

## Women in History

**Pamela Walford** accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior in 1989. She currently lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba and has been the Manitoba Regional Coordinator for Project Hannah for the past two and a half years. Pamela is studying for her Bachelor of Theology as a distance student at Alliance University College in Calgary and will be temporarily moving to that city in 2005 to complete her degree. She is divorced, has two grown sons, works part-time and is a member of First Nations Community Church in Winnipeg, where she is involved in the prayer ministry and recently coordinated the cultural adaptation and implementation of protection policies for the children's Sunday school. Pamela also regularly attends a rural home church, which in addition to its monthly worship service, meets twice a month for Bible study and twice a month for prayer meetings.



### The Story of God: Women in the Early Church

by Pamela Walford

In less than 400 years following the deaths of the last apostles, the early Christian church yielded to the influence of the Greco-Roman culture in which it was immersed and relinquished the egalitarianism that had been established by Jesus; thereby setting the stage for the subjugation and silencing of women that spanned more than two millennia and continues to detrimentally impact the lives of women today.

While history shows that all social classes were impacted by the influence of Greco-Roman culture on the church, the discussion in this paper will be confined to women and how the first four centuries of the Christian church were pivotal in the consequences they generated for women.

There is ample evidence in Scripture that Jesus had an inclusive attitude toward women in ministry and had initiated their emancipation from the confinement of their culture. He defended the adulterous woman brought to Him by the Pharisees (John 8:1-11) and affirmed the unclean woman who dared to touch Him (Matt. 9:20-22). He validated Mary's abdication of domesticity and encouraged her sister Martha to also make following Him her priority (Luke 10:38-42). He had several women disciples (Mark 15:40-41, Luke 8:1-3). He sent the Samaritan woman as a missionary to her people (John 4:1-42). He appeared first to women at His resurrection and sent them as His first missionaries to His church (John 20:15-18, Luke 24:9, Matt. 28:9-10), and He baptized women with His Holy Spirit at Pentecost at the same time as the men (Acts 1:14, 2:1).

Furthermore, Jesus' emancipating call to women to step out of their culturally gendered roles and into ministry was entirely in keeping with the Old Testament. When God called women in the past, their obedience continually required their having to move beyond the boundaries of their culture's customary roles for women, but it also consistently facilitated Israel's rescue and altered the course of Biblical history.

Jochebed deceived Pharaoh's daughter and preserved Moses' life (Exod. 2:1-10), Rahab sheltered Israelite spies and as a result her Gentile family was brought into the nation of Israel and into the genealogy of Christ (Josh. 2). Jael murdered her husband's ally and saved Israel (Judges 4:17-21). Tamar deceived Judah and preserved Christ's birth line (Gen. 38:1-30). Abigail defied her husband's stupidity and kept David from sin (1 Sam. 25:14-35). And, Mary, the Lord's mother, transgressed the taboos of her culture by her pre-nuptial pregnancy and gave birth to our Savior (Luke 1:26-38).

According to Acts and other New Testament letters, women did fulfill Jesus' mandate to serve in ministry alongside their Christian brothers. The criteria for being considered an apostle was having seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 9:1), which Joanna certainly had (Luke 24:10), and who Paul considered an apostle who had been significantly helpful to him (Rom. 16:7).<sup>1</sup> Priscilla was not only Paul's colleague but was the teacher of Apollos as well (Rom 16:3-5, Acts 18:24-28). Phoebe was a church leader as were Syntyche, Euodia (Phil. 4:2-3) and Lydia (Acts. 16-14-15, 40). In addition, there is well-argued speculation that the anonymous author of the Book of Hebrews is none other than Paul's beloved friend, Priscilla.<sup>2</sup>

"What went wrong?" female students of Christian history inevitably ask themselves, because once we leave Scripture and move on to extra-Biblical reading, Christian history reads in such a way as to imply that women were completely uninvolved in the formation of the church. The last of the apostles would have not lived much beyond the beginning of the 2nd Century A.D., and women in church leadership seem to have disappeared along with them.<sup>3</sup> How did it come to pass that women ceased to function as church leaders, and why so early in the church's development?

