Clergywomen: Attitudes and Perceptions
Toward the Woman Pastor

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)
by
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For my Honors Thesis I chose to write on clergywomen with special emphasis on the attitudes of local church members and on how women pastors perceive their ministry. To help with this project I read books concerning the topic of clergywomen, I interviewed clergywomen, and finally I conducted questionnaire surveys in local churches. In my paper I will report on my findings from books I read and the results of my own research with women pastors and local churches, integrating what I read, researched, and observed in all three areas. From the outset I must emphasize this is not a scientific study; my research was conducted with a limited sample. My objective was to see if there was a correlation between what I was reading and what was happening within local church congregations.

In their book, Women In the Pulpit, the Proctors lift up the stories of women who responded to their calling to the ministry. These women, as the Proctors state, have entered "the largely uncharted territory of a man's profession, the pastoral ministry" (preface). The book presents many issues and attitudes women face as ministers and also the special qualities that women bring into the ministry.

Carol Anderson, an Episcopal priest, states that one of the qualities that women pastors possess is the gift of mothering. Anderson has found that people who are sick "have a need to be mothered," and says they "identify with me more easily than they do a man because of this mothering thing" (Proctor, 8-9). Anderson also feels that
women show more concern than men through "words, touch, and feeling" (Proctor, 9). One of the beautiful stories told in the book is about the time Carol Anderson conducted a baptism. As she held and cuddled the baby in front of the congregation "it was as though a Raphael madonna had briefly come to this staid Manhattan church" (Proctor, 9). Several persons in the congregation mentioned this touching ceremony. However, it appears that for every positive attitude, there is a negative attitude, such as the parishioner who does not think women clergy should wear earrings in the pulpit or thinks that women clergy are all lesbians. There are those also who do not believe that women should have spiritual authority; they believe women should be quiet in church (Proctor 73).

The Proctors also discuss being a single clergywoman and a married clergywoman. If a woman is single she often realizes that if she decides to marry, her spouse will need certain qualifications. If married to a clergyman, that can have a set of its own problems, such as competition in the pulpit, or when one pastor is called to a church and the other is not. A clergy couple can face problems in the attitudes of the congregation; for instance, the woman may be treated as the "pastor's wife," not as co-pastor, or when calls are made especially about parsonage or church repairs the members will often ask to speak to the husband/pastor (Proctor 58). Another problem discussed is the division of the family/housework duties (66). Personally, I see this as no different than in other marriages where both partners work. There is also the decision faced by clergy couples and clergy/unordained spouses as to whose career gets top
priority when a move comes up for one or the other.

When a woman chooses to become a pastor, it's inevitable that the very foundation of her marriage will be challenged, and the challenges come from every quarter. She may feel driven to distraction by the tensions and sense of guilt that can accompany the joint responsibilities of household chores and pastoral duties. Or she may be torn apart emotionally by having to decide between following the call of God and supporting a husband's career (Proctor 70).

Much attention is given in the Proctors' book about the qualities which women bring into ministry. Among some of the qualities associated with women are gentleness and patience, warmth, counseling, spiritual charisma, caring and openness, and approachability, a desire to produce harmony, and "a maternal instinct to reconcile and give to others" (96). Along this same line, Connie Parvey, a Lutheran campus chaplain, expresses that "my presence brings out people's feminine side more" (Proctor 130). Even a Catholic priest related how the nuns offer a "warmth and motherliness" that priests lack (Proctor 150).

Women In the Pulpit offered many stories about women responding to their call, but I did not find a lot of statistical information that would be useful in my research.

In his book, Women Clergy: Breaking Through the Gender Barriers, Edward Lehman discusses the impact of women pastors on the church and the different reactions that occur when any church experiences a woman pastor. Lehman uses research studies to show how church members reacted to clergywomen who were appointed or called to their congregation. As Lehman reports in the preface, "this research is basically sociological in its approach" (xi). Lehman wanted to see how church members perceive women pastors.
I found Lehman's book very helpful and informative with its research findings. It put something concrete with what he was reporting, which I did not find in the Proctors' book. Lehman's book gave me some solid foundation as I began to think about the study I would be developing for this thesis.

Lehman begins his book by discussing how churches respond to a woman pastor. He points out how women who are perceived as women first, then ministers, are referred to by members as "weak, dependent, emotional and indecisive" (27), suggesting that these women are stereotyped. However, it appears that persons who see women pastors as ministers first, then as women, take women pastors "as they are, as individuals without imposing uncomplimentary traits upon them" (27). Lehman concludes "most church members think clergywomen have ability to function effectively as pastors" (39). In fact, 82% of the church members feel that women are just as suited for the ministry as men (32). An interesting fact in the research is that even though the majority of church members feel that women can function as pastors just as well as men, church members still prefer a male pastor. In Lehman's research, two-thirds of church members prefer a male as a senior or sole pastor (41). It is quite clear that church members do not discriminate against women in regard to their becoming pastors, but they still prefer a man as pastor of their church.

