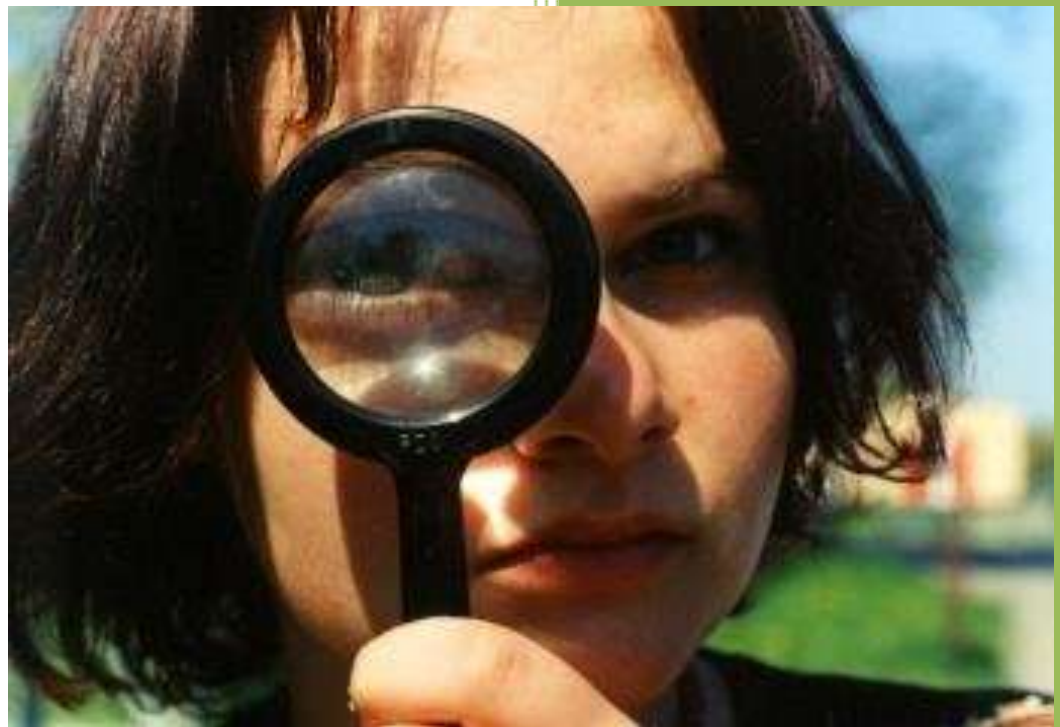# 2012

# Looking at Who We Are

*A summary of responses to the second 2011 survey of prior participants in the Transition into Ministry programs*

*-funded by the Lilly Endowment*

David T Gortner, Linda Mouzon,

Anne Burruss

VTS

4/6/2012

# Looking at Who We ARE

## A Summary of Responses

## from

## Transition into Ministry Program Participants

David Gortner, Linda Mouzon, and Anne Burruss

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# LOOKING AT WHO WE ARE

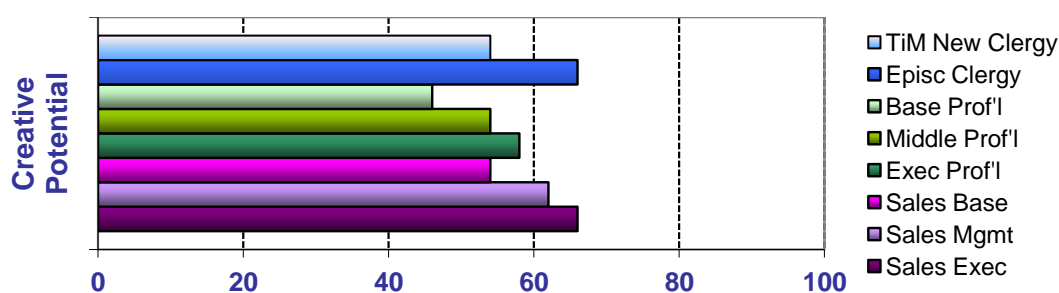## Transition into Ministry Clergy Compared with Other Groups

In our first report, we summarized feedback from over 300 responses from past participants in the Transition into Ministry (TiM) programs. They shared their experiences from training and development as pastors and priests. In this report, a summary of our second survey, we turn to some of the inner qualities and habits of these (TiM) alumni. We asked questions about creativity in work, personal dispositions and habits of mind in relation to work and daily life, patterns in handling conflict, and indicators of physical, interpersonal, spiritual, financial, and emotional wellness.

When possible, we have drawn from other studies to provide comparisons between TiM participants and other clergy and/or groups of professionals from other fields.
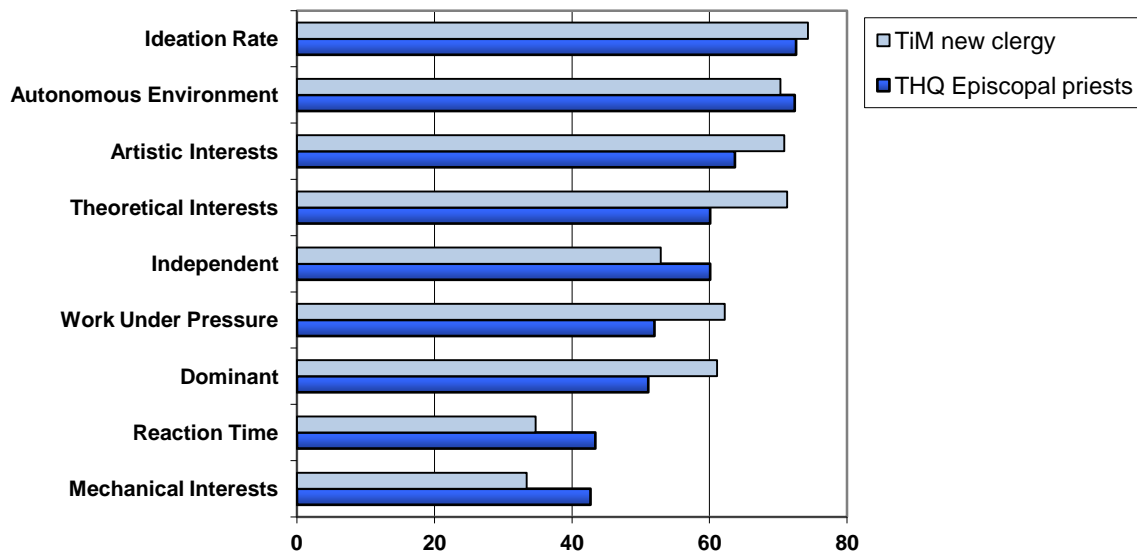
## CREATIVITY AMONG NEW TiM CLERGY

How creative are clergy who are alumni of TiM programs? How does their level of creativity compare to other clergy and higher level professionals?

TiM alumni saw themselves as moderately creative. The *Cree Questionnaire*, a test designed to assess an individual's creative-innovative potential, asks questions about past experience in work, school, and other productive settings that indicate creative potential. Compared with other professionals from a range of non-profit and for-profit fields, TiM alumni scored at the 54th percentile, somewhat higher than average in creative potential — surpassing base-level professionals and comparable to mid-level and executive professionals and to base-level sales professionals. These relatively new clergy scored lower than longer-term senior Episcopal clergy, who surpassed almost all groups of professionals and salespeople, matched only by sales managers and executives in creative potential.



