

PROFILES of Ministry

Interpretive Manual Stage I



The Association of Theological Schools
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

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Revised by Daniel O. Aleshire (1985) and Francis A. Lonsway (1999, 2005)

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This publication is a part of the Profiles of Ministry program of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. A list of the principal members of the project staff and their contributions can be found on the last page of this manual.

Profiles of Ministry

THE PROGRAM

This manual and your personal profile are part of the Profiles of Ministry program of The Association of Theological Schools. The program which began in the early 1970s addresses questions such as: What are the characteristics and abilities most needed for competency in ministry? What sensitivities, approaches, and concepts of ministry are considered most important? What evidence is there that these characteristics are present in those preparing for ministry?

The *Interpretive Manual* provides essential information to help understand the scores on your profile. Interpretation with an individual trained to understand the scores at a deeper level will greatly enhance the appreciation of your gifts and areas for growth.

FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES

Several key issues have guided this program of research and assessment.

1. **Seminary training** does not equip ministers with everything they will ever need to minister effectively. One should expect that good theological education will foster the skills, knowledge, and sensitivities necessary to begin ministry and enhance the capacity to acquire new knowledge and other skills. Your profile gives indications of concepts, intentions, approaches, concerns, beliefs, attitudes, and skills that comprise the gifts you bring to ministry. It also indicates areas where growth and change may be warranted.
2. **The theological concepts of ministry** from which the instrumentation for the Profiles of Ministry program has emerged is interactive. On the one hand, ministry has a prophetic responsibility and there will be times when the expectations of people must be challenged. At the same time, the judgments of people who receive ministry and the expectations they hold of ministers must be taken seriously. Each must listen to the other.
3. **The empirical concept of assessment** underlying this program includes the assumption that numeric information can contribute to understanding an individual. Good instrument development involves complex statistical procedures. The scores on your profile reflect appropriate statistical measurement. Although numbers can be overinterpreted and abused, they can also provide meaningful estimates and images that deserve consideration. Good assessment warrants serious consideration, careful interpretation, and discussion with other people.
4. **The philosophical concept of education** on which this program rests is that theological education has as its agenda both instruction in knowledge and instruction in the process for integrating that knowledge with judgment and action. The Profiles of Ministry program has sought to develop instruments that relate to the more difficult facets of ministry to assess and while it does not examine every characteristic related to ministry, it provides useful information for personal reflection and a basis for growth.

Interpreting Your Scores

The Profiles of Ministry program scores provide an estimate of how likely you are to express various characteristics or approaches to the practice of ministry. Each score has been derived from your responses either to the *Casebook* or the *Interview*. The scores are not accidental; they reflect a pattern of responses gathered from various parts of each instrument.

The **first page** of the profile presents scores related to your personal tendencies in dealing with other people, attitudes about family relationships, personal faith, and potentially negative behaviors. The scores on the **second page** relate to four orientations or concepts of ministry.

Your scores are not related to any norm or standard of reference. They should be interpreted as your individual tendencies or approaches and do not reflect whether you have greater or lesser amounts of these traits than other students. Nevertheless, careful interpretation should indicate whether scores or patterns of scores are likely to foster your ministry, weaken or hinder it.

READING THE PROFILE

Your profile presents scores on specific characteristics. Each score is indicated by a computer-printed "X." The logical meanings of the scores range from "Very Unlikely" to "Very Likely" for *Casebook* scores and "Little Evidence" to "Much Evidence" for *Interview* scores. Scores to the far left indicate little evidence or likelihood that you exhibit the characteristic measured while scores to the right suggest that you show evidence or likelihood of the characteristic's presence. If the symbol ** is generated, this indicates that there is either missing or unreadable responses which would have affected the reliability of the score. No score is printed in this instance.

READING THE MANUAL

The description for each score reflects answers or responses characteristic of a **high** likelihood or evidence score. Some descriptions will also suggest meaning for mid-range or low evidence or likelihood scores. The measurement provided in this program makes it difficult to explain the meaning of "unlikely" or "little evidence." While such scores mean that you would **not be inclined** to exhibit the characteristic being measured, it does not identify the contrasting trait that would be an indication of your behavior or response to a situation. As you interpret your scores, avoid reading more or less into a score than is actually indicated.

