

# Commission for Women 25th Anniversary Survey

## Analysis of the Length of Time Spent Waiting for First Call

by

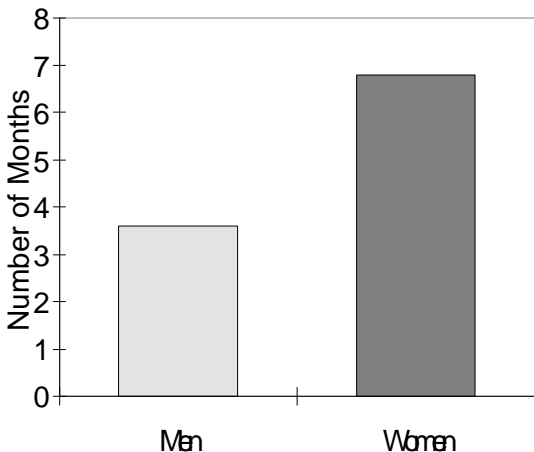
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*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

It is widely believed that women continue to wait longer than men for a first call to ordained ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Results from a survey of 1,836 ELCA clergy do uphold this assumption (women wait an average of 3.3 months longer than men for their first call). However, with a twist. Several other variables, including age at ordination, placing certain types of restrictions on the first call, and being a second career candidate, were also important in determining how long candidates waited for first call. Overall, a number of variables, in addition to gender, show their relationship to the length of wait for first call.

On the survey, pastors were asked “Approximately how many months did you wait (after submitting your mobility papers) before you received your **first** call?” This analysis focuses on explaining the length of time it took pastors to receive a first call and determining if the experiences of men and women were different.

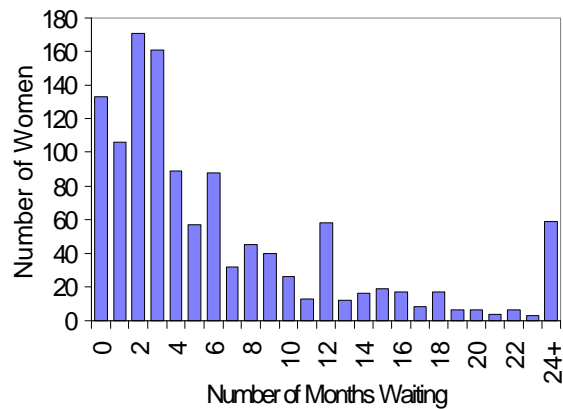
**Gender:** The average length of time men and women wait for their first call is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Average Wait for Women and Men



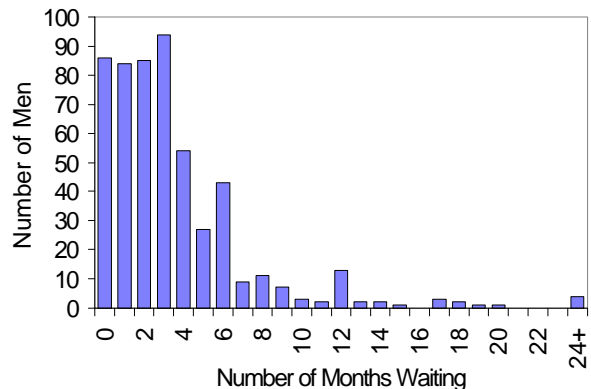
For women, the average wait was 6.8 months, the median was four months, and the waits ranged from zero to 99 months. Chart 2 shows how the length of wait for women was distributed. For men the average wait was 3.6 months, the median

Chart 2: Months Women Waited



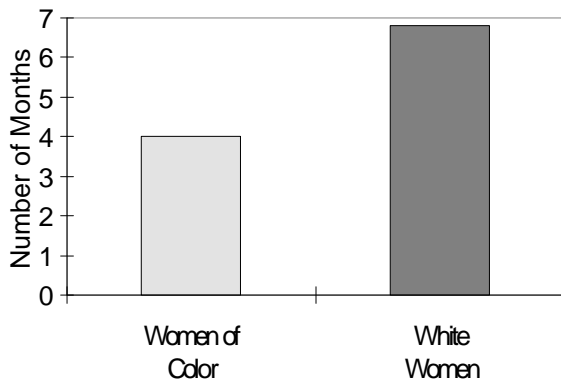
was three months, and the waits ranged from zero to 66 months. Chart 3 shows how the length of wait for men was distributed.

