

WOMEN CLERGY IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE:

AN ANALYSIS OF CHANGE FROM 1908 TO 1995

A THESIS IN
Sociology

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by
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Richard W. Houseal, Jr., Master of Arts

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1996

ABSTRACT

Since its organization into a denomination in 1908, the Church of the Nazarene has ordained women and the Church's polity provides women with the right to hold any position within the denomination. However, the data compiled for this study document that women are a decreasing percentage of the total ministerial corps within the Church of the Nazarene, and that their roles within the Church have changed throughout the century. Chi-square analysis reveals that Nazarene women pastors are disproportionally distributed, with smaller districts utilizing more female pastors. Also discussed is the conflict of the district superintendent who must represent

both the interests of local churches and the interests of female pastors. The district superintendent role seems to favor the interests of local churches, especially when some church members are resistant to having a woman as pastor. Finally, broader social movements are seen to affect the number of Nazarene women in ministry and the types of roles which they fulfill.

This abstract of 158 words is approved as to form and content.

Dr. Kristin Esterberg, Professor of Sociology
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, have examined a thesis titled "Women Clergy in the Church of the Nazarene: An Analysis of Change from 1908 to 1995," presented by Richard W. Houseal, Jr., candidate for the Master of Arts, and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."¹ With this one sentence in the very first chapter of the Bible, the writer of Genesis made an egalitarian statement about men and women--both are created in the image of God. The quotation, recorded by Moses over 3,000 years ago according to tradition, stands in contrast to the theological and sociological study of today concerning the inequality of women's access to leadership positions within the church.

A number of individuals have studied various aspects of the history of, and resistance to, women in public ministry. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin cite many historical examples of women involved in ministry in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Edward Lehman

¹Gen. 1:27 NRSV (New Revised Standard Version).

has studied the differences in how women and men perform their ministerial roles, and has also written about organizational resistance to women in ministry. Marjorie Royle has researched the acceptance of women ministers within the congregations they serve, while Barbara Brown Zikmund's research led her to conclude that women are changing the meaning of ordination. And recently, Mark Chaves has argued that when a denomination has a formal policy allowing for the ordination of women, but the policy is only loosely connected to organizational practice, the policy exists to respond to external forces rather than for internal governance.²

²Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish & Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979); Edward C. Lehman, Jr., *Gender and Work: The Case of the Clergy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Edward C. Lehman, Jr., "Organizational Resistance to Women in Ministry," *Foundations* XXIV, no. 3 (July-September 1981): 236-256; Marjorie H. Royle, "Women Pastors: What Happens After Placement," *Review of Religious Research* 24, no. 2 (December 1982): 116-126; Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Changing Understandings of Ordination in American Protestantism" (paper presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, St. Louis, Missouri, 26-29 October 1995); Mark Chaves, "Ordaining Women: The Diffusion of an Organizational Innovation," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 4 (January 1996): 840-873.

This study differs from previous works in that it focuses on the Church of the Nazarene and the change it has experienced in regard to women clergy from 1908 to 1995.

The Church of the Nazarene was organized at Pilot Point, Texas, in 1908. Its membership at that time was drawn from associations of churches which had sprung up during the "holiness movement" in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Its doctrinal beliefs are within the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition.³

The Church of the Nazarene offers a unique perspective on the issue of resistance to women in ministry. While the Nazarenes have always ordained women, the data collected for this study will show the development of a resistance to women in ministerial positions, particularly since the late 1950s. The data should also enable us to test some possible explanations for changes within the female ministerial workforce.

³Timothy L. Smith, introduction to *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years*, by the Church History Commission (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), 9.

Historical Background

Some theologians cite Biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as universal prohibitions against women in positions of church leadership.⁴ Other theologians come to a different conclusion by interpreting these passages within the context of the society and circumstances for which they were written. C.S. Cowles points out that most first century women were uneducated and illiterate, and that the context of 1 Corinthians is an admonition for orderly worship. He believes that Paul is prohibiting noisy and bothersome conversation during the worship service, not making a permanent injunction against women preaching.⁵

While theological debates are currently taking place within many denominations, the Church of the Nazarene has always ordained women and the Church's polity provides equal access to every clergy and lay office within the Church. Rebecca Laird writes:

⁴Clarence T. Craig, *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953).

⁵C.S. Cowles, *A Woman's Place? Leadership in the Church* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1993), 134.

An oft-repeated folklore tells us that Phineas Bresee, one of the main denominational founders, was fond of saying, "Some of our best 'men' are women!"

The 1898 Constitution of the Los Angeles Church of the Nazarene, the "mother church," registered the same stance when it stated: "We recognize the equal right of both men and women to all offices of the Church of the Nazarene, including the ministry."⁶

The equal right to ministry was theologically acceptable because of Scriptures such as Acts 2:17, which states, "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy." For the Nazarenes, the fact the God pours out God's Spirit on both men and women gives both the right to minister, and the responsibility to do so, if the Spirit so directs.

In her study of ordination in Protestant denominations, Barbara Brown Zikmund writes concerning the Church of the Nazarene and other spirit-centered denominations that, "These denominations come out of what historians call the 'holiness' and 'pentecostal' movements: . . . They hold to a high doctrine of the Holy Spirit,

⁶Rebecca Laird, *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1993), 11.

believing that in a second blessing or baptism by the Holy Spirit, God will come upon men and women alike." She goes on to say, "From the beginning of the holiness revival in 1856 women and men were equally involved as leaders."⁷

This is not to say that the Church of the Nazarene was completely without resistance to the ordination of women. The Pentecostal Mission, an association of preachers and missions (which did not create formal church organizations) covering the Southeast and headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, considered joining the Church of the Nazarene in 1908 but decided not to do so, in part because of the ordination of women. The Pentecostal Mission was led by J.O. McClurkan, who regarded the ordination of women as unscriptural. The irony is that "McClurkan's own wife had become, with her husband's encouragement, one of his movement's finest preachers, though she remained, of course, an unordained one."⁸

The Pentecostal Mission did eventually join with the Church of the Nazarene. On his death-bed, McClurkan told

⁷Zikmund, 9.

⁸Smith, 9.

his wife, Frances Rye, that the Mission should unite with the Nazarenes. On April 15, 1915, the union was concluded.⁹ Frances Rye McClurkan was ordained in 1920.¹⁰

Even though the Pentecostal Mission finally united with the Church of the Nazarene and accepted the position that women could preach and hold leadership offices, it seems that resistance toward women in ministry was just beginning. Barbara Brown Zikmund points out that as the holiness and pentecostal movements organized into more conventional denominations, they were forced to confront issues of church order and biblical authority, and began to compromise the egalitarian treatment of women with which they started.¹¹

But it does not seem to have been the official position of the Church of the Nazarene that changed. In a survey of articles which appeared in official publications of the denomination, Laird observes that:

In 1922, 1934, 1939, and 1943 lay persons raised

⁹Ibid., 199.

¹⁰Laird, "Ordained Women," 129.

¹¹Zikmund, 9-10.

the question of how the Church of the Nazarene harmonized the ordained ministry of women with the injunctions in 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians for women to keep silence in the church. Each time, the official answer declared that the calling of the Spirit is not limited by gender or race and that the historical position of ordaining women is faithful to the gospel.¹²

Although many observers believe that the number of women ministering within the Church of the Nazarene has declined, very little statistical work has been done to support this claim. Rebecca Laird has done the most work in this area. Using a sample of four districts in the Church of the Nazarene, she recorded the number of credentialed men and women from 1908 to 1950.¹³ Although her thesis was mostly biographical histories of ten Nazarene women preachers spanning the years from 1898 to 1950, the statistics Laird collected found declines in the number of credentialed women from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Laird's work is helpful, but it still leaves large holes in the documentation of Nazarene women in ministry.

¹²Laird, "Ordained Women," 144.

¹³Rebecca Laird, "A History of the First Generation of Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene" (Master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1990).

The four districts used in her sample represented 24% of all the districts in 1908, but by 1950 they represented only 7%. Furthermore, the sample did not give representation to the Indiana-Ohio area, which has become the area with the largest concentration of Nazarenes. Are we sure we can make claims about the number of women in ministry based upon these four districts?