Personal Characteristics

Ministry is one of those human endeavors where personal qualities are so mingled with the performance of tasks that it is frequently difficult to separate personal tendencies from ministerial skills. Whether leading a congregation, counseling a parishioner, or preaching a sermon, personal qualities influence how the task is performed. While the scales reported in this section are not measures of personality characteristics, they do indicate ways in which personal tendencies may influence your approach to ministry. Measures include your typical approach to relationships with others, perspectives on faith, and orientation to family relationships.

RESPONSIBLE AND CARING

These six scores group together because of the responses of students over the years. While each individual's scores will vary on the different scales, there is a tendency for them to group together in one general area of the profile. As a whole, they represent a responsible and caring approach to tasks and people.

Fidelity to Tasks and Persons (FIDL)

(High likelihood—Case) You give evidence that respect for persons is a high priority. You believe that all persons have value, their ideas and wishes should be heard and taken into account, and we should be conscious of one another's needs. You believe that people should be informed and included in decision-making or guideline-setting that affects them. Honest communication between persons is important to you. A score in the high likelihood range also suggests that you are responsible both to tasks and persons and consider the implications for both in decision-making. You do not see tasks, decisions, or improvements as ends in themselves but view them primarily in terms of what they will do to or for people.

Personal Responsibility (RESP)

(High likelihood—Case) You try to keep commitments whether they are related to schedules, promises to other people, or to your own inner convictions. Where a previous commitment of your time comes in conflict with some newly-discovered need, you will tend to keep your prior commitment. In the face of two important but conflicting ministry responsibilities, you tend to make your decision on the basis of your original commitment.

Acknowledgment of Limitations (LIMT)

(High likelihood—Case) You accept responsibility for mistakes whether in judgment or behavior. You are not likely to attempt to shift responsibility for your mistakes to other persons or outside circumstances. You readily apologize for mistakes and actively seek to make amends. You affirm the importance of humility and confession.

Flexibility of Spirit (FLEX)

(High evidence—Interview) A high evidence score suggests that you prefer to govern your behavior more by the present than by the past. You adapt to what is required by the unique character of the situation. You sometimes take things seriously, sometimes lightly. You appear willing to explore what is new, to be able to cope with the unexpected, and to modify your plans to meet new situations. You are willing to forget about the past negative experiences with persons and start afresh. While you like to plan ahead, you willingly alter your plans if the situation changes.

A Note on the First Four Characteristics

High presence of these four characteristics is generally seen as an asset for ministry. However, very high scores can reflect problems. For example, a person with a score far to the right on *Fidelity to Tasks and Persons* can be too intent on doing what he or she perceives others want or to compulsively complete tasks. In a similar way, *Personal Responsibility* has the potential for showing inflexibility or inappropriate exercise of control. A minister who takes this characteristic to the extreme is frequently perceived as stubborn, rigid, or inflexible. A high likelihood score on *Acknowledgment of Limitations* could identify persons who apologize for everything even when they have done nothing wrong. It may also reflect manipulative

behavior. Check for elevated scores in the Potential Negative section of the profile. It is possible, too, that a healthy degree of *Flexibility of Spirit* can give way to an inability to make decisions or keep commitments.

In each of these examples, a score cannot identify your reasons for the pattern of responses. They serve as estimates of how likely you are to exhibit certain approaches or sensitivities. Do you possess the positive aspects of these characteristics or do you have problems hidden within them?

Involvement in Caring (ICAR)

(High likelihood—Case) A score far to the right indicates that you aid people with problems by helping them explore and evaluate their alternatives, make their own decisions and act on them. You help persons express their feelings in tragic or stressful situations and encourage them to seek the help of others who have been through similar experiences. You are likely to assist people who face problems by facilitating their movement through the resolutions they have chosen.