Chart 3: Months Men Waited



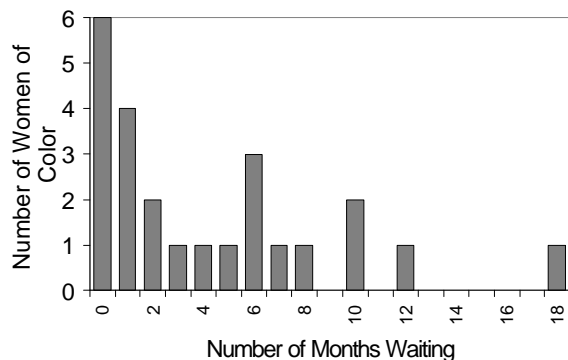
**Race & Ethnicity:** Twenty-two of the 55 ordained women who are African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American responded to the survey and indicated that their average length of wait for first call was 4.0 months compared with 6.8 months for White women.

Chart 4: Average Waits for Women of Color and White Women



There were no African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American women waiting more than 18 months compared with 7% of White women who waited more than 18 months.

Chart 5: Months Women of Color Waited



Comprehensive analysis is underway in a separate project to learn about the experiences of clergy women of color. Because of the small number of respondents, no further analysis about race and ethnicity is contained in this report.

**Several Variables Tested:** To further understand the differences between the length of time women and men waited for their first call, several other variables were tested to see if they were causing the differences between women and men. These variables included: age at ordination, year

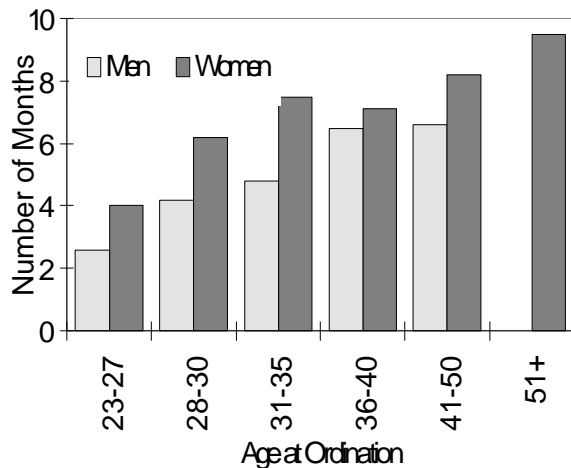
ordained, having children at home, being a second career candidate, putting any one of a variety of restrictions on the first call, being married to a rostered leader, attending two seminaries for their M.Div., having ever accepted a part-time call at their own request, and saying that family commitments have impacted their vocational decisions. In addition, a question about personal characteristics (“For each item indicate on the scale from 1 ‘Very True’ to 7 ‘Not True At All’ how true you believe it is as a description of you as an **ordained pastor:** powerful, personable, helper, leader, anxious, confused, goal oriented.”) was tested to see if these characteristics were associated with the length of wait for the first call.

Initially, multivariate regression analysis was used to determine the importance of each of these variables, including gender, on the length of time waiting for first call. The results of this analysis detected no strong relationships between any of the variables and length of time waiting for first call (see Appendix B). What follows is an analysis of the variables found to be most strongly related to the length of wait for first call. The analysis will also show how much of the difference in the length of wait for women and men was related to these other variables in addition to gender.