There are different forms of personal and organizational creativity. Transition into Ministry (TiM) alumni showed a similar pattern to senior Episcopal clergy in the types of creative work in which they excelled and those in which they were more challenged. The general pattern suggests that clergy overall tend more toward **independent creative thinking** than toward **organizational creative doing** – they have great capacities for thinking quickly of great and beautiful ideas and for working on their own, but do not necessarily have high capacities for implementation.

It seems the TiM programs and early work experiences of TiM alumni may have had some impact on this overall pattern. Although TiM alumni's ability to work independently was somewhat lower than more seasoned clergy, the TiM programs may have strengthened other creative capacities that were stronger than among seasoned Episcopal priests.[1] For instance, TiM alumni tended to score somewhat higher in dominance and in their ability to work under pressure. These scores highlight TiM alumni as a group of emerging church leaders who have more experience with turnaround response and delivery as well as greater familiarity with strong leadership.

There are some other intriguing differences between TiM alumni and more seasoned Episcopal clergy. TiM alumni indicated stronger theoretical interests, lower mechanical interests, and, interestingly, less speedy reaction time.  This last difference is surprising in an age in which the multitask and responsorial world of web-based communication and information-searching might be expected to produce stronger self-reports of speedy reaction time.  Perhaps reaction time is linked to the ability to focus one's attention and set aside distractions – an increasing challenge in the face of a multiple-stimulus world.

## NEW CLERGY DISPOSITIONS AND HABITS

How do the dispositions of clergy who are alumni of TiM programs compare to more seasoned clergy and other professionals?
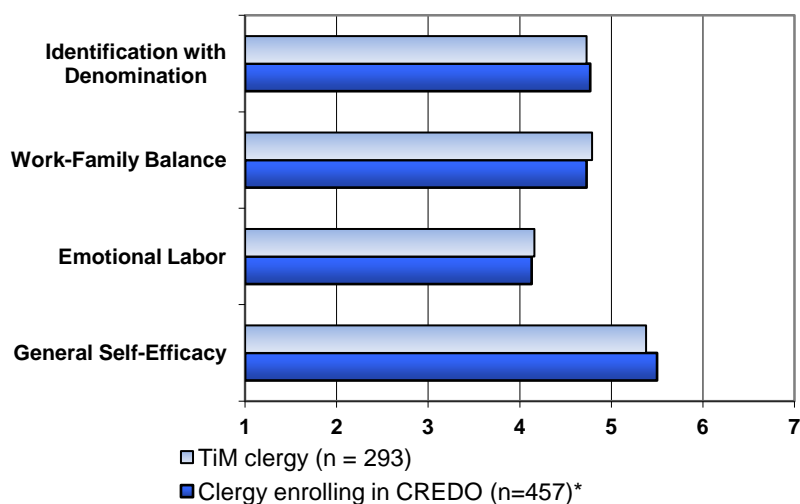
We asked TiM alumni a variety of questions about their work-related dispositions and habits.  These questions have been asked of clergy and other professionals from a wide range of fields.  A first set of

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[1] Alternatively, such capacities may also have preceded participation in TiM programs and contributed to the choices and selections of these individuals.  Further examination of our data will help us tease out the effects of TiM from natural leadership capacities.

questions was drawn from surveys regularly given to clergy from different denominations who are preparing to attend a CREDO conference on clergy wellness.  These surveys, created by organizational behavior psychologists, included questions that asked the following:

- ➢ How closely is your own identity as a pastor linked to the collective identity of your denomination?
- ➢ How well do you balance between the demands and expectations of work and those of your family and personal life?
- ➢ How much effort do you put into showing emotions that you are not actually feeling, as part of your work?
- ➢ To what degree do you believe that you are able to achieve the goals and aims of your work?

The chart below shows how TiM alumni (293) and clergy enrolling in CREDO (457) as groups responded to these questions, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).



*pre-CREDO n=78 for Emotional Labor, Identification with Denomination, Work-Life Balance

Responses of TiM new clergy were similar to a group of clergy enrolled in and anticipating attendance at a CREDO clergy wellness and personal development conference.  It is noteworthy that TiM alumni reported comparable scores for self-efficacy and work-life balance, or less emotional labor, than our comparative sample of clergy who were about to attend their first eight-day CREDO clergy wellness conference but who had not necessarily experienced an intensive early vocation development program like TiM.  The two groups were very similar. However, about one-third of TiM alumni reported a less strong sense of self-efficacy.

From the CREDO-based scales, it seems that most—but not all—clergy have a moderately strong sense of self-efficacy.  Their ratings of self-efficacy exceeded their ratings of their work-life balance and their sense of personal identification with their specific Christian denomination.

This picture of clergy as moderately high on self-efficacy does not completely align with clergy responses on another set of questions collectively called "The Temperament Comparator" (TC).  Using the TC, we asked TiM alumni to describe themselves according to twelve dispositional qualities, by choosing the more favored description in each possible pairing.  Patterns from the TC show that TiM alumni see themselves as focused, committed, non-flamboyant and unflappable people who thrive in the presence of other people but are nonetheless self-confident.  But they described themselves less frequently as self-reliant than did longer-term senior Episcopal clergy in a study 10 years ago.

Self-description choices, from most to least frequent, are as follows for TiM clergy:

# Emotionally stable
# Even-tempered
## Persevering
## Seeking Company
## Self-confident
### Calm
### Decisive
Talkative
Steady Worker
Serious
Cautious
Demonstrative

It is interesting to compare responses of TiM clergy with more seasoned Episcopal clergy who took a similar set of surveys 12 years ago.  Overall, TiM clergy viewed themselves as less self-reliant and more dependent in their work dispositions than did longer-term Episcopal clergy—who described themselves as less self-reliant and more dependent than other professionals.  Often serving in assistant positions or as new solo pastors in small churches, TiM clergy responses we suspect may be related to their relatively "new" status as fully ordained pastors.  We will be exploring this pattern more fully in future reports.

Stronger self-reliance is clearly associated with other indicators of self-differentiated leadership.  TiM alumni who described themselves as most self-reliant and least dependent also scored higher in self-efficacy and work-life balance, and lower in emotional labor.  Stronger self-reliance was directly related to better experiencing life as making a difference, making and maintaining clear choices that draw the line between church life and personal or family life. To a lesser degree, stronger self-reliance was associated with less emphasis on performing emotionally as expected by many in the role of a pastor or priest.

Interestingly, TiM alumni's personal work temperament was not related to how strongly they identified with their own Christian denominations.  TiM alumni clergy reported only moderately strong denominational identification and loyalty—significantly lower than their commitment to work-life balance.

# CONFLICT PATTERNS, STYLES, AND ENCOUNTERS AMONG NEW CLERGY

How do clergy who are alumni of TiM programs handle conflict?  And what are some of the typical conflicts they encounter?

We asked TiM alumni to complete the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI).  The TKI is a human resources tool widely used for helping people in organizations understand their own patterns of engagement in conflict.[2]  It provides indicators of people's typical behaviors in conflict situations, based on two dimensions:  assertiveness and cooperativeness.  People choose among response options according to five types of responses to conflict:  avoidance, accommodation, compromise, collaboration, and competition.

