

# ***25th Anniversary of Women's Ordination Survey of Clergwomen and Clergymen***

## **Report II: Analysis of First Calls to Ordained Ministry**

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**Introduction:** This survey of all 1,689 ELCA clergy women with a comparative sample of 856 clergy men was conducted in June 1995 on the occasion of the ELCA's recognition of the 25th anniversary celebration of women's ordination. We are issuing findings in a series of reports and this report is the second in the series. Information on how the survey was conducted, response rates, and other information is included at the end of this report. For more information, call the ELCA Commission for Women at 800-638-3522 ext 2860.

The first report was based on an analysis of the length of wait for first calls. We found that:

- on average, women wait longer than men — 6.8 months compared to 3.6 months,
- several other variables, including older age at ordination, placing certain types of restrictions on the first call, and not being a second career candidate, were also related to longer waits for first call, and
- because women are more likely to be older at ordination, place restrictions on their first call, and be a second career candidate, these variables affect women more than men.

In this second report we focus on the experiences of 745 ELCA respondents accepting first calls between 1988 and

1995 and the characteristics of the congregation calls. Because much of the information about their first call congregations is taken from official data annually supplied by ELCA congregations, comparable analysis about the remaining 1,091 respondents ordained before 1988 was not possible.

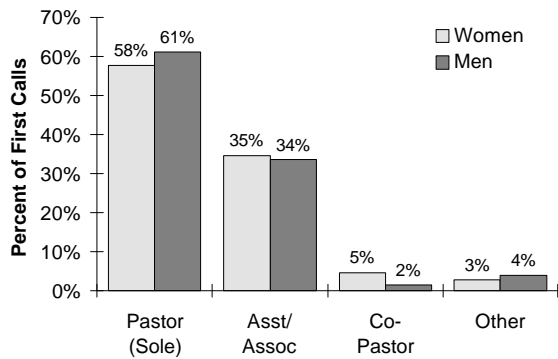
We found that:

- there are few differences between the characteristics of first calls for women and first calls for men,
- women are called to congregations with less financial resources (i.e., an average of \$53,840 in current operating expenses compared to an average of \$70,615 for men for sole pastors),
- women are more likely to be paid below salary guidelines than men (38% of women report being below salary guidelines compared with 30% of men), and
- women appear more likely to go On Leave From Call following their first call than men (38% of women compared with 27% of men).

In the next section of the report, we present the hypotheses we tested and what we found. At the end there is an appendix containing the frequencies, percentages, means, and significance tests for all charts.

**Title:** The first hypotheses -- women are more likely to receive first calls as assistant or associate pastors than men. We found the differences were small. The majority of all first calls to women and men were to positions as the sole pastor of a congregation (see Chart 1). Approximately one third of both women and men were called to staff ministries as assistant or associate pastors. Only 5% of first call clergy women were called as co-pastors and only two male pastors in

**CHART 1: Types of First Calls Received**



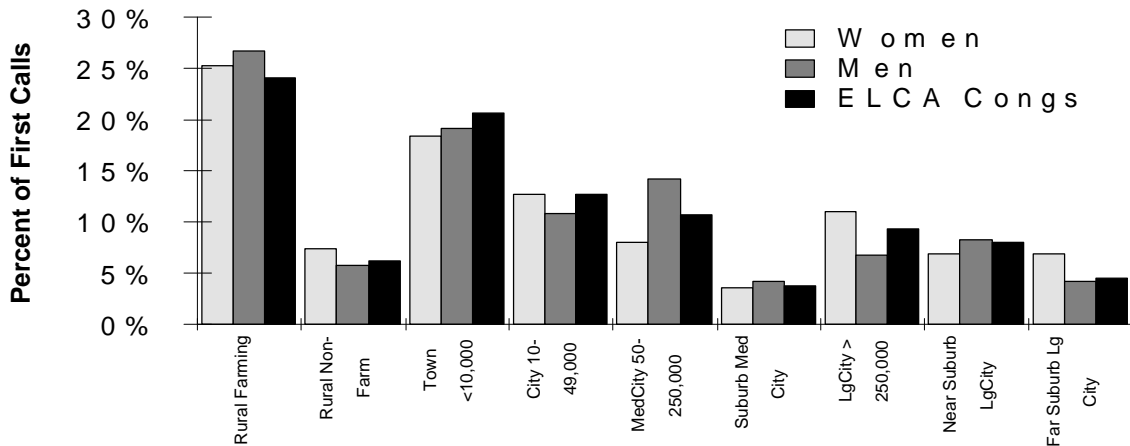
this sample were called as a co-pastor. In variance from the normal, so-called “three year rule” where newly ordained pastors must serve in parish ministry for three years before receiving a call to non-parish settings, 3% of women and 4% of

