

# Commission for Women 25th Anniversary Survey

## Report III: Analysis of On Leave From Call

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*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

*“A new senior pastor came to the parish and he had some different ideas about staffing and position descriptions. The bishop and the congregation had requested my own letter of resignation when the former senior pastor left; it was kept on file through the interim period and then, just a few days after the new senior pastor arrived, it was sent to the church council and accepted.*

*I didn’t want to be On Leave From Call but I had no choice. The bishop was sympathetic but, unlike situations where pastors have some leisure about choosing the right next step and moving only when it is apparent where the Spirit is leading, there was no new call ready and waiting for me. It took several months of waiting for the right situation to open up. This is not so unlike the situation for other pastors who are looking to make a move, but all during this time I was unemployed, except for very part-time and low-paying experiences, no benefits, no contributions to my pension, no vote at the synod assembly, and a real sense of marginality.*

*I never expected that this would happen to me and it was humiliating. I felt like a second-class citizen in my own church. Even though everyone knows that associate pastors are normally expected to resign and do often leave when a new senior pastor comes, my colleagues still regarded me as something of a flawed pastor because I resigned without having a second call.”*

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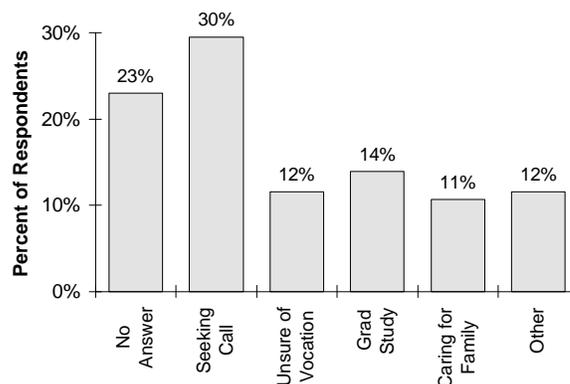
**Thirty-eight percent of clergy women in our survey, ordained since January 1988, went On Leave From Call at the end of their first call, as compared with 27% of clergy men. This statistic alone is remarkable.**

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Thirty percent of ELCA ordained women who went On Leave From Call after their first call were actively seeking a second call throughout their time On Leave (see Chart 1). These respondents were clergy women ordained after January 1988.

This finding, from a recent survey of 1,689 ELCA clergy women on the roster in early 1995, and a comparable sample of 856 clergy men, contradicts assumptions that a majority of clergy women On Leave have chosen to take time off to care for children and other family responsibilities. Of those women ordained since 1988 and On Leave after their first call, only 11% reported the reason as “caring for children or family.”

**CHART 1: Women Respondents Who Went On Leave After First Call Were...**



In fact, more women (14%) reported that graduate study was their reason for being On Leave. (However, as we will discuss later, some women may cite study as their purpose while also caring for family.) Smaller numbers of women cited other reasons, including being unsure of next vocational steps, health and medical reasons, and possible career change out of ordained ministry. Thirty-four percent of women respondents gave no answer or cited “other” as their reason for being On Leave.

The Commission for Women and the Department for Research and Evaluation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America conducted a survey in June 1995 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women in Lutheran churches in the United States. This report is the third in a series from that data.

This report also makes use of additional material from a separate survey, conducted at the same time by Susan Kintner, involving 123 clergy women On Leave From Call at the time they answered our questions.

The first report analyzed the length of time waiting for a first call, comparing the experiences of women and men. We found that, on average, women wait longer than men – 6.8 months compared to 3.6 months. In addition to gender we found that other variables, such as age at ordination, placing restrictions on the location or type of call, and being a second career candidate were also related to the length of the wait for a first call.

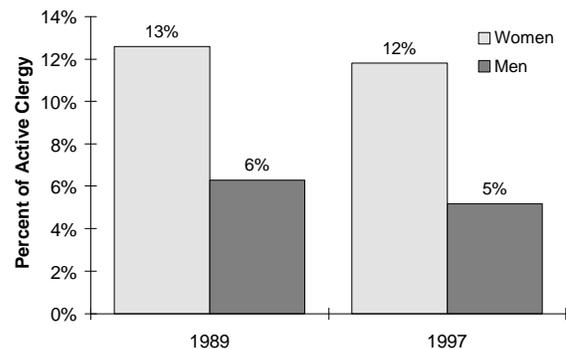
The second report focused on the experiences of 745 respondents who received their first call between January 1988 and June 1995, and especially on the characteristics of their first calls. We found that, while there are relatively few differences between the characteristics of first call congregations of women and men, women generally are called to congregations with fewer financial resources and are more likely than men to be paid at below recommended synodical salary guidelines. We also learned that women are more likely than men to go On Leave From Call at the end of their first call.

The On Leave From Call experience is the subject of our third report. Besides the comprehensive data from the survey of 1,689 clergy women and the representative sample of 856 clergy men, we have additional data gleaned from another survey sent to 217 clergy women who were On Leave From Call during 1995. One hundred twenty-three women responded to questions about their reasons for being On Leave and their experience as it unfolded.

## Number of Women On Leave

ELCA clergy women are twice as likely as ELCA clergy men to be On Leave From Call. Statistics from the ELCA’s Office of the Secretary show that in September 1997, 11.8% of all non-retired clergy women were On Leave From Call, as compared with 5.2% of all non-retired clergy men (see Chart 2). Another way of looking at these statistics is to note that, at the end of 1997, 30% of all ELCA pastors On Leave From Call were women. At this same time, women made up only 16% of the active roster of all ELCA clergy.

**CHART 2: What Percent of Active Ordained Men and Women Are On Leave From Call?**



This disparity in proportion is not a new phenomenon. Reports from the ELCA’s Office of the Secretary in 1989 indicate that 12.6% of active ordained women and only 6.3% of men were On Leave. Women made up 15.6% of all those On Leave even while comprising only 6.9% of the total number of active clergy.

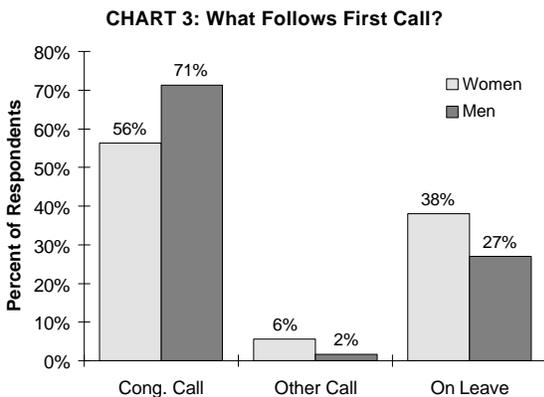
Many theories seek to explain this disparity. Are women more likely than men to opt out of active ministry in order to stay home and raise children? Are women more likely than men to experience conflict and to opt out of the situation? Are women more likely than men to opt out of ministry for any variety of reasons, unrelated to the actual experiences they have serving as pastors? Are women more likely than men to be restricted in movement due to a spouse’s job relocation? Are women more likely than men to be unwilling to move out of a school district or environment that is desirable for other personal or family reasons? Are

women more likely than men to leave a difficult situation simply because, for economic reasons, they *can*?