Fortunately, with the 20th Century advent of feminist historians and theologians, church history has been revisited, but the answers to these questions are not easily discerned and must be teased out from a historical framework that records the passage of time solely from a male perspective and reports the history of women only as it pertains to men. <sup>4</sup> Although, there is a scarcity of documents written by women about the lives of members of their own gender, upper class women in the Roman Empire were highly educated and historians surmise that women likely wrote a great many more works than what has survived.<sup>5</sup> Among the few surviving works believed to have been written by women is the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, most of which Perpetua is believed to have

written herself and the Apocryphal Acts, which is essentially a series of lively stories about women who, upon encountering a male apostle, reject secular life in favor of ascetic Christianity.<sup>6</sup> And, of course there is the controversial, Gospel of Mary Magdalene, which, despite its much debated historicity and theology, suggests that she had a ministry that was significant enough to warrant a gospel account.<sup>7</sup>

The little else that is known about women in the early church has been gleaned from epitaphs on tombstones, artwork and from what the church “fathers” wrote about them, and the evidence suggests that women held positions of authority in the church and were also exegetes. An ancient mosaic in Rome names a Bishop Theodora. There were women Bishops in Egypt and women presbyters in Sicily and Greece.<sup>8</sup> A woman named Paula, was the most intimate friend of the church “father”, Jerome, with whom he enjoyed challenging debates over Scripture.<sup>9</sup> Another woman, Melania the Elder, was dubbed a “female man of God” by her Christian brothers on account of her learnedness.<sup>10</sup>

While a few select women as mentioned above received accolades from church “fathers”, most often when writing about women, they denounced them for performing certain ecclesiastical tasks, or they penned diatribes on woman’s intrinsically sinful nature. Feminists deduce from these writings that if the “fathers” deemed it necessary to speak against women functioning in specific ecclesiastical roles, women must have been in fact participating in them. “The fact of laws forbidding women to preach indicates that there were preaching women who needed to be silenced.”<sup>11</sup> Condemnation of women prophets can only mean that women were prophesying. If the 2nd Century Statutes of the Apostles lambasted women presiding over the Eucharist, the assumption must be that they were presiding over it and likewise regarding women baptizing.<sup>12</sup> If the Didascalia, a manual on church organization, castigated the “order of widows” for evangelizing, discipling believers, hearing confessions and performing baptisms, then it stands to reason that the widows were doing all of these things.<sup>13</sup>

Women apparently also exercised authority and leadership through their influence as patrons. Lucilla of Carthage held considerable sway as a patron of Donatus and was instrumental in the rise of the Donatist movement that plagued the “orthodox” church for several centuries. Origen was also assisted by a woman patron as was Chrysostom.<sup>14</sup>

With a clearly extensive female presence in church leadership and the support of Scripture behind them, it seems inconceivable that the church devolved so rapidly into an institution that viewed itself as an exclusively male domain that eventually came to consider the creation of women as almost a misguided afterthought on God’s part. Egalitarian historians, both male and female, generally attribute it to the pressure applied by the pervasive influence of Greco-Roman culture.<sup>15</sup> However, this explanation does not adequately convey the manner in which this influence was visited on women in the quest to prohibit them from church leadership. What began as the relatively soft-sell of persuasion in the form of written attacks and ecclesiastical legislation eventually transcended the church and escalated into violent acts of force that sought to subdue women across the spectrum of society.

Attitudes toward women in the Roman Empire were inherited from the Greeks. Greek mythology taught that women were created by Zeus as a curse against the human race, which prior to offending the gods, was strictly male.<sup>16</sup> The Greeks defined masculinity, which in their minds equaled humanity, through the male genitalia. They associated honor with sexual prowess to the degree that orgies were rampant and homosexual relations with young boys were highly regarded.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, women were associated with shame and were viewed strictly as male possessions for usage that had to be endured as the unfortunately necessary means of procreation. Since men were honorable, they could be separated from their sexuality and carry on public business and political activity, whereas women were sexual in any sphere because of their being the curse of men. To be a woman meant to carry shame everywhere, and private life was the only sphere in which her taint could be endured. From this philosophy evolved the assumption that public life was male, and private life was female. Any woman who held a public office was deemed unchaste and was seen as attempting to establish sexual independence. A woman’s sexuality was a male possession, and a sexually independent woman was a threat to every man’s authority.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to the conversion of Emperor Constantine, persecution and the fact that Christians “conceived themselves explicitly as an alternative family or household,” meant that the church functioned as a private institution. Christians confined worship primarily to meeting in homes where women in leadership was not an issue.<sup>19</sup>

However, due in great part to the rising veneration of celibacy, not all Christians in the pre-Constantinian church embraced female leadership. With the deaths of the apostles, the church lost the authority of its first-hand witnesses to the teachings of Jesus, and as Greco-Roman converts continued to be brought in the church, their secular culture had increasing impact. Celibacy was the combined birth child of Greek disdain for women and Christianity’s desire to distance itself from the appalling sexual promiscuity of the Roman pagans.

