

Biblical Champions of Female Leadership Assimilation

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Jesus set the model for leadership and ministry through service instead of dominance.¹ Rather than reflecting the common understanding of authority, He exemplified a new way to lead. This counter-cultural approach marked the onset of Christ's Kingdom. Jesus encouraged women to follow His example and empowered them to lead those around them by providing opportunities for them to influence others (Matt. 28:1-10, John 4:39-42). Multiple examples of women in the Gospels and the Early Church reveal that women influenced those around them to follow Jesus. This Kingdom influence revealed their call to leadership.

Christ's counter-cultural approach to leadership permeated His words, actions, and relationships. The Apostle Paul also followed Christ's leadership method by using his words, actions, and relationships to encourage females to lead in the Early Church (Rom. 16; 2 Tim. 1 and 4; 1 Cor. 16). The presence of female leaders reveals that Jesus and Paul implemented their leadership even in a counter-cultural manner. Jesus and Paul's words, actions, and relationships provide insight into the value they placed on women leaders and how they assimilated them into the Early Church authority structure. Further, their words, actions, and relationships provide a trans-cultural and timeless method of assimilation for women into the Church authority structure.

Jesus and the Assimilation of Female Leaders

The Gospel writers revealed Jesus' practice of female leadership assimilation. From the beginning of Christ's introduction in the Gospels, the female presence subtly confronted the cultural norm through the inclusion of women in the genealogy of Christ.² While female absence remained normative in the Old Testament, the Gospel of Matthew named four women in Christ's genealogy: Tamar (1:3); Rahab (v. 5); Ruth (v. 5); and the wife of Uriah (v. 6).³ Additionally, it appeared that Luke intentionally included three women and three men in the report of Jesus' birth.⁴ Jesus' words and actions revealed His willingness to identify with female followers and build healthy, rewarding relationships. Jesus clearly modeled behavior that challenged the status quo of culture and religion; His approach included a counter-cultural attitude and interaction with women.⁵

Words

Jesus used His words to equalize and assimilate women into His Kingdom. He viewed both males and females as capable of grasping spiritual truth.⁶ The story of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus exemplifies that He taught women in the same way He taught men (Luke 10:39, 41-42). Further, Jesus commonly spoke to women directly,⁷ defying the idea that men could not publicly address women by freely conversing with

them⁸ because women were not educated in the Torah.⁹ Rabbis did not want to educate women in the Law and, as a result, men treated women with little respect and believed they could not contribute to the conversation.¹⁰

The words Jesus used in public indicated His intentional defiance of the cultural practice of treating women as subordinate beings.¹¹ In contrast to the norm, Jesus communicated spiritual truths using parables that highlighted women as the heroines.¹² Jesus described His prophetic role with feminine metaphors (Matt. 23:37-39).¹³ When He taught about marriage, He equalized the roles, responsibilities, and rights of husband and wife.¹⁴ He held private and lengthy conversations with women.¹⁵ Some of His most significant conversations recorded in the Gospels were with women. On His way to Golgotha, Jesus prophesied to the women mourning His death (Luke 23:27-31). The final group Jesus spoke to before the cross consisted of women.¹⁶

Actions

Jesus used His actions to equalize and assimilate women into His Kingdom. He removed the woman's responsibility for male lust (Matt. 5:27-30).¹⁷ He defended women in public. The Gospel of John records the account of the woman caught in adultery; Jesus acts extraordinarily by defending her, confronting her accusers, and placing equal responsibility upon the man for this sin (8:1-11).¹⁸ He blessed men and women in the same way.¹⁹ He allowed women to touch Him to receive healing.²⁰ He also touched women and allowed a prostitute to wipe away tears with her uncovered hair (Luke 7:36-50).²¹ The significance of Jesus touching the crippled woman in Luke 13:10-17 reveals his

intention to break cultural and religious barriers to right relationship.²²

Jesus restored dignity and social status.²³ He assimilated women into His ministry. The Gospel of Luke records females financially supporting and, most likely, ministering alongside Christ while traveling with Him (Luke 8:2-3).²⁴ Radical, counter-cultural actions helped equalize and assimilate women into His Kingdom. As a result of Jesus' words and actions, women responded to His message gladly, discovering a new identity.²⁵