**Age at Ordination:** In the ELCA, the average woman is older when ordained than the average man. Among the respondents to this survey, the average age at ordination was 35.1 for women and 28.8 for men. Chart 6 (on next page) combines respondents into six groups based on their age at ordination and then compares the length of wait for men and women of the same age when ordained. On the average, older candidates wait longer for their first call regardless of gender. The data for women show an average wait of four months for the 23 to 27 age group which more than doubles to 9.5 months for those age 51 and older. Men show a similar pattern with an average wait of 2.6 months for men age 23 to 27 and a wait of 6.6 months for men age 41 to 50. The sample contained no men who were age 51 or older when they were ordained. The difference in length of wait for first call is reduced when comparing women and men of the same age. The biggest difference is 2.7 months for persons

ordained at age 31-35 and the smallest difference is 0.6 months for persons ordained at age 36-40. To summarize, part of the 3.2 months difference between women and men is related to the fact that older candidates wait longer for their first call than younger candidates and there are more older women than men.

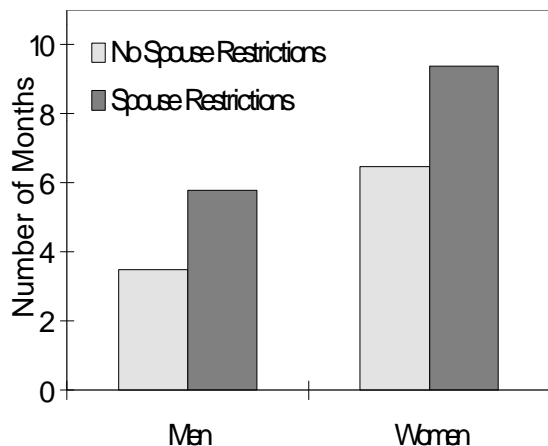
Chart 6: Average Wait by Age at Ordination



**Placing Restrictions on Your First Call**

**Associated With Your Spouse:** There were 108 women (9.1%) and 21 men (3.9%) who described restrictions on their first call which specifically involved their spouse, usually their spouse’s job. The chart below shows that the average wait for first call was increased by two to three months by placing this type of restriction on one’s call. Women placing spouse restrictions on their first call waited 9.4 months compared to 6.5 for all

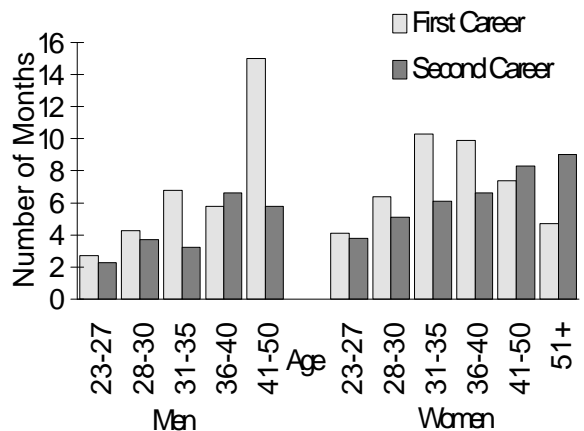
Chart 7: Average Wait for Spouse Restrictions



other women. Men placing spouse restrictions on their first call waited 5.8 months compared with 3.6 for all other men. Because women are more likely to place this type of restriction on their first call (9.1% vs. 3.9%), this variable explains some of the 3.2 month difference between the average length of wait for women and men.

