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Differences about Differences

"WHY CAN'T A WOMAN BE MORE LIKE A MAN?" cried Henry Higgins in the musical *My Fair Lady* (Lerner 1978, 247). The misogynous Professor Higgins was confronted with the task of transforming Eliza Doolittle, a lower-class woman, into a cultured lady. He had been willing to put his money where his mouth was—a wager that he could pull off the metamorphosis—and he sensed a danger that he was about to lose his shirt. He didn't even understand women. To him women were irrational, emotional, and infuriating carbon copies of their equally exasperating mothers. Why couldn't they be like their fathers? How was he to go about changing one of them anyway?

Higgins's lament is something that virtually everyone in Western audiences can *understand*, although many listeners would not necessarily *endorse* the sentiments. The plea "why can't a woman be more like a man?" reflects a set of untested assumptions about human beings that enjoys very broad consensus, that is, that women and men by nature are different cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. In Western European and North American societies, for instance, the traditional culture defines man as typically aggressive, dominant, power hungry, rational, analytical, independent, competitive, unexpressive, and cool under pressure. Correspondingly those cultures describe women as

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passive, submissive, egalitarian, emotional, intuitive, dependent, non-competitive, expressive, and flappable. People in many non-Western cultures and preliterate societies also tend to think dichotomously about men and women, although the attributes they describe do not always parallel those observed in the industrial West (e.g., Mead 1935).

Alternate assumptions have arisen in the United States and other Western countries in recent years, suppositions that turn Henry Higgins's ideas upside down. Some of those revisionist definitions of the sexes would have a Professor *Henrietta* Higgins singing a different tune. When confronted with *Elmer* Doolittle, a typical Western man, she would sing, "Why can't a man be more like a woman?" As one who could not endorse Henry Higgins's complaint, she would describe men as coldly rational, over sexed, hypercompetitive, status conscious, uncaring, and so forth—and thus equally exasperating. She'd mourn that men don't grow up to be like their mothers.

Significant numbers of women would identify with those sentiments. Especially among the cultural feminists (described below), there are broadly shared perceptual norms specifying that masculine approaches to life—and especially to work—are pathological. "The patriarchal orientation," they would say, "pits one person against another in perpetual competition. This stance is hopelessly rational, rigid, legalistic, instrumental, hierarchical, authoritarian, and power-hungry. It has dominated world affairs to date, and we need to get away from it as quickly and as far as we are able."

It is clear to anyone who has been sensitized to cultural and structural sexism in Western society that Henry Higgins's definition of the sexes is the more institutionalized version there. The dissenting feminist voice grows a bit louder each year, but the macho traditions are still able to all but drown it out. The postulates of male superiority seem to be deeply embedded in most social institutions within which formal and informal social interaction between men and women takes place. Take, for example, just the concept of "dominance"—a rather ubiquitous aspect of social relations involving power and privilege. Differences in the relative dominance men and women enjoy in relation to each other appear in virtually all institutions. In its purest form, the misogynist tradition assumes that the man is regarded as the proper "head" of the family, for example. Those same assumptions lead business and industrial organizations to recruit men almost exclusively as their executive officers. Most large work organizations still do not consider women sufficiently stable and dependable to entrust the fate of the firm to female hands. In similar fashion, the most prestigious posts in higher education tend to be occupied by men, males dominate professional athletics, they hold almost all of the significant positions

of political leadership, only men are to go off to war, and on and on. To many people, the apparent social inequities in such social configurations are perfectly acceptable, because they conform to what is considered "naturally" male and female. If men are naturally the more dominant, some would say, then it is "only proper" that they occupy the more dominant positions. Assumptions such as these embody the problems feminists seek to solve, that is, eradicating institutional sexism and opening up social participation to women.

While it is clear that the Henry and Henrietta Higginses of the world differ profoundly in the evaluations they place upon each other, one must not lose sight of the fact that *they actually share an important premise. They agree on the underlying assumption that men and women are endemically different cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally.* Their articulations of those differences are highly divergent, as are their estimations of the value placed on the traits they perceive. *But they both assume fundamental sex differences.* That assumption is the focus of this research.

Gender Differences in Religion

This book reports the results of an exploratory study of some gender differences said to characterize institutional religion. More specifically, the project focuses on men and women who are ordained ministers serving as pastors of local Protestant congregations. The research involves an empirical examination of a set of assertions concerning differences in the way male and female clergy approach their work. Over the last two decades, a body of literature has emerged in which authors present some version of the argument that *it is possible to identify two major approaches to carrying out the role of pastor of local congregations, one labelled "masculine" and the other called "feminine"* (e.g., Christ and Plaskow 1979; Ice 1987; Miller-McLemore 1988; Nason-Clark 1987; Weidman 1985; Stevens 1989). The masculine stance is the traditional one, and since men had a corner on the ordained ministry until recently, this approach is considered to have derived from men's preferences. The masculine religious culture also includes legitimations based on Biblical references. The feminine approach is a direct opposite of the masculine stance in many ways, and it is set forth as an innovative way of enacting the role of minister, a uniquely feminist approach deriving from the experience of being a woman (see also Hahn 1991; Ochs 1983; Franklin 1986; Ruether 1983 1985; Maitland 1983; Russell 1974; Daly 1973; Fiorenza 1976; Collins 1974; and Christ 1977).