Relationships

Jesus developed healthy relationships with women, equalizing and assimilating them into His Kingdom. Jesus included women in His ministry team, and some theologians suggest that His female followers described in Luke 8 functioned as disciples.²⁶ Unlike other rabbis, Jesus allowed both male and female disciples to accompany Him on His travels.²⁷ Scripture provides numerous examples of Jesus interacting with women, revealing how He broke barriers associated with race, class, and sex.²⁸ The Gospels highlight the female presence in Jesus' ministry at the cross and resurrection, revealing the loyalty of these women (Matt. 28; John 19:25-27; 20:1-18). They were true disciples of Jesus—something other rabbis would not allow.²⁹

Jesus' closest friends included Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Interestingly, more is written about Mary and Martha than about Lazarus.³⁰ Jesus taught Mary in her own home in the same manner as He did male disciples.³¹ Normally, this advanced education remained exclusive to male students,³² yet Jesus affirmed Mary as she stepped outside a woman's traditional domestic sphere because He was unconcerned with upholding gender-based

roles.³³ Jesus' selection of Mary's preference to learn from Him, over Martha's activity, revealed Jesus' belief that a woman's potential went beyond homemaker.³⁴

Jesus redefined relationships in His teachings, challenging abusive patriarchy.³⁵ His concern for equality in relationships included the familial structure. Jesus redefined family relationships in His teachings by telling His followers not to call anyone "father" (Matt. 23:9), identifying those who do the will of God as His "brother, sister, or mother" (Mark 3:31-35; NB no mention of "father"), and declaring that those who left all for His sake will receive back houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land—but no fathers (Mark 10:29-30).³⁶ Jesus allowed the term "father" to apply only to God.³⁷

The Apostle Paul and the Assimilation of Female Leaders

The Apostle Paul continues the counter-cultural approach toward women that Jesus exemplified in His life and ministry. Contemporary church leaders' fixation upon scattered texts within Paul's writings which appear to restrict women leaders sometimes overshadows Paul's evident strategy for female leadership assimilation and his intention to not apply the documented restraints permanently and universally.³⁸ Although the Church continues to wrestle with the meaning of these problematic texts, Paul's words, actions, and relationships reveal a constant and strategic implementation of women into a variety of leadership roles throughout the Roman Empire.

Words

The Apostle Paul's writings provide evidence of his support for women leaders

in the Early Church. New Testament writers note women in the Early Church functioning in positions of authority such as apostles (Rom. 16:7), prophets (Acts 21:9), deacons (Rom. 16:1), teachers (v. 3), and evangelists (Matt. 28:10; John 4:39).³⁹ The spread of Christianity from Judaism into Greco-Roman culture and beyond created the need to make Christianity easily transferable into these new domains.

Though the New Testament records how the Church wrestled with the challenge of incorporating Christ's values and practices into daily life, Paul's writings serve as an ideal example of this challenge as he assimilates female church leaders. He advocates Christ's freedom and, at the same time, provides Christian guidelines for appropriate attitudes and behavior within existing societal structures (Eph. 5:8-6:9). Paul provides clear evidence of relationships with female leaders and encourages the Church to embrace them (Rom. 16:1-2). In addition, Paul names female leaders serving in different positions in the Early Church: Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, Olympas, Nereus, Apphia, Nympha, and Lydia. In his greetings he frequently notes something significant about the female leaders' contribution (vv. 1-16).

The house church functioned as the equivalent to the contemporary local believers' assembly. The Apostle Paul identifies the female hosts' names for several house churches, which reveals the existence of women pastors in the first century: Acts 12:12 speaks of Mary, the mother of John Mark; Acts 16:13-15, 40 speaks of Lydia; 1 Corinthians 1:11 mentions Chloe; 1 Corinthians 16:19 and Romans 16:3-5 refer to Priscilla and Aquila.⁴⁰ Paul's intentional recognition of female leaders within his valuable

correspondence provides noteworthy support for women leaders.⁴¹

Actions

The backdrop of the society and culture of the Roman Empire shows the significance of the actions of the Early Church and, in particular, the Apostle Paul. The book of Acts reveals that women became central to the growth and function of the church (e.g., Lydia in Philippi, Acts 16:13-14). Luke lists the names of female converts among Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile believers; he eventually lists the names of females before males to reveal their prominent church participation (Acts 5:14; 8:12; 17:4, 12, 16-17, 34).⁴² The practice of identifying the female's contribution and participation in gospel expansion displays the counter-cultural actions reflective of Jesus.⁴³ Further, the listing of Tabitha (also called Dorcas) as "one of only two individuals recorded as being raised from the dead through the ministry of the Early Church" revealed the prominence of women.⁴⁴