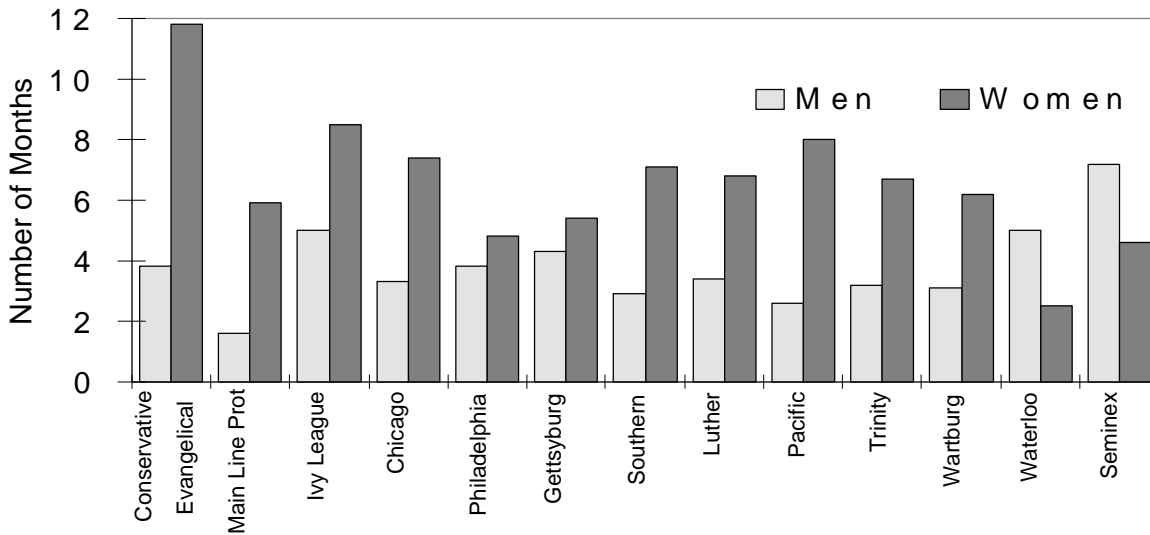
**Being a Second Career Candidate:** Respondents were asked if they consider their current ministry a “second” career. Both women and men experienced an average longer wait for their first call if they were a second career pastor. Second career women waited 7.1 months compared with 6.2 for all other women. Second career men waited 4.2 months compared with 3.5 months for all other men. However, since age at ordination was found to lengthen the wait for first call, the chart below compares the length of wait for first and second career women and men in the same age group. These results show that in most cases second career candidates in the same age group waited a shorter length of time to receive their first call.

Chart 8: Average Wait for Second Career Controlling for Age at Ordination



**Seminary Attended:** An analysis of the seminary attended was conducted to determine whether the length of wait for first call was associated with the seminary attended. To simplify the chart, three groups of non-Lutheran seminaries were created: traditionally conservative evangelical seminaries, mainline Protestant seminaries, and Ivy League

Chart 9: Average Wait For Grouped Seminaries



seminaries. Chart 9 shows that, on the average, women attending conservative evangelical seminaries (like Fuller) wait longer and women attending Waterloo Seminary wait shorter lengths of time. The seminary with the largest difference between women and men is Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary where women wait eight months and men wait 2.6 months, a difference of 5.4 months.

There were two variables which show no effect for men, but there was an effect for women.

**Placing Geographic Restrictions on Your First Call:** When asked about restrictions placed on their first calls, some candidates reported placing geographic restrictions. Some of these restrictions were very broad (anywhere but North Dakota) while others were very narrow (Minneapolis, MN). Women placing geographic restrictions on their first call waited an average of 8.2 months compared with 6.3 months for all other women.

**Placing Congregational Restrictions on Your First Call:** Other women reported placing congregational restrictions on their first call. Examples of congregational restrictions were wanting a small congregation or wanting an assistant pastor position. Women placing congregational restrictions on their first call waited an average of 4.5 months compared with 6.9 for all other women.