Our findings suggest that each of these hypotheses may be true. However, the extent to which they are true does not account for the large difference in the percentages of women and men who are On Leave From Call.

**Our data suggest that one reason more women than men are On Leave From Call after the first call is that *women wait longer than men for a second call*. The greatest number of women On Leave were actively seeking a new call.**

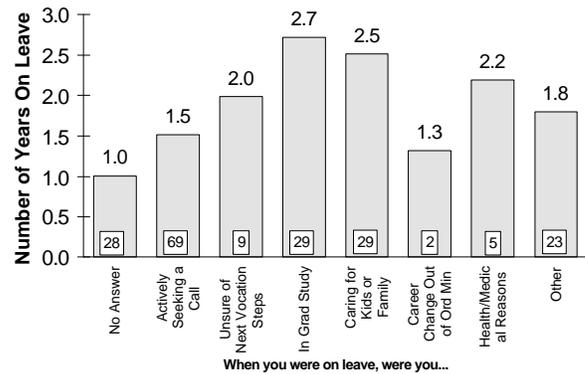
We found that 38% of clergy women went On Leave From Call at the end of their first call (see Chart 3), and that, of these, 30% were



actively seeking a second call (see Chart 1). They were On Leave an average of eighteen months (see Chart 4). At the same time, 27% of clergy men went On Leave From Call at the end of their first call, and, of these, 15% were actively seeking a second call. They were On Leave an average of only six months (Length of time On Leave for subgroups of men are not available because of the small number of men in the survey). Women awaiting second calls were On Leave an average of one year longer than men On Leave awaiting a second call.

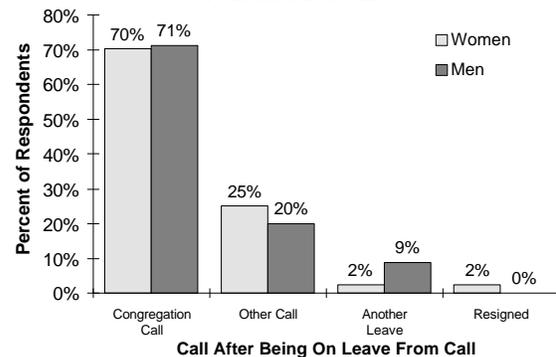
Several summary observations are helpful:

**CHART 4: Average Length of Time On Leave For Survey Respondents On Leave After First Call**



- women are more likely than men to be On Leave from Call after their first call,
- while On Leave, the largest group of women were actively seeking another call, not caring for children or family members,
- women On Leave who were actively seeking another call waited an average of 1.5 years before starting their next call,
- the longest time spent On Leave was found among women in graduate study (2.7 years) and caring for children or family (2.5 years),
- roughly 70% of both women and men returned to congregational calls following their time On Leave (see Chart 5). About a quarter of these pastors go to serve in non-parish second calls, and

**CHART 5: What is Second Call if On Leave Follows First Call**



- when asked what they were doing when On Leave 35% of women provided no answer or said “other.” The Kintner study, discussed later, shows that being On Leave is more complicated than checking a single box on a survey.

## Complex Reasons

Within these statistics, countless permutations of variables combine to create hundreds of unique reasons for pastors to be On Leave From Call. A primary reason, e.g., study, may be cited in response to our questionnaire but further analysis reveals the complex interaction of several factors.

We believe, based on analysis of the surveys from the Kintner study of women On Leave, that some pastors find it more acceptable (to themselves and to others) to identify one purpose such as “actively awaiting call” or “graduate study” as their primary reason for being On Leave, while the reality is that staff conflicts, congregational conflicts, personal issues, or family needs in fact prompted their move to be On Leave From Call. Lines between these categories blur quickly and are subject to interpretation. For many, a combination of factors is involved.

## Survey of 123 Women On Leave

Reverend Susan Kintner, of Portland, Oregon, on behalf of the Commission for Women, asked the 217 women who were On Leave in 1995 to participate in another survey specifically about the experience of being On Leave From Call. The survey contained 7 objective and 12 essay questions. One hundred twenty-three surveys were returned (57% return rate). Follow-up interviews were conducted with some women to clarify their responses on the survey.

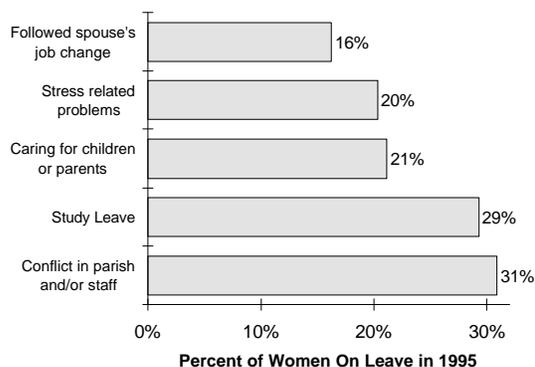
The results from this survey of women On Leave may seem a bit different from the larger survey of all clergy women but consistent themes emerge. We gave this group of women more options and flexibility to list three reasons for their current On Leave From Call status. The primary choices for our 123 respondents (shown in Chart 6) were:

- conflict in parish and/or staff (31%; 13% said parish conflict, another 13% said staff conflict, and 5% said both parish and staff conflict),

- further study (29%),
- stay home to care for children or elderly parents (21%),
- stress-related physical or mental health problems (20%), and
- follow spouse’s job change (16%).

*(Respondents could choose up to three of these and other key factors. The factors receiving few “votes” included: pregnancy or maternity leave, divorce, faith crisis, disillusionment with ministry, parish closed, not enough pay, chose another vocation, isolation, term call not renewed, part-time call not available, or institutional program cuts.)*

**CHART 6: What Were Three Primary Reasons for Your Current On Leave Status?**



Of those who had been associates, 88% identified **conflict** with the senior pastor as at least one of their reasons for being On Leave From Call. Many of them identified parish conflict as another, distinct reason. Women serving solo pastorates also cited parish conflict as a primary reason for their being On Leave From Call.

