An Organizational Leadership Response for Women in Leadership: An Analysis of Romans 16:1–16

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The idea of female or woman in leadership is intellectually intriguing and an evolving concept in modern leadership discipline and academic culture. Research in various disciplines scratches the surface of women and leadership by identifying questions and themes for future inquiry (Kappeler et al., 2019). Women in leadership defined as a standalone lacks a quantifiable and qualitative theoretical framework. Yet women and leadership continue to be influenced in modern research, reflected in academic literature and novice representations that give thought and persuasion to descriptions and titling such as women in leadership, women and leadership, women doing leadership, female leadership style, and woman for leadership. Women in leadership researched within

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theological methodology is a developing approach that is inclusive to theologies, social justice, and feminist thought, yet exclusive to the totality of women in leadership in context, definition, and theory. This chapter seeks to assess an organizational leadership response that contributes to women serving in leadership roles. This includes cultural perspective and societal implications favorable toward women in leadership as a framework that is influential and conceptual. The chapter looks at five main principled areas that can shape a framework supportive of women in leadership through the lens of Romans 16:1–16. The five main principled areas include authenticity, emergent, culture, gender trends, and communication competencies.

Women in Leadership Undefined

An organization's professional development and path for women in leadership can be called into question (Ely & Rhode, 2010, p. 379). This leads to an understanding that there is no set definition of women in leadership as it relates to theory. One aspect of understanding women in leadership is to first have a sense of clarity and understanding of women in leadership. Over the past few years, women have made considerable leadership advances in executive and management positions within corporate, government, and technology industries both in the United States and globally (Schock et al., 2019). A great representation to this phenomenon is the 116th freshman elect of the United States Congress. According to the 2018 Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics report, the 116th Congress had the most diverse election of women in political history. Although leadership literature has begun to include studies on women and leadership, the preponderance of leadership theory is articulated by men based on male-dominant experiences (Fine, 2009, p. 181). The power of perception and framing messages about social issues centered around women illustrate how well they are reflected in contemporary leadership. One metaphor used that best describes women's quest for leadership is the labyrinth which suggests that the path of advancement, although challenging, is not impossible for women to master (Carli & Eagly, 2015, p. 525). Historically, researchers have focused on describing women in leadership with an essentialist point of view in which gender differences are ascribed to unchanging qualities of men and women (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Defining woman leadership should also include reviewing attributes and characteristics in which women as

leaders engage and exercise influence within groups is key in illustrating the leadership opportunity unique for and to women. A great example is a holistic approach toward women in leadership, developed within an organization that has a greater impact and influence on bottom-up services to the organization at large (Hassan & Silong, 2008, p. 369).

Leading Women Under Pauline Leadership

Throughout the New Testament, the woman's narrative has a special appeal that speaks to diversity in resources, work, leadership, and functioning with authority (Lane, 2021, p. 40; Muir, 2019, p. 8). Leading women such as Anna, the prophetess (Luke 2:36–38); Mary Magdalene, the leader of the women who followed Christ (Ricci, 1994); the four daughters of Phillip who prophesied (Acts 21:8–9); and Lydia, the founding member of the church in Philippi (Green, 2010, p. 755) all had exceptional evangelization roles. Deeper examination of the biblical text bears evidence of the roles of women in the early church, images of their emergence in worship, radical discipleship, and matters of influence within household culture (Guy, 2004, pp. 170–175). Even more, participation during the first-century church estimated approximately one-fourth of the co-workers mentioned in the Pauline epistles are women (Gehring, 2004, p. 211). Yet, despite women's involvement, a growing scholarly consensus recognized Apostle Paul, the leader of the first-century church, as patriarchal, yet inclusive, androcentric, yet supportive of women's leadership, and a proponent of egalitarianism over preferential treatment of greater honor toward others (Clarke, 2008; Elliott, 2003; Levine, 2004). Shaped by a spiritual formation of grace, Paul reconciled his own reality and spiritual formation of what he had been taught about women (Lane, 2021, p. 141). He regarded women as effective disciple makers within community and within house church roles. Some of the Pauline epistles similar to what is found in Romans suggest validity of Paul's regard for spiritual value and impact of women to connect with unbelievers (Gench, 2015). This would contradict the imposed injunctions on women leaders as a means of minimization of effective discipling at a crossroad of organizational development (Lane, 2021, p. 130).