Lehman went on in the book to discuss why there is a resistance to women in the ministry. First, the resistance may be just from prejudice in general against women; second, it is or might be due
to the church and/or community where persons are involved; and third, it is based on members' involvement (108). Sexism was more apparent among the laity than among the male clergy (80). It appeared that members belonging to large affluent churches opposed women pastors more than do other churches. Also, the more members are traditionally involved in the church the more they are opposed to women pastors (108).

Some of the attitudes toward clergywomen are related to the members' concerns about the effect a woman will have on the congregation. Some members fear that a woman pastor will "drive the men away and transform the church into a feminine institution" (Lehman 111). Others fear a division or conflict in the church in response to having a woman as pastor. Still others fear that women will push for more inclusive language which might alienate some members. In his research, Lehman found that the more members feel that women pastors will create tension in their church the more likely they are to be against having a woman pastor. Secondly, when members are afraid of inclusive language offending some members they are more likely to oppose women in ministry (126). In other words, the more people are concerned about the impact of conflict on their congregation, the more they are opposed to women in ministry. The less they are willing to risk conflict in their congregation, the more they resist having women in clergy roles (129).

Another concern of the local congregation is that church attendance and budget will decline with a woman pastor, but studies have shown this to be marginal (130).

What is interesting is that "what the members see as a social reality does not always square with the actual realities" (Lehman 136).
In essence, what the members saw or perceived as a problem does not happen. What generally happens is that after being exposed to a woman pastor the church members are more accepting and amenable to clergywomen. The congregations find that they are just as capable of functioning with a female pastor as they are with a male pastor (Lehman 141). It probably would be helpful if the local church could somehow experience a clergywoman beforehand. Lehman's study shows that congregations experiencing a woman pastor as an interim or appointed pastor have less stereotyping than churches who had never experienced a woman pastor (157). Lehman reports that contact with a clergywoman:

1. Increases members' levels of receptivity.
2. Breaks down the pervasiveness of institutionalized sexism in the church.
3. Overrides the effects of other factors influencing levels of receptivity (163).

In general, it can be said that once a congregation has experienced a clergywoman there is less stereotyping and discrimination. Instead of a negative experience with a clergywoman, church members' experiences are mostly positive. Lehman found the following results after individuals and churches had contact with a female pastor:

1. More males than females still stereotyped and preferred a male pastor. However, more women than men discriminated against female clergy.
2. People with low income and low status jobs are more resistant to a woman pastor than persons with a higher income and status.
3. The female pastor is more than likely to win the older people over.
4. Persons who considered themselves to be theologically conservative still preferred a male pastor.
5. Members who attended church often do not object to women pastors in liturgical roles (217-220).
Lehman lifts out two additional barriers women clergy face that women entering other fields do not face. First, women clergy are faced with centuries of tradition which is used to determine who may and may not enter the ministry. Second, Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity does not apply to religious organizations (229).

As one looks at the data and what Lehman reports, one sees women typically receiving the small, rural, struggling churches, with membership and finances declining (due mainly to the older population of the congregation). These churches are generally the churches that male pastors do not want (Lehman 238). Lehman reports that the salary for women pastors is only 60-70% of what their male counterparts receive (237).

Lehman summarizes that women will continue to challenge the church to practice what it preaches. He concludes that even though there is inconsistency in the congregations' attitudes toward women pastors, generally members are positive toward women pastors, especially after initial contact (282-83). The problem is that though the majority is positive, it is the minority who speaks up loud and clear against women and influences others to adopt their point of view (284). Lehman suggests that perhaps "the denominational placement system is the 'best friend' of clergywomen seeking positions in ministry" (291).

Another book I read that gave me much information and statistical data was *Women of the Cloth*, by Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara Hargrove, and Adair T. Lummis. As the authors suggest at the beginning of
their book, "women of the cloth present a new opportunity for the
churches" (2). The percentage of women working has increased from
around 30 percent in 1950 to around 43 percent in 1980. The number
of clergywomen has increased 240 percent from 1930 to 1980 (Carroll,
et al, 3).

Bock, a sociologist, was quoted in Women of the Cloth as saying:
The ministry has not only been defined as masculine,
but as sacredly masculine. The father figure, a prominent
feature of Christianity, is also a prominent ingredient
in the image of the clergy (9).

Many traditions throughout Christianity uphold this view. Some
people believe that since Jesus and his disciples were male that
ministers/priests must be male. Because of the problems the early
church was having, Paul ruled that women should have a subordinate
role in the church (I Corinthians 11:1-16). The patriarchal society
of both the Old and New Testaments placed women below men. Unfortun-
ately, this attitude has been carried down by some throughout history.

