

# The Woman's Pulpit

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March  
2018

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## World Pentecostals Name Women Bishops

On August 4 the U.S. based Pentecostal Assemblies of the World consecrated in a Nashville, Tennessee, ceremony, the first two women bishops to take on full responsibilities of a bishop among its 62 dioceses. The predominantly black denomination boasts more than 1.2 million members in its 5000 plus affiliated churches around the globe, reported Holly More to USA Today Network on July 27.

As Bishop Mona Reide and Bishop Gwendolyn G. Weeks took up leadership of two dioceses in Africa, Presiding Bishop Charles H. Ellis said, "I think it again continues to move in the direction that we feel our organization should be moving in. These will be the first with dioceses. That means they will actually oversee and they will govern male pastors."

The consecration on July 8 at the church's annual convention included more than 6,000 persons. Reide will oversee the Republic of Sierra Leone Diocese in western Africa and Weeks will head the Eastern Cape Diocese in South Africa. They will continue to lead their respective churches in the U.S. as well.

Reide, ordained in 1996, who in 2006 founded Grace International Outreach Church in Michigan, which she continues to lead, has spent years working in parts of Africa, including Ghana. In 2012 she became the first female suffragan bishop in Michigan as well as the first woman with an international appointment in Ghana. "One of the reasons the Sierra Leone council requested me is because of my understanding of African culture," she said. "They're not concerned about my being a woman. They are concerned about making sure that the gospel goes forth."

Weeks also will continue to lead Bethel Tabernacle Pentecostal Church in Massachusetts, founded by her father, as she assumes her episcopal

responsibilities in South Africa's Eastern Cape Diocese. Ordained in 1998, she was the first female chair of the Pentecostal Association of the World's Northeast District Council and has served on the denomination's board of directors.

Leadership roles for women vary

across Pentecostal traditions, but women have always been a central part of Pentecostal church life. "I clearly understand that in the home God has established differences," said Reide. "But in the work of God, it's an opportunity for men and women to

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Lebanese Arab Woman Pastor Elected WCRC President

The Arab Presbyterian pastor who on July 5 preached at worship in the pulpit of Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Germany, was elected two days later to head the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The Rev. Najla Kassab from Lebanon who now leads the communion of 225 national churches in 110 countries

found inspiration and empowerment as she preached in Wittenberg's Stadtkirche.

"Martin Luther is a symbol of speaking up," said Kassab. "To speak your mind in freedom, that is essential. That is why I said, 'This could have been Martin Luther's 96th question to the church. Not 'Why is there a woman in the pulpit?' but 'Why did it take so long?' This is not just a struggle for equality; this is a struggle for justice," she said.

Kassab has a B.D. in Christian Education from the Near East School of Theology and an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary. Her career has revolved around Christian education at the synod level and, through conferences and workshops, she has encouraged women in ministry for 24 years. The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon offered her a preaching license in 1993 and, in March 2017 awarded her full pastoral ordination. Kassab has served as a member of the WCRC Executive Committee since 2007 and in 2015 hosted its meeting in London.

Having spent much of her career encouraging women to enter the ministry of the church, Kassab felt com-

pelled to accept the nomination for president when it was suggested to her at the General Council meeting in Leipzig. She believes the fight has taken too long. "We cannot think that a bird can fly with only one wing."

She called the place where Luther first preached "the perfect place to speak about women's ordination."

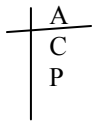
Kassab, a native of Lebanon, believes the most important qualification for her presidency of the WCRC may be her nationality. "The WCRC talks a lot about justice," she said. "I come from the Middle East and let me tell you, I know what justice looks like."

Her calling, which frequently takes her to Syria, carries a fair degree of personal danger. She feels both she and the WCRC must assume that risk.

"At times I have to be present to affirm, 'I am one of you.' We as a church have to be physically present in places where there is suffering. We have to be present where it aches if we are going to talk about justice."

She plans to look for ways to strengthen work for gender equality and justice in WCRC's regions where it can take root in local diversity.

*(From a WCRC news release by Amy Eckert)*



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**Pentecostals—**

*(Continued from page 1)*

see that gender does not determine  
 God's call on your life or the type of  
 call that God places on your life."

**Women in Leadership**

Women have long served as minis-  
 ters and pastors in the Pentecostal  
 Assemblies of the World, but only in  
 the last decade has the office of  
 bishop opened to them.

