. Do you know about Jesus?

Jesus was my friend and Teacher. He told me all about God's love. I was one of his followers. Oh, I forgot to tell you my name. My name is Junia. Can you say that?—"Junia" **. Jesus had lots of disciples. We all loved him very much and traveled with him to Jerusalem, but then something terrible happened to him. Do you know what happened to Jesus on Good Friday?

And do you know what happened next? On Sunday morning some women went to the tomb where Jesus was laid, even before the sun came up. But they didn't find Jesus' body. He wasn't dead any more. He came alive again. Later Jesus came to visit all his friends. We saw him alive again. And that's when he made us his apostles. Apostle means 'one who is SENT.' All of us who believed in Jesus were his followers. But Jesus wanted us to do more than just follow him. Jesus wanted to send us out into the world to tell everybody about his saving love. That's why he gave us a new name—APOSTLES—so we could go out into the whole world and preach the good news, ...so we would tell the story about Jesus dying and coming alive again, and make lots of new disciples! Everybody who believes in Jesus will be saved. On the 40th day after Jesus rose from the dead, he left us to go up into heaven and be with God. Someday Jesus will come again and take us with him to God's kingdom, but in the meantime, he wants us all to be his apostles—to tell other people about his love and invite them to become his followers too. Do you have a friend who doesn't come to church? Could you tell your friend about Jesus and his love?

Every time you tell somebody else about Jesus and his love, that makes you an apostle too! It's been fun to visit with you. I'm glad to know that you love Jesus too. I guess I'll be going on to the next village soon. But before I go, would you like to learn a song we used to sing in my country when I was a girl? I see you have song books here in your modern church. We wrote on scrolls instead. Would someone like to open my song scroll? Now, I'll need two volunteers to hold it up nice and high, so we can all sing it together. Even the grown-ups can help. Let's see if we

[***Dialogue with the children here. Let them answer your questions. If they don't know what to say, engage the adults to help.] [**Let children practice.]

can say these funny words together, before we try to sing them. Sha-lom Cha-ve-rim, **Sha-lom Cha-ve-rim,** Sha-lom, Sha-lom.** Shalom is what we say in my language when we want to say good morning or goodbye. Shalom is a Hebrew word that means PEACE. When I say shalom to you, I am asking God to bless you today with his peace. Now, let's try the next words. Le-hit-ra-ot, Le-hit-ra-ot,** Sha-lom, Sha-lom.** Lehitraot means "until we meet again." When we sing this song, we are giving each other God's blessing of peace, until we meet again.

[I teach the song then by singing one line at a time, with the whole congregation echoing. Then we sing all the lines together one or two times through. I tell them they may keep the scroll as a remembrance of my visit, and that they can even sing this song as a round. Then I bid them *Shalom* and exit down the aisle with my walking stick.]

Suggested Songs for Junia to Teach the Children

Shalom Chaverim (round)

Shalom chaverim, Shalom chaverim, Shalom, Shalom.

Lehitraot, Lehitraot, Shalom, Shalom.

Words: Israeli Round Music: Hebrew Melody

He Is Lord!

He is Lord, He is Lord! He is risen from the dead and He is Lord!

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Words and Music: Anonymous

Love, Love (round)*

*This Is My Commandment**

*Music and words may be found in *WEE SING Bible Songs* by Pamela Conn Beall and Susan Hagen Nipp (Los Angeles: Price/Stern/Sloan Publishers, 1986).

**Here the children will repeat what you've said or sung.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE APOSTLE JUNIA

1. JUNIA, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR YOU, GROWING UP AS A GIRL IN THE FIRST CENTURY? (pronounced Joo'-nya)

2. WERE YOU ALIVE WHEN JESUS WAS ON EARTH?
DID YOU EVER GET TO MEET HIM?

3. WHO IS ANDRONICUS—THE ONE PAUL MENTIONS ALONG WITH YOU IN HIS LETTER TO THE ROMANS? (pronounced An-dron'-i-cus)

4. IS AN APOSTLE THE SAME THING AS A DISCIPLE?

5. ISN'T IT TRUE THAT PAUL WAS OPPOSED TO WOMEN IN MINISTRY?

6. BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS PAUL WHO TOLD WOMEN TO KEEP QUIET IN CHURCH!

7. WERE THERE REALLY WOMEN WHO SERVED AS LEADERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH? IF THERE WERE, THEN WHY DON'T WE READ ABOUT THEM IN THE BIBLE?