The table below contains group raw scores on each scale for TiM alumni clergy, as well as comparison group raw scores for more seasoned Episcopal priests, a recent national sample of employed individuals across all types of work (CPP, 2002), management graduate students (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977), and young professionals enrolled in continuing education (Volkema & Bergman, 1994).

**Table 26.  Clergy TKI average raw scores, compared with three groups, on conflict strategies**

| Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode | Average Raw Scores (Standard Deviations in parentheses) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TiM Clergy (292) | Episcopal Clergy (447) | National Sample of Employed (3603)[b] | UCLA Mgmt Grad Students (196)[c] | Young East Coast Professionals in Business Course (202)[d] |
| Competition | 3.0 (2.5) | 3.8 (2.9) | 4.9 | 5.9 | 5.2 (2.8) |
| Collaboration | 6.6 (2.3) | 6.5 (2.2) | 5.8 | 6.5 | 6.0 (2.4) |
| Compromise | 7.5 (2.3) | 7.1 (2.3) | 7.2 | 6.4 | 7.0 (2.4) |
| Avoidance | 6.4 (2.4) | 6.4 (2.4) | 5.5 | 5.9 | 6.2 (2.5) |
| Accommodation | 6.5 (2.2) | 6.1 (2.1) | 5.5 | 5.2 | 5.6 (2.2) |

[b]Figures from Consulting Psychologists Press (October, 2002).
[c]Figures from Kilmann & Thomas (1977).
[d]Figures from Volkema & Bergman (1994).

Transition into Ministry alumni remain more on the cautious end of the continuum when it comes to conflict.  They tend not to assert themselves and their own interests strongly, unless they are also vigorously engaged in eliciting others' interests as well and seeking ways to collaborate and compromise.

TiM alumni profiles are most like more seasoned clergy (as in the Episcopal clergy sample) – they favor accommodation as a first and best approach to conflict, seeking to affirm and pursue other people's
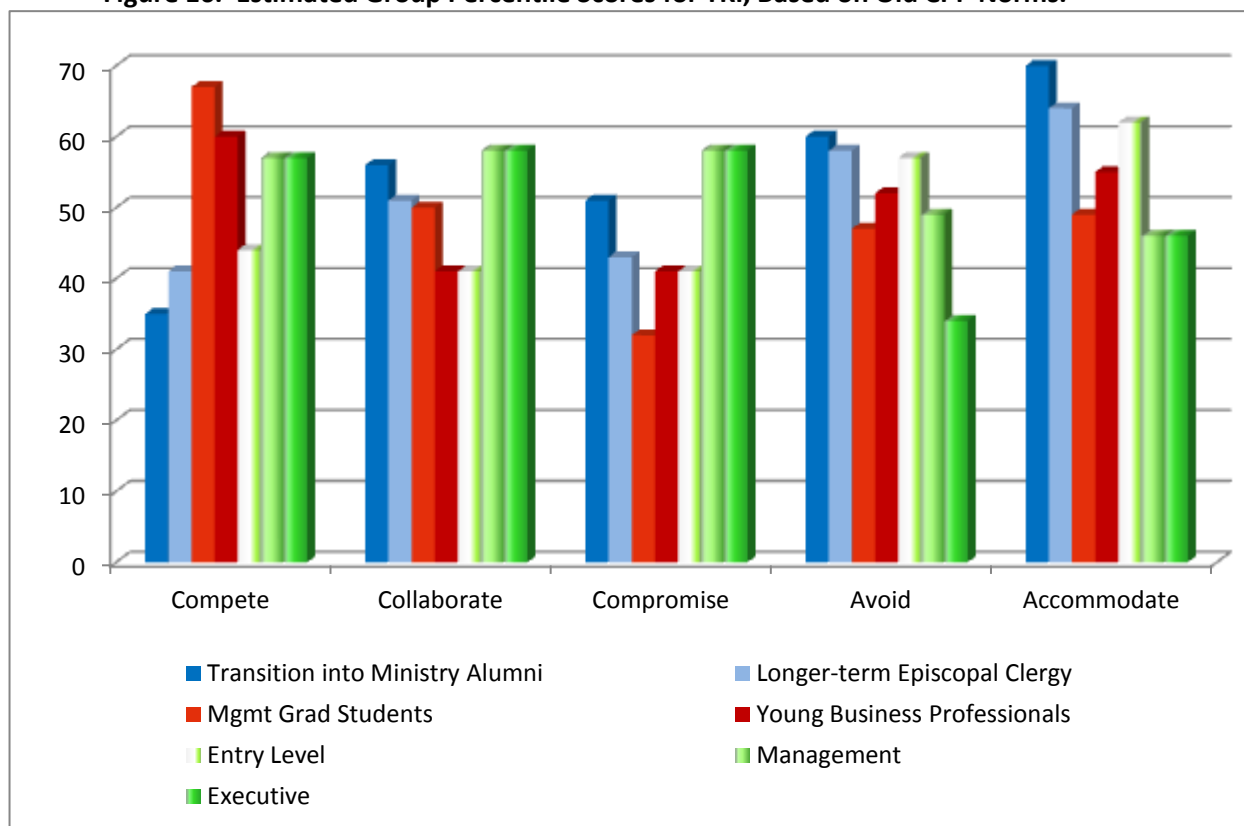
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[2] Speed Leas, an Alban Institute author and consultant, developed a conflict instrument modeled on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, adapted and expanded for use in religious congregations.  But this instrument has not been as widely used and lacks comparative data for different professions.

interests and to sacrifice or ignore their own interests in favor of others, and they withdraw from a more competitive approach in which personal interests are asserted with little interest in others' interests. They are somewhat more strongly inclined to collaborate and compromise than more seasoned clergy, but are similar in their high likelihood to avoid and withdraw entirely from situations of conflict.

As would be expected, new clergy differ from young business professionals on a purely assertive, or competitive, approach to conflict. TiM alumni are much more likely to seek collaboration and compromise as ways to assert their own interests in conversation with others' interests; they are much less likely to take a purely competitive stance (only asserting their own interests)—and they are much more likely to take a purely accommodating stance.

TKI raw scores are typically converted to percentile scores. These percentile scores are still based on the original normative sample of 400 middle and upper level managers in business and government – a group that is likely to be more assertive than average. The charts below contain estimated group percentiles based on group raw-score averages (compared to the original normative sample).

**Figure 16.  Estimated Group Percentile Scores for TKI, Based on Old CPP Norms.**

## Examples of conflicts encountered by new clergy

Like more seasoned clergy, new TiM clergy encounter a wide array of conflicts in their work in churches and other organizations. Often, these involve conflicts amongst fellow staff members, clergy, or lay leaders.

New clergy can find themselves navigating a minefield of religiously laden (but theologically erroneous) expectations and assumptions about conflict, personal assertiveness, and cooperation. Churches can especially succumb to the allure of a theology of "niceness" – and church staffs are certainly not exempt from such assumptions. The following offers an example from Pastor Terry, a relatively new young pastor who encountered these kinds of assumptions:

*The strength of my personality was "inhibiting" the youth director from being able to "do his job." Head of staff asked if I would be willing to sit down with a therapist and work through the issue. I said yes. Nothing ever came of it, and I never sat down with the therapist - what I did do was gain a new awareness of the power of my voice. I now have worked with the same youth director for 7 years with a very healthy relationship that has much candor and honesty.*

This quote is richly layered. It reveals a local organizational system in which the complaint of a less assertive member can result in a more assertive member being told to behave differently. It shows a system with a lack of follow-through. It also points to unexpected new self-awareness and self-chosen adaptation of behavior without giving up one's strengths, as well as the grace of two very different people learning to work effectively with one another – even in a system that seemed conflict-averse.