Romans 16:1–16 draws a striking semblance of leading women under Pauline leadership. The women addressed in Romans 16:1–16 were assumed to be mentored by Paul, in the same spiritual formation as the men who followed and walked with him. An examination of leadership

roles of the early church contends a plural pattern of qualifications and responsibilities that were not always clear and not all were gender specific (Guy, 2004). This chapter takes a thorough analysis of Romans 16:1–16 with specific attention drawn to five principled areas that shape a framework supportive of a contemporary way of seeing and viewing women in organizational leading roles. The areas identified include authenticity, emergent, culture, gender trends, and communication competencies toward women as leaders represented within the analysis of Romans 16:1–16.

Women in Leading Roles in Romans 16:1–16

Scholars reference Romans 16 as, "a roster of potential campaign supporters" to pave the way for Paul to Rome (Jewett, 1988, p. 153). Of the twenty-nine people that Paul mentions in Romans 16, ten are women—Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus' mother, Julia, and Nereus' sister. This represents thirty-four percent of leading Christians addressed in Romans 16. Each of the women and their respective characteristics as an organizational response for women in leadership is identified below. Each briefly gives pause to the reality that women were principled leaders per principled roles identified by Paul in Ephesians 4:11–12.

Phoebe, A Deacon

Phoebe is the first woman mentioned in Romans and the only named deacon in the first-century church with an official community role and "a praiseworthy exemplar of a woman minister" (Clark, 2019, p. 5). Paul exhorted her as sister, deacon, servant, and a benefactor to him and to others in the faith (16:1–2). This acknowledgment of Phoebe affirmed commitment to his identification of her role in the Christian faith to the community of Rome. Phoebe and Paul possibly met in Cenchreae during Paul's time spent in this small city outside of Corinth (Acts 18:18). Theodoret of Cyrus affirmed that although Cenchreae was a small city, the community was so large as to need a woman deacon (Marucci, 2016). Phoebe is referenced as deliverer of the epistle and a carrier of God's message from Corinth to Rome (Newsom et al., 2012). It is notably striking that Paul mentions Phoebe's willingness to travel

to a group of Christians that she did not know and sending her delivered conveyed a message that "a person should not be shown favoritism for being a man or a woman" (Abelard, 1969, p. 179). Deacon has biblical qualifications for a spiritual office conveyed in Timothy 3:8–13 as being serious, not double tongued; not indulgent in wine; not monetarily greedy; marry once; and management of one's household affairs. Historically, evidence supported through epigraphs, letters, and chronicles in Western and Eastern churches suggests that women served in deacon roles during the early church (Karras, 2004; Macy, 2016). Ignatius referred to deacons as servants of the "mystery of Jesus" (Trallians 2:3 referenced in Shaw, 2013, p. 136). Yet, some scholarly works would seem to relegate Phoebe's role as financial supporter and carrier; however, her setting creates significant interest in how women contributed to the creativity of leadership during the early church (Clark, 2019, p. 20). The opening with Phoebe as the woman-lead is crucial because it establishes that women *were* serving as spiritual leaders in the early church and that Paul not only approved but was a part of their spiritual formation support in leading roles.

Prisca, The Disciple-Teacher

Paul mentioned Prisca first in Romans 16:3 as an influencer and encouragement to the other women who were being recognized in the preceding greetings (Lane, 2021). She was a leader in her house church in Rome (16:4) and undoubtedly an example for other women believers at the church in Rome. Cross-gender partnership is reflected in the husband-and-wife relationship of Prisca and Aquila (Sharma, 2020). Attributes of unity and sameness, humility toward others, use of relational gifts, and skills in profession and doctrinal understanding are ascribed to the couple in their introduction in Acts 18:2–3. Prisca—reflected as her formal name used in Pauline epistles—served alongside her husband yet was significant in her own right of the Christian faith. She was found active in demonstrating discipleship and accurate teachings of the way of God to Paul (Acts 18:26–28). Credited as literate and from a noble family, Paul may have presented Prisca first—four of six times before her husband (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19)—due to her community status and leadership activity (Lane, 2021). She risked her tentmaking profession as her missionary partnership extended beyond the house church in Corinth (Acts 19, 1 Cor. 16:19), to Ephesus and Rome (Lane, 2021). Prisca's

contributions as disciple maker and legacy as teacher are so important to the first-century church that Paul references her in the final greetings at the end of 2 Tim. 4:19. Lastly, consideration of Prisca's life provides insight into the culture of gendered division of space within the household and thereby a women's leadership performed in hospitality and missionary responsibility to lead and arrange the house church for worship (Osiek & McDonald, 2006, p. 33).

