

Lutherans Say...4 Report

**CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL ISSUES AND
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA**

Office for Research, Planning and Evaluation

Kenneth W. Inskeep

December 1991

Lutherans Say...4 Report: Summary
CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL ISSUES AND
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Office for Research, Planning and Evaluation
Kenneth W. Inskeep

Controversial social issues are not frequently discussed by the laity or clergy in the ELCA. The issues that were most frequently discussed included economic matters like the recession and the federal budget deficit. Seventy-one percent of those between the ages of thirty and forty-five frequently discussed the problems of raising children.

Both a majority of laity and clergy support the use of the congregation as a setting for discussing controversial social issues in the light of religious faith. Strong support was given to the appropriateness of discussing issues like homelessness and raising children.

The majority of clergy respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* believed that the relations between White Americans and African, Hispanic and Native Americans were not good and they predicted that these strained relationships will either stay the same or worsen over the next five years. The laity were generally more positive. Still a majority felt the relationships between African Americans and Hispanics and White Americans were not very good. Fifty-one percent of the laity felt the relationships between Native Americans and White Americans were good and only 6 percent felt that it would get worse. Both a majority of laity and clergy felt that the relationships between Asian and White Americans were good.

The majority of clergy felt that differences in types of employment, levels of income and adequate housing between African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans and White Americans were due to acts of discrimination. A majority of the laity felt that discrimination was a factor only for African, Hispanic and Native Americans. Among the laity there was a substantial minority -- from 24 percent to 35 percent -- who felt that differences in income and housing between White Americans and African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans were not due to discrimination.

A majority of both the laity and clergy generally supported efforts on the part of religious and business groups to set up programs encouraging African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans to buy houses in predominantly white communities (Figure 9). At the same time, support among the laity was not as strong as among the clergy. The laity were much more likely to respond that they were "not sure" if they would support such programs. On the other hand, over 70 percent of the laity and 50 percent of the clergy indicated that the government should take no role on behalf of African, Asian, Hispanic or Native Americans in integrating housing.

The majority of both laity and clergy opposed legal abortions when the abortion was sought to avert the financial burden of having and/or supporting a child, to avoid being a single parent, to avoid further complicating an already poor relationship between the mother of the child and her partner, to avoid a negative impact on the future life opportunities of the mother, or simply when an abortion was sought for any reason. The majority of both lay and clergy supported the right to legal abortions if there were health problems threatening the life of the mother or the fetus or if the pregnancy was

the result of rape. Despite the opposition to abortion on demand, the vast majority of laity (64%) and clergy (75%) indicated that they generally oppose a constitutional amendment banning abortion.

The issue of the right to a legal abortion is also one of the few social issues on which the clergy are more conservative than the laity. Both the clergy and the laity agreed that a legal abortion should be a right in cases of rape or where the health of the mother or child is in danger, but the clergy were significantly more opposed to abortion in several specific cases. For example, the clergy were more likely to be opposed to abortion when the reasons for the abortion were not related to the health of the mother or when the health of the fetus was at stake.

Those lay members of the panel who believe that the Bible is without error were more likely to oppose abortions when the abortion was to avert the financial burden of having and/or supporting a child, to avoid being a single parent, to avoid further complicating an already poor relationship between the mother of the child and her partner, to avoid a negative impact on the future life opportunities of the mother, or simply when an abortion was sought for any reason. The biblical inerrantists, however, were not morally or ideologically opposed to abortion under all circumstances. Ninety-eight percent of the biblical inerrantists were in favor of granting a legal abortion when the pregnancy would endanger the woman's health. Eight-two percent were in favor of granting a legal abortion when there were problems affecting the health of the fetus and 93 percent were in favor of granting a legal abortion when the pregnancy was the result of rape.

Both the laity and clergy respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* generally felt that women were less likely than men to hold positions of power and influence in business corporations, the government or the church because they choose not to compete in these fields or because social traditions have imposed limits on the progress of women. Eighty-four percent of the laity and 82 percent of the clergy agreed that "many women freely choose to devote their energies primarily to being wives and mothers and they enjoy their role and often find great fulfillment." At the same time the majority of the laity and clergy agreed that traditionally women have not been afforded equal education and employment opportunities and that they have had to set aside their careers during child bearing years. Less than 43 percent of the laity and 25 percent of the clergy agreed that men and women were inherently different and fewer than 30 percent of the laity and 7 percent of the clergy felt that God created "men to lead and women to be men's helpers."

In general, the clergy shared or took more conservative views than the laity with regard to acceptable sexual behavior with the major exception of same sex sexual behavior. While there were no significant differences between clergy and laity opinions on sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner, or on an unmarried man and woman living together with a lifelong commitment to each other, or on an elderly man and woman living together without being married to reduce their taxes and increase their social security payments, the clergy were more conservative than the laity about the situations that occur most often -- a man and a woman living together without a lifelong commitment or a couple having sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months. On the other hand, it was the laity (65%)

who were more likely than the clergy (53%) to feel that two men or two women living together was always or almost always wrong.

The majority of clergy respondents supported government action guaranteeing the rights of women and homosexuals, special efforts among government agencies in hiring women, providing more public assistance for working, low income single mothers, and providing more public funds for child care programs. A majority of the clergy opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion and legislation prohibiting the provision of birth control information to men and women under eighteen, but they were not in favor of providing federal or state funds for abortions for low income women. The laity respondents essentially mirrored the clergy views on public policy issues with the significant exception of the 23 percent of laity who were "not sure" whether or not they favored or opposed legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals.

The members of the *Lutherans Say...4* panel were asked whether the church, in teaching about sexuality, should put the primary emphasis on the positive aspects of sexuality or on the possible harmful effects of certain sexual activities; the laity and clergy concurred that the church should teach about both. Sixty-three percent of the clergy felt that the church's teaching on sexuality should combine both the positive and negative aspects of sexuality. Forty-six percent of the laity agreed with another 25 percent feeling the emphasis should be on moral "God pleasing" sexual behavior. Almost none of the clergy and 11 percent of the laity believed that the church should have no role in teaching about sexuality. There were no significant differences in these views based on gender, age or worship attendance.

Sixty-one percent of the clergy compared to 36 percent of the laity indicated that they would feel at least somewhat comfortable in a "congregation that sometimes uses feminine language to refer to God." Thirty-three percent of the clergy and 40 percent of the laity said they would not be at all comfortable in such a congregation and 24 percent of the laity said they were unsure about how comfortable they would feel.

Almost all the clergy members of the panel of *Lutherans Say...4* had heard of synodical (97%) or churchwide (97%) activities of the ELCA in the last six months. The majority of lay members had heard of synod (52%) activities and slightly less (47%) had heard of churchwide activities. But, when asked about their impression of the churchwide and synod offices, 74 percent of the laity did not have an impression of the synod offices and 72 percent did not have an impression of the churchwide offices. Ten percent of the clergy had no impression of the churchwide offices.

Clergy perceptions of the churchwide offices reveal one significant pattern -- there is a strong relationship between whether or not the clergy respondents perceive the churchwide offices to be in touch with congregational needs and whether or not they perceive the churchwide offices to be faithful in ministry and mission, effective in ministry and mission or, finally, whether or not the clergy perceive the churchwide offices to be effectively administered. In other words, those clergy who perceive the church to be out of touch with congregational needs are also very likely to perceive the church as being ineffective and less faithful in ministry and mission and/or ineffectively administered.

Lutherans Say...4 Report
CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL ISSUES AND
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Office for Research, Planning and Evaluation
Kenneth W. Inskeep

INTRODUCTION

Lutherans Say...4 was developed to gather the opinions of the clergy and lay members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on many of the most controversial issues that confront American society. The members of the panel were asked how often they discussed social problems with their family, friends and coworkers and then about a host of specific issues from discrimination to abortion to standards of acceptable sexual behavior. Finally, the members of the panel were asked about their perceptions of the ELCA churchwide and synod offices.¹

SOCIAL ISSUES AS TOPICS OF INFORMAL DISCUSSION

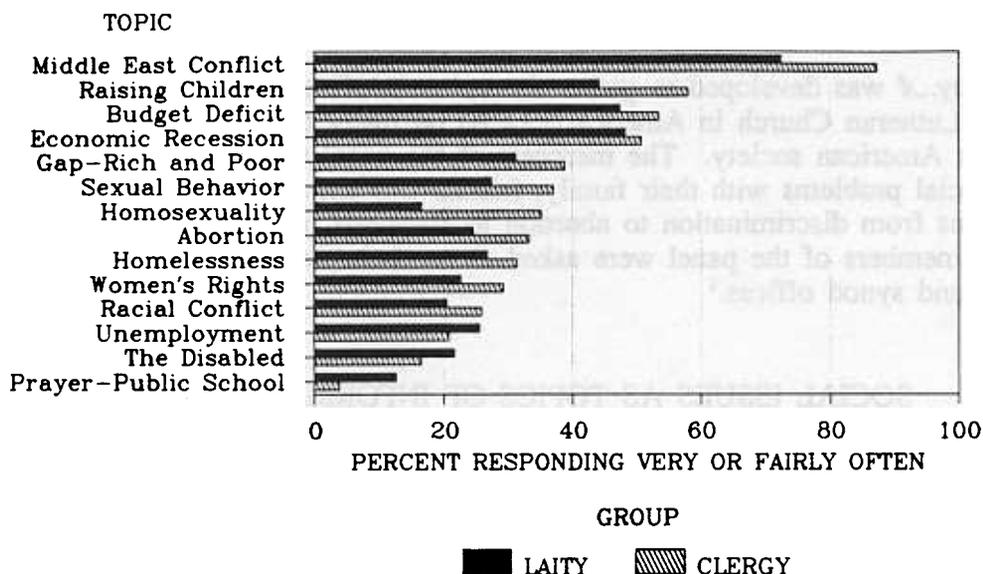
Fifty percent of the laity or fewer indicated that they had very often or fairly often taken part in a discussion (lasting five minutes or longer) of thirteen of the fourteen social issues asked about on *Lutherans Say...4* (Figure 1). Only conflict in the Middle East was a topic of frequent discussion. Forty percent or more of the laity had very often or fairly often discussed economic recession (48.3%), the federal budget deficit (47.5%) and problems in raising children (44.2%), but less than 20 percent had very often or fairly often discussed prayer in public schools or homosexuality.

Among the clergy, the level of informal discussion with family, friends and coworkers increased, but the topics discussed most often were essentially the same as those discussed most often by the laity (Figure 1). Eight-seven percent of the clergy said that they very often or fairly often discussed conflict in the Middle East; 58 percent, raising children; 54 percent, the federal budget deficit; and 51 percent, the economic recession. The issues that the clergy discussed least often were prayer in schools and problems of the disabled.

The level of informal discussion people carry on with their family, friends or coworkers may not be indicative of their concern about social issues in general or in particular. While people may be concerned about homosexuality or homelessness, they may not frequently discuss these issues as a normal part of daily life. The clergy are more likely to be involved in such discussions, but less than a majority were often involved in discussions of controversial issues like homosexuality, homelessness, women's rights and conflict between racial groups. Both the clergy and laity respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* were most likely to discuss economic issues like the recession and the federal budget deficit along with the problems of raising children.

¹ The response rate for the lay members of the *Lutherans Say...4* panel was 45 percent. The sample of 1,892 lay members was selected from the baptized members of ELCA congregations who are 13 years of age and older. The members of the panel were regularly encouraged to respond. The questionnaire was mailed in October of 1990 and followed by a reminder card and then a second full mailing. The clergy sample consisted of 924 clergy. Eight-three percent responded.

Figure 1
 FREQUENCY OF DISCUSSION WITH FAMILY,
 FRIENDS OR COWORKERS BY TOPIC BY GROUP



The panel members of *Lutherans Say...4* were also asked if they felt their local congregation should be a place where social issues were discussed in light of religious faith. Fifty-two percent of the laity agreed that the congregation should be such a place and 24 percent strongly agreed (Figure 2). Thirty percent of the clergy strongly agreed and 57 percent agreed. At the same time more clergy (13%) than laity (6%) felt strongly that the congregation should not be involved in sponsoring discussions of controversial social issues; this group of clergy and laity were not significantly different in age or income than those who felt otherwise.

Those who agreed or strongly agreed that the congregation should, in general, be a place to discuss difficult social issues, were asked which social issues they felt it was appropriate to discuss in their congregation. Over 80 percent of the clergy indicated that it was appropriate to discuss all fourteen issues (Figure 3). A majority of the laity felt that it was appropriate to discuss all the issues except the federal budget deficit, but only on the issue of raising children was there both a significant frequency of discussion and agreement between the clergy and laity on its appropriateness as an issue of discussion in a congregational setting. Seventy-one percent of those between the ages of thirty and forty-four discussed the problems of raising children very often or fairly often. Even though the percentage drops to 30 percent for those who are younger than thirty or older than forty-five, a congregational emphasis on the problems of raising children may well attract more people in the thirty-four to forty-four age group to church.