Pastor Terry's is but one example of a wide array of conflicted situations faced by TiM clergy. Over 240 TiM alumni wrote descriptions of "notable conflicts" in their current ministry settings. The next few pages present samples of different kinds of conflicts encountered by TiM alumni.

## *Staff Conflicts in Churches: Authority, Respect, and Responsibility*

Employment policies and procedures are not always clear in churches, and this can exacerbate problems in the exercise of proper authority and the practice of mutual respect. Below are two accounts of TiM clergy involved in confrontation and discipline of staff who were not performing in line with their duties—and one account of a TiM pastor who experienced the brunt of angry confrontation by her superior.

*The church administrator and I were engaged in conflict over my pastoral authority. She had a different view of what I should be doing in my job and let me know. I called her on her behavior and she eventually quit.*

*Over the last two years, we have had to fire two staff people at the church. There was a concern about job performance and ability. As the pastor, I am the direct supervisor. In both cases there was a lack of respect and trust was lost through the process that would have made any other decision than to fire very difficult. In both cases I worked closely with our Personnel committee, tried to be clear about my opinions and listen to others, and carefully weigh the options. Both cases were emotionally draining, but the situations resolved without creating too much additional conflict. The Personnel Committee and I dealt directly with the situation and sought the best solution for the church as a whole. I am pleased to say, as a church, we are healthier and in a better place today having dealt with the issue rather than letting it linger.*

*I was assigned the task of creating a summer children's curriculum on diversity and was not informed by my supervisors that the start date had been bumped up to a day that I had already secured as a vacation day. When I discovered the dates had changed and realized that I would not be ready to pass the launch of the program on to volunteers, I asked about delaying the start of the program for another week. There had been some tensions between myself and my supervisor, so I know I didn't articulate*

*myself well as I made this request because I was nervous about how she would receive it. She cut me off in the middle of my request, criticized my way of expressing myself, yelled at me for dumping this in her lap while dumping everything she was struggling with in mine. I was so taken aback by the way she launched into me that I stepped back from the conflict. I did what I could to prepare the program for launch and solicit volunteers before going on vacation. I requested time to sit down and talk with her when I got back. When we did, she talked and made it clear that it was time for me to listen. I heard about how my behavior had been inappropriate and heard her talk about our conflict as an "unproductive conversation." She accused me of trying to embarrass her when I had been trying to figure out clear expectations of my job. This conversation made it clear to me that we had such different experiences of the same encounter, that to maintain a continued working relationship, it wasn't safe or even possible to confront the conflict head on. As the lowest member of the totem pole, I was expected to fall in line and never give the appearance of dissent or differing opinion. Keeping a smile on my face has lessened the tensions to the extent that day to day interactions are now less volatile than they were immediately following the conflict. However, it does not feel resolved.*

These situations illustrate the importance of learning and practicing direct communication with staff and of establishing clear policies for hiring and firing—they further illustrate the challenge of learning positive employee relations in an organizational culture where senior leaders themselves do not practice respect. In the first two situations, the pastors learned how to deal directly with situations of insubordination and underperformance. This is invaluable learning that not all TiM alumni experienced. In the third situation, the "lesson learned" was to smile and toe the line—and not to communicate directly. This might have unfortunate future repercussions, were it not for TiM peers and mentors who helped this pastor reflect on her situation and eventually find a new position.

### *Self-Discovery about Rapid Change and Conflict*
Besides the challenges and conflicts that arise in staff relations and organizational life, there are conflicts that present opportunities to learn more deeply about the pacing of change and the emotional and relational costs of rapid change. The first quote shows how a young church-planting pastor learned to manage her own impulse toward rapid change, in light of the impact her behavior had on her starting congregation.

*When I began my position creating a new church start with about a dozen members of a congregation that had closed, I made too many assumptions about the energy and flexibility that they had for the new start and probably tried to change too much too quickly. They were almost all angry at me. I sought them out for one-on-one conversations and called meetings to discuss the issues. I readily apologized for my actions and tried to non-defensively explain my intentions lest they believe I had acted with ill will toward them. Some of the members refused to speak to me; some went through the process and decided to leave; others agreed to keep working together. There is deeper mutual respect between myself and those who stayed. I still feel some guilt (and to be honest, some resentment) regarding those who refused to speak with me. With the others who chose to leave, I feel that we parted amiably though with different visions for the Church and our respective places in it.*

This is definitely "hard learning." The price was particularly high for this TiM solo pastor—and it is unfortunate that this very typical impulse of creative new pastors is not addressed through any training in organizational change. The next quote shows how another TiM pastor, in an assisting role, had the benefit of learning from a supporting position how to handle movements of resistance to change and how to support senior leadership.

*The church I currently serve holds a lot of anxiety about its future: it has been declining in membership and in income for the past 50 years and there are real, significant questions about whether it can make it in the years to come. In our situation, change is clearly necessary. The process of discerning what this change should be and how to bring about transformation has led to considerable conflict that is somewhat constant from a certain subset of the congregation. Recently, several folks in the church mailed out a letter that was critical of the senior pastor's ministry and of a position the church council was*

*recommending, only days before the congregation was scheduled to gather and vote about whether or not to support the recommendation. There were 14 signers on the letter. My role was serving as a support person for the senior minister as well as others who were wounded in the process of receiving this letter: providing pastoral care, listening, and making sure not to feed into anxiety driven triangulation and fear. I continue to be intentional about not engaging in behavior that fuels that unhealthy way of functioning.*

This young pastor learned about the pastoral cost of internal conflict—invaluable insight into how to lead in a way that can diminish the likelihood of behavior that fuels conflict and wounds people. The third quote, below, shows an example of a new pastor who has learned the art of slowing down and fostering conversation in the process of change.

*We are presently exploring next step options for the life of the congregation I serve. There is some feeling that we must move ahead quickly with action steps, but it is clear that there is not unanimity about what those might be. I have encouraged us to be intentional about listening to one another and not to take concrete action until there is some clarity about the best vision for the life ahead in the congregation.*

### When Individuals Act Up or Act Out

The following are examples of conflicts that arose for TiM clergy because of the behaviors of individuals in their congregations—either lay or staff. A primary role TiM clergy assume in these situations is that of a pastoral caregiver. Sometimes, the arts of confrontation and clarification of policy lead into interpersonal cleanup and healing in the wake of emotional upheaval.