Women are seen as bringing a "real affect element, a real feeling,
a real nurturing element" into their ministry (Carroll, et al, 12).
Some words Carroll, et al, use to characterize women pastors are
compassion, sensitivity, and caring (12). These are special gifts
that we, as women, can bring into the ministry that sometimes men
lack.

Again, as in Lehman's book, these authors discuss and report
on the types of churches women pastors are given. If a woman is
a sole pastor, she is usually sent to a church which is declining
in membership and/or finances or having some other difficulty.
If a woman is sent to a larger church it is generally as an assistant
or associate pastor (Carroll, et al 125). From my reading, I gather it is not difficult to obtain a first appointment in a church, but obtaining the second or third may be difficult. As one United Methodist official said, "The jury is still out on second and third appointments" (Carroll, et al 115). It is still not known if these moves will be upward or horizontal. Another interesting factor is that churches who receive a single woman as pastor wonder why she is single. If the woman pastor is part of a clergy couple, that causes problems in placing the couple. And if the woman pastor is married to someone who is not a clergy, the question of whether the spouse will move with her is brought up (Carroll, et al 109).

Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis found one contradiction with Lehman's previous findings. Carroll, et al, reported that clergywomen are significantly less likely than men (48 to 63%) to describe their church's theological position as very or moderately conservative. Clergywomen usually describe their churches as either liberal (31%) or mixed (21%). The more liberal the church, the more likely they are to call a woman pastor (127-128).

As far as salary differences between male and female clergy, men consistently receive higher salaries than the women. For example, clergymen with five or less years experience and earning less than $10,000 is 16%, whereas for clergywomen with five or less years experience and earning less than $10,000 is 40% (Carroll, et al 130-31). In other words, there is no equal pay for equal work, even in the ministry!

Some of the sexist attitudes among the laity are that a woman's place is in the home, not the pulpit; women are not suited for ministry;
and that religious leadership has been given to men. Some persons feel that women are subordinate to men, while others just cannot favor a woman as a pastor (Carroll, et al 139). The authors mention two reasons why women pastors might be seen as a threat:

1. A woman pastor may arouse concern among the traditional church members and thus threaten an already shaky congregation.
2. While churches have a large number of women members, some see a female pastor changing the church image into a woman's organization (140).

Carroll, et al, found that their 1981 study supported Lehman's 1977 study concerning the attitudes of lay leaders regarding women pastors. Three-fourths of the persons felt that there was an incompatibility between the image of minister and that of woman. Forty-five percent of the men and thirty-four percent of women felt that a senior pastor should be a man. In Lehman's 1977 study, 71% of the laity thought that women were just as suited for the ministry as men. However, the 1981 study (Carroll, et al) shows 88% of men and 92% of women agree that women are just as suited for the ministry as men (142-144).

According to Carroll, et al, clergywomen feel their strong points are in preaching, planning, leading, worship, and teaching children. They feel less competent in working with the church budget. The laity tended to agree with the clergywomen's perception of themselves (Carroll, et al 155-56).

One problem that clergywomen have to deal with is that of the "superwoman complex." A United Methodist study of clergywomen described the superwoman complex as "an insidious creeping kind of phenomenon that often invades personalities without being aware
of it" (Carroll, et al 196). One reason this may happen is that women are still rare in the ministry and place themselves under pressure (198). Women who are entering the ministry should avoid falling victim to this complex.

In the concluding pages of Women of the Cloth, the story about the report of the spies to Moses (Numbers 13) is related as one of the earliest good news/bad news stories. The authors compare clergymen with that story, saying: "The good news about clergymen has been the acceptance and functioning as parish clergy. The bad news is there are still 'giants' to be met" (Carroll, et al 203).

In her book, Women Ministers: How Women are Redefining Traditional Roles, Judith L. Weidman explores the changes women pastors are making in the church. Weidman looks at the special gifts that women bring into the ministry and explores what kind of pastors they make.

Statistics show that by the end of the 1970s there were about four percent (11,000) women pastors in the United States, by the mid 1980s the numbers had increased to about seven percent (Weidman 3). Seminaries, churches, governing bodies of the various denominations, and male clergy have been "forced" to deal with this new phenomenon. According to Weidman,

As a woman of my generation was expected to be wife, mother, hostess, chauffeur, cook, economist, and den mother, so she can be pastor, preacher, counselor, administrator, educator, evangelist, cheerleader, and in a pinch, organist (46).

Weidman goes on to say that women can be not only a nurturer, an educator, and dishwasher,
she is worthy to be the representative of the people of God before God's most holy of tables and in the name of God's son. She is able to be both earthly and mysterious, authoritative and loving, intellectual and feeling, just as her brothers in Christ are able to be (83).