men received their first calls to other ministries, primarily as missionaries and chaplains.

**Community Context:** The second hypothesis -- women are more likely to receive first calls in particular community settings. We found no meaningful difference between women and men. About half of women and men are called to first calls in congregations located in settings with a population of 10,000 or less (see Chart 2). Approximately one quarter of first calls are in medium sized cities with a population of 10,000 to 250,000 and their suburbs and the remaining quarter are located in cities with a population larger than 250,000 and the suburbs of these cities. The location of these first call congregations closely reflects the distribution of all ELCA congregations.

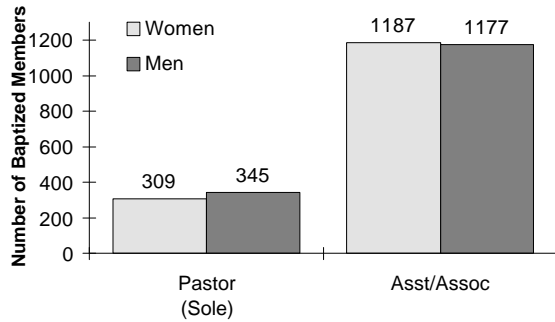
**Congregation Size:** The third hypothesis - - women are more likely than men to be called to smaller congregations. We found that women called as sole pastors were in congregations with an average of 309 baptized members compared with 345 baptized members for men (see Chart 3). In contrast, women called as assistant/associate pastors were in

**CHART 2: Congregation Community Context**



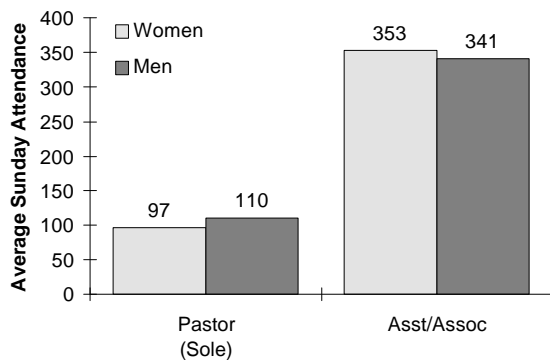
congregations with slightly larger numbers of baptized members (1,187 compared to 1,177). We looked further

**CHART 3: Average Number of Baptized Members in Congregations**



to discover if using averages was hiding some important differences in the size of congregations served by men and women and again found that women were a little more likely to be serving the smallest congregations (21% of women were serving congregations with 201 or fewer baptized members compared with 15% of men). A similar analysis was done using average worship attendance for the measure of size (see Chart 4). The pattern found for baptized membership

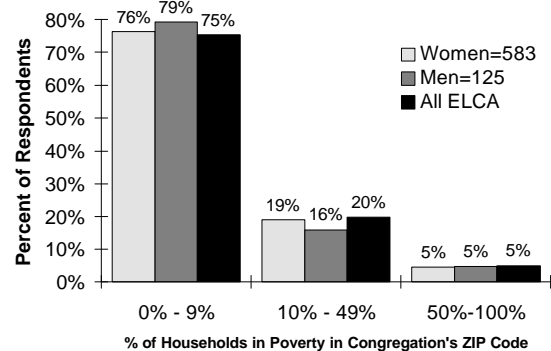
**CHART 4: Average Attendance in Congregations**



was repeated using average worship attendance. Overall, while we found some indications that women received first calls to congregations that were smaller than congregations served by men, these differences in size were small.