"A lot of our former fathers had a  
 very narrow vision of the Scriptures,"  
 Ellis said. "In our generation we are  
 using every available resource to at  
 least get the context, get the true  
 meaning, get the commentary on the  
 scripture so that we are not narrowly  
 defining what the Word of God says.

"Bishops, the denomination's high-  
 est office, typically oversee a geo-  
 graphical region of the church. Duties  
 include administrative responsibilities  
 as well as serving as the authority on  
 church doctrine and other ecclesiasti-  
 cal duties within the diocese."

While a handful of women became  
 suffragan bishops, the national organi-  
 zation didn't select its first female  
 bishop until 2015, although the deci-  
 sion to do so had been taken in 2009.

**The First Woman Bishop**

In 2015 at the annual Assembly  
 Bishop Aletha J. Cushinberry became  
 the first woman elevated to that office.  
 Because she exceeded the age for  
 bishops, Cushinberry did not preside  
 over a diocese, but was named an  
 honorary bishop, and, by an unusual  
 action, was given voice and voting  
 power on the denomination's bishop  
 board. "I thought it would be embar-  
 rassing after 100 years of convention  
 to finally elevate a woman (to the of-  
 fice of bishop) and she can't talk or  
 can't vote," Ellis said. Cashinberry  
 died in December 2015.

In the Pentecostal Assemblies of  
 the World Ellis thinks resistance to  
 female bishops has subsided, espe-  
 cially as the older generation retires or  
 moves into emeriti bishops status.

Neither Reide nor Weeks has ex-  
 perience pushback to her consecra-  
 tion and appointment.

*(Excerpted from the Nashville Ten-  
 nesseean)*



Photo: Diocese of Perth  
**Rt. Rev. Kay Goldsworthy**

**Australian Woman  
 Named Archbishop**

At the end of August the Rt. Rev. Kay  
 Goldsworthy was elected Archbishop of  
 Perth, the first woman to hold that office in  
 the Anglican Church of Australia. In 2008  
 she was consecrated as Australia's first  
 female bishop. She has served as bishop of  
 Gippsland in Victoria since 2015.

Her election followed an eight-month  
 selection process. Her installation will take  
 place in St. George's Cathedral, Perth, in  
 February.

Administrator of the Perth Diocese the  
 Rt. Rev. Kate Wilmot welcomed the ap-  
 pointment, commending Goldsworthy's  
 commitment and significant experience:

"Bishop Kay was one of the first women  
 ordained to the priesthood in St. George's  
 Cathedral in 1992 and has a wealth of di-  
 ocesan, national and international experi-  
 ence, including being a long-standing mem-  
 ber of general Synod and a member of the  
 international Anglican Consultative Coun-  
 cil. The Archbishop-elect is well known in  
 Perth and has displayed excellent leadership  
 and hospitality across the Perth community.  
 We are very much looking forward to wel-  
 coming Bishop Kay and her husband, Jeri  
 James, back to the Perth community."

*(Anglican News Service)*

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Photo: Endel Apsalon

**Ordained women share in the festive worship service at Tallinn St. Mary's Cathedral celebrating 50 years of women's ordination in Estonia on September 7, 2017.**

## Estonia's Lutherans Celebrate 50 Years Ordaining Women

(IWI)—Last September the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) celebrated 50 years of women's ordination at a festive conference and worship service attended by local and international guests.

The event, also a part of a commemoration of 500 years of Reformation in Estonia, opened with a eucharistic worship service in St. Mary's Cathedral, Tallinn. Delivering the sermon, Archbishop Ulmas Vilma referred to the first woman in the ordained ministry of the church, the Rev. Liane Villenthal (1922-2009), who was ordained on November 16, 1967 at the same cathedral. She went on to serve as a parish pastor in the southern town of Pindi until 2003.

Archbishop Vilma, who is also the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) vice president for Central and Eastern Europe, cited Villenthal's ordination sermon: "It is only because of the grace of God that I stand here. We two (she and a male pastor, Rev. Harri Rein) who were just ordained were not made pastors (by our own doing.) We have been made pastors only by the loving grace of God that has been revealed by Jesus Christ."