In some churches, female virgins were part of the clergy and were greatly revered. They sat in special places during worship, and as a sign of having dedicated their lives to God, they did not wear the veils normally worn by women. Tertullian, a 3rd Century theologian with a robust Greco-Roman contempt for women, opposed all manifestation of female leadership and insisted that virgins should not be bestowed any measure of honor and accordingly, should wear their veils in church despite it being “private” space.<sup>20</sup>

Emperor Constantine's conversion and the subsequent legalization of Christianity with the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. catapulted Christianity into the public realm for which it was unfortunately unprepared.<sup>21</sup> Many of Constantine's subjects converted to Christianity motivated more by a desire to curry his favor than by religious fervor. Established Christians also desired his goodwill more than they desired God's. This, when coupled with Constantine's own faith being of a questionable degree, made for a situation in which Biblical authority took a back seat to the will of the emperor and the ambitions of undiscerning Christians.<sup>22</sup> A natural consequence of a more secular, Greco-Roman influenced and less Spirit-led church was the widespread consensus that women ecclesiastical leaders were absolutely unacceptable.<sup>23</sup>

The campaign to eject women from ministry that began with the quills of the church "fathers" in the 3rd Century transitioned into ecclesiastical legislation during the 4th Century when the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. banned women from the clergy.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, history shows that women did not universally or easily accept their banishment because over the ensuing centuries the church had to repeatedly enact legislation against women leaders and enforce it with their customary disciplinary measures of excommunication and burning at the stake.<sup>25</sup>

The continued persistence of women in fulfilling their call from God kept the attack on women alive. The pens of the "fathers" marched on relentlessly, but their ranting had one significant difference; rather than being merely unfit for leadership, woman became sin personified. Whereas for the Greeks, woman would not have been created if man had not sinned, the church "fathers" determined that if woman had not sinned, faultless man would still be enjoying himself in the Garden of Eden in perfect harmony with God.

Writing in 375 C.E., Ambrose of Milan's attitude toward woman may have been one of the more affirming ones among the church "fathers" in that he conceded that God had deemed woman good despite her being the very source of sin. Augustine, on the other hand was not so kind. In 401 A.D., he agreed that God had made woman to be man's helper, but the issue was what kind of helper she was supposed to be. Any man could outwork a woman; therefore, it could not have been for the purpose of physical labor. "One could also posit," he argued, "that the reason for her creation as a helper had to do with the companionship she could provide for man, if perhaps he got bored with his solitude. Yet for company and conversation, how much more agreeable it is for two male friends to dwell together than for a man and a woman, nor could it have been for the purpose of companionship ... I cannot think of any reason for a woman's being made as man's helper, if we dismiss the reason of procreation." His contemporary, John Chrysostom, magnanimously chimed that as a helper to man, woman was far superior to an animal because God had made a clear distinction between woman and beast in the Genesis creation story.<sup>26</sup>

Sadly, to make the situation for women worse, the evolving all-male, church leadership came to believe the "fathers" had so thoroughly summarized Christian theology that their writings superseded the authority of Scripture. This negated the necessity of reading Scripture altogether and granted the church the license to do whatever it wanted. In time, the "fathers" authority was conferred on the Pope as infallibility.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of the 5th Century, the only option for formal ecclesiastical service for women was celibate life as a nun or a masochistic ascetic. Undaunted, women were determined to follow the call to ministry and flocked to monasteries and convents, often defying their families. Unfortunately, becoming a nun was available almost exclusively to wealthy women since life in a monastery required a substantial dowry. The remaining masses of lower class women had to be content with life within the confines of marriage; an institution the church increasingly denounced as an unfortunate necessity for individuals too weak and too sinful to embrace the higher calling of celibacy.<sup>28</sup>