The masculine approach—also labelled "patriarchal"—involves a

ministry steeped in impersonal hierarchies, segmental relationships, hypercompetitiveness, power over lay people, authoritarian decision making, mastery over nature, rigid theology, legalistic ethics, and exclusion of women and minorities. By contrast, the feminine stance incorporates personal communities, holistic relationships, egalitarianism, empowerment of lay people, democratic decision making, cooperation with nature, open and flexible theology, existential ethics of responsible sharing, and inclusion of women and minorities (Ice 1987; Nason-Clark 1987, 332–33). Some proponents of such comparisons also label the masculine approach as "pathological," and they argue that if the church is to fulfil its proper role in society, it is necessary that ministers adopt the "healthy" feminine way of doing things (Ice 1987, 6–7).

However, as we shall see below, the proponents of a feminine approach to the ministry do not speak with one voice on the issue of male/female differences in defining the role of parish minister. (Feminism is not monolithic, and its schools of thought involve numerous crosscutting distinctions. Here we focus on but one, gender and approach to work. For discussions of various types of feminism, see Riley 1989; Ruether 1983; and Grant 1989.) Their arguments can be divided into at least two camps, that is, those who perceive significant gender differences and those who do not (e.g., Christ and Plaskow 1979, 1–17). One camp—called the "minimalists" (see also Epstein 1988, 25ff.)—would answer both Henry Higgins's question and the inverted one posed by "Henrietta" in the same way—"They can be, and they are! Men and women in ministry are far more alike than different in their work. The songs assume major divergences, but variations between male and female approaches to ministry are but superficial idiosyncrasies. Both styles appear about equally in both sexes." Their argument asserts that there are far more similarities than differences between male and female ministers, and that the arguments for significant gender differences are primarily political and are based on self-interested speculation. Harrison says, for example, that there is no such thing as a distinctively feminist ethic. To her, normative issues are the same for all, and the need is to maintain inclusive institutions. "We must begin by rejecting the notion that there is any fundamental dimorphism in human nature/being" (Robb 1985, 29; see also Ruether and McLaughlin 1979, 19).

In contrast to the minimalists, the other camp—the "maximalists"—would reply very differently. They assume real and important differences in the way men and women approach their work. To Henry Higgins they would say (exaggerating a bit), "Given what I have experienced of men in the ministry, I wouldn't want to be like them for anything in the world! Men have been taking the church

down a primrose path, and we are working hard trying to undo the harm they have done!" A caricature of their answer to Henrietta would be, "They can't! Men are men, and women are women, and there's no way men can even understand, let alone implement, a feminine approach to pastoral ministry! Women should avoid like a plague any chance of being co-opted into the patriarchal way of doing things. They should strive instead to serve the Christian community on their own as only women can do it!"

Most of the religious literature dealing with this issue tends to be maximalist. It reflects assumptions of one or more male/female differences in ministry style. Given the prevalence of sexism in the churches, along with the virtually universal experience of resistance among women seeking deeper involvements in church leadership, it is not surprising to see large numbers of women adopting and arguing the maximalist position. The perceptions of superiority in feminine approaches to church life provide meaning, legitimation, and focus to women long frustrated by the churches.

It is also important to note that the ideas about male/female differences in approach to ministry (and to religion in general) found in that literature tend to be more implicit than explicit. Theological statements appear time and again that could not be made without underlying assumptions of women doing religion fundamentally differently from men. Often the assumptions appear only "between the lines" as postulates on which other assertions would have to rest. This mode of presentation gives them the flavor of *dogma* so clearly understood that it is not necessary to spell it out. They are the "of-course assumptions" of a community—"of course that's the way it is; how come you didn't know that?" They appear to be so obvious to participants in the subculture that there is no need to articulate them in any detail.

The published literature expressing doubts about consistent male/female divergences in ministry style is much more sparse. Rather than urgently pressing an argument that men and women are basically alike, persons skeptical of other feminists' claims to a uniquely feminine ministry style have tended to remain on the publishing sidelines, where they reflect on and generally reject the arguments that women manifest a uniquely feminine ministry style. They have felt less motivation to write about it. Instead they appear to go about their work while seeking greater integration in church structures and programs.

Accordingly, there is a tendency for these differences in approach to be found in divergent structural locations. As Christ and Plaskow (1979, 13) put it, "Those feminists who work within the Biblical traditions tend to call for equality in religious rituals and symbolisms,

while those whose theological or spiritual reflection is primarily rooted in the women's movement...more often call for at least temporary ascendancy of women and the female principle." The maximalists are in a position to "grind their axes" without concern for extraneous organizational consequences. The minimalists, by contrast, tend to be persons who feel responsible for some segments of existing religious structures, which makes it much more difficult for them to espouse separatist ideologies, actions that would compromise prior commitments and weaken their structural base.

