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The psychological-type profile of cathedral worshippers

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ABSTRACT

The psychological-type profile of Church of England lay people whose main place of worship was a cathedral was compared to that of worshippers whose main place of worship was a parish church. The sample, from two combined surveys of the Church of England employing the Francis Psychological Type Scales, comprised 231 cathedral worshippers and 3,322 parish-church worshippers. Those who worshipped in cathedrals showed a significantly higher preference for thinking over feeling than those from parish churches, but there were no other significant differences in profiles between the two samples.

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Cathedrals; Church of England; judging process; psychological type

Introduction

The model of psychological type in current use is based on four components, each with a pair of binary preferences. Orientation refers to the location of psychological processing, which can be external (extraversion, E) or internal (introversion, I). The perceiving process refers to the ways in which information is gathered, which can be through the senses (sensing, S) or through the imagination (intuition, N). The judging process refers to the ways in which decisions are made, which may be using objective logic (thinking, T) or subjective values (feeling, F). The attitude towards the outer world refers to which of the two core processes tends to be projected into the outer world, perceiving (P) or judging (J). The theory argues that individuals may operate with any of the eight preferences but that they tend to have a preference for one over the other in each of the four components. The preferences are each associated with particular characteristics, which give rise to the personality profiles described in the 16 psychological types of the model (Myers and Myers 1980; Myers et al. 1998).

The Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS) were created in order to provide a research tool that operationalised the psychological type model of personality (Village and Francis 2023a). They have been used to profile a wide range of religious groups, especially within the Church of England (Francis and Village 2012; Francis, Robbins, and Craig 2011; Francis, Robbins, and Jones 2012). There has also been a particular focus within that research tradition on profiling those connected with

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cathedrals such as visitors (Francis et al. 2010), members of Friends Associations (Muskett and Village 2015), or worshipping congregations (Walker 2012).

Studies of worshippers in cathedrals to date have examined those present at particular services by distributing paper questionnaires and asking participants to complete them before they leave. Analysis of the data collected from cathedral congregations has shown that they differ significantly from those collected in a similar fashion from parish church congregations. For example, Walker (2012) found that the profile of worshippers at a carol service in Worcester Cathedral contained more intuitive types and more thinking types than would be expected in parish-church Sunday services. Similar trends were present in carol-service congregations in other Anglican cathedrals (Francis, Edwards, and ap Siôn 2021; Francis, Jones, and McKenna 2021). Some of the differences between those studies might reflect the presence of people who rarely attend regular Sunday worship, rather than differences between regular worshippers at cathedrals versus regular worshippers at parish churches. However, studies of worshippers in Southwark Cathedral during regular Sunday services suggested the higher proportion of intuitive and thinking types may be a genuine difference between those who chose cathedrals over parish churches as their regular place of worship (Francis and Lankshear 2021; Lankshear and Francis 2015).

This study uses a different method to compare cathedral worshippers with parish-church worshippers by drawing on two separate surveys of the Church of England which asked respondents about their main place of worship, and which also contained a psychological-type profiler.

Method

Participants

The two datasets were from the *Church Times* survey in 2013 (for details, see Village 2018) and the *Covid-19 and Church-21* survey in 2021 (for details, see Village 2022). Ethical approval was from the School of Humanities, York St John University (code: HRP-RS-AV-04-20-01); participants ticked a box on the survey to indicate they consented for their responses to be used for research purposes. In each case subsets of the data were selected to comprise lay people (rather than ordained clergy) who attended worship at least six times a year and identified as Anglicans living in England. Two slightly different questions in each survey asked about where respondents worshipped. In the *Church Times* survey, there was a specific question on cathedral worship, and respondents were categorised as cathedral worshippers if they ticked either 'Cathedral as your main place of Sunday worship' or 'Cathedral as a place of regular weekday worship'. Others were assumed to worship in parish churches. In the *Covid-19 and Church-21* survey respondents were asked about their main place of worship prior to the pandemic lockdowns, and those who ticked 'Cathedral' were counted as cathedral worshippers. Those who ticked 'No place of worship', 'Worship in non-church building', 'Online worship', or 'other' were excluded in order to ensure that the non-cathedral worshippers in this study were most likely to be attending parish churches.

There were 2,431 participants in the *Church Times* survey sample, of whom 188 (7.7%) were classed as cathedral worshippers. There were 1,149 participants in the *Covid-19 and Church-21* survey sample, of whom 43 (3.7%) were cathedral worshippers. These numbers were too small to treat the two surveys separately, so the two samples were combined. The sex

Table 1. Profile of combined samples.