Mary, The Laborer

It is recognized throughout scriptures that Mary was a common Jewish name. Five other Mary(s) are mentioned throughout the New Testament all of whom labored much.[1] However, Mary in Romans 16:6 is the only Mary Paul ever mentioned. What is significant and notable as a takeaway about this Mary is that Paul referenced her labor not in vain and worthy to mention. The same Pauline reference, "who worked very hard among you," was often used in recognition of commitment and efforts of other first-century leaders (1 Thess. 5:12–13; Col. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:17). Particularly within Romans 16, Paul's frequent emphasis on greeting women who "*work*[ed] with me" (16:3) and "*worked* very hard among you" (16:6) is recognized as an honorable description of worth and value toward their faithful work in the Roman community, Mary included. Lastly, this Mary verbally identified by Paul serves as evidence that women during the first-century church without marital designation conducted authentic work for the sake of the Gospel, independent of male counterparts.

Junia, The Apostle

Likened to Prisca and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia were partners in the ministry of Christian faith. Scholars have suggested they were of the earlier Christian believers before Paul's conversion and possibly present during the resurrection of Christ (Pederson, 2006, p. 82). Paul may have encountered the couple during missionary trips or shared imprisonment time (Mounce, 1995, p. 276; Pederson, 2006, p. 33). Romans 16:7

[1] Mary the mother of Jesus (Matt. 2:11, 13:55); Mary Magdalene (16:9); Mary of Bethany—sister of Martha (John 11); Mary, the wife of Clopas (John 19:25); and Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12).

is identified as the chief scripture of pivotal importance in determining women in leadership roles in the early Christian church (Epp, 2005). Junia is one of the most historically controversial women within the book of Romans because of her mentioned role as an apostle. Her name has been the source of discussion in determining the gender of Junia[s]. Her gender leads to the source of the Apostolic title that is given to her and its connection and issue of contemporary women and church leadership. Consensus among early Christian forefather theologians such as Origen, Chrysostom, and Abelard placed Junia as a female apostle (Epp, 2005, p. 21). However, during the thirteenth century, a commonly repeated intellectual architecture was initiated by Giles of Rome who developed the biblical context interpretation that identified Junia as Juniam or Juilam and eliminated Junia as female apostle altogether. However, the exegetical deep research analysis conducted by Epp (2005) tracked the evolution of change in biblical translation from male to female with no noted explanation. Albeit biblical history would reverse and return Junia in the King James Version. Hence, Epp's work concluded Junia was an apostle (p. 77). Paul's greeting puts it on record that he is calling them both apostles. He was very familiar with the functioning and weighted responsibility of the office. He attached himself to the designation, defending his own apostleship (Galatians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 15:9). His message was more than likely clear as well as received within the congregation at Rome that Junia was an apostle.

Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis, Workers in the Lord

The sisters, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, along with Persis are mentioned together possibly because of their proximity to each other in relationship. Scripture describes them as hard workers in the Lord (Rom.16:12). The language is not consistent with household traditional women roles such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, but instead communicates inclusion of Paul's companions within his core ministry (Lee, 2021, p. 105) whom he often esteemed "very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thess. 5:12–13). The three Gentile Christian women believers' names are culturally identified as feminine slave origin, yet they are charted as faithful women workers in the Pauline corpus associated with charismatic teaching and nurturing of other believers in the first-century church and under his leadership (Kruse, 2012). The authentic characteristic of each name identifiable by origin of slavery points to each of

women's resilience and tenacity to hold firm to Paul's conviction that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

The Mother of Rufus, Wisdom, and Continuity of the Faith

Pauline scholars contend that the identity of Rufus in Romans 16 is the son of Simon the Jewish Cyrenaic from the north coast of Africa who helped Jesus carry the cross to Golgotha (Mark 15:21–22; Mathew, 2013; Schreiner, 2016). "Chosen in the Lord" associated Rufus with "a class of believers who had a direct link with the historical Jesus" (Jewett, 2007, p. 969). In what way Rufus' mother acted as a support to Paul for him to call her "his mother and mine" is unknown. It could be inferred as a form of endearment characteristic of role ethics common within Pauline Christian groups and/or hospitality patronage extended to Paul from "mother" at some point in his ministry (Jewett, 2007; Kruse, 2012, Mathew, 2013).

Julia and Nereus' Sister

Barentsen (2011) recognized that the names in Romans 16:1–16 suggest at least five to seven house churches functioning throughout Rome (p. 182). One additional such house church husband-and-wife partnership is that of "Philologus, Julia... and all the saints who are with them" (16:15). Lampe (1991) conducted a thorough study of Romans 16:1–16 that revealed the building of religious community reflected in tenement churches of Arstobulus and Narcissus. Paul's reference to "the family of Aristobulus" and "the family of Narcissus" (16:10–11) is a testament to the gospel reaching household members—slave and free. Although the named patriarchs may not have been Christian believers themselves, research suggests that Arstobulus and Narcissus' households consisted of a community of slaves who were Christian believers (Jewett, 2007). Lampe further evaluated the formulation of household tenement congregations including a group that were slaves and freed(wo)man, strongly Roman in outlook, yet among the Gentile Christian majority (pp. 967–968).