**Poverty Settings:** Another hypothesis -- women were more likely to receive calls to congregations in poverty settings than men. This hypothesis actually comes from the reputation that several clergy women have earned serving congregations in urban poverty settings. PRIZM Cluster data from Claritas was used to test this hypothesis. This information tells us for the ZIP Code where each congregation is located what percentage of the households are described as living in poverty. The analysis shows that approximately 5% of both women and men accept first calls to congregations located in ZIP Codes where 50% or more of the households are living in poverty (see Chart 5). The number of first call congregations located in poverty settings closely reflects the distribution of all ELCA congregations.

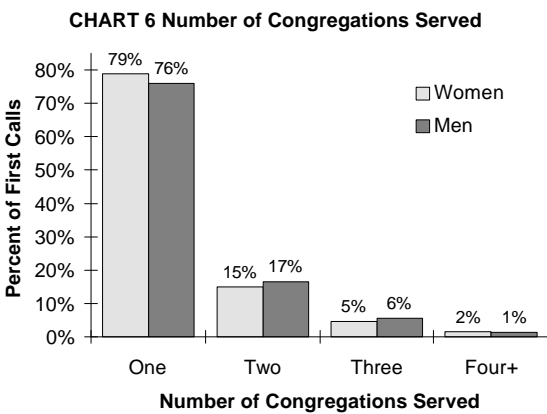
**CHART 5 Percent of Households in Poverty in the Congregation's ZIP Code**



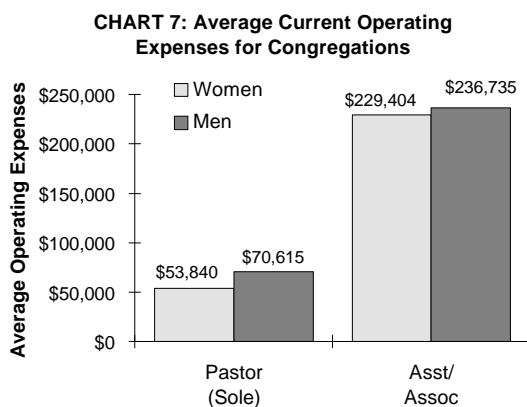
**Number of Congregations Served:** The fifth hypothesis -- women are more likely than men to be called to serve more than one congregation. We found that 79% of first call women serve one congregation. This is only slightly higher than the 76% of men called to serve one congregation, while roughly the same percentages of women and men were called to two-point or three-to-five point parishes (see Chart 6).

**Current Operating Expenses:** The sixth hypothesis -- women are more likely than

men to be called to congregations with fewer financial resources. To measure a



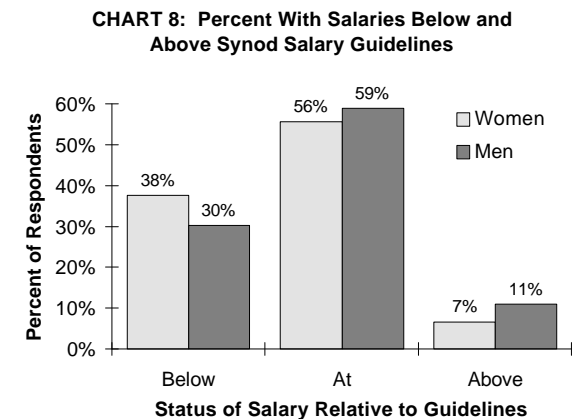
congregation's financial resources we used their current operating expenses, or the amount of money they spend internally on their own programs, utilities, salaries, etc. We found that women are called as sole pastors to congregations with an average current operating expenses of \$53,840 and as assistant or associate pastors to congregations with an average expenses of \$229,404 (see Chart 7). Clergy men serve congregations with slightly higher average current operating expenses (\$70,615 for sole pastors and \$236,735 for assistant or associate pastors). While the average



expense figures for sole pastor women and men both suggest serious financial constraints on ministry, congregations served by these clergy women are much

more likely to find it difficult to pay salaries which meet synod salary guidelines and to have funds available for ministry activities. The \$16,775 difference in average expenses for sole pastor women and men can be the difference, in many communities, between hanging by a tenuous thread and real viability for ministry. In addition, it is important to note that 66% of women and 54% of men called as sole pastors are serving congregations with less than \$54,000 in current operating expenses.