		Cathedral	Parish church	Both
N =		231	3,322	3,553
		%	%	%
Sex	Female	56.3	55.1	55.2
	Male	43.7	44.9	44.8
Age	<50	19.0	12.4	12.8
	50s & 60s	40.3	43.7	43.5
	>60s	40.7	43.9	43.7

and age profiles of the two groups are shown in [Table 1](#). Sex ratios were similar in the cathedral and parish church samples, so psychological-type profiles were compared for both sexes combined.

Instrument

Both surveys contained the Francis Psychological Type Scales. The *Church Times* survey had just the four components of psychological type, whereas the *Covid-19 & Church-21* survey used the revised version of the Francis Psychological Type and Emotional Temperament Scales (FPTETS), which also included a scale of emotional temperament. The original and revised scales have been shown to give identical type profiles when compared in the same sample (Village and Francis 2023b). Each instrument was used to assign preferences in each of the four components of the type model: orientation (extraversion, E, versus introversion, I), perceiving (sensing, S, versus intuition, N), judging (thinking, T, versus feeling, F) and attitude towards the outer world (judging, J, versus perceiving, P), as suggested by Francis and Village (2022). The profiles of the two groups, cathedral and parish-church worshippers, were then compared and tested using a standard psychological-type comparison table (McCaulley 1985).

Results

Cathedral worshippers showed strong preferences for introversion (68%) over extraversion (32%), sensing (73%) over intuition (27%) and judging (94%) over perceiving (6%) ([Table 2](#)). There was a smaller, but statistically significant, preference for thinking (59%) over feeling (41%). The most frequent types were ISTJ (25%), ISFJ (20%), ESTJ (12%), and ESFJ (10%). When these proportions were tested against the much larger sample of parish-church worshippers, there were no statistically significant differences in orientation, perceiving process, or attitude ([Table 3](#)). In the judging process, however, cathedral worshippers showed a small, but statistically significant, greater preference for thinking over feeling compared with parish-church worshippers. This was reflected in the higher proportion of ISTJs among cathedral worshippers. There were no differences in the proportion of other types, but numbers in the cathedral sample were too small for some of these tests to be reliable.

Conclusion

The main conclusion from this study is that it confirms the trends in previous profile-studies of cathedral congregations that indicate cathedrals may attract a higher proportion

Table 2. Type preferences and 16 types for cathedral and parish-church worshippers.

	Cathedral	Parish
<i>N</i> =	231	3,322
Extraversion	32%	33%
Introversion	68%	67%
Sensing	73%	70%
Intuition	27%	30%
Thinking	59%	51%
Feeling	41%	49%
Judging	94%	90%
Perceiving	6%	10%
ISTJ	25%	32%
ISFJ	20%	17%
INFJ	7%	6%
INTJ	9%	8%
ISTP	1%	0%
ISFP	1%	2%
INFP	2%	1%
INTP	2%	1%
ESTP	0%	0%
ESFP	1%	1%
ENFP	2%	0%
ENTP	1%	0%
ESTJ	10%	13%
ESFJ	12%	8%
ENFJ	4%	5%
ENTJ	4%	5%

of thinking types than is normally found among regular worshippers in parish churches. It has not confirmed earlier studies (Francis and Lankshear 2021; Lankshear and Francis 2015) that suggest a higher proportion of intuitive types and a lower proportion of those with an SJ temperament. Whether this reflects differences between Southwark Cathedral and cathedrals more generally is unknown and would require further study.

The method used here had the advantage of comparing parish-church worshippers and cathedral worshippers from the same two surveys, rather than comparing data gathered from cathedral worshippers with data from parish-church worshippers gathered in surveys completed some years previously. It is likely that the respondents came from a wide range of churches or cathedrals, so there is greater independence between respondents than would be the case for those all belonging to the same congregation. The limitations with the present study were that there was no information about which churches or cathedrals the respondents attended, and that the number of cathedral worshippers was low, meaning the samples from two studies had to be combined.

Future work needs to concentrate on establishing more firmly the differences between regular worshippers in parish churches and cathedrals. This may mean over-sampling cathedrals in order to get samples large enough for detailed analysis. The results may show whether the greater preponderance of thinking types (and possibly intuitive types) in cathedrals is a widespread and stable phenomenon, or whether it varies with the nature of cathedrals or the type of service being accessed.

Table 3. Psychological-type profiles of 231 cathedral worshippers compared with 3,322 parish-church worshippers.