Chart 10: Average Wait for Geographic Restrictions

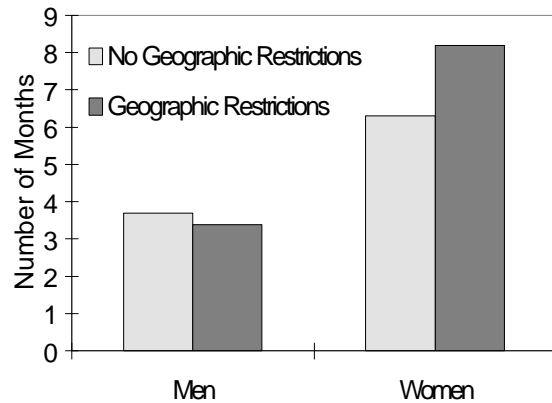
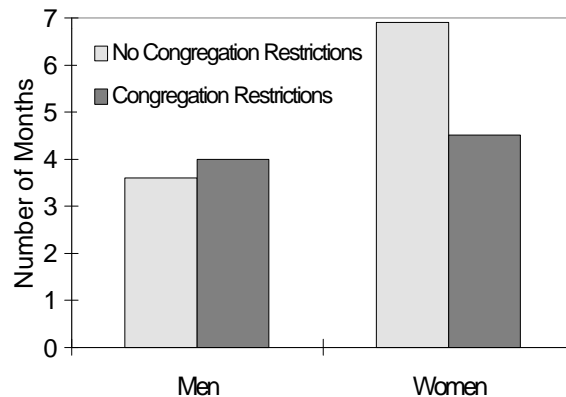


Chart 11: Average Wait for Congregational Restrictions



What follows is the list of variables that were tested for some impact on the length of time waiting for first call. The multiple regression analysis found the relationship between these variables and average wait for first call to not be statistically significant.

- ! Having Ever Accepted a Part-Time Call at Your Own Request
- ! Year Ordained
- ! Having Children at Home When Ordained
- ! Having Ever Been Part of a Clergy Couple
- ! Saying That Family Commitments Have Impacted Your Vocational Decisions
- ! Having Attended a Second Seminary to Complete the M.Div.
- ! Having Ever Experienced Divorce
- ! Placing Clergy Spouse Restrictions on Your First Call:
- ! Placing Family Restrictions on Your First Call
- ! Placing No Restrictions on Your First Call
- ! Saying That You Were Confused
- ! Saying That You Were Not Personable
- ! Saying That You Were Not a Helper
- ! Saying That You Were Anxious
- ! Saying That You Were Not Goal Oriented

**Implications for the ELCA:** As church leaders seek to provide encouragement to women entering the ordained ministry, it will be important to be honest about the impact of the findings of this analysis. The combination of an older age (e.g., 50), female gender, and restrictions on the first call will likely result in a longer average wait for first call. If this is a second career, that wait will be reduced a little. A man of the same age, same restrictions, and also second career will likely have his wait lengthened by about the same time.

Church leaders will need to decide if there is something that can be done to reduce the impact of these factors. Why are congregations more reluctant to call older pastors to an “entry-level” position? Why are congregations less likely to value the experience of older women who have spent, perhaps, the past fifteen or more years caring for young children and devoting their attention to home and volunteer (often church) activities, as compared with women and men who have been teachers, nurses, administrators, and otherwise employed?

Spouse and geographical restrictions on mobility and availability are likely here to stay. Can the church find ways to deploy these candidates strategically? Subsequent reports will show that more women than men have served in calls to part-time service and that more women than men have been On Leave From Call. Analysis suggests that this is not all bad news. Many women, and some men, choose to work part-time, and many also choose to be on leave for periods of time in order to care for family and other personal needs. This, too, will require the rethinking of many church leaders who maintain a strong bias against such patterns. We may find, for example, that such trends are a fortuitous coincidence with the number of congregations unable to provide for a full-time pastor, or who seek the care of a skilled interim pastor. We will need to find ways to honor and support this kind of ministry.

**Next Steps:** As women move into the ranks of ordained clergy in increasing numbers (1,718 clergywomen comprised 13% of all non-retired ELCA pastors in 1995), many questions, assumptions and concerns remain. Data from the survey described in Appendix A provide a wealth of information, so rich in detail, so full of complexity, it comes into focus slowly. This first report covers only one critical aspect of clergywomen’s experience and will be followed by subsequent reports, over a three year period, about mobility, compensation, challenges, expectations, strengths and priorities.