*I deal with small groups at church. Most recently, one group that is growing needed to split, and one woman in the group became volatile and so upset over the whole thing that the leader was warning me she would be calling me to talk about it. It is in the process of being resolved. I am trying to care for her and hear what is really going on with her deep down and figure out why she is so angry about it, while at the same time, supporting the decision of the group leader (who prayerfully had discussed the split extensively with me as well as the small group before it occurred).*

*Upon beginning at my current church, I discovered the long time church secretary had embezzled thousands of dollars from the congregation. I requested an audit upon my arrival and discovered the inconsistencies. Unfortunately, this worker was much beloved by the congregation and the situation was devastating to many in the church. My role was caretaker for the congregation in the aftermath of this situation, while also assisting the prosecutor in gathering evidence against her. When she was sent to prison, I worked through the grief process with the congregation as a whole.*

### When Conflict Is Theological

As the examples above illustrate, not all conflicts have deep theological significance—many are straightforward matters of organizational best practices. But some conflicts arise in church life that are deeply theological, and that bring clergy into conflict with one another because of differing understandings of the Church, salvation, sacraments, and paths of Christian formation and discipleship. The following is a great example of just such a "Paul and Barnabas" disagreement that created tension for a clergy team leading a new congregation.

*The first large conflict I had with my co-pastor came only a few months into our time together. Our small house church was already celebrating communion on a regular basis. It came to our attention that one of the integral people in this house church had not yet been baptized, and in fact had no desire to be baptized, seeing it as an "empty sign". Our denomination's polity requires (in theory) that all communicants first be baptized. My co-pastor, having then a higher view than baptism than I and being more of a stickler for the rules of the church, wanted to exclude this young woman from communion. I was afraid that excluding her would destroy the relationships that we were seeking to build in our fledgling community. We agreed that eventually she should be baptized, but could not agree on how to teach her the meaning of baptism or what to do about communion in the meantime. During a prolonged argument about whether or not she should take communion, my co-pastor*

*insisted that she should not receive communion while I insisted that excluding her would destroy the relationship we had already built. Eventually we agreed to let her take continue to receive communion in the expectation that she would be baptized (an expectation that was fulfilled a year and a half later). My co-pastor only agreed to this, though, because of a mutually agreed upon understanding that certain provisions of our denomination's polity did not apply to our church community until we chartered as a self-sustaining congregation. For him, the primary concerns in the conflict were orthodox understanding and practice of the sacraments and obedience to our denomination's rules. For me, the primary concern was maintaining the relationship that we had with our unbaptized communicant.*

### *Capacity to Stand and Be Appropriately Assertive*

To conclude this brief consideration of conflicts encountered by TiM clergy, let us return to Pastor Terry. Pastor Terry was sought out by regional leaders for Terry's capacity to deal with difficult issues and forge a clear-headed solution.

*As the only non-conflict-averse clergy on a multi-clergy staff, I often "take on" divisive issues. Most recently, I've seen this work out in the life of the presbytery and in the church over the theological divide regarding ordination of gays and lesbians. I was appointed by the Presbytery moderator to work to create a document for churches who desire to leave the denomination with their property without cost. I gave myself to hard work, much prayer, and intense networking in places where I didn't know how to proceed. Now, churches have an exit and are leaving in droves - so it must have worked… Am I happy about the deconstruction of our presbytery? No. In addition, in the particular church I serve, we have a gay inquirer so in process right now of how we work with our leadership in terms of navigating discipleship, leadership and discernment as a body of Christ in a particular place. Hard work - lots of prayer, conversation, not "taking stands" but listening with a willingness to shift - MOSTLY, honoring peoples stories.*

As this quote illustrates, clergy with stronger capacities to utilize assertiveness and to work with rather than avoid conflict are the clergy sought out for their strength. It is these clergy, who are capable of being both assertive and cooperative, who are also likely most capable of working with and for the good of people representing very different interests and positions.

## INDICATORS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

One of the major concerns church leaders have identified over the past 15 years is the concern about clergy health and wellness. Like clergy in many other denominations, many Methodist pastors are overweight or obese.[3] Like in other denominations, many Episcopal clergy struggle with depression and anxiety (anti-anxiety and anti-depressant medications are among the top ten medications prescribed for Episcopal clergy).[4] Many clergy wrestle with debt they accrued during the course of seminary education, and most struggle with financial stability in churches or organizations that themselves struggle to give their clergy the compensation packages expected by their denominations.
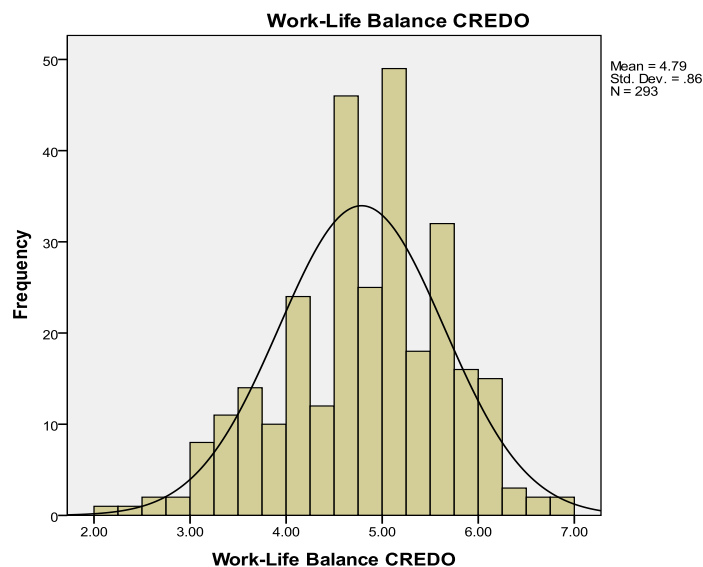
We asked TiM alumni a variety of questions about their own health and wellness. Paralleling these questions were our questions about work-life balance. The chart below shows the distribution of TiM alumni in their average scores on work-life balance questions. TiM alumni were split about 50%/50% between those who practiced more balance between their work and the rest of their lives, and those

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[3] Duke University clergy wellness study, currently underway.
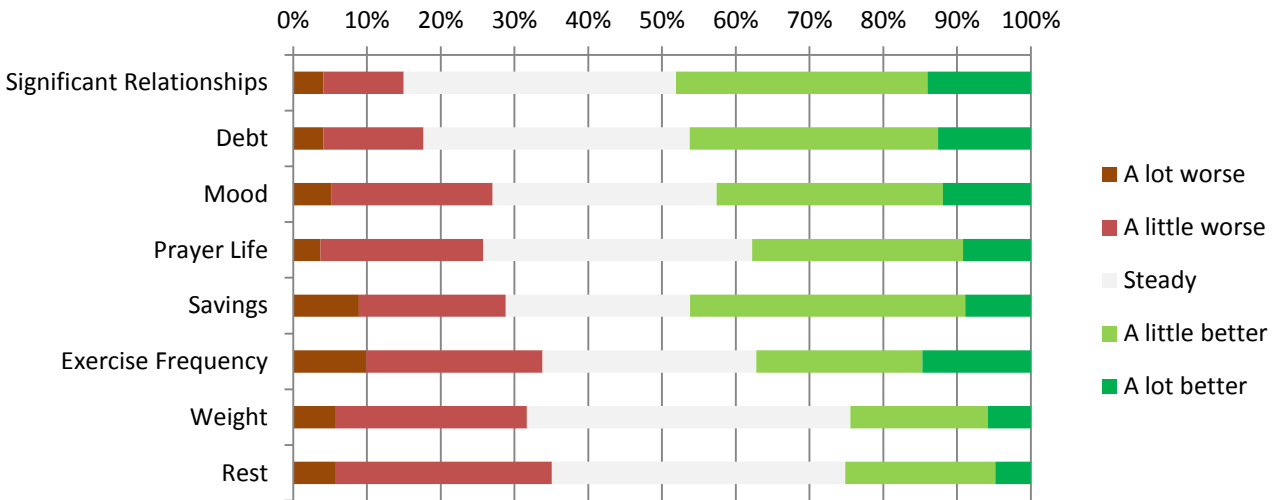[4] Church Insurance Company report, 2005.

whose work lives were out of balance.  We will revisit the relationship between work-life balance and wellness later in this report.

