IMAGINING THEMSELVES AS MINISTERS: HOW RELIGIOUSLY COMMITTED BAPTIST YOUTH RESPOND TO THE REVISED PAYNE INDEX OF MINISTRY STYLES (PIMS2)

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Abstract

A sample of 545 religiously committed Baptist youth (who were participating in a week-long mission and service program) were invited to imagine themselves serving as ordained ministers and to rate their approach to ministry on the revised Payne Index of Ministry Styles (an instrument based on Jungian psychological type theory). The data demonstrated two main findings. First, while the young people’s own psychological type colored their perception of ministry, this influence was not strong. Second, ministry was conceived more strongly in extraverted terms than in introverted terms. On the basis of these findings, the recommendation is made that religious vocations among young people should be fostered by encouraging them to recognize that there is room within ministry for different personality types to bring different gifts and to exercise different ministry styles.

Keywords: psychological type, clergy, ministry roles, Baptist, Canada

A number of Christian denominations within the developed world are experiencing difficulties in recruiting young candidates into ordained ministry (see Astley & Francis, 2009). Even those denominations such as the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches in Canada that maintain thriving youth ministries, capable of recruiting significant numbers of young people to participate in mission and service programs, struggle to convert such participation into sufficient numbers of young adults preparing for ordained ministry (Fawcett, McDonald, & Nylen, 2005). Against this background, the aim of the present study was to assess how religiously committed Baptist youth imagine the role of the

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minister and to place their assessment within the theoretical framework of ministry styles proposed by Francis and Payne (2002) and operationalized by the Payne Index of Ministry Styles (PIMS).

Within the sociological literature, there is a long-established research tradition concerned with the variety of roles that clergy fulfill. This tradition is generally traced back to the pioneering work of Blizzard (1955, 1956, 1958a, 1958b) who distinguished between six clergy roles: teacher, organizer, preacher, administrator, pastor, and priest. Blizzard’s analysis was adopted, among others, by Coates and Kistler (1965), Jud, Mills, and Burch (1970), Towler and Coxon (1979), and Brunette-Hill and Finke (1999). Other sociological analyses have been advanced by Nelson, Yokley, and Madson (1973) who identified five roles; by Reilly (1975) who identified six roles; by Davies, Watkins, and Winter (1991) who identified seven functions; by Ranson, Bryman, and Hinings (1977) who identified seven functions; by Francis and Rodger (1994) who identified seven roles; by Tiller (1983) who identified eight roles; by Lauer (1973) who identified 10 roles; and by Robbins and Francis (2000) who identified 10 roles. Not only does the sociological literature fail to agree on the number and definition of clergy roles or functions, it also fails to generate a clear conceptual framework within which these functions or roles can be differentiated.

In their discussion of the variety of ways in which ministers, clergy, and priests express and fulfill their ministry, Francis and Payne (2002) rooted their analysis not in the sociological literature but in the psychological literature. They defined their concern to be with neither ministry roles nor ministry functions but with ministry styles, and they grounded their understanding of ministry styles within the Jungian framework of psychological type.

Psychological type theory has its roots in the observations of Jung as documented in his classic volume *Psychological Types* (1971). The theory has also been developed and extended by a series of self-completion psychological tests, most notably the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978), and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). The core of Jung’s theory resides in the identification of two key psychological processes, generally defined as the perceiving process and as the judging process. The perceiving process is concerned with the gathering of information. Jung termed this the irrational process, since it is not concerned with evaluating or applying the information.