Unlike other Protestant denominations in the U.S. who report that a majority of their clergywomen are serving and have served in non-parish settings, virtually all ELCA clergywomen have served at least their first call in a congregation. The “three year rule,” which requires all ELCA pastors to serve a congregation before moving into a specialized setting, has the benefit of providing both pressure and opportunity for this church to receive the ministry of women pastors at its very heart, in local parish life. This involvement increases the impact of clergywomen on the whole church and provides vital preparation to significant numbers of women who may take up leadership roles.

The presence of women clergy has “raised up new expectations of pastors,” and has “challenged the church to look beyond form to the spirit of the Gospel” and has “made us stronger overall.” Having women clergy has helped “the church become more able to listen to *all* women” and has encouraged “other [lay] women in the church to take their ministries more seriously.”

Subsequent reports will expand on the observations that *clergywomen are more likely than clergymen to:*

- ! *consider their ordained ministry as a second career;*
- ! *have used an ‘alternate route’ through candidacy;*
- ! *have had or have a part-time call;*
- ! *have been On Leave From Call;*
- ! *have experienced gender-based discrimination or harassment in education and work settings;*
- ! *be single adults living alone.*

And that *clergywomen are no more likely than clergymen to:*

- ! *have served as an assistant or associate pastor;*
- ! *serve on synodical councils or committees or staff;*
- ! *have reported that family commitments had a significant impact on career decisions;*
- ! *be married and living in a home with no children.*

**Appendix A:** As part of the ELCA’s recognition of the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women, the Commission for Women and the Department for Research and Evaluation conducted a survey of ELCA ordained women and men. An eight-page questionnaire containing questions about the candidacy process, first call process, experiences in subsequent calls, on leave from call experiences, descriptions of their role as pastor, family dynamics, gender-based harassment, etc. was developed. In June of 1995 surveys were sent to all 1,689 rostered clergy women and a comparable sample of 856 clergy men. One thousand two hundred and fifty-five women returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 74 percent. Five hundred eighty-four men

returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 68 percent.

**Appendix B:** Multiple regression analysis was used to measure the independent effects of the variables contained in the survey. Because many of these variables are related to one another (i.e., the average woman is four years older than the average man when ordained) it is hard to determine which variable is having the greatest effect (i.e., gender or age at ordination). The multiple regression analysis found that five variables were important in understanding the number of months waiting for first call. They were, in order of their importance, age at ordination, gender, saying that “powerful” was a “not very true” description of you as an ordained minister, placing spouse restrictions on first call, and defining yourself as a second career candidate.

The results of the analysis were somewhat disappointing because only 7.3% of the variance was explained by the equation. The analysis was helpful by pointing out that although women do wait longer for their first call than men, independent of other factors, there are other variables that are also working. Age at ordination is also important, indicating that average first call candidates of both genders wait longer if they are older. It was also interesting to see the relationship between age and second career status. Being a second career candidate does shorten the wait for first call while older age simultaneously increases the wait. Other variables, which many people think are strongly related to the length of wait for first call, were not shown to be important.

Multiple R=	.270
R Square=	.073
F=	23.108
Signif F=	.000

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Sig T</u>
Ord.Age	.220	.206	5.86	.0000
Gender	2.074	.119	4.36	.0000
Not Powerful	8.606	.102	4.06	.0001
Spouse Restr.	2.373	.075	2.97	.0031
2nd Career	-1.280	-.077	-2.25	.0245
(Constant)	-2.577	1.072	-2.40	.0163