In any case, in this study *we focus primarily on the arguments of the maximalists.* Can we document empirically the existence of male/female differences in ministry style? Who is right, the maximalists or the minimalists? Some empirical research implies that men and women do approach the ministry differently (e.g., Ice 1987; and Stevens 1989). Other studies suggest that descriptions of such sex differences may have been overblown (e.g., Charlton 1987; Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis 1983; Nason-Clark 1987; Ekhardt and Goldsmith 1984; Hale, King, and Jones 1980). Which set of assumptions about how women and men take and define the role of parish minister is actually "out there" among clergy? In somewhat simplified terms, that is the question this undertaking seeks to address.

The Secular Background

These positions concerning masculine and feminine approaches to the pastoral ministry did not emerge in a vacuum. Behind the feminist challenges to patriarchal forms of ministry lay the secular feminist movement. The debates in the churches resonate well with those in the larger society, and shifts in the secular feminist movement have also seen their parallels in the religious feminist dialogue. And if there is any causal connection between the two, it is probably the events in the secular arena that are the more causally antecedent.

There is a relatively broad consensus concerning the sequence of major shifts in the position of women in discussions of social and cultural life in the United States. Until about the middle of the twentieth century, women tended to be the "residual" category in Western culture. The general cultural bias was that the interesting things in life— things that were important to study and think about—were men's things. Histories, novels, theater, economics, politics, biography, religion—all tended to be by and about men. The general assumption was that it truly was a man's world. Women were "there," of course, but

they were not nearly as interesting as the men. After all, how much impact did they have on the world anyway? "Normal" life was that involving men's activities; it needed little explanation. Where women's life departed from those patterns, the analytical problem was easily defined away merely by relegating women to the status of deviant cases. In this sense, women "needed to be explained." Nevertheless, in fact most of the time women were simply ignored.

This pattern was clearly evident in scholarship about human beings prior to about the last two or three decades. Most work in the social and behavioral sciences and the humanities was "womanless." In psychology, for example, males were used disproportionately as research subjects, the results of that work were presumed to be generalizable to women, and gender was generally ignored as an important category of social reality. The research in question was done almost exclusively by men who assumed that men's activities were the ones most central to human life (Crawford and Marecek 1989, 149).

In roughly the late 1960s, this picture began to change. Social and behavioral sciences began to study women systematically. The emergence of this new scholarship didn't flow "naturally" from sophisticated perceptions of interesting research directions and questions. Instead the new focus on the feminine derived from the political agenda of the women's liberation movement (Epstein 1988, 24). The call was to "bring women in." As a result, the research tended to focus exclusively on women.

One approach to "bringing women in" was to focus on *exceptional* women. In history it involved rediscovering important female figures generally expunged from the record—Joan of Arc, Catherine the Great, Marie Curie, and Eleanor Roosevelt. In psychology it was an examination of the works of Anna Freud, Karen Horney, and others. This approach served to bring to mind the work of noteworthy women and to militate against assumptions that females are not capable of significant achievement. Nevertheless, there was also a "down side" to that focus, that is, it "may convey an underlying message that only exceptional women are...worthy of serving as role models [and]...it may reinforce the belief that success is solely the product of individual ability, determination or effort" (Crawford and Marecek 1989, 150–51). It could backfire and be used by conservatives in their arguments against structural and programmatic change to benefit women.

A second approach some observers took in moving away from the "womanless" picture of society has been described by Crawford and Marecek (1989, 151–55) as the "woman-as-problem" stance. It has also been called the "female deficiency" approach. According to this perspective, women are seen as presenting researchers with a series of

anomalies that beg for explanation. Individual "deficits" included under this conceptual umbrella include dependency, eating disorders, fear of success, math anxiety, and so forth. The central question was why women differed from men in these ways. The woman-as-problem approach does succeed in focusing attention on women and thus moving away from the "womanless" paradigm of old. Nevertheless, Crawford and Maracek (1989, 153) also point out that examining women as "problems" for society gives conservatives further ammunition in their effort to exclude women from positions of responsibility. If women suffer deficiencies such as these, then won't some conservatives ask why women should be given opportunities to move into strategic positions they may not be able to handle adequately? Furthermore, the stance also still uses men as the standard by which women are to be assessed. And, of course, it is a classic example of "blaming the victim." So from a feminist perspective, the women-as-problem approach solves only the matter of female invisibility, and in the process it creates or continues other problems for the effort to "bring women back in."

A third approach to solving the "woman problem" was the development of the concept of 'androgyny' (Bem 1974). In simple form, the concept of 'androgyny' refers to a blending of supposedly masculine and feminine personality traits within a single individual, whether male or female. Discussions of androgyny assert that there are masculine and feminine traits in everyone. Sex role socialization encourages males to develop predominantly in one direction and females in another, but the potential for internalizing both masculine and feminine characteristics is said to be present in everyone.

Reflecting a political tone again, androgyny was also promoted as a *desirable* trait for everyone. The assumption spread broadly that it was "not good" for men to be purely masculine or for women to be purely feminine. The argument stated that men would be more healthy, for example, if they developed an ability to express emotions they'd otherwise "naturally" repress, such as in the act of crying. Women would be more healthy—and more acceptable in the world of business and public affairs—if they could be more assertive and analytical instead of retiring and intuitive. A spate of "therapies" burst onto the social scene to help women—especially with things like "consciousness raising," "image management," and "assertiveness training"—to help them become more androgynous. "Even more than the fear of success, [androgyny] became a buzz word for the public." (Mednick 1989, 1119). Still today, in certain pop circles, you are considered "with it" if you can manifest androgynous personality traits, or at least convince people that you think androgynous personality is desirable.