**Work-Life Balance CREDO**

Mean = 4.79
Std. Dev. = .86
N = 293

The Presbyterian Church (USA) asks its pastors some particularly helpful questions about clergy wellness.  Their questions span spiritual, financial, physical, emotional, and familial aspects of healthy life.  We adapted some of these questions and asked TiM alumni to respond.  This was, in many ways, the most personal part of our surveys.

The two charts below show the ways TiM alumni responded to our two sets of questions about physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and relational wellness.  First, we asked TiM alumni to rate the degree and direction of changes in their patterns of life in the last year.  Next we asked them to rate their level of concern, satisfaction, or excitement about their current patterns of life.

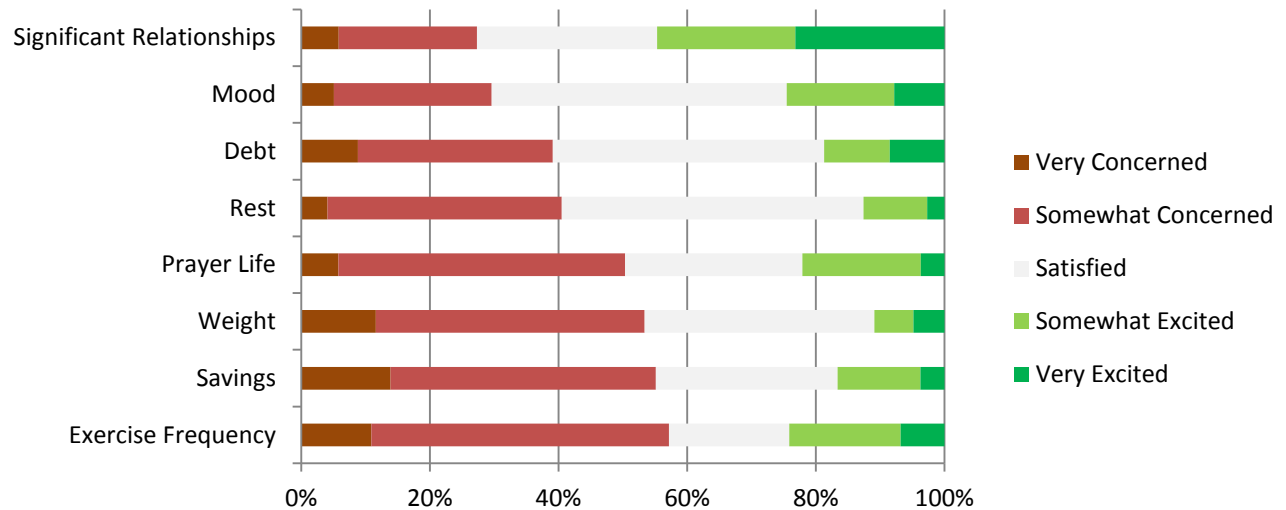**How have different dimensions of wellness changed over the past year?**



TiM alumni indicated the most improvement in their significant relationships and in their financial health – nearly 50% reported that these areas of life had improved a little or a lot, and fewer than 20% reported that relationships or debt had gotten worse. Nearly 30%, however, indicated a decline in savings.

Over 35% also indicated modest to significant improvement in physical exercise, prayer life, and mood. But around 25% indicated modest to significant decline in prayer life and mood – and nearly 35% reported less frequent physical exercise. Not surprisingly, mood was strongly related to both exercise and prayer.

Physical exercise, rest, and overall weight were areas of increasing difficulty for over 30% of TiM alumni. Practices and disciplines of the body seem to be areas of difficulty for these well-trained clergy, as they are for clergy in general.

**How do new clergy feel about different dimensions of wellness in their current lives?**
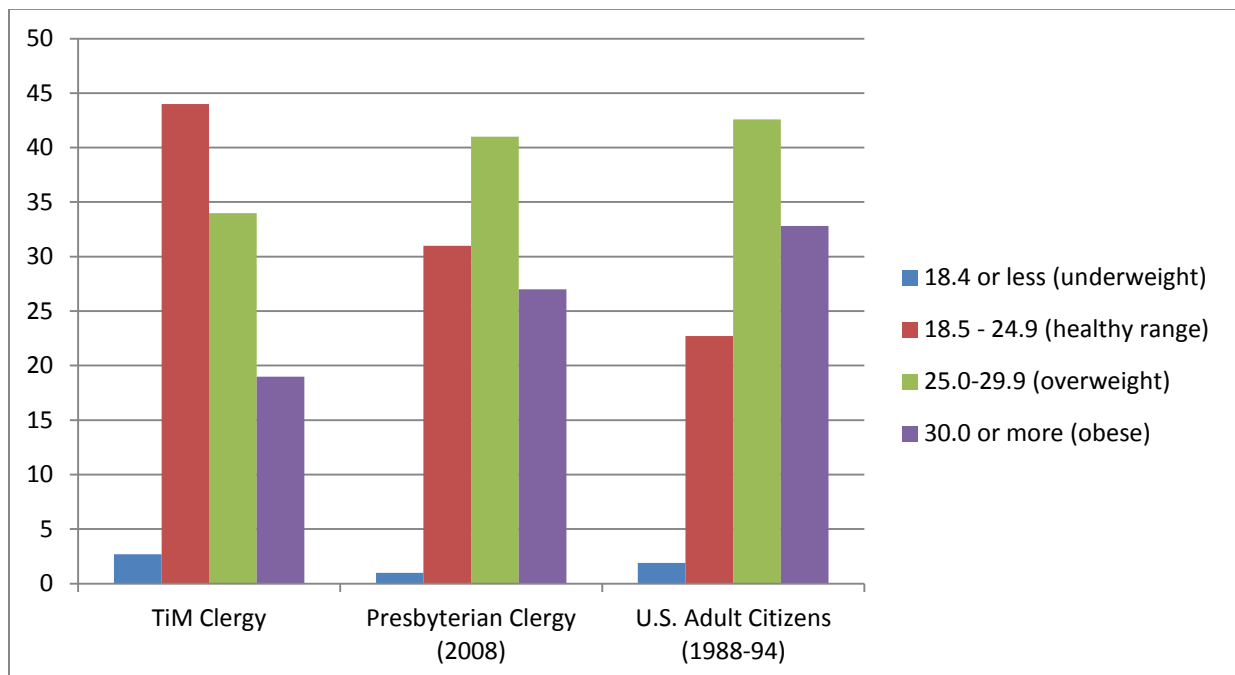


On a very positive note, TiM clergy were most excited about their current significant relationships. Over 40% were somewhat or very excited about their relational health; while only 25% were somewhat or very concerned about their significant relationships.

In other areas, TiM alumni expressed higher concern and less excitement. The highest areas of concern – for more than 50% – were in their frequency of exercise, savings, weight, and prayer life.