Presentations at the conference covered historical and contemporary experiences and considerations regarding women in the ordained ministry in Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, but also raised issues on hermeneutics and exegesis. Other LWF representatives included the Nordic Region Vice President Archbishop Dr. Antje Jackelén (Church of Sweden), Bishop Dr.

Tanás Fabiny (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary) and staff from the Geneva Communion Office.

Prof. Dr. Anne Kull, head of the Chair of Systematic Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Tatu, presented a paper on women in the Reformation.

About one-fifth of EELC's 213 clergy are women. Of LWF's 145 member churches, 119 (82 percent) ordain women; it supports full integration of women in ordained ministry.

(Lutheran World Information)

## First African American Woman Pastor Heads Disciples of Christ

Elected General Minister and President of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) by its General Assembly on July 2, the Rev. Teresa (Terri) Hord Owens became the first African American woman to head a U.S. mainline denomination, said a news release from the United Church of Christ on July 10.

Hord Owens is widely sought after as a preacher, speaker and workshop facilitator. Her ministry and intellectual interests include a theology of reconciliation, cultural intelligence, developing inclusive and multi-cultural congregations, and mentoring youth and young adults.

Hord Owens' resume includes more than 20 years in corporate America leading diverse teams in data management before she entered theological seminary.

For the last 15 years she has been the dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School, shepherding a varied student body in denominational background and theology.

"We need to stop demonizing differences as deficiencies," said Hord Owens. "We should seek to understand, to work through our differences in priorities, opinions, methods and goals. This will not be easy, but imagine what an example it will



**The Rev. Teresa Hord Owens**

be for the world if we can bridge the gaps in politics, identity, geography and theology."

She has been married to Walter Owens, Jr. for 30 years; they have an adult son, W. Mitchell Owens III.

Her election follows the 12-year tenure of the Rev. Sharon E. Watkins, who was the first female to head a mainline denomination in the United States upon her election in 2005 and has served the limit of two six-year terms.

(From news releases by the Christian Churches [Disciples of Christ] and the United Church of Christ.)

## United Arab Emirates Anglican Double Ordination Includes Woman

In late September Charlotte Lloyd-Evans was ordained a deacon and Hin Lai Chiang (Harry) a priest at Christ Anglican Church in Jebel Ali, to the south of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, to serve a growing church in that country. The UAE Minister of State for Tolerance, Her Excellency Sheikha Lubna bin Khalid bin Sultan Al Qasimi, attended the

service as a special guest, as did the British Consul General to Dubai, Paul Fox. The multi-national congregation included a number of clergy, faculty and friends from Harry's native Hong Kong.

The two staff new curacies in Dubai that have been created to serve a growing church. Harry will continue his chaplaincy work in Dubai, Sharjah, and the Northern Emirates from his base at Jebel Ali. Charlotte will serve as assistant curate of Abu Dhabi Chaplaincy from a base at Al Ain, an inland oasis on the border with Oman.

The foundation of Christ Church in Jebel Ali was laid in 2000; the church was consecrated two years later. Attendance at the Friday evening worship services has grown from 40 to more than 200.

St. Thomas Church at Al Ain, a new, young congregation, operates from a "temporary permanent" base in that town's center.

After what the Rt. Rev. Michael Lewis, bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf Anglican Province, described as a "moving and profound service," Sheikha Lubna shared a cake cutting ceremony with the bishop and newly ordained clergy. Later the bishop said the presence of Sheikha Lubna at the service "gave substance to and is further evidence of, the warm relationship and mutual respect that exists between the authorities in the UAE and the Anglican church."

(Anglican News Service)

## CSI Pushes For Gender Equal Society in India

A Gender Conclave held by the Church of South India (CSI) last September at its center in Chennai was "another significant milestone in the journey towards a gender equal society beginning with the Church," the CSI said. The conclave was one of a number of events held as part of the CSI's 70th anniversary.

The CSI affirmed "three important messages" during the conclave: "gender inequality is pervasive in our socio-cultural context and the church has taken its role in breaking this cycle of inequality seriously; the responsibility to break this cycle of inequality is not on women alone but should be a task to be handled in partnership together as men and women; [and] we realize that as a church we need to work simultaneously at different levels to tackle gender inequality."

"Tackling gender inequality can be achieved by changing the mindsets of people culturally and theologically, sending strong messages from our pulpits and making 'zero tolerance towards gender inequality' our official policy as a church," the CSI added.