**First Call Salaries:** The next hypothesis -- women are more likely to be paid below the synod salary guidelines. We found that when asked about their first call compensation level, 38% of women as compared to 30% of men received salary and other benefits *below* the synod recommended minimum guidelines for first call pastors (see Chart 8). Women



were also less likely than men to receive compensation *at* the recommended minimum guidelines and at a level *above* the recommended guidelines.

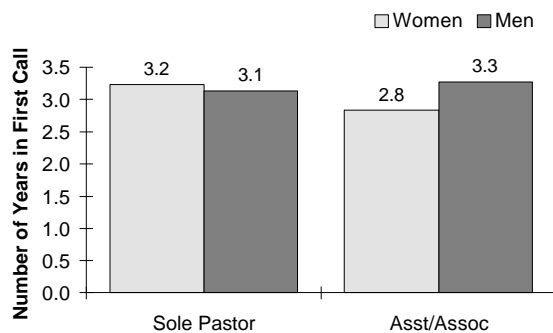
We looked further to see if a congregation's financial resources were linked to paying their first call pastor below salary guidelines. We found that congregations with lower current operating expenses were also more likely

to pay their sole pastor below salary guidelines. For example, 56% of women in congregations with expenses of \$39,000 or less were paid below salary guidelines, as were 50% of men in such situations. If the congregation's expenses were above \$53,800 then the percentage below salary guidelines drops to 28% of women and 24% of men.

We also looked at compensation in different community contexts and found that women were most often paid below salary guidelines in large city and large city suburb settings (48% compared with 40% in rural settings). Men were most often paid below salary guidelines in medium city and medium city suburb settings (44% compared with 37% in rural and large city settings).

**Length of First Calls:** The final hypothesis -- women are less likely than men to remain in their first call for a long time. Of all those ordained since 1988 and *who had left their first call by 1995*, the average length of that call was 3.2 years for women and 3.1 years for men serving as sole pastors, and 2.8 years for women and 3.3 years for men serving in staff ministries. There are some pastors still serving in first calls who could not be included in these statistics (see Chart 9).

CHART 9 Average Number of Years in First Call For Those Beyond First Call



To include pastors still in their first calls in the analysis, we counted the number of pastors who completed at least three

years in their first call and found that 71% of women and 72% of men met this criterion.

We also looked further to see if first call pastors stay a shorter length of time in smaller congregations and in congregations with the fewest financial resources. We found that both women and men serving first call congregations with 201 or fewer baptized members stayed 3.0 years, which is only slightly less than the 3.2 and 3.3 years found for all women and men. For financial resources we found that both women and men stayed slightly longer in congregations with expenses of \$40,000 or less (3.3 years for women and 4.0 years for men).

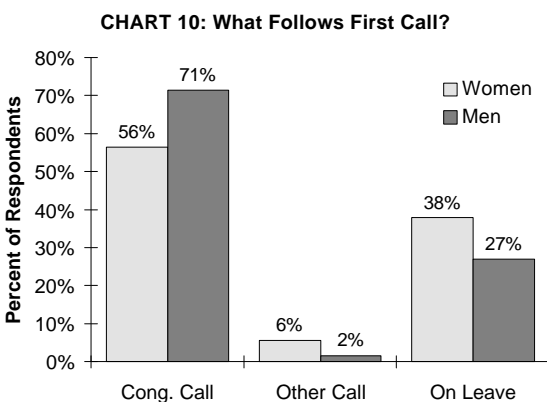
**Concluding Comments:** On the one hand, these data demonstrate that clergywomen and clergymen receive first calls to settings that are more similar than many hypothesized.

