

I Corinthians

October 2019

Bonus Material

- Listing of Gender inclusive Churches of Christ in the U.S.
82 different congregations (pages 2–22)
 - CBE International (Christians for Biblical Equality)
www.cbeinternational.org/content/about-cbe (page 23)
 - Deacons: Male and Female? A Study for Churches of Christ (pages 24-25)
 - The Junia Project www.juniaproject.com (pages 26 – 28)
- But**, another perspective to consider:
Touchstone Magazine Junia Among the Apostles
The Story Behind a New Testament Saint & the Egalitarian Agenda
<http://touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=21-08-022-f>
(pages 29-41)- Two Views on Women in Ministry (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology)
(pages 42 - 43)

The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians.

www.wherethespiritleads.org/gender_inclusive_churches.htm

A Directory of Gender Inclusive and Egalitarian Churches *in the Church of Christ Heritage*

This directory is published in an effort to help Christians who want to be a part of a gender inclusive Church of Christ locate a church in drivable distance of their home.

The churches listed below have all become more inclusive to participation by women in the worship, leadership, ministries, and teaching. Each congregation has decided through much study how inclusive they would like to be. Some congregations are inclusive only in the worship and teaching ministries while others have removed all barriers to women being able to use the gifts they have received from God. Some of the churches listed are churches with a strong Church of Christ tradition, who associate with Churches of Christ, but do not have Church of Christ in their name.

The guidelines developed for listing these churches are as follows. If the answer to one or more questions is YES, then I will happily include congregation in my directory.

- a) Are women welcome to use their gifts in leading public worship (leading prayer, giving communion talks, leading singing, and/or reading scripture)?
- b) Are women welcome to use their gifts in proclamation by preaching from the pulpit?
- c) Are women welcome to use their gifts and knowledge in biblical instruction, to teach all age groups regardless of gender in bible classes?
- d) Are women welcome to serve in leadership positions such as pulpit minister, worship leader, deacon, and elder (*not including positions such as children's minister or women's minister)?
- e) Does the church publish a clear statement of purpose to be an egalitarian church or gender inclusive church on their website?

***We prefer not to list churches where the only position for a woman is the children's or women's minister; though this often represents a small step forward, many churches that presently have these staff positions do not allow women to serve or participate in any other part of worship, teaching, or leadership, and thus cannot be characterized as gender inclusive, equal, or just.**

I have tried to accurately describe the gender inclusiveness of each church listed with the information I have been provided. The information may or may not be completely accurate and will be updated should better information become available. If you are a member of any of the listed congregations and feel the description is not accurate, please contact me. If you are a member of a gender inclusive Church of Christ as described above and wish to have your congregation listed, please contact me so that I may list your congregation. If you know of a gender inclusive Church of Christ that does not have a web site, I will list it with contact information on my page once I confirmed the accuracy of the information. Be sure to state in the subject line of your email "Gender Inclusive Church of Christ" and include a brief description of the congregation. The goal of this list is to collect as many links to gender inclusive Churches of Christ as possible so that Christians who consider gender equality and inclusion in the church important can find churches where the Galatians 3:26-28 approach to worship, work in the church, teaching, and leadership is important.

italicized sentences with quotations marks are taken directly from the church's website or excerpted from an email

Marked with an @ indicates this congregation welcomes women preachers into their pulpit

Arizona

[Tempe church of Christ](#) in Tempe , AZ

Received via email: *"We visited the Tempe church of Christ in Tempe , AZ and a woman prayed before the congregation, and women helped serve communion".*

California

@ [Camarillo Church of Christ](#), Camarillo, CA
Alan Beard, senior minister

From an email received from Alan Beard: *"I can verify that Camarillo Church of Christ meets the A, B, and C qualifications."*

[Conejo Valley Church of Christ](#), Thousand Oaks, CA.

Andy Wall, Preaching Minister

Email from a member:

"Thanks for your work listing gender-inclusive churches. I would encourage you to add the Conejo Valley C of C to your list (Thousand Oaks, Ca). Conditions A, B, and C apply."

[@ Culver Palms Church of Christ](#), Los Angeles, CA.

Mark Manassee, senior minister

From their website: *"God calls men and women to use their gifts in all aspects of the church's life."* On July 09, 2013, the Culver Palms leadership made the following announcement:

"As a result of our ongoing study of scripture, we discern God's call on the Culver Palms church to fully use the gifts of men and women to share God's word through preaching in order to build up the body of Christ here and for the good of God's kingdom..."

The Culver Palms Leadership"

[Eastside Church of Christ](#), Antioch, CA

Bobby Valentine, Minister

This is a gender inclusive church where women share in the worship leadership with the men.

[Metropolitan Church of Christ](#), Carson, CA

Fate Hagood, Minister

"We have women at all levels of leadership except elder and the minister."

[Palo Alto Church of Christ](#), Palo Alto, CA

Scott Falkowski, Minister

From their website: *"We have a number of men and women who serve the church in specific leadership roles."* Women serve as deacons, and in other positions.

[Pasadena Church of Christ](#), Pasadena, CA

From their website: *"We are a more progressive Church of Christ that is gender inclusive. We try to live out our Christian walks without the legalism and fundamentalism that has given so many Churches of Christ a bad name. We want a second chance to live out our calling in a fresh way that is enlivened by God's Holy Spirit...diligently trying to follow Him."*

[Sonoma Avenue Church of Christ](#), Santa Rosa, CA

Brice Smith, preaching minister

One of our non-traditional practices for a Church of Christ is the participation of women in our worship services. Women regularly participate in worship, reading scripture, sharing testimonies, offering prayers, and serving communion. Our Worship Minister is a woman and we have begun to include instruments into our times of praise. It is important to note that we hold that the spiritual leadership of the congregation is the responsibility of godly men (shepherds) and that our leadership model is the Great Shepherd who came to serve and not be served; who taught and practiced spiritual leadership that was and is very different from how the world perceives leadership.

[Turnpike Road Church of Christ](#), Santa Barbara, CA

From their web site: *On any given Sunday you will see various women and men who are not the "official" minister serving, leading and facilitating the service in different ways.*

[University Church of Christ](#), Malibu, CA

Rich Little, preaching minister

From their web site: *Leadership in worship is not limited to those formally recognized as ministers and elders. You will see Christian men and women from various walks of life taking active roles such as reading Scripture, serving communion, and participating in prayers. We are concerned to include all members in our worship in ways that are biblical, orderly and meaningful.*

Colorado

[Littleton Church of Christ](#) Centennial, CO
Collin Packer, lead minister

From their web site: *"ReNew Worship
Our 10:30 am worship service is a place where you can listen, sing, and engage in worship. The worship team is on-stage during the songs, video is used throughout the service, and both men and women are involved in various parts of the service. The ReNew service runs approximately 75 minutes."*

Connecticut

@ [Stamford Church of Christ](#) Stamford, CT.
Dale Pauls, Senior Pulpit Minister; Naomi Walters, minister in residence.

"is a multi-racial, gender-inclusive Church of Christ. We honor as our spiritual heritage those attempts that began in America early in the 19th century to restore the life and spirit of Christianity as envisioned by Jesus and his apostles." Another early leader in the full equality and inclusion of women in all areas of church service, ministry, and leadership

Georgia

[Campus View Church of Christ](#) Athens, GA
Jerry Neill, preaching minister

I received the following through email: *"Just this past summer, the Campus View Church of Christ started allowing women to read Scripture, serve communion and lead adult Bible classes."*

@ [Northlake Church of Christ](#), Tucker, GA
Ike Reeser, Senior Minister

"Because we believe that every person has gifts to serve the church and the world, we welcome both men and women to participate in all ministries and in our worship assemblies."

@ [Southern Crescent Church](#), Tyrone, GA
Keith Clark

"As to our organization, we believe that Christ is the only head of the church and that every member is under His authority and also in submission to one another. We

understand every member to be a minister of Christ- called to minister and serve in His name. We recognize that there are different gifts and functions within the body of Christ, but do not believe there is any hierarchy in which one member or ministry is more important than another; we believe that every member of our church family is accountable to Christ and to one another. We believe the Bible teaches that our local church family is to be organized as a flock under the loving and watchful care of shepherds (also called elders, bishops, presbyters) and the ministry of the church is to be entrusted to spiritual men and women who serve as ministry leaders."

Illinois

@ [The Lakeview Church of Christ](#), Chicago, IL

Sean Wicks, Minister Cambry Pardee

From an email from Sean Wicks: The Lakeview Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois transitioned to being a fully gender-inclusive church in 2010. Since the transition, Lakeview has a 5-person leadership team consisting of 2 women and three men; women regularly participate/have access to all elements of our worship service, including leading worship, giving our welcome address, delivering communion thoughts, praying, reading scripture, making announcements, and preaching a sermon. We are trying to be a gift-oriented church, concentrating on putting to work the gifts of each person in our community.