Either print each question on a separate card or give each questioner a photocopy of this entire sheet, marking the question you want each person to ask. Typing them in a large, bold font will make for easier reading. Make sure your volunteers are comfortable pronouncing all the words and can project the questions so as to be heard. *Alternative:* have the person who introduces Junia also serve as the interviewer who asks all the questions.

SCRIPT TO INTRODUCE THE APOSTLE JUNIA

Our guest today is a notable apostle who comes to us from the first century of the Common Era. She was born in Judea, became a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, witnessed his resurrection and eventually helped to establish the Christian church in Rome. Perhaps you did not know that women were important leaders in the early Christian church; but there were many such women who served as ministers, deacons, bishops and missionaries. In his letters, Paul includes 13 women leaders.

JUNIA is one of those women—the only one who is called an apostle. In the 16th chapter of his letter to the Romans, Paul sends greetings to Andronicus and JUNIA, his RELATIVES (or fellow Jews) and also his FELLOW PRISONERS, who were IN CHRIST before Paul was. One of the early church fathers wrote about Junia: "Oh how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!" [John Chrysostom]

JUNIA is here with us now to tell us her *HAG-GA-DAH*. In the Jewish tradition, *haggadah* is a story about a real Bible character—a story that makes the character come alive in our imaginations. *Haggadah* is not historical biography, but storytelling.

JUNIA will tell us her story (at least one that could be true, based on what we do know about her). JUNIA may also be able to answer questions you have about some of those difficult passages in the New Testament that are often cited by people who don't believe women belong in the ministry.

Please welcome the Apostle JUNIA!



JUNIA EXPLAINS WHY SHE HAS COME

Shalom, my friends. I have come to you from down through the ages, because the cry of many sisters in the faith has reached us in heaven. God has called them into ministry and blessed them with gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yet, churches are reluctant to call them as pastors, simply because they are women. Many women are waiting and praying, not for God to bless them, but for people to open their minds and hearts to the new thing God is doing in our midst.

There are some who believe that the Bible says women should not be in ministry as pastors or leaders. Yet we know that the Scriptures record the witness of women and men in every age who have answered God's call to serve in leadership roles. We know that Jesus accepted the help and support of women; he did not stop a Samaritan woman from telling her whole village about him; and on Easter morning he entrusted the good news of his resurrection to a woman.

Even Paul's letters reveal a mixture of attitudes. Sometimes his instructions, like those he gave to Timothy in one of his letters, were directed at specific cultural or practical issues in the churches of our day, and seem to disapprove. But Paul's letters also include the gospel affirmation that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek... slave nor free... male and female," as he wrote to believers in Galatia. And many of his letters include greetings to women as well as men whom he counted as partners and co-laborers in the gospel ministry. Let's begin.

QUESTION ONE

1. JUNIA, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR YOU, GROWING UP AS A GIRL IN THE FIRST CENTURY?

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- I was born in Judea in the first century of what you now call the "Common Era."
- My parents were Jewish; we kept the Sabbath and remembered the festivals. Went to the Temple in Jerusalem once. Can still remember climbing all those steps up to the Women's Court. My mother and I had to stay there, while my father and brother went up 15 more steps into the real sanctuary to worship God. I could barely hear the singing or the rabbi's words. I wanted to get closer, but women and girls were not allowed. It was the same in my synagogue at home; we had to worship from behind a screen. Even as a young child, I yearned to be closer to God.
- Our family fell on hard times. Before I reached my teen years, my father sold into slavery. He didn't want to, but he owed the landowner and in those days it was legal to sell your daughter into slavery after she turned six.
- Since my new master was Roman, my name was changed to the feminine version of his family name. That's how I became Junia.