The Apostle Paul's counter-cultural actions shine in Philippians when he addresses two women, Euodia and Syntyche (4:2). Paul calls them "coworkers" (*sunergos*) (v. 3), the same term he uses regarding fourteen men.⁴⁵ He describes them as leaders contending alongside Paul for the gospel.⁴⁶ The term refers to "athletic combat found in gladiator matches."⁴⁷ The solution the Apostle Paul presents for the disagreement between these women reveals his elevated value for female church leadership (Phil. 4:2-3). Rather than silencing these women leaders, he behaves in an opposite manner by encouraging them to cooperate and directing male leadership to assist their women coworkers.⁴⁸

Relationships

Greetings, salutations, and brief references in the Pauline epistles provide clues to the Apostle Paul's valued ministry relationships. The Apostle Paul frequently mentions Priscilla, a female leader and prominent teacher in the Early Church. Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, appear multiple times throughout Acts and the Pauline epistles. In the book of Acts, Luke depicts the Apostle Paul's arrival in Corinth (Acts 18) also referencing Priscilla and Aquila. After the initial introduction of this team, the positioning of Priscilla's name in the text highlights her ministry prominence in Christian circles.⁴⁹

Acts describes this excellent female teacher as the foremost instructor for the learned and fervent minister, Apollos (Acts 18:24-26). Evidence reveals Priscilla's presence in Ephesus, the very location of the female teacher controversy. The Apostle Paul greets her in 2 Timothy 4:19, and refers to her leadership, sacrifice, and boldness in his Roman letter (Rom. 16:3-5). The language he uses in both instances indicates a close relationship with this fervent ministry couple. The indication that their ministry extended beyond one specific region further reveals the prominence of their spiritual authority.

The Apostle Paul also appears to value his relationship with the woman minister Phoebe, referring to her as the deacon or minister in the church of Cenchrea. Paul promotes her leadership by encouraging the church in Rome to receive and help her (Rom. 16:1-2). Further, he indicates her significant contribution to his ministry through his use of the masculine form of *diakonos*. This term carries a general range of authority that the feminine form abdicates.⁵⁰ In *God's Women—Then and*

Now, Deborah Gill and Barbara Cavaness explain, “Though it is irregular for a woman to be described by a masculine noun, it is not a grammatical error. When, in Greek, a female is associated with a masculine noun the term is an official or ecclesiastical title.”⁵¹ The description of the office of deacon is not described in detail, but the extent of authority included administrative and general responsibilities.⁵² Further, linking the term *diakonos* to a specific congregation reveals the Apostle Paul’s intention to assign Phoebe a position of authority in the Cenchranean church.⁵³ He also implies Phoebe’s prominence by titling her benefactor or patron (*prostatis*) of the church.⁵⁴

Describing Junia’s apostleship as “outstanding” and “prominent,” Paul reveals Junia’s significance to the Early Church as a high-ranking female leader (Rom. 16:7).⁵⁵ Controversy regarding gender surrounds this mysterious leader; historians wrestle with the likelihood of Junia as female since the masculine form would be an exception.⁵⁶ “Early Church Fathers acknowledged that the text indicates Junia was both a woman and an apostle. John Chrysostom writes, ‘Oh! How great is the devotion of this woman that she should be counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!’”⁵⁷ Theological debates regarding Junia’s gender erupted in the thirteenth century, resulting in translations rendering her as male with her name altered to appear as “Junias.”⁵⁸ In fact, no historical evidence exists that confirms the use of Junias as a male name.⁵⁹ The linguistic and textual issues evident in ancient sources reveal the likelihood of Junia as female outweighing male.⁶⁰

Like Jesus, Paul actively assimilates women into church leadership through his words, actions, and relationships. Although female leadership assimilation does not constitute the vast majority of Paul’s content, the fact

that he greets and honors females within his letters reveals the importance of their presence and ministerial contribution. Paul’s letters were meant to be read aloud, so when Paul mentions someone by name, he does so intentionally.⁶¹

Paul embraced the divine call to live as “a servant of Christ Jesus” (Rom. 1:1) and, as a result, relinquished the right to incorporate his own cultural notions. Therefore, in reflection of Christ’s words, actions, and relationships, the Apostle Paul continued the counter-cultural approach inaugurated by Jesus.

Both Jesus and Paul refused to concede to cultural restrictions; therefore, implementation of this Kingdom dynamic remains possible even among cultures which uphold derogatory and restrictive views toward women. Neither propagated the ideology that female ministry is contingent upon culture. This ideology clearly represents an ungodly concept which Church leaders ought not to nurture as the Kingdom of God expands to various cultures.