Another question concerns the type of roles held by women. Were these women pastors or evangelists? Is it possible that women were accepted in some types of ordained ministries but not others? Data to answer these questions has not been available until this study.

A couple of theories have been suggested to explain why the number of women in ministry in the Church of the Nazarene has declined. One theory is that there has been a rise in fundamentalism--the belief that the Bible is the literal Word of God and is completely inerrant--which has made churches less accepting of women in ministry. Another theory is that Nazarenes started among lower-class people who later migrated into the middle-class, and therefore took on middle class values which view a woman's place as

in the home. Neither of these theories has been tested. I believe this is so because of the lack of adequate data. While this study will more fully document the number of credentialed women in the Church of the Nazarene, I have been unable to find any data covering the entire twentieth century for trends in fundamentalism, or a change in the social status of the church's members, and will therefore not attempt to test these theories.

The purpose of this thesis is to more fully document the number of credentialed women in the Church of the Nazarene. In doing so, I will take care to distinguish between the roles of pastor and evangelist. Using chi-square analysis I will test the hypothesis that women were more accepted in areas new to the Church of the Nazarene. In addition, I will discuss the effect which the district superintendent can have on the placement of women pastors. And finally, I will look at how several U.S. social changes helped shape the number of Nazarene women in ministry.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study needed to be compiled since no database was available which detailed the number of men and women in particular ministerial assignments from 1908 to 1995. To create such a database with the resources available, I determined that five year increments would provide enough information to cite trends occurring within the ministerial corp of the Church of the Nazarene.

Because the denomination was founded in 1908, that year became my starting point; however, I wanted to include the start of each decade in my incremental points of study.

Since I did not think much change would occur between 1908 and 1910, I moved to the year 1915, and then studied every fifth year through 1995. These years provided me with 18 points in time with which to see changes in the ministerial assignments held by woman in the Church of the Nazarene.

It was also determined that only credentialed

ministers would be counted for the study. A credentialed minister is one who holds either a district license or is ordained. The district license is a necessary step in the process of ordination; it also creates a mutual link of authority and accountability between the denomination and individual. Ministers who hold a district license are in the process of completing their educational requirements or are acquiring ministerial experience. Ordained ministers have met all the educational requirements of the denomination and have acquired at least two years of ministerial experience. All credentialed ministers claim the calling of God and have received the approval of the denomination.

The distinction of a credential is important because there are some lay pastors at every period of time within the study. The lay pastor, however, is one who does not profess a calling by God to full-time ministry, nor is he or she bound by the educational requirements of the denomination.

Two sources were used in compiling these statistics: district assembly journals were used for the study years

between 1908 through 1980, while computer records were available for the years 1985, 1990, and 1995.

The assembly journal is the official record of each district's yearly meeting. It records the minutes of the assembly, contains a directory of the churches in the district, reports several statistics for each church, and lists all credentialed individuals in the district. It is this listing of credentialed individuals, which appears in the journal under the headings "Elders" and "Licensed Ministers," that is the source for much of this study's data.

Collecting data from the journals presents several problems. The most notable is that gender is not indicated. Since gender is an important factor in analyzing the data for this study it had to be determined. Following is a description of the methods used to determine gender.

In most cases the journal listings have a title in front of the names of women, such as Mrs. or Miss. In these cases I feel quite confident the individuals are female, but there are many times when no title is given.

The men are rarely given a title; often they have only initials designating their first and middle names. With names such as Bertha and Betty, one can assume with confidence a female gender, even when no title is given. The problem comes with names such as Leslie and Pat, and when only initials are given. In cases such as this, I assume that the individual is male. Female gender is only concluded when some other piece of information points to such an assumption.

Some examples of additional information leading to the conclusion of female gender are as follows: when the name is found elsewhere in the journal with a feminine title, or when two individuals have the same last name and address and a double-check of the church directory lists them in such a way that a marriage relationship can be assumed. (For example, the Elders listing might include a John Jones and a Pat Jones, both with the same address. If the directory of churches listed them as John and Pat Jones, it was assumed that Pat was the wife of John, and not a brother or other male relative.) Therefore, without evidence of female gender, the assumption was always biased

toward male gender.

Another problem presented by the journals was that until 1955 the elders and licensed ministers listings did not include the individuals' assignments. Fortunately, I was able to determine which were pastors by comparing the names in the elders and licensed ministers lists to the pastors' names found in the church directory portion of the journal. Likewise, each journal contained a separate listing of evangelists, so that by comparing these names I was able to identify which of the elders and licensed ministers were evangelists. Other assignments such as missionary or educator were not standardly reported, making their value to this study useless. If an individual was neither a pastor nor an evangelist, he or she was placed in the "other" category.

The final problem presented by the journals is that districts do not hold their assemblies simultaneously. One district may hold its assembly in June while another may hold its in August. Since the journal becomes a record of the district at the time of the assembly, it becomes possible (although unlikely) for someone to be recorded as

a member of one district, and then move and be recorded as a member of another district, thereby being counted twice. Of course, the reverse is also possible. By moving from a district which has not yet held an assembly to one whose assembly is past, an individual might not be counted at all. It is difficult to say how often the above scenario takes place, but for the analysis in this study, it is assumed that any movement in one direction is balanced by movement in the other. It is at least helpful that membership can only be held in one district at a time.

The computer records used to compile data for the years 1985, 1990, and 1995 are from those kept by the General Secretary's Office at the headquarters for the Church of the Nazarene. The Nazarene Headquarters went to a computerized system in 1983 and has accurate histories for ministerial assignments from that time forward. Along with personal information, the database contains one record for each assignment held. Included within this data is a gender code, a credential code, a beginning and ending date for each assignment, a role code which indicates the type of assignment being held (pastor, evangelist, missionary,

educator, associate pastor, etc.), and the church name or place where this assignment is located.

This database made it possible for me to select only those people in the system who held a credential of elder or licensed minister on a particular date. The dates used were December 31, 1985, December 31, 1990, and February 22, 1995 (the day I downloaded the data). I was then able to crosstab the data by gender and role. Since the data from 1908 through 1980 included only three role categories (pastor, evangelist, and other), the computer data was condensed to those same roles for comparability.

By choosing a particular date within the year, it is possible for a person who had pastored for most of the year to be counted in another category. For example, it is possible for someone who had pastored 10 months in 1990 to be counted as a missionary (and therefore included in "others") for that year if that is what his or her assignment was on December 31. However, it was assumed that December 31 would represent a relatively stable point within the year as concerns assignment changes, and that any change in assignment by one person would be balanced by

a change in an assignment for another person.

The final step in compiling the data was to locate the female pastors by county in the United States. For the years from 1908 to 1980 this was accomplished by looking up the cities and states recorded in the journals in a Rand McNally *Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide*. In most cases the home address was used to determine county location. In the few cases where no home address was listed, the church address was used. The home address was preferable since in some cases a pastor was assigned to more than one church. In situations where a city covered more than one county, the zip code was checked to determine which county the pastor lived in. In cases where no zip code was available, the pastor was located in the county which contained most of the population of the city, designated in the *Atlas* by being the county listed first. Once the county name was known, the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) code was recorded so that this data could be mapped.

County locations for the years from 1985, 1990, and 1995 were determined by the computer records at Nazarene

Headquarters. The assignment files for those pastoring include a church number which can be linked to a statistics file for the church. It is the statistics file which contains the state and county FIPS codes. It should be noted that these FIPS codes give the county locations for the churches, not the home addresses, as was used in the previous study points. However, none of the women pastoring in 1985, 1990, and 1995 were doing so in more than one church. It is also reasonable to assume that in most cases the county location of the church and home address are the same.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER ROLES IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

The patterns for ministerial roles held by credentialed women within the Church of the Nazarene are strikingly different than for their male counterparts. While the number of men in pastoral roles showed steady increases from 1908 to 1990, the number of women have not. Women comprised 43% of evangelists in 1908, but that percentage has declined steadily. Proportionately, women today have a less prominent role within the ministerial force of the Church of the Nazarene than at any other time.