Figure 2
VIEWS OF THE CONGREGATION AS A PLACE TO DISCUSS DIFFICULT SOCIAL ISSUES

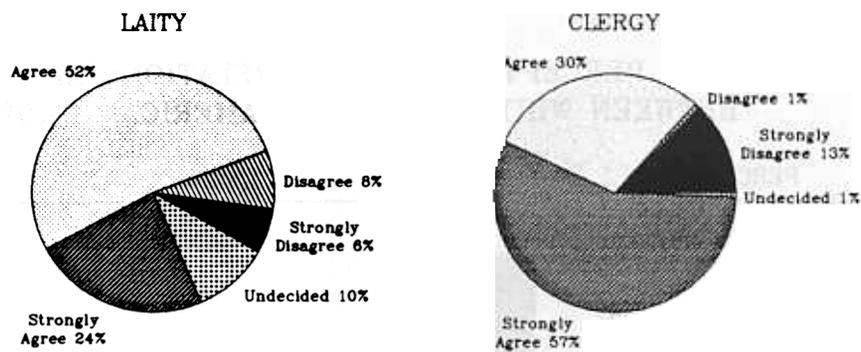
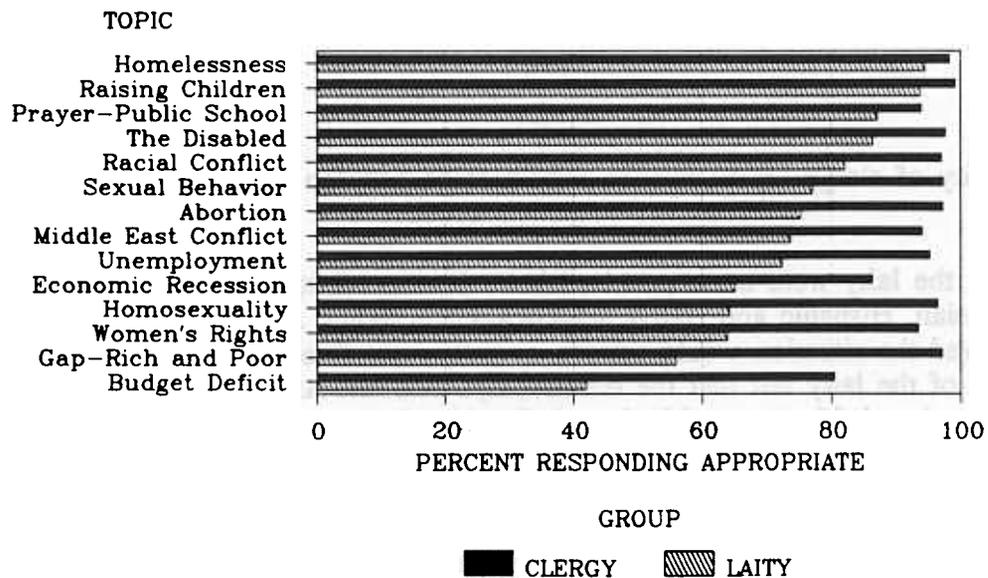


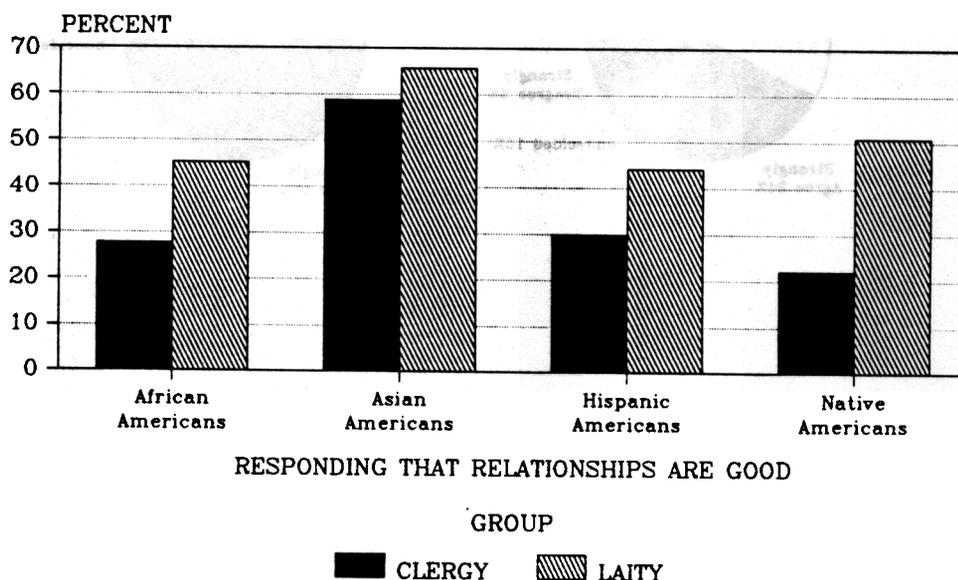
Figure 3
SOCIAL ISSUES FOR CONGREGATIONAL DISCUSSION



RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WHITE, AFRICAN, ASIAN, HISPANIC AND NATIVE AMERICANS

The majority of clergy respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* believed that the relations between White Americans and African, Hispanic and Native Americans were not good and they predicted that these strained relationships will either stay the same or worsen over the next five years (Figures 4 and 5). The largest number of clergy (78%) felt that the relationships between Native and White Americans were not very good and the least likely to improve.

Figure 4
PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN WHITE AND OTHER AMERICAN GROUPS



The majority of clergy (58%) felt the relationships between Asian and White Americans were good.

In general, the laity were more positive about the current state of relationships between African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans and White Americans and significantly fewer laity believed the situation would worsen over the next five years (Figures 4 and 6). Still, 55 percent of the laity felt that the relationships between African and White Americans were not very good and 56 percent felt the relationships between Hispanics and White Americans were poor. The laity, however, felt much differently about the relationship between Native and White Americans than did the clergy. Fifty-one percent of the laity felt that the relationships between Native Americans and Whites were good and only 6 percent felt that they would get worse. The majority of laity (66%) also felt that the relationships between Asian and White Americans were good.

Figure 5
CLERGY PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN GROUPS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

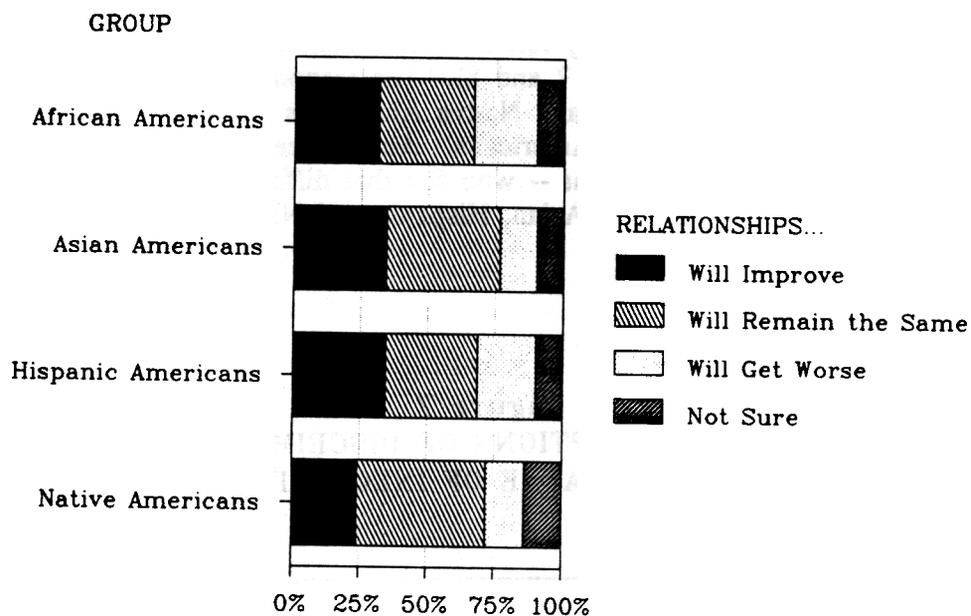
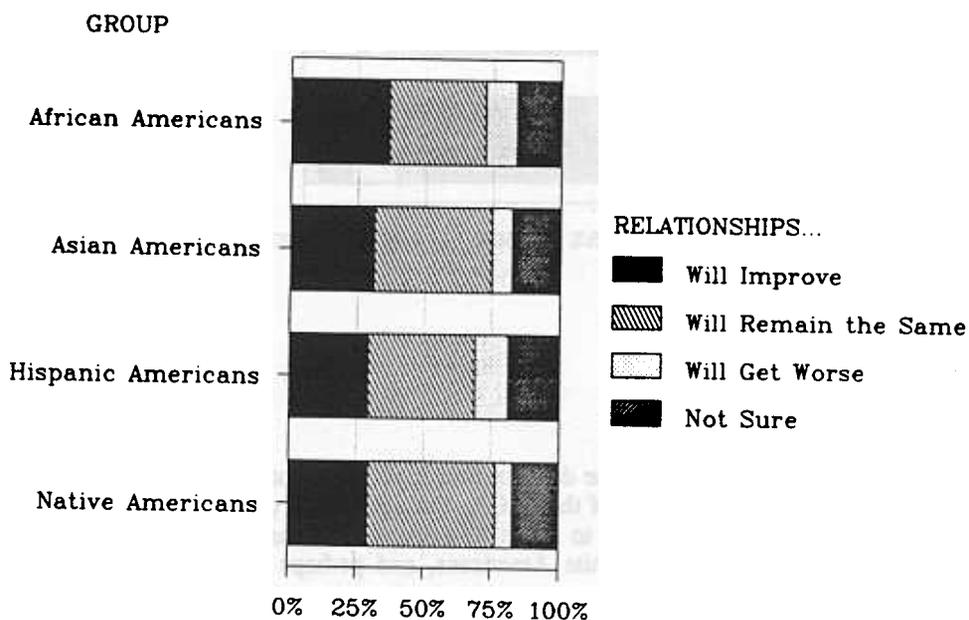


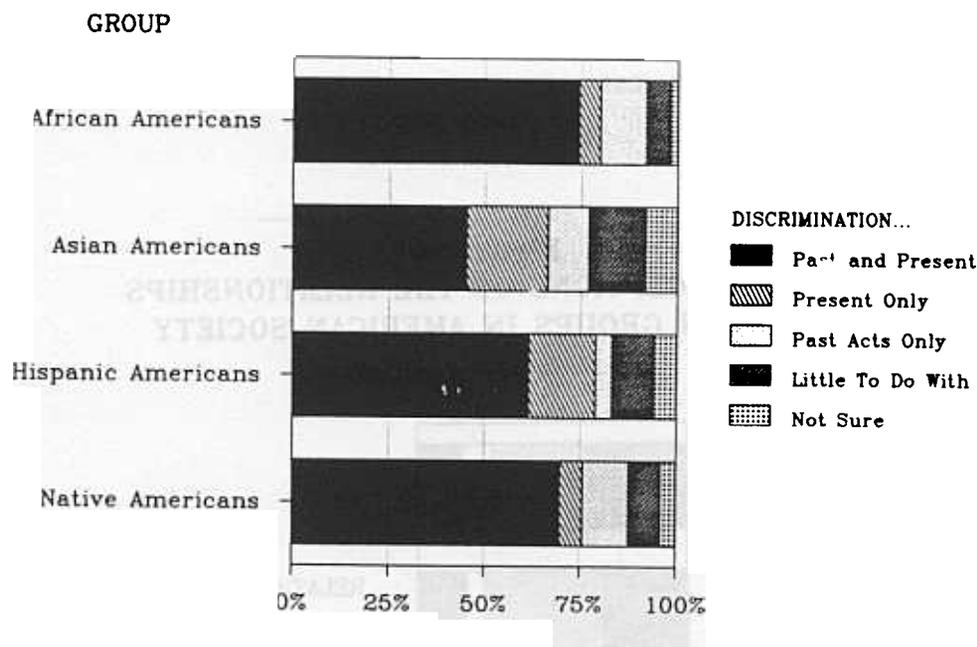
Figure 6
LAITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN GROUPS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY



DISCRIMINATION

The members of the *Lutherans Say...4* panel were asked whether or not they believed that African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans had poorer jobs, lower incomes and less adequate housing than White Americans because of acts of discrimination. The majority of clergy felt that differences in employment, income and housing were due to discrimination for all four groups but a majority of laity felt discrimination was a factor only for African, Hispanic and Native Americans (Figures 7 and 8). The respondents were most convinced that discrimination had affected African and Native Americans and were least convinced about its effect on Asian and Hispanic Americans. Among the laity there was a substantial minority -- from 24 percent to 35 percent -- who felt that differences in income and housing between White Americans and African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans were not due to discrimination.²

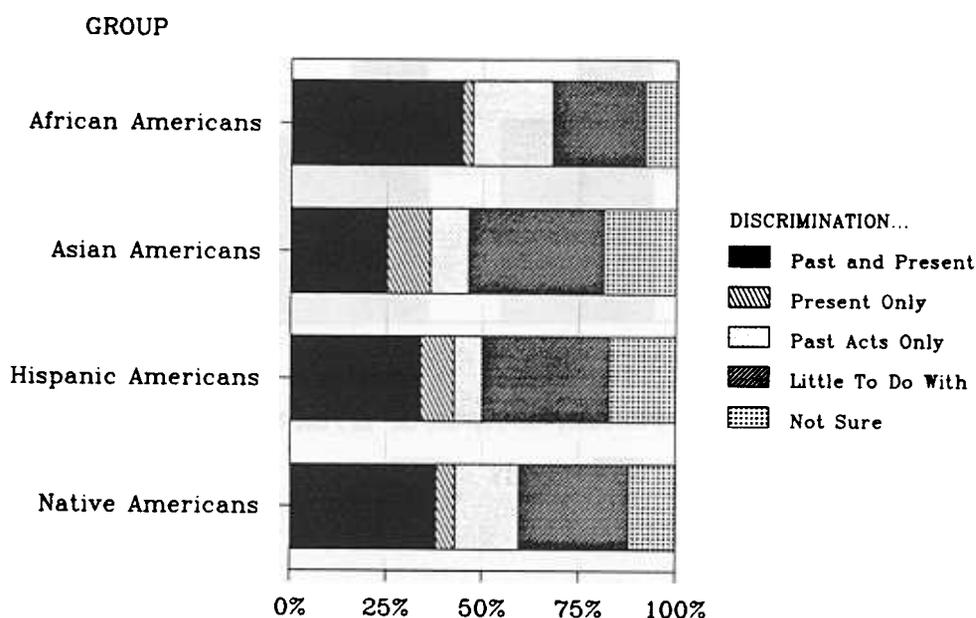
Figure 7
CLERGY PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION
AS THE CAUSE OF INEQUALITY



² When the questionnaire was constructed the decision was made to include all four of the groups recognized by the Commission for Multicultural Ministries of the ELCA. As a result the question about employment, income and housing is somewhat misleading with regard to Asian Americans. The majority of Asians do not have lower incomes and more inadequate housing than White Americans, and perhaps this inaccuracy in the question is reflected in the responses of the laity.