Without the ascendancy of Scripture, the denigration of woman continued unabated, and of which canonized Peter Damian's following harangue was typically representative. "I speak to you, O charmers of the clergy, appetizing flesh of the devil, that castaway from Paradise, poison of minds, death of souls, companions of the very stuff of sin, the cause of our ruin. You, I say, I exhort women of the ancient enemy, you bitches, sows, screech-owls, night-owls, blood-suckers, she-wolves, ... come now, hear me harlots, prostitutes, with your lascivious kisses, you wallowing places for fat pigs, couches for unclean spirits."<sup>29</sup>

In the face of such spiraling hatred it is no surprise that the church's misogyny eventually culminated in the witch-craze that began in the 12th Century and did not end until the 17th Century. Often, the proof that a woman was a witch was the crime of being an impoverished middle-aged widow, but the real root of the problem was, as always, female sexuality. Impotency, infertility, disease, death and above all, male lust, were all the fault of women who were supposedly sleeping with Satan. Women were tortured until they confessed to night-flying, killing babies, stealing penises, impregnation by the devil and so on. The witch-craze reached its pinnacle in 1492 when the European town of Langendorf declared that only two women in its entire village were not witches.<sup>30</sup> It is estimated upwards from one million women were burned at the stake as witches and often after first suffering other public atrocities such having their breasts hacked off.<sup>31</sup>

Another far less gruesome but equally un-biblical by-product of the church's spiteful sexism was the Vatican's 1854 A.D. declaration on the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary. It was impossible for the Roman church to fathom God having debased himself by birthing his son through a woman, the very source of all sin. They concluded that Mary had to have been a super-woman, born without the taint of her sisters.<sup>32</sup>

The plight of women finally began to turn around with the Reformation. Martin Luther and his colleagues dug the Bible out of the cellar and blew off a thousand years of dust. They reinstated salvation by faith and resurrected the

blessing of marriage. Unfortunately, Protestant women were still not quite as equal as Protestant men, but they were expected to read the Bible alongside their brothers.<sup>33</sup> And, with the Scriptures once again in their hands, women began the slow process of reclaiming their freedom in Christ, a process which continues to this day.

Naturally, there are detractors who argue that although Greco-Roman culture undeniably held sway, the only women leaders in the early church were those in heretical sects like the Gnostics. They contend these sects endangered the orthodoxy of the church and justify the “fathers” strong stand against women.<sup>34</sup>

On the surface this evidence would appear to be true, but the argument does not hold up against Scripture, and it must be remembered that only male writings survived the censure of a male-dominated church. We do not know if orthodox women wrote in defense of their leadership. We do know there were orthodox male voices such as Helvidius and Jovinian, who affirmed marriage and gender equality. Furthermore, the ascetism many church “fathers” followed was itself a derivative of the Gnostic view that the body was inherently evil and needed to be deprived of comfort to facilitate holiness.<sup>35</sup>

More likely, the real issue was not heresies or female sin but male sexuality. As much of their writing suggests, the various “fathers” struggled with their sexuality. This sheds much needed light on their susceptibility to a culturally influenced repugnance of women. Ascetism and celibacy are not natural human states. We are not androgynous. We are sexual beings, male and female, and we were created to care for our bodies and for each other, physically, emotionally and sexually.

In the Gnostic gospels of Mary Magdalene and Phillip, Jesus is fully human and fully male. This was a problem for the Greco-Roman ascetic “fathers.”<sup>36</sup> Their desire to live fully dedicated to God as celibates was not inherently wrong. The problem was that for them sex was inherently sinful and inherently female. They believed that were it not for women they would not have had to struggle with their lust. They did not know how to reconcile their sexuality with the redemptive plan of Christ without rejecting woman. In their minds, Jesus was holy and as such was not sexual. Scripture affirms Jesus as being fully human and also affirms his sinlessness (Heb. 4:15). If the “fathers” had divorced their culturally informed understanding of sex and sin from their interpretation of Scripture, they would have understood that, because Jesus never sinned and never married, He had been celibate by virtue of premarital sex being sin. Jesus had rejected sin, not his sexuality. To think otherwise is to believe that sexuality was never redeemed by Christ. Unfortunately, this is exactly what the “fathers” believed, and the repercussions reverberated far into the future.