Principal Foundations of Women in Leadership

There are five principled foundations gleaned from Romans 16:1–16 that shape a framework supportive of women in leadership as a contemporary way of seeing and viewing women in organizational leading roles. The areas identified include authenticity, emergent, culture, gender trends, and communication that are favorable and lend toward women as leaders represented within the analysis of Romans 16:1–16.

Authenticity

"To thine own self be true" is the Greek philosophical origin of authenticity. It is the psychological art of "owning one's personal experiences and expressing self in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter, 2002, p. 382). The art of authenticity is prevalent within womanist theologies and womanist leadership, which is textualized through lived experiences and relationship with God (Lane, 2021). Authenticity is also recognizing and not abandoning female characteristics and strengths in the process of adapting to a dominant behavior within an organizational structure. Instead, authenticity involves entrusting women to keep within the confines of their true authentic self, regardless of the leadership position. Authenticity also refers to leaders who are in tune with their basic nature of selves and can accurately see themselves through their lives and lived experiences (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 319). It is a continual process of being oneself even when dealing with others and in accordance with changing contexts (Goffee & Jones, 2005). Being authentic as a leader also means being comfortable with decisions being guided by an internal moral compass that reflects an ethical standard (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

> Principle One: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers the value of authenticity as a dominant characteristic intuitive to women kept within the confines of their true self, regardless of the leadership position.

Emergent

Leadership emergence refers to an identity associated with someone or a group perceived or viewed as a leader (Hogan et al., 1994, p. 10).

Although studies reflect that women score higher on scales that test leadership characteristics and circumstances compared to men, differences in leadership emergence are induced by gender roles (Eagly et al., 2003, p. 578). The church at Rome was spiritually strategic for Apostle Paul because it represented an emerging concern of Christian doctrine. Due to its governance authority, Roman society in the first century developed a pattern of social hierarchy where high status was recognized and publicly honored and elements of such flourished within the congregation of the early church (Clarke, 2008, p. 249). Emerging women in Rome helps to explain the variables of social status, influence, and hierarchical prosperity among the women (Barentsen, 2011, p. 30). Paul's insight of emerging women within the church in Rome placed the traditional leadership model of power at a crossroads, no longer just emanating from the top, but having a juxtaposed women grassroots phenomenon. Organizations suggest considerable leadership advances in executive and management positions within corporate, government, and technology industries (Schock et al., 2019). This is visible within political structures, demonstrated within higher enrollment in educational opportunities for women and invested more in career preparation (Schock et al., 2019, p. 189).

> Principle Two: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers the reality and insight of emerging women as valuable leaders within an organizational structure.

Culture

Culture is a very peculiar topic of influence in society and organizations. Schein (2010) defines culture as a pattern of shared assumptions learned by a group through adaptation and integration (p. 18). Within organizational structures, workspace settings contribute to construction of culture (Walker & Aritz, 2015, p. 456). Traditionally, women culturally navigated social and organizational terrain differently from male counterparts in leadership (Ely & Rhode, 2010). An example is the historical, yet not often discussed in academic study, tribal roles of the American female Indian who were greatly responsible for war strategies and determining fate of captives, and did not relate leadership to governance (Fox et al., 2015, p. 85). The dynamics for women leaders to influence followers vary from culture to culture. This is due to varying stereotypes fostered against

females as leaders within cultures that still commit to a stereotypical mindset based on gender roles (Samo et al., 2019, p. 397). Cultural entitlement that condones masculinity over leadership intelligence contributes to the broader obstacles of women in leadership (Gouws, 2008, p. 24). Walker and Aritz (2015) indicated that male-dominant organizations may likely not recognize women as leaders regardless of ability (p. 474). However, additional studies predict the end to masculine leadership style and a more woman leader communication archetype preferred for the new global workplace culture (Cartwright, 2014). This predicted shift is in part relative to the favor of communicating transparency, collaboration, genuine dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds—all of which woman leaders are traditionally characteristic in culture and style. Lastly, a change in organizational culture is the key to increase women leaders and the recognition of women in leadership (Carli & Eagly, 2015, p. 521). It represents an understanding of the cultural environment and figuring out how to navigate it without compromising integrity, morals, and leadership authenticity. This also includes building a culture that is conductive of mentoring and coaching women leaders (Meister et al., 2017, p. 682).