The major contribution that the discussions of androgyny made was in refocusing discussions of gender differences away from women alone. They dealt with both men and women largely on an equal plane, presenting any variations in personality as the result of sex role socialization rather than artifacts of biological functioning. Yet the entire discussion rests on a basic assumption of gender *differences*, and its scientific merit has been seriously questioned recently (Mednick 1989, 1119).

The most recent theories about gender differences to have gained widespread popularity are those of Gilligan (1982). Gilligan's thesis is a direct challenge to Kohlberg (Kohlberg and Kramer 1969), dealing with the issue of "moral development" in children and adults. Kohlberg had developed a scheme of stages through which people are said to develop, each stage being characterized by different criteria for making moral choices. The "lowest" stages are basically matters of crude self-interest and coercion, orientations that tend to characterize young children. The "highest" stages involve appeals to universalistic moral principles revolving around the concept of "justice." The initial application of Kohlberg's concepts tended to portray women as typically manifesting lower stages of moral development than men.

Gilligan studied groups of women confronting difficult moral dilemmas that were unique to women. She developed a scheme for describing stages of moral development that revolved not around the concept of justice but around that of 'responsible caring'. Using such conceptualization, Gilligan argued that moral development in men and women differs most centrally, in terms not of stages (which any person can go through, male or female) but of developmental schemes involving gender-specific criteria. Morality in men and women, according to Gilligan, differs not in degree but in *kind*. For men it is a matter of justice; for women it involves responsible caring. Men and women speak with "different voices" (Gilligan 1982).

Gilligan's arguments took the discussions of gender differences another step away from "women-as-problem." They asserted at least implicitly that women's morality was not only unique but also more desirable. "Women's way" was not only different but also better. Social life governed by appeals to "justice" were cold and unforgiving. It would be much better to have moral criteria of empathetic benevolence or warm parental caring. "This idea has been widely and enthusiastically accepted by many feminist scholars in numerous disciplines, as well as by many writers, politicians, journalists, and the public. It is no doubt a conceptual bandwagon" (Mednick 1989, 1119).

Unfortunately, scholarship following up on the Kohlberg/Gilligan debate has tended *not* to support Gilligan's perspective. Studies

involving both schemes have indicated few, if any, differences between men and women, whether using Kohlberg's measure or moral dilemmas that reflect Gilligan's ideas (see Thoma 1986; and Friedman, Robinson, and Friedman 1987). Yet the belief in a "different voice" is still around among journalists and politicians. "It appears to be a symbol for a cluster of widely held social beliefs that argue for women's difference, for reasons that are quite independent of scientific merit....The 'different voice' is part of a currently popular category of theories, sometimes referred to as cultural feminism..., that argue for women's special, and even superior, nature" (Mednick 1989, 1120).

A Focus on "Gender"

By the late 1970s, many feminist scholars came to perceive that focusing on women to the exclusion of men would further neither their scholarly goals nor their political agendas. They needed an empirically verifiable approach that would retain a focus on women as significant players in the drama of human existence but, at the same time, would not backfire politically as a weapon to be used against women's interests. The move was to "shift the focus of inquiry from woman to gender, and from gender as difference to gender as social relations. That is, gender came to be conceived as a principle of social organization, which structures the relations, especially the power relations, between women and men" (Crawford and Marecek 1989, 155). Previous dichotomous divisions of the world by sex were rejected as simplistic, and in their place a new breed of feminists posited the idea that any such perceptions were merely social constructions deriving from the fact (experience) of hierarchy (Epstein 1988, 15–16). This position generally reflects the argument of the "minimalists."

According to Mednick (1989), minimalist views assert that "women's behavior is a function of much more than a supposedly universal trait. The latter way of thinking by some political feminists... [involves] a false universalism that leads to the incorrect perception of the situation of *all* women as the same" (1120). One of the generalizations that minimalists are first to reject is the assumption that all women manifest similar personality traits. On the contrary, race, ethnicity, occupation, education all tend to predict variations in women's sense of identity, values, behavior patterns, and so forth. Careful analyses of women in those various social locations indicate that such social and cultural circumstances significantly affect the characteristics of the players functioning within them. Men and women in similar positions of power and authority (or the lack of it), for example, think

and act more like each other than do women or men in positions that differ in that regard. The implication of those patterns is that cognitive, affective, and behavioral differences perceived in men and women are not artifacts of unique personality traits within them but epiphenomena of those external circumstances.

Summary

The relative absence of reflection in the "womanless" period and the discussions of significant women, androgyny, women as problem, male and female moralities, and so on, since the late 1960s may be subsumed within the category of "maximalists." People thinking in these ways either accept without question or develop arguments for the existence of important gender differences in adults. Those who reconstruct the concept of 'gender' in terms of social interaction, especially that involving power relations, represent the "minimalists." For them variations in thought, emotions, and actions between males and females do not represent different personality traits associated with sex or gender but instead reflect the influence of external constraints and opportunities that *happen to be* associated more with one sex than the other.

