

II. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

1. **The proportion of women in leadership positions in the Episcopal Church has clearly increased over the last fifteen years.** Many more women have been ordained deacon or priest (3,481 in 2002 compared to 855 in 1987) and there are now 11 women bishops whereas there were none in 1987. Judging by the reports of the participating dioceses, women are significantly more represented on vestries as well. [See pages 8 & 9 for further information and discussion.]
2. **In 2002 as compared with 1987 fewer people at all levels of the church are aware that barriers to women's full participation in the church continue to exist.** At the national level the percentage of women and men disagreeing that sufficient opportunities exist has decreased from 81% to 69% among women and from 59 to 44 % among men. At the diocesan level the decrease was from 61% to 51% among women and from 52% to 33% among men, and at the congregational level was 42% to 29% among women and from 35% to 22% among men. [See page 10 for further information and discussion.]
3. **In general, acceptance of women in leadership positions is greatest at the national level and steadily decreases at the diocesan and congregational levels.** Acceptance also decreases the higher the position in the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church. For example, there is greater acceptance for a woman serving as Senior Warden or as an ordained assistant than for her being a rector, a senior staff person at the national church level or a bishop. Acceptance also reflects some geographic/cultural variations, decreasing in southern and rural areas. [See page 9 for further information and discussion.]
4. **There is more support at the congregational level in 2002 than in 1987 for using inclusive language referring to humans in worship services.** Women's support has increased from 37% to 52%, men's support from 41% to 50%. Inclusive language referring to God is considerably less acceptable for both men and women. However, two thirds of clergywomen are comfortable with female nouns and pronouns for God. [See pages 12 – 14 for further information and discussion.]
5. **Lay persons who regularly see an ordained woman in the pulpit and at the altar are significantly more likely to approve of women in all congregational leadership positions, including rector, than are those who only see men in these pastoral roles.** In illustration, in congregations where an ordained woman is on the staff, 81% of the women and 73% of the men would be willing to have a woman as rector, while in congregations with only male clergy, only 60% of the women and 50% of the men are willing to have a woman as rector. [See page 16 for further information and discussion.]
6. **Persons are more apt to see themselves as open to women in top church leadership positions than they are to believe that most members of their congregations would be.** In illustration, while fully 73% of the women and 64% of the men say they personally would be willing to have a woman as their rector, only 39% of the women and 31% of the men believe that most members of their congregations would accept a woman

as their rector. More respondents in 2002 than in 1987 believe that members of their congregation would be amenable to having a woman as their rector, but not if she has young children or is a lesbian with a partner. [See pages 17 & 18 for further information and discussion.]

7. **In 2002 at all levels of the church, ordaining ethnic minorities is a higher priority among both men and women than ordaining women.** In illustration, Among those on the national level, while 88% of the women and 75% of the men believe that more ethnic minorities should be ordained, 70% of the women and 31% of the men say it is important to ordain more women. On the diocesan level, the same differences emerge, but much more strongly among clergy than laity; in fact, lay persons are much less enthusiastic than clergy about ordaining ethnic minorities. [See pages 19-21 for further information and discussion.]
8. **There is strong support, particularly among national leaders (88% of women and 81% of men), for continuing national church attention to education for women's concerns and ministries.** There is less widespread enthusiasm for church job advocacy for women now than fifteen years ago, particularly among men. While "supportive" of continuing educational efforts, survey respondents are unclear as to the shape or content those efforts should have. [See pages 23 & 24 for further information and discussion.]
9. **Conditions change over time. New ways of operating must be tried to fit new occasions and duties.** However, to change attitudes about the appropriate place of minorities and women – attitudes embedded in social traditions as to who should be church leaders according to their birth characteristics – may take a broader educational effort than the survey findings suggest people are willing to undertake.
10. **In the dioceses the larger the membership of the congregation, the less willing respondents are personally to have a woman as their rector.** In congregations with attendance under 150 adults, 76% of women and 71% of men are very willing to have a woman as rector versus congregations with attendance over 350 adults where the percentages drop to 66% for women and 56% for men. 49% of clergymen respondents from the larger congregations are receptive to a woman as rector; however, only 19% of them believe that most in their congregation would be willing to accept a woman as rector. [See pages 25 & 26 for further information and discussion.]
11. **Diocesan level respondents from the Northeast (81% of women and 74% of men) are more likely to endorse women's ministry as church leaders, than those from the South (49% of women and 39% of men).** Respondents from dioceses in the Northcentral and West had more of a mixture in attitudes on these and other issues relating to women in the church. [See pages 27 & 28 for further information and discussion.]
12. **Congregational characteristics are not randomly distributed among regions.** The **Northeast** congregations have more women in leadership positions (more women rectors and a larger proportion of women on the vestry) compared to those responding from the other three regions combined. The **South**, in contrast, stands out in being more likely to

have members responding who are in larger congregations, which are significantly less likely to currently have a woman as rector or a woman in any other clergy position (e.g. assistant or associate minister, vicar, interim) than the other three regions combined. Congregations in the South, as well, have the fewest women on the vestry as compared to the other three regions. The **Northcentral** stands out from the other regions in having congregations, which are significantly more likely to be located in urban and suburban areas than congregations in the other three regions combined. [See page 29 for further information and discussion.]

13. **The regional location of diocesan respondents is not a major influence on the kinds of missions they endorse.** However, it is interesting to note that the **South** stands out from all other regions combined in its respondents being somewhat less likely to see each of the following as an important priority for the national church, their diocese, or congregation:

- “Legislation affecting USA families, welfare reform, medical care.
- “Homophobia and heterosexism”
- “Ecology and the environment”
- “Deployment and compensation of ordained and lay professional women.”

[See page 29 for further information and discussion.]

14. **Regional location is similarly not a major influence on the kinds of educational experiences wanted.** Here again only the **South** stands out from all other regions combined in respondents’ being somewhat less likely to be interested in workshops on “social advocacy for economic reform” and somewhat more likely to be interested in those on “marriage enrichment”. [See page 29 for further information and discussion.]

15. **Some Episcopal Church priorities are seen as compatible with the goal of equal status for women in the church and others are seen as conflicting and therefore threatening.** Although there is no data to support the belief, some people do believe that more women in leadership positions would discourage men from participating in the church. [See page 29 & 30 for further information and discussion.]

16. **Mission and Ministry Priorities:** In the 2002 diocesan survey only, respondents were asked how important they considered a list of fourteen mission and ministry areas for the national church, their dioceses, and their congregations. Some mission areas are seen as particularly important for all levels of the Episcopal Church by the great majority of respondents (e.g. “spiritual development”); some are viewed as more important for the national church to pursue than for dioceses or congregations (e.g. “world hunger”); some are seen as more important for dioceses and congregations than for the national church (e.g. “poverty in this region or state”). **These divisions on additional goals/priorities other than women’s issues, and especially the reasons for these divisions, are also likely to impact how much attention 2002 survey respondents feel should be given to women and their concerns.** [See Appendix A for further information and discussion.]