Since the days of the Reformation much headway has been made in the way of feminist exegesis of Scripture, but there remain many women who mistrust Scripture as the Spirit inspired inerrant Word of God because (with the possible exception of the Book of Hebrews) its human authors were men and because the Canon was compiled by the “fathers.” With so much hurt in women’s history, they will continue to struggle with their view of God unless the church attempts to answer their demand to know where God was while women were beaten into silence by the church and why he took so long to release them.

An answer might be found if we revisit Christian history once again and this time remember that God’s involvement in history did not end with the closing of the canon. History is not the story of humanity; it is the story of God. It is the story of His redemptive work in His creation, male and female, who image Him together as one. It is the only way to make sense of all the sin and hurt we humans have inflicted on each other.

Since creation, God has ceaselessly moved humanity toward eternal redemptive reconciliation with Him and just as ceaselessly, humanity has rejected His offer of mercy and heaped sin upon sin instead. Adam and Eve rejected Him. The early human race of Noah’s day rejected Him. Israel, his chosen people rejected Him in the desert, in the Promised Land and when their Messiah came. Would His church be any different than the rest of humanity or His chosen Jewish people? The first humans rejected God and the last humans will reject Him (Rev. 19:11-21)

Mercifully, despite our sin, God remains steadfast in His plan to bring into eternity with Him, those who accept the reconciliation He offers through Jesus Christ. He promised that those who sought Him with all their heart would find Him (Jer. 29:13) and that He would preserve them. He saved Noah and his small family. He preserved Israel through a faithful remnant (Isa. 6:13), and He preserves His church through a faithful remnant like the early monastics, who objected to the church’s alliance with the Roman Empire, and the Reformers who restored His Word, and the countless marginalized women who persevered through the centuries, and the millions of ordinary people who strive to know God in a church that persistently rejects Him (Rev. 2, 3, 18:4-5).

The Bible tells us that in the last days the church will be an apostate prostitute that has made an alliance with the world and is drunk with the blood of the saints. However, as we have seen, the church has already long been an apostate prostitute who befriends the world and murders the saints. Much has been lost through what women were denied to bring to Christianity, but it was not women who were imprisoned for a thousand years; it was God’s image that was in bondage to sin. Male and female were equally made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and men lost as much as women when they rejected the very thing God had said it was not good for them to be without (Gen. 3:18). What they were without was not just a “helper” but the female face of God.

Furthermore, while sin has played a significant role in the failures of the church, the grace of God has played an even greater role in its successes. It has never stopped being His church and though humans have perpetually attempted to wrest it from his control, He has remained faithful and has preserved it in one form or another. He

has taken his sinful creation and guided them toward an ever increasing awareness of Himself, and by his Spirit, continues to transform the body of Christ, individually and corporately, into the image of His son. "All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart" (NRSV 2 Cor. 3:18). One wonderful day in eternity we will see Christ as He is, and we will be free from sin at last and be perfect like He is (1 John 3:2). Sin removed women from the church leadership but the Holy Spirit brings them back to their rightful place beside their brothers.

Why did He allow women to be silenced in the first place? Why did He wait so long to release them? Why the Holocaust of World War II? Why the genocide in Sudan? Why did he wait 400 years to rescue Israel from Egypt? Why did he wait so long before sending His son? Why must we suffer so long before His return?

We cannot answer those questions; we can only look at God and remember that, "for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. (NRSV 1 Cor. 13:12). The Bible tells us not to be impatient with God's patience with sin and to trust that He is always good and His decisions are always just (2 Peter 3:9, Rom 12:2). Somehow, everything is working out according to His plan and is for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). Perhaps what women bring to the church now is much better than what we would have brought before because we have been purified by the Refiner's fire (Mal. 3:3-4). The more women are restored, the more the church resembles Christ, and the more the church resembles Him, the closer we are to eternity. This is all we can say.

Even as God was giving Moses the law on Mount Sinai, the Israelites were down below dancing around a golden calf. The Lord struck those who had sinned against him, but he did not remove his promise to dwell with Israel. Instead, He restored their hope and redeemed them. He moved their eyes to the future and commanded them to build His tabernacle. Jesus did likewise with Peter. After Peter denied him, Jesus restored him by asking three times if Peter loved Him, and each time Peter said yes, Jesus commanded Peter to care for His flock (John 21). What has been lost cannot be regained, it can only be redeemed. We are not to look back on history unless it is to reflect on God's mercy (Isa. 43:18-19) and to remember that for now faith, hope, and love abide, and that "the greatest of these is love" (NRSV 1 Cor. 13:13).