Gender and Social Policy

These two camps, the maximalists and minimalists, represent two poles in a broad spectrum of points of view concerning the existence and explanation of gender differences. The research from any of the points of view along that continuum is of interest in and of itself. At the same time, as so often happens in social science research, it is difficult to divorce most of that discussion from political goals. "Gender research is replete with ideological overlays, reflecting the values of the scholar and of the social group" (Epstein 1988, xii). The assumptions of both the minimalists and the maximalists provide not only intellectual structure for inquiry but also normative goals and political strategy for realizing them (see also Bacchi 1990). In the 1970s, the ideal toward which most feminist writers were pressing was integration and equality for women. In the 1980s many feminists repudiated that agenda and instead were pressing for evidence of female superiority and for either ways of gaining feminist power and influence or ways of withdrawing from social participation in the masculine society altogether. In both cases, the predominant assumption has been one of sig-

nificant gender differences. The primary strategy in the 1970s was to find ways to *play down* those differences in order to remove barriers to the entry of women into fuller participation in the political, economic, and social life of the society. The strategy that gained a greater following in the 1980s, on the other hand, was to *play up* gender differences in an effort to demonstrate the superiority of female approaches to life and to move toward replacing masculine structures with feminine ones, either for women alone or for the entire society (e.g., Daly 1978).

The political objectives of the minimalist feminists are actually not very different from the basic objectives of some maximalists, particularly those predominating in the 1970s, that is, removing social and cultural impediments to open participation of women in all aspects of social life. Here also the analytical arguments are laden with normative agendas. "The political is not easily separated from the intellectual, even for those who feel that they ought to be—and of course may believe they are the same thing" (Epstein 1988, xiii).

A major way in which the political agenda is worked out among the minimalists is to analyze the negative political consequences of the arguments of the maximalists. The minimalists argue that those emphasizing differences between the sexes are prone to jump on ideological bandwagons without thinking through the social and political implications of their actions. In the most general sense, feminist scholars who argue that "men and women live in two cultures, two domains, that they are in effect two species" actually support the traditionalists. This accrues whether they argue for a separate-but-equal situation or for female superiority. To insist on gender differences is to keep alive old beliefs and doubts about women's competence. Reinforcing those traditional assumptions bolsters the social conspiracy against women (Epstein 1988, 223–39).

Hare-Mustin and Marecek make a similar point, expressing it in terms of "paradoxes" involved in thinking about gender.

> Paradoxes arise because every representation conceals at the same time as it reveals....The issue of gender differences has been a divisive one for feminist scholars. Some believe that differences affirm women's value and special nature; others are concerned that focusing on differences reinforces the status quo and supports inequality, given that the power to define remains with men. A paradox is that efforts to affirm the special value of women's experience and their 'inner life' turn attention away from efforts to change the material conditions of women's lives and alleviate institutional sexism.... Another paradox arises from the assertion of a female way of knowing, involving intuition and experiential understanding, rather than logical abstraction. This assertion implies that all other thought is a male way of knowing, and if taken to an extreme, can be used to support the view that

women are incapable of rational thought and of acquiring the knowledge of
the culture....Moreover, feminist separatism, the attempt to avoid male
influence by separating from men, leaves intact the larger system of male
control in the society....There is yet another paradox. Qualities such as car-
ing, expressiveness, and concern for relationships are extolled as women's
superior virtues and the wellspring of public regeneration. At the same time,
however, they are seen as arising from women's subordination....When we
extol such qualities, do we necessarily also extol women's subordination...?
If subordination makes women 'better people,' then perpetuation of
women's 'goodness' would seem to require the perpetuation of inequality.
(Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1988, 462)

In summary, the minimalist argument is that some maximalists, in
their enthusiasm to demonstrate unique qualities women can bring to
social arenas that have traditionally been the provinces of men, may
have promoted strategies that could be used to the detriment of the
very women they wish to assist.

The Pattern in the Churches

The basic rationales that structure the discussions within the secular
women's movement can also be seen in the literature dealing with reli-
gious feminism (e.g., Christ 1977). Prior to about mid-twentieth cen-
tury, there was little discussion of significant leadership roles for
women in local congregations. Even though women constituted the
core of lay workers who kept the churches running from week to
week, "everyone" assumed that the ordained ministry was properly
reserved to men, and the men in top positions in the hierarchies did lit-
tle to disabuse members of those views. A few congregations had
ordained women and called them as pastors, primarily among groups
with a congregational polity located in New England, however,
women tended to be "invisible" in discussions of professional church
leadership. Well known evangelists such as Amy Semple McPherson
and Evangeline Booth were noteworthy in their day primarily because
they were departures from that norm. They accomplished a great deal
as religious leaders in spite of the fact that they were women. Women
didn't attain any significant visibility in the ordained ministry in terms
of numbers until about the 1970s.