They told us of their experiences. “After several years in a team ministry, conflict developed and we called in an LSS consultant. He and the senior pastor decided I had to go.” “I was exhausted and worn down. I needed the time away to assess where I am and where I am going. I needed some time to recharge my batteries spiritually and emotionally.” “Being On Leave proved very healthy because it gave me time to process some very painful episodes. It gave me a chance to regain my balance and to think about what in ministry mattered most to me.” “I was forced to resign my last call

*because of conflicts with the other pastor.” “I am unofficially retired. I retired to avoid conflict with a new senior pastor, who later resigned in a huff.” “There was conflict with the senior pastor; the bishop recommended I get out.” “I sought synod help in the parish which was not supportive of me or the ministry. I asked for help finding a new call for more than two years. Finally, I just had to leave.” “I am now On Leave to recover from the abuse I experienced at the hands of a few people in my former parish. It is inhumane to allow pastors to be treated in such a cruel manner and to be abandoned by the synod with only a verbal ‘we support you’ to go on.”*

*“As associate pastor, I had a conflict with my senior pastor. I resigned to keep the congregation from choosing up sides.” “I had the financial freedom to leave conflict because my spouse is employed.” “I chose to resign as part of a negotiated settlement of a sexual harassment lawsuit against the senior pastor, the congregation, and the bishop for failing to deal with the harassment in an open and fair manner.”*

Twenty-nine percent of those 123 queried cited **study leave** as a primary reason for being On Leave. They described their study programs as enhancement to their ministry and/or specialization with ministry. Their study ranged from M.A. work in fields such as counseling, to CPE residency, D.Min. work in preaching, leadership, pastoral care and counseling, organizational dynamics, and community development, and Ph.D. studies to prepare for seminary teaching. Very few of these women were On Leave with a view toward changing professions. Some of the women had held the formal designation, On Leave From Call for Graduate Study, and others simply were On Leave and undertaking their study without this formal status. Of this group 28% left associate positions, another 28% left solo pastorates, 14% had been co-pastors, and 19% had non-parish calls. They had been ordained an average of 8.5 years and their average age was 38.5 years.

For many, this was a creative career step, providing new skills and options for the future. They wrote appreciatively of the time given to

reflection about ministry and how best to match their particular gifts and skills with particular needs.

This group of women, who cited study as a reason for being On Leave, were among those who also had other reasons, such as family responsibilities, parish conflict, or spouse’s job change to prompt their decision to be On Leave From Call. Responses to open ended questions suggested that, for many women, study leave seemed a better reason to cite in conversation with colleagues than the real reasons, such as conflict, burn out, or family needs. However, even when pastors left due to conflict, many then took these active steps to develop greater competency for service. Some of those who cited study leave were not engaged in full-time academic work.

We did not survey a similar sample of clergy men On Leave. However, informal discussions suggests that this same strategy may hold true for some men who cite study leave as their primary reason for being On Leave.

In an institutional culture that values education and ongoing professional development, it is more acceptable to opt for additional study than to opt *out* for any reasons. Pastors are likely to have told their congregations, too, they were leaving to pursue further study when, in fact, they were leaving because of conflict or other reasons.

Women who left because of sexual orientation usually cited study as a purpose of their Leave.

Some of these respondents wrote:

*“I am completing my Ph.D. in Family Social Science/Family Therapy.” “D.Min. on visual arts in the church.” “I received a fellowship for study leave. Excellent stipend and travel money and moving expenses were paid.” “It was the right decision to go On Leave for Study, but now my status is no longer in my hands. My mobility papers have been sent to many synods, some of whom never even acknowledge receipt.”*

*“Painful experience led me to believe I was in danger of wasting large portions of my life and talents waiting for the church to find a place to use me. By pursuing dual vocations now, I hope to maximize my opportunities to*

*serve God and his people. The decision was and is extremely wrenching but, yes, it has been the right one.” “My mother died and my parish was rural and difficult. I chose CPE.” “Licensed Pastoral Counselor/LPC.” “I recently completed another Master’s degree and moved to follow my spouse’s work.”*

*“It has been disconcerting, confusing, and painful to try to make sense of what it means to be ‘called’ and to be On Leave From Call. The church doesn’t know what to think theologically about people like me who are on leave for graduate study to develop further skills to serve the church. Other denominations call individuals to further study ‘for the sake of the church.’ This issue of naming our status and affirming it is unresolved and I think it’s important!”*

Twenty-one percent of the 123 women we queried cited **family responsibility -- caring for young children** as at least one of their three chief reasons for being On Leave at this time. Two percent cited responsibility for **elderly parents** as a reason for being On Leave. Fifty-eight percent of these pastors at home with young children or elderly parents said they would not be On Leave if they could find a part-time call that provided opportunity for them to fulfill their family responsibilities in addition to service in ministry. Many of them also cited study as one of their three key reasons (see the paragraph above). Of this group, twice as many left associate positions as left solo pastorates. Their average age overall was 37 and they had been ordained an average of eight years.

*“To be home with children, although I wish I could be in a setting where I worked a quarter to half-time.” “I went On Leave to be home with our two-year-old daughter. I’m glad to have had this time with her, without having to be pulled away before I was ready.” “I wanted more time to be home with our four children. I was a part-time pastor and the needs there were great. We had just completed a building project and the church needed more staff.” “I feel it is important to stay with my elderly mother who had cancer surgery less than a year ago.”*

*“My adopted children all need extra care and attention.” “My children are one and three, and they need me at home. The church wanted me six days a week.” “The boundary-less way the church works encroached too much on our family life. I never had time off, even when I wasn’t working, I was somehow still working. My kids never got the attention they needed.”*

*“I was weary . . . I worried about the effects of parish conflict on the life of my child.” “My 94-year-old father was requiring more assistance. The parish needed me full time and it just seemed to be the right time to move.”*

Twenty percent of the 123 women said that **stress related health reasons** were involved in their decision to be On Leave. Sixty-four percent of these women also listed conflict as one of their reasons for being On Leave (and many of those who listed conflict also cited health). Fifty-six percent left solo pastorates, 12% left associate positions, and 32% left non-parish calls. Their average age was 39 and they had been ordained an average of eight years. Thirty percent of these women also cited care for children as another reason for being On Leave From Call, 30% of them also identified study for themselves as a reason, and 15% listed conflict as a reason for going On Leave.

They told us, *“disability -- a total hip replacement by a surgeon who botched the job.” “Physical health -- disability due to disease.” “Post traumatic stress disorder.” “Depression after several years in a national disaster area and personal stresses.” “I had a seizure related to bad medication; the congregation encouraged me to take a leave, then fired me, citing breach of trust because I hadn’t told them of a preexisting condition (depression).” “I cannot be whole in ministry to the Church as a lesbian woman. After denying who I was and spending ten soul-searching years in therapy, I realized I needed to leave to gain some sense of health and ministry.”*

Sixteen percent of women queried in our sample of 123 women On Leave From Call in 1995 who **spouse’s job change** as one reason for being On Leave were evenly distributed between

solo, associate, co-pastor, interim, and other non-parish calls. Their average age was 39 and they had been ordained an average of six years. Thirty-five percent of this group followed clergy husbands who had new calls (but they didn't), 20% followed spouse's to postgraduate study, another 20% followed non-clergy with new positions, 15% followed a spouse to other academic study, and one woman left her call to accompany her spouse on a sabbatical.