Pastoral Roles

Several denominations have only recently decided to ordain women. Ordination provides access to church leadership positions, most notably, pastoral ministry. Since the polity of the Church of the Nazarene has always allowed for the ordination of women, a more historical

perspective may be gained by comparing the changes in pastoral positions held by women and men within the denomination.

Within the Church of the Nazarene, women show numeric increases in pastoral positions from 1908 through 1935, even though their percentage of the total peaked back in 1925 (Table 1). From 1925 through 1935, the number of women in pastoral roles, although increasing, did not keep pace with the number of men. The rapid growth of male pastors in comparison to female pastors can be seen in Illustration 1.

After 1935 and continuing through 1950 there were small declines in the number of women pastors; however, these small numeric declines only accelerated the percentage declines because the number of male pastors continued to increase.

1955 stands out as an unusual year for women in pastoral roles. It marks the peak of the number of women pastors in the Church of the Nazarene. The gain of 86 female pastors from the 1950 total also represents the largest numeric increase for any of the five year periods

Table 1. Credentialed Ministers by Gender and Role in the Church of the Nazarene*

| Year | Male Pastors | | % Female Pastors | | Male Evangelists | | % Female Evangelists | | Total | | % Total | |
|------|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Pastors | Female Pastors | Evangelists | Female Evangelists | Evangelists | Female Evangelists | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| 1908 | 140 | 13 | 47 | 36 | 43.4% | 561 | 121 | 17.7% | | | | |
| 1915 | 373 | 33 | 63 | 26 | 29.2% | 1,168 | 197 | 14.4% | | | | |
| 1920 | 607 | 83 | 251 | 91 | 26.6% | 1,799 | 435 | 19.5% | | | | |
| 1925 | 843 | 117 | 188 | 68 | 26.6% | 2,073 | 527 | 20.3% | | | | |
| 1930 | 1,087 | 136 | 207 | 65 | 23.9% | 2,469 | 646 | 20.7% | | | | |
| 1935 | 1,498 | 176 | 317 | 94 | 22.9% | 3,022 | 767 | 20.2% | | | | |
| 1940 | 1,893 | 160 | 297 | 108 | 26.7% | 3,633 | 848 | 18.9% | | | | |
| 1945 | 2,301 | 150 | 378 | 112 | 22.9% | 4,382 | 878 | 16.7% | | | | |
| 1950 | 2,828 | 148 | 436 | 120 | 21.6% | 5,371 | 898 | 14.3% | | | | |
| 1955 | 3,517 | 234 | 499 | 117 | 19.0% | 6,214 | 875 | 12.3% | | | | |
| 1960 | 3,772 | 189 | 476 | 101 | 17.5% | 6,501 | 804 | 11.0% | | | | |
| 1965 | 3,974 | 148 | 476 | 63 | 11.7% | 7,182 | 724 | 9.2% | | | | |
| 1970 | 4,046 | 110 | 491 | 57 | 10.4% | 8,077 | 660 | 7.6% | | | | |
| 1975 | 4,096 | 82 | 478 | 45 | 8.6% | 9,170 | 605 | 6.2% | | | | |
| 1980 | 4,150 | 72 | 432 | 37 | 7.9% | 9,618 | 591 | 5.8% | | | | |
| 1985 | 4,497 | 52 | 280 | 19 | 6.4% | 9,583 | 508 | 5.0% | | | | |
| 1990 | 4,584 | 65 | 283 | 20 | 6.6% | 10,371 | 663 | 6.0% | | | | |
| 1995 | 4,439 | 76 | 285 | 23 | 7.5% | 10,884 | 783 | 6.7% | | | | |

*The category of "Other" credentialed ministers is not shown here. It can be found in Table 2 on page 30.

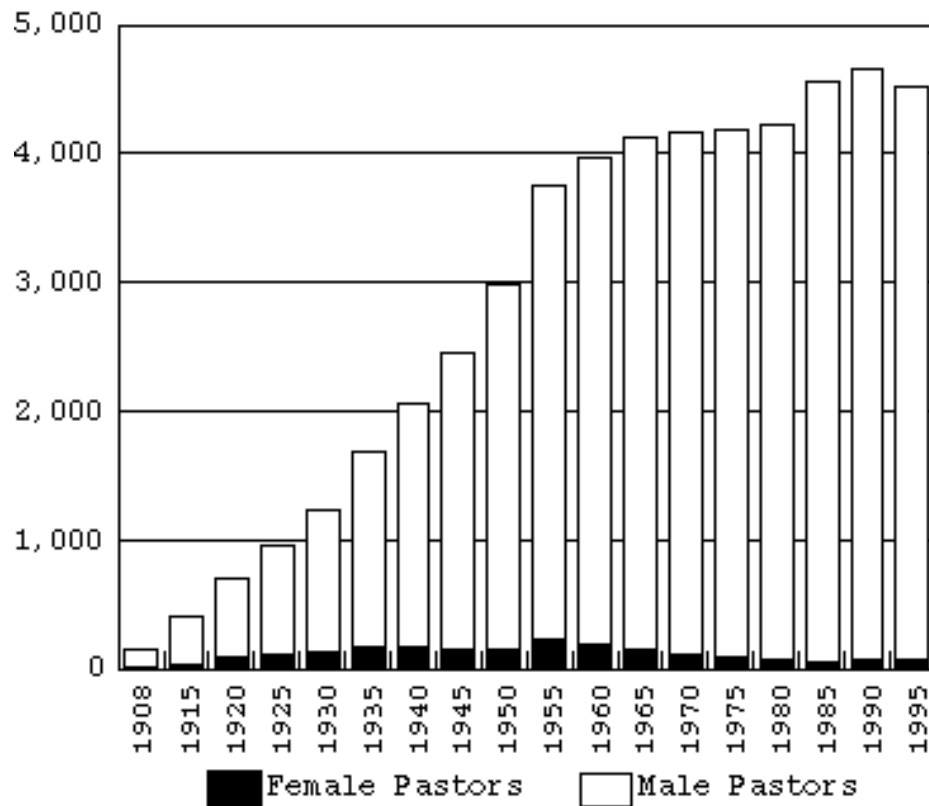


Illustration 1. Pastors in the Church of the Nazarene by Gender

in the study. Interestingly, the actual total number of credentialed women fell from 898 to 875 for the period from 1950 to 1955. It should also be noted that the number of men in pastoral roles increased by 689 for the same period, which also represents the largest numeric gain for male pastors.

The gains for women in pastoral positions were short

lived, however, and again declined every year in both number and percent through 1985. Finally, small numeric and percentage gains appeared in 1990 and 1995. The change in male pastoral positions from 1990 to 1995 should also be noted since there was a decline of 145, the only decline recorded for males.

Evangelist Roles

Evangelists in the Church of the Nazarene travel from place to place preaching the Gospel. They typically are not financially supported by any single church or district, but receive offerings at the places where they preach. An evangelist is usually invited to preach by a church, a group of churches, or a district for special meetings known as revivals. A revival may be similar to a regular worship service but is generally more evangelistic in nature and will meet for 3 to 5 consecutive days, sometimes longer.

At the start of the denomination in 1908, almost half (43%) of the evangelists were female. (See Table 1.) This percentage declined steadily through 1985, although there was a brief exception in 1940. From 1985 to 1995 there was

little change in either the number or percentage of both male and female evangelists.

Numerically, the high point of 120 women evangelists in the Church of the Nazarene was reached in 1950. From that point until 1985 there was a consistent loss in the number of female evangelists.

The male evangelists reached their high of 499 in 1955. For the next 20 years the number of male evangelists was relatively stable. Then, from 1975 to 1980 there was a 10% drop in their number. This was followed by an even bigger loss from 1980 to 1985. The total decline in the number of male evangelists from 1975 to 1985 was 198 (41%).

It is important to note this change in the number of male evangelists because the pattern from 1955 to 1990 is significantly different from the number of male pastors. One would expect the pattern of steady growth in the number of male pastors to be paralleled by the number of male evangelists. This relationship seems to be true for the women since female evangelists display a pattern of numeric growth and decline that is similar to that of female

pastors. In fact, a relationship of steady growth in both male evangelists and pastors can be seen from 1908 to 1955; but then a change occurs. While the number of men in pastoral roles continued to increase from 1955 to 1990, the number in evangelist roles plateaued and then declined.