In general the clergy were more likely to hold that differences in employment, housing and income between African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans and White Americans were due to discrimination. None of these differences in opinion regarding the affects of discrimination could be traced to differences in gender, frequency of church attendance, income or age among either the laity or clergy.

Figure 8
LAITY PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION
AS THE CAUSE OF INEQUALITY



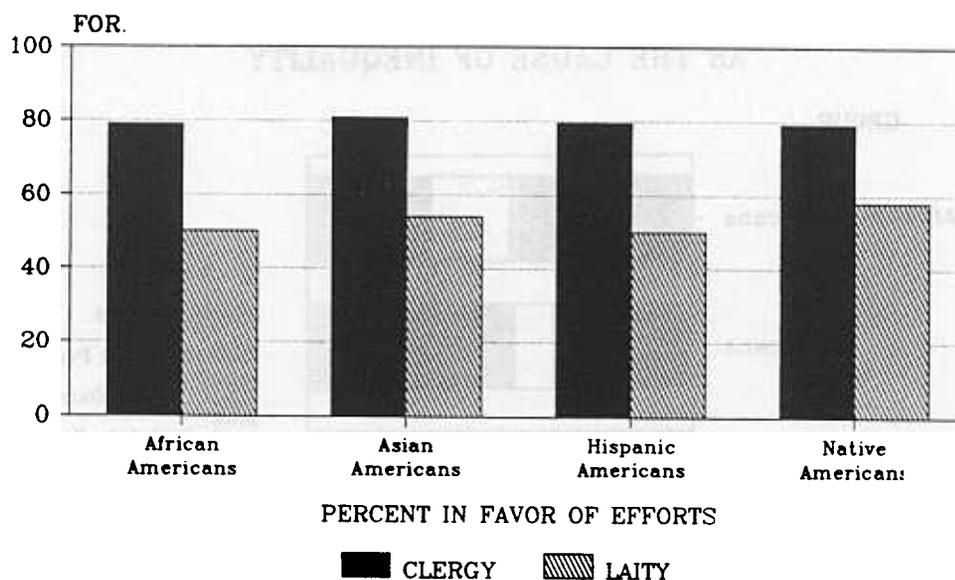
HOUSING

A majority of both the laity and clergy generally supported efforts on the part of religious and business groups to set up programs encouraging African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans to buy houses in predominantly white communities (Figure 9). At the same time, support among the laity was not as strong as among the clergy. The laity were much more likely to respond that they were "not sure" if they would support such programs.

Despite the fact that the laity were less sure than the clergy about their support of housing integration programs led by religious and business groups, the ELCA laity were more likely to be supportive, at least with regard to African Americans, than members of the U.S. population at large. The General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago asked a representative national sample of Americans if they favored or opposed religious and business groups setting up "programs

to encourage Black people to buy houses in white suburbs."³ Thirty-eight percent of Americans favored such programs compared to 50 percent of the laity responding to *Lutherans Say...4*.

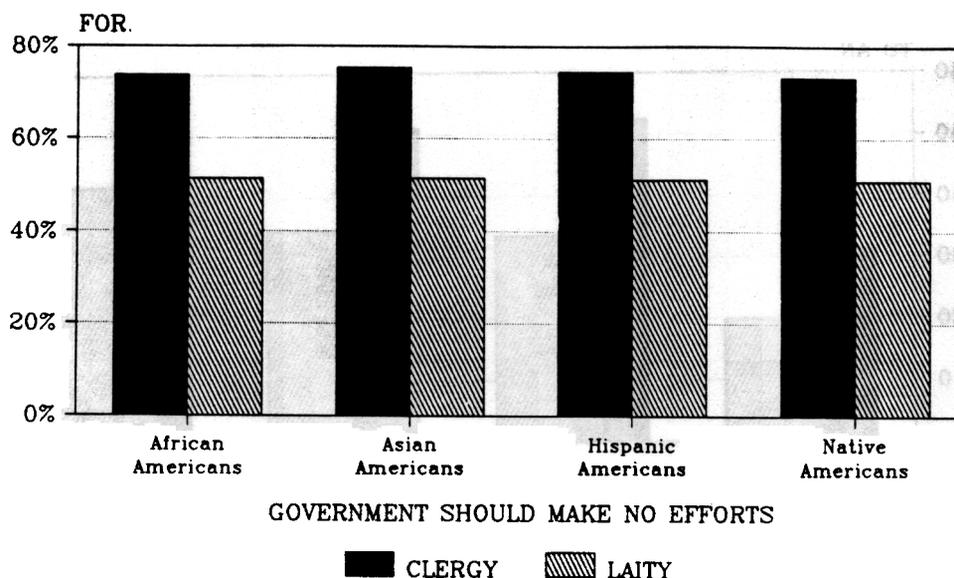
Figure 9
SUPPORT OF EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE
HOUSING BY RELIGIOUS AND BUSINESS GROUPS



As has been quite evident from *Lutherans Say...2* and *Lutherans Say...3*, members of the ELCA do not favor government intervention in promoting social change. The *Lutherans Say...4* panel was asked whether or not they favored government programs to encourage African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans to buy homes in predominantly white areas and, consistent with the previous surveys, a majority of both the laity and clergy were opposed. Over 70 percent of the laity and 50 percent of the clergy indicated that the government should take no role on behalf of African, Asian, Hispanic or Native Americans in integrating housing (Figure 10).

³ The question was asked as part of the 1982 GSS, so that almost 10 years have passed making current comparison somewhat suspect. At the same time, the nation has gone through the Reagan years and certainly has not become more "liberal" with regard to these issues.

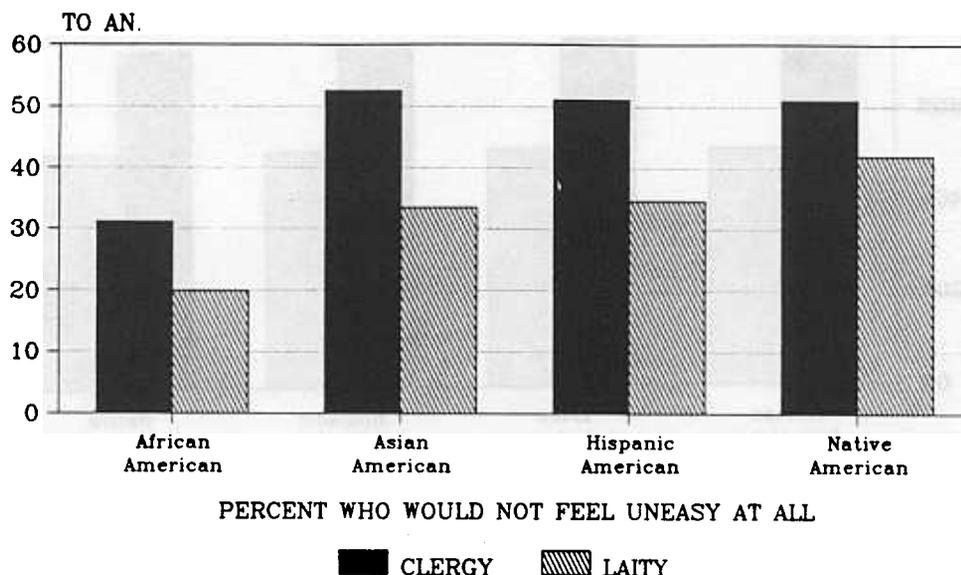
Figure 10
VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO
INTEGRATE HOUSING BY GROUP



Finally, the members of the *Lutherans Say...4* panel were asked whether or not they would feel uneasy if a close relative were planning to marry an African, Asian, Hispanic or Native American person. A majority of the clergy said they would not be uneasy except in the case of African Americans (Figure 11). Fourteen percent of the clergy indicated that they would be very uneasy if a close relative was planning to marry an African American and 48 percent said they would be somewhat uneasy. Thirty-four percent of the laity indicated that they would be very uneasy if a close relative planned to marry an African American, but only 17 percent would be uneasy about a close relative marrying an Asian, Hispanic or Native American. The laity expressed approximately the same level of uneasiness about a close relative's plans to marry an African American as did the respondents to the GSS.⁴

⁴ The question on *Lutherans Say...4* was worded exactly like the GSS question. The question was asked on the GSS in 1982 with 42 percent responding very uneasy, 32 percent somewhat uneasy, 24 percent not uneasy at all and 2 percent with no opinion.

Figure 11
FEELINGS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE OF A CLOSE
RELATIVE TO MEMBER OF ANOTHER GROUP



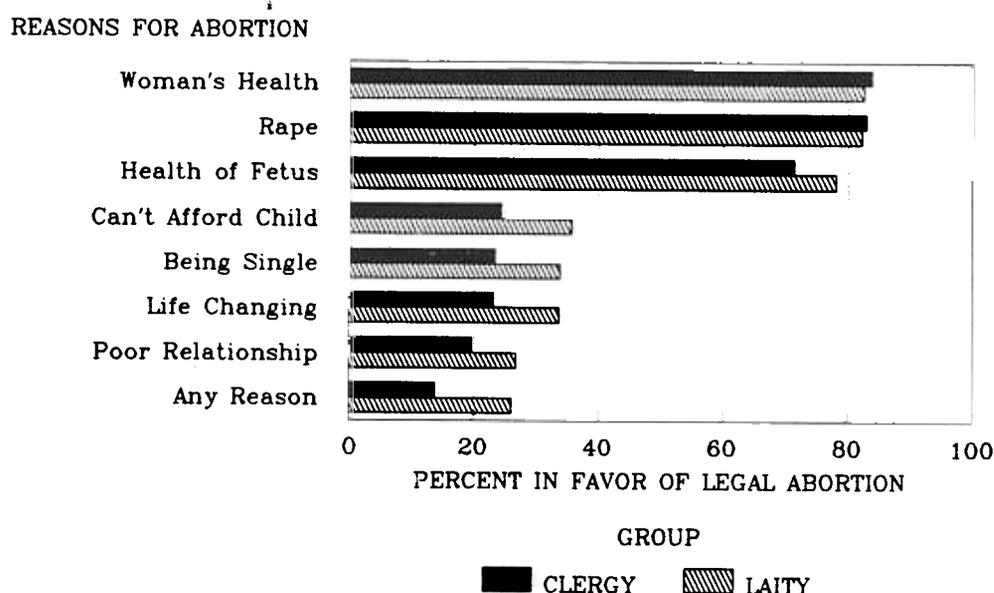
ABORTION

The question of abortion continues to be one of the most divisive social issues in American society. In general the members of the ELCA are slightly more conservative in their views on legal abortion than the majority of other Americans. In 1989, the GSS asked several questions on abortion. Eighty-eight percent of Americans compared to 83 percent of the members of the ELCA felt that a woman whose health was seriously endangered by a pregnancy should have the right to a legal abortion.⁵ Eighty percent of Americans felt that it should be possible for a woman to obtain a legal abortion if "she became pregnant as a result of rape," compared to 82 percent of the members of the *Lutherans Say...* panel. Thirty-nine percent of Americans felt that it should be possible for a woman to obtain a legal abortion if "she wanted it for any reason," compared to 26 percent of the ELCA laity and 14 percent of the ELCA clergy.

⁵ A Lutheran Listening Post survey of members of the Lutheran Church in America found that 88 percent of the laity and 91 percent of the clergy believed that abortion was "ethically" acceptable when a woman had a health condition which made it dangerous for her to bear a child. Eighty-six percent of the laity and 85 percent of the clergy felt that abortion was ethically acceptable when a woman had become pregnant as a result of rape. Twenty-two percent of the laity and 21 percent of the clergy indicated that abortion was ethically acceptable when the married couple felt that it could not adequately support any more children.

Support for legal abortions by the members of the panel was heavily dependent upon the conditions under which abortions were sought (Figure 12).⁶ Neither the clergy nor the laity favored a ban on all abortions nor do they support abortion on demand. The majority of both laity and clergy opposed legal abortions when the abortion was sought to avert the financial burden of having and/or supporting a child, to avoid being a single parent, to avoid further complicating an already poor relationship between the mother of the child and her partner, to avoid a negative impact on the future life opportunities of the mother, or simply when an abortion was sought for any reason. The majority of both lay and clergy supported the right to legal abortions if there were health problems threatening the life of the mother or the fetus or if the pregnancy was the result of rape.