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences							
ISTJ <i>n</i> = 62 (33.0%) <i>I</i> = 1.42** +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++ +++	ISFJ <i>n</i> = 30 (16.0%) <i>I</i> = 0.76 +++++ +++++ +++++ +++++ +	INFJ <i>n</i> = 14 (7.4%) <i>I</i> = 0.95 +++++ ++	INTJ <i>n</i> = 14 (7.4%) <i>I</i> = 0.76 +++++ ++	E <i>n</i> = 59 (31.4%) <i>I</i> = 0.99 I <i>n</i> = 129 (68.6%) <i>I</i> = 1.00	S <i>n</i> = 135 (71.8%) <i>I</i> = 1.05 N <i>n</i> = 53 (28.2%) <i>I</i> = 0.90	T <i>n</i> = 110 (58.5%) <i>I</i> = 1.18* F <i>n</i> = 78 (41.5%) <i>I</i> = 0.83*	J <i>n</i> = 175 (93.1%) <i>I</i> = 1.03 P <i>n</i> = 13 (6.9%) <i>I</i> = 0.71				
ISTP <i>n</i> = 1 (0.5%) <i>I</i> = 0.62 +	ISFP <i>n</i> = 3 (1.6%) <i>I</i> = 1.36 ++	INFP <i>n</i> = 2 (1.1%) <i>I</i> = 0.39 +	INTP <i>n</i> = 3 (1.6%) <i>I</i> = 0.98 ++	Pairs and Temperaments							
				IJ <i>n</i> = 120 (63.8%) <i>I</i> = 1.03	IP <i>n</i> = 9 (4.8%) <i>I</i> = 0.75	EP <i>n</i> = 4 (2.1%) <i>I</i> = 0.63	EJ <i>n</i> = 55 (29.3%) <i>I</i> = 1.03				
				ST <i>n</i> = 84 (44.7%) <i>I</i> = 1.32**	SF <i>n</i> = 51 (27.1%) <i>I</i> = 0.78*	NF <i>n</i> = 27 (14.4%) <i>I</i> = 0.92	NT <i>n</i> = 26 (13.8%) <i>I</i> = 0.87				
ESTP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%) <i>I</i> = 0.00	ESFP <i>n</i> = 3 (1.6%) <i>I</i> = 1.68 ++	ENFP <i>n</i> = 1 (0.5%) <i>I</i> = 0.35 +	ENTP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%) <i>I</i> = 0.00	SJ <i>n</i> = 128 (68.1%) <i>I</i> = 1.04	SP <i>n</i> = 7 (3.7%) <i>I</i> = 1.16	NP <i>n</i> = 6 (3.2%) <i>I</i> = 0.49	NJ <i>n</i> = 47 (25.0%) <i>I</i> = 1.00				
				TJ <i>n</i> = 106 (56.4%) <i>I</i> = 1.22**	TP <i>n</i> = 4 (2.1%) <i>I</i> = 0.63	FP <i>n</i> = 9 (4.8%) <i>I</i> = 0.75	FJ <i>n</i> = 69 (36.7%) <i>I</i> = 0.84				
ESTJ <i>n</i> = 21 (11.2%) <i>I</i> = 1.16 +++++ +++++ +	ESFJ <i>n</i> = 15 (8.0%) <i>I</i> = 0.70 +++++ +++	ENFJ <i>n</i> = 10 (5.3%) <i>I</i> = 1.49 +++++ +++++	ENTJ <i>n</i> = 9 (4.8%) <i>I</i> = 1.29 +++++	IN <i>n</i> = 33 (17.6%) <i>I</i> = 0.80	EN <i>n</i> = 20 (10.6%) <i>I</i> = 1.12	IS <i>n</i> = 96 (51.1%) <i>I</i> = 1.10	ES <i>n</i> = 39 (20.7%) <i>I</i> = 0.93				
				ET <i>n</i> = 30 (16.0%) <i>I</i> = 1.12	EF <i>n</i> = 29 (15.4%) <i>I</i> = 0.88	IF <i>n</i> = 49 (26.1%) <i>I</i> = 0.79	IT <i>n</i> = 80 (42.6%) <i>I</i> = 1.20				
Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types					
<i>n</i>	%	<i>Index</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>Index</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>Index</i>			
E-TJ	30	16.0	1.19	I-TP	4	2.1	0.86	Dt.T	34	18.1	1.14
E-FJ	25	13.3	0.89	I-FP	5	2.7	0.69	Dt.F	30	16.0	0.85
ES-P	3	1.6	1.36	IS-J	92	48.9	1.11	Dt.S	95	50.5	1.11
EN-P	1	0.5	0.24	IN-J	28	14.9	0.84	Dt.N	29	15.4	0.78

Note: *N* = 231 (NB: + = 1% of *N*)
p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Andrew Village, is Professor of Practical and Empirical Theology at York St John University. He researches in the psychology of religion as well as congregational and clergy studies. His recent books include *Encountering the Bible* (2016, SCM) and *The Church of England in the First Decade of the 21st Century: Findings from the Church Times Surveys* (Village 2018, Palgrave Macmillan).

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