The data concerning evangelists can be interpreted to mean that women have become less and less accepted as evangelists in the Church of the Nazarene. But one could also conclude that the role of the evangelist itself is less accepted. The patterns of growth and decline suggest less of a distinction between male and female evangelists than there is between an evangelist and a pastor.

Illustration 2 shows the decline of both male and female evangelists since 1955.

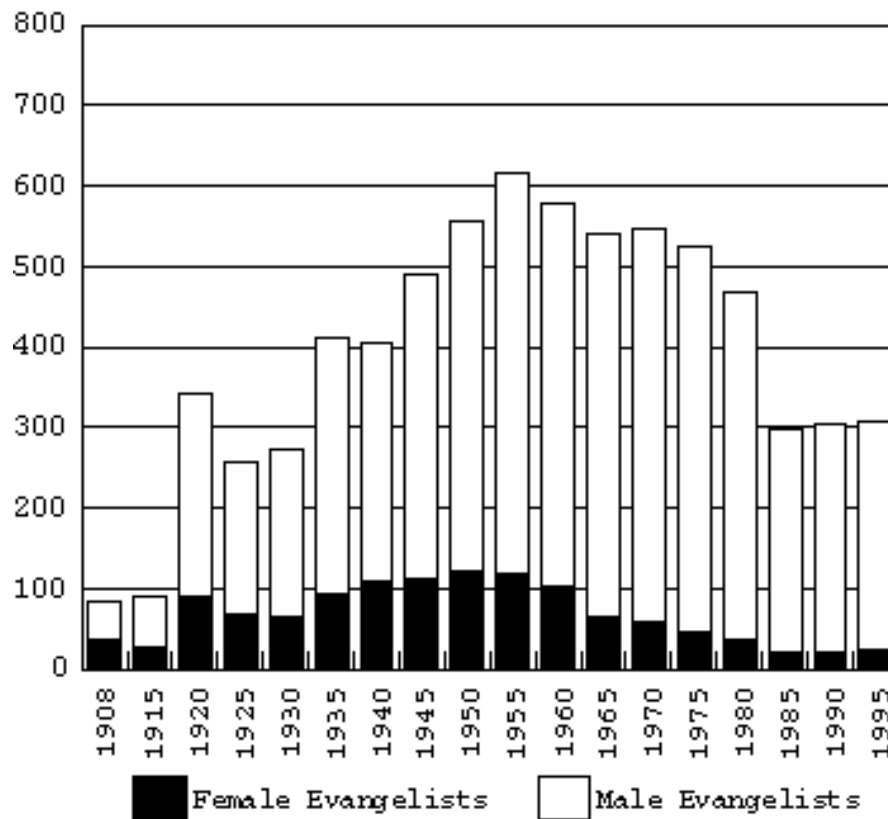


Illustration 2. Evangelists in the Church of the Nazarene by Gender

All Credentialed Roles

There are many other roles in the Church of the Nazarene besides pastor and evangelist. Some other roles include educator, chaplain, missionary, associate minister, district and International Headquarters administrative positions, and those who have retired. I have not taken the time to count these various roles separately because

much of the information is unavailable for the first 50 years of the denomination. Therefore, I will refer to these roles here as "other."

When men's and women's roles are considered together the overall number increases every year with the single exception of 1985, which had a small decrease. This overall trend parallels the trend for all males. The women's total looks almost flat in comparison to the men, but there are actually three well-defined periods of movement. From 1908 to 1950 the total number of women showed small but steady increases. From 1950 to 1985 there were small, steady decreases. Finally, from 1985 to 1995, the pattern returned to increases (Illustration 3).

We have already noted the continual increase in the number of male pastors from 1908 to 1990, but another look at Illustration 1 shows that the increases were very small from 1965 to 1980. It is almost a plateau. However, this does not seem to have affected the increases in the total number of credentialed males as seen in Illustration 3. Increases in the number of "other" males for this time period keeps the overall trend for males climbing.

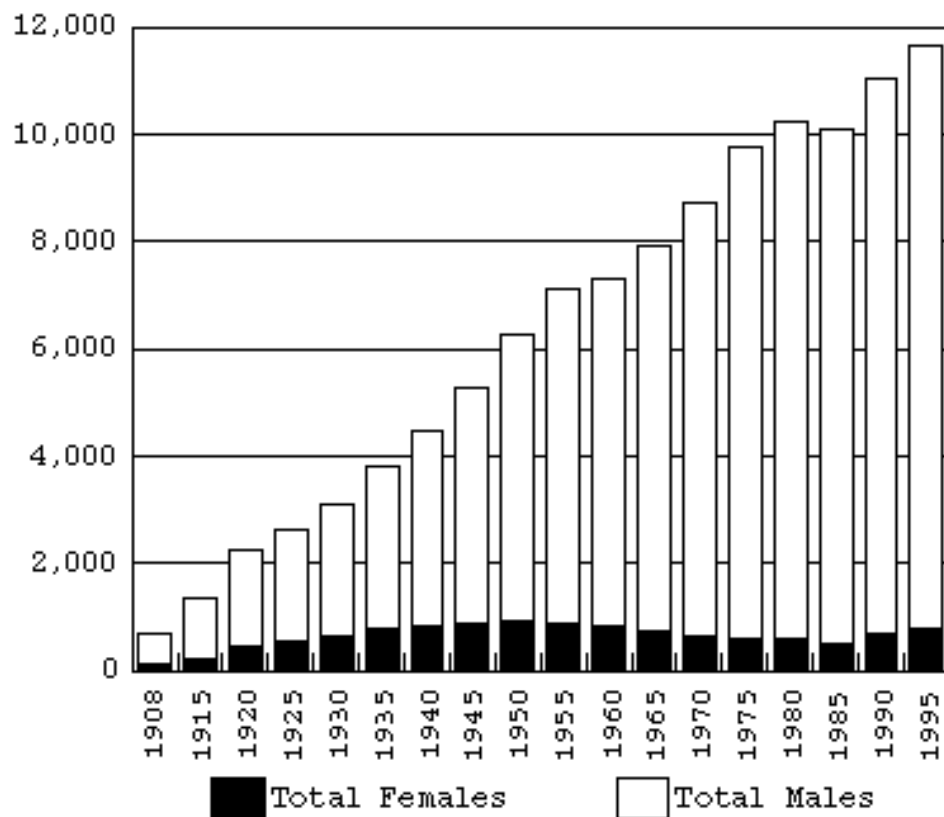


Illustration 3. Total Credentialed Ministers in the Church of the Nazarene by Gender

In a similar way, increases in the number of females in the "other" category offset losses in pastoral positions from 1935 to 1950. Was there another ministerial role which women were encouraged to pursue rather than pastoral ministry? It is likely that many of the women in the "other" category for this time period were involved in missionary work. My reasoning for this suggestion is based

on work by R. Pierce Beaver who found that the first half of the twentieth century saw impressive increases in the number of women in foreign missionary work, causing them to easily outnumber the men.¹ In any case, females in the "other" category have always accounted for more than half of the total number of credentialed women (Table 2).

Table 2. "Other" Credentialed Ministers by Gender in the Church of the Nazarene

| Year | Male "Others" | % of Total Males | Female "Others" | % of Total Females |
|------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1908 | 374 | 66.7% | 72 | 59.5% |
| 1915 | 732 | 62.7% | 138 | 70.1% |
| 1920 | 941 | 52.3% | 261 | 60.0% |
| 1925 | 1,042 | 50.3% | 342 | 64.9% |
| 1930 | 1,175 | 47.6% | 445 | 68.9% |
| 1935 | 1,207 | 39.9% | 497 | 64.8% |
| 1940 | 1,443 | 39.7% | 580 | 68.4% |
| 1945 | 1,703 | 38.9% | 616 | 70.2% |
| 1950 | 2,107 | 39.2% | 630 | 70.2% |
| 1955 | 2,198 | 35.4% | 524 | 59.9% |
| 1960 | 2,253 | 34.7% | 514 | 63.9% |
| 1965 | 2,732 | 38.0% | 513 | 70.9% |
| 1970 | 3,540 | 43.8% | 493 | 74.7% |
| 1975 | 4,596 | 50.1% | 478 | 79.0% |
| 1980 | 5,036 | 52.4% | 482 | 81.6% |
| 1985 | 4,806 | 50.2% | 437 | 86.0% |
| 1990 | 5,504 | 53.1% | 578 | 87.2% |
| 1995 | 6,160 | 56.6% | 684 | 87.4% |

¹R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968).