The 66 conclave participants from different parts of the CSI included presidents of diocesan Women Fellowships, Women Fellowship secre-

taries and Men Fellowship secretaries from the church's 24 dioceses.

Moderator Thomas K. Oomen opened the conclave and led Bible study on Zelophelad's daughters who claimed property (Numbers 27), affirming the right of women to family property. He said, "Only the church can give leadership to bring gender equity in society" and "give new life and hope for women and men partnering for gender equity." Proclaiming God's kingdom on earth, the church is the source of gender equity.

CSI General Secretary the Rev. Dr. Rathnakara Sadananda said both men and women are "ex nihilo" - created out of nothing - "which indicates that all are equal," he said, pointing out that "we have partnerships in the church, but many times they are not equal partnerships."

(Anglican News Service)

## Woman Leads United Lutheran Seminary

United Lutheran Seminary, a merger of the former Gettysburg and Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminaries, based in those cities in Pennsylvania, installed the Rev. Dr. Theresa F. Latini as its first President last November 2 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lancaster, Penna.

Latini was ordained in the United Presbyterian Church (USA), a full communion partner of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to which United Lutheran Seminary belongs. In the past she was Professor of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care at Gettysburg Seminary and will continue that role in her new call.

Most recently she was Associate Dean of Diversity and Cultural Competency and Professor of Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. She has experience in conflict mediation and has consulted with judicatories and congregations throughout the U.S.A.

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Photo:LWF/Marko Schoenberg

**More than 120 Lutheran women pastors from 18 countries advocated for women's ordination in Wittenberg, Germany, last August. They stand where Martin Luther's Reformation began in 1517.**

## 'Here We Stand' Supporting Women's Ministry As Reformation

Invited by Bishop Ilse Junkermann of the Evangelical Church in Central Germany and meeting in the context of the Reformation summer, August 10 to 14, more than 120 women pastors assembled in Wittenberg's Castle Square in Saxony, including 17 bishops and women in leading church positions from Suriname, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Latvia, Norway, Greenland, Sweden, Germany and ten additional countries to celebrate women's ordination worldwide in their communion and advocate for this right in churches not yet granting it.

Hosted by WICAS, the Women in Church and Society program of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and its German National Committee, on Junkermann's initiative, the meeting's unanimous message was, "We owe great respect and a debt of gratitude to the women who were the first to move into leading positions." Those present shared experiences from their respective contexts on the opportunities and difficulties for women in positions of church leadership and offered each other advice and support.

### Early Experiences

Norway Bishop Ann-Helen Fjelstad Jusnes recalled that "Forty years ago we women had no right even to be ordained."

Retired Bishop Maria Jepsen, the first Lutheran pastor elected to that office worldwide, in her keynote presentation, reported that colleagues and journalists followed every step she took with a critical eye and commented accordingly. There were situations in which she was aware of a lack of backing and public support. She underlined that she always gave priority to transparent

communication and leadership and consulted those who would be affected before making decisions even though this caused criticism from central church officials.

Margot Kassmann, the first woman elected to chair the Evangelical Church of Germany in 2009 after becoming the first female bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover in 1999, said that she had first to explain how she would manage her family life and care for her four daughters before she was elected bishop. In 2009 when she took on the national office as chair of the Evangelical Church in Germany, the Russian Orthodox Church, which does not ordain women, questioned the continuation of its dialogue with that national church which had been going on since 1959. In 2010, after Kassmann left that office, the dialogue continued.

### Current Challenge

Bishop Ilse Junkermann, called to lead the newly organized Evangelical Church of Central Germany, formed from a union of

two Lutheran Churches in Saxony and Thuringia in 2009, addressed the current issues pastors face in her country. The concept of an official church, such as a state church, has died out, she said, and the church has to 'reinvent' itself. She said the traditional womanly skill and art of midwifery could be crucial as the church finds ways to new birthings.

### Regression

In 1993 the newly-elected bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia refused to ordain more women pastors (9 were then rostered); in 2013, during his third term in office, he succeeded in having the church's constitution changed so that no women may be ordained in the future.

During its 12th Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia, the LWF affirmed women's participation in the ordained ministry in the 119 LWF member churches (among 175) that currently ordain them and urged the member church which has rescinded ordination of women to reinstate the practice.