Indiana

[Turning Point Church](#) Franklin, Indiana

Guy Langston, senior minister

(Formerly Franklin Church of Christ) From an email from a member/ex-elder: "Women-Serve as Deacons and Ministry Leaders. Oversee communion, Serve communion, Open the service, close the service, Lead the congregation in prayer, Teach in mixed groups, are ministry Leaders. On two occasions have given the Sunday morning lesson (Sermon if you wish), are on the worship team, play instruments, sing solos, duets, etc."

Kansas

[Overland Park Church of Christ](#), Overland Park, Kansas

Received by email on Sunday Aug. 04, 2019: *"I was visiting the KC area this weekend and visited the Overland Park Church of Christ for worship today. They had women that led prayers, did the welcome, gave an exhortation, served communion and their worship leader was a female. I'm not a member there but being aware of your directory (which I use for when I am traveling) I thought you might want to add them or reach out to them to see if they would like to be added."*

Massachusetts

[@ Brookline Church of Christ](#), Brookline, MA

Senior minister: Candace Nicholds

"When worshipping at Brookline you will notice that women participate in public worship more than you may be used to in most Churches of Christ.....Brookline seeks to use the gifts God has given us without regard to gender because we have found two distinct imperatives that compel us to do so. The first imperative is clear in the doctrine of creation. God created humankind as equals-"male and female he created them."

[Pittsfield Church of Christ](#), Pittsfield, MA

Russell Moody II and Charles Young, ministers

"Our assemblies are intentionally relaxed. Our leadership seeks to utilize the giftedness of all our members. This means that men, women and children may be participating in our worship under the oversight of our elders. We understand the passages in both I Timothy and I Corinthians (often cited to limit women's participation) to be a corrective of chaotic circumstances. When "decency and order" and "edification" are the norm, everyone is encouraged to participate."

[Restoration Community Church](#), Kingston, MA

Received via Email from Eric Greer: *"Restoration Community Church is a church in the tradition of the American Restoration Movement. We not only believe in the the priesthood of all believers; we practice it. Our gathering is fully egalitarian as is our leadership team"*.

Michigan

[Arbor Bridge Church](#), Ann Arbor, MI (formerly [Ann Arbor Church of Christ Neighborhood Church](#))

Darryl Canty, minister

From email from Darryl Canty: *"At our church we believe that women can do anything except be an elder."*

[Rochester Church of Christ](#), Rochester Hills, MI.

Adam Hill, Minister of the Word

Rochester Church is committed to nurturing and empowering every disciple to most faithfully utilize their gifts in service to Christ, Christ's Kingdom, the church, and the world. To this end, women regularly use their gifts in our worship assemblies by reading scripture, leading prayer, giving communion talks, leading singing as a part of the praise team and in solos, and participating in dramas. Within our adult Bible classes, women serve as part of our teaching teams, and regularly teach adult Bible classes of both genders. In addition, women are regularly invited to co-preach alongside the Minister of the Word. While women do serve as Ministry Leaders and Pastoral Care Ministers (we do not have "Deacons" as an office currently, although, were it added, women would certainly be included in that office), as of now (Sept, 2013) women are not given the role of Shepherd (elder) or Minister of the Word. While not fully egalitarian at this point, we are committed to justice and inclusion and growth as we live out the gifting and blessing of God together.

[Trenton Church of Christ](#), Trenton, MI.

Charlton Taylor, Senior Minister

From an email from Charlton Taylor: *"women serve communion, give announcements, sing on a standing praise team, read scripture, participate in drama, teach, serve as ministry leader and we also have women serving on our Vision Team, one of our primary leadership teams."*

[Troy Church of Christ](#), Troy, MI.

From their web site: *"After many years of studying and prayerfully reflecting on women's roles in our public gatherings, our church family concluded that part of being true to Scripture was to include women in various capacities while embracing unity and peace. The result is that both men and women share in the responsibilities of serving during our assembly through Communion, Bible Reading, Prayer and Testimony."*

Missouri

[East Sunshine Church of Christ](#), Springfield, MO

Deron Smith, preaching minister

Quoted from an email from Deron Smith: *"At this time, East Sunshine's leadership has determined that elders and the preaching minister will be roles for males, while all other ministries and leadership positions include both men and women. This perspective comes from an understanding that God gave men a responsibility to answer to Him for the church family. There is a diversity of perspective in our leadership and congregation, but we have landed on this decision as the best for us right now. At East Sunshine, men*

and women pray; read Scripture; share reflections and pray at the communion table; serve communion; participate in praise team, dramas, testimonies, and announcements, etc. We have women ministers, ministry leaders (our term for deacons), and Bible class teachers/facilitators, and women have participated in the same kind of teams/committees that men have been a part of. Our goal is to base service, not so much on gender, but on giftedness, passion, abilities, personality, and experiences, within the leadership's understanding of male responsibility before God. We believe that strong male leadership will nurture an environment in which female leadership and giftedness thrives, not be suppressed."

[McKnight Crossings Church of Christ](#), St. Louis, MO

Jeff Kryder preaching minister

From their web site: "A **Traditional** worship meets in the auditorium. This a cappella worship is rich in the church of Christ heritage. A **Contemporary** worship meets in the gym. This relaxed worship style is led by both men and women, with instrumental music accompanying our congregational praise. Our aim is that both worship experiences are uplifting, relevant, Christ-centered, and God-honoring. Try one this week and come back the next week to try the other!" (admin note: The Mid-county CofC, a previous listing in St. Louis, has merged with the McKnight Road CofC to form McKnight Crossings.)

New Jersey

[Monmouth Church of Christ](#), Tinton Falls, NJ

From an email from Ashok Bruno, Elder, Monmouth Church of Christ: "We allow women to serve as deacons, welcome the congregation, read scripture, and make announcements." The following link is to a MS Word 97 document on their web site regarding the role of women at

Monmouth <http://www.monmouthchurch.org/Reference/Misc/Role%20of%20Women.doc>. I have converted the document to html for those who do not have access to MS Word 97: [Role of Women](#)

New Mexico

[Cuba Avenue Church of Christ](#) Alamogordo, NM

Al Maxey, Minister

"Women now participate in the serving of the Lord's Supper."

@ [Los Alamos Church of Christ](#), Los Alamos, NM
Tim Stidham Pulpit Minister

"Service in worship is not limited to those formally recognized as ministers or elders. We believe in the priesthood of all believers. You will see Christian men and women from various walks of life taking active roles such as reading Scripture, preparing us for communion, and participating in prayers. We want to include all members in our worship in ways that are, biblical, orderly and meaningful."

@ [Montgomery Church of Christ](#), Albuquerque, NM
Jason Burnett

Received from a member: *"We only recently enacted a policy to allow women to SERVE communion, deliver messages for the bread and fruit of the vine and the offering message. Today, for the first time, one of our former elders' wives BAPTIZED a woman with whom she has been studying. The elders are now ALWAYS accompanied by their wives...in encouraging people to come forward at the end of services, in attending training programs for elders, etc..... We have an excellent Praise Team and Worship Leader, our services are wonderful. We also have a female Children's minister and had a female Administrative minister....."*

South Main Church, Roswell, NM

Robert Moore, teaching pastor Phone: 575-622-4426 , Roswell, NM

Received by email: *"We began including women in public roles about 5 years ago. We were formerly known as the South Main Church of Christ. We don't have any particular statement on our website about women, as this is somewhat of an "old" issue for us - a statement is no longer necessary."*

New York

@ [Manhattan Church of Christ](#) New York, NY
Dr. Thomas Robinson Senior Minister Amy Bost Henegar

"A community of people on a spiritual journey together. We are striving to grow in devotion to God and in service to people." Not fully gender inclusive at leadership level at this time but was one of the leaders in including females in most areas of church service, ministry, worship, and teaching. They have gender equality and inclusive teaching material on their resources page.

@ [West Islip Church of Christ](#), West Islip, New York

David Fritz

"is dedicated to serving the community and spreading the ministry of Jesus. We praise God joyfully and reflectively in worship services designed to let everyone participate—men and women, young and old." This congregation is an early leader in the gender equality and gender inclusive movement. It had the first husband and wife preaching team in the churches of Christ. West Islip is fully inclusive at all levels of church involvement and leadership.