"Other" roles have also become an increasing percentage of the male ministerial corps. From 1908 to 1960 the percentage of males categorized as "others" declined by 32%, even though the actual number of male "others" increased by 1,879. Obviously, many more males were finding work as pastors or evangelists during this time period. But from 1960 to 1995 the trend changed. The percentage of males categorized as "other" rose from 34.7% to 56.6%.

Since 1965 the percentages of those categorized as "other" for both males and females has been on the rise. The increase in "others" can clearly be seen in Illustration 4, which shows the number of all credentialed ministers in the Church of the Nazarene by role (without regard to gender). The Illustration points to several changes which occurred in the Church of the Nazarene around 1955, and to possible explanations for the increasing "other" category.

The number of new church starts declined dramatically

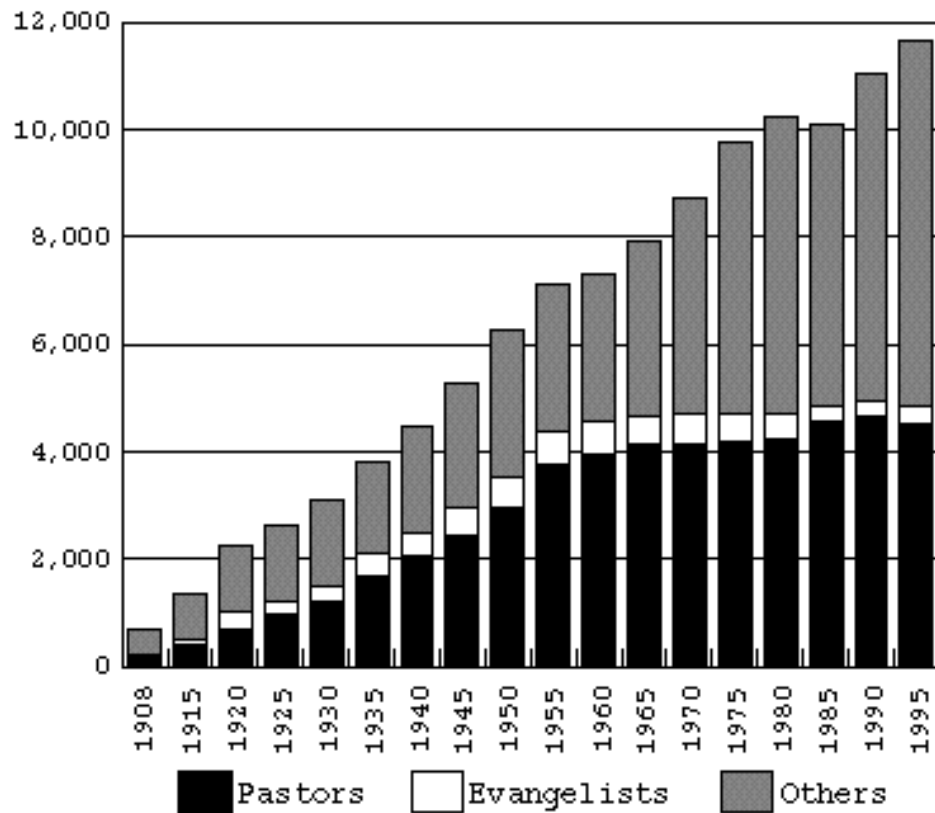


Illustration 4. Total Credentialed Ministers in the Church of the Nazarene by Role

after 1955,² leading to a leveling off in the total number of pastors. Expanding educational and administrative systems³ created more opportunities for "other" ministries.

²Kenneth E. Crow, "The Life Cycle of Nazarene Churches" (Kansas City: Church Growth Research Center, Church of the Nazarene Headquarters, 28 September 1987), 12.

³Laird, "A History", 142-143.

And, as existing churches have increased in size⁴ the role of associate minister has become more popular.

Another possibility for the increasing size of the "other" category is that more and more ministers are actually without an assignment. They currently do not hold a position within the Nazarene system even though they hold a credential. Ken Crow, in a study for the Church of the Nazarene concerning the composition of the 1987 ministerial corps, estimated there to be 1,000 more ministers than there were appropriate positions in which to place them.⁵ If part of the growth in the "other" category is due to an increase in the number of unassigned ministers (especially males), it may be that competition for a limited number of positions has negatively affected the placement of females.

⁴Crow, "The Life Cycle," 8.

⁵Kenneth E. Crow, "Pastors in the Church of the Nazarene: A Report of a Study of the Ministerial Corps" (Kansas City: Church Growth Research Center, Church of the Nazarene Headquarters, 22 March 1988), 18.

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN PASTORS IN PIONEER AREAS

Evidence suggests that shortages among male clergy leads some denominations to ordaining and using women in pastoral positions.¹ It has already been noted that the Church of the Nazarene has from the time of its organization ordained women, but the incongruity between the number of male and female clergy indicates that a number of internal and external forces have shaped the use of female clergy. While there never seems to have been an overall shortage in the number of male clergy available in the Church of the Nazarene, it is possible that particular districts may have experienced either shortages of male pastors, or an unwillingness of males to pastor in certain areas--particularly, pioneer areas.

I use the term pioneer area to convey the sense of a new area of work to the Church of the Nazarene, not in the

¹Chaves, pp. 846-847.

sense of western migration and settlement. Pioneer areas for the Church of the Nazarene, whether they be an expansion into the Indiana-Ohio area or new developments in the Northwest, could be defined by the number of churches in the district. Having only a few churches in a district would indicate that the district is expected to do a lot of pioneering to expand the denomination. I am suggesting here that smaller districts would be more prone to male pastor shortages because these districts would have fewer resources and a perceived lower status, and that we should therefore find a higher percentage of female pastors in these smaller districts.

Smaller districts might also be perceived as mission fields, and therefore may be more accepting of women in pastoral positions. Women's involvement with foreign missions go back to the early part of the nineteenth century with the formation of non-denominational organizations called Female Foreign Missionary Societies.² The growth of these societies, particularly during the first women's movement, eventually led to the full

participation of women as missionaries by the early twentieth century. To describe the trend of women in missionary positions, R. Pierce Beaver used a 1933 report by William Lennox, which looked at the health and turnover rate of missionaries associated with six different denominations. Lennox found that in 1830, 49% of the missionaries were female. At that time, missionaries were typically a husband and wife team, with the husband being associated most closely with the missionary role. By 1880 the percentage of missionaries who were female had increased to 57%, and by 1929, 67% of the missionaries were female.³ Women, many of them single, had become accepted as ministers on the mission field. The role of women in missions is evident even today within the Church of the Nazarene. Out of the 24 directors employed by the Nazarene Headquarters, only 2 are women; one of those is the director of the Nazarene World Mission Society.⁴

With the acceptance of women as missionaries to

³Ibid., 109.

⁴The other woman is the director of the Children's Ministries department.

foreign countries, the next step for women was to be accepted as pastors in their own country. This should not have been a large leap since many denominations already referred to their work in the U.S. as home missions. But to what extent could districts in the U.S. be viewed as a mission field? That probably depends on the size of the district. Again, the hypothesis here is that smaller districts--that is, districts without many churches--are more easily perceived as mission fields, and therefore will have a higher percentage of women as pastors.

Using the data collected, district size was determined by adding the number of male and female pastors. While this number may actually be slightly lower than the total number of churches--a church may have been in the middle of a pastoral change, or one pastor may have been pastoring two churches--it should still accurately represent the amount of work taking place within the district.