They wrote, *"I knew moving was risky but I wanted to support my husband getting an advanced degree."* *"The decision was right but not easy."* *"Taking a mini-sabbatical was healthy for me."*

*"It is difficult moving across the country without any sense of what might be possible, not knowing the new bishop or having any colleagues. I was so isolated at first. If you're not in a call, you don't really exist, as far as the synod is concerned."* *"I was absolutely no where. I changed synods and received no support from either synod staff. Neither did I feel support from my husband who was excited about his new call. I couldn't go to clergy groups because they met during the day when I was tied up with the job I needed to keep to make ends meet."* *"This synod's bishop, where I've moved, has been helpful, but there are no calls."* *"I have relished the time On Leave to be renewed, to make the move and get settled."*

## **Complicated and Simple Reasons**

In addition to these primary reasons, the women wrote about more complex reasons for being on leave, and more straightforward ones. These include, *"I had to stop doing what I was doing and take some time to stand back, reassess, and regroup."* *"I went into debt while serving as a pastor and it was going to get much worse."* *"The congregation could no longer afford my full time salary."* *"I was restructured out of my position in this agency."*

*"I stayed in my first parish eleven years. I was exhausted. I have found renewal."* *"We decided that my life was too valuable to be stuck working in a job in which I am unhappy."* *"I*

*was bored with parish ministry."* *"I left a semi-rural town to move into an urban area, to study counseling, to regain a sense of normal social life for a young, single woman, and to wrestle with God."*

*"I had a co-terminus call with the senior pastor who retired."* *"The parish called the interim hired during my maternity leave -- and the bishop did nothing to stop them."* *"The senior pastor's 'no boundaries' style made it impossible for me to work there."* *"I noticed other bright, gifted women who were older than I who had reached an invisible ceiling and were not getting second and third calls. I wasn't sure I wanted to be vulnerable to that, too."*

*"One of the best decisions I've ever made."* *"No third call was forthcoming."* *"Sexism from call committees."* *"My full-time package (pay) was \$17,200. I made house payments out of that, they paid utilities. I asked to cut down to part-time. They could save some money, I could have more family time. After seven months of studying this idea, they voted instead to seek a pastor who could work full time. I left shortly and soon after they called a male pastor full-time and pay him over \$25,000."* *"It was time."*

## **Interim Ministry**

Some of these women are providing interim ministry to their synods, both as trained, accredited and sometimes called interim pastors, and under more informal arrangements. Many expressed a desire for greater opportunity to serve in this way, to receive calls for this ministry and to have this ministry respected and affirmed.

One wrote, *"I am On Leave now because I want to be called to interim ministry within my synod but the process is just being developed. I am working with other interims to develop this new system and it is taking a lot of work."* *"I feel 'called' (but am not called in this synod) to do interim ministry. They want me to continue to provide this service, but what do we do when my three years On Leave run out?"* *"Some synods don't call interims. We spent four years*

*trying to clarify the interim position and were unable to come to any conclusion or make any plans.”*

## **Part-time Calls**

Twenty-four percent of these 123 women said they would be glad to have a part-time call. It does not quite logically follow that all of these 24% would not be On Leave if more part-time calls were available, but it is a statistic worth noting. Six percent of all 123 respondents said they were On Leave because of the unavailability to them of a (preferred) part-time call situation. Many women (and men) in this survey (and the larger one) expressed a concern that the church has not found a way yet to provide for healthy integration between family and work responsibilities.

*“Serving in a part-time call does not mean that I am only willing to serve the Gospel part-time,” one pastor wrote. “Ministry in a parish is not the only way I can serve God. I serve the Lord in my work as a mother, and as a daughter, a spouse and in my community.” “Our synod has a lot of congregations that really could benefit from a part-time pastor and are open to having part-time pastors. But the bishop is dead set against it.” “It seems we’re all juggling these days. It is hard to do but I would rather do that than live entirely in one world -- the home -- or the other -- the church.”*

*“For some of us, a part-time call is the answer to our prayers. For others, it means underemployment and great economic hardship, and the stigma of being less than full-time.”*

Up to now, the church has tended to view part-time calls in a pejorative light. If a pastor sought one, it was a sign of less than full loyalty to the calling. If a bishop recommended one, it meant he or she lacked confidence in the pastor’s ability to carry off a “real” call. If a congregation requested one, it showed they were dying and unwilling to fully commit to ministry.

For some pastors, finding only a part-time call spells economic disaster and professional discouragement. Part-time calls can be used to

marginalize pastors and congregations. Pastors serving in part-time calls often report feeling like second-class colleagues to those who serve full-time. Many pastors receive part-time calls with part-time compensation only to discover they are expected to work full-time. Some part-time calls, with pro-rated part-time salary and benefit packages, are explicit in their expectations that 40-hours a week is only part-time.

Many women believe that women clergy have been sent in disproportionate numbers to interview in such congregations and *expected* to accept such calls, given the assumption still that their income is less essential to the family. For these reasons, many believe that part-time calls are unjust and must be avoided at all costs. It is a justice issue, to stop sending women clergy into marginal situations.

At the same time, there are some women and some men who would prefer these calls and who do not internalize the stigma of serving only part-time. They may choose to serve a parish or agency part-time while serving the community in a secular job or as a volunteer. Or they may welcome the opportunity to have more discretion in their lives as they seek to fulfill family or other personal responsibilities.

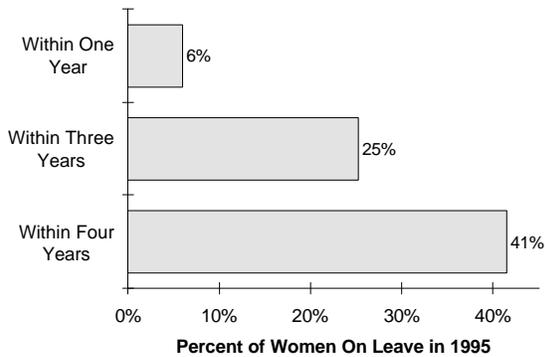
We have tended to make individual accommodations rather than look carefully at the possibility for making systemic changes in how we view and extend part-time calls. We may choose to review our policies and procedures and our philosophy about part-time calls in light of new, and relentless, societal changes. The church may simply require more part-time ministry due to changing conditions, even while more pastors may seek part-time calls. This would be a happy coincidence.

## **Other Factors**

Forty-one percent of all 123 women questioned about their On Leave experiences reported going On Leave From Call within four years after ordination (25% went On Leave within the first *three* years and 6% left their first call to go On Leave within one year, see

Chart 7). Women who had been ordained for more than five years generally reported more creative and positive experiences from their time On Leave. Women with less than five years experience in ordained ministry were more likely to report feeling disillusioned and uncertain of their future in ministry. Many of these women reported conflict as one of their key issues and many of them served as associates.

**CHART 7: How Long After Ordination Were You On Leave?**



The average age for all of these women On Leave was 39 years. The average age for women at home with family responsibilities was 37 years. For those caring for children, the average was closer to 34 years. All other categories conformed to the overall average of 39.

Of this sample of 123 women, 75% said it was the right decision for them to go On Leave From Call when they did. Seven percent said it was not the right thing to do and others were not sure if it was the right thing or not. Even those who felt confident it was good for them to be On Leave at that time worried about finding another call when the time was right, or about adjusting to full-time ministry again in the future. *“I am having a difficult time getting back in,”* one explained. Another wrote, *“I have no desire to return. I cannot live with the ELCA position on homosexuality.”*

Poignantly, one woman said, *“The demands of parish ministry are easily left untouched once they are put down for a while. I am not anxious to take them up again.”* And another had concluded, *“I feel God called me into the ordained ministry and I feel God has now called me out of the ordained ministry.”*

When we asked these women *why they thought more women than men were On Leave*, most expected it would be family responsibilities, especially care of children. Most (88%) associate pastors said they expected staff conflict to have been a factor for other associates who were On Leave, as it had been for them.