## Appendix C: Actual Means and Frequencies for Charts

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	6.77	1,190
Men	3.65	534
<b>Race</b>		
Women of Color	3.96	22
White Women	6.82	1,167
<b>Age at Ordination</b>		
Men 23-27	2.64	271
Women 23-27	4.04	218
Men 28-30	4.16	147
Women 28-30	6.20	276
Men 31-35	4.82	79
Women 31-35	7.52	217
Men 36-40	6.48	25
Women 36-40	7.05	155
Men 41-50	6.64	11
Women 41-50	8.24	220
Men 51+		0
Women 51+	9.49	79
<b>Spouse Restrictions on First Call</b>		
Men No Restrictions	3.56	513
Men Restrictions	5.76	21
Women No Restrictions	6.51	1,082
Women Restrictions	9.44	108
<b>Second Career Status by Age</b>		
Men First Career 23-27	2.66	264
Men Second Career 23-27	2.29	7
Men First Career 28-30	4.26	120
Men Second Career 28-30	3.73	26
Men First Career 31-35	6.78	36
Men Second Career 31-35	3.19	43
Men First Career 36-40	5.75	4
Men Second Career 36-40	6.62	21
Men First Career 41-50	15.00	1
Men Second Career 41-50	5.80	10
Women First Career 23-27	4.05	210
Women Second Career 23-27	3.75	8
Women First Career 28-30	6.36	222
Women Second Career 28-30	5.14	49
Women First Career 31-35	10.26	68
Women Second Career 31-35	6.13	144

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Women First Career 36-40	9.86	22
Women Second Career 36-40	6.59	133
Women First Career 41-50	7.37	19
Women Second Career 41-50	8.26	198
Women First Career 51+	4.67	3
Women Second Career 51+	9.01	72

**Is “Powerful” a description of You as an Ordained Minister?**

Men 1=Very True	3.64	511
Women 1=Very True	7.19	126
Men 2	4.24	131
Women 2	6.09	307
Men 3	3.35	172
Women 3	6.69	379
Men 4=Middle	3.11	106
Women 4=Middle	6.62	216
Men 5	5.08	49
Women 5	6.69	68
Men 6	3.57	7
Women 6	6.19	27
Men 7=Not Very True	4.80	5
Women 7=Not Very True	16.55	11

**Is “Personable” a description of You as an Ordained Minister?**

Men 1=Very True	4.11	185
Women 1=Very True	6.38	562
Men 2	3.58	241
Women 2	6.77	438
Men 3	2.54	80
Women 3	8.22	131
Men 4=Middle	4.11	19
Women 4=Middle	7.30	30
Men 5	5.33	6
Women 5		0
Men 6		0
Women 6	15.00	3
Men 7=Not Very True		0
Women 7=Not Very True		0



<u>Variable</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
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**Seminary (Grouped) Granting Their M.Div. Degree** (For Lutheran seminaries all individuals attending predecessor seminaries were grouped with the current seminary. For non-Lutheran seminaries, they were grouped into traditionally conservative evangelical seminaries (i.e., Fuller), Mainline Protestant Seminaries (i.e., Garrett), and Ivy League Seminaries (i.e., Yale).

Men at Traditionally Conser- vative Evangelical Sems.	3.8	5
Women at Traditionally Conser- vative Evangelical Sems.	11.8	16
Men at Mainline Protestant Seminaries	1.6	5
Women at Mainline Protestant Seminaries	5.9	19
Men at Ivy League Sems.	5.0	4
Women at Ivy League Sems.	8.0	72
Men at LSTC	3.3	57
Women at LSTC	7.4	141
Men at LSTG	4.6	41
Women at LSTG	5.9	118
Men at LSTP	3.8	31
Women at LSTP	4.8	92
Men at LTSS	2.9	22
Women at LTSS	7.1	48
Men at Luther	3.4	174
Women at Luther	6.8	312
Men at PLTS	2.6	27
Women at PLTS	8.0	86
Men at Trinity	3.2	67
Women at Trinity	6.7	116
Men at Wartburg	3.1	57
Women at Wartburg	6.2	128
Men at Waterloo	5.0	4
Women at Waterloo	2.5	2
Men at Seminex	7.2	12
Women at Seminex	4.6	5

**Placing Geographic Restrictions on First Call**

Men No Restrictions	3.7	401
Women No Restrictions	6.3	894
Men Geo. Restrictions	3.4	133
Women Geo. Restrictions	8.2	296

**Placing Congregational Restrictions on First Call**

Men No Restrictions	3.6	504
Women No Restrictions	6.9	1137
Men Cong. Restrictions	4.0	30
Women Cong. Restrictions	4.5	53