Women do not need to bang down the church doors and demand equality from what is all too often an apostate prostitute. They simply need to follow Jesus by forgiving their brothers and lovingly obeying Him, even it means walking outside the norms of their culture, just as their sisters before them have done. In so doing, they will show their brothers the other side of the face of God that all of humanity lost 1500 years ago.

After the days of purification were completed, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the Lord. He was greeted by the prophets Simeon and Anna. Anna was of the tribe of Asher and was representative of the northern tribes while Simeon was representative of the southern tribes.<sup>43</sup> In that brief moment when Anna and Simeon prophesied over the infant Jesus, who is both the son of God and the son of his Gentile ancestral grandmothers, Rahab and Ruth (Matt. 1:1-11), all the tribes of Israel, all the nations of the earth, and male and female, were represented in a symbolic reconciliation with their Creator and Redeemer, Immanuel, "God With Us," in His Holy Temple (Luke 2:25-37).

We need to look ahead to our eternal future (Luke 21:28), not behind at our appalling past. Unless we wed our perspectives as male and female and retell the history of God together, not avoiding our sins or piling new ones on top of the old, but confessing them and forgiving each other and rejoicing in His unending mercy. We need to ask God to bring about the fullness of the restoration He began with Anna and Simeon and Jesus in the Temple, and then we need to say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (NRSV Rev. 22:20).

## Notes

1. Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 166-169. Junia is the Greek equivalent to Joanna. During the Middle Ages, copyists changed the female name to the male name, Junias.
2. Ruth Hoppin, "We are Witnesses to a Mystery" ([www.godswordtowomen.org/studies/articles/hoppin.htm](http://www.godswordtowomen.org/studies/articles/hoppin.htm), 2005).
3. Mary T. Malone, *Women and Christianity, Volume I: The First Thousand Years* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 101.
4. *Ibid.*, 35.
5. *Ibid.*, 245.
6. Elizabeth A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1983), 78, 89, 97-98.
7. Jean-Yves Leloup and Joseph Rowe, Translator. *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene: Translation from the Coptic*

*and Commentary* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2002), 7.

8. Karen Jo. Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*. (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 9-10.

9. Clark, "Women in the Early Church," 163-168.

10. Malone, "Women and Christianity, Volume I," 148.

11. *Ibid.*, 33.

12. Torjesen, "When Women Were Priests," 42-44, 148.

14. *Ibid.*, 146-149.

14. *Ibid.*, 90-92, 100, 113.

15. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, et al., *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 22. Contributors to this book from the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship jointly determined that, "A feminist is a person of either sex who works to restore social, economic, and political justice between women and men in a given society. This work is motivated by the conviction that the devaluation of women and their activities as compared with the valuation of men and their activities is wrong, and that the systematic disempowering of women in relation to men is unjust."

16. Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton, with Janice Rogers, *Why Not Women: A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership* (Seattle: Youth With A Mission, 2000) 72-75.

17. Torjesen, "When Women Were Priests," 180-188.

18. *Ibid.*, 12, 40, 113-115.

19. *Ibid.*, 126-127.

20. *Ibid.*, 158-172.

21. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1, The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1984) 107-108.

22. Eric de Bruyn, "HI 260 Christian History to the Reformation." Lecture, Alliance University College, 2005.

23. Torjesen, "When Women Were Priests," 155-158.

24. Malone, "Women in Christianity, Volume I," 125.

25. *Ibid.*, 126-127, 149.

26. Clark, "Women in the Early Church," 28-34.

27. Malone

28. *Ibid.*, 172, 187.

29. *Ibid.*, 18.

30. Mary T. Malone, *Women and Christianity, Volume II: From 1000 to the Reformation*, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2002), 216-219.

31. Torjesen, "When Women Were Priests," 228-233.

32. Mary T. Malone, *Women and Christianity, Volume III: From the Reformation to the 21st Century*, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2003), 184.

33. Malone, "Women in Christianity, Volume III," 56.

34. Clark, "Women in the Early Church," 20-21.

35. Malone, "Women in Christianity, Volume I," 163-166.

36. Jean-Yves Leloup and Joseph Rowe, Translator, "The Gospel of Mary Magdalene," 9-12.

37. Bauckham, Richard, "Gospel Women," 98-99.

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