

THE
PROFILER OF CONGREGATION PERSONALITY PREFERENCES - PCPP

It is essential for their health that congregations confront rules that keep them unhealthy and expose the unspoken expectations that set leaders up for judgment and failure. These facets of congregational life distort the image of the congregation and in glaring ways blind members from being able to perceive its giftedness. Engaging in healthy practices and relationships is requisite for the congregation to glimpse its personality and to distinguish who it is — a self-differentiated congregation.

In 1988 I began to identify the corporate personalities of congregations. The research project was conducted under the guidance of Flavil Yeakley, then president of the Association of Psychological Type. In this research the MBTI[®] was administered to a statistically significant number of members of a congregation, virtually the entire adult rostered membership, which had agreed to be the object of the study. An identification of a corporate personality for the congregation emerged. Its personality type was revealed through both a compilation of scored types of the individuals' personalities and by a continuous scoring method, which sequentially adds the scores of each individual's dichotomous choice to create one score for each of the group's preferences. A test instrument was developed with the purpose of verifying the results. This instrument has proved valuable as a method of identifying the congregation's personality.

Since its creation, hundreds of lay people and pastors in traditions of Baptist to Roman Catholic, Assembly of God to UCC, as well as Jew, have used, reviewed, or evaluated the ability of this instrument to express a congregational identity across the various settings, polities and traditions. Their comments and questions have been invaluable in the continued development of the instrument and the evolution of the portraits of congregational personality types. I first experienced the format for the profiler in the work of Gordon Lawrence *People Types and Tiger Stripes*,¹ a format repeated by most authors introducing readers to the process of identifying personality preferences in Jungian personality types.

The Profiler of Congregation Personality Preferences (PCPP) is intended as a starting point in the identification process. As you contemplate the choices consider how the congregation appears to function in the main; that is, how it prefers to function in a variety of situations, apart from the pastor. The premise is that corporate types, groups of people gathering as one, function in recognizably definable ways similar to individuals displaying the same type preference. Congregations exhibiting the same general preferences would be guided by similar patterns of communication, foster similar gifts and attitudes, be strengthened by a similar spiritual posture and be undergirded by similar values. This is a subjective process.

The intent is not to restrict a congregation through identifying a personality pattern. The intent is to validate and affirm the congregation's gifts for ministry giving it freedom to pursue its interests in appropriate ways. The congregation's

effectiveness will thus be maximized. Congregations, as with individuals, are healthier when they learn to approach life's work, the business of living, from a posture of giftedness and grace. The identification of a congregation's personality is not intended to be the end goal of the process. Naming the personality is the beginning of discovering the special embodiment of God's gifts in the congregation. An honest acknowledgement recognizing the abilities and challenges of personality types will further lead congregations into a deeper understanding of themselves. Self-awareness is essential for achieving self-differentiation; having a healthy estimation of who it is as a congregation apart from its clergy or key lay members thus supporting the development of healthy relationships that foster appropriate boundaries and expectations of members and clergy.

Ideally, those within the congregation who give attention to specific areas of ministry and congregational life will seek to be ever more comprehensive in planning and initiating actions according to the congregation's personality traits and preferences. It is not helpful for one person or group, including the clergy, to try to make the congregation into an extension of their own personality, governed by their preferences. Nor should they simply try to elevate their area of interest or involvement to the exclusion of the whole. As a congregation acknowledges its preferences and limitations it may eventually lead to openness for developing an interdependent relationship with other congregations as various gifts of each congregation are recognized as being supportive of worship, service and mission efforts in the greater social community.

Endnotes

- ^{1.} Gordon D. Lawrence, *People Types and Tiger Stripes*, (Gainesville, Florida: The Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Inc., 1982), 1-4.