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Biblical conservatism and psychological type

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Abstract

The Village Bible Scale, a measure of biblical conservatism, was completed by 3,243 Church of England readers of the *Church Times* in 2013 alongside a measure of psychological type. Overall, biblical conservatism was higher for men than women, for those under 60 than those over 60, for those with school-level than those with university-level qualifications, for laity than clergy, and higher among evangelicals and charismatics than among those in Anglo-catholic or broad-church traditions. The perceiving process was the only dimension of psychological type to predict biblical conservatism, which was positively correlated with sensing and negatively correlated with intuition. Within church traditions, sensing scores predicted biblical conservatism in Anglo-catholic and broad-church traditions, but not for evangelicals. Thinking function scores were positively correlated with biblical conservatism among evangelicals, but negatively correlated among Anglo-catholics. The findings point to the possible roles of psychological preferences in influencing predispositions for retaining or changing theological convictions.

Keywords: Bible; Church of England; evangelical; personality; literalism

1. Introduction

1.1 *Liberal and conservative beliefs about the Bible*

Beliefs about the Bible have been a contentious theological issue since at least the time of the Reformation. The role of the Bible in different Church traditions depends on how it is understood as a means of revelation, a witness of faith, and a source of authority. The parameters of beliefs about the Bible in Protestant churches have tended to form along a continuum that ranges from liberal to conservative. Conservative beliefs vary but are commonly derived from the Reformation ideas of the necessity, authority, sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture. In the last century these were expressed in the writings of evangelicals such as Jim Packer (1958, 1983) and John Stott (1974, 1993), and documents such as the Chicago Statement on biblical inerrancy (Henry, 1979). Doctrines of inerrancy and infallibility refer to ways in which the Bible is understood to be true, and these have made literalism the default mode of interpretation. Although the detailed theology of Reformed thinkers does not necessarily shape the beliefs of most worshippers, those in conservative Protestant traditions generally believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God, authoritative for all matters of faith and conduct, which contains sufficient and exclusive truth for salvation. It is considered to be a true account of events recorded, and to reveal universal truths that are evident to those who have faith (Village, 2007).

Liberal beliefs arose as challenge to traditional ideas, notably with the advent of historical-critical approaches to the Bible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Gore, 1889; Legaspi, 2010) and changes in the way in which the Bible was understood within Western societies (Sheehan, 2005; Sherwood, 2008). Although not often brought together in a coherent doctrine of Scripture, liberal beliefs about the Bible stem from questioning its origins, and especially the extent to which it therefore represents normative and authoritative

understandings of faith. Liberals uphold the Bible as inspired human writing about God, and few would disparage its importance in the life of believers. However, they may not consider it to be the final or sole authority in matters of faith or conduct, and would more readily admit to it containing some human error. Truth revealed in Scripture may be understood symbolically rather than literally, and some teachings are treated as historically and culturally contingent rather than absolute and universal. This means the writings of other faiths may be set alongside the Bible as sources of valid religious and spiritual truth.

The debate between liberals and conservatives continues, though some see it as a product of Modernity that is being over taken by the different concerns of Postmodernity (McLaren, 2001, 2010; Murphy, 2007). In the United States, popular and scholarly writers who have been part of conservative Protestant churches are challenging the dominant view of the Bible, arguing for interpretations that allow less literalism and which are able to resist violent biblical worldviews (Enns, 2014; Flood, 2014; Smith, 2011). In the United Kingdom, writers have similarly offered accounts of the Bible that are a challenge to traditional and conservative beliefs (Barr, 1984; Lines, 1995; Oliver, 2006; Ward, 2004, 2010). The debate is not confined to theologians, and it has relevance to many clergy and laity in faith communities. Bible beliefs can be fiercely contested and are a shibboleth that shapes both sense of identity and wider faith commitments (Ammerman, 1987; Baker, 2012; Boone, 1989; Malley, 2004; Village, 2007; Watt, 2002). The Bible can offer comfort, challenge, inspiration and insight to its readers, but the way in which it achieves its influence may be strongly determined by what it is believed to be. A practical theological approach to bible beliefs asks questions about the causes and consequences of such belief, while an empirical theological approach asks if such beliefs relate to wider realms than the particular theological issues that drive the debate itself.