North Carolina

@ [Cole Mill Road Church of Christ](#) Durham, NC

Ben Fike, pulpit minister

- *Preaching, Lead singing, prayers, communion meditations, and welcome in worship service along with serving communion*
- *Teach classes of all ages with participants of any gender*
- *Serve as Youth and Families Minister*
- *Serve on our Ministry Coordinating Committee (replacement for deacons) to lead various ministries of our church*
- *Female Ministry leaders listed on website along with rest of MCC members*

@ [Courtyard Church of Christ](#) Fayetteville, NC

Point of Contact: Tiffany Dahlman, Leadership Team member and courtyardcoc@gmail.com

I received the following in an email from Tiffany on March 08, 2016:

"We are a fully egalitarian Church of Christ where all people are encouraged to use whatever gift they have been given regardless of gender."

[Providence Road Church of Christ](#), Charlotte, NC

Providence Road has two unique services. The early service is a traditional service. The late service is a contemporary service which includes female participation in the service as noted by an online video on their web site explaining their services.

Oklahoma

@ [Dayspring Church of Christ](#) , Edmond, OK

This information was received via email from Linda King, Adult Education:

"Dayspring Church of Christ is a small (100 members) congregation in Edmond, Oklahoma. We are located next to the University of Central Oklahoma and not far from Oklahoma Christian University.

Dayspring is unique in that we are a volunteer congregation. We have never had a paid minister. Instead, each week a different member/family/group volunteers to plan the Sunday morning communion service. In addition, because of our proximity to OC, we are blessed to be able to call on OC Bible professors to teach fine classes for us year after year.

Partly as a consequence of our volunteer ethic and our flattened hierarchy, Dayspring Church has always been gender-inclusive throughout its 34-year existence. We have had female deacons and full participation in public worship for over 20 years. For the last 4 years, we have also had female shepherds (elders). There is no more gender distinction in our congregation than there is a distinction between tall and short, young and old, rich and poor. I don't mean to sound glib about this: we studied the issue extensively over the course of two years in the early 1990s. We conducted a series of all-church meetings one summer to examine, assess, and discuss the hermeneutical lens(es) through which we read scripture as well as the traditions and personal/ professional/ cultural contexts that influenced our views. For these meetings we had ground rules and facilitators and plenty of time for people to listen to one another. Over it all, we had prayer. Although we did not reach immediate unanimity, there was a strong consensus. Our elders at the time decided that their 'rule' for the Dayspring congregation would be that there would be no rule: each person would be encouraged to fully use his or her gifts in service to the Lord and the community, considering what was best for one another and for our Christian witness. Instantly, the addition of women's voices of wisdom, counsel, leadership, and prayer to the life and work of the church confirmed to us that the Spirit of God had directed our steps, and the matter of gender became an utter non-issue in the congregation.

Our leadership is clearly set forth on our website at www.dayspringchurch.info. I offer the above brief history to explain why we don't articulate a "gender-inclusive" policy on our website. We long to remain Christ-centered rather than issue-oriented, so we have consciously not trumpeted our "progressive" stance or our stance on any issue that might tend to dominate or distort our identity as anything other than followers of the Way. On the other hand, we don't hide or dissemble, and many Bible faculty at OC, ACU, and Lipscomb

universities have either visited us or taught entire series of lessons for us. They frequently remark as they leave, "This is wonderful. If only" Some eventually entrust themselves to us, and we are thankful that they now feel safe enough in their university positions that they can join themselves to our little congregation wholeheartedly, not covertly or casually.

Having enjoyed the blessings of gender inclusion for all these years, we are happy to share our experiences—both successes and missteps—with anyone interested. Although we make it a policy not to enter into doctrinal debates or discussions via e-mail, we welcome all who would like to visit. In addition, you may include Dayspring on your list of churches of Christ that are fully inclusive. In Christian love and humility, Linda A. King

@ [The Journey Church](#), Tulsa, OK

Greg Taylor, preacher

OHIO

[Alum Creek Church of Christ](#), Lewis Center, OH

Adam Metz, minister

"Women regularly lead public prayers, pass communion, provide the welcome and announcements, serve as deacons (though we don't have official titles), and participate in many ways. We have a praise team with men and women, and have both men and women lead solos, dramatic readings, and share testimonies. We are a small church and try to utilize whatever gifts each member provides."

Oregon

@ [Agape Church of Christ](#), Portland, Or

Ron Clark, preaching minister.

By email from Ron Clark: *"is fully gender inclusive church that is focused on outreach and empowering people, especially women, to do ministry."*

@ [East County Church of Christ](#), Gresham, Or
Lewis Robinson, minister

"East County Church of Christ, in Gresham, Oregon, is gender inclusive and may be added to your list, with A, B, and C applying. Women sometimes lead prayer, give communion talks, serve communion, sing on praise teams, teach mixed auditorium classes, do guest preaching, and serve as ministry servants (deacons)."

@ [PUMP Church of Christ](#) Portland Oregon Cheryl Russell

@ [Westside Church of Christ](#), Hillsboro, Or

Aaron Metcalf, minister Jen Christy

"Westside Church of Christ in Hillsboro, Oregon is gender-inclusive in worship, teaching and most leadership (we don't have women serving in the role of elder at this time). Women do lead worship, pray and read scripture publicly, lead the L.S., teach adult bible classes and help lead Westside's overall ministry efforts."

Pennsylvania

@ [Kainos Church of Christ](#), Exeter Township, Reading, PA
Chip Hartzell, minister

Received the following from a member: *"I think it's even more remarkable how natural it is, and that there are no male voices saying in essence that they are "allowing" women to enjoy an extended role in the assembly. I am not saying at all that it's an equal participation, but that our differences deepen our worship. Everything is done with the utmost consideration, love and respect for each other. There is no one making anyone feel like we are more, and you are less. More like, we all our different and we are all useful in different ways."*

Tennessee

@ [All Saints Church of Christ](#), Nashville, TN

The following is supplied by email from Claire Frederick, a member and one of their volunteer preachers:

"A new egalitarian church plant in Nashville called "All Saints Church of Christ" (established Oct. 2, 2016). Church planters include Claire Davidson Frederick, John Mark and Jennifer Hicks, and Jerry and Kim Reed. We meet at 4:00 p.m. each Sunday in the sanctuary of Vine Street Christian Church (4101 Harding Pike, Nashville, TN 37205). Our services are liturgical, and we follow the Revised Common Lectionary and church calendar. Home to a large number of M.Div. students and theology professors, we rotate male and female preachers,

communion officiants, and worship leaders each week. Our worship is a blend of acapella and instrumental (depending on who is leading), and we get to experience both male and female members offering prayers and reading Scripture. We have no official elders or deacons at this point and instead are practicing liturgy without hierarchy. Our goal is that everyone may serve according to his or her giftedness and that the "priesthood of ALL believers" would be both a theology and a lived practice. Each week, 100% of our contribution goes to a different faith-based charity, as we have no paid staff and no overhead costs."

[4th Avenue Church of Christ](#), Franklin, TN.

Patrick Mead, senior minister.

Quoted from their website: Every congregation of the Church of Christ is independent and you will find a variety of worship styles and organizational models among them. Fourth Avenue Church has two distinctives: our worship is mixed — acapella and instrumental — and women play a larger role in the life and work of our congregation than they do in some others. The link below will take you to our statement on Women in Worship and Ministry.

[Fourth Avenue and Women in Worship and Ministry](#)

[Maury Hill Church](#), Columbia, TN.

Russ Adcox, senior minister

Published on their website: *Our belief is that women can participate in any activity of the assembly and serve in any capacity of the church with the exception of serving as an elder or senior minister.*

[Otter Creek Church of Christ](#), Brentwood, TN

Mike Runcie, Executive Minister; Josh Graves, Preaching & Teaching Minister

Otter Creek Church invites men and women to serve, based on giftedness, in ministry, worship gatherings (communion, prayers, music, readings, testimony), deacon/deaconess oversight leadership, all forms of adult education and spiritual formation. We are still wrestling with what it means to be a community based on giftedness through baptism.

@[Reformation Church](#), Nashville, TN

Russell Pointer, founding minister

received by email: *My name is Russell Pointer, and I am the founding minister of Reformation Church Nashville, a Church of Christ starting in Nashville, TN. We are an egalitarian Church of Christ that allows women to freely minister in any capacity.*

[Stones River Church of Christ](#) Murfreesboro, TN,

Tony Woodall, Pulpit Minister

Stones River has women serving as Worship Minister, Youth Minister, and Children's Minister.

[Sycamore View Church of Christ](#), Memphis, TN

Josh Ross, Preaching Minister

Received by email: *"We believe that to not move forward regarding both males and females fully participating in our worship settings, is not in keeping with the practice and spirit of the New Testament record, nor is it in keeping with the calling of the Holy Spirit. We see this as an exciting and powerful moment for Sycamore View, and pray for God to open new doors of opportunities for us to be a restoring church family here in Memphis."* For more information regarding Sycamore View's Gender role study, please click [HERE](#).