### Where Change Is Needed

For women like Cathy Mui from Papua-New Guinea a dream would come true if she could be ordained as a pastor. Mui was one of the first women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea to study theology. "My church doesn't ordain women," she said, addressing the ordained women in Wittenberg, where the Reformation began. "Don't stop fighting so that we, too, can stand with you one day."

(Lutheran World Information)

## Commentary Series Review—

# Introducing Wisdom Commentaries

Barbara P. Reid, OP, edits this series. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 54 volumes. US\$39.95 each. This volume was reviewed in the October-December 2017 issue of The Woman's Pulpit.

## Wisdom Commentary Review—

### 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus

Vol. 52. 1-2 Timothy, Titus. By Annette Bourland Hultzenga, 2016. 207 pages. ISBN 978-08146-8203-6.

**Introduction:** The author does not use the now common and convenient designation of “the Pastor” for “the author of these Pastorals” However known, this New Testament letter writer mentions women only in negative ways. He also

attacks male homosexuals and slave traders. The Pastor corrects the practice of some of the home/house churches as household management with God now as the head. In the treatment of gender the author does not seem to realize that in the **household** the matron reigned. Xenophon, in *The Economist*, advised re the best household management with the household seen as the sum total of property. In Xenophon the treatment of wives is parallel to the treatment of horses. The wife who manages well has as much influence as the husband on their property (III.15). Xenophon was somewhat concerned about the health of the wife; doing some household work would give her some exercise and make her healthier.

Slaves may have been one-fifth of the population. The woman was responsible for training and deploying the household slaves and servants, for training and educating boys up to seven and all girls. With slaves/servants she produced the clothes, i.e., carding, spinning and weaving wool for cloth or processing skins into leather. Food (from their farm or the market) had to be processed, e.g., grain ground, fruit preserved. Olives needed grinding for oil or preserving. Matrons might shop at the market (at special times). The household gods were also her responsibility. Indeed her half of the household was a matriarchy.

**1 Timothy.** The author is too negative about woman Deacons (pp. 37-39). The word, *diakonos*, is not masculine but epicene, and specified by the accompanying article. She fails to note the qualifications for a widow plus a woman Deacon parallel those

for a male Deacon. Like the matron in her household, the ministry of women Deacons was also extensive among women and children. Also, she is too negative re women teaching. Note the emphasis: “not allowed...to teach or have authority **over a man**, (1 Tim. 2) but definitely **over women**. In the *Didascalia*, although lay men and lay women might not teach, widows had a limited teaching ministry and the women deacons were entrusted with a more extensive teaching of theology. Thus women in the church were at least parallel to women in the wider society. Unlike Paul's praise of celibacy the Pastor sees motherhood as the only role for women. The support of widows was a ‘problem’ but wealthy widows could have great influence (as Chrysostom later testifies) and they are treated in several categories. The author does not think that the ‘real’ widows had any office in the church, although they were matriculated and had the duty of perpetual prayer. The author notes that households had slaves and criticizes those who say that slavery in ancient society was not totally bad. Slavery was a matter of political, or rather, non-citizen status. However, in contrast with the American experience it was not racial. Anyone might be captured and become a slave. Needless to say, the ex-teacher would be used for teaching and highly valued, but the ex-criminal would be treated harshly.

**2 Timothy.** In this epistle “Paul” commands a church leader steadfast adherence to sound teaching. Already there were some deceiving leaders

who took advantage of some ‘silly women’ who were even more to blame. There are warnings against ‘false teachers’ and ‘itching ears.’ There is a list of those who have defected and those who have remained loyal. Again the commentary judges the role of women more by 21st century western standards rather than by ancient standards.

**Titus.** Again the issues of leadership, teaching and the household are addressed. Christ is now termed ‘savior.’ In Crete ‘Titus’ is to appoint male elders (*presbuteroi*) and bishops with specific qualities. Among other false teachings, he condemns those of ‘lying Cretans’ and ‘Jewish myths.’ Teaching is to be applied separately to older men and younger men. The older women (*presbuterai*) are instructed so that they may teach younger women. Among the usual things, the young women are taught to be ‘good managers of the household.’ Rather than being zealous for the **law**, Christians are to be ‘zealous for good works.’ ‘Paul’ wills them to do good and warns against quarrels about the Law and divisions. Again names are mentioned. The author questions the authority of the pastorals, but they do give us a picture of how third generation Christians were trying to fit into the society and yet be separate from it.