Nearly 27% of TiM clergy expressed moderate or serious concern about four or more areas of wellness in their lives, and over 90% expressed concern about at least one area of wellness. Closer inspection reveals that over 32% indicated serious concern about one or more areas of wellness. But 50% of these same TiM clergy also expressed basic satisfaction to excitement about four or more areas of wellness in their lives—and two-thirds of them indicated moderate or high excitement about at least one area of wellness. There were about 8% who expressed no satisfaction or excitement about any areas of wellness.

A further indicator of physical wellness is body mass index (BMI). We asked TiM alumni to report their height and weight. The following chart shows the average and range of BMI for TiM alumni, compared to Presbyterian clergy and with adult Americans in general.[5] As seen below, BMI for TiM alumni is similar to that of Presbyterian clergy and American adults, with a high proportion who are overweight or obese. As seen below, BMI for TiM alumni is lower than that of Presbyterian clergy and American adults, with a high proportion who are in what is regarded as the healthy range (18.5-24.9). However, 53% are either overweight or obese: far better than the 68% of Presbyterian clergy across ages and years of service, and the 74% of the American adult population, but still a point of concern.
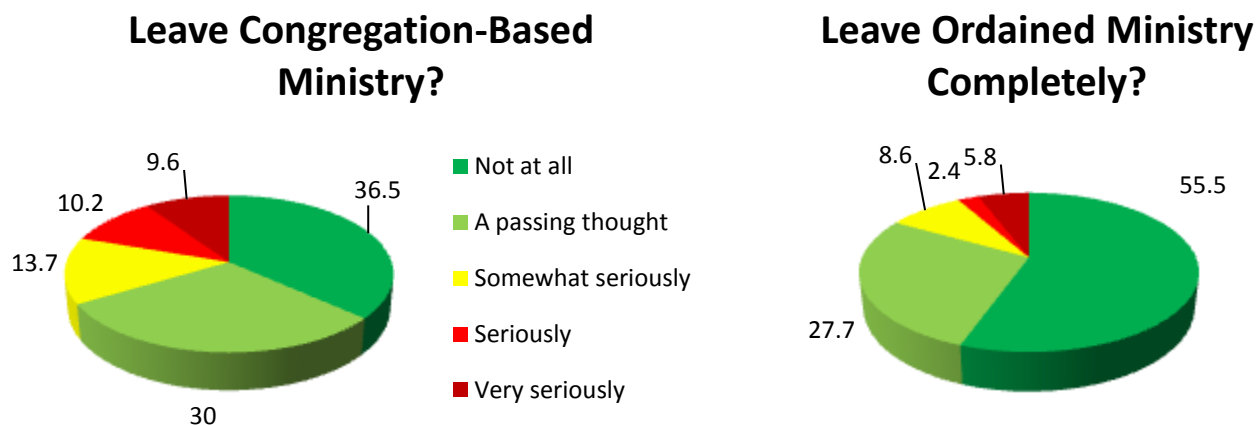


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[5] Data on Americans is from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) online report, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes/databriefs/adultweight.pdf

# FRUSTRATION WITH ORDAINED MINISTRY:
# INDICATORS OF DESIRE TO EXIT

One of the major reasons that the Lily Endowment invested in the TiM initiatives was because of a growing concern about attrition in ordained ministry.  An increasing percentage of newly ordained clergy were leaving the ministry during their first five years; in some denominations this rate was as high as 40% or more.  So, after a decade of investment in post-seminary transitions into ministry, how is the staying power of TiM alumni?

We asked two questions that other denominational organizations have asked their clergy.  These two questions elicit responses about intent to leave congregation-based ministry and the ordained ministry altogether.  The following two graphs show a somewhat hopeful response, but also some cause for continuing concern.

### Leave Congregation-Based Ministry?



- 36.5
- 30
- 13.7
- 10.2
- 9.6

Legend:
- Not at all
- A passing thought
- Somewhat seriously
- Seriously
- Very seriously

### Leave Ordained Ministry Completely?



- 55.5
- 27.7
- 8.6
- 2.4
- 5.8

TiM clergy are highly dedicated to staying in ordained ministry.  A little over 8% of these relatively new clergy are seriously or very seriously considering leaving ordained ministry.  Over 83% are strongly committed, with fewer than 9% at most giving a passing thought to leaving.

The picture is not so certain for enduring commitment to congregation-based ministry.  Nearly 20% of TiM alumni are seriously or very seriously considering leaving congregations in order to serve in other venues and types of ordained ministry – and only about two-thirds of these clergy remain steadily committed to congregation-based ministry.

# HOW CONFIDENCE AND CLARITY ARE RELATED TO THE WAYS NEW CLERGY DEAL WITH CONFLICT, PERSONAL WELLNESS, AND COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY

Does an inner disposition of greater confidence and clarity have anything to do with leadership and balanced living?  Let us consider some relationships between self-efficacy and work-life balance on one hand and conflict engagement, wellness, and durability in ministry.

*TiM alumni with stronger self-efficacy were also more assertive*.  They showed a marked preference for seeking collaborative solutions to conflicts, and a dislike for simple acquiescence to a competing party's wishes or an avoidance altogether of situations of conflict.  They also tended to score higher on creative potential.

Similar relationships appeared between work-life balance and assertiveness.  *TiM clergy with stronger clarity of work-life balance were more purely assertive – and less purely cooperative.*  They indicated a stronger tendency to compete for what they wanted, and less likelihood to accommodate to others' wishes or expectations.

*TiM alumni with stronger self-efficacy indicated more positive assessments of their current life in prayer, mood, rest, exercise, and weight – and more improved prayer life, exercise frequency, and debt reduction.*

*TiM alumni with stronger work-life balance showed more positive assessments of their current prayer life, significant relationships, rest, savings, mood, exercise, and weight.*  They also indicated *more frequent improvement in mood, rest, prayer life, significant relationships, savings and debt* – all areas except weight and exercise.

*TiM alumni with stronger self-efficacy were* somewhat less likely to consider leaving congregation-based ministry for another venue and form of Christian ministry, and also *less likely to consider leaving ordained ministry altogether.*

Work-life balance did not have any significant relationship with the frequency with which TiM alumni considered leaving ordained ministry or specifically congregation-based ministry.

Emotional labor is worth some momentary consideration.  Interestingly, there was no relationship between emotional labor and either assertiveness or cooperativeness.  But *TiM clergy who worked harder at displaying "expected" emotions also indicated more concern about their prayer life and their savings, reported a decline in prayer life and in the quality of their significant relationships, and gave more frequent and serious consideration to leaving ordained ministry altogether.*

For TiM alumni, a strong sense of identification with and loyalty to their specific denominations was not related to assertiveness, cooperativeness, or matters of wellness.  Denominational identification (or allegiance) was most strongly related to endurance in ministry:  *TiM alumni who identified most strongly with their specific denominations were least likely to consider leaving ordained ministry*, or even to consider leaving congregation-based ministry for some other form of ordained ministry.