[Woodmont Hills Church](#), Nashville, TN

Jeff Brown, preaching minister

received by email: *"Woodmont Hills church announced a policy change today that should merit its inclusion on your list. They now allow women to serve in all roles other than elder, pulpit minister, worship leader. They can be other types of ministers, serve as deacons, lead prayers, read scripture, speak and give devotional messages, serve communion, serve on praise team, teach adult bible classes."*

TEXAS

[@ Bastrop Church of Christ](#), Bastrop, TX

Johnny Bond, Minister

"We are an open-door, open-arms church that doesn't expect you to have everything together but welcomes people as they are. We focus on building relationships through loving Jesus and loving people by serving our community. We are a fun-loving, Christ-centered church ready to make a difference in your life."

[@ Bering Drive Church of Christ](#) Houston, TX.

Dr. Jeff Christian, Preacher * Paige Pecore Youth Minister, Cynthia Ownby,

Possibly the oldest fully gender inclusive church in Texas with *"a mission to bring people into a relationship with God, in a community of Jesus' disciples, seeking Biblical, nondenominational Christianity, and serving others in the compassion and power of the Holy Spirit."* This congregation has women presently serving in eldership, ministry, and worship leadership.

[Broadway Church of Christ](#), Lubbock, TX

Karl Ihfe Preaching Minister

Women lead in the Call To Worship. Confirmed by family members who are part of his congregation.

[Cinco Ranch Church of Christ](#),

Bo Pugh, Lead Minister

"Women serve in every area of Cinco with the exception of shepherds and lead/senior minister."

[East Side Church of Christ](#), Snyder, TX

Received by email from a visitor to East Side: *"Similar to Glenwood Church of Christ in Tyler"*

[Glenwood Church of Christ](#), Tyler, TX

<https://glenwoodchurch.com/resources/women-in-the-church>

[Highland Church of Christ](#) Abilene, TX

Jonathan Storment, preaching minister

"Highland Church of Christ is not totally inclusive at this time but it does have several women ministers on staff and women are utilized in the worship."

[Highland Oaks Church of Christ](#) Dallas, TX

Pat Bills, Minister

The following link is to the elders' published statement on gender equality in the church <http://www.hocc.org/eldersstatement/>

[@ The Church at 1548 Heights](#) Houston, TX

Dr. Matt Soper, preaching minister

This is a fully egalitarian church.

@ [Mercy Street Church of Christ](#) Abilene, TX.
Stan Baldwin, minister

The Mercy Street Church of Christ is a new church planting that is a multi-racial, multi-cultural, gender-inclusive Church of Christ. Read about this Church of Christ in an article published by the [ReporterNews.com](#), an online news site for Abilene, Texas.

@ [Minter Lane Church of Christ](#) Abilene, TX.
Albert Acosta, pulpit minister

Received via email from Albert Acosta: *"We currently are characterized by the categories A and B"*.

@ [Oak Ridge Church of Christ](#) Willow Park, TX

I found out about this congregation through a female friend who preached for them not long ago. Their inclusive nature was verified by a member email.

[Preston Road Church of Christ](#), Dallas, TX
Wade Hodges, lead minister

Received in an email from Wade Hodges: *"women pass communion and read scripture on Sunday mornings. Also make announcement. Women teach co-ed classes on Sunday mornings on some occasions."*

[Southern Hills Church of Christ](#), Abilene, TX

From their web site: <https://www.sohillschurch.org/aboutus/expanding-the-roles-of-women/> *"As a church family, we have always fully affirmed that women and men possess equal worth in Jesus Christ. Now, as one body, your shepherds bless and empower both men and women who have the desire and giftedness to participate in roles of service in our worship gatherings and in the life of our church. Our collective understanding of scripture leads us to affirm that the roles of elder and preaching minister will continue to be filled only by men. Aside from these two roles, various roles of service in our worship gatherings that were previously filled only by men will now be filled at times by men, at times by women, and at times by both men and women together."*

Personal note from Admin: My twin daughters attended Southern Hills when they were students at ACU (2002-2007). At that time, SHCoC was very traditional in their views of what women could and could not do but my wife and I always felt warmly welcomed there. The elders announcement September 30, 2018 is something that brightens my day!

@ [Southwest Central Church of Christ](#), Houston, TX.

update: *"On Sunday, Aug. 4, 2019, This congregation ordained their first female shepherd"* (received by email on Aug. 08, 2019)

From their website:

"Another tradition we have here at SWC is the participation of women in our worship services in prayer, reading or serving the Lord's Supper. After years of study, we have come to see God leading us to this practice as a way of declaring that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28)."

Email received on June, 2016

"Since we have chosen not to hire a minister for the traditional preaching role, we all share in the sounds of our assemblies. In our gathered time together, we have both gifted women and gifted men from the congregation who preach regularly, as well as pray, read Scripture, offer testimony, serve the bread and cup, and lead singing."

@ Southwind Church, Mansfield, TX meets at Mary Orr Intermediate School, Mansfield, TX 76063 US
Lonnie Gentry, Minister

Southwind is a fully egalitarian church. From an email from Lonnie Gentry: *"We are a young and small church, but we are fully committed to gender inclusiveness. At Southwind, a woman can do anything a man can do. Women serve on our board, as shepherds, lead worship, have preached, etc."* From the website: *"Many (but certainly not all) of our members have backgrounds in Churches of Christ and/or Christian Churches. As a result, we participate in some activities associated with these churches (like Leadership Training for Christ). In belief and practice we are at the more progressive end of this fellowship (compare The Hills Church of Christ or Compass Christian Church)"*

@ [Spirit of Unity, a Church of Christ Family](#), Irving TX (Formerly Plymouth Park Church of Christ)

John Ketchersid, Minister

An ecumenical, gender-inclusive, kingdom-centered body of Christians serving the city of Irving, TX. This congregation is fully gender inclusive at all levels of service, ministry, and leadership. Located at 211 W. Third St. Irving, TX 75060 (Chapel of First United Methodist Irving) -- Sunday morning worship is at 10:30 am. -- Glorifying God, Loving Our Neighbors, In Jesus Christ! You are always welcome to join us!

[Sunset Ridge Church of Christ](#), San Antonio, TX.

John Harp, Senior Minister

From their website: *"We are a gift-inclusive church, meaning leadership in worship is not limited to men or those formally recognized as ministers or elders. You will see both men and women taking an active role using their gifts such as leading singing, reading Scripture, presiding over and serving communion, and participating in prayers. We strive to include all members in our worship in ways that we believe are biblical, orderly and meaningful."*

@ [Tahoka Church of Christ](#), Tahoka, TX.

Preaching: Brandon Fredenburg and Shannon Rains

by email: *"Women have been included in the worship by serving communion, making announcements, and reading Scripture."* and a conversation with three members on 04/28/2012: *"Two women will be installed as deacons on Sunday, May 6, 2012"* (update 07-2017: *personal observation: Women now teach and preach*).

[The Branch Church](#) (formerly Farmers Branch Church of Christ),

Farmers Branch, TX Chris Siedman, Lead Minister

Received via email: *"The Branch (formerly Farmers Branch Church of Christ), where my wife and I are members, should be on your list."*

[The Hills Church](#) (formerly Richland Hills Church of Christ): North Richland Hills, TX.

Rick Atchely Minister

The following information is supplied by a member: *"we have women leading prayers in worship, also on occasion, little girls leading prayers in worship and reading Scripture in worship, also women leading worship. We are working toward getting women to serve communion and to usher"*

[West Fort Worth Campus](#) [Southlake Campus](#)

@ [The Vine Church](#), a church of Christ fellowship, Temple, TX

from a member email: *"We have women ministry leaders, women teach mixed adult classes, women have made announcements, women sing solos and sing on our praise team, voice prayers in small groups, lead prayer on Wednesday nights, and make Wednesday night devotional talks. We sing both accapella and instrumental, but more instrumental. We have long been considered the more progressive and non-traditional church of Christ in our area."*

[University Avenue Church of Christ](#), Austin, TX

Eddie Sharp, Minister

From their website: *"Thank you for your interest in University Avenue Church of Christ. In our worship services, women are asked to sing, read Scripture, offer prayers, make announcements, and help with the Lord's Supper."*

@ [Venture Community Church](#), Denton, TX

Karen Lawson

Virginia

@ [Roanoke Church of Christ](#), Roanoke, VA

Keith Wagner, minister

Received from member Mike Brown: "Roanoke became gender inclusive in the early 90s after a period of study and discernment."