—REV. SR. TERESA JOAN WHITE, CSA

## Wisdom Commentary Review—

### 2 Thessalonians

Vol. 52. 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 2016. 210 pp. ISBN 9978-0-8146-8201-2

By Mary Ann Beavis and Hye-Ran Kim-Cragg.

Some regard 2 Thessalonians as an end-of-the-century pseudo-Pauline writing but others regard it as having been written soon after 1 Thessalonians. The Christian situation is one of persecutions and afflictions. Again the expected *parousia* is not an excuse for idleness. Warn those who do not obey. It is Christ who is the Kyrios/Lord. The authors do not mention that the LXX used ‘kyrios’ for YHWH, but see it in terms of a kyarachy. Thus it really is a theological term, not a sociological one.

—REV. SR. TERESA JOAN WHITE, CSA

## Wisdom Commentary Review— Psalms, Books 2, 3

Vol. 21. Psalms, Books 2-3, 2016.  
411 pp. ISBN 978-0-8144-8120-6.

By Denise Dumbrowski Hopkins

This thick volume deals with Psalms 42-89, mainly with the theme of ‘lament.’ What can feminist exegetes do when a major metaphor is the kingship of God? Is the divine king a figurehead, a constitutional or an absolute monarch? Does the covenant make the king constitutional? The metaphors used are often masculine, so the only possible inclusion of the feminine is in the universal ones. Several chapter headings refer to women but often it is hard to see them in the text. This should not surprise us, for the primary theme is the worship of God.

There is much of value, but this reviewer has more reservations about this volume than any others so far. Providing the Hebrew for key words is very helpful, but not for those who do not read Hebrew or whose Hebrew is rusty. It would be better if, when Hebrew appears in the text, it be translated in parentheses, with root consonants in upper case and vowels in lower case letters (e.g., YHWH or YahWeH, SHaLoM, etc.).

Additional commentary, maybe, in suggestions for sermons: The supervising, training, education importance of the woman in the household could have been emphasized more. But we know that the women were semi-public in their participation in Temple worship and rather public in mourning. The suggestions concerning how some Hebrew women, e.g. Rachel, etc., could have understood a psalm are interesting but should be in gray-scale, and a few are anachronistic. The traditional Christological interpretations are not discussed.

—REV. SR. TERESA JOAN WHITE, CSA

**The International Association of Women Ministers was founded in St. Louis, Missouri, USA on November 19, 1919.**

**Plan to attend  
IAWM's Centennial Assembly  
In Pittsburgh, PA, USA,  
in July 2019.  
Watch for more information.**

## Wisdom Commentary Review— 1 Thessalonians

Vol. 52. 1 & 2 Thessalonians,  
2015. 210 pp. ISBN 9978-0-8146-8201-2

By Florence M. Gillman & Mary Ann Beavis.

The “forward” by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza notes the poisonous theme of misogyny needs to be overcome by Wisdom. The series “Introduction” by Barbara E. Reid highlights the New Testament treatment of Jesus as Wisdom Incarnate.

Thessalonica, named for the half-sister of Alexander the Great, was on the Via Egnatia. This letter was written c. 50 CE by Paul (with his co-workers) from Corinth. The commentary author speculates about possibilities of Timothy’s family situation and concerning Prisca as a scribe. She asks if some of the copyists would have been women.

Unlike six other Pauline letters which mention women, this letter does not, so “*adelphoi*” may designate “brethren” only.

The Thessalonians had turned to God from idols. Various mystery cults would have been found in this crossroads. Paul had nursed Christians as a father. There is no comment on ‘imitators of the churches...in Judea.’ To what extent should Jewish customs be continued by Gentile Christians? *Poneia* (‘forbidden’ [rather than ‘illegal’?]) sexual practices) lacks Translation Matters treatment.

There is hope for those who have died because they may expect to be resurrected, therefore grieving should be moderated. Christians should behave differently from their unconverted neighbors. Persevere in this life but expect the next. Stay awake, for the end will be unexpected.

The ‘labor pains’ simile is a rare hint to the world of women, who remain mainly invisible in this letter despite the efforts of some commentators to detect their presence.

The ‘Afterword’ notes the silence concerning the Gentile women’s translation from polytheism to monotheism.