Figure 12
CLERGY AND LAITY VIEWS OF LEGAL
ABORTION BY REASON



Despite the opposition to abortion on demand, the vast majority of laity (64%) and clergy (75%) indicated that they generally oppose a constitutional amendment banning abortions.

⁶ The conditions respondents were asked to take into account were based on the most important reasons women give for obtaining an abortion (*Family Planning Perspective*, Vol. 20, July/August, 1988).

The issue of the right to a legal abortion is also one of the few social issues on which the clergy are more conservative than the laity. Both the clergy and the laity agreed that a legal abortion should be a right in cases of rape or where the health of the mother or child is in danger, but the clergy were significantly more opposed to abortion in several specific cases. For example, the clergy were more likely to be opposed to abortion when the reasons for the abortion were not related to the health of the mother or when the health of the fetus was at stake.⁷

ABORTION AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND ACTIVITIES

A substantial number of laity and clergy, though a **minority**, were unsure how they felt about the relationship of abortion to God's will, but the majority of laity (59%) and clergy (71%) who had an opinion about the issue did not hold that it was always against God's will for a person to have an abortion.⁸ At the same time, 62 percent of the laity who attended worship services once a month or more believed that it should not be possible for a woman to obtain a legal abortion because she cannot afford the baby, while 60 percent of those who attended less than once a month did (Figure 13). Seventy-three percent of those who attended worship services once a month or more thought it should not be possible for a woman to obtain a legal abortion for any reason, compared to 50 percent of those who attended worship services less than once a month. These differences between members of the panel who attended worship services more or less often were not affected by differences in gender, income or whether or not they had close personal friends or relatives who had had an abortion. Those who attend worship services on a frequent basis hold more restrictive views about abortion than those who do not attend frequently.

Two other variables were also important in understanding the views of the respondents about abortion. Those lay members of the panel who believe that the Bible is without error were more likely to oppose abortions when the abortion was to avert the financial burden of having and/or supporting a child, to avoid being a single parent, to avoid further complicating an already poor relationship between the mother of the child and her partner, to avoid a negative impact on the future life opportunities of the mother, or simply when an abortion was sought for any reason (Figure 14).⁹ The biblical inerrantists, however, were not morally or ideologically opposed to abortion under all circumstances. Ninety-eight percent of the biblical inerrantists were in favor of granting a legal abortion when the pregnancy would endanger the woman's health. Eight-two percent were in favor of granting a legal abortion when there were problems affecting the health of the fetus and 93 percent were in favor of granting a legal abortion when the pregnancy was the result of rape.

⁷ Differences are significant at the .05 level.

⁸ Ten to 17 percent of respondents were not sure how they felt about abortion. The responses of these individuals were excluded from the analysis for the purposes of clarity and as a result the responses of those who did have opinions are slightly over-represented.

⁹ The biblical literalism question was asked on *Lutherans Say...3* and includes only those respondents who completed both *Lutherans Say...3* and *Lutherans Say...4*.

Figure 13
WORSHIP ATTENDANCE AND ABORTION
BY REASON FOR LAITY

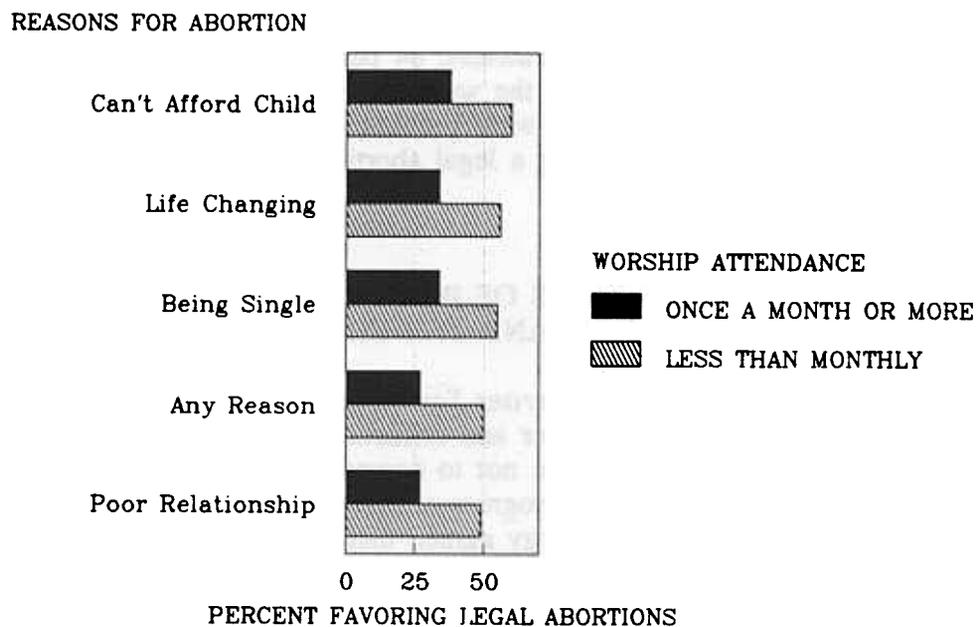
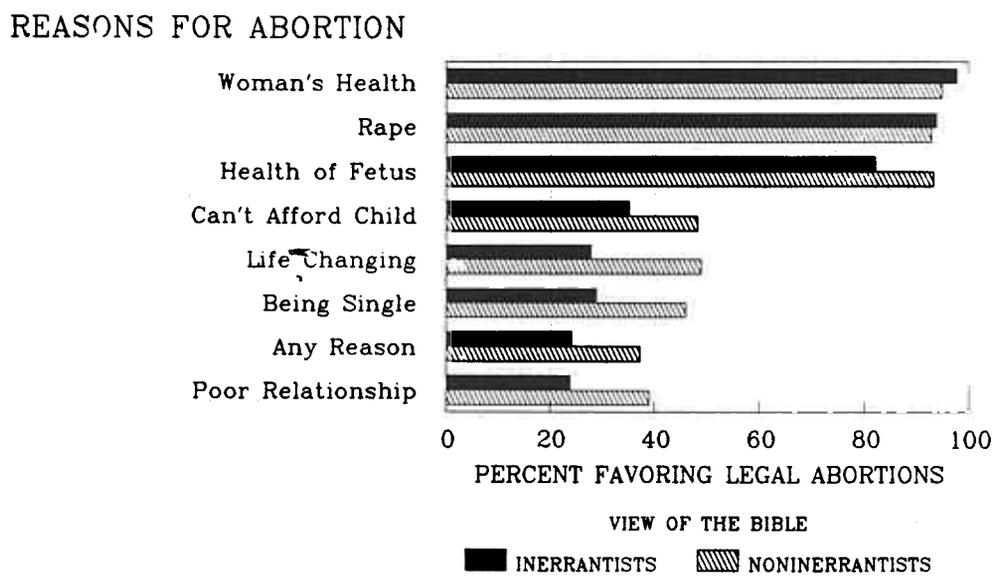


Figure 14
BIBLICAL INERRANTISTS AND ABORTION
FOR LAITY



Bible reading was also an important predictor of views of abortion. For example, 45 percent of the laity who had not read any part of the Bible at home in the last year were in favor of granting legal abortions for any reason compared to 28 percent of those who had read the Bible in the last year.

Twenty-one percent of the clergy believe that the Bible is inspired and contains no errors and this inerrantist group of clergy was significantly less likely than any of the other clergy or laity groups to support legal abortions. Nevertheless, 84 percent still favored granting a legal abortion when the pregnancy would endanger the woman's health, and 67 percent were in favor of granting a legal abortion when there were problems affecting the health of the fetus. Eighty-three percent were in favor of granting a legal abortion when the pregnancy was the result of rape.

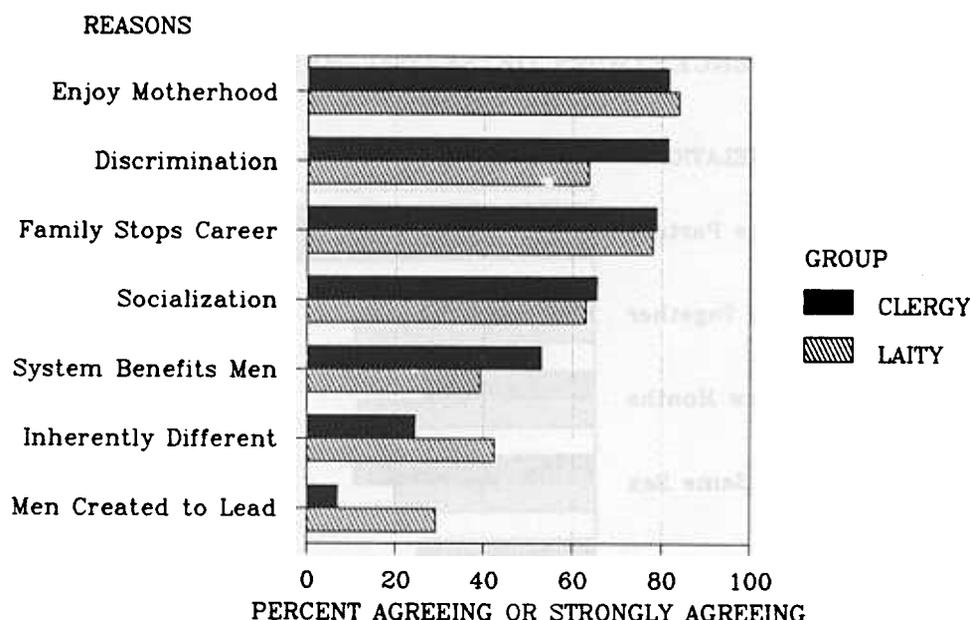
WOMEN AND POSITIONS OF POWER IN BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT AND THE CHURCH

Both the laity and clergy respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* generally felt that women were less likely than men to hold positions of power and influence in business corporations, the government or the church because they choose not to compete in these fields or because social traditions have imposed limits on the progress of women (Figure 15). Eighty-four percent of the laity and 82 percent of the clergy agreed that "many women freely choose to devote their energies primarily to being wives and mothers and they enjoy their role and often find great fulfillment." At the same time the majority of the laity and clergy agreed that traditionally women have not been afforded equal education and employment opportunities and that they have had to set aside their careers during child bearing years. Less than 43 percent of the laity and 25 percent of the clergy agreed that men and women were inherently different and fewer than 30 percent of the laity and 7 percent of the clergy felt that God created "men to lead and women to be men's helpers."

Despite the preference for social and historical explanations of why women are less likely to hold positions of power and influence in American society, slightly less than a majority of the laity (48%) agreed that "men keep women down because most men benefit from having more power." Fifty-eight percent of the clergy agreed overall with this perspective, including 35 percent of those clergy who take an inerrantist view of the Bible. Gender also influenced opinion on this issue. For example, among the laity, 51 percent of the women agreed that men benefit from keeping women down compared to 29 percent of the men, and among the clergy 84 percent of the women agreed compared to 57 percent of the men.

Opinions about why more men than women hold positions of influence and power in business, government and the church varied consistently by age, as well. For example, younger respondents among both the laity and clergy samples were significantly less likely to agree with explanations of differences between men and women that appealed to God or nature. Thirty-eight percent of the laity under thirty-five years of age agreed that men and women are inherently different compared to 55 percent of those who were over thirty-five. Among the clergy, 22 percent of those under thirty-five agreed that men and women are inherently different compared to 35 percent of those over thirty-five years of age.

Figure 15
REASONS WHY WOMEN DO NOT
HOLD POSITIONS OF POWER

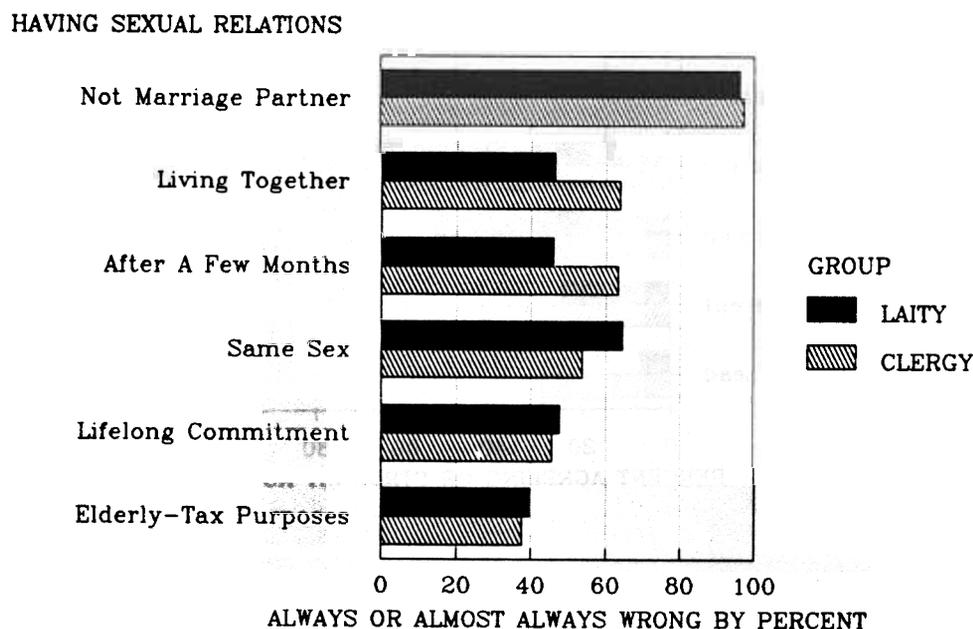


ACCEPTABLE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

The opinions of members of the ELCA on acceptable sexual behavior are complex (Figure 16). On some issues the respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* were more conservative than the U.S. population in general. Forty-six percent of the laity and 63 percent of the clergy felt that it is always or almost always wrong for a couple to engage in sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months or for a man and a woman to live together as sexual partners before deciding whether to marry. In 1989, the General Social Survey reported that 36 percent of a national sample of respondents believed that it was always or almost always wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relations before marriage. Ninety-six percent of the *Lutherans Say...4* laity and 97 percent of the clergy felt that it was always or almost always wrong for a married person to have sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner compared to 90 percent of the GSS respondents. At the same time, both the laity (65%) and clergy (53%) respondents were significantly less likely to indicate that sexual relations between two men and/or two women were always or almost always wrong than the respondents to the GSS (75%). In this case, however, some of the differences may be due to the way the two survey questions were worded. The *Lutherans Say...4* respondents were asked about two men or two women living together as sexual partners in "a lifelong relationship in which they were faithful to each other." The GSS

respondents were asked simply about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex. These different response rates may indicate that the implication of promiscuity in same sex relationships is a major factor affecting how people feel about such relationships.