From their website: "With firm conviction that the scriptures teach the redeeming act of Christ on the cross has broken down all barriers between humankind, and after many years of prayer and study, we of the Roanoke Church of Christ now recognize the contributing gifts and talents of all the redeemed, regardless of gender. This, along with the other ministries of this church, has given us the greatest sense of mission and purpose we have ever known. If you are a newcomer, we welcome you and invite you to join us in the grace and freedom of Jesus Christ our Lord."

[Springfield Church of Christ](#), Springfield, VA

From their website: Everyone is invited to participate in our worship services. On any given Sunday, we may have men, women, the young and the old singing, reading scripture, serving communion and leading prayer. For some in our tradition, this is unusual. You are invited to read our thoughts on this [here](#)

Washington

@ [Federal Way Church of Christ](#), Federal Way, WA

Ben Ries, preaching minister

by email from Ben Ries: "If you were to come on a Sunday morning you will find both male and female voices present in our worship. Women will often lead our welcome/call to worship, read scripture, pray, pass communion trays, lead our practice of dwelling (a kind of lectio divina) and share testimony. Women also teach adult bible classes, sometimes by themselves, sometimes in partnership with others. We also have a women ministry leaders (aka deaconesses) and a woman youth minister who leads our 7th-12th grade ministry."

Wisconsin

[Mandrake Road Church of Christ](#), Madison, WI

Roy Ratcliff, minister & elder

by email from Roy Ratcliff: "we use women in the worship to help lead worship by leading prayer and Bible reading, we use women to teach adult Bible classes, and we have a woman deacon."

<https://www.cbeinternational.org/content/about-cbe>

Leading Together, Serving as Equals

CBE International (Christians for Biblical Equality) advances the gospel by equipping Christians to use their God-given talents in leadership and service regardless of gender, ethnicity, or class.

CBE, a 501c3 nonprofit, is supported by a community that believes the Bible, properly interpreted, calls women and men to lead and serve as equals, based on Scriptures such as Galatians 3:28. [Learn more.](#)

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CBE Bookstore offers reviewed and relevant books on the Bible's call for women and men to share leadership and service equally.

CONTACT US

122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 218
Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451
United States of America
Phone: (612) 872-6898
Fax: (612) 872-6891
Email: cbe@cbeinternational.org

Excerpts from Chapter 12 Conclusions of:

“Deacons: Male and Female? A Study for Churches of Christ” by J. Stephen Sandifer:

([order on amazon](#))

In reading the New Testament, one gets the impression that Christians did not think in terms of clergy and laity, of sacred persons and sacred places. Everything is sacred, and every person was a minister, an integral part of a priesthood of believers. Titles of hierarchy and distinctions of primacy or rank are out of place. Submission to God and to one another is the frequent theme. The emphasis is on service, of which *διακονος* was the key word.

.....

Although the writer of this book is influenced by the application of the church fathers and historians, he is drawn back to the scriptures for his primary conclusions. However, this complicates rather than clarifies the question at hand. The New Testament books are written over a period of forty years to a variety of cultures and to churches in various stages of development. Not all churches appear to have the same organization, and one must ask at what point in that development he wishes to stop and establish a reference for study? No deacons, male or female, (or any other “officers” unless you so define Apostles) are apparent on Pentecost when the church was established. The leadership structure evolves based on the spiritual gifts of early Christians and the needs of their assemblies. This is especially significant as the church spreads from Jerusalem and the apostles in time, distance, and culture.

.....

The following is apparent for deacons in the New Testament:

- 1) In some churches a group of early Christian servants were recognized for their service by the word *διακονος*.
- 2) The group included male and female servants.
- 3) The servants were under the oversight/leadership of the elders/shepherds of the local church and may have been primarily assistants to those overseers. No job description was given.
- 4) Those “officially” recognized for their service were outstanding examples of Christian character.
- 5) No instructions were given for the method of selection, “ordination” or appointment, or tenure of this special group.
- 6) Evidence is insufficient to show that deacons were a recognizable group of special servants in every mature congregation.
- 7) Evidence is insufficient to illustrate that deacons were ordained to an office in the church; rather the emphasis was on function.

.....

Concerning the Seven in Jerusalem (Acts 6), this writer sees them as a unique group produced for a particular historical situation. They were neither elders nor deacons in a sense recognizable today.

.....

Philippians 1:1 (NIV)

¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons^[a]:

Footnote:

The word *deacons* refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Romans 16:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NIV)

⁸ In the same way, deacons^[a] are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹ In the same way, the women^[b] are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.

¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Footnotes:

[1 Timothy 3:8](#) The word *deacons* refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in verse 12; and in Romans 16:1 and Phil. 1:1.

[1 Timothy 3:11](#) Possibly deacons' wives or women who are deacons

Romans 16:1 (NIV)

Personal Greetings

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon^{[a][b]} of the church in Cenchreae.

Footnotes:

[Romans 16:1](#) Or *servant*

[Romans 16:1](#) The word *deacon* refers here to a Christian designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12.

www.juniaproject.com/

About the Junia Project

Welcome, and thanks for dropping in!

We are a volunteer community of women and men advocating for the inclusion of women in leadership in the Christian church and for mutuality in marriage. We believe that when interpreted correctly, the Bible teaches that both men and women are called to serve *at all levels of the Church*, and that leadership should be based primarily on *gifting* and not on *gender*. Our interpretation comes out of the Wesleyan-Holiness perspective described in [A Call to Full Participation: Women in the Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition](#).

If you are new to this conversation we recommend this 8 page booklet which lays the biblical foundation for this position: [The Bible Teaches the Equal Standing of Men and Women](#) by [Phil Payne](#).

The Mission of The Junia Project

- To encourage the study of egalitarian theology within a supportive online community
- To advocate for the inclusion of women at all levels of leadership in the Church
- To let women know that God loves them deeply and intends for them to be equal participants in the faith community
- To encourage men to advocate for women and to work alongside them in Kingdom work
- To provide resources on women in the Bible to enrich church teaching

The Junia Project Blog

The blog serves as a platform for a diverse group of writers to communicate their understanding of egalitarian theology and to share reflections on gender equality. We generally post new content once a week.

The views and positions expressed by individual authors and those commenting on posts are theirs alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or positions of The Junia Project administrative team, or of our employers.

While writers come from varying backgrounds, the administrative team adheres to a Wesleyan Holiness theology, and is in line with the core values of [Christians for Biblical Equality](#).

Who was Junia?

The Junia Project is named for Junia, a woman apostle in the early church (see [Romans 16:7](#)). Her ministry in partnership with Andronicus and Paul reminds us that God's intention is for men and women to partner together as equals in the home, the church, and the community.



Junia: Co-laborer, Fellow Prisoner, Noted Apostle

We know from the book of Romans that Junia served alongside Paul in his ministry, and was effective enough to be considered a threat to the local authorities, who imprisoned her along with Paul. Paul thought highly enough of Junia and her co-laborer Andronicus that he commended them both in Romans 16:7 as **“noted among the apostles”**. While most scholars believe that Andronicus was her husband, there is no mention of that in the text – he could possibly have been a brother or other relative.

Though widely accepted as a woman apostle throughout early Church history, in later translations an “s” was added to the end of her name, making it into a masculine form, Junias. What was the reasoning behind this – was it a scribe’s mistake? Or could it have been something more political, like an attempt to deny that women could be apostles? We don’t know. What we do know is that any masculine form of the name Junia was essentially non-existent during those times, while the feminine was, and is to this day, quite common (just Google it and see the evidence!) More recently, scholars have overwhelmingly acknowledged that the name is definitively feminine. The NIV translation finally corrected the name in the 2011 revision, along with thousands of other gender-related corrections. In naming our ministry The Junia Project, we hope to restore Junia’s identity and honor her service in advancing the gospel in the early Church.

Additional Resources on Junia

Website Articles

Ben Reynolds. [Junias in Romans 16:7](#)

On our website. [Who Killed Junia? Part One](#) and [Part Two](#) by Patrick Mead.

Peter Arzt-Grabner. [The Interpretation of IOYNIAN in Rom 16.7](#) (Paulus Handbuch Series)

Rena Pederson [Paul Praises a Woman Apostle](#) (article from CBE)

Scot McKnight. [Shifting Footings](#)

Suzanne McCarthy [Series: Translation & linguistics issues related to Junia](#) (18 articles)

Books

A number of books have been written about Junia. A good place to start is with theology professor Scot McKnight's very inexpensive but delightful ebook, [Junia is Not Alone](#).

Other books worth the read:

[The Lost Apostle: Search for the Truth about Junia](#) by Rena Pederson

[Junia: The First Woman Apostle](#) by Eldon Jay Epp.