These responses, interviews with clergy women and clergy men, synodical bishops and staff, seminary faculty and staff, and other leaders in the church point us in the direction of several general observations and some recommendations.

## Concerns of Pastors On Leave

Many pastors in the On Leave survey wrote with disappointment, surprise, and bitterness of being forgotten and ignored while On Leave From Call. Those who made an effort to continue in colleague and clergy groups often felt like *“they really didn’t know why I was here because I wasn’t, in their eyes, a real pastor anymore.”* Many were taken off mailing lists for conference meetings. All expressed dismay at their being unable to participate fully in synodical assemblies, except as visitors. They discovered the logical consequence of being unable to attend clergy gatherings during the day if they had other inflexible employment or were required to be at home with family members. They found that opportunities to serve on synodical committees dried up over time, the nominating committees assuming they weren’t interested because they were On Leave From Call. Regardless of their reasons for being On Leave, most felt like curiosities to their colleagues, and very few said they found any active support there.

These pastors’ strongest expressions of disappointment and anger were reserved for the synodical offices and bishops whom, some pastors felt, were entirely unsupportive of their situations. *“They said they would call, but they never called. They said they would put my name*

*in but I never heard about it. They said they would recommend me for interims but they never did.”*

Whether true or not, many pastors On Leave had the sense that their bishops hoped they would simply go away. And, most disturbing, some reported receiving only a terse form letter near the end of their third year On Leave, notifying them that their roster status would soon be withdrawn. They receive no invitation to call for conversation, no inquiry about their plans or their well-being, no affirmation of their ministry, no communication at all except this brief notice.

To be sure, some pastors On Leave seemed to have the idea that it was the church’s responsibility to take care of them, to guarantee employment, or financial aid between calls, and to provide for their well-being. Where this notion came from, we can’t be entirely sure, but the church has had a history of seeking to care for its own. It is also possible that some of these pastors have brought their own dependency needs with them into ministry and will learn along the way that the church cannot “take care of them,” even though it can and should *care for them*.

Many pastors wrote comments that betrayed deep bitterness, disillusionment, and mistrust. Some of these comments also reflect unrealistic expectations to begin with, and some of them show real insight, such as this woman who observed, *“If you have trouble setting boundaries in order to have time and space to take care of yourself, no one will do it for you.”*

## **Concluding Observations**

Pastors go On Leave From Call for a complex variety of reasons. Some of the pastors who go On Leave are strong, capable, and effective pastors. Some are not. Pastors who go On Leave From Call view this experience in both positive and negative terms, and many express ambivalence about it.

## **On Leave as a positive experience**

Some of the clergywomen in our survey saw their time On Leave as a welcome sabbatical from the intensity of parish life. Some chose to exercise this option freely and viewed it as an honorable way to maintain their vocational status and identity while taking time out to do, usually, one of the following: develop specialized ministry skills or strengthen skills for parish ministry (e.g., preaching, organization, counseling); care for family responsibilities; or rest and pursue interests related to ministry and, perhaps, serve in limited, flexible settings. Some women did all of the above.

Most of these women (who viewed the experience overall as positive) maintained a strong sense of vocational identity and a high commitment to ordained ministry, even while they were not exercising public (and paid) ministry on a regular basis. They continued to serve the church actively as synodical committee members, interim pastors, consultants, or contract staff to congregations or other church-related ministries, and as local congregational members. Some had high profile responsibilities in the wider church while On Leave. Many were active in community, ecumenical, and parachurch activities. They provided the backbone of many synods’ lists of supply pastors.

Some of these women had young children and especially valued the opportunity to take time for full-time parenting for at least a period of years. They viewed this as an important part of their vocation as parent and felt that this role, at times, appropriately took priority over public ministry and paid work. Some made the decision to go On Leave easily and with relatively less financial consequence. Others accepted substantial risks. Some had great ambivalence about this decision but felt compelled to choose to emphasize their family vocation. Some were nudged in this direction because of a spouse’s job change and family relocation, illness, or a change in the ministry setting.

Many of these women – often seen as excellent pastors, strong leaders, and deeply

committed to the church – believed they were making significant sacrifices in terms of “career development” in order to fulfill family responsibilities but did so nevertheless. Many of them were concerned about the impact of their leaving on the congregations they left. Many worried that they themselves would be viewed as less serious about ministry. Many women who chose to stay home with children worried about the impact of their choice on the church’s overall impression of women pastors. Some of these women internalized the perceptions they worried about and questioned their own sense of call or the depth of their commitment to ministry. Many of these women adopted a rather furtive attitude about their reason for being On Leave and, instead, gave other reasons when queried by colleagues and church officials. They were as likely to say they were “doing more study” or “back in school” as “taking care of the kids.”

These women seek respect and consideration for their decision to stay home to care for children. They believe it is unfair and churlish for church leaders and colleagues to regard them as “unprofessional” or “uncommitted” for choosing to emphasize their family vocation for a period of time. They want to be included as colleagues at synodical assemblies and other professional gatherings, to receive correspondence and notification of important events in the synod’s life, and to be taken seriously as candidates at such time as they seek to re-enter active and regular, public ordained ministry.

Some of these women used their time On Leave to consider specialized training for calls to non-parish ministries, where they expected they might find more flexibility and less intensity than in the parish, when they did return to active service. Some of the women who went On Leave expecting to stay out of the work force for just a short time found, instead, that they wanted to continue to be On Leave beyond their initial projections (and, often, the traditional three-year period).

These women were eager to find part-time and flexible ministry settings but felt unwilling to commit to the 60 hour weeks, evening meetings, and overall intensity of full-time parish ministry

that can be so disruptive of family life. Time and again, women On Leave told us they would gladly serve, and some would even move to, a part-time call but none were available, or the bishop had a strong bias against matching such pastors with part-time ministries. Some women On Leave expressed interest in non-stipendiary calls – where they would be accountable to the church to provide ministry but not need to receive monetary compensation. A number of these women had creative and important ideas about how to extend the ministry of the church in new ways, with accountability and shared planning, that served a vital need in their community and respected their own needs for flexible or part-time work. Few of them felt their ideas were welcome.

Many of the women On Leave said that they experienced bias because of their desire to work less than full-time. They heard repeatedly about the [good old] “days when pastors went wherever they were sent and did not inject their own selfish interests into the matter.” Rather than feeling selfish, many of the women On Leave for family reasons, especially, felt it was quite unselfish of them to take time out of their public ministry (and career development) to care for family needs. They were puzzled by the dissonance they experienced in hearing the double-message: “Family first! The church is a place that values family and affirms its priority claim.” V.s.: “Nothing less than an all-out commitment to [ordained] ministry is acceptable and respectable.” Some clergy women internalize these mixed messages and become anxious, confused, conflicted, and depressed as they seek to keep faith with important family commitments at the same time as seeking to keep faith with ordination vows.

