

What if it's not men that men are looking for?

By [Carol Howard Merritt](#)

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I got into a car recently, with another female pastor and an Evangelical man. I asked the guy about his church and he said, "I go to a church where men's leadership is very important. Men don't go to church any more. And so our church puts men in leadership so that it will attract more men."

I was not very quick on my feet... it had been a long day... so I didn't say anything and just swallowed the insult. After all, it's not a [new theory](#), I've heard it about a thousand times. It's just one of those indignities that we endure as women clergy.

"Men are attracted to male leadership. We need more men. We will hire a man so that men will attend our church."

Other than it being a clear affront to me as a female pastor, I also wonder if it's true. I mean, overall, men have been running the show about 99% of the time. And if you look at the whole of Christianity, then the men have been in charge 99.99% of the time. And still, there are an overwhelming number of women in the pews.

What if these commonly held assumptions are incorrect? What if opposites attract? Maybe I should just start declaring that male leadership attracts female members (I mean, that seems much more historically accurate). And it must follow that female leaders would attract more male members. And so male pastors are really kind of obsolete.

Do I think that male pastors are obsolete? Of course not. But after being a pastor for growing congregations for the last twelve years, I'm

really getting tired of the assumption that I'm obsolete, and that men won't go to a church I pastor.

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