For a detailed critique of complementarian interpretations of Romans 16:7 that attempt to diminish Junia's status as an apostle, see David Williams book, [Junia: A Woman and an Apostle](#) (2014).

Junia Among the Apostles

The Story Behind a New Testament Saint & the Egalitarian Agenda

Junia—The First Woman Apostle

by Eldon Jay Epp

Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2005

(138 pages, \$16.00, paperback)

A review by **John Hunwicke**

In this important work, Epp investigates the mysterious disappearance of Junia from the traditions of the church. Because later theologians and scribes could not believe (or wanted to suppress) that Paul had numbered a woman among the earliest churches' apostles, Junia's name was changed in Romans 16:7 to a masculine form . . . calling Junia an apostle seemed too much for the tradition. Epp tracks how this happened in New Testament manuscripts, scribal traditions and translations of the Bible. In this thoroughgoing study, Epp restores Junia to her rightful place.

Thus the publisher's press release introducing Eldon Jay Epp's book, *Junia—The First Woman Apostle*. And thus our minds are transported back to an ancient fantasy world which by now we know extremely well; a sinister world of oppressive patriarchy; a world in which cunning and manipulative ecclesiastics falsify records to eliminate whatever threatens their status or their prejudices; a Dan Brownish or Elaine Pagelsish world of truths concealed for centuries, of cowed, conspiratorial monkish scribes in dark and mysterious cells busily destroying evidence.

Poor Epp must have been very distressed and embarrassed if he read this passage, because, to be fair to him, his book is not at all about *scribes* suppressing the fact that Junia was a woman. It is not at all about tracking how

this happened in *manuscripts*. And, so far from giving *Tradition* a walloping, Epp in fact demonstrates that Tradition, and the New Testament manuscripts, got Junia's gender *right*.

Linda Belleville, only months before Epp's book was published, made most of the same points as he does, and came to the same conclusions in a rather less pompously written article, which is a much better read (*New Testament Studies* [NTS] 2005). She prefaced her work with a decidedly less tendentious *argumentum* than the one dreamt up by Epp's publishers: "Christian tradition from the Old Latin and Vulgate versions and the early Greek and Latin fathers onwards affirms and lauds a female apostle. Yet *modern* [my emphasis] scholarship has not been comfortable. . . ." (Epp's book justifies part of his own description of it as "lengthy and tedious"; I write "part" because I do not want to contradict all of Beverly Gaventa's claim in her Foreword that it is "slender and important.")

Source of the Sex Change

Most readers will probably know the main facts about Junia, her gender, and the continuing controversy about whether she was "an apostle." She occurs, linked with Andronicus, in Romans 16:7 as one of many recipients of St. Paul's greetings as he writes to recommend himself to the Christians of Rome, and she does so in a Greek accusative *Iounian*. Depending on what sort of accent you put on it, the corresponding nominative can be either *Iounias* (masculine) or *Iounia* (feminine).

So which accent do the early manuscripts have? Neither; because early manuscripts lack *all* accents. As soon as accents started to be added to Greek texts, the feminine accent was added; and as soon as the invention of printing made mass production possible, the feminine accent was that chosen by editors.

As far as translations are concerned, the Latin Vulgates give either *Juniamor Juliam*, a manifestly feminine name; and the sixteenth-century English translations, including the Authorized Version and the Roman Catholic version from Rheims, regarded the name as feminine. Belleville and Epp show that the overwhelming number of writers and commentators in the first Christian millennium and a half believed St. Paul was addressing a

female Junia; and like Burer and Wallace, whose 2001 *NTS* article (arguing that Junia was *not* an apostle) ignited the present phase of this controversy, they agree that the feminine form of the name is overwhelmingly more probable (or, to use Epp'speak, certain).

So how did the idea get around that the female Junia was really a male Junias? Perhaps a monkish hand can, after all, be detected in this; the ex-Augustinian Martin Luther seems to have set this ball rolling. It is probably due to him that some north European Protestant translations went for “Junias” (masculine), while versions in Spain and Italy, where the dead repressive hand of Romish tyranny had more influence, stayed with “Junia” (feminine). But even despite Luther's influence, with only one exception, Greek New Testaments down to 1927 continued to give her the feminine accent. Yes! Even through the dark oppressive decades of Victorian patriarchy, Junia's femaleness remained unproblematic as far as editors were concerned.

Who, then, is guilty of the sex change? Stand up the thirteenth (1927) edition of Nestle: the standard Greek Testament beloved of twentieth-century “scientific” and “modern” biblical scholarship! Again—Yes! Not Dark Age monks; not obscurantist popes; not medieval misogynist conspirators; not pre-Enlightenment bigots; it is the brightest and the best of liberal European and North American modern scholarship that took a reconstructive scalpel to Junia's groin. All subsequent Greek Testaments, including the influential United Bible Society editions, slavishly followed the obviously infallible *magisterium* of the younger Nestle without qualm or hesitation.

The only printings of the Greek Bible between 1927 and 1994 which allowed Junia to retain her feminine gender were those which consciously reproduced the *Textus Receptus*, that is, the old “pre-critical” text based on “late” and “poor” manuscripts and used in Byzantine Christendom; a text long despised by most of the confident exponents of Modern Scholarship. (My own mentor in New Testament textual criticism, the great eclecticist George Kilpatrick, believed that “TR” was as useful a text-type as any other; and, back then in the 1960s, what a lonely furrow he seemed to be plowing in making even as modest a claim as that.)

Bias & Emphasis

The best part of Epp's book is the section in which he demonstrates how devoid of evidence, how motivated by untested assumptions and culpably lazy gut prejudice, was the assumption of so many of the big names in modern liberal biblical scholarship that *Iounia(s)* must have been a male. He writes, with all the naïve surprise of the earnest liberal, about a "pervasive sociocultural bias that has operated in New Testament textual criticism and exegesis for an entire century of what we might have regarded as the period of our most modern, liberal, and detached scholarly enquiry."

Entertainingly, Epp fails to realize that he may be sawing off the branch upon which he is himself sitting. If the self-confidence of twentieth-century scholars who loved to undermine the authority both of Scripture and of the Great Tradition, on the basis of their own ephemeral and careless theorizing, was so ill-conceived, so time-conditioned, one might wonder at his own and his publishers' unworried assurance to us that *he* has written a "definitive" "last word" on the subject he treats; and, *a fortiori*, at the implication (writ large from his dedication page onwards) that his discoveries drive reliably towards a more "egalitarian" polity in both church and society.

Eighty-five of his 98 pages deal with what is largely undisputed and was believed by nearly every scribe, church father, and Bible reader before the sixteenth century: that the person St. Paul greets was a woman and that she was called Junia. A mere thirteen pages are devoted to the unresolved and far more important questions: Was she an apostle; and, if so, what does the word "apostle" mean in her case? Could Epp here be guilty of an intentional *suggestio falsi*? The incautious and impressionable reader, picking up his book and seeing that so much plodding erudition is displayed to prove the *one* point, may assume that all you need to show is that Junia was a woman, and then you can at once move rejoicing into the broad sunlit uplands of Feminism and Mrs. Jefferts Schori. Look at the last paragraph of his Preface if you do not believe me.

A Question of Status

But first, there is the curious question of whether Romans 16 really is part of Romans. Until comparatively recently it was one of the favorite certainties of the fashionable, dominant school of Modern Biblical Scholarship that the New Testament books are riddled with interpolations. The last couple of chapters of Romans were commonly dismissed, on what always seemed to me wholly frivolous grounds, as not part of the original text. Indeed, Epp argues that textual critics may need to abandon the search for a single “original text,” and appears to leave it open whether we should “exegete” Romans with or without chapter 16.

I, too, have long felt that in a culture where orality is dominant, the concept of an “original text” may be misleading when dealing with the Gospels and Acts; papyrological advances have suggested a similar caution with regard to the text of Homer. (Incidentally, Epp’s discussion here subverts—and rightly—the cheerful schoolboy confidence with which the *United Bible Societies* editions highlight “certain” readings with the letter *A*.) But I do rather incline to Beverly Gaventa’s feeling in her Foreword that there must have been *a* text of St. Paul’s letter that Phoebe held in her hand and delivered to Rome.

However that may be, it is curious that Epp does not devote a couple of dozen pages to discussing a point so basic to his thesis as the status of Romans 16; and, all the more so, since he can find space to argue (in detail but on the basis of similarly slender evidence) that 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 *is* an interpolation into what he (apparently now conforming to what he has earlier disdainfully called “the old ‘canons of criticism’”) seems to regard as an Original Text of 1 Corinthians. Or perhaps this is not so curious when one recalls that while the latter passage appears to exhort women to be silent in church, Romans 16, which mentions a large number of women, has provided fertile ground for feminist writers.