Some of these women – again, many of them highly regarded, strong and effective pastors – went off the roster for a period of time and were reinstated when they were ready to accept calls to full-time ministry. During the period they were off the roster, their synods were not able to utilize their gifts for sacramental, interim, and supply ministries that only the ordained can provide. Some experienced great difficulties with insurance matters and many became frustrated upon learning about how irregularly the protocols

for On Leave status (and the extension of calls to interim ministry, for example) are applied in this church.

Not all pastors who had a positive experience On Leave were parents caring for children! Many such pastors were engaged in graduate studies full-time, perhaps preparing to teach in theological faculties or to supervise Clinical Pastoral Education. They went On Leave From Call for Graduate Study very intentionally, for the express purpose of preparing for this specialization of their ministry. They, too, maintained a strong commitment to ministry and sought an active connection to the life of the church, at the synodical and churchwide as well as congregational expressions. One reason they viewed their experience positively was that the church, overall, had a positive orientation toward their purpose for being On Leave and was less forgetful about including them in its work.

Other pastors who had a generally positive experience, who did not use the time to care for children, may have taken the time On Leave to tend to other personal needs or interests. [A very few took time out to care for elderly parents, a spouse or sibling, and they were not as likely as those who cared for children to view it in such a positive light.] And some pastors began their time On Leave against their will, so to speak, but found, nevertheless, that it proved a rich and fruitful time. They shared the same feelings of commitment to the church, eagerness to participate, and willingness to do interim, contract, and consulting, non-stipended, supply, and other non-typical ministries. They may have been engaged in various continuing education but did not pursue an advanced degree. Some took time to develop other talents (e.g., music, art, writing) that could enrich their ordained ministry in the future. Some of them also found they wanted, at the end, to find more flexible calls that would still leave time and energy for these other commitments. And some of them sought calls that would allow for “tent-making” (or bi-vocational) ministry.

## Ambivalence about being On Leave

Pastors who felt ambivalent about their experience On Leave generally affirmed the value of taking time out, perhaps because of burn-out or other forms of stress, needing to leave conflicted or intransigent, stuck ministry settings, having time to focus on family responsibilities, or care for health issues. At the same time, many of them wished it were not so, that they didn’t find it necessary to be On Leave. Some were asked to resign by a new senior pastor and, while in agreement that it was time to leave, and glad of some time for assessment and reflection, they wished to have had things go on as before. Some were unsure of their next vocational steps, including their “fitness” for ordained ministry (or, rather, whether it was right for them) and took time to look carefully at other options. Some engaged in study to prepare for specialized ministries out of fear of never finding another parish call again, while others sought additional professional training to make themselves more attractive as candidates in the future. And some were glad of the time out but worried about the consequences of it on finances, reputation or future consideration by call committees.

Among women who expressed mostly positive or ambivalent perspectives about being On Leave, of those who indicated that study was their reason for being On Leave, most also cited other factors as contributing to their decision to go On Leave From Call. It is doubtful that all of the women (and men) who said “study” was the reason of their Leave were, in fact, On Leave for the *primary purpose* of pursuing further academic study or specialized training. Based on our research, we believe that many of these pastors chose to study after going On Leave for other reasons. Many of them were not in full-time programs of any kind, but rather involved in occasional, limited courses of study, earning CEU’s rather than degrees. This, too, is an important, valuable means of developing new skills and nurturing one’s gifts (and we mean no disparagement). Advanced degrees are expensive and most pastors On Leave had little access to continuing education grants, although some who were On Leave From Call for Graduate Study received significant scholarship assistance. Few women said their synods reimbursed their tuition

for Interim Ministry Network training, for example. Some did extended units of Clinical Pastoral Care and received modest stipends.

Some pastors may use the On Leave From Call option as an easy way out of difficult challenges. Some pastors may go On Leave From Call simply because they *can*. However, some pastors find this a reasonable way of responding to ministry situations that were impossible to bear any longer, or to personal needs requiring urgent attention, or to their desire to focus on other priorities for a period of time. It is indeed likely that men and women use the “cover” of study leave as a way to ratchet down the busy and stressful life of parish ministry and put a respectable face on their decision to leave.

It goes without saying that, if only 32.6% of clergywomen report having ever been On Leave From Call, a good number of women who might have reason to go On Leave to care for family, or to leave a conflicted situation, or to care for personal needs, or to study, never do. Clergy women make different choices in response to the circumstances and contingencies of their lives. Some clergywomen with children work full-time throughout the course of the career and find their own ways to balance these different commitments. Some women seek to leave a difficult situation and find a new call relatively quickly, or stay on until they do, no matter how long it takes. Some do so because they have to, financially, and some just do. Some clergywomen never experience burn-out, conflict, family crisis, and some continue in their calls nevertheless. Some are able to find part-time and other flexible or specialized calls without having to take time out On Leave From Call.

It is our sense that no one way will work for all clergywomen and no one way (taking time out/not taking time out On Leave) is necessarily better than another. Women clergy in this church value the options they have, the freedom of choice in our system, and seek, more than anything, respect for the choice each pastor makes in response to her circumstances.

## **On Leave as an unwelcome interruption**

Other clergywomen in our survey viewed this period of time On Leave From Call as an unwelcome interruption in their service to the church, a negative experience. They preferred to *not* be On Leave, did not choose it freely, and were eager to get back to “normal,” full-time ministry. Many of these women maintained a strong sense of vocational identity and commitment throughout this period while others were thrown into a whirl of self-doubt and cynicism about the church.

Some of the pastors who were On Leave, and wished they were not, eventually came to find meaningful opportunities for growth and creative options for professional development. Some of these women used their time On Leave to train for specialized ministry, expecting to have great trouble finding another parish call, even though they would have preferred continuing in parish ministry. Some engaged in additional education and training for new kinds of ministry and were surprised by their changing attitude (toward the positive) about being On Leave. Some took reluctant steps toward specialized training yet maintained a fierce commitment to the parish, and did not make themselves available to interview for calls in non-congregational settings.

Some of the women who did not want to be On Leave had had trouble finding a new call despite being viewed as strong, competent, and even experienced pastors. They encountered bias from call committees or other church leaders and felt they were not considered seriously because of their gender. Often, these perceptions were corroborated by synodical staff and other observers. In some cases, the calls they sought were to larger congregations, with increased responsibilities and in other cases, they had difficulty making what one might consider even a lateral move. Some are surprised that, after 25 years of ordaining women in this church, gender bias is still operative in some places. They ask for educational and other resources to help local call committees prepare to receive the ministry of ordained women.

Some of the women who had trouble finding a new call do not interview well, even though they are fine pastors. A number of women suggested that training and preparation for call committee interviews might be helpful.

Some of the women who were unhappy being On Leave were, quite frankly, not the most effective pastors. Some had gifts more suited for other kinds of service, some had serious personal concerns or characteristics that prevented them from functioning in healthy ways as leaders, some lacked the skills needed by congregations in their synods. Some of these women would go on to find avenues of appropriate, fruitful service in specialized ministries, some would languish for years On Leave, and some would cycle off the roster.