Churches who have been served by female pastors report that they have "a more personal preaching style, greater approachability, and a stronger tendency to include lay people in decision making" (Weidman 6). Women pastors also seem to have the gift of encouraging people. Women pastors come into contact with many persons who have difficulty or cannot accept a woman as a pastor. However, Weidman reports, as does Lehman and Carroll, et al, that after experiencing a woman pastor "the laity's perception of the shape and style of ministry does change" (6). As can be seen, the only way possible to change people's attitudes is for them to be exposed to and work with women pastors. It seems like all the talking about inclusiveness and equality does not do as much as actually seeing women in the role of pastor.

There are additional gifts that women can and do bring into the ministry. Women pastors tend to be people-oriented. Weidman suggests this is probably due to women being raised to be "relationally oriented, exceptionally sensitive, and an ear for attentive listening" (91). Women are good at counseling because they possess the gifts of nurturing, supporting, and accepting (Weidman 102). Weidman gives an excellent analogy of a clergywoman as a midwife, "one who does not create something new, but stands patiently by, helping the other give birth to newfound parts of her/himself" (99). Weidman also suggests that women pastors represent a sign of hope to people
experiencing the death of a loved one. The reason for this is that women are seen as the bearers of life, thus life continues on. Also, women's nature to show their emotions seems to allow grieving persons to be open about their feelings of grief (Weidman 83). Women also have the gift of empowering. Eleanor Haney recognizes this empowering "to be vital for women as a process of gaining autonomy, power, integration, consistency, and responsibility" (Weidman 143). Women need to become what God calls them to be. Women, according to Weidman, have a temptation to overgive, "to be over-accessible," and to accept the "male value system, structures, and way of ministering" instead of going on their own feelings, perceptions, and experiences (103-04).

Women pastors struggle with scripture that comes from a patriarchal view and a God seen in male terms. A woman pastor can and should bring to the pulpit and ministry the feminine side of God. An example is given in Weidman's book of a woman pastor who used her imagination and intuition to show God's liberating love. One Sunday this woman pastor preached on "Waiting for the Birth of the Christ"; she herself was very pregnant at the time. By using her imagination and intuition she could draw an analogy between her waiting for her own child and the waiting for the Christ-child (51).

Weidman makes a final statement at the end of her book which I feel is right on target. She says:

When women are in visible positions of leadership in our society, it says to the world: "In this church women are first class." Having both women and men share leadership provides an inclusive view of the nature of God (218).
The next process for my thesis was to interview six clergywomen (see Appendix 1). Of the six that I interviewed, 50% were serving churches in a rural or small town setting. Most of the clergywomen reported the composition of their churches as mainly older people, women, and children. Fifty percent of the churches served by these clergywomen had memberships of 51 to 100 and of those members, 75% were over fifty years of age. The women pastors who served or had served larger churches were either associates or co-pastors. These facts coincide with what was reported in the books I read.

Of the six clergywomen I interviewed, five had previous appointments, with the average number of appointments being 3.4 and the average number of years served at each appointment being three years. As for the salary of these clergywomen, four (67%) made under $20,000 a year and two (33%) made $21,000 or over. The two who made $21,000 or over were a district superintendent and a campus minister.

Two of the clergywomen interviewed were not married and they reported that church members tried to find them a spouse. Two clergywomen were divorced. One of the divorced clergywomen reported there were some questions when she first arrived at the church, but no real problems once the church members got to know her. The only exceptions were a few isolated people. The other clergywoman had just gone through a divorce and reported that she received great support from her congregation. I was particularly interested in interviewing clergywomen who were married to clergy. In my reading, the Proctors reported that the woman pastor may be treated as the "pastor's wife," not as a co-pastor (58). The two clergywomen who
were part of a clergy couple were split in response to whether they were treated more as the pastor's wife. One felt that she was treated more like a pastor's wife (she comes from a rural church), while the other clergywoman reported that she was not treated as a pastor's wife. One reason for this difference could be that the first clergywoman just entered the ministry a few years ago, whereas the other one is now a district superintendent with several years of experience working with her husband as a missionary and pastor.

Most of the clergywomen (83%) reported they received the same support from both men and women. One suggested that sometimes the women will be like a cheering squad for her. She also shared that at first men will sometimes question a woman's "trustee" knowledge; they question her ability to act on the administrative and custodial care of church property. Another clergywoman shared that she has found men more willing to do extra things (this could come from a chauvinistic attitude), whereas women hold back on doing extra things. As far as support from their male counterparts, 67% of the clergywomen report some male pastors are supportive, while others treat them as though they should not be in the ministry and others ignore them. The other 33% of the clergywomen report that male pastors treat them as equals and as colleagues.

Quite interesting was the fact that all the clergywomen interviewed reported no decline in membership and/or finances in the churches when they became the pastor. This supports Lehman's findings. The attitude is that membership and finances will decline, but studies have shown that this does not happen.