What a shame St. Paul never gave Junia a puff in Ephesians; had he done so, that letter would undoubtedly have been shifted out of the “pseudonymous” category to which much Modern Scholarship has consigned it, and would now be held up as central to the Pauline *corpus*. As it is, Epp asserts without argument that Ephesians

and Colossians (being in his eyes unsatisfactory on gender matters) are “deutero-Pauline” and that 1 Timothy (2:8–15 does not suit him) “from the customary critical standpoint, is the composition of a later Paulinist.” Really? And would that be the same sort of Customary Critical Standpoint as the one that led Nestle and his uncritical followers to award Junia an accentual penis?

I am not a “fundamentalist”; I have no problems with the concept of New Testament pseudepigraphy (although I have never followed the unargued but common assumption that judgments in this field have an adverse effect upon the canonicity of the documents concerned). What does set me wondering is the immediate and sometimes hysterical uproar occasioned by *possible* discoveries that sit uncomfortably with the Customary Critical Standpoint.

Anthony Kenny’s *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament*, arguing that, in respect of 96 stylistic features, Ephesians, Colossians, and both the Timothies are closer to Romans than 1 Corinthians is (Titus being the only stylistically rogue member of the *corpus*), never seemed to get onto many undergraduate reading lists. And a plausible claim that papyrological evidence might date 1 Timothy to before A.D. 70 inspired comparatively few writers even to trouble to refute it. Skeat’s codicological researches into the formation of the New Testament Canon received little notice, despite their revolutionary implications. Our culture is one in which any new theory, fantasy, or piece of potential evidence that appears to cast doubt on the authenticity of traditional Christianity is welcomed and is sold on to the secular media within hours; anything that might run the risk of bolstering it is buried. Now there’s a *real* conspiracy.

Philology & Common Sense

Andronicus and Junia were *episemioi en tois apostolois*; does this mean *distinguished among the apostles* or merely *well known to the apostles*? Epp's treatment of this central question is light and unimpressive.

Preliminaries are in order. This is not entirely a matter of the highest philology; a fair bit of it is nearer what we call Common Sense. “*X* is well known/renowned/notorious among *Y*”: This can have two meanings—*inclusive*, where *X* is a member of the class of objects *Y*; and *exclusive*, where *X* is *not* a *Y*. But it is often far from clear whether a particular statement is inclusive, exclusive, or *both*.

“The *New York Times* is well known among politicians”: That is quite clear; the newspaper is not itself a politician and so the sense is exclusive—politicians know the newspaper well.

However, take “Condoleeza Rice is well known among politicians.” Surely, this can bear the implications *both* that other politicians know Dr. Rice well (“exclusive”) *and* that the world at large knows her well as belonging to the category “politician” (“inclusive”). Because both propositions are true, we probably will not often need to try to distinguish.

If we were to distinguish, we would need *information external* to the proposition itself. Consider three examples. (1) “William the Conqueror is well known among historians.” Since (external information) we assume that the Bastard was not a historiographer, it is fairly clear that this means “Historians know William well.” (2) “Mephistopheles McPherson is well known among historians.” Because you do not know whether M.M. is or is not a historian, you will not know whether this is meant inclusively or exclusively unless I tell you, thereby giving you additional information external to the statement. (3) “Winston Churchill is well known among historians.” I think you will need to search in the wider context that contains this statement (external information) before you know whether this is meant inclusively or exclusively; after all, Churchill did write history (so the statement could be inclusive), *and* he is, as a well-known world leader, an appropriate object for the attention of historians (so it could be exclusive).

I suspect that these considerations account for the fact that Burer and Wallace on the one hand, and Belleville on the other, come so easily to different conclusions about some of the evidence they discuss. Sometimes, indeed, external information is available, as in the case of Euripides' *Hippolytus* 103: "Yet she [Aphrodite] is revered and famous among mortals"; we know that the sense must be exclusive because we know that Aphrodite is not a mortal. (It seems a little unfair for Euripides' evidence to be dismissed as a bit too early for comparison with Romans by writers who are willing to rely heavily on some words of Chrysostom; is he not a bit too late?) More often, matters are less clear because external information—or, if you like, context—is lacking.

Plausibility Problems

It seems to me hard to reconstruct a plausible and natural context in which this usage, in Romans 16:7, can be inclusive. St. Paul has carefully associated Andronicus and Junia with himself as fellow Jews (*suggeneis*) and fellow captives (*sunai khmalotous*; he is very fond of compounds with *sun*); if they were apostles, it would be natural for him to go on to describe them as fellow apostles (*sunapostolous*), or (cf. Romans 1:5) as *sugkoinonous tes autes kharitos kai apostoles hes kago*, but he does not.

And Belleville's discussion has led her to a conclusion that many on both sides of this argument may feel creates more problems for her than it solves. She finds herself obliged to translate *episemos* in a passage of Lucian as "most distinguished," and to attach this rendering to Andronicus and Junia ("most distinguished among the apostles").

But can they really have been *that* high up in apostolic circles? That they were real, pukka apostles, fully paid-up members of the club, might be demonstrable. But "most distinguished"? Senior or equal to the *stuloi* and *dokountes* of the Jerusalem Church? This couple who, on the most favorable estimate, occur once in the middle of a list and have left in history and tradition no other evidence of their existence, still less of their apostleship, and least of all of their *leading* role in the apostolic group? Are Calendar makers *really* now to give them an entry at the same liturgical rank as St. Peter? And (to return to Romans 16:7), we may wonder why St. Paul,

instead of merely saying that they became Christians before he did, does not say that these “most distinguished” apostles had attained apostleship before himself (cf. Galatians 1:17).

Oddest of all, for Belleville’s and Epp’s views, are Junia’s place in the middle of a list and the way her status apparently needs to be expressed and yet seems to be tossed aside in passing. If she is an apostle—nay more, one of the two “most distinguished” apostles—then Romans 16 is rather like a letter I might write sending greetings to my fellow Anglicans in America which ran, “. . . and give my best wishes to Tom, Dick, and Harry, to Molly, Mildred, and Maureen, to Katharine Jefferts Schori—she’s a primate in the Anglican Communion, y’ know—to Phil, Jill, and Jack. . . .” Or like a list of political friends in which, sandwiched between Uncle Donald and Auntie Condie, we suddenly found “and say hullo to Dubya: y’ know, he’s a pretty well known head of state.”

The scenario we are asked to accept is just downright improbable to anybody who tries to see the wood rather than merely taking a microscope to a little bit of bark on one of the trees.

Context & a Dilemma

Epp, among other writers on Junia, seems to need to steer clear of anything too detailed about the contextual purpose of Romans 16. But this does not prevent him, in a footnote, from challenging his critics to supply a context. So I will stick my neck out and do so. St. Paul intends, I believe, to visit Rome so that the Roman Christians may help him on his way to preach the gospel to the rest (the western half) of the world. Just as he had needed the *koinonia* of the Philippians to support his mission in the East, he needs Roman sponsorship in the West.

But the Jewish members of the Roman Church, in frequent contact with Antioch and Jerusalem, may have heard ill of St. Paul, especially as the result of intemperate expressions such as those in Galatians (“If they’re so keen on circumcision, why don’t they just cut the whole thing off?”). So he expresses his views more moderately in Romans, makes a “collection” among his Gentile converts by which to commend himself to Jewish or Judaized

Christians, and compiles a list of Christians in Rome who are influential and know him and may be prepared to speak well of him; whose judgment may carry weight with those Roman Christians possibly suspicious of Paul as an apostate from Judaism. In this context, it helps his case to assure the Roman Christians that Andronicus and Junia are extremely highly regarded by the apostles, using that term in the same sense as he had in Galatians 1:19 to refer to the senior members of the Jerusalem Church.

Not, of course, that this is the only way in which the term “apostle” is used either in Paul or in the rest of the New Testament. If it *does* mean “leader of the Jerusalem Church,” it seems odd that a couple apparently resident in Rome are among “the most distinguished” leaders at Jerusalem. Epp in fact spends but a page and a footnote in skating over this matter. Belleville records the speculation of some Latins that Andronicus and Junia may have been among the Seventy-two who were sent out by the Lord, although this hardly puts them in the top league (“most distinguished”) of apostles.

Those who, believing her to be an apostle, are concerned to maximize the status of Junia, appear to be on the horns of a dilemma. *Either* they can make her out to be a leading apostle in a *maximal* sense of that word, together with Peter, James, John, and Paul—in which case they have a major problem explaining her almost-invisibility in the records; *or* they can assign to her an apostleship in a *minimal* sense of that term, perhaps like that of Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25—in which case, they have not proved anything that will be of much use to them in their sociocultural agenda.