Perceptive Counseling (PRCO)

(High likelihood—Case) You are sensitive to the needs and feelings of people with whom you talk and you try to be a good listener. You encourage persons dealing with feelings of failure to share their problems. You are accepting, affirming, and reassuring to people who doubt their worth or value. You seek to be ready to minister to others when their comments or concerns suggest they are in need of your care.

A Note on Interpretation

You may find it helpful to yoke your scores on *Involvement in Caring*, *Perceptive Counseling*, and *Theologically Oriented Counseling* (from the second page of your profile.) The first characteristic provides a measure of your concern for people while the second and third indicate your approach to counseling. Specifically, *Perceptive Counseling* provides a measure of your presence when counseling while “*Theologically Oriented Counseling*” indicates your concern to bring the gift of faith to the individual.

FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Married ministers must deal with the issues that emerge from work, which require both significant time and emotional energy, and their families who also need time and emotional support. These two realities often tug at a minister in conflicting directions. The scales in this section reflect two ways of dealing with this tension.

Mutual Family Commitment (FAML)

(High likelihood—Case) You show respect for and appreciation for your family. You value good family relationships, know their importance to an effective ministry, and therefore protect time set aside for maintaining those good relationships. You are committed to keeping commitments both in your ministry and to your family. You appear to be sensitive to your family’s needs and attempt to give as careful attention to them as to the demands of your profession.

Ministry Precedence over Family (FAML)

(High likelihood—Case) You believe that your responsibilities in ministry take precedence over all other commitments including your commitment to spouse and family. You believe that your family should understand the disruptions of family plans that your responsibilities in ministry create. You perceive your priorities as first to God, then to church, then to family.

Relationship Between Family Perspective Scores

On most profiles one of these two scores will be more toward the right. However, there are other possibilities. If both scores are high, the implication is that you hold some impossible expectations of your own behavior, that you will be both unfailingly devoted to family and unfailingly devoted to the interests of the congregation. The other possibilities, that both scores are in the middle range or low, may be a sign of indecision in this matter or of a tendency to avoid confronting the inevitable conflicts that are likely to emerge.

PERSONAL FAITH

There are a variety of expressions of personal faith. While the two scores in this section do not reflect all the richness or diversity that exist in Christian spirituality, they do represent the degree to which some approaches to personal faith may characterize you. These scales, unlike the ones in the “Responsible and Caring” section, do not group empirically and your scores will likely be different on each scale. If your personal style of faith is different from anything reflected in these measures, your scores may cluster in the low evidence region of the profile.

Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety (PIET)

(High evidence—Interview) A score toward the right indicates that you believe that the church’s primary message is not so much one of guidance for human behavior as it is God’s action in love toward humanity. You are conscious of God’s loving and sustaining presence at work in the church, your life, and the lives of others today. You show sensitivity to the activity of the Holy Spirit in contemporary life and to the need for forgiveness. You do not hesitate to share these convictions with others, especially when they give evidence of doubting. Even when things look bleak, you trust in God’s providence and are likely to express this conviction. A very high score, on the other hand, may indicate religious behavior that may be only externally religious.

Belief in a Provident God (PROV)

(High likelihood—Case) A score in the high likelihood region reflects your understanding that God loves humankind and offers the gift of life and hope. You repudiate the assumption that God operates by human rules or solely within the limitations of human understanding or beliefs. Rather, you believe that God’s being and actions are at times beyond human comprehension. You believe that God works, loves, and judges humankind with divine mercy and brings people to a saving knowledge.

POTENTIAL NEGATIVE TENDENCIES

In some cases, the scores in this section indicate negative behaviors in the context of the community of faith. In others, the scores identify behaviors that the individual may not mean to be negative but are nevertheless likely to be perceived that way by others. As you interpret your scores on each of these scales, you need to consider not only your actions but also how they may be experienced by others.