A small but noteworthy number of women On Leave were lesbians who either chose to be On Leave because of the dissonance they experienced in a closeted life or because they were “outed” and asked to resign their calls. Other lesbian women were not available to complete the survey because they are off the roster. Many of these women have had strong, effective ministries and would like very much to return to active service but will not given the current expectations that they refrain from participation in an intimate relationship with a partner. Some planned to go off the roster at the end of three years and others expected to resign sooner in order to take up new ministries in different institutional contexts. They expressed feelings of deep sadness, anger, and regret at the loss of connection to a church they loved and sought to serve faithfully. Most of them would gladly return to full-time parish ministry tomorrow if they were free to do so. Their former parishioners reported feeling deep regret about their leaving, very positive affirmation of their gifts and skills and commitment to ministry, and hopefulness they might be welcomed to serve again in the future.

A small number of clergywomen go On Leave From Call after experiencing sexual harassment or abuse in the ministry setting. In such cases, the offender is usually their superior or supervisor (a senior pastor, clinical supervisor, teacher, etc.). Depending upon whether the behavior was harassment or abuse,

the offender is likely to remain in the call; it is less likely that sexual harassment will be treated as an “actionable” offense that prompts a serious disciplinary response (e.g. filing of formal discipline charges, the bishop serving notice of intent to file charges, the pastor’s resignation). It is more common for such situations to be dismissed as a “terrible misunderstanding.” Few clergy women who reported experiencing harassment felt they had received a proper response. In many cases, the clergy woman who was harassed or abused was blamed for the behavior, or for misconstruing the situation. Depending on a variety of factors, including the support system this women had available, her emotional strength, and the stance of the synodical office, these clergy women could find new calls and return quickly to new ministries or they suffered and struggled for a long time. [We are not aware of any women in our survey who were On Leave because of being accused of sexual abuse and asked to resign a call.]

Clergy sexual abuse is a significant cause of congregational conflict and a congregation’s disaffection and lack of respect for subsequent pastors. When congregations do not have the opportunity to deal with their awareness (even when it is not out in the open but hidden) of a betrayal of pastoral authority and trust in healthy and constructive ways, future pastors are set up for a rocky ride. As we heard from clergywomen who left parishes because of conflict, many had stumbled unawares and unprepared into congregations deeply wounded by prior abuse. They ask to be told in advance about any history of abuse within the congregation and for resources to help the congregation address it intentionally, recover and move forward. They, personally, need support, training, and, at time, back-up, from synodical and other church leaders.

Some women On Leave placed serious restrictions on their availability for service and had difficulty getting another call. In some situations, the restrictions were so severe as to prevent them from serving in 98% of the calls in their synod. In other situations, their limitations were viewed with extreme disapproval by the synodical staff and few recommendations were made to call committees on their behalf. Women who found it necessary to place limitations on

their availability or mobility express a wish that the church would distinguish those gifted pastors who, while seeking to serve in ministry, also *must* accommodate family or other requirements, and be open to receiving such ministry as these pastors can provide.

Some pastors who had difficulty finding another call (because of restrictions or other reasons) had an attitude of expectation that the synod should *find* them a call and should *take care* of them. They must be distinguished from those pastors who, despite the constraints they need to place on their availability, are nevertheless eager to work *with* the synod in finding a good place to utilize their gifts and skills, and who do not have an attitude of entitlement or any sense of expectation that it is the church's fault they are not having an easy time finding a call within their parameters and should take care of them.

While it is frustrating for those who have responsibility for placing pastors in congregations to not be able to deploy leaders where they want them, it is likely that some gifted and effective pastors will continue to need to place limitations of various kinds on their availability for service. Studies in other professional fields, including other service professions (e.g., medicine, teaching) where high commitment, sacrifice, and altruism are traditional characteristics of leaders, suggest that even highly educated and deeply committed workers are more likely than ever before, and more and more likely all the time, to say “no” to jobs that take up all their time and energy, force their families to relocate, and impose rigid traditional job descriptions.

Even the most dedicated, and talented, workers [pastors] are imposing limits on their availability. This is heresy to those who came of age in another era. It is common to assume that only those who are not truly committed to the cause (of ministry) place limitations on their service. In fact, growing numbers of men and women have said they are reluctant to take positions that force family members to leave important work, education, or family behind, or to accept responsibilities that will tie up all of their time and energy.

Pastors are getting the message about health and wellness, and part of that message is setting appropriate limits. It is hard on bishops and other church leaders when the limits they set have consequences for their availability to serve anywhere and everywhere, anytime and all the time. However, despite the limits, they are still eager to serve somewhere, for a good part of the time. Can we adjust to these changing times?

Many of the pastors who are looking for new paradigms for ministry, e.g., tent-making, or bi-vocational options, part-time calls, non-stipendiary calls, interim calls, specialized calls, and so forth are, in fact, among the creative and visionary leaders this church will need most as it engages the challenges of the post-Christendom world. These pastors are talented, eager, flexible, improvisational, visionary (catching the big picture, the long view), and deeply committed to serving the Gospel. They have taken time to develop specialized skills, have had time to reflect on their work, have actively engaged the very communities we want to reach, in ways we hadn't thought of before, and are willing to take risks in order to carry out the mission. We may need them even more than they need us!

In fact, the highly skilled professionals of tomorrow will increasingly be able to set their own terms. In the case of the church, these pastors will find other ways to serve if we can not find ways to utilize their gifts. In this culture, and increasingly, we see an incredible, rich and diverse proliferation of flexible, improvised, contractual, consulting, and entrepreneurial services, including ministry. Our pastors who require greater flexibility will find opportunities to serve the Gospel outside the ordained ministry of the ELCA if they cannot find options within it. Increasingly, they will not feel any longer as if they must stay in order to be useful.

We are being challenged by the likelihood that the “leaders of tomorrow will be leaders on their own terms.” Some of these terms will be unreasonable and inappropriate for this church to embrace. But more of them than we might want to admit – yet – will be reasonable and, more than that, creative, dynamic, and *essential* for moving us to where we need to go.

Our research suggests that ELCA clergy have a deep commitment to serve the Gospel *at the same time* as, in some cases, they fulfill family and other personal responsibilities. They are not as interested in “sequencing” (the popular proposal of the 1980's) as in improvising, sharing, juggling. They are not less invested in doing public ministry, so much as they are equally and simultaneously invested in their vocation to family life and the stewardship of other resources. We can choose to accept their offers to provide ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament in this church, on some of their own terms, or not.

We invest not-inconsiderable resources in recruitment, candidacy, training, and education of our pastors. We have invested several thousands of dollars, in one way or another, in each pastor by the time that person is ordained. We can choose to find ways to “make good” on that investment ourselves, or give it up to the wider Christian community.