Each district within each year was considered a separate case.⁵ This produced a total of 971 cases

⁵The 1908 data was dropped from the analysis because

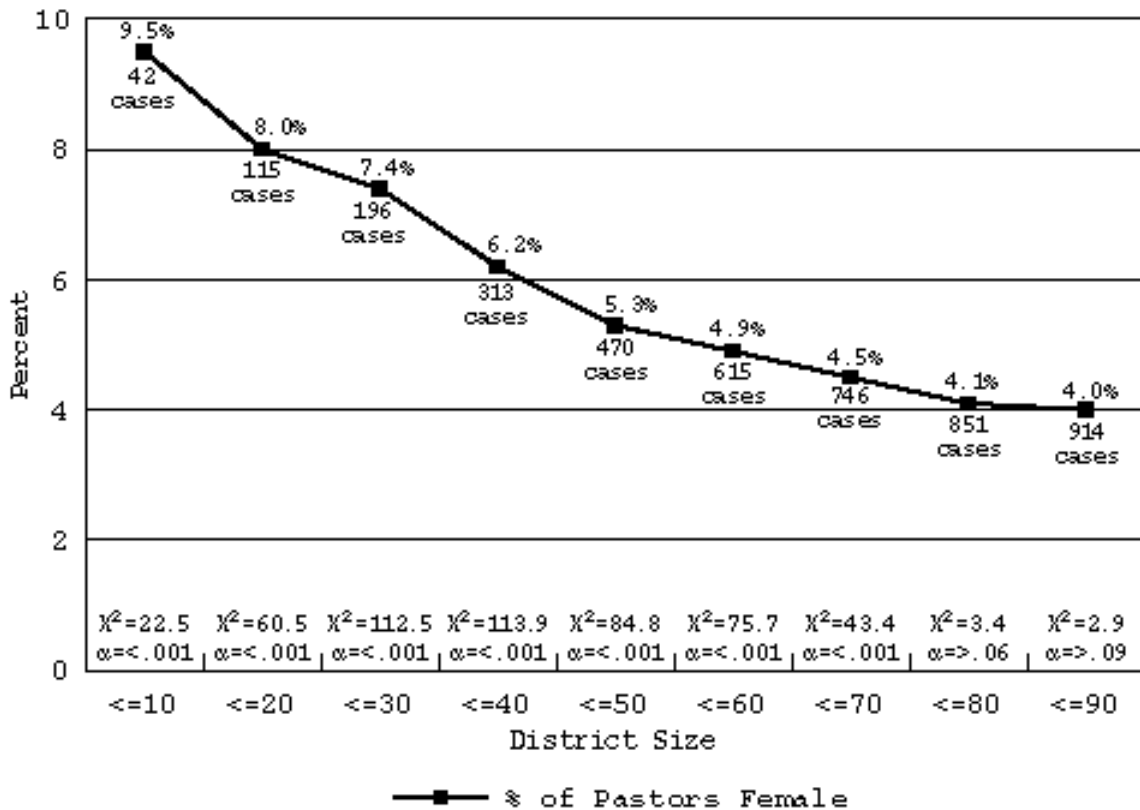
observed. Within the cases were a total of 50,536 pastors; 48,505 of whom were males (96%), and 2,031 of whom were females (4%). The null hypothesis would assume that district size would have no effect on the above distribution of male and female pastors.

Using all 971 cases the districts were broken into two groups: those with less than or equal to 10 pastors (42 cases), and those with more than 10 pastors (929). Within these two groups, women represented 9.5% of the pastors in districts with less than 10 total pastors, and 4.0% in the districts with more than 10 total pastors. This procedure was repeated so that two groups were formed at 20 pastors, 30 pastors, and so on up to 90 pastors.

Chi-square analysis was then used to test if the distributions observed between male and female pastors was significantly different from what would be expected by chance. By default, chi-square assumes an equal distribution between variables. Since I knew my variables of female and male pastors were not equally distributed, I computed my own expected frequencies for each grouping based on the overall distribution of 4% female and 96%

male. By doing this I isolated district size as the independent variable. Illustration 5 summarizes the results for both the percentage of female pastors in each grouping and the chi-square analysis.

The percentages from the above procedure clearly show



Notes: District size is based on the number of pastors serving in the district.
 Total cases=971.
 Expected frequencies for χ^2 computed from observed distribution of all cases (96% male, 4% female).

Illustration 5. Distribution of Pastors by Gender and District Size

that as district size increases, the percent of pastors who are female decreases. The chi-square analysis is significant at less than .001 for each district size grouping up to 70 pastors. At the 80 and 90 pastor groupings the distribution of male and female pastors is close enough to the overall distribution of 96% male and 4% female that the chi-square statistic is no longer significant below the .05 level. Based upon these results the null hypothesis is rejected. Pioneer districts, whether it is because of a shortage in male clergy, their association as a mission field, or some other factor, have a significantly higher percentage of pastors who are female.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN PASTORS AND THE EFFECT OF DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

District superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene provide leadership for both clergy and laity. Their role in church hierarchy may be understood as a conduit through which denominational interests are conveyed to the local church, and through which local church needs are communicated back to the denomination. Their responsibilities give them the power to organize new churches, remove pastors from existing churches, and mediate disputes at the local church level. District superintendents are also responsible for recommending prospective pastors to the local church board when pastoral positions are open. This puts them in a strategic position to affect the placement of women ministers.

In a study of denominational executives, pastors, and laypersons in American Baptist Churches (ABC), Edward Lehman identified the need for organizational viability as

a source of concern which erects barriers to the placement of women in ministry.¹ Two of the areas identified by Lehman are of particular interest to me. The first is the perception, displayed by both denominational executives and lay persons, that other church members will not accept a woman as senior pastor. The second is that the role of denominational executives is responsible for promoting harmony, not discord, and thereby discourages any attempt to place women in pastoral ministry.

The position of district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene is similar to that of the executive and area ministers Lehman questioned in the ABC. Lehman reported that the executives viewed women to be just as capable as men for pastoral ministry, but that the executives perceived formidable barriers to the placement of women because the executives believed many church members would not accept a female pastor.²

¹Edward C. Lehman, Jr., "Organizational Resistance to Women in Ministry," *Foundations: A Baptist Journal of History, Theology, and Ministry* XXIV, No. 3 (July-September 1981).

²*Ibid.*, 249.

If district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene have the perception that the local church does not want a female pastor, it may be because the perception is true. In a 1995 survey, active members in the Church of the Nazarene were asked to respond to the statement, "I would welcome a woman as senior pastor of our congregation."³ The results, shown in Table 3, indicate some division as to the acceptance of woman in pastoral

Table 3. Members' Responses to the Statement, "I Would Welcome a Woman as Senior Pastor of Our Congregation."

| | All Figures are Percentages | | | | | | | | N=524 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|-----|---------------------------|---------|------|-------|
| | Total | by Gender | | by Age | | by Church Worship Size | | | |
| | | Male | Female | <55 | 55+ | <100 | 100-249 | 250+ | |
| Strongly Agree | 12 | 4 | 14 | 12 | 6 | 16 | 13 | 8 | |
| Agree | 32 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 36 | 26 | |
| Unsure/Neutral | 34 | 34 | 30 | 29 | 35 | 31 | 33 | 31 | |
| Disagree | 17 | 22 | 18 | 18 | 24 | 12 | 10 | 25 | |
| Strongly Disagree | 6 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 6 | 12 | 7 | 11 | |

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: ANSR Poll, May 1995.

³"ANSR Poll," survey by the Association of Nazarene Sociologists of Religion (Kansas City: Church Growth Research Center, Church of the Nazarene Headquarters, May 1995).

positions. The most common position for members to take on the issue is to be unsure or neutral, and even though the strongly agree and agree categories total to 44% overall, almost 1 in 4 disagree or strongly disagree. Even if a majority of members within a single church were willing to have a female pastor, the risk of losing those members who do not want a woman is a conflict which any church would rather do without. Knowing this, many district superintendents may not try to place females seeking pastoral positions.

This brings me to the second issue of Lehman's which I think is important. Just as Lehman found with ABC executive and area ministers, I believe Nazarene district superintendents understand their role in terms of doing what is best for maintaining the viability of the local church, which they interpret as promoting harmony rather than causing conflict. The unfortunate result is that the interest of a whole group of prospective pastors--women--is not represented.