Figure 16
PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR
BY GROUP

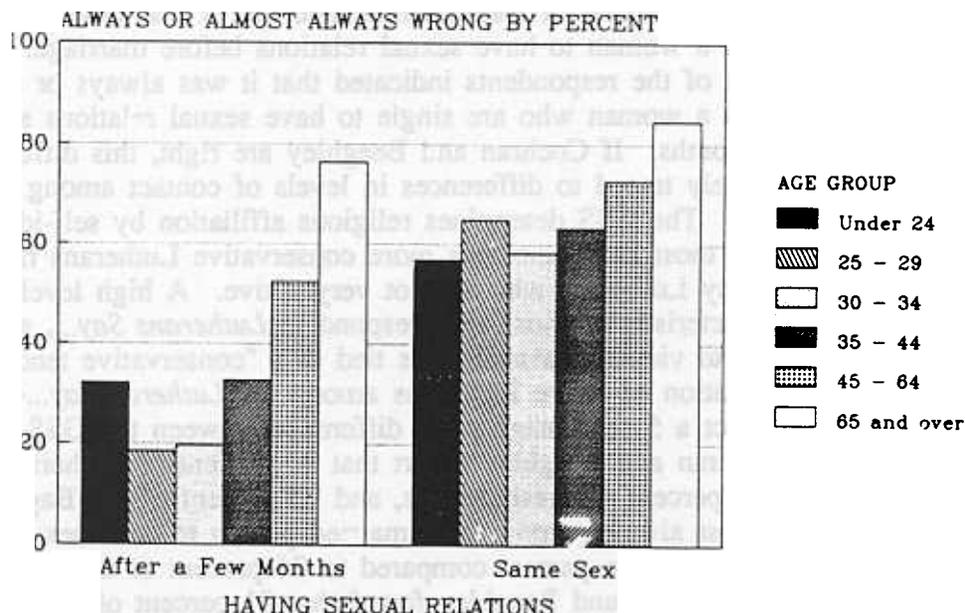


In general, the clergy shared or took more conservative views than the laity with regard to acceptable sexual behavior with the major exception of same sex sexual behavior. While there were no significant differences between clergy and laity opinions on sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner, or on an unmarried man and woman living together with a lifelong commitment to each other, or on an elderly man and woman living together without being married to reduce their taxes and increase their social security payments, the clergy were more conservative than the laity about the situations that occur most often -- a man and a woman living together without a lifelong commitment or a couple having sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months. On the other hand, it was the laity (65%) who were more likely than the clergy (53%) to feel that two men or two women living together was always or almost always wrong.

Two major factors that account for different views of acceptable sexual behavior are age and worship attendance. In most cases those who attended worship services more often were more likely to more narrowly define acceptable sexual behavior outside of marriage. For example, 64 percent of those who attend worship services once a week or more felt that it

was always or almost always wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months compared to 28 percent of those who attend less than once a month. Sixty-two percent of those who attend worship weekly felt that it was always or almost always wrong for two men or two women to live together as sexual partners compared to 27 percent of those who attended worship services less than once a month. Age, however, was a very important factor mediating the impact of worship attendance on views of appropriate sexual behavior (Figure 17). For those who were under twenty-four or over thirty-five attending worship was an important factor in how acceptable they believed it was for a man and a woman to have sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months, but for those who were between twenty-five and thirty-four worship attendance was not a factor. Forty percent of all those who were between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four thought that it was always wrong for a single man and a woman to have sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months compared to 41 percent of those between the same ages who attended worship services less than once a month.

Figure 17
 LAITY PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR
 SELECTED ISSUES BY AGE GROUP



DENOMINATIONS AND CONGREGATIONS AS REFERENCE GROUPS

Cochran and Beeghley (1991) argue that religious congregations form reference groups that shape the behaviors and attitudes of their members including their views of sexuality. Reference groups with the most clearly expressed standards of right and wrong are most influential. Among the religious denominations, Cochran and Beeghley argue that Jews and Episcopalians are the most tolerant with regard to sexual behavior, with Catholics and Presbyterians being only slightly more intolerant, "to the yet more oppositional stance of the Lutherans and the Methodists." The most conservative and intolerant attitudes are typically held by Baptists and other conservative Protestants. Cochran and Beeghley, using GSS data, argue that denominational views are reflected in the beliefs and attitudes of the members of different churches.¹⁰ They conclude (1991:52) their analysis of the GSS data by noting: "It is quite telling...that members' attitudes are highly consistent with the official doctrines and normative stands of their respective faith groups." Individuals who have the most frequent and sustained contact with reference groups are, in turn, the most likely to be influenced by them. Perhaps this is why, given the more conservative views of the clergy on these issues, there is a strong relationship between frequent worship attendance and beliefs about the immorality of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity.

In the process of coming to these helpful conclusions, Cochran and Beeghley also lend considerable support to the validity of the *Lutherans Say...4* data and the *Lutherans Say...4* data in turn lend additional support to their thesis. For example, the percentage responses from *Lutherans Say...4* on matters of sexuality are very close to those reported by Cochran and Beeghley. They report that 41 percent of Lutherans, 25 percent of Episcopalians, 36 percent of Presbyterians and 49 percent of Baptists indicated that it was always or almost always wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relations before marriage. On *Lutherans Say...4*, 46 percent of the respondents indicated that it was always or almost always wrong for a man and a woman who are single to have sexual relations after knowing each other for only a few months. If Cochran and Beeghley are right, this difference of 5 percentage points is most likely traced to differences in levels of contact among Lutherans with Lutheran congregations. The GSS determines religious affiliation by self-identification. As a result, the GSS sample most likely includes more conservative Lutherans from the Missouri Synod but also many Lutherans who are not very active. A high level of "activity," however, is a hallmark characteristic of those who respond to *Lutherans Say...*, and more activity, at least with regard to views of sexuality, is tied to a "conservative tendency." Because of the overrepresentation of active Lutherans among the *Lutheran Say...4* respondents, one would expect a 5 percentage point difference between the GSS and *Lutherans Say...4* data. Cochran and Beeghley report that 90 percent of Lutherans, 85 percent of Episcopalians, 89 percent of Presbyterians, and 90 percent of the Baptists felt that it was always wrong or almost always wrong for a married person to have sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner compared to 96 percent of the respondents on *Lutherans Say...4*. Finally, Cochran and Beeghley found that 81 percent of Lutherans, 66 percent of Episcopalians, 76 percent of Presbyterians and 89 percent of Baptists felt that it

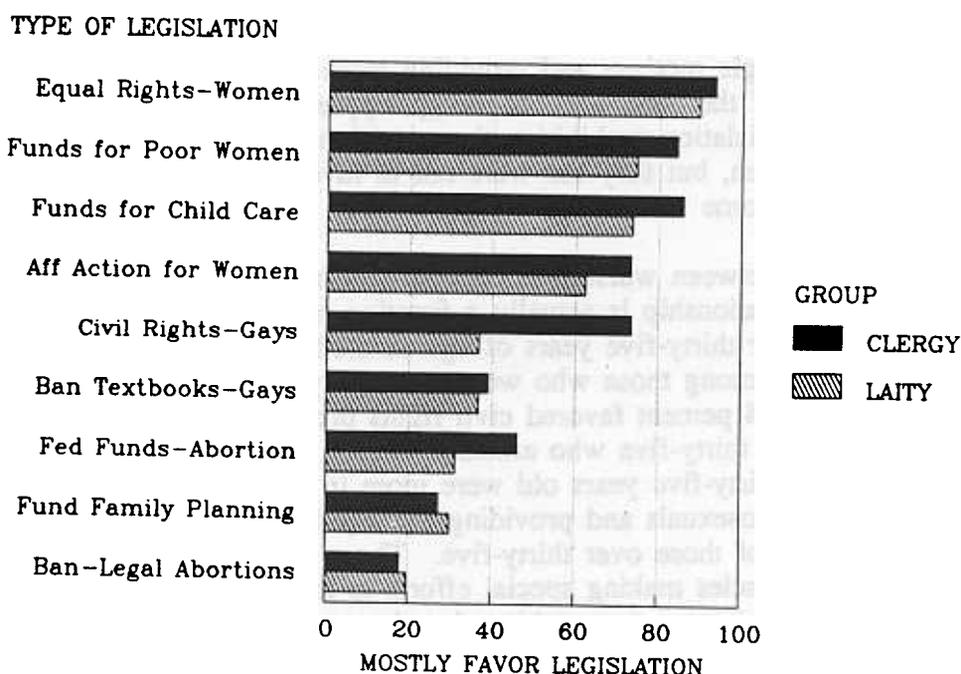
¹⁰ The direction of the relationship between the views of the members and those promoted by a denominational group are somewhat difficult to determine. Do the views of the members shape denominational views or are denominations important in shaping the views of their members? Cochran and Beeghley are arguing the latter.

was always or almost always wrong for two adults of the same sex to have sexual relations compared to 65 percent of the laity respondents on *Lutherans Say...4*. But again, in this case it is likely that this large difference between the percentages from the GSS and *Lutherans Say...4* is due to the way the *Lutherans Say...4* question was worded to include reference to a lifelong and faithful relationship.

PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

The members of the *Lutherans Say...4* panel were asked about a series of public policy issues most of which involved favoring or opposing some form of legislation. The issues ranged from equal rights to increasing public assistance for low income, working single mothers. Overall the majority of clergy respondents supported guaranteeing the rights of women and homosexuals, special efforts among government agencies in hiring women, providing more public assistance for working, low income single mothers, and providing more public funds for child care programs (Figure 18). A majority of the clergy opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion and legislation prohibiting the provision of birth control information to men and women under eighteen, but they were not in favor of providing federal or state funds for abortions for low income women.

Figure 18
VIEWS OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION



Age was related to clergy opinions on several public policy issues. For example, 90 percent of those clergy who were under thirty-five favored legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals compared to 79 percent of those over thirty-five. Ninety percent of those under thirty five opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion compared to 80 percent of the clergy over thirty-five.

There was a stronger relationship, however, between the clergy point of view on these social policy issues and their views of the Bible. Fifty-six percent of those clergy who took more inerrant views of the Bible were in favor of legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals compared to 84 percent of those who see the Bible as containing historical and scientific errors. But, on this issue there was still a majority of the clergy favoring legislation to provide civil rights protection for homosexuals even among those who took a more inerrant view. In some situations, however, the majority opinion did follow the inerrant, historical-scientific error split. Sixty percent of the clergy who believe that the Bible may contain historical and scientific errors favored providing federal or state funds for low income women compared to 25 percent of those who believed that the Bible has no errors. Forty-two percent of those who believed the Bible may contain historical and scientific errors favored legislation prohibiting public schools from using textbooks which present homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle compared to 54 percent of those who believed the Bible has no errors.

The laity respondents essentially mirrored the clergy views on public policy issues with the significant exception of the 23 percent of laity who were "not sure" whether or not they favored or opposed legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals (Figure 18). The majority did favor legislation guaranteeing equal rights for men and women, special efforts among government agencies in hiring women, providing more public assistance for working, low income single mothers and providing more public funds for child care programs. A majority of the laity, like the clergy, opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion and legislation prohibiting the provision of birth control information to men and women under eighteen, but they too were not in favor of providing federal or state funds for abortions for low income women.

There is a relationship between worship attendance and how the laity view these public policy issues, but the relationship is actually a function of age. For example, a majority of all those who were under thirty-five years of age favored civil rights protection for homosexuals; however, among those who were over thirty-five and attended worship services once a month or more 44 percent favored civil rights protection for homosexuals compared to 62 percent of those over thirty-five who attended church less than once a month. In general, those who were under thirty-five years old were more in favor of legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals and providing more public funds for child care programs compared to 80 percent of those over thirty-five. Those under thirty-five were also more in favor of government agencies making special efforts to hire and promote women and providing more public assistance for working, low income single mothers and were more opposed to legislation prohibiting agencies from providing birth control information to those under eighteen years of age.

Age was related to clergy opinions on several public policy issues. For example, 90 percent of those clergy who were under thirty-five favored legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals compared to 79 percent of those over thirty-five. Ninety percent of those under thirty five opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion compared to 80 percent of the clergy over thirty-five.