**Correlations:  CREDO Measures with Other Measures (n=287)**

| | Self-Efficacy | Emotional Labor | Denominational Identification | Work-Life Balance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assertiveness | **.315**\*\* | .021 | -.059 | **.158**\*\* |
| Cooperativeness | .027 | -.046 | -.017 | **-.129**\* |
| Competing | **.161**\*\* | .036 | -.055 | **.147**\* |
| Collaborating | **.229**\*\*\* | -.004 | -.060 | .050 |
| Compromising | **.126**\* | -.041 | .096 | -.003 |
| Avoiding | **-.259**\*\*\* | .012 | .035 | -.049 |
| Accommodating | **-.204**\*\*\* | -.028 | -.001 | **-.151**\* |
| Creative Potential | **.151**\*\* | .098 | -.015 | .064 |
| Change in Frequency of Exercise | **.104†** | -.073 | -.029 | .089 |
| Change in My Weight | .068 | .007 | -.057 | .005 |
| Change in My Mood | **.114†** | -.072 | .084 | **.236**\*\*\* |
| Change in My Savings | .078 | -.077 | .018 | **.098†** |
| Change in My Debt | **.119**\* | -.011 | .041 | **.103†** |
| Change in My Rest | **.110†** | -.029 | -.048 | **.270**\*\*\* |
| Change in My Significant Relationships | .041 | **-.105†** | -.018 | **.137**\* |
| Change in My Prayer Life | **.225**\*\*\* | **-.165**\*\* | **.133**\* | **.191**\*\*\* |
| Frequency of Exercise | **.149**\* | -.012 | -.011 | **.200**\*\*\* |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction about Weight | **.134**\* | .030 | -.045 | **.102†** |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction about Mood | **.213**\*\*\* | -.041 | .089 | **.331**\*\*\* |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction about Savings | -.013 | **-.117**\* | -.020 | **.098†** |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction about Debt | -.044 | -.094 | -.040 | .053 |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction about Rest | **.151**\*\* | -.064 | .007 | **.398**\*\*\* |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction ab. Relationships | .082 | -.076 | .032 | **.257**\*\*\* |
| Concern vs. Satisfaction about Prayer Life | **.268**\*\*\* | **-.180**\*\* | .086 | **.248**\*\*\* |
| Any Wellness Concern | -.221\*\*\* | .119\* | -.024 | **-.349**\*\*\* |
| BMI | **-.046** | **-.034** | -.006 | **-.008** |
| Leave congregation-based ministry for another type of ministry? | **-.110†** | **.091†** | **-.228**\*\*\* | -.031 |
| Leave ordained ministry entirely for another line of work? | **-.133**\* | **.165**\*\* | **-.302**\*\*\* | -.052 |

† p < .1      * p < .05      **. p < 0.01      *** p < .001

## POINTS OF HIGH AND LOW CONFIDENCE IN ORDAINED MINISTRY

If confidence and clarity are important in overall effectiveness for clergy as leaders and as examples of how to live balanced lives, then where are clergy most confident—and where are they least confident?

We asked TiM clergy to rate their own confidence on 92 different activities of ordained ministry.  TiM clergy indicated their **highest confidence** in areas like *preaching, worship leadership, setting a positive Christian example,* and some *pastoral care*.  They were also confident in their own capacity to identify areas for *continuing self-development*.

These same clergy were **least confident** in *group development, congregational development,* and *lay leadership development;* in *ecumenical and larger community-based partnerships;* in *more challenging or unpleasant aspects of pastoral care;* in *financial and property oversight;* and in *starting new congregations and faith communities.*

The following are items that the majority of TiM clergy indicated as acts of pastoral ministry and leadership in which they have the highest confidence.  The list starts with the items most strongly endorsed as areas of confidence.

1st. **Preaching** so that people experience the Word of God as a living, positive force in life.
2nd. Assuring the beauty and special quality of church **worship services** on such occasions as **major holy days** (e.g., Christmas, Good Friday, Easter).
3rd. Communicating **feelings and emotions** that fit your **sermon's message** and are appropriate to God's Word.
4th. Building trust through the care with which **confidences are maintained and promises kept**.
5th. **Telling individuals and groups directly of God's love** and good will toward them and of ways they can grow in God's grace.
6th. Continually **improving** your **ability to express** ideas and facts, orally and in writing.
7th. Providing a **role model** through personal stability and reliable performance.
8th. Being **aware of the life concerns of people** in your congregation and surrounding community, and addressing these in your **preaching** in the light of the Gospel.
9th. Continually **improving** one's own **skills**.
10th. **Ministering to the dying** and bereaved and officiating at **burial services**.
11th. Showing a **pattern of behavior** in your life that reflects self-understanding and self-discipline.
12th. Developing the arts of **translating** Gospel values and ideas **into contemporary language** and examples that will communicate to the hearers.


In contrast, these are the acts of pastoral ministry and leadership in which TiM clergy indicated the lowest confidence—the bottom 10 items in clergy's confidence ratings, with items of least confidence at the bottom.

83rd. In an institutional or community setting, **developing lay people as leaders** for programs of education or action in that setting.
84th. **Analyzing the causes of breakdown** in congregation or group functioning and acting to correct them.

85th. Working to **get people** from different groups (e.g., age, income level) **to agree on long-term goals** that respond to major changes in the community or that represent new initiatives by the church.

86th. **Involving and training church lay members** who can teach in programs for adults and young people or lead discussion groups.

87th. **Developing ecumenical and interfaith alliances** and (as needed) relationships with non-religious organizations in order to seek community improvements or make a religious witness.

88th. Making personal **contact with visitors and lapsed members**.

89th. **Confronting** and assisting **members whose behavior is destructive** to themselves, those close to them, or the life of the congregation.

90th. Performing duties such as **financial record keeping** and arrangements for **property improvements** when lay leadership is unavailable or seems inadequate.

91st. **Creating or strengthening community-wide groups** to address community problems such as drug abuse, economic adversity, quality education, housing, etc.

92nd. (LOWEST RATED) **Starting a new congregation** with such strategies as forming a lay nucleus, house-to-house visiting, surveys, public relations and mailing/web-based campaigns.

The TiM alumni, following the intensive efforts of TiM programs to strengthen their developing ministries after seminary, responded similarly to seasoned Episcopal clergy who answered these same questions 12 years ago. This consistent pattern of clergy confidence in activities of pastoral ministry and leadership both confirms and raises questions about the focus of ordained ministry.

In the end, TiM clergy mirrored seasoned Episcopal clergy in the strong confidence they expressed in their own preaching, leadership of worship, and setting an example – and the lower confidence they showed in their capacities for new church development, community-building, and development of lay leadership. Where TiM clergy showed some difference was in stronger confidence about preaching (related to a stronger emphasis on proclamation in many other mainline Protestant denominations), and in stronger confidence in focused self-development related to their experiences of focused development through the TiM programs.

The areas of pastoral ministry and leadership in which they expressed the lowest confidence – which mirrors the areas of low confidence among seasoned Episcopal clergy – reveals a continued focus on traditional forms and ideals for Christian ministry and leadership. These were forms and ideals that fit well in an age of religious establishment, where clergy were expected to be dispensers of core religious goods (Word and sacraments) for a gathered public who themselves were expected to adhere to a common faith. But it is likely that the areas of lowest confidence among both TiM clergy and more seasoned clergy – areas that take clergy outside traditional assumed and established roles – are those particularly needed in an age of increasing dis-establishment of and distance from religion.