—REV. SR. TERESA JOAN WHITE, CSA

January-March 2018/7

## Ordinations Roman Catholic Women Priests

Aptos, California, U.S.A.

On October 1 at Temple Beth-El retiring Bishop Olivia Doko presided, together with Bishops Michele Birch-Conery, Marie Bouclin, Mary Eileen Collingswood, Joan Houk, Andrea Johnson, Christine Mayer-Lumetzberger, Bridget Mary Meehan, Nancy Meyer, Regina Nicolosi and Sibyl Dana Reynolds, at the ordination and consecration of **Bishops Jane Via and Suzanne Thiel** who now co-lead the Roman Catholic Women Priests Western Region.

Fayetteville, Arkansas

At the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville on October 14 Bishop Joan Clark Houk ordained **Deacon Claudia Nora Adamson**.

Stony Point, New York

Bishop Andrea Johnson ordained **Deacons Emma Durkin** of Glen Arm, Maryland, and **Donna Enos Burke** of Amherst, New Hampshire, at the Ecumenical Retreat Center on October 15.

## Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests

Sarasota, Florida

On October 21 at Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community Bishop Bridget Mary Meehan ordained **Elena Garcia** a priest.

## In the News

### Spain

In September the **Rev. Christina Moreria** told a meeting of the 37th Roman Catholic Congress on Theology that the Roman Catholic Women Priest Movement in Europe, the U.S.A., Canada and Latin America works to restore the role of women in that church, for justice, equality and dignity, and human values that include women in the lineage of the “12,” understanding they represent all of humanity, all tribes, (which also include women). These aims qualify for priesthood, not male gender.

(Information from *Bridget Mary's Blog*.)

### **Africa**

Rwanda, Namibia and Burundi were, respectively, ranked fifth, twelfth and fourteenth on the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap index in 2016. All three have ratified their equivalent of an **Equal Rights Amendment** which has become part of their respective constitutional equivalents. The ratifications have provided legal frameworks and support to lessen the gender gap in these countries.

### **Australia**

After his visit to Australia in September Lutheran World Federation General Secretary Dr. Martin Junge reported a synod debate **on the ordination of women in that Lutheran Church** showed a majority in favor but fell short of the necessary 2/3 vote. He said solid theological material has been developed and a new theological statement is being prepared to equip the church to continue processing this important question.

### **England**

Last September **the Church of England** announced that 544 ordinands started training to become clergy, the largest number for 10 years, and that more than half, 274, were women, the largest number of

women candidates since 2001 when 243 women entered training.

### **Ireland**

Early in September the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland called on the Irish bishops to halt the introduction of permanent deacons in their dioceses until **the Vatican's commission on women deacons** has concluded its report and Pope Francis has made a decision based on its findings.

On August 9 parish priest Fr. Roy Donovan warned that introducing permanent deacons without women is "extending patriarchy." "I am passionate about the church and creating a space for women," he told the U.S. National Catholic Reporter.

### **United States**

At a festive service at Christ Episcopal Church in San Antonio, Texas, on July 20 **the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson** was ordained and consecrated the sixth bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Texas.

On July 24 Bishop Larry Provenzano announced the appointment of **the Rev. Patricia S. Mitchell** as canon for pastoral care in the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

**The Rev. Catherine E. Williams**, newly appointed assistant professor of

preaching and worship at Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary, who is also a distinguished musician, focused her dissertation on developing distinctive preaching for Trinidad and Tobago rooted in the indigenous music of calypso.

### **Vatican City**

On October 2 the U.S. Women's Ordination Conference reported that "The 'Little Flowers' of the Grassroots were in full bloom yesterday, witnessing around the world for women's ordination in honor of the feast day of St Therese of Lisieux, who herself was called to the priesthood. (The 19th century French Carmelite nun and Doctor of the Church wrote in her journals and confided in her sister Celine her deep desire to be a priest. 'I feel in me the vocation of priest,' she wrote.)"

For the first time a five-yard long purple "Ordain Women" banner was placed on the Sant'Angelo Bridge just in front of St. Peter's Basilica and stayed in place for more than two hours before being removed by the authorities, said the WOC.

*(From Women's E News, Lutheran World Information, Anglican News Service, the National Catholic Reporter, Episcopal News Service, LNP [local newspaper], and the U.S. WOC.)*

## **In the News**