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Some of the gifts the clergywomen feel they bring to the ministry include: instinct (ability to sense when there is a need), tenderness, nurturing, sensitivity to emotional hurts, compassion, dedication, caring, commitment, listening skills, empathy (especially with women and children), touching, networking, integrating verbal and visual symbols, women more easily share deep problems with a woman pastor, and some men also share problems they might not share with a male pastor. Again, this coincides with what I read that women bring a compassion, nurturance, sensitivity, gentleness, patience, warmth, caring, openness, spiritual charisma to their ministry. The clergywomen I interviewed felt their strong points to be: pastoral calling/visiting, preaching, compassion/empathy, love, previous experiences, and organizational skills. This, too, corresponds to what I had read.

Probably the most interesting part of the research I did for this paper was doing the questionnaire surveys in the local churches about their attitudes toward clergywomen. For this part of the research, I surveyed three different types of churches; the first church (Church 1) was a church that had never experienced a female pastor. The second church (Church 2) had just been appointed a female pastor within the past three months; and the third church (Church 3) had experienced a female pastor for four years. Each church allowed me the opportunity to conduct the surveys at the end of their regular Sunday morning worship service. I felt by doing this I had a better cross-section of the congregation than had the survey been conducted at an administrative board meeting,
or some other similar meeting, where you might get just the leaders within that congregation. Also, I asked only those who were twelve and over to take part in the survey, feeling that those under twelve would not be as accurate since they perhaps would be reporting their parents' feelings, not theirs. A sample of the questionnaires used for all three groups appears in the Appendix.

If one looks at Church 1 (Table 1), the age group is fairly well distributed from ages 20 to over 60, whereas with Churches 2 and 3 (Tables 2 and 3) show that the total percentage between ages 20 and over 60 is similar (Church 2 - 79%; Church 3 - 78%), but the distribution between the three age groups is not evenly distributed. For instance, in Church 2 (Table 2) 72% are age 41 or over and in Church 3 (Table 3) 64% are age 41 or over. This confirms the fact that women pastors are sent to churches with an older membership. One noteworthy fact that is found in the tables is that the youth (ages 19 and lower) percentages in Churches 2 and 3 are slightly higher than the percentage in Church 1, which had never had a woman pastor.

In doing my research, one of my objectives was to see if there was a correlation between gender (independent variable) and whether one felt that women are just as suited for ministry as men (dependent variable). Church 1 (Table 4) shows that 79% of males strongly agree/agree that women are just as suited for the ministry as men, compared to 72% of women. There is a significant difference between males (6%) and females (15%) on being undecided about whether women are suited for the ministry.
Questionnaire for Churches

Male 41% Female 59%

Age: 19 and lower 13% 20-40 30% 41-60 26% over 60 31%

Rate your church involvement on a scale of 10 (with 10 being very involved.)

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1) My attitude toward clergywomen can be described as:
   Positive 40% Neutral 53% Negative 8%

2) I believe women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
   Strongly agree 15% Agree 61% Disagree 13%
   Strongly disagree 1% Undecided 11%

3) I feel more women should be ordained as ministers.
   Strongly agree 9% Agree 46% Disagree 15%
   Strongly disagree 1% Undecided 28%

4) I would be willing to accept a clergywoman as pastor of my church.
   Strongly agree 14% Agree 54% Disagree 10%
   Strongly disagree 3% Undecided 18%

5) I believe the next time a pastorate is open our church should seriously consider women as well as men clergy.
   Strongly agree 9% Agree 45% Disagree 13%
   Strongly disagree 4% Undecided 29%

6) My preference for a pastor is:
   female 0 male 50% no preference 49%

7) I consider my theological position to be:
   Very conservative 9% Moderately liberal 40%
   Moderately conservative 39% Very liberal 8%

8) I consider myself a feminist.
   Strongly yes 6% Yes, but not strongly 64% No 24%

Church 1--Never experienced a female pastor
KW (7/89)
Honors Thesis

Table 1
18
Questionnaire for Churches

Male 30%  Female 70%

Age: 19 and lower 18%  20-40 7%  41-60 11%  over 60 61%

Rate your church involvement on a scale of 10 (with 10 being very involved.)

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Choose answer you agree with.

1) Before my church had a clergywoman, my attitude toward women pastors was:
   Positive 43%  Neutral 52%  Negative 5%

2) My attitude now toward women pastors is:
   Positive 64%  Neutral 34%  Negative 2%

3) I believe women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
   Strongly agree 43%  Agree 39%  Disagree 2%
   Strongly disagree 2%  Undecided 13%

4) I feel more women should be ordained as ministers.
   Strongly agree 36%  Agree 43%  Disagree 5%
   Strongly disagree 0  Undecided 9%

5) I would be willing to have another clergywoman as pastor of my church.
   Strongly agree 36%  Agree 45%  Disagree 0
   Strongly disagree 0  Undecided 14%

6) My preference for a pastor is:
   Female 5%  Male 14%  No preference 77%

7) I consider my theological position to be:
   Very conservative 9%  Moderately liberal 30%
   Moderately conservative 34%  Very liberal 2%

8) I consider myself a feminist.
   Strongly yes 7%  Yes, but not strongly 34%  No 48%

Church 2--Just appointed a female pastor
KW (7/89)
Honors Thesis

Table 2
Questionnaire for Churches

Male 34% Female 66%

Age: 19 and lower 21% 20-40 14% 41-60 21% over 60 43%

Rate your church involvement on a scale of 10 (with 10 being very involved.)