Jesus exemplified how to assimilate women into the church leadership arena, and the assimilation begins with those already in authority empowering women in practical ways. The central focus ultimately remains on how each person will use his or her resources to ensure that all people called of God receive a genuine opportunity to fulfill that calling and bring God glory through the expansion of His Kingdom.

Pentecostal Leadership and Assimilation of Women Leaders

The examples given first by Jesus and then by the Apostle Paul provide a strategy for assimilation of women leaders that meets modern challenges. The assimilation

methods Christ exemplified remain central to the recommendations to all leadership, whether influencing the Pentecostal ecclesiastical culture on a micro or macro level.

Pentecostal Leadership and Words

Words form ideas, and ideas influence people. Just as derogatory language reveals the heart of a person, complimentary, inclusive language also reveals a person's intentions. Jesus said, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). Leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ should submit their speech to reflect Jesus' Kingdom values.

Words used regarding gender issues need to remain respectful in public and private settings, female-only, and male-only settings. In order to reflect Christ, male and female ministers should refuse to engage in derogatory language with regard to the opposite sex including jokes, stereotypes, or exclusive language. Male leaders need to advocate for women leaders by encouraging promotions and opportunities for advancement. Godly leaders ought to advocate for women in front of others, even those who hold to contradictory viewpoints. Both Jesus and Paul functioned this way. Male leaders can promote advancement for women in positions within the ecclesiastical structure such as presbyter positions, district leadership, and executive opportunities, using words consciously and intentionally as Jesus did when He empowered women through His vocabulary.⁶²

Those in power positions ought to defend women with words just as Jesus did when a woman came to anoint Him (John 12:7).

They need to defend their ministries, callings, and their right to glorify God through using their gifts and talents (1 Tim. 4:14). Just as Junia, Priscilla, and Phoebe needed the support of the Apostle Paul, women still need the support of the influential male leaders around them to help open doors for ministry (Rom. 16:1).

Verbal proclamation continues to characterize the overarching culture and perpetuate Pentecostal values; therefore, ample ministry opportunities for women to preach only enhance the tradition.⁶³ The church body could benefit from a feminine perspective on scriptural passages. Further, Pentecostal leaders should intentionally ensure that female ministers appear on the speaker docket; this inclusion will complement male preaching and promote female assimilation.

Pentecostal Leadership and Actions

Jesus' countercultural approach toward women stands as the ultimate example for leaders of the church. Leaders need to encourage respect toward female ministers by exemplifying it in front of the larger community and by entrusting female leaders with opportunities for public ministry. Continued visibility of women ministers creates opportunities to influence followers and colleagues toward accepting women in other ecclesiastical spheres. Human nature drives people to value those similar to themselves, but in the body of Christ, diversity remains a necessary component for health and balance (1 Cor. 12).

Actions that help remove barriers for women ministers need to exist at lay leadership and professional levels. These actions encompass pastors maintaining awareness of the female struggle within the larger society and responding to this struggle by providing

resources to meet unique needs. Christ-like actions include encouraging women pursuing ministry callings through providing educational scholarships, presenting ministry opportunities, and advocating prayer on their behalf. Due to family and marriage limitations, some women called by God may never fulfill their callings unless this opportunity arises through the local church they attend. Leaders exemplifying Christ seek to provide opportunities for ministry development, recognition, and promotion within the local church so women can fulfill their ministry calls. In the professional arena, actions reflecting Jesus Christ include inviting the lone female minister to sit at the table during professional meetings, hiring female ministers at fair wages, providing preaching opportunities, ensuring visibility for female leadership, encouraging advancement by intentionally nominating women for leadership positions, and serving as an advocate.

Pentecostal Leadership and Relationships

Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul valued and cultivated relationships with the female leaders around them. Pentecostal leaders should nurture healthy working relationships by seeking to erode gender discomfort rather than ignoring it or maintaining an awkward relational distance.⁶⁴ Resources in such areas as mentoring, coaching, or relationships can facilitate healthy, appropriate boundaries between men and women serving Christ.⁶⁵ Senior pastors can implement coaching tools

to successfully oversee staff and guide pastors supervising lay ministers.

The words Pentecostal leaders use in private and public settings, the behavior they exhibit, and the relationships they develop between male and female ministers will help break down the assimilation barriers for women in leadership.