The Fathers whom Epp and Belleville list as regarding Junia as an apostle do not seem—despite the fact that “something of a women’s liberation movement [was] at work . . . at the turn of the millennium” but disappeared “in succeeding centuries”—to have been in the least worried by her and her status. I know of no suggestion that she was regarded as one of the New Patriarchy of Twelve upon which the Lord founded his New People, nor that Tradition assigned to a female Junia a role of founding apostle-bishop of one of the churches.

If it had, it is not easy to see how St. Ignatius could have so easily assumed and asserted that the *episkopos* was the *tupeos tou patros*, Image of the Father. In an age (we are told) of growing misogyny, in which *sacerdotium* was confined to men, nobody, as Gaventa admits, seems to have been either aware of, or in the least disconcerted by, any reflection that Junia subverts this restriction.

It is true that the women mentioned in the New Testament afford a legitimate and interesting field for study, and do bear witness to the divine givenness of the leadership roles of so many women in the church of every age. But has not the church of our own day been given Blessed Teresa of Calcutta? And what about Mother Angelica, the nun with the television station who won such an amusing victory over her local (liberal) bishop? (“What an outstanding apostle *that* woman is,” I would cry if I were not afraid of being misunderstood.)

If Junia is needed to validate the “leadership roles” of such women as these, then good luck to her. But there are no reasons for seeing Junia and her status as having any relevance to the question of the admission of women to the presbyteral or episcopal priesthood of the ancient churches, in which the *sacerdos* images the Father and is the Bridegroom of his church. Whether it has or has not any bearing upon the admission of women to the non-sacerdotal ministries of the Reformation tradition, I would not presume to discuss.

Gynophile Gospel

Epp’s general agenda is clear, even if its every term is not spelled out. From the programmatic dedication to his grandsons (“May they live in a more egalitarian world”) to his concluding rhetoric (the “significant and regrettable [and] unnecessary alienation of women”), the subtext is of change. Since all the mainstream liberal Protestant sects have, for some decades, been enthusiastically committed to the fullest incorporation of women into ministries both liturgical and nonliturgical, it is difficult to construe his purpose in terms other than as a determination to carry his gynophile gospel into the last resisting redoubts; the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and any surviving biblical Protestant communities.

His influence is clear in a paper written in 2006 by a brace of English Anglican bishops. David Stancliffe (Salisbury) and Tom Wright (Durham) felt the need to attack a paper by Walter Kasper in which the cardinal had begged the Church of England not to terminate the movement towards *communicatio in sacris* by admitting women to the episcopate. They followed Epp in his simplistic conviction that the only thing needing to be proved is Junia's gender. If this is to be established, they claim, "then even Roman tradition might be forced to recognize the possibility that women could be apostles, and therefore presumably could hold ordained ministry in the apostolic succession." This is quite staggering in its implication that if New Testament women exercised "leadership roles," this feeds in directly to a conclusion that women be ordained to priestly ministries.

For nearly two millennia, women have unashamedly (and laudably) exercised "leadership roles" in the Church, but nobody in all the centuries before Epp's generation was clever enough to spot that this points to their call to ministerial priesthood. Recent popes have made powerful women saints "doctors of the Church" or "patrons of Europe" without—the pontifical simpletons!—apparently realizing that these actions logically imply that women can be called to *episkope*. Most Christians for some eighteen hundred years have regarded Junia as a woman, without its for one moment occurring to their confused minds that this makes her some sort of proof of, or paradigm for, women in the sacerdotal ministry of the Catholic Church.

The conviction that all you need to do is to prove that Junia was a woman (which the Tradition had in any case overwhelmingly asserted until modern liberal scholarship decided it knew better) in order to demonstrate the need to expunge the semiotics of gender from the theology of priesthood, simply shows that Epp and his running dogs have not begun to understand what the discussion is all about.

Junia's life, in the last decade or so, has been a rich and fulfilling one. After being rescued from the sexually ambivalent embraces of Erwin Nestle, she has been an associate of St. Mary Magdalene in the kipper trade; with her, she met Jesus when he was working as a healer, during his Year Out, in the spa at Tiberias; probably (like so many women clergy) a divorcee, she has ditched Chouza and acquired Andronicus as her "partner" (the term is Gaventa's), changed her name, and helped to found a Church in Rome.

We are clearly in a new age of rich mythopoeia, worthy to compete with the most imaginative that the medieval cultus of the saints could offer. The fertile need of modern feminism to provide justification and aetiology for its novel dogmas has surpassed the inventiveness even of the hagiographers whose trade it was to promote pilgrimages, shrines, and relics. What a jocose lady Clio must be.

John Hunwicke is the former Head of Theology at Lancing College in England and is now Senior Research Fellow and Pusey House, Oxford.

Two Views on **Women in Ministry**

James R. Beck, general editor

The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians.

Pages 15-17

Introduction

James R. Beck

The four contributors to this volume recently gathered for lunch at the Atlanta Hilton. Together with a representative from our publisher and me, we enjoyed renewing our friendships and planning this revision of the first edition of *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (2001). Normally one would assume that the production of a volume dealing with a controversial topic would require the editor to serve as a referee among the various contributors, all of whom hold strong views on divergent sides of the topic. The assumption doesn't hold true for this project. The six of us are friends. We enjoy one another's company and strongly respect the scholarship of each member of this team. Our hope is that our camaraderie can serve as a model for other scholars working in this difficult area of gender and ministry.

One of the more important accomplishments of this working lunch--a lunch that would hardly qualify as a "power" lunch--was the crafting of a statement to which all the contributors and the editor could agree: *We believe one can build a credible case within the bounds of orthodoxy and a commitment to inerrancy for either one of the two major views we address in this volume, although all of us view our own positions on the matter as stronger and more compelling.* The implications of this simple statement of concord are enormous and merit close attention by all students of the issue of women in ministry.

The three broad reasons for producing the first edition of this book remain true for this second edition. First, evangelicals have not yet settled the exegetical and theological issues involved in deciding if churches should place some limits or no limits on the ministry of women in the church. The exegetical issues are complex, and even the most enthusiastic of promoters for one side or the other cannot justifiably claim that the opposing view is beyond the limits of orthodoxy. Nor can one assert that a particular view is the only one reflecting a belief in biblical inerrancy.

Second, the need for a more irenic spirit among proponents on both sides of this debate is as strong as ever. Too often more heat than light emerges when people get together to debate about women in ministry. The church cannot afford to waste precious energy and time on advocacy reflecting excess and overkill. The enemies who truly threaten the integrity of the church are outside its walls, not inside its walls. We need to demonstrate a Christ-honoring irenic spirit when we work on this issue. As a concerned editor, I challenged each contributor to demonstrate this irenicism in their responses to each other's essays. I am happy to inform you that they all succeeded admirably in accomplishing this assignment.

Third, the fruit of relevant scholarship continues to appear in journals in remarkable volume. Each of the essays in this second edition reflects new literature that has emerged since 2001. New findings will occasionally weaken an existing argument; sometimes new evidence will bolster an otherwise sagging set of data. More exciting, advancing scholarship can sometimes set forth an entirely new line of reasoning that can help one side or the other better explain its case. On the whole, we must all stay abreast of cutting-edge scholarship if we are going to participate in this debate effectively.

Readers will notice several changes from the first edition of this book. Dr. Blomberg has moved from serving as a coeditor of the first edition to the role of a contributor of one of the four main essays in this book. He reworked and greatly expanded his appendix essay in the first volume to provide us with the essay that appears here. Also, we have asked each contributor to respond to the other three essays in this edition. None of the contributors saw any of the other essays until each had completed his or her own chapter. I have arranged the essays in this second edition alphabetically by the contributor's last name. The order of the three responses to each essay begins and ends with responses from contributors who hold the opposite view, sandwiching a response from the contributor who argues the same position in this volume. The essays and the responses to them vary somewhat in length. However, the total number of pages devoted to an examination of each of the two views discussed in this volume is almost exactly the same.

The four contributors to this volume are evangelical NT scholars who hold seminary faculty positions. Their material gives broad coverage to the relevant issues, although one could also have selected four evangelical theologians or four evangelical OT scholars to argue the case from the perspective of their respective disciplines. However, since so many of the disputed texts, terms and theological issues are centered in the books of the NT, it makes good sense to engage NT scholars as resource persons in this discussion.

In the spirit of full disclosure, readers should know that the editor is an egalitarian by conviction. But I have striven hard to oversee this project with evenhanded fairness. I trust that readers will not find evidence to the contrary in the following pages. Happy reading.