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Choose answer you agree with.

1) Before we had a woman pastor, my attitude toward clergywomen was:
   Positive 26% Neutral 63% Negative 10%

2) My attitude toward clergywomen today is:
   Positive 71% Neutral 26% Negative 3%

3) I believe women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
   Strongly agree 44% Agree 40% Disagree 4%
   Strongly disagree 0% Undecided 7%

4) I feel more women should be ordained as ministers.
   Strongly agree 29% Agree 46% Disagree 3%
   Strongly disagree 1% Undecided 19%

5) I would be willing to have another clergywoman as pastor of my church.
   Strongly agree 39% Agree 43% Disagree 4%
   Strongly disagree 1% Undecided 11%

6) My preference for a pastor is:
   Female 7% Male 20% no preference 69%

7) I consider my theological position to be:
   Very conservative 10% Moderately liberal 46%
   Moderately conservative 31% Very liberal 4%

8) I consider myself a feminist.
   Strongly yes 10% Yes, but not strongly 24% No 54%

Church 3--Has had a female pastor for four years
KW (7/89)
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Table 3

20
Churches combined--Gender and whether women are suited for ministry.

Table 5

Church 2 (Table 4) shows that 55% of females and 15% of males strongly agree that women are suited for the ministry. There is no difference between males (39%) and females (39%) who agree that women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
Church 3 (Table 4) shows that the males (29%) tripled from Church 1 and doubled from Church 2 in strongly agreeing that women are just as suited for ministry as are males after having experienced a female clergy for a few years.

If one compares Church 2 and Church 3 (Table 4) looking at strongly agree and agree, one will notice that it is the males who significantly increase their attitude. Females' attitudes about whether women are just as suited for the ministry as males virtually remain the same. An interesting note is that when the strongly agree and agree categories are combined, it supports the hypothesis that as a church experiences a female pastor the better attitude they will have toward female pastors. One observation I made was that in Church 1 (Table 4) the male percentage that strongly agreed or agreed that women were just as suited for the ministry was much higher than the males in Church 2 (Table 4). I believe the difference for this is the fact that Church 1 has never experienced a woman pastor so the males do not feel or perceive a threat, thus they answered that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Whereas, males in Church 2 who had just received a female pastor were not as sure about their attitude on whether women are just as suited for the ministry. But as noted earlier, after experiencing a woman pastor for a few years the males in Church 3 (Table 4) showed a significant increase in agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement. If one combined the three groups on the strongly agree/agree categories one would come up with 76% of males and 84% of females who agree/strongly agree that women are just as suited for the ministry as
males (Table 5). If you then combine the 76% and 84% and divide it by two one comes up with 80% who agree/strongly agree with the statement. This goes along with the previous research conducted by Lehman that shows 82% of church members feel that women are just as suited for ministry as males (32).

The next area I was interested in observing had to do with a person's church involvement and their attitude toward a woman pastor. In the research I had read the researchers/authors had reported that the churches which have women pastors show that the more members are involved in the church the more positive they were about women pastors. Tables 6 and 7 show the results of church involvement (independent variable) and attitude toward women pastors (dependent variable) for Churches 2 and 3. As can be seen in Table 6 for Church 2, the higher the involvement in the church the more positive the members are of women pastors. The table also shows that with more involvement the neutral and negative attitudes drop very significantly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Low (0-3)</th>
<th>Medium (4-6)</th>
<th>High (7-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Church 2--Just appointed a female pastor.

Church Involvement and Attitude Toward Woman Pastor

Table 6

23
Table 7 for Church 3 basically shows the same results as with Church 2. One interesting point is that even in low involvement 45% are still positive about the female pastor compared to only 10% in Church 2. This could be accounted for because the pastor in Church 3 has been with the local church longer than in Church 2. But the results still support the hypothesis that the more a person experiences a female pastor the more positive they are toward female pastors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Low (0-3)</th>
<th>Medium (4-6)</th>
<th>High (7-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Church 3--Has had female pastor four years.