Conclusion

As the Church expands, the issue of how to assimilate female leaders into church culture will continue. The value Jesus placed upon women should remain central as the gospel message embarks into cultures that view women as subordinates. Competing world religions restrict women with rules and regulations, enslaving them to inferior roles. Christianity glistens with freedom and equality for women. As Jesus and Paul exemplified, no rules, regulations, or cultural restrictions can prevent the powerful effects of the permeation of Christ-likeness as those in authority lovingly empower women to serve alongside them in Kingdom advancement. The Apostle Paul sums up this new worldview: “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:28-29).

¹Susan C. Hyatt, *In the Spirit We're Equal* (Dallas, TX: Hyatt Press, 1998), 27.

²Richard Coffelt, "Transformational Narrative as Primary Method in Activating the Divine Calling of the Emerging Woman Leader: Curriculum Design and Assessment" (D.Min. diss., Regent University, 2006), 206.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Judy L. Brown, *Women Ministers According to Scripture* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing, 1996), 123. Luke includes Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna.

⁵Martin Scott, *For Such A Time as This* (London: P.S. Promotions, Ltd., 2001), 50-51.

⁶*Ibid.*, 129.

⁷Brown, 132. "Before a large crowd of people Jesus stopped a funeral procession, spoke to the mother of the young man who was dead, raised her son back to life again, and gave him back to her (Luke 7:11-15). He held the hand of a little girl who had died, spoke to her, and raised her to life (Mark 5:21-24, 35-42). He called a crippled woman out from the audience in a synagogue on the Sabbath, spoke to her, touched her, and made her well (Luke 13:10-13)."

⁸*Ibid.*, 52. Matt.15:21-28; Mark 5:33-34 and 7:24-30; Luke 8:47-48; John 4:4-42.

⁹Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985), 55-56.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 58.

¹¹Brown, 132.

¹²Scott, 56. "We find Jesus freely using a story about a woman to illustrate the love of God (Luke 15:8-10). In effect he is saying, 'God is like a woman who searches for her lost coin.' To use such blatantly feminine imagery must have been very offensive in the patriarchal society of Jesus' day."

¹³*Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴Brown, 131. Matt.15:3-4. "He denounced the ultimate symbol of male dominance in marriage, the right to divorce a wife at will (Matt. 5:31-32) and identified this wrongdoing against women as being the result of man's spiritual shortcoming (Matt.19:7-8). He taught that God's desire for marriage is found in the pre-fall account of Adam and Eve rather than in any deviations or accommodations that have occurred as a result of the fall (Matt.19:3-9)."

¹⁵Scott, 52.

¹⁶Brown, 134.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 51. In the Judaism of Jesus' day, "the woman was always blamed for a man's lust. If a woman was seen in public with an exposed face she could expect that men would lust after her. Jesus, however, did not blame the woman but firmly placed the responsibility with the man for his behavior (Matt. 5:27-30). In Jesus' new order, men and women were to look at each other differently; women were no longer to be seen as sex objects but as people of equal value. Jesus radicalized the meaning of lust and adultery to include even the mental act of dehumanizing women."

¹⁸*Ibid.* This account corresponds with Jesus' teaching on lust. He establishes equal responsibility for both male and female for lustful behavior.

¹⁹Ibid., 135. “Other Jewish rabbis would not have had direct dealings with women, but Jesus did so on a number of occasions. The same blessings that He made available to men, He also gave to women—the physical miracles of healing and the spiritual miracles of salvation.”

²⁰Scripture cites the woman bleeding for twelve years in Matt. 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48.

²¹Scott, 52.

²²Charles O. Knowles, *Let Her Be* (Columbia, MO: Knowell Publishing, 2001), 56.

²³Scott, 53. An example includes the woman crippled for eighteen years in Luke 13:10-17.

²⁴Coffelt, 210.

²⁵Scott, 55.

²⁶Coffelt, 210.

²⁷Knowles, 54.

²⁸Ibid., 54 He includes a list of females encountering Jesus. “The woman bent double (Luke 13:10-17), Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14-15; Mark 1:30-31; Luke 4:38-39), the woman with bleeding (Matt. 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-29; Luke 8:43-48), the woman at the well (John 4:4-42), the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), Jairus’ daughter (Matt. 9:18-19, 23-25; Mark 5:22-24, 38-42; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56), the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30), the women who anointed his feet or head (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8), Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-44), Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2), Joanna (Luke 8:3), and Susanna (Luke 8:3).”

²⁹Scott, 54.

³⁰Brown, 136.

³¹Spencer, 58. “Sitting at a rabbi’s feet was a position typical of rabbinic students expressing respect to their rabbi. As Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah, who lived *ca.* 160 B.C., said, ‘Let thy house be a meeting-house for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink their words with thirst.’”