Self-Serving Behavior (SELF)

(High likelihood—Case) A score toward the right indicates that you have high respect for the office of ministry or priesthood and that you expect others to have a similar high regard. This expectation of respect may reflect a tendency to assume that others will regard you highly on the basis of your position. It reflects a need to be in control of situations and the willingness to use the authority of your office to achieve that control. It is self-serving in that others’ needs or desires are rejected and your preferences implemented.

Pursuit of Personal Advantage (PADV)

(High likelihood—Case) A score in the very likely region means you may have a tendency to try to get other people to do what you would like them to do without directly asking them to do it. You resort to indirect approaches that can be manipulative of other people. A score to the right may also reflect a tendency to want administrative structures to meet your needs rather than being willing to do things that best meet the administrative needs of an institution or organization.

Self-Protecting Behavior (PRTC)

(High evidence—Interview) You give evidence of a pessimistic view of your own abilities that causes you to be uncomfortable in unfamiliar or ambiguous situations. You tend to feel tense or nervous when being watched as you work. You want to avoid making mistakes and you worry about mastering tasks. You may have a tendency to be disorganized. You appear vulnerable to the disapproval of others and are eager to do well. A score to the right may indicate a kind of insecurity about yourself or your performance that creates the need for you to be guarded and protective.

Perceptions of Ministry

The scores on the second page of the profile relate to various approaches to the work of ministry. The scores within each of the four sets cluster empirically and logically. People tend to score in similar ways on scales within a set although there will be variations. Each of the four groups of scores represents an orientation to the overall task of ministry. A person may emphasize one, some, or all of these orientations. There is some evidence, however, that persons who tend to be strong on some sets may tend to reject other orientations.

ECCLESIAL MINISTRY

Christian congregations, while sharing many characteristics with other social institutions, nevertheless, have a unique focus. They provide a context for the proclamation of the Gospel, the worship of God, the administration of sacraments, and the personal development of faith. The scores in this section focus on your approach to ministry.

Denominational Collegiality (DNOM)

(High evidence—Interview) A high evidence score indicates that you feel at home in your denomination, that you consider ministers in your church body to be sympathetic with you and your ministry, and that you believe you can work comfortably and easily within staff relationships and denominational structures. This characteristic emphasizes a feeling of belonging, both in one's local church and in broader church settings. It suggests that you are neither disenchanted nor carrying on an active "lover's quarrel" with the church structure and organization. A very high score, on the other hand, may indicate blindness to the realities of denominational life.

Sacramental-Liturgical Ministry (LITG)

(High evidence—Interview) A score showing much evidence implies sensitivity to the sacramental nature of ministry. You would tend to emphasize the liturgical aspect of worship over the preaching or fellowship aspects, follow prescribed liturgical forms, and be sensitive to the symbolic value of vestments worn in worship.

CONVERSIONIST MINISTRY

The orientation of this set of scores holds that a primary mission of the church is sharing the Gospel so that people might come to a saving relationship through Christ. It perceives sin in clear terms, calls for individual repentance, and encourages people to use the resources of their faith to deal with the ups and downs of life. It is an orientation that contends there are spiritual laws that call people to right living, personal accountability, and reflect the judgment of God when ignored.

Assertive Individual Evangelism (EVAN)

(High likelihood—Case) You espouse a conversionist theology and, in talking with a member of another world religion, would not hesitate to speak of God's action in the hope that the person would be converted to belief in Christ.

(High evidence—Interview) You are committed to the idea that it is the task of every Christian to share the Christian message with all persons. You accept such witness as your personal responsibility and support others who aggressively share their faith. You sometimes initiate conversation with people about their faith or relationship with Christ.

The *Interview* score represents a more aggressive, intentional evangelism by going to others to tell them about Christ, whereas the *Casebook* score reflects a willingness to share faith during a conversation with an individual who has come to you to talk about such issues.

Precedence of Evangelistic Goals (GOAL)

(High likelihood—Case) A score to the far right reflects a belief that the church can make its primary contribution by ministering to a person's spiritual needs rather than by an emphasis on their physical needs. If forced to choose between the two, you would choose the former. If forced to choose between evangelism and social justice, you would choose evangelism as the more important task of Christian people.