The positive side is that there seems to be a few district superintendents who are demonstrating that the

choice between harmony and the placement of female pastors does not have to be an either/or situation. The data collected for this study show two districts since 1990 with a percentage of pastors who were female well above the national total. In 1990, 10.4% of the Houston District pastors were female, compared to the national total of 1.4%. And in 1995, 6.0% of the Pittsburgh District pastors were female, compared to 1.7% for the nation.

Roy Fuller, District Superintendent of the Pittsburgh District, insists that all he is trying to do is "place the best person possible in a pastoral position." Since my earlier research had indicated that women would be used in areas where there was a shortage of male clergy, I asked Fuller whether men were available for these positions. He indicated that they were. When asked whether the churches were resistant to female pastors, Fuller pointed out that he receives the most resistance from women age 55 and over. He handles this by simply explaining that God calls both men and women into ministry. Fuller says that he is not aware of any members who have left the church because a woman was placed as the pastor. Fuller did suggest that

large churches do not want female pastors and will only hire a female as an associate, but he believes there are women currently pastoring in his district who will someday lead large churches.⁴

Some of the data in Table 3 seems to support Fuller's statements. Only 6% of those age 55 or over strongly agreed that they would welcome a woman as senior pastor of their current church, compared to 12% for those under age 55; however, 30% of both age groups either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The effect of age was even more conclusive in a United Methodist study. A total of 1,387 clergy and laity responded to a survey on attitudes toward women in ministry. The researchers found that younger respondents were more supportive of clergywomen, and older respondents were less supportive.⁵

In regard to gender, the ANSR Poll data seem to show

⁴Roy Fuller, interview by author, telephone, Kansas City, MO., 4 June 1996.

⁵Susan Swan Mura, Mearle L. Griffith, and C. David Lundquist, "Survey of United Methodist Opinion: Attitudes Toward Women in the Ordained Ministry" (Office of Research, General Council on Ministries, The United Methodist Church, Dayton, OH, August 1988), 1.

that females are somewhat more receptive to women pastors than are males. Again, this is echoed by The United Methodist study in which women were found to be generally more supportive of clergywomen than men.⁶ But the variable that seems to support Fuller's statements the most is congregational size. When the categories of strongly agree and agree are grouped together, and the same is done for disagree and strongly disagree, the only item which has a higher percentage of those that disagree rather than agree is churches with 250 or more in worship attendance. Once again, the United Methodist study reports that, "As the size of the congregation increases, the projected rate of acceptance decreases."⁷ In Lehman's terms, members in a large church feel that the placement of a woman as senior pastor would risk the church's organizational viability.

If district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene are not trying to place female pastoral candidates, their apathy is certainly understandable in the

⁶Ibid., 1.

⁷Ibid., 9.

face of lay resistance. However, the district superintendent position is critical to the development of women in pastoral positions. The district superintendent's position is responsible for representing the interest of female clergy, as well as the interest of the local church. They have the power to recommend female pastoral candidates to local churches, and they have the influence to teach that God calls both men and women into ministry. At least a few districts have shown it can be done.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON NAZARENE WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Organizations are affected by the culture in which they are situated. It should come as no surprise that social changes within the United States affect the Church of the Nazarene. The U.S. has experienced many social changes during the twentieth century, but I have chosen four which I believe have had the most influence on the number of Nazarene women in ministry: the women's movement, the proliferation of household laborsaving devices, the baby boom, and the religious revivalism of the 1950s.

Steven M. Buechler divides the U.S. women's movement into three periods during the twentieth century: from 1900 to 1920 there was a renewal of the nineteenth century women's suffrage movement, followed by a dormant period from the 1920s to the 1960s, which was followed by the current women's movement from the 1960s to today.¹ I have

¹Steven M. Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States: Woman Suffrage, Equal Rights, and Beyond* (New

combined these time periods with the data of credentialed Nazarene women in Illustration 6.

The women's rights movement started as far back as 1848, but during the period from 1900 to 1920 it emphasized suffrage. During the suffrage movement the number of credentialed Nazarene women more than tripled. Unlike the

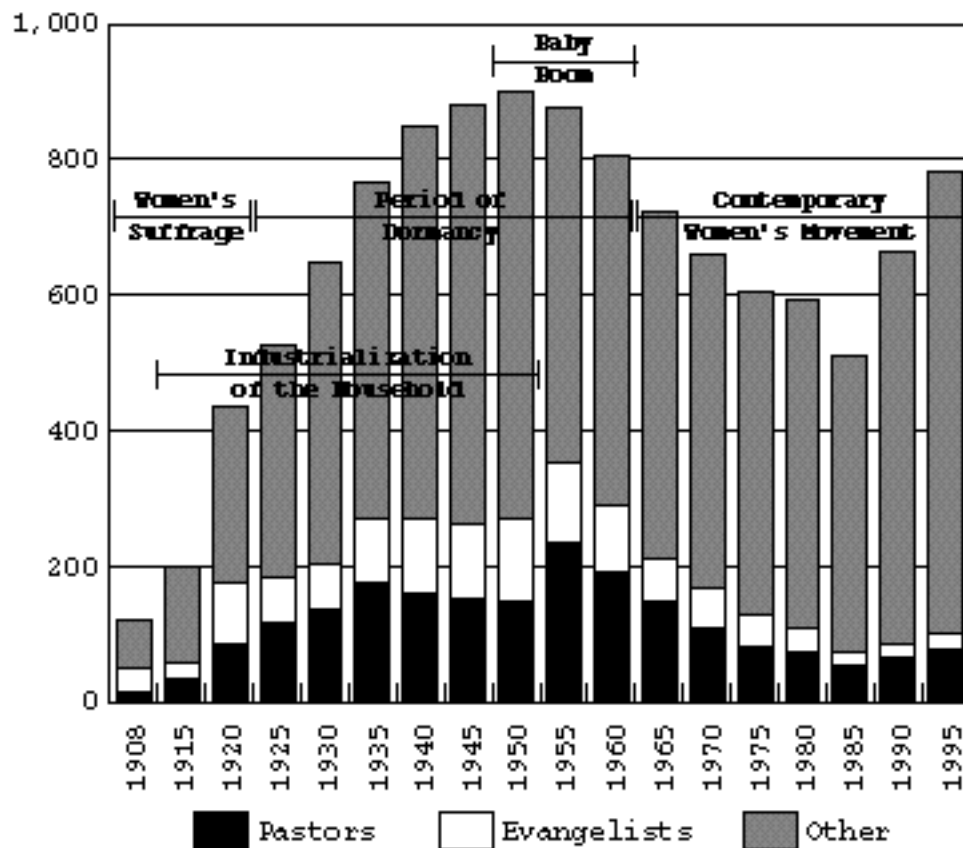


Illustration 6. Credentialed Nazarene Women and Social Movements

women's movement during the 1800s, the suffrage movement did not challenge the prevailing assumption of women as homemakers. In some ways, the suffrage movement of the early 1900s actually supported the homemaker stereotype by arguing that the women's vote would help the temperance movement, which would help promote better family life--the accepted domain of women.² Religion was also seen as a support for family life, and many women were involved in religious activities. Therefore, in the early 1900s, women's activism in religion and social issues were not seen as contradictory to the family.³ And so it seems, neither was the credentialling of Nazarene women for ministry.

After winning suffrage in 1920, the next 30 years saw continuing increases in the number of credentialled Nazarene women. The women's movement, in its period of dormancy, was still not seen as a threat to family life. Furthermore, the pattern of increases for Nazarene women in ministry is consistent with the continual increase in the

²Ibid, 92-97.

³Ibid, 15.

percent of women in the U.S. labor force, which rose from 22.7% in 1920, to 33.9% in 1950.⁴

The period from 1910 to 1950 has also been described as the industrialization of the household.⁵ Technology changed such things as the preparation of food, the washing of clothes, family transportation, and utility systems, just to name a few. But many of the so-called labor saving devices that were developed did not actually result in more time for women outside the home. Ruth Schwartz Cowan writes:

What changed most markedly was the productivity of these workers: modern technology enabled the American housewife of 1950 to produce singlehandedly what her counterpart of 1850 needed a staff of three or four to produce: a middle-class standard of health and cleanliness for herself, her spouse, and her children.⁶

⁴Francine D. Blau and Marianne A. Ferber, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 70.