1.2 *Bible beliefs within the Church of England*

This study examines biblical conservatism within the Church of England where, in common with the wider Anglican Communion, the Bible is thought to stand alongside 'tradition' and 'reason' as a key source of authority (Church_of_England, 2002; Greer, 2006; Henderson, 2011). In the Church of England there are two main wings, Anglo-catholic and evangelical, but most worshippers occupy the middle ground of 'broad-church' Anglicanism. Anglo-catholicism arose from the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century as a counter to the rising tide of scientific discovery and biblical criticism (Hylson-Smith, 1993; Nockles, 1994). It has traditionally looked towards the Roman Catholic Church, especially in matters related to ritual and worship. Evangelical Anglicanism in England is rooted in the wider evangelical revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and looks towards the Reformation roots of Anglicanism (Hylson-Smith, 1989; Scotland, 2004) As with many mainstream denominations, the Church of England has been influenced by the Charismatic Movement, which emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit and which has led to changes in worship in many congregations (Hocken, 1997; Scotland, 2003; Steven, 2002).

Evangelicals in the Church of England share some of the conservative beliefs of the wider evangelical movement in the United Kingdom, especially in matters of doctrine and morality (Bebbington, 1993; Randall, 2005; Steer, 1998; Village, 2008, 2012b, 2013; Wellings, 2003). Anglo-catholics can be conservative in terms of ecclesial matters, but have often championed more liberal causes when it comes to doctrines and moral issues. In matters related to the Bible, evangelicals uphold traditional and conservative beliefs, whereas other traditions tend to be less likely to do so (Village, 2005b, 2007; Village & Francis, 2010). Charismatics, like Pentecostals, have traditionally been drawn to evangelical ways of understanding the Bible (Archer, 2001; Hey, 2001; Smith, 1997; Stibbe, 1998), and in the Church of England can be as, or even more, biblically conservative than evangelicals (Village, 2007). Within the

Church of England there is thus a wide variety of beliefs about the Bible, which span most of those found across other denominations in the United Kingdom.

1.3 *Psychological insights into conservatism*

Psychology can offer insights into the reasons why individuals might hold conservative or liberal stances on Christian faith. The literature has tended to be dominated by the notion fundamentalism, which is both a specific manifestation of American conservative Protestantism, and a term applied more widely to other religious groups (Carpenter, 1997; Hankins, 2008; Marsden, 1991). Attempts to explain in psychological terms why some people adopt a fundamentalist religious stance have struggled to demonstrate links to general personality traits. Altemeyer's (1988) right-wing authoritarianism scale has been widely used to assess this kind of belief, but it is based on socially-derived beliefs or attitudes, rather than a general personality trait (Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis & Birum, 2002). Hood, Hill and Williamson (2005) rightly point out the difficulties in using personality to predict fundamentalism, and opt for an 'intratextual' model based on the cognitive processes that shape the way that a sacred text functions to create meaning for believers. They argue that, whatever the particular contents of a text, believing that it is its own interpreter and that it takes precedence over other sources of information or peripheral beliefs, will tend to create a fundamentalist way of relating to religion and the world. They contrast this with an 'intertextual' model, where an authoritative text offers relative truths that interact with extra-textual beliefs. Their work helpfully shows the importance of beliefs about what a text *is* (rather than what is says) as the starting point for ways in which religious people might live out their faith in practice.

Psychological type is one model of personality that might offer insights into why some people adopt conservative rather than liberal approaches to the Bible. First proposed by

Jung (1923) and later developed by Katharine Myers and Isobel Briggs-Myers (Myers & Myers, 1980), this four-dimensional model of psychological functioning has been widely used in recent decades to study religious beliefs, attitudes and expressions (Francis, 2005; Francis & Village, 2008; Village, 2011). The model is based on four dimensions that refer to different modes of psychological functioning and the psychological space in which that functioning occurs. The dimension of 'orientation' refers to where psychological functioning occurs, and this can be in the exterior world through interaction with others (extraversion, E) or the interior world through individual contemplation and thought (introversion, I). The dimension of 'perceiving' refers to the process of gathering information, and this can be via the senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell (the sensing function, S) or via the imagination (the intuitive function, N). The dimension of 'judging' refers to the process of evaluating information, and this can be done by using objective rationality and logic (the thinking function, T) or by using subjectively-based values (the feeling function, F). The dimension of 'attitude' refers to which process is used in the outer world, and this can be the information gathering process (perceiving, P) or the information evaluating process (judging, J). In type models, individuals are assumed to switch from one mode of functioning to the other within each particular dimension, and most people will have all modes of operation open to them. However, within each dimension one mode will often be preferred and will be the one most often used, leading to the idea that individuals tend to be either extraverts or introverts, sensing types or intuitive types, feeling types or thinking types, and judging types or perceiving types. Preferences in each dimension will locate an individual in one of 16 psychological types such as ESTJ, ISFP, ENFP, etc., each of which has particular characteristics that