Concentration on Congregational Concerns (CONG)

(High likelihood—Case) A score in the high likelihood range indicates a belief that the church ought to content itself with making its unique spiritual contribution to community life and not take corporate stands on social or political issues. It indicates that you would have no inclination to mobilize a congregation for political action or to encourage the church to support what some would consider questionable causes or issues where there is no one Christian course of action. This attitude is likely based on a theology that suggests the church should view itself as a spiritual community and not a political action group.

Law Orientation to Ethical Issues (LAW)

(High likelihood—Case) You affirm God's moral law and the personal consequences of breaking them. You believe that the Scriptures are the only dependable guide to God's intentions for life and that obedience is a Christian discipline that needs more emphasis. Because persons will not be saved apart from Jesus Christ, you feel the urgency of bringing the Gospel message to persons lost in sin. You think that people should have their erroneous beliefs and wrongdoing called to their attention and be reminded of God's judgment in the hope that they will repent and change their lives.

Theologically Oriented Counseling (THCO)

(High likelihood—Case) A score in the high likelihood region indicates that, at least in some situations, you help people deal with personal problems or decisions by explicitly encouraging them to be sensitive to God's purpose in their lives and to use the resources of Scripture and faith in dealing with problems. It suggests that you communicate to others the value of prayer, faith, Scripture, and the church community as resources in times of personal crisis or distress. It also implies that you make use of specific faith-related terminology in counseling situations. A very high score, on the other hand, may indicate too sharp a focus on faith-filled answers to issues at the expense of listening.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

The measures in this group reflect an orientation in which the mission of the church is to address the unjust structures of the world with the redemptive claims of the Gospel. The strategies for this approach include aggressive political action and, as needed, the support of unpopular causes. It is an orientation to ministry that emphasizes justice and works on behalf of oppressed groups and persons.

Aggressive Political Leadership (PLIT)

(High likelihood—Case) A high likelihood score implies a belief that leadership in political activity is a Christian responsibility even when that activity may cause controversy. It suggests a willingness both to be involved in political activity yourself and to encourage members of the congregation to become responsibly involved in the political process. Political activity is seen as one way a minister can put faith into action, represent Christ's love to people, and take a meaningful stand in the community.

(High evidence—Interview) A high evidence score says that you have not only been involved in political life but that you also expect to continue to be involved politically. You may be willing to use political power to change social wrongs, even at considerable expense to yourself, because you see political life as an area in which you should make your Christian witness.

Support of Unpopular Causes (CAUS)

(High evidence—Interview) A score showing much evidence describes a person who becomes overtly and vigorously involved in unpopular or controversial causes and issues, taking public stands and actions in an effort to right specific wrongs.

Openness to Pluralism (OPEN)

(High evidence—Interview) A high evidence score suggests that you respect and want to hear others' opinions and views. You have an interest in what they believe, what they are thinking, what motivates them, and how they go about making value judgments. A score to the right also implies that you are hesitant to force your own beliefs or religious position on others and think it is good for persons in your congregation to be exposed to very divergent opinions. Your approach to those whose beliefs differ from your own is cooperative rather than competitive. A very high score may indicate a drift into a valueless approach to faith in which no personal convictions are held.

Position on Conservative Moral Issues (MORL)

(High evidence—Interview) A score to the right indicates that you likely advocate aggressive political action to eliminate legalized abortion, seek to keep homosexuals from teaching in public schools, and think AIDS is punishment because of sinful behavior (homosexuality, drug abuse). You believe that these are moral issues that require a Christian response.

COMMUNITY AND CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY

The scores in this group present an orientation in which the primary tasks of ministry are to provide the services that will nurture the life of the congregation and give the community the programs and ministry it needs. The scales, as a group, reflect a vision of the church as a good citizen to its community and as a nurturing guide to its members.