³²Brown, 138.

³³Knowles, 56.

³⁴Spencer, 58.

³⁵Scott, 56.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Brown, 199. “How, then, did Paul treat the ‘woman issue’ of his day? He treated it as less important than evangelizing the world. He treated it as subservient to evangelizing the world. If the newfound liberty that women had in Christianity was exercised too quickly or too extremely, and if this became an obstacle to anyone’s perception and acceptance of the gospel, then Paul told women to refrain from exercising their freedom.”

³⁹Crabtree, 25.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Hyatt, 30.

⁴²Brown, 155.

⁴³Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 128-129.

⁴⁴Brown, 155.

⁴⁵Ibid., 156. “Paul uses this term to refer to himself (1 Cor. 3:9), Aquila (Rom. 16:3), Urbanus (Rom. 16:9), Timothy (Rom. 16:21; 1 Thess.3:2), Apollos (1 Cor. 3:5, 9), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Clement (Phil. 4:3), Aristarchus (Col. 4:10-11; Philem. 24), Mark (Col. 4:10-11; Philem. 24); Justus (Col. 4:11), Philemon (Philem. 1), Demas (Philem. 24), and Luke (Philem. 24). It is noteworthy that Paul never used this word to designate believers in general, but reserved it for references to his associates in the ministry. Four of these men were also identified as apostles: Paul (Rom. 1:1), Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6-7), Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6, 9), and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25, ‘*apostolos*’ translated ‘messenger’); therefore, being a ‘*sunergos*’ was not a small or casual designation.”

⁴⁶Hyatt, 29.

⁴⁷Brown, 156.

⁴⁸Ibid., 157.

⁴⁹Groothuis, 192. “The New Testament references to Priscilla and Aquila make it clear that, despite the male-dominate culture, Aquila was not the leader and Priscilla his assistant. In fact, of the seven times the two names are mentioned together, Priscilla is listed first four of those times (Acts 18:18-19, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19). Because it was the custom to list the husband’s name first, this reversal indicates Priscilla’s importance in the minds of the New Testament writers Luke and Paul. It also indicates that Priscilla was not teaching as a secondary partner under the ‘covering’ of her husband’s spiritual authority.”

⁵⁰Deborah M. Gill and Barbara Cavaness, *God’s Women—Then and Now* (Springfield, MO: Grace and Truth Publishers, 2004), 112. “In the past several decades, much scholarly effort has been focused on women deacons and deaconesses in the Early Church. It has been learned that the order of deaconess (*diakonissa*) was not even present at Phoebe’s time, but was the creation of the later Roman (Catholic) church to restrict the role of ministering women to serve women only. If Phoebe were a deacon (as opposed to a minister), however, her role was the same as any deacon of the first century. It is inaccurate and belittling, therefore, to call her a deaconess.”

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Groothuis, 196.

⁵³Stanley Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 88-89.

⁵⁴Groothuis, 196.

⁵⁵Ibid. “They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was” (Rom. 16:7).

⁵⁶Brown, 182-185.

⁵⁷Groothuis, 195.

⁵⁸Ibid..

⁵⁹Gill and Cavaness, 115.

⁶⁰Brown, 182-185.

⁶¹Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon Fee, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality, Complementarity without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 120.

⁶²An example of progress in this is the resolution passed in the 2008 Southern Missouri District Council to incorporate gender inclusive/neutral language into official documentation and district correspondence.

⁶³Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 112-120, 158. Wacker explains that in early Pentecost the presence of well-known female preachers promoted Spirit baptism and new opportunities. Some historians conclude that these “high-profile figures like Aimee Semple McPherson and Maria Woodworth-Etter were exceptions who proved the rule.” Others believe “the Pentecostal revival afforded opportunities for women that they did not enjoy in most denominational contexts.” One might conclude that the subject of female preachers and ministers moved from a dormant position to an active discussion as a result of the Pentecostal revival.

⁶⁴David Willis, “God’s Call and Practical Methodology for Establishing Longevity in Ministry (D. Min. Diss., Fuller Seminary, 2003), 121.

⁶⁵Recommended coaching books include Gary R. Collins, *Christian Coaching* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001) and Jane Creswell, *Christ-Centered Coaching: 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders* (St. Louis, MO: Lake Hickory Resources, 2006), and Robert Hargrove, *Masterful Coaching* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2003), and Thomas G. Crane, *The Heart of Coaching* (San Diego, CA: FTA Press, 2001).