Warner points out, however, that the current movement of
women into the ministry did not emerge from a historical vacuum.
The frontier spontaneity and charismatic appeals that defined the
revivalism of the "Second Great Awakening" of the nineteenth cen-

tury established norms of individual religious empowerment. Church members didn't require the approval or endorsement of religious leaders in existing hierarchies in order to act in what they considered to be a response to the call of God. Charismatic appeals to religious vocation and activity became sufficient criteria for assuming leadership roles in local evangelical communities. Women used those norms of empowerment to "carve out space" for themselves in religious organizations. In so doing they were able to separate themselves from the direct control of male church leaders, and they were able to define their own agendas. "From the 1830's on, women formed extraparochial associations, many of which became essential to the church's mission. Because of the power of the purse and of their personal presence, association women gained rights of representation on various church boards. Persistent pressure from various local and regional assemblies (representing lay women) and from staff of specialized agencies (representing religious professionals) eventually wore down the resistance of male elders and bishops in the years after World War II" (Warner 1989, 29). By the 1970s, large numbers of women were pursuing theological education, ordination, and eventual placement as pastors of local congregations in most mainline Protestant denominations. Women ministers were no longer "invisible."

As was the case in the secular women's movement, up through the 1970s supporters of women's ordination typically emphasized gender equality and down-played sex differences in taking the role of ordained minister. The predominant goals were to reform sexist practices, reconstruct (reinterpret) biblical traditions, and promote an androgynous ministry. All of these specific objectives were designed to open the ordained ministry to women—to "bring women in." The predominant assertion was that women could perform clergy roles just as well as men. The argument at the heart of this movement was that there were no relevant differences between men and women in terms of their capacity to serve congregations as religious leaders—a "minimalist" argument. Accordingly, the actions the churches were called upon to take were clear and simple—barriers to women's ordination and placement should be removed (e.g., Christ and Plaskow 1979; Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis 1983; and Robb 1985).

In form the movement resembled the approach of the "integrationist" wing of the civil rights movement—an appeal to equality and a press for assimilation. The approach has been called "structural feminism" and closely resembles a broader school of thought in secular feminism referred to as "liberal" feminism (see Riley 1989; Ruether 1983; and Grant 1989). According to this perspective, the thing that is considered "the problem" is the *structure* of the church as a social sys-

tem. Individuals wishing to participate in the system had unequal access to it regardless of their individual abilities to perform system roles. To those of this persuasion, it followed logically that the system—the churches—must change the rules and let women in. The problem was simply to assemble the appropriate argument and evidence, the power of which would then persuade the church leadership to recant and open up church structures to women.

However, the normative structures of social and cultural systems do not readily bow to such appeals to empirical evidence and logic. They function according to their own "*socio*-logic." Since cultural definitions, values, and normative patterns of thought and action tend to be integrated—if you change one thing, you also risk changing others as well—the religious systems did not readily concede the demands of the integrationist wing of the women-in-ministry movement. People at both the denominational and the congregational levels resisted the incorporation of women into the leadership of the church. In most mainline Protestant denominations, this resistance took the form of "not wishing to rush things"—"let's wait and see"—"let's not upset the balance of things"—"don't do anything to create a schism." These forms of resistance to increasing women's roles in religious organizations still continue today.

In the face of this resistance, many integrationist/structural feminists kept pressing and are still holding to the same strategy today. Others, however, simply gave up on the church. The classic expression of church members "throwing over the traces" is illustrated by Mary Daly (1975), who gave up all hope that the church would ever renounce its misogynistic ideology and policies. In about the 1980s, however, many religious feminists tended to take a less extreme stance than Daly, but one that nevertheless represented a major departure from the integrationist approach that had dominated the previous decade.

Standing in dynamic tension with the integrationist (and minimalist) approach, the new stance emphasizes gender differences and a tendency for rejecting the existing system and replacing it with a feminist ideology and structure. It has been referred to as "cultural" religious feminism (also called "radical" feminism by some (Riley 1989; Ruether 1983; Grant 1989). Disenchanted with the foibles and exclusions of the patriarchal system, the cultural feminist agenda emphasizes the "temporary or permanent ascendancy of women and the female principle" (Christ and Plaskow 1979, 13). The approach postulates the immaleable sexism of received traditions. Disabused of reform, its proponents call for replacing extant sexist religious systems with new feminist thought forms and structures—a new "culture."

Out of this view has come the "women-church" movement and "Christian goddess" worship (Ruether 1985; Royle 1991).

In this way, cultural feminism resembles the "black power" sector of the civil rights movement—equality (if not superiority) is to be secured, but within newly created social institutions. In both cases the prime mover—the aspect of the situation that defines the core agenda—is the experience of oppression (Neitz 1990). Blacks and women share a common history of exclusion from full participation in society in terms of access to sufficient power and authority to control their economic, political, and social lives. In each case some of them have felt it necessary to condemn existing institutions, to withdraw from participation within their structures, and to establish their own set of values and organizational structures for realizing them. This is the situation with religious cultural feminists (e.g., Daly 1975, 1978).