QUESTION TWO

2. WERE YOU ALIVE WHEN JESUS WAS ON EARTH?
DID YOU EVER GET TO MEET HIM?

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- Jesus and I lived at the same time. I first heard him preach while I was a slave in the Junian household in Galilee.
- After that I went to hear him whenever I could. Heard his teachings, watched him heal many people—even cast out demons!
- One day, after I finished my master's chores, I went to a nearby village to hear Jesus again. I was able to get up close to the Teacher that day. I had burned my hand in the fire while cooking and it still felt like it was on fire. Maybe He could see the pain in my face. I don't know. I would never have dared to ask Him to heal my hand; as a woman, I was not allowed to speak to a man in public. But somehow, he knew my need. All of a sudden I felt the burning leave my fingers; my hand was healed. Jesus looked right at me and said, "Your faith has made you well, my daughter."
- In time, my father's debt was paid; I had completed my time of servitude. I was free to go, but where? I decided to FOLLOW JESUS.
- Along with many other women—Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza [pronounced Kyu'-za], and Susanna, we went everywhere with Jesus and his disciples, providing for their needs out of our own resources. I didn't have any money, but I was a hard worker and had my own story of faith to tell.

- To Jerusalem. The Upper Room (women were there too, not at the same table, but in the same big room to keep the Passover together. We heard what he said about the bread being his body and the cup being his blood of the covenant).
- The Cross. The Grave. The Resurrection. I too saw Him risen from the dead! I remembered back in Galilee, He promised he would be raised.
- Imagine my joy that Jesus loved me enough to send me in his name!

QUESTION THREE

3. WHO IS ANDRONICUS—THE ONE PAUL MENTIONS ALONG WITH YOU IN HIS LETTER TO THE ROMANS?

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- Andronicus was my husband. Both early followers of Jesus. My husband was raised in the Jewish faith by his devout mother, God rest her soul.
- Andronicus had a Roman name, because his father was a Roman soldier, who (although he was a Gentile) counted himself among the God-fearers. God-fearers believed in the one true God and observed the Jewish Sabbath.
- Andronicus and I believed Jesus was the Messiah our people had been waiting for. We were among the earliest and most eager of his followers. When Jesus sent out missionaries in pairs to go into all the towns where he would be coming to speak, Andronicus and I were among the 72. We also saw Jesus after he was raised from the dead, along with more than 500 other believers.
- By the time Jesus ascended into heaven, the number of believers who followed Jesus had grown to 120. On the Day of Pentecost, we were all there together in Upper Room praying, waiting for the promise of the Father.
- Wind. Tongues of flame. We spoke in many languages to people in the street. Thousands believed the story we were telling in their own native tongues—the story about how Jesus was crucified, buried, and then rose from the dead.

- Some laughed, thought we were drunk. But, Peter said it was the fulfilling of Joel's prophecy.

"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, ...even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

- Being filled with the Holy Spirit was such an answer to prayer for me. Ever since my early visit to the Temple in Jerusalem, I had yearned to be closer to God. At long last, God's own Spirit was dwelling within me.

QUESTION FOUR

4. IS AN APOSTLE THE SAME THING AS A DISCIPLE?

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- A disciple is a follower of Jesus, one who learns from his teacher.
- An apostle is one who is SENT by God or Christ with a message to share. Nowadays, you call them missionaries.
- At first, apostles were those who had been with Jesus from the beginning and had witnessed his resurrection. Their message was to tell the story as eyewitnesses that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and He is Lord!
- Paul claimed to be an apostle, too—even though he had not known Jesus earlier. But he did see the resurrected Lord on the road to Damascus, when he was blinded by a great light and heard Jesus ask him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
- Later, the term apostle was used of any believer who showed the spiritual gifts for being able to preach the gospel boldly. Apostles were sent as missionaries to both Jews and Gentiles, after one of the original apostles had "laid hands on" them and prayed.
- I was an apostle sent by Jesus. But Andronicus and I were also blessed and sent by Paul as apostles to the Gentiles in Rome, where we helped build up the church.

QUESTION FIVE

5. ISN'T IT TRUE THAT PAUL WAS OPPOSED TO WOMEN IN MINISTRY?

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- Nothing could be farther from the truth! Paul was radically supportive of women in ministry.
- Paul believed that all baptized believers had "put on Christ" . . . that every believer was a new creation, who was becoming more like Christ everyday. He wrote to the Galatians:

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for you are one in Christ Jesus."