Church Involvement and Attitude Toward Woman Pastor

Table 7

The next hypothesis I was interested in testing had to do with peoples' theological position and their preference for a pastor. I hypothesized that a person's theological position would predict their preference for a pastor, i.e., a very conservative person would prefer a male pastor and a very liberal person would have no preference. As can be seen by looking at Table 8-10 my hypothesis was wrong. There does not seem to be a correlation between theological
position and preference for a pastor. Church 1 (Table 8) is pretty evenly divided among all theological positions and preferring a male pastor or no preference. Likewise in Church 2 (Table 9) there is no significant difference in theological position and preference for a pastor. If anything, I see this table supporting my previous hypothesis that once a person experiences a female pastor their attitude toward them becomes more positive. This table surely shows that Church 2 after receiving a female pastor dropped their male preference and went to no preference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theological Position</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>V. Cons.</th>
<th>Mod. Cons.</th>
<th>Mod. Liberal</th>
<th>V. Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Preference</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Church 1--Never had a female pastor.

Theological Position and Preference For a Pastor

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theological Position</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>V. Cons.</th>
<th>Mod. Cons.</th>
<th>Mod. Liberal</th>
<th>V. Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Preference</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Church 2--Just appointed a female pastor.

Theological Position and Preference for a Pastor

Table 9
Church 3 (Table 10) is the one which confused me a little. Table 10 shows a spattering all over, but still there is nothing to support my hypothesis. From looking at the table one can see that the majority in all of the theological positions, except very liberal, show no preference for a pastor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>V. Cons.</th>
<th>Mod. Cons.</th>
<th>Mod. Liberal</th>
<th>V. Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Preference</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Church 3--Has had a female pastor four years.

Theological Position and Preference For a Pastor

Table 10

If one compared Church 1 (Table 8) and Church 3 (Table 10) there is a significant drop in preference for a male pastor in all theological positions except the very liberal. In Church 3 the very liberal preferred a male pastor 67%. Also in looking at Table 10 for Church 3 there is quite a significant increase among moderately conservatives (10%), moderately liberal (3%), and very liberal (3%) preferring a female pastor. Again, this does not support my hypothesis about theological position and preference for a pastor, but it does seem to support my previous hypothesis that as a person or church experiences a female pastor their attitudes toward female pastors
change to a more positive attitude (since Church 2 and 3 are served by female pastors).

In conclusion, as I started exploring the topic of clergywomen for this paper, I wanted to see what the attitudes and perceptions of the local churches were in relationship to what had been reported from previous research. In other words, have there been any changes in peoples' attitudes and perceptions as more women are entering the ministry today than previously? I knew from the outset that my research could not be on a large-scale scientific basis, although that would have been the best approach. When I began my work, all I planned to do was to study previous research and interview some women pastors, but as I delved into my reading I decided it would be interesting to go into local churches and find out what the members were thinking. I felt by doing the questionnaires I could really correlate the previous research and what local church members' attitudes are at the present. In fact, doing the questionnaire and going into the local churches was the most exciting part of the research for me.

One can observe by reading this paper there are many correlations with the studies done previously. One correlation is that as church members come in contact with a woman pastor the more positive their attitude toward clergywomen. Second, women pastors are generally assigned to small, rural churches with declining membership and/or finances. In addition, their salary is 60-70% of what male clergy receive. Third, women bring special gifts to the ministry that males sometimes lack, such as nurturance, gentleness, patience,
caring, approachability, and warmth. Fourth, most church members believe that women are just as suited for the ministry as are men. In fact, on this point I was very shocked and had to change my own thinking on this matter. I had always presumed that it was the males who were least supportive of the females as ministers, but as can be seen from this study much of the time it is the men who are more supportive of the women. It is a shame that we, as women, are not supporting each other. We, as women, need to end our bickering and jealousy. We need to be unified as women in reaching our goals, only then will we see the progress many of us want and desire. Finally, from this study and the previous research we see that membership and finances do not decline when a woman pastor begins serving a church.

Reflecting back on this study and paper, if I had had the time and resources, I would have done it differently. I would have surveyed many more churches and women pastors, including more denominations other than just the United Methodist Church. Using only the United Methodist Church probably biased some results and made percentages appear higher than what they might have been had the study been more cross-sectional. For instance, in the area of theological position and preference for a pastor in my research, there was a high no preference across all theological positions. Had I researched more denominations my hypothesis may have been right that a person's theological position will predict their preference for a pastor, but in the United Methodist church with it being more liberal, having open itinerancy, and the push for inclusiveness, persons have been
exposed to the possibility of having a woman pastor and so may be more accepting across all theological positions.