- Women and men serve small, rural and small town congregations in roughly equal numbers,
- Most women and men are called to congregations with small operating budgets,
- Women and men are similarly represented in congregations located in poverty settings and in multiple point parishes,
- Women and men serve first calls in congregations with roughly equivalent membership and attendance,
- Only a few more women than men serve on pastoral teams as assistant or associate pastors, and
- Women and men stayed in their first call just about the same length of time.

However, women were found somewhat more frequently than men in congregations with fewer financial resources and with compensation below minimum salary guidelines. While some of these differences are fairly small, they appear consistently. And, in fact, some of the differences have significant impact.

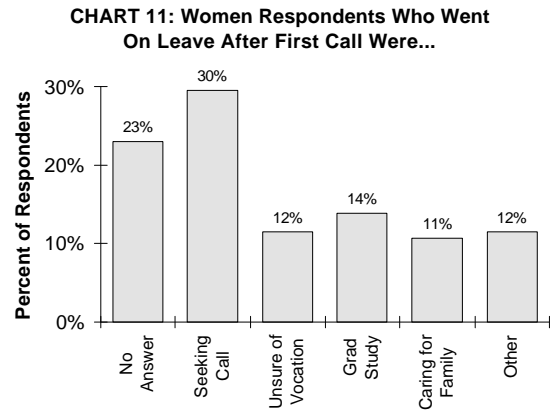
One might fairly conclude that even within an overall first call process that is reasonably efficient and equitable, subtle bias may operate to move more women than men into settings with fewer resources and smaller salaries. We will continue to look for differences between the experiences of women and men to better understand what's happening.

**After the First Call Experience:** There is suggestive evidence that the differentiating experience for ordained women is not related to their first call — at least not to obtaining a first call or obtaining a call that is comparable to calls held by men — but with regard to what happens after the first call. We found, for example, that after their first call 38% of women go On Leave From Call compared to 27% of men (see Chart 10). In



response to the question “While you were On Leave From Call were you...,” we found that 30% of clergy women were actively seeking a call. There were also 35% of women who answered “other” or

gave no answer at all (see Chart 11). What do their answers mean? (There were too few men in this category to include in the analysis.)



These findings raise a series of questions. For example, is the experience of first call a negative experience so that women are more reluctant than men to continue to pursue their careers as congregational clergy? Is the process of seeking a second call slowed down enough so women are forced to go On Leave? Is the role of the synod in working to place women in a second call significantly reduced? Do the demands of being a woman in this society make an uninterrupted pattern of service unrealistic for some? Have these patterns been changing for women and men?

**What's Next?** The next report will focus on what happens beyond the first call. We have interviews with 123 women who were On Leave From Call during 1995 which will help us understand why women are On Leave. We will also look at the characteristics of second calls, third calls, and beyond. Are there typical patterns or career paths for ordained women? How do their experiences compare with those of ordained men? We already know that there are differences. For example, only 1.1% of women serving congregations are senior pastors compared with 5.7% of men. Is this difference due to there being

more older, experienced ordained men, or are congregations showing a preference for male candidates for senior pastor positions, or are other factors at work?

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Large City Suburb < 10 miles	39 6.9%	10 8.3%	49 7.1%
Large City Suburb > 10 miles	39 6.9%	5 4.2%	44 6.4%
Total	566 100%	120 100%	686 100%

$\chi^2 = 8.30$        $p > .05$

## Appendix

**Table 1 Titles of First Calls Received**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Sole Pastor	356 57.8%	80 61.1%	436 58.4%
Asst/Assoc	214 34.7%	44 33.6%	258 34.5%
Co-Pastor	29 4.7%	2 3.8%	31 2.9%
Other	17 2.8%	5 3.8%	22 2.9%
Total	616 100%	131 100%	747 100%