There was a stronger relationship, however, between the clergy point of view on these social policy issues and their views of the Bible. Fifty-six percent of those clergy who took more inerrant views of the Bible were in favor of legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals compared to 84 percent of those who see the Bible as containing historical and scientific errors. But, on this issue there was still a majority of the clergy favoring legislation to provide civil rights protection for homosexuals even among those who took a more inerrant view. In some situations, however, the majority opinion did follow the inerrant, historical-scientific error split. Sixty percent of the clergy who believe that the Bible may contain historical and scientific errors favored providing federal or state funds for low income women compared to 25 percent of those who believed that the Bible has no errors. Forty-two percent of those who believed the Bible may contain historical and scientific errors favored legislation prohibiting public schools from using textbooks which present homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle compared to 54 percent of those who believed the Bible has no errors.

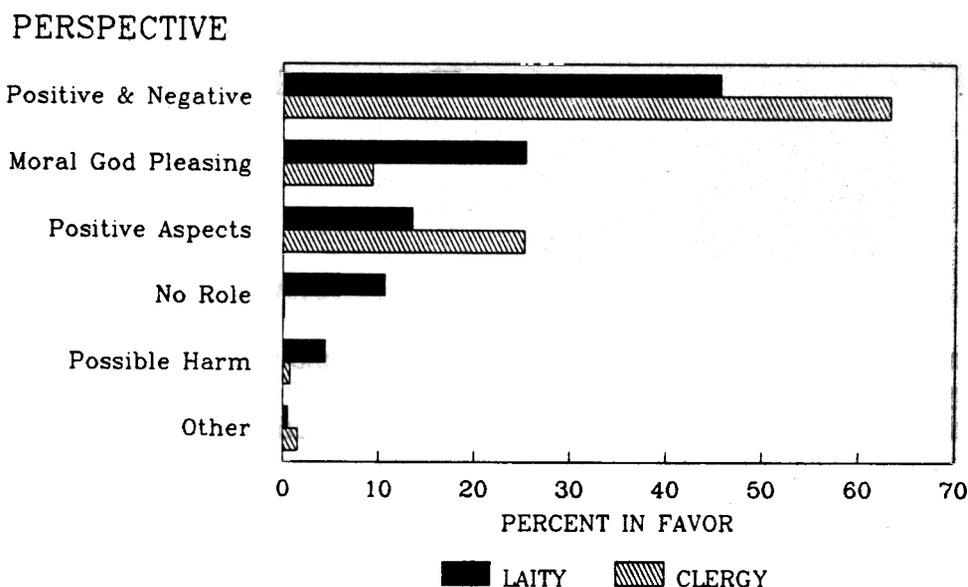
The laity respondents essentially mirrored the clergy views on public policy issues with the significant exception of the 23 percent of laity who were "not sure" whether or not they favored or opposed legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals (Figure 18). The majority did favor legislation guaranteeing equal rights for men and women, special efforts among government agencies in hiring women, providing more public assistance for working, low income single mothers and providing more public funds for child care programs. A majority of the laity, like the clergy, opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion and legislation prohibiting the provision of birth control information to men and women under eighteen, but they too were not in favor of providing federal or state funds for abortions for low income women.

There is a relationship between worship attendance and how the laity view these public policy issues, but the relationship is actually a function of age. For example, a majority of all those who were under thirty-five years of age favored civil rights protection for homosexuals; however, among those who were over thirty-five and attended worship services once a month or more 44 percent favored civil rights protection for homosexuals compared to 62 percent of those over thirty-five who attended church less than once a month. In general, those who were under thirty-five years old were more in favor of legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals and providing more public funds for child care programs compared to 80 percent of those over thirty-five. Those under thirty-five were also more in favor of government agencies making special efforts to hire and promote women and providing more public assistance for working, low income single mothers and were more opposed to legislation prohibiting agencies from providing birth control information to those under eighteen years of age.

THE CHURCH AND TEACHING ABOUT SEXUALITY

The members of the *Lutherans Say...4* panel were asked whether the church, in teaching about sexuality, should put the primary emphasis on the positive aspects of sexuality or on the possible harmful effects of certain sexual activities; the laity and clergy concurred that the church should teach about both (Figure 19). Sixty-three percent of the clergy felt that the church's teaching on sexuality should combine both the positive and negative aspects of sexuality. Forty-six percent of the laity agreed with another 25 percent feeling the emphasis should be on moral "God pleasing" sexual behavior. Almost none of the clergy and 11 percent of the laity believed that the church should have no role in teaching about sexuality. There were no significant differences in these views based on gender, age or worship attendance.

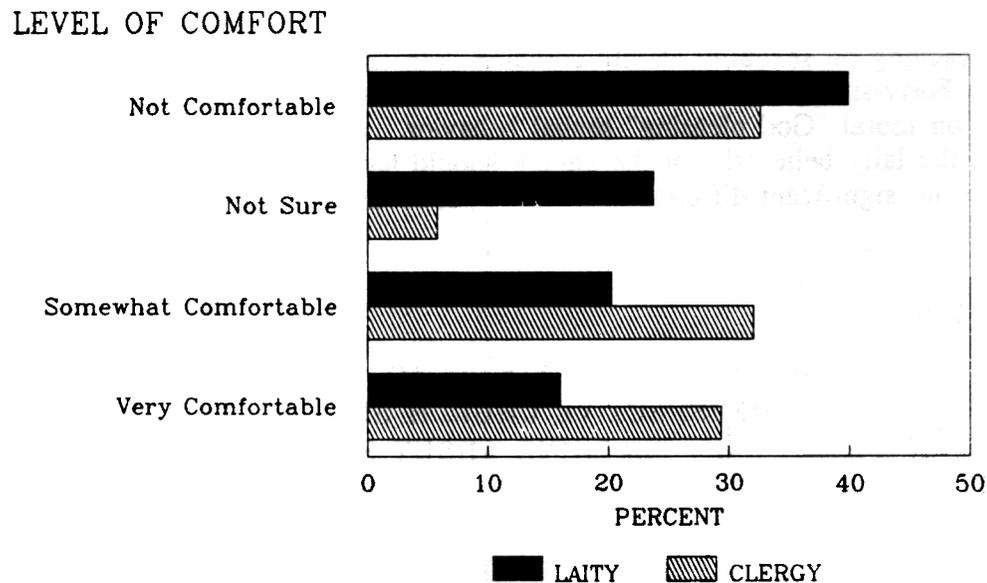
Figure 19
PERSPECTIVE CHURCH SHOULD TAKE
ON TEACHING ABOUT SEXUALITY



THE CONGREGATION AND THE USE OF FEMININE LANGUAGE TO REFER TO GOD

Sixty-one percent of the clergy compared to 36 percent of the laity indicated that they would feel at least somewhat comfortable in a "congregation that sometimes uses feminine language to refer to God" (Figure 20). Thirty-three percent of the clergy and 40 percent of the laity said they would not be at all comfortable in such a congregation and 24 percent of the laity said they were unsure about how comfortable they would feel.

Figure 20
COMFORTABLENESS WITH OCCASIONALLY
USING FEMININE LANGUAGE TO REFER TO GOD



VIEW OF THE SYNOD AND CHURCHWIDE OFFICES

As one would expect, almost all the clergy members of the panel of *Lutherans Say...4* had heard of synodical (97%) or churchwide (97%) activities of the ELCA in the last six months. The majority of lay members had heard of synod (52%) activities and slightly fewer (47%) had heard of churchwide activities. But, when asked about their impression of the churchwide and synod offices, 74 percent of the laity did not have an impression of the synod offices and 72 percent did not have an impression of the churchwide offices. Ten percent of the clergy had no impression of the churchwide offices.

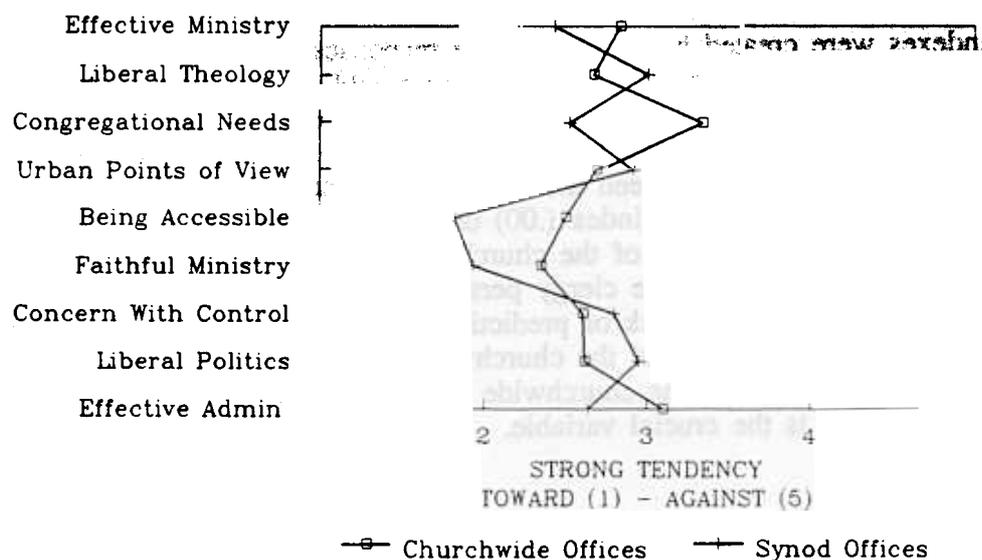
Clergy Views

The small number of laity who had impressions of the churchwide or synod offices of the ELCA makes it impossible to generalize about the views of the laity. However, it is possible to develop a profile of views of the 93 percent of the clergy who held some impression of the synod and churchwide offices.

On the more positive side, 60 percent of the clergy who had an impression of the churchwide offices felt that the offices were faithful in ministry and mission while only 13 percent did not (Figure 21). Fifty-two percent also felt that the churchwide offices were easy

to contact and find help. Forty-one percent felt that the offices were effective in ministry and mission while 25 percent felt the offices were ineffective. Thirty-four percent of the clergy felt that the churchwide offices were somewhere between being effective and ineffective while 52 percent felt that the offices were neither too theologically liberal nor conservative. At the same time, a strong minority (36%) felt the churchwide offices tended to be too theologically liberal and too politically liberal. Twelve percent described the churchwide offices as too theologically conservative and 11 percent as too politically conservative.

Figure 21
CLERGY PERCEPTIONS OF SYNOD
AND CHURCHWIDE OFFICES -- MEANS



(7% of respondents had no opinion)

On the less positive side, 48 percent of the clergy who had an impression of the churchwide offices felt that the offices were out of touch with congregational needs, and 39 percent felt the church was not administered effectively.

The Issue of Congregational Needs

Views of the churchwide offices tend to follow patterns, and the clergy perceptions of the churchwide offices reveal one significant pattern -- there is a strong relationship between whether or not the clergy respondents perceive the churchwide offices to be in touch with congregational needs and whether or not they perceive the churchwide offices to be faithful in ministry and mission (.62, p=.000), effective in ministry and mission (.60, p=.000) or,

finally, whether or not the clergy perceive the churchwide offices to be effectively administered (.52, $p=.000$).¹¹ In other words, those clergy who perceive the church to be out of touch with congregational needs are also very likely to perceive the church as being ineffective and less faithful in ministry and mission and/or ineffectively administered.

Other clergy perceptions of the churchwide offices were also significantly related to perceptions of the effectiveness of churchwide administration but to a far less consistent degree. For example, there was a statistically significant relationship between clergy perceptions of how politically or theologically liberal the churchwide offices were and whether or not they perceived the churchwide offices to be well administered, but the correlation coefficients are much lower (-.14 and -.17 respectively). In other words, knowing whether or not a clergy person thinks that the churchwide offices are too liberal or too conservative is much less important in predicting their views of the administration of the churchwide offices than knowing whether or not they perceive the churchwide offices to be in touch with congregational needs.

Several indexes were created by combining the responses to related questions from both *Lutherans Say...3* and *Lutherans Say...4* including a biblical literalism index; an integration support index; an abortion support index; and an open sexuality index.¹² The indexes were then correlated with clergy perceptions of the administration of the churchwide offices. There were no relationships between the biblical literalism index (.07), the open sexuality index (.01), the abortion support index (.00) or the integration support index (.07) and perceptions of the administration of the churchwide offices. There was a low positive correlation between the age of the clergy person (.12, $p=.001$) and perceptions of effective administration, but overall the lack of predictive power with regard to any of these indexes and the effective administration of the churchwide offices point instead to the one issue that does matter. Whether or not the churchwide offices are thought to be in touch with congregational needs is the crucial variable.

¹¹ Correlation coefficients vary between -1 and +1 and measure the level of consistent variation between two variables. If the consistency is absolute, i.e., one variable goes up every time the other goes up, the coefficient is 1. If one variable goes up every time the other goes down the coefficient is -1. If the consistency is not absolute but some pattern of consistency remains the coefficient will be between -1 and 0 or 0 and +1 depending on the degree of consistency. If there is no pattern of consistency between the two variables the coefficient will be 0. The "p" indicates the probability of the consistent variation between the two variables occurring simply by chance. A "p" of .000 indicates that such a level of consistency between two variables would occur by chance less than 1 time in a thousand.