The Research Question

The cultural feminist orientation involves not only an ideology but also *a set of empirical assertions about unique characteristics of women's approach to ministry.* This study focuses on those postulates. The cultural feminist argument constitutes another example of the "maximalist" position on gender differences. It assumes that *there are important systematic differences between men and women and that these gender differences result in predictable variations in the way male and female clergy approach their work.*

Martha Ice (1987) summarizes the basic assumptions cultural (maximalist) feminists hold concerning differences between men and women in their approach to ministry. While the assertions are many (see also Christ 1977), with no single proponent accepting all of them, the proposed differences scattered throughout the literature can be grouped into several categories as shown in Table 1.1 (following Ice 1987).

It is important to remember that not all men and women resemble these types; individuals differ. Of equal importance is the caveat that no individual of either sex will manifest *all* of these characteristics. The paradigm involves a "summary" of various assumptions which in caricature asserts, first of all, that male and female clergy relate to other people—especially to those in their congregation—in radically and predictably different ways. Men relate to others with aloofness and manipulativeness. They feel a need to control the social situation, and they assume that social relationships within congregations make no

Table 1.1. Summary of Masculine and Feminine Approaches to Ministry

	Masculine	Feminine
Interpersonal Style	Impersonal, detached	Personal, intimate
	Directive	Compliant
	Suspicious	Trusting
	Agency	Communion
	Instrumental	Expressive
	Authoritarian	Egalitarian
	Closed, guarded	Open, vulnerable
Theology	Transcendent God	Immanent God
	Power over people	Power within people
	Justice	Love and mercy
	God atop a hierarchy	God a partner
	God as "imposer"	God as "infuser"
	God as abstract being	God as embodied
Career Goals	Extrinsic success	Intrinsic rewards
	Social status	Social inclusion
	Material wealth	Benevolence
	Goal attainment	Nurturance
Thought Forms	Rationality	Intuition
	Analytical thinking	Integrative thinking
	Rigidity	Flexibility
	Scientism	Holistic thought
Power & Authority	Seek power	Eschew power
	Impose order	Develop consensus
	Hierarchy	Egalitarianism
	Formal legitimation	Charismatic trust
	Of position	From results
	Like power over	Seek to empower within
	Chain of command	Free discussion; equals
	Formal authority	Charismatic authority
	Speak down to laity	Speak as one with laity
	Formal structure	Informal structure
	Clear guidelines	Crescive actions
	World mastery	World partnership
Ethics	Legalistic	Existential
	Rigid	Flexible
	Personal morality	Social ethics
	Avoidance of evil	Love & reconciliation
	Rules for living	Responsible freedom

sense unless they are directed toward specific instrumental goals. Women, on the other hand, relate to others primarily for the sake of those relationships themselves. Their interpersonal style is egalitarian, non-threatening, open, and personal.

The scheme also postulates gender differences in theological orientation. Men tend to view God in transcendental, authoritarian, autocratic terms. Theirs is a God to be feared and obeyed. The God of women, by contrast, operates from within individuals as a benevolent partner to be loved and trusted.

According to religious cultural feminism, the career goals of men and women manifest divergent assumptions as to what the ministry is all about. Men see it in extrinsic terms, as an arena within which one strives for success, status, and material wealth. Women view ministry more intrinsically—as a position from which to interact with other church members and to take satisfaction in seeing them develop as mature Christians.

Men and women go about their work employing divergent cognitive styles. Men tend to insist on being analytical, logical, and scientific, while women's style is more flexible, intuitive, integrative, and holistic.

Perhaps the point of variation between men and women that receives the most frequent and intense discussion among cultural feminists is the matter of authority and power (Lips 1991; Verdesi 1976). This arena is often the starting and ending point in conversation about gender differences in ministry, perhaps because most organizational power in the churches is still manipulated by men. Men are described as power-hungry autocrats who function most effectively in rigid hierarchical structures from which they can impose their will on others and control the directions of church life. Women, on the other hand, want little to do with authority and power over others. They wish to be able to control their *own* life, but they have little desire to impose their will on others. Indeed, their goal is to empower others. They shy away from rigid organizational structures, and their ideal is to create an egalitarian church in which all are free to participate as equal players in policy formation and program development.

Finally, the model states that men and women differ in their approach to determining what is good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and sin—their ethics. In this scheme men are by nature legalistic and rigid. They approach moral decisions by bringing with them a set of abstract rules to apply to concrete situations. They are much more interested in personal sin than social evil. By contrast women are existential and flexible. They approach ethical matters by looking for freedom to act responsibly. They are concerned about social issues and social problems, not just individual foibles.

The reader may object to the pejorative mode of describing masculine approaches to ministry in contrast to the flattering and constructive images of the feminine stance as presented above. Fair enough. Nevertheless, I have presented them in this mode, because that is precisely the "flavor" one encounters in most discussions of those differences. The patterns are only supposed empirical generalizations on the surface, but it is nearly impossible to divorce those descriptive statements from normative evaluations one encounters in the literature where they are discussed. (Unflattering terminology describing *feminine* approaches to work will appear occasionally in later chapters.)

Once again trying to bracket the political dimension, we see that the question for this research is not whether the *agendas* of the structural or cultural feminists are right or wrong; it is not whether one strategy is to be preferred over another. Those are ideological issues, broadly conceived as questions of social ethics. Considered narrowly they are matters of theology. Instead, the study focuses on two *empirical* questions:

1. whether the above differences in approach to ministry *actually cohere* as identifiable "masculine" and "feminine" types, and

2. whether female and male clergy *actually differ* in the extent to which each type is empirically associated with them.