The ELCA has taken steps in recent years to increase the flexibility within our roster of ordained ministers: the possibility of extending the On Leave From Call period beyond three years, the development of calls to interim ministry, other synodical calls, non-stipendiary calls, more part-time calls, significant resources committed (through GEM) to continuing education, more careful attention to pastors On Leave (in some synods), creative planning for shared ministry in coalitions or larger parishes, Alternate Route (as a path to ordination), new respect for specialized ministries, and a willingness to consider other new options. It is likely that some of these steps will falter and some may lead us down a wrong path. But many will stir up even more opportunities for this church to be in ministry in the world in clever, compelling ways. One church leader recently mused that, “perhaps we need to working harder at finding ways to screen people in rather than screen people out.” He was not speaking about allowing for unhealthiness or incompetence or insincerity or about “lowering the bar” in any way in terms of our standards of excellence and expectations of commitment to serving the Gospel. He meant exactly this: welcoming and encouraging those who are going to do things a bit differently.

Some of our pastors On Leave From Call want nothing more than to get back into “normal” parish ministry where they will likely serve effectively, faithfully, and lovingly for years to come. Some of our pastors On Leave From Call do not want and will not accept part-time or other specialized, interim, untraditional calls to anything but full-time service. This is good! We need them! Some of our pastors On Leave From Call will have developed new knowledge, skills, and capacity as the result of their study leave. Some of our pastors On Leave From Call will reluctantly shift to a specialized ministry, and others will do so enthusiastically. And some of our pastors On Leave From Call need to go off the roster, find other ways to serve the Gospel, and will. All of this is also good! And some of our pastors On Leave From Call are ready to lead us into new forms of ministry! This, too, is a good thing.

## Recommendations

The Steering Committee for the ELCA Commission for Women received the findings of the On Leave From Call study at its Fall 1997 meeting, and, in accordance with its constitutional responsibilities, recommends the following:

That the ELCA affirm the gifts of women in ordained ministry, and:

- 1) provide education and encouragement for call committees who have the opportunity to consider women candidates for pastoral ministry;
- 2) provide continued assistance to pastors and congregations, and to staff ministry teams, for dealing with staff and parish conflict and parish transitions;
- 3) support the ministry of parish pastors through continuing education, including focus on the challenges and opportunities of male/female ministry teams, health and wellness, and boundaries;
- 4) advocate on behalf of pastors who serve in marginalized situations, and those with compensation below synod salary guidelines;

5) affirm new patterns of ministry, some of which more naturally reflect the career and life cycles of women:

6) view part-time calls, interim calls, and other flexible calls as positive alternatives that extend the church's range of options to provide ministry in settings where it is needed and, at the same time, give qualified pastors the possibility to fulfill family and other responsibilities;

7) affirm the development of specialized skills for non-parish ministry, including CPE supervision, seminary teaching and administration, pastoral counseling, social ministry, outreach, chaplaincy, institutional administration and leadership, and other specialized ministries; and lift up the value of these specialized ministries throughout the life of the church;

8) continue to study and use the options for non-stipendiary calls, short-term contract calls, calls to interim ministry, and calls that provide for 'tentmaking' or other secular employment while providing 'stated supply' and other kinds of ministry as alternatives that make it possible for qualified pastors to meet family or other commitments while providing important ministry; with status in the church that offers respect, full participation in synodical activities, and appropriate benefits;

9) encourage granting an extension of On Leave From Call status for those qualified pastors seeking to meet family or other responsibilities while showing evidence of ongoing commitment to ordained ministry (but not currently in called, contracted and paid positions);

10) examine the practices of the ELCA Board of Pensions with respect to pastors On Leave From Call, especially regarding pension contributions and related benefits.

11) encourage synodical bishops and staff to meet periodically with pastors On Leave From Call, and take steps to ensure that pastors On Leave are included on synodical mailing lists and invited to events scheduled on synodical territory, and perhaps designate a staff person to be a regular liaison to pastors On Leave;

12) provide regular opportunities for pastors On Leave who choose to, to meet with each other for information, support, learning, and prayer;

13) encourage pastors to make use of and seek out opportunities for spiritual direction, pastoral care, counseling (as appropriate), colleague groups, mentoring, supervision, and sabbaticals, in addition to continuing education for professional skill development;

14) refrain from stigmatizing those pastors who choose to take time off from full-time ministry to care for family and other commitments as therefore less serious about and committed to ministry; refrain from generalizing about all women on the basis of those who make choices to take time off from full-time ministry in order to care for family and other commitments;

15) utilize career assessment and other appropriate test instruments to identify persons who are not appropriate candidates for ordained ministry;

16) provide interpretation and assistance to pastors as they understand that the church will not *take care of them*, but can be a place of care for them;

17) continue to consider the possibilities available for ministry when lesbian women are freely and fully welcomed into the ordained ministry;

18) learn about, prepare for, and incorporate new possibilities and options for ministry that come with the opportunities, realities, and challenges of the new century and the increasingly marginal role of mainline churches in society, and the changes in cultural conditions that affect the church's members and rostered leaders.

***ELCA Commission for Women  
Fall, 1997***

## Appendix

**Table 1 Women On Leave After Their First Call Were. . .**

	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
No Answer	23.0%	28
Actively Seeking a Call	29.5%	36
Unsure of Next Vocational Steps	11.5%	14
Graduate Study	13.9%	17
Caring for Kids or Family	10.7%	13
Other	11.5%	14
Total	100%	122

**Table 2 Active Women and Men On Leave**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
1989	148	802	950
% of Active Clergy	12.6%	6.3%	6.9%
1997	234	549	783
% of Active Clergy	11.8%	5.2%	6.3%

**Table 3 What Follows First Call?**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Congregation Call	181 56.4%	45 71.4%	226 58.9%
Other Call	18 5.6%	1 1.6%	19 4.9%
On Leave From Call	122 38.0%	17 27.0%	139 36.2%
Total	321 100%	63 100%	384 100%

**Table 4 Average Length of Time On Leave For Women Ordained After 1/1/88 Who Went On Leave After First Call and Who Ended Their On Leave Time**

	<u>Length</u>	<u>Number</u>
No Answer	1.0 years	28
Actively Seeking a Call	1.5 years	69
Unsure of Next Vacation Steps	2.0 years	9
In Graduate Study	2.7 years	29
Caring for Kids or Family	2.5 years	29
Career Change Out of	1.3 years	2
Health/Medical Reasons	2.2 years	5
Other	1.8 years	23

**Table 5 What is Second Call If On Leave Follows First Call?**

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Congregation Call	177 70.2%	32 71.1%	209 70.4%
Other Call	63 25.0%	9 20.0%	72 24.2%
Another Leave	6 2.4%	4 8.9%	10 3.4%
Resigned*	2 2.4%	0 0.0%	2 0.7%
Total	252 100%	45 100%	297 100%

\*To be in this survey, these pastors resigned and were later reinstated.

**Table 6: What Were the Three Primary Reasons for Your Current On Leave Status?**

	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Conflict in Parish and/or Staff	30.9%	38
Further Study	29.3%	36
Care for Children or Parents	21.1%	26
Stress Related Problems	20.3%	25
Follow Spouse's Job	16.3%	20

**Table 7 How Long After Ordination Were You On Leave?**

	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Within One Year	5.7%	7
Within Three Years	25.2%	31
Within Four Years	41.5%	51