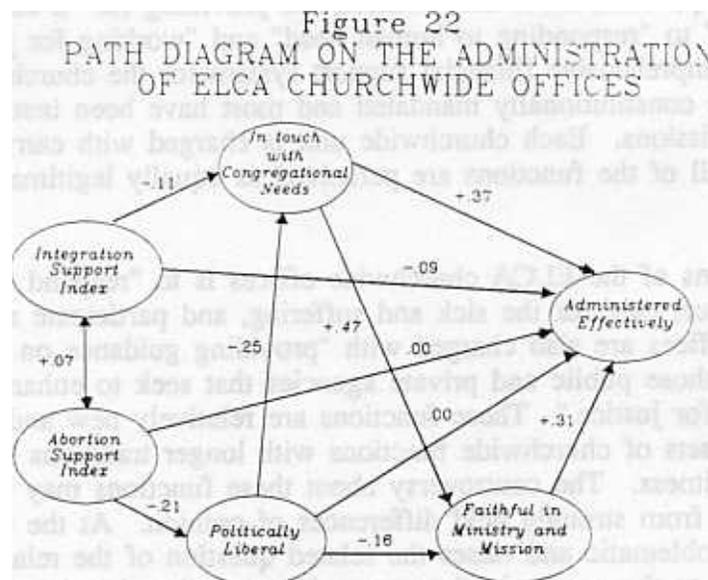
¹² The integration support index was created by combining responses on the question of discrimination against African Americans with the responses on the questions of support for encouraging integrated housing and marrying an African American person. Those who attributed differences between African and White Americans to past and present acts of discrimination, who supported private and public programs to integrate housing, and were least uneasy about a close relative marrying an African American were given the highest index scores.

The biblical literalism index was based on the biblical literalism question from *Lutherans Say...3*, the abortion support index on combining responses on the questions about support for abortion under different circumstances and the open sexuality index on combined responses to several of the questions about appropriate sexual behavior. In each of the cases those who took the most liberal positions were given the highest scores.

All the index scores were converted to standard scores (z-scores) and averaged over the number of questions on which the index was based. Missing cases were assigned a standard score of zero.

A Path Model on Perceptions of Effective Churchwide Administration

One final way to address the relationship between these variables is with a path model (Figure 22). The path model is designed to provide a more complete picture of the clergy perceptions of the administration of the churchwide offices. The path coefficients display the relative impact and direction of each factor. Higher path coefficients indicate stronger effects. This path model is designed to reveal the relative impact of five factors on whether or not clergy perceive the churchwide offices to be effectively administered. The five factors include clergy support for integration, clergy support for abortion, clergy views of the churchwide offices as being in touch with congregational needs, clergy views of the churchwide offices being too politically liberal, and clergy perceptions of the churchwide offices being faithful in ministry and mission.



The path model shows that clergy support for integration and abortion and clergy perceptions of the churchwide offices as being too politically liberal have a low to negligible effect on clergy perceptions of the effective administration of the churchwide offices. Clergy who perceive the churchwide offices as too liberal are also less likely to perceive the churchwide offices as being in touch with congregational needs but none of these factors -- supporting integration or abortion or clergy perceptions of churchwide liberalness -- are very important in and of themselves. There is some independent effect of perceptions of the churchwide offices as being faithful in ministry and mission, but overall the most powerful factor in determining clergy perceptions of the administration of the churchwide offices is whether or not the offices are perceived to be in touch with congregational needs.

This finding raises the larger question of the appropriate role of a denomination in the last decade of the 20th century. Many ELCA clergy continue to view the primary and legitimate function of the churchwide offices as providing services and resources to congregations and to the extent that the churchwide offices are engaged in other activities -- particularly what are perceived to be social and political activities, but perhaps ecumenical as well -- the effective administration of the offices will be questioned. If a new definition of the role of the churchwide offices is emerging, or has already emerged, many of the clergy have yet to be convinced of this new reality, much less its legitimacy.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the past several decades American denominations have taken on new roles and additional functions. The current list of functions for the ELCA churchwide offices includes 25 specific functions from providing "resources that will enable the church to equip its members to worship, learn, serve and witness," to providing for "a competent, committed ordained ministry," to "responding to human need" and "working for justice and peace," to "coordinating a comprehensive financial support system for the church's mission." All of these functions are constitutionally mandated and most have been institutionalized as offices, divisions or commissions. Each churchwide unit is charged with carrying out a specific function, but not all of the functions are perceived as equally legitimate by either the clergy or laity.

One of the functions of the ELCA churchwide offices is to "respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and suffering, and participate responsibly in society." The churchwide offices are also charged with "providing guidance on social matters," and cooperating with "those public and private agencies that seek to enhance the dignity of all persons and work for justice." These functions are relatively new and as a result more controversial than sets of churchwide functions with longer traditions like providing resources for worship and witness. The controversy about these functions may come as much from their "newness" as from strongly held differences of opinion. At the same time, any question of legitimacy is problematic and raises the related question of the relationship of the churchwide offices to the people in the pews. It is not that the churchwide offices should reflect the views of the majority of laity or clergy, but that churchwide offices and the clergy and laity understand each other well enough to form a true partnership. The ELCA constitution opens the chapter on the functions of the churchwide organization by stating "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church." Being one church is important not only in a theological sense, but in a sociological sense as well. Roof and McKinney (1987:89) argue that moderate Protestants including Lutherans have not had as much access to power or occupied a privileged status in the "national ethos.... Their claims to being mainline have rested instead on their close ties with the people and their fundamental, grass-roots values -- the ideals and standards implicit in the common American creed" (Roof and McKinney, 1987:89).

On the one hand, the laity and clergy respondents to *Lutherans Say...4* were very progressive and there is evidence of a partnership or at least a set of shared perspectives on which a partnership could be built. While neither the laity nor clergy frequently discussed social issues with family, relatives or friends, they did believe that differences between the living

conditions of African and Native Americans and White Americans were the result of discrimination. The majority of both laity and clergy generally supported efforts on the part of religious and business groups to integrating housing. The majority of laity and clergy were not opposed to abortion when the health of the mother is threatened or in the context of questions about the long term health and viability of the fetus. The clergy and laity generally opposed a constitutional amendment banning abortion. The majority of laity and clergy agreed that traditionally women have not been afforded equal education and employment opportunities, and less than a majority agreed that men and women are inherently different. On most of these issues there is room for the church to work for more justice with the support of both the clergy and laity. There is room to establish or strengthen a partnership.

On the other hand, one of the more interesting findings of the *Lutherans Say...4* questionnaire has to do with perspectives on the churchwide offices. Seventy-two percent of the laity had no impression of the churchwide offices and 74 percent had no opinion of their synod offices. If the ELCA is in partnership with the laity of its congregations, many of the laity are unaware of it, which raises the question of the clergy as gatekeepers.

Many of the clergy have positive views of the churchwide offices and their views on social issues tend to be very progressive. But, at the same time they tend to understand the functions of the churchwide offices in traditional terms. There is a strong relationship between whether or not the clergy respondents perceive the churchwide offices to be in touch with congregational needs and whether or not they perceive the churchwide offices to be faithful in ministry and mission or effectively administered. Whether or not a partnership between the churchwide offices and the clergy can be established on another basis is not well understood. There is evidence that there is room to do so.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cochran, John K. and Leonard Beeghley. 1991: "The influence of religion on attitudes toward non-marital sexuality: a preliminary assessment of reference group therapy." *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 30:45-62.
- Davis, James A. and Tom W. Smith. 1990: "General Social Surveys, 1972-1990: Cumulative Codebook." Conducted for the National Data Program for the Social Sciences at the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, and distributed by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, the University of Connecticut.
- Roof, Wade Clark and William McKinney. 1987: *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers.
-

Appendix I
Lutherans Say... 4
 Questionnaire and Frequencies

1. People often have discussions with their family, friends or coworkers about social issues or events covered in the news. Over the past several months how often have you taken part in an extended discussion (five minutes or more) on any of the following?

	Very Often		Fairly Often		Occasionally		Almost Never	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
• economic recession	13.7	18.5	37.1	29.8	36.0	36.1	13.2	15.6
• conflict in the Middle East	47.2	34.3	40.3	38.2	11.8	23.0	0.7	4.5
• the federal budget deficit	19.8	22.3	33.7	25.2	32.2	33.8	14.3	18.7
• problems in raising children	25.3	21.3	32.7	22.9	32.1	35.7	9.9	20.1
• unemployment	5.2	8.8	15.6	16.8	40.9	39.0	38.3	35.4
• homelessness	9.4	8.2	22.0	18.6	43.2	43.5	25.4	29.7
• abortion	9.2	7.6	24.1	17.0	43.3	42.3	23.4	33.1
• homosexuality	11.6	5.1	23.5	11.5	42.1	34.9	22.8	48.5
• changing standards of sexual behavior	10.8	7.7	26.2	19.8	41.7	37.5	21.3	35.0
• conflict between racial groups	7.9	5.5	18.1	15.0	41.0	39.4	33.0	40.1
• women's rights	7.7	6.5	21.6	16.2	42.8	39.5	27.9	37.8
• problems of the disabled	3.2	6.7	13.3	15.0	35.9	37.0	47.6	41.3
• prayer in public schools	0.4	4.7	3.5	7.9	13.4	26.6	82.7	60.8
• the gap between rich and poor	13.2	10.3	25.6	21.0	38.9	36.1	22.3	32.6

Many of the following questions have appeared on national opinion research polls of current events and social issues. The questions and response categories come from those polls and the perspectives the questions represent have nothing to do with the policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They are used here because it is important for the church--to better undertake some aspects of its work--to know how its members feel about these issues compared to the general public.

2. Many Americans who are members of minority groups in American society have poorer jobs, lower incomes and more inadequate housing than White Americans. For each of the groups below, indicate if you think these differences primarily exist because of present acts of discrimination, past acts of discrimination, or problems that have little to do with discrimination. (Check one box for each racial/ethnic group.)

	Present Acts of Discrimination		Past Acts of Discrimination		Both Past And Present Discrimination		Little to do with Discrimination		Not Sure	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
• for African Americans/Blacks	5.5	2.6	12.0	20.9	74.4	44.6	6.0	23.9	2.1	8.0
• for Asian Americans	21.3	11.1	10.7	10.1	44.9	25.2	14.7	35.0	8.4	18.6
• for Hispanic Americans/Latinos	17.3	8.6	4.4	7.4	61.5	34.0	10.8	32.8	6.0	17.2
• for Native Americans	5.9	4.8	11.9	16.6	69.8	38.1	8.3	28.5	4.0	12.0

3. Do you believe that, in general, relationships between White Americans and each of the following groups are currently good or bad in this society? Do you believe they will improve, remain about the same or get worse over the next five years?

	<i>They Are...</i>		<i>They Will...</i>			
	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Improve</u>	<u>Remain The Same</u>	<u>Get Worse</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
For Clergy						
• for African Americans/Blacks	27.7	72.3	31.4	35.2	23.5	9.9
• for Asian Americans	58.7	41.3	34.4	42.2	13.7	9.7
• for Hispanic Americans/Latinos	29.8	70.2	34.6	34.0	21.6	9.8
• for Native Americans	22.1	77.9	24.2	47.5	14.4	13.9

	<i>They Are...</i>		<i>They Will...</i>			
	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Improve</u>	<u>Remain The Same</u>	<u>Get Worse</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
For Laity						
• for African Americans/Blacks	45.2	54.8	36.5	35.5	11.6	16.4
• for Asian Americans	65.7	34.3	31.2	43.5	7.6	17.7
• for Hispanic Americans/Latinos	44.1	55.9	29.2	39.6	12.3	18.9
• for Native Americans	50.9	49.1	29.9	46.8	6.3	17.0

4. Some religious and business groups have set up programs to encourage persons of the following groups to buy houses in predominantly white communities. Would you favor or oppose these voluntary programs to integrate predominantly white areas with regard to each of the following groups?

	<u>Strongly Favor</u>		<u>Mildly Favor</u>		<u>Mildly Oppose</u>		<u>Strongly Oppose</u>		<u>Not Sure</u>	
	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
	African Americans/Blacks	39.7	13.7	39.3	36.5	9.3	20.1	4.8	14.3	6.9
Asian Americans	40.9	15.2	39.9	39.1	8.3	17.8	4.2	11.6	6.7	16.3
Hispanic Americans/Latinos	38.9	14.5	40.5	35.5	9.0	21.2	4.5	13.1	7.1	15.7
Native Americans	39.4	20.0	39.7	38.1	8.7	16.2	4.5	10.3	7.7	15.4

5. What about the government in predominantly white areas? Do you think they should encourage people in these groups to buy homes in predominantly white areas, should they discourage them or should they just stay out of it?

	<u>Encourage</u>		<u>Dis-courage</u>		<u>No Govern-ment Role</u>		<u>Not Sure</u>	
	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
• African Americans/Blacks	39.6	10.5	1.0	4.4	51.2	74.0	8.2	11.1
• Asian Americans	39.1	9.9	1.1	3.5	51.4	75.4	8.4	11.2
• Hispanic Americans/Latinos	39.2	9.5	1.0	3.9	51.1	74.6	8.7	12.0
• Native Americans	39.0	13.2	1.1	2.6	50.8	73.3	9.1	10.9

6. How would you feel if a close relative of yours were planning to marry a person from one of the following groups? Would you feel very uneasy, somewhat uneasy, or not uneasy at all?