Is there a demonstrable feminine style of ministry (in contrast to a masculine approach) among clergy, and do we in fact observe this orientation to ministry more among women than among men?

The results of a recent meta-analysis of research dealing with gender and leadership style in a variety of settings (Eagly and Johnson 1990) support some of these assertions but not others. Eagly and Johnson's synthesis indicates that the assertions concerning *power* tend to be supported. Women tend to favor *democratic* leadership styles, while men are more inclined toward *autocratic* or *directive* styles. And these tendencies emerged from studies of leadership style in all types of settings—laboratory experiments, assessment studies, and organizational studies. However, suppositions that female leaders would be *interpersonally* oriented while male leaders would be *task* oriented were *not* supported in organizational studies, that is, studies in settings where women and men were selected and trained for leadership in work organizations. Do these patterns also emerge among women and men in positions of pastoral leadership over congregations?

Using data from *both* women and men in the pastoral ministry, the question of comparisons of the leadership style of the sexes has never

been asked before. There is some partial evidence of the existence of feminine forms of ministry. Ice (1987) perceived the approach among a highly selected sample of influential clergy. Likewise Stevens (1989) also documented feminine forms of ministry in the self-images of women in nontraditional forms of Anglican ministry in Canada. The problems with this evidence, while it is clearly relevant and interesting, are that it was obtained from highly selected and atypical samples of clergywomen and, more importantly, that it comes from the studies that *did not include samples of men.*

A few studies involving both female and male ministerial aspirants have touched on these issues tangentially. Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis (1983) found little evidence of different motivations in ministry among men and women seeking ordination in several mainline Protestant denominations. The women, for example, manifested little desire to transform the church. And they found no difference between men and women on leadership style, competence in selected clergy roles, and ease of relating to lay church members. Charlton (1987), in a review of research on seminary students, concluded that there were very few motivational differences attributable to gender. Ekhardt and Goldsmith (1984; also Goldsmith and Ekhardt 1984), in one of those undertakings, found that male and female seminary students were more alike than different in their motivational profiles. There were no significant differences between men and women on measures of masculinity and femininity, but both the male and female seminarians differed from males and females in the broader college population. They also found that the male seminary students were higher than general college males on nurturance, succorance, and desirability and lower on autonomy. Similarly the female seminary students outscored the general college females on affiliation, dominance, exhibition, understanding, and desirability, while scoring lower on aggression and change. Their conclusion was that the seminary students tended to be highly androgynous, converging toward one another in personality profiles, and that it would be a mistake to assume major differences between male and female clergy once those students were in positions of church leadership.

Finally, there is considerable evidence that clergywomen tend to *differ widely among themselves* on various characteristics. They deviate from one another in terms of background characteristics, marital status, theological training, ideology, placement strategies, length of tenure, and level of success in various forms of ministry (Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis 1983; Lehman 1985; Royle 1984; Ice 1987; Cardwell 1982). There is little evidence that "the woman minister" is at all monolithic. With clergywomen often accused of being "too masculine" and male clergy sometimes caricatured as the "third sex," the

recent arguments for systematic role-related differences between male and female clergy clearly remains an open question empirically. That is the analytical problem this undertaking seeks to address.

Summary

In the world of scholarship dealing with the role gender plays in social life, there are at least two camps vying for position in their efforts to determine how we will think about the issue. One school of thought—the "maximalists"—asserts that through some interaction between biology, socialization, and individual experience, women and men are fundamentally different cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. The argument goes on to say that these divergent orientations to life are also manifested in people's approaches to work. As women enter occupations formerly considered as the exclusive province of men, they relate to that work differently—"as women"—and in the process the long-term effect will be that they transform the ways in which that work will be done.

The opposite stance is called the "minimalist" position. It argues that any perceived gender differences in thought, feeling, and action are spurious. Rather than attribute observed variations in these things to endemic qualities of gender, the minimalists state that such patterns are artifacts of the actor's position in social structure, including divergent experiences of subordination and exclusion from full participation in social life.

This debate pervades feminist discussions of the ministry just as it does the dialogue devoted to secular society. Some religious feminist authors argue that women and men "by nature" approach the ministry in radically different ways. They describe the traditional "masculine" approach as pathological, involving excessive rationality, scientism, legalism, authoritarianism, status seeking, rigidity, exclusivity, and power over people. By way of contrast, they prescribe a "feminine" approach as a way out. The feminine approach involves intuitiveness, holistic thought, responsible ethics, egalitarianism, intrinsic rewards from work, flexibility, inclusiveness, and the empowerment of people.

The study asks a simple descriptive question, that is, are these descriptions of male and female approaches to pastoral ministry accurate? Can we gather evidence to substantiate the existence of two styles of ministry? If so, do we observe the masculine style mostly among men and the feminine style mainly among women?

   The next chapter will describe the structure of the research and will chronicle the steps taken in the research process. Then subsequent chapters will present the results of the analysis of the data and then speculate on their possible implications.