Pastoral Service to All (SERV)

(High likelihood—Case) A score in the high likelihood region indicates a tendency to extend pastoral service and church programming to all people. It suggests you would personally offer or urge the church to offer practical aid to nonmembers (e.g., assistance with food or shelter to vagrants, minority groups or the poor of a community) as readily as to a member of your own congregation.

Relating Well to Youth (YUTH)

(High likelihood—Case) A high likelihood score implies that you take an advocacy position toward youth and a ministry that meets their needs and problems. When youth are being criticized, you are likely to speak up in their defense and to urge others to see them more positively. The score does not indicate your level of skill in working with youth nor your attractiveness to them; it speaks only of your attitude about the church's responsibility to meet their special needs.

Active Concern for the Oppressed (OPRS)

(High likelihood—Case) You consider it important to help people understand the realities that confront oppressed people (e.g., citizens of Third-World countries and Native Americans) and urge the Christian community to deal with their social and economic needs. If it is necessary to make a choice, you would prefer that personal, social, and economic needs be met first and that conversation about the Christian faith come later. The measure gives evidence of your attitude and intention of aiding oppressed people and educating others concerning their needs but gives no evidence of your experience in this area.

Encouragement of World Missions (MISN)

(High likelihood—Case) You show a high level of personal interest and motivation to encourage congregations to support the worldwide mission of the church. Your sense of mission on behalf of people near and far arises not only from your perception of their needs but from your own belief about how Christ would respond to them. You are especially likely to advocate missions involvement with those who are in poverty and in need of material assistance.

Balanced Approach to World Missions (MSBL)

(High likelihood—Case) A score in the high likelihood region suggests you refuse to choose between evangelistic witness and meeting physical needs as the better form of missions involvement. You feel that evangelism and the search for justice should not be separated, and dualistic approaches should be avoided.

Building Congregational Community (BLDG)

(High likelihood—Case) Your score indicates that you emphasize fellowship and a sense of community as meaningful goals for a congregation or group. When decisions are to be made, one significant element in your thinking is whether the decision will help or hinder the sense of community within the church. You value people more than programs, are more oriented toward fellowship than task, and believe in investing significantly in building trust and rapport within a congregation. You would be likely to foster activities in the congregation that are purely for the sake of community or fellowship.

Conflict Utilization (CNFL)

(High likelihood—Case) A high likelihood score indicates that you understand conflict not as an event to be avoided or even played down but as an inevitable part of group life that has the potential for good in it. Your consistent approach to conflict situations is to have all sides expressed and heard. You believe buried conflict is destructive and will reject proposals to avoid or discourage discussion of controversial issues by the congregation. Rather, you feel responsible for helping the congregation learn how to resolve disagreements or at least to express them without destroying community.

Major Contributors to the Readiness for Ministry Project and the Profiles of Ministry Program

In the early history of the program, 1973-87, members of the staffs of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and Search Institute worked as a team in its conceptual and practical development. For David S. Schuller, former Associate Director of ATS, and Milo L. Brekke, former Principal Research Scientist at Search Institute, this meant an investment of nearly six years. The major revisions of the program in 1987-88 and 2003-04 have been accomplished by ATS staff with the help of consultants and experts in data analysis.

Others have worked for shorter periods, some of them early in the program's development and others joining later. All have contributed unique gifts and enthusiastic belief in the value of the work.

Though most of the people named below worked in several capacities, each is named for his or her major contribution.

1973-74

Conceptualization, organization, instrument development, data analysis:

David Schuller, Milo Brekke, Merton Strommen, Daniel Aleshire, and Robert Reineke

Writing, interpretation, training:

Francis Lonsway and Dorothy Williams

Data management, systems:

Ernest Thompson, Mark Brekke, Phillip Wood, and Carolyn Eklin

Support service, administrative assistance, coordination of data collection:

Arlene Galloway, Mary Kay O'Brien, and Roberta Tidemann

1987-88

David Schuller, Daniel Aleshire, Bill Hoopes, Richard Wilson, and Deborah Williams

2003-04

Director of the study, principal researcher:

Francis Lonsway

Data management and analysis:

Fran Pacienza and Scott LaJoie

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