	Very Uneasy		Somewhat Uneasy		Not Uneasy At All		Not Sure	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
an African American/Black	13.6	35.9	47.9	36.4	32.1	19.9	6.4	7.8
an Asian American	3.7	17.3	36.9	39.6	52.4	33.5	7.0	9.6
a Hispanic American/Latino	4.5	17.4	37.1	38.5	51.2	34.6	7.2	9.5
a Native American	4.4	12.0	36.7	35.8	51.0	41.9	7.9	10.3

7. Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if...

	Yes		No		Not Sure	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
the woman cannot financially afford the baby.	24.7	36.0	63.3	49.0	12.0	15.0
she does not want to be a single mother.	23.7	34.1	66.3	55.3	10.0	10.6
the relationship with her husband or partner is poor.	19.6	26.7	68.8	58.0	11.6	15.3
having a baby would dramatically change her life in ways she is not ready for (like not being able to finish school).	23.1	33.6	65.6	54.2	11.3	12.2
there are problems with the woman's health complicated by the pregnancy.	83.9	82.8	5.7	3.5	10.4	13.7
there are problems affecting the health of the fetus.	71.4	78.2	11.8	6.0	16.8	15.8
the woman was raped.	82.9	82.2	6.8	6.2	10.3	11.5
the woman wants an abortion for any reason.	13.7	26.0	75.5	57.0	10.8	17.0

8. Do you have any close personal friends or relatives who have had an abortion?

	Clergy	Laity
not sure	18.0	17.8
no	24.0	49.3
yes	58.0	32.9

→ Did it affect your attitudes about abortion?

	Clergy	Laity
yes, I became more opposed to abortion.	15.9	14.4
yes, I became less opposed to abortion.	14.6	17.3
no, my feelings stayed the same.	67.0	63.9
don't know	2.5	4.4

9. Men in the United States are more likely than women to hold positions of influence and power-to be public officials, presidents of corporations or church leaders. Here are some of the reasons people have given to explain why. Please read over these reasons and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each one.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
Men keep women down because most men benefit from having more power.	12.5	8.4	40.5	30.8	5.3	8.5	30.4	41.4	11.3	10.9
Men and women are inherently different and they feel more comfortable assuming different roles.	2.8	6.5	21.8	39.7	6.2	9.1	43.0	33.6	26.2	11.1

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
• Men and women are not naturally different but because of how they are raised in this society they tend to assume different roles.	9.8	11.2	54.7	51.9	3.3	8.4	27.4	23.6	4.8	4.9
• Women, because they bear the children, often have to set aside their careers which frequently sets them back.	12.4	17.5	66.6	60.7	2.3	3.4	15.9	14.2	2.8	4.4
• Many women freely choose to devote their energies primarily to being wives and mothers and they enjoy their role and often find great fulfillment.	21.8	26.9	59.8	57.0	5.9	4.8	10.4	8.7	2.1	2.6
• The Bible tells us that God created men to lead and women to be men's helpers.	1.6	6.3	5.4	22.9	1.4	16.3	33.3	35.0	58.3	19.5
• Women have traditionally not been given equal education and employment opportunities.	29.7	16.7	51.8	46.8	2.1	4.2	13.0	26.0	3.4	6.3

10. Stories on television and in the newspapers might lead a person to believe that people's opinions about what is acceptable sexual behavior are changing. What would be your opinion about each of the following relationships, if engaged in by a person in your circle of friends--would it always be wrong, almost always wrong, sometimes acceptable, or generally acceptable?

	Always Wrong		Almost Always Wrong		Not Sure		Sometimes Acceptable		Generally Acceptable	
	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity	Clergy	Laity
A married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner.	79.1	80.0	17.9	16.2	0.4	1.0	2.5	2.6	0.1	0.2
A man and a woman who are both single having sexual relations after knowing each other for a few months.	38.1	32.6	25.2	13.4	1.1	4.5	26.4	23.5	9.2	
A man and a woman living together (as sexual partners) before deciding whether to marry.	37.2	32.8	26.7	13.6	0.7	3.0	25.7	25.5	9.7	25.1
A man and a woman who have made a life-long commitment to each other living together (as sexual partners) without getting married.	26.3	31.8	19.4	15.9	2.2	4.4	33.0	24.2	19.1	23.7
Two men or two women living together (as sexual partners) in a lifelong relationship in which they are faithful to each other.	43.4	54.2	10.0	10.4	8.5	8.8	19.5	13.8	18.6	12.8
An unmarried elderly man and woman living together (as sexual partners) without being married because married couples pay more taxes and receive reduced social security benefits.	26.1	28.2	14.5	11.5	4.2	7.8	33.5	27.5	21.7	25.0

11. Would you say that you mostly favor or mostly oppose each of the following?

	<u>Mostly Favor</u>		<u>Not Sure</u>		<u>Mostly Oppose</u>	
	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
• Legislation guaranteeing equal rights under the law for men and women.	93.5	89.5	2.6	5.5	3.9	5.0
• Legislation providing civil rights protection for homosexuals.	73.4	36.7	7.9	23.3	18.7	40.0
• A constitutional amendment banning abortion.	18.0	19.6	7.2	16.7	74.8	63.7
• Providing federal or state funds for abortions for low income women.	46.2	31.1	12.0	16.8	41.8	52.1
• Legislation prohibiting public schools from using textbooks which present homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.	39.0	36.7	10.8	13.4	50.2	49.9
• Providing more public funds for child care programs.	85.8	73.6	5.5	10.8	8.7	15.6
• Government agencies making special efforts to hire and promote qualified women in order to increase the proportion of high level positions held by women.	73.3	62.3	8.1	16.3	18.6	21.4
• Legislation prohibiting agencies which receive public funds from providing birth control information to men and women under 18 years of age without informing their parents.	27.2	29.8	6.9	11.1	65.9	59.1
• Providing more public assistance for working women who earn low wages and are raising children alone.	84.3	74.5	8.1	12.9	7.6	12.6

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

12. Some people believe that the local congregation should be a place where believers discuss how to relate their faith to the difficult issues that confront society. To what extent do you agree with such a view?

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
strongly disagree	12.7	6.1
disagree	0.6	8.0
agree	29.5	52.1
strongly agree	56.6	23.6
undecided	0.6	10.2

Which of the following issues do you believe it would be appropriate to address in a congregational setting?

(Responses for those who agreed, strongly agreed or were undecided.)

	<u>Appropriate</u>		<u>Inappropriate</u>		<u>Not Sure</u>	
	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
• economic recession	86.4	65.3	5.9	18.0	7.7	16.7
• conflict in the Middle East	94.1	73.8	3.3	12.2	2.6	14.0
• the federal budget deficit	80.5	42.0	9.8	35.0	9.7	23.0
• problems in raising children	99.2	93.8	0.3	2.2	0.5	4.0
• unemployment	95.3	72.6	2.1	14.1	2.6	13.3
• homelessness	98.3	94.7	0.8	1.7	0.9	3.6
• abortion	97.2	75.4	1.1	12.3	1.7	12.3
• homosexuality	96.5	64.3	1.8	20.9	1.7	14.8
• changing standards of sexual behavior	97.4	77.0	0.9	12.6	1.7	10.4
• conflict between racial groups	97.1	82.0	0.9	7.7	2.0	10.3
• women's rights	93.5	64.1	2.9	20.7	3.6	15.2
• problems of the disabled	97.5	86.5	0.8	5.4	1.7	8.1
• prayer in public schools	93.9	87.2	3.5	4.6	2.6	8.2
• the gap between rich and poor	92.7	55.9	3.5	25.2	3.8	18.9

13. How comfortable would you feel in a congregation that sometimes uses feminine language to refer to God?

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
very comfortable	29.4	16.0
somewhat comfortable	32.1	20.3
not comfortable at all	32.7	39.9
not sure	5.8	23.8

14. Do you believe that it is always against God's will for a person to have an abortion?

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
no	71.7	58.9
yes	15.7	16.3
not sure	12.6	24.8

15. Do you think the church should teach about sexuality by putting the primary emphasis on the positive aspects of sexuality--it being a gift from God--or on the possible harmful effects of certain sexual activities?

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
The church has no role in teaching about sexuality.	0.1	10.6
The primary emphasis of the church should be on the positive aspects of sexuality.	25.2	13.5
The primary emphasis should be on the possible harmful effects of certain sexual activities.	0.7	4.4
The emphasis should be a combination of the positive and negative aspects of sexuality.	63.2	45.7
The teachings should stress moral (God pleasing) sexual behavior.	9.3	25.3
The teachings should stress other aspects of sexuality (<i>please specify</i>):	1.5	0.5

ON THE CHURCHWIDE AND SYNODICAL OFFICES OF THE ELCA

The ELCA has three "expressions": congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. These expressions of the church are interdependent entities that share responsibility in God's mission. We would like to know about your contact with and impressions of the synod and churchwide expressions of the ELCA.

16. Over the past six months have you had any contact, from calling for information to attending meetings, with either your local synod or the churchwide office of the ELCA?

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
• <i>Your local synod office?</i>		
yes	94.9	15.8
no	5.1	84.2
• <i>The churchwide office?</i>		
yes	60.5	8.7
no	39.5	91.3

17. Have you heard about synodical or churchwide office activities of the ELCA on the radio or television or have you read about them in *The Lutheran* magazine or other publications in the last six months?

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
• <i>Your local synod office?</i>		
yes	96.8	52.3
no	3.2	47.7
• <i>The churchwider office?</i>		
yes	97.3	45.6
no	2.7	54.4

18. What is your general impression of the churchwide offices of the ELCA? If you don't have an impression, please check the first box and go on to the next question. If you do have an impression, for each pair of words below circle a number to indicate how you feel. *For example, circle "1" if you believe they are effective in ministry and mission. Circle "5" if you believe they are ineffective in ministry and mission. Circle "2, 3, or 4" if you believe they are somewhere between effective and ineffective.*

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
I don't really have an impression of the churchwide offices.	10.1	72.1

The churchwide offices are generally...

For Clergy (89.9% responding)

effective in ministry and mission	7.1	33.3	34.2	19.6	5.8	ineffective in ministry and mission
too theologically liberal	11.2	24.7	52.4	9.5	2.2	too theologically conservative
in touch with congregational needs	3.2	22.3	27.1	32.7	14.7	out of touch with congregational needs
too urban in outlook	7.5	25.1	60.0	6.4	1.0	too rural in outlook
easy to contact and find help	22.6	29.3	29.1	14.0	5.0	hard to contact and find help
faithful in ministry and mission	21.4	38.1	27.6	9.1	3.8	not faithful in ministry and mission
too concerned with control	14.2	23.1	52.8	8.2	1.7	not concerned enough with control
too politically liberal	13.8	22.3	53.4	8.9	1.6	too politically conservative
administered effectively	4.8	26.8	29.3	27.3	11.8	administered ineffectively

For Laity (27.9% responding)

effective in ministry and mission	25.3	30.2	27.5	11.5	5.5	ineffective in ministry and mission
too theologically liberal	15.8	19.8	44.1	12.4	7.9	too theologically conservative
in touch with congregational needs	14.3	24.0	32.0	20.0	9.7	out of touch with congregational needs
too urban in outlook	8.1	29.7	49.4	9.9	2.9	too rural in outlook
easy to contact and find help	23.7	24.9	29.4	15.6	6.4	hard to contact and find help
faithful in ministry and mission	34.7	31.9	22.5	9.3	1.6	not faithful in ministry and mission
too concerned with control	13.2	25.9	47.1	9.2	4.6	not concerned enough with control
too politically liberal	13.5	18.1	52.1	9.9	6.4	too politically conservative
administered effectively	18.2	24.4	37.5	11.4	8.5	administered ineffectively

19. What is your general impression of your synod offices? If you don't have an impression, please check the first box and go on to the next question. If you do have an impression, for each pair of words below circle a number to indicate how you feel.

	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>
I don't really have an impression of my synod offices.	4.0	74.0

My synod offices are generally...

For Clergy (96.0% responding)

effective in ministry and mission	17.8	42.8	22.2	12.7	4.5	ineffective in ministry and mission
too theologically liberal	3.8	11.8	70.1	11.4	2.9	too theologically conservative
in touch with congregational needs	17.9	39.4	21.2	16.0	5.5	out of touch with congregational needs
too urban in outlook	4.0	12.6	73.8	7.1	2.5	too rural in outlook
easy to contact and find help	49.1	30.4	12.5	5.8	2.2	hard to contact and find help
faithful in ministry and mission	37.7	40.3	15.6	4.0	2.4	not faithful in ministry and mission
too concerned with control	9.3	17.5	60.8	8.9	3.5	not concerned enough with control
too politically liberal	3.5	13.5	70.1	10.3	2.6	too politically conservative
administered effectively	21.2	36.5	23.1	13.4	5.8	administered ineffectively

For Laity (26.0% responding)

effective in ministry and mission	33.9	26.9	27.5	8.8	2.9	ineffective in ministry and mission
too theologically liberal	7.5	19.4	58.7	11.3	3.1	too theologically conservative
in touch with congregational needs	23.6	28.5	26.7	13.3	7.9	out of touch with congregational needs
too urban in outlook	10.1	23.4	58.9	7.0	0.6	too rural in outlook
easy to contact and find help	36.3	23.3	23.9	10.4	6.1	hard to contact and find help
faithful in ministry and mission	42.3	25.3	25.3	6.5	0.6	not faithful in ministry and mission
too concerned with control	10.6	28.1	51.9	8.1	1.3	not concerned enough with control
too politically liberal	5.2	21.3	63.9	7.7	1.9	too politically conservative
administered effectively	25.6	26.8	31.7	9.8	6.1	administered ineffectively