- First time I heard him say this, I remembered how my father used to pray each day, as did all Jewish men, thanking God he was not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. There were 3 great social divides in the ancient world: Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. Should I still feel ashamed I was born a woman? Or that I freely associate with Gentiles? In Jesus Christ, even these traditional ways of thinking were turned upside down.
- Paul's letter to the Galatians is called the Magna Charta of Christian liberty. Galatians 3:28 explains how believers are to relate to one another in a whole new way. The world might not have been any different, but inside the church, Christians were expected to treat one another with honor. Everything else Paul ever said or wrote **MUST** measure up to the universal truth in Gal. 3:28.



QUESTION SIX

6. BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS PAUL WHO TOLD WOMEN TO KEEP QUIET IN CHURCH!

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- Some people think Paul wanted women to keep silent in church. He did ask the women in the church at Corinth to take turns praying in tongues; he also asked them to not chatter during worship. Paul wanted all Christians to *HUPOTASSOMAI*—that is, to be considerate of each other and listen during worship, so everyone could be built up in Christ.
- In his letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged all the Christians in Ephesus to develop an attitude of *HESUCHIA*—the quiet, spiritually attentive attitude of a rabbinical student. He gave specific instructions for Timothy to make sure women could learn in church. Nowhere in the ancient world were women educated in public. What Paul really wanted was for women to learn in church.
- He also wanted Timothy to guard against women teaching incorrect theology in church. There was a lot of that going around in Ephesus—ideas about Eve being the author of Adam and the one who brought the knowledge of spiritual enlightenment to all humankind. Hogwash! Paul only wanted women to learn the truth by studying the scriptures.
- Many Christians in the 21st century seem to think women in Bible times were not allowed to preach or lead in church, but that was not the case at all. Whoever was moved by the Holy Spirit during our worship services would speak; after all, we were speaking for God! Read 1 Corinthians 11, verse 5. Paul is commenting there on the question of whether or not it is

proper for a woman who is praying or prophesying in church to do so with her head uncovered. Obviously, women were leading in worship and prayer; obviously, women were preaching or prophesying in the early church—OR the question never would have been asked.

- Whenever we are confused by what Paul seems to be saying in English, it is very important for us to return to the original text and learn as much as we can about the cultural and historical context. We must also remember Paul's bottom-line theological perspective, which was that "there is no longer male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus."

(If time and interest in this topic permit, the following information can also be shared.)

- In the Greek language there are 30 different words to describe types of speaking; 5 of them mean to preach or proclaim, but Paul did NOT use any of those 5 words when he was asking women not to speak! In his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 14: 34-35) he used the term *LALEO*, which just means to talk. Apparently, some of the women were talking during worship when they should have been listening. Since women in Greek society were not normally present in educational or worship settings, these women who were new Christians were probably asking their husbands questions in church that could have waited until they got home.
- After Paul says that women or wives are not permitted to *LALEO* in church, he also says they should *HUPOTASSOMAI*. In your English Bibles, this word is translated 'to be subordinate,' but that is not exactly what *HUPOTASSOMAI* means. *HUPOTASSOMAI* means 'to be considerate of each other.' For the sake of the whole congregation, Paul wanted the women to listen during worship, so everyone could be built up in Christ. While wives in ancient Greece were the responsibility of their husbands and had no legal rights, we also need to remember...this is the church, and in church, social rules did not apply. Being considerate of others was something everyone tried to do—voluntarily—to treat others with respect, the same way Jesus treated people.

QUESTION SEVEN

7. WERE THERE REALLY WOMEN WHO SERVED AS LEADERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH? IF THERE WERE, THEN WHY DON'T WE READ ABOUT THEM IN THE BIBLE?

JUNIA'S ANSWER

- Maybe you didn't know you were reading the names of women. These days people don't name their baby girls Tryphaena or Tryphosa.
- In his New Testament letters Paul honors nine different women leaders of the early church:
 - JUNIA-apostle
 - PRISCA or Priscilla taught Apollos
 - PHOEBE-minister of church at Cencrea
 - MARY, PERSIS, TRYPHAENA, TRYPHOSA-worked hard in the Lord in church at Rome
 - LYDIA-hosted house-church in Philippi
 - NYMPHA-hosted the house-church in Corinth
 - CHLOE & APPHIA-leaders in Collosian church
 - EUODIA & SYNTYCHE-leaders in Philippian church

God is still pouring out His Holy Spirit on your sons AND your daughters.

Do not be afraid to live the new life Jesus promised.