> Principle Three: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers an organizational culture in favor of transparency, collaboration, genuine dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds.

Gendered Trends

The women discussed in Romans 16:1–16 had various roles in the development and shaping of the first-century church and were forerunners for women within the Roman Christian community to model. It would be appropriate to acknowledge that gender differences existed during the first-century church. A fundamental challenge to women in leadership is the barriers in traditional gender expectations, roles, and practices that are a part of some organizational structures that can potentially lead to additional challenges for female leaders (Ely & Rhode, 2010, p. 378). For example, a female leadership competency framework from the perspective of male leaders does not fairly assess or include a full woman model (Esser et al., 2018, p. 141). Researched evidence differentiating in gender-related leadership is mixed in exploring and findings of differences in

organizational settings (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016). Some research builds on gender role differences as the main reason for differences in gender leadership behavior. Applying a gender-neutral aspect to woman leadership, however, may collide with the authenticity of being woman (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015, p. 3). This is referred to as role congruity, an inconsistency of authentic and true self and what Kernis (2003) proposes as a lack of true self-development through social norms within the organization. Gender and perceived leader characteristics affect perceptions of leadership potential and that oftentimes women are expected to enhance their self-awareness in or to adopt communal behavior to be used strategically within the organization (Schock et al., 2019, p. 190, 196). Lastly, lack of access to people, places, and things can be a barrier that precludes women from advancement within traditional male-dominant roles within an organization. Access increases the ability to influence others within organizational spaces. However, as a work around it may be encouraged that leaders within such structures encourage women to heighten workforce participation and support language from within that brings awareness and reinforcement of women as partners in the organization.

> Principle Four: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers gendered trends that explore and encourage changes in leadership and support language from within that brings awareness and reinforcement of women as partners in the organization.

Communication

The inclusion of women in the sacred text establishes their role as major participants in the building of the future church which required an amount of communication and formation. A positive element of gender trends in favor of women leaders is communication. Christian leading women in Rome at one point and time spent communicative time with Paul as their leader that indicated he trusted them, and he had confidence in their abilities in building community. Studies suggest the importance for women to maintain natural feminine authenticity and remain true to feminine qualities which are strengths and a key advantage to communicating with others (Esser et al., 2018, p. 152). This is displayed in Prisca's warm greetings back to the women in Corinth communicated by Paul in 1 Cor. 16:19. This suggests a direct communication of influence that motivated and encouraged the women in Corinth. Sensitivity to nonverbal

communication and the natural understanding of feelings is somewhat of an ethnic language for women (Hochschild, 2019, p. 108).

Contemporaries suggest that women master the combination of appropriateness with authenticity that communicates a hard truth (Sandberg, 2013, pp. 138–141). In order to get around gender-related challenges, it is recommended that organizations devote more resources and proactively develop a culture that is supportive and collaborative in communications in order to create an environment where gender trending biases are reduced (Walker & Aritz, 2015, p. 474).

> Principle Five: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers communicative resources and a culture that supports collaborative communication that will create an environment where gender trending biases are reduced.

Summary

Leadership involves a process of social observations that can emerge from individual prototypes and contextual elements that in the case of organizational leadership can shape context toward women in leadership (Lord et al., 2001, p. 129). When women are not involved in leadership roles, the loss to societal advancement extends far beyond the lack of role models for both women and men (Longman & Anderson, 2016, p. 26). In review of Romans 16:1–16, five principled foundations emerge in support of a framework toward women in leadership as a contemporary way of seeing and viewing women in organizational leading roles. Table 9.1 summarizes the principles identified within this chapter that culminates in an organizational leadership response for women in leadership.

As public and private workspace expands, synthesized and concise research in the field of woman leadership will require further qualitative and quantitative studies in order to further the discussion of women as leaders at all levels and within all industries. Novice literature that speaks to areas of women's development is great, but deeper research and analysis will be best served to assess how women lead and the development of women leadership as theory.

Table 9.1 Integrative principles for an organizational leadership response for women in leadership

Integrative principle	Theme	An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers
One	Authenticity	The value of authenticity as a dominant characteristic intuitive to women kept within the confines of their true self, regardless the leadership position
Two	Emergent	The reality and insight of emerging women as valuable leaders within an organizational structure
Three	Culture	An organizational culture in favor of transparency, collaboration, general dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds
Four	Gender trends	Gendered trends that explore and encourage changes in leadership and support language from within that brings awareness and reinforcement of women as partners in the organization
Five	Communication	Communicative resources and a culture that supports collaborative communication in order to create an environment where gender trending biases are reduced

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