

I found a research article dealing with some underlying causes and/or further facilitators of the “stained glass ceiling.” It explained that one contributing factor to the scarcity of clergywomen was the fact that the current (male) ministers often felt their first priority was to maintain “harmony” in the church. Often, this takes the form of taking the more conservative path around issues.

It is often the case that clergy women cause a “stir” in the church, and as such, the Protestant ministers interviewed for this article would often bar the placement of clergy women for the purpose of placating the larger congregation.

Several things are of particular interest to me here. First, most of the ministers actually expressed that they *personally* have very little contention with women being clergy members, but they had to appeal to the masses and prevent such a notion from becoming a reality. I cannot help but wonder if the ministers *truthfully* feel this way, or if they were simply trying to appear less sexist. Either way, there are some pretty interesting implications.

If the ministers *actually* do not disapprove of women clergy, I find it very interesting that the leader of the church is, in a way, subordinate to the church. Rather than use their leadership position to influence and/or challenge their congregations’ gender perceptions, they must actually *submit* to the will of the church.

If the ministers *are not* being totally honest about their attitudes, I would imagine that there is an implication that they are at least partially embarrassed about their beliefs. I would think that if these ministers were not at all ashamed of their disapproval of clergywomen, they would openly express such an attitude; if they actually disapprove, yet “blame” the congregation for their actions, so to speak, it would seem to me that the ministers might be masking their true feelings to disguise a sexism that *they themselves* seem to be acknowledging.

Thanks,

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Source:

Lehman, Edward Jr. (1981). “Organizational Resistance to Women in Ministry.” *Sociological Analysis* Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 101-118