Do you have any other questions?

Grace, mercy and peace be with you all.

The next two pages contain a fact sheet about Junia, which can be photocopied as a hand-out for people coming to a Junia presentation.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE APOSTLE JUNIA?

*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives
who were in prison with me;
they are prominent among the apostles,
and they were in Christ before I was.
(Romans 16:7, NRSV)*

- "relatives" means fellow Jews.
- "who were in prison with me"—we don't know when or where. Perhaps Paul had them dragged off to prison (Acts 8:3), but then he would not have been in prison with them. He may have just identified with them as fellow-prisoners. The possibility of them having been arrested in Jerusalem when Paul was (Acts 23), is inconsistent with the fact that when Paul wrote Romans he was in Cenchrea or Corinth, on his way to Jerusalem to deliver the offering (Romans 15:25).
- Andronicus and Junia were notable apostles, living in Rome. This means that the church Council in Jerusalem would also have recognized their service as missionaries of the gospel.
- "who were in Christ before [Paul was]" means that Junia likely had seen the Risen Lord herself in the days following the resurrection. She may even have traveled (among the women, see Luke 8:1-3) with Jesus from Galilee and been there in Jerusalem when he was crucified. She was already a believer before the Risen Lord accosted Paul on the road to Damascus.
- Andronicus was likely Junia's husband, since they are mentioned together, as couples often were. Nothing more is known of him either, but we can imagine that he was the son of a Roman soldier (Andronicus is a Roman name) and a Jewish mother. Since he is also identified as a notable apostle, he probably began to follow Jesus during his earthly ministry, witnessed the resurrection, and was present at Pentecost. Perhaps Andronicus and Junia were among the 72 Jesus sent out as workers into the harvest field. As apostles they eventually went to Rome to carry the gospel to the Gentiles.
- According to *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Junia was "the only woman called an apostle (Romans 16:7) in the New Testament."¹ Clearly, she was not the only woman to qualify—that is, to have seen the resurrected Jesus and be sent on a mission to tell the good news! The gospels all agree women were the first witnesses

¹ Bernadette J. Broonen, "Junia" *THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE BIBLE*, Edited by Bruce J. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 405.

to the resurrection. But Junia may have been the only one, or else one of a few women, who was ordained for this purpose. She was the only woman recognized as an apostle by Paul. In the early days of the Christian Way, apostles were defined as witnesses to the resurrection who were sent out as missionaries, and who were authorized to preach and teach by the laying on of hands (Acts 13:3). Paul himself refers to Junia as a kinsman, or Jew, and fellow prisoner for the gospel. Paul specifies Junia as a noteworthy apostle who was in Christ before he was. Paul sends greetings to her and Andronicus at the end of his letter to the Romans (16:7).

- In some versions of the Bible the name in Romans 16:7 was recorded as Junias, and was considered to be a masculine name. Scholars believe the ending was added in the 13th century, either because the copyist thought it was a mistake or because the Church did not want to admit that there was a woman apostle. Older manuscripts have Junia. However, the name Junias is only hypothetical; Junias is not a name we find in ancient literature. On the other hand, the female Latin name, Junia, is found over 250 times in Greek and Latin inscriptions found in Rome alone. Therefore scholars today generally interpret the name as feminine. What's more, church fathers—including Origen, John Chrysostom, and Jerome—all identify the apostle Junia as a woman. "Oh how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!"²
- The fact that at least one woman did serve in the role of apostle in the early church provides a light in the darkness of later confusion about the role of women as leaders in the early church. Clearly, in the church of Paul's day, women did prophesy and lead in prayer; women often hosted the Lord's Day celebration in their own homes, served communion and led the believers in worship. In the first generation church, women were treated as Jesus had treated them—as persons created in the image of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and set free to live a new life. Until Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, churches met in the homes of believers, where women did exercise their spiritual gifts of leadership. In the fourth century the Church entered the public sphere by building basilicas and establishing a hierarchical church government. Once the church entered the public arena, women were no longer welcomed as leaders.

Despite evidence to the contrary, some Christians still believe the Bible prohibits women from serving as pastors.

What might the Apostle Junia have to say to those who refuse to allow women to exercise the gifts of the Spirit in ministry today?

² Chrysostom, trans. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1956), 11.555.