⁵Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Twentieth-Century Changes in Household Technology," in *Family in Transition*, 6th ed., eds. Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), 67.

⁶*Ibid*, 67.

Through increased productivity, product marketing, and new utilities, the industrialization of the home served to increase the bond between women and domestic chores. It may be said that what women produced was family, but because women's productivity increased, work outside the family--including the ministry--was still not seen as a threat to family life.

So why would the number of credentialled Nazarene women start declining in the latter half of the 1950s, particularly when the number of women in the U.S. labor force continued to increase steadily? From 1950 to 1984 the percentage of women in the labor force increased by almost 20% (the 1984 figure was 53.7%)⁷. In contrast, the number of credentialled Nazarene women dropped 43% from 1950 to 1985.

The decline in the number of credentialled Nazarene women started during the baby boom. It may be that the mothers of those children began to feel that the best way to serve God was to care for the children God had given them, rather than serving God through positions recognized

by the Church. The household technologies developed in the previous 40 years would have aided this view of women's roles.

The contemporary women's movement seemed to hasten the decline of credentialled Nazarene women, particularly those in pastoral positions. In contrast to the suffrage movement, the contemporary women's movement was seen as a threat to the family. This resurgence of the women's movement may be understood as a response to the changing role of women brought about by the industrialization of the home and the baby boom. The role of women as homemakers increasingly contradicted the growing percentage of women in the labor force, and therefore represented a threat to the traditional family.

With the successes of the contemporary women's movement--evidenced by such things as Congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion in *Roe v. Wade*--antifeminist groups also began to mobilize. The antifeminist countermovement, composed mainly of conservative and religious groups, wanted to conserve women's roles within

the traditional family and in homemaking.⁸ A good example of the antifeminist countermovement is Focus on the Family, an organization founded in 1977 by James Dobson. As their title suggests, Focus on the Family seeks to strengthen traditional Christian families.

The irony seems to be that both feminist groups and "family" groups recognized the problems faced by women in trying to work both in the home and outside the home. Their solutions, however, were opposites. The feminist movement pushed for changes in the family and for workplace equality, while their counterparts tried to conserve the traditional family and declare the primary function of women as homemakers. For the Church of the Nazarene, conservation of the traditional family may have meant fewer women in ministry.

Beside those already mentioned, there are clearly other social factors that influence the Church of the Nazarene and the women who minister within the denomination. One such factor was an increase in religious practice during the 1950s. Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara

Hargrove, and Adair T. Lummis write, "Although the 1950s have been seen as a regressive decade in the area of women's roles in the society, it was also a decade during which the ordination of women to full clergy roles was opened in major denominations such as the Methodist and the Presbyterian."⁹ Indeed, the 1950s represent a high point in the religious life of the U.S. According to the Princeton Religion Research Center the highest levels of church attendance for the U.S. population were in the 1950s (49% in 1954, 1955, and 1958).¹⁰

The data in Illustration 6 record a peak in the total number of Nazarene female ministers in 1950. However, as the total started to decline, the number of female pastors increased by 58% to a total of 234 in 1955. The baby boom may have affected the role of women toward homemaking, but it may have also accounted for the rise of church

⁹Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara Hargrove, Adair T. Lummis, *Women of the Cloth: A New Opportunity for the Churches* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 42.

¹⁰Robert Bezilla, ed., "Church Attendance Constant Through the Years," *Religion in America: 1992-1993* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Religion Research Center, 1993), 42.

attendance during the 1950s. The data gathered by the Princeton Religion Research Center indicates that parents generally want religious training for their children.¹¹ Along with increased church attendance came an increase in the number of churches. For the period from 1950 to 1955 the Church of the Nazarene gained 681 churches. This compares with a gain of only 348 churches from 1956 to 1961.¹² The baby boom may have provided the motivation for families to attend church services, and high church attendance produced more churches, and this helps explain the dramatic rise in the number of female Nazarene pastors that appeared between 1950 and 1955.

It is interesting to note that the past 10 years have seen an increase in the total number of credentialled women; however, most are still not being placed in pastoral

¹¹Robert Bezilla, ed., "Much Depends On Life Style," *Religion in America: 1992-1993* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Religion Research Center, 1993), 12.

¹²"Annual Statistics," (Kansas City: Church Growth Research Center, Church of the Nazarene, [1996]). (The gains in churches reported here are for both the U.S. and Canada; however, there are far fewer Nazarene churches in Canada.)

positions. Because these trends are recent it is more difficult to determine which social factors may be involved. What does seem clear is that the Church of the Nazarene is an organization which has been affected by the larger social movements that have occurred within the U.S. Although it is difficult to sort the many factors which affect a denomination like the Church of the Nazarene, it is apparent that the confluence of the women's movement, the industrialization of the home, the baby boom, and the increase of religiosity during the 1950s, has influenced the church's feelings toward women in ministry and their placement in ministerial positions.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

While a number of studies have examined various aspects of the history of, and resistance to, women in ministry, the Church of the Nazarene offers a unique perspective on the issue. Since their organization into a denomination in 1908, the Nazarenes have ordained women and have given them full access to all clergy positions in the Church. The Church's holiness doctrine and interpretation of Scriptures such as Acts 2:17 led them to recognize that God calls both men and women to preach the gospel. However, even though no change in polity has occurred, the data compiled for this study show changing patterns of women's roles in the Church of the Nazarene, and a diminishing percentage of the total clergy when compared to men.

In 1925, women represented 12.2% of Nazarene pastors. In 1955 the total number of female pastors was 234, the

highest numeric total recorded, but their percentage of the total number of pastors had declined to 6.2%. The growth in the number of male pastors had far outpaced that of the females. To make matters worse, after 1955 the number of female pastors declined steadily for the next 30 years while the number of male pastors continued to increase.

Both male and female evangelists show patterns of growth up to the 1950s and then declines. However, once again the growth in the number of male evangelists far outpaced that of the females. The overall decline in the number of evangelists since 1955 indicates their diminishing role within the Church of the Nazarene.

Women have represented as much as 20.7% of credentialed Nazarene ministers, having done so in 1930; but by 1995 women represented just 6.7% of the total credentialed ministers. The types of roles they fulfilled had also changed. In 1930 31.1% were either pastors or evangelists. By 1995 that percentage had dropped to just 12.6%; 87.4% were in "other" types of assignments.

While the number and percentage of female pastors has declined, chi-square analysis of district size reveals that

women are used in larger proportion in districts that are smaller in size. These smaller districts may either have some trouble in attracting male pastors, or, to the extent that the district size enables it to be perceived as a mission field, may be more accepting of female pastors.

District superintendents plays a key role. They are responsible for recommending the names of prospective pastors to churches with a pastoral opening. Because some church members express resistance to women in pastoral positions, the district superintendent is faced with a difficult choice and may be reluctant to recommend a female. When the interest of a local church's viability depends on promoting harmony among church members, the interests of God-called women are often left behind. However, there are at least a few examples of district superintendents who are willing to teach lay members that God calls both men and women into ministry.

There are also external factors that influence the Church of the Nazarene and its female ministerial corps. Social movements such as the women's movement, the industrialization of the home, the baby boom, and

revivalism all have ways of affecting the number and role of women in ministry. The suffrage movement in the early part of the twentieth century, combined with the temperance movement, actually enhanced the position of women as both activists and keepers of the family. In contrast to this, the contemporary women's movement was seen as a threat to the family. The number of Nazarene women in ministry increased and decreased accordingly.

The 1950s seem to have been a watershed for Nazarene female clergy. The baby boom and a decline in the number of new Nazarene churches being started seem to have contributed to the decline of women in ministry. At the same time, an increase in religious participation within the U.S. population may have prompted a brief increase in the number of female pastors for the Church of the Nazarene.

While this study has helped document changes within the ministerial corps of the Church of the Nazarene, the complex interaction between Nazarene members, Church polity and role expectations, combined with external social forces, requires more study to be done. The question to be

answered by Nazarenes is: Will the Church put into practice its theological understanding that God calls both men and women to the preach the gospel? The answer will be seen in the number of women the Church uses as pastors, evangelists, and other types of ministers in the future.

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