Progress has been made in the attitude and perception of women as clergy, but much more work remains for women pastors to be viewed as a "pastor" not a "female." Acceptance of women as ministers does not just happen. It takes a commitment to push for acceptance, which means getting support, not only from other female clergy but also from others (male and female, clergy and laity). I would hope for the day when we who choose the profession of ministry will be looked at for our abilities, our gifts, our qualifications, and our calling, not for our gender. Whether we are male or female, clergy or laity, we are instruments to do God's work. We need to take Paul's words in Galatians 3:28 to heart:

There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither slave nor free,
there is neither male nor female;
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Questionnaire for Clergywomen

1) Church location is:
   rural_____ small city or town (less than 54,000)_____ inner city_____ city or town (over 55,000)_____

   Church membership is:
   25-50_____ 51-100_____ 101-200_____ over 200_____

   Approximately how many members are over 50?
   1/4_____ 1/3_____ 1/2_____ 2/3_____

2) Is this your first appointment?
   yes_____ no_____ 
   If yes, how long have you been there?
   
   If no, how many appointments have you had?_____
   How long were you at each of these appointments?_________
   Describe the churches you have served.

   Can you compare your length of appointment(s) with length of male clergy?

3) What is your present salary?
   $10,000 and under_____ $16,000 - 20,000_____ 
   $11,000 - 15,000_____ $21,000 and over_____ 

4) If single, how does church accept your not being married?

5) If divorced, how does church accept your being divorced?
   Is it harder being divorced?

Appendix 1
6) If married to a male clergy, are you treated more like a pastor's wife and/or do members expect you to fulfill traditional roles of a spouse along with being a pastor?

7) Do you encounter persons who believe women should be silent in church?

8) What support do you receive from women, from men in your church?

9) Do people see you as a woman first, then a minister, or as a minister then a woman?

10) Have you seen a decline in membership and/or finances since you became pastor?
   yes____ no____

11) The church's theological position is:
   very conservative____ moderately liberal____
   moderately conservative____ liberal____ mixed____

12) My own theological position is:
   very conservative____ moderately liberal____
   moderately conservative____ liberal____ mixed____

13) How do male pastors treat you?

14) What special gifts/qualities do female clergy bring into the ministry?

Appendix 1A
15) What is the biggest barrier to your ministry?
   yourself_____ resources_____ family_____ 
   sexism_____ other_____

16) What is the most effective factor of your ministry?

17) Do you consider yourself a feminist?
   Strongly yes_____ Yes, but not strongly_____ No_____
Questionnaire for Churches

Male____ Female____

Age: 19 and lower____ 20-40____ 41-60____ over 60____

Rate your church involvement on a scale of 10 (with 10 being very involved.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1) My attitude toward clergywomen can be described as:
   Positive____ Neutral____ Negative____

2) I believe women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

3) I feel more women should be ordained as ministers.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

4) I would be willing to accept a clergywoman as pastor of my church.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

5) I believe the next time a pastorate is open our church should seriously consider women as well as men clergy.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

6) My preference for a pastor is:
   female____ male____ no preference____

7) I consider my theological position to be:
   Very conservative____ Moderately liberal____
   Moderately conservative____ Very liberal____

8) I consider myself a feminist.
   Strongly yes____ Yes, but not strongly____ No____

Church 1--Never experienced a woman pastor.
KW (7/89)
Honors Thesis

Appendix 2
Questionnaire for Churches

Male____ Female____

Age: 19 and lower____ 20-40____ 41-60____ over 60____

Rate your church involvement on a scale of 10 (with 10 being very involved.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Choose answer you agree with.

1) Before my church had a clergywoman, my attitude toward women pastors was:
   Positive____ Neutral____ Negative____

2) My attitude now toward women pastors is:
   Positive____ Neutral____ Negative____

3) I believe women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

4) I feel more women should be ordained as ministers.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

5) I would be willing to have another clergywoman as pastor of my church.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

6) My preference for a pastor is:
   female____ male____ no preference____

7) I consider my theological position to be:
   Very conservative____ Moderately liberal____
   Moderately conservative____ Very liberal____

8) I consider myself a feminist.
   Strongly yes____ Yes, but not strongly____ No____

Church 2--Just appointed a woman pastor.
KW (7/89)
Honors Thesis
Appendix 3
Questionnaire for Churches

Male____ Female____

Age: 19 and lower____ 20-40____ 41-60____ over 60____

Rate your church involvement on a scale of 10 (with 10 being very involved.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Choose answer you agree with.

1) Before we had a woman pastor, my attitude toward clergywomen was:
   Positive____ Neutral____ Negative____

2) My attitude toward clergywomen today is:
   Positive____ Neutral____ Negative____

3) I believe women are just as suited for the ministry as men.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

4) I feel more women should be ordained as ministers.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

5) I would be willing to have another clergywoman as pastor of my church.
   Strongly agree____ Agree____ Disagree____
   Strongly disagree____ Undecided____

6) My preference for a pastor is:
   female____ male____ no preference____

7) I consider my theological position to be:
   Very conservative____ Moderately liberal____
   Moderately conservative____ Very liberal____

8) I consider myself a feminist.
   Strongly yes____ Yes, but not strongly____ No____

Church 3--Has had a woman pastor for four years
KW (7/89)
Honors Thesis