$\chi^2 = 3.28$        $p > .05$

**Table 2 Community Context**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rural Farming	143 25.3%	32 26.7%	175 25.5%
Rural Non-Farming	42 7.4%	7 5.8%	49 7.1%
Town < 10,000 Population	104 18.4%	23 19.2%	127 18.5%
Small City 10,000-49,999 Population	72 12.7%	13 10.8%	85 12.4%
Medium City 50,000-250,000 Population	45 8.0%	17 14.2%	62 9.0%
Suburb of Medium City	20 3.5%	5 4.2%	25 2.6%
Large City >250,000 Pop.	62 11.0%	8 6.7%	70 10.2%

**Table 3 Average Baptized Membership**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	
Sole Pastor	$\bar{x}=309$ n=356	$\bar{x}=345$ n=80	t=1.14 p>.05
Asst/Assoc	$\bar{x}=1,187$ n=214	$\bar{x}=1,177$ n=44	t=.07 p>.05

**Table 4 Average Worship Attendance**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	
Sole Pastor	$\bar{x}=97$ n=356	$\bar{x}=110$ n=80	t=1.71 p>.05
Asst/Assoc	$\bar{x}=353$ n=214	$\bar{x}=341$ n=44	t=.33 p>.05

**Table 5 Percent of Households in Poverty**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
0%-9%	445 76.3%	99 79.2%	544 76.8%
10%-49%	111 19.0%	20 16.0%	131 18.5%
50%+	27 4.6%	6 4.8%	33 4.7%
Total	583 100%	125 100%	708 100%

$\chi^2 = 3.28$        $p > .05$

**Table 6 Number of Congregations Served**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
One	477 79.0%	96 76.2%	573 78.5%
Two	90 14.9%	21 16.7%	111 15.2%
Three	29 4.8%	7 5.6%	36 4.9%
Four	5 0.8%	1 0.8%	6 0.8%
Five	3 0.5%	1 0.8%	4 0.5%
Total	604 100%	126 100%	730 100%
	$\chi^2 = 0.61$		$p > .05$

**Table 7 Current Operating Expenses**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	
Sole Pastor	$\bar{x} = \$53,840$ n=356	$\bar{x} = \$70,615$ n=80	t=2.24 p<.05
Asst/Assoc	$\bar{x} = \$229,404$ n=214	$\bar{x} = \$236,735$ n=44	t=0.30 p>.05

**Table 8 First Call Salaries vs. Guidelines**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Below	220 37.6%	39 30.2%	259 36.3%
At	326 55.7%	76 58.9%	402 56.3%
Above	39 6.7%	14 10.9%	53 7.4%
Total	585 100%	129 100%	714 100%
	$\chi^2 = 4.27$		$p > .05$

**Table 9 Average Number of Years in First Call for Those Beyond First Call**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	
Sole Pastor	$\bar{x} = 3.25$ n=167	$\bar{x} = 3.14$ n=38	t=0.40 p>.05
Asst/Assoc	$\bar{x} = 2.84$ n=127	$\bar{x} = 3.28$ n=23	t=1.41 p>.05

**Table 10 What Follows First Call?**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Congregation	181 56.4%	45 71.4%	226 58.9%
Other Call	18 5.6%	1 1.6%	19 4.9%
On Leave	122 38.0%	17 27.0%	139 36.2%
Total	321 100%	63 100%	384 100%
	$\chi^2 = 5.51$		$p > .05$

**Table 11 What Were You Doing While On Leave From Call?**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
No Answer	28 23.0%	2 11.8%	30 21.6%
Actively Seeking a Call	36 29.5%	8 47.1%	44 31.7%
Unsure of Next Vocational Steps	14 11.5%	1 5.9%	15 10.8%
Graduate Study	17 13.9%	3 17.6%	20 13.4%
Caring for Kids or Family	13 10.7%	0 0%	13 9.4%
Other	14 11.5%	3 17.6%	17 12.2%
Total	122 100%	17 100%	139 100%
	$\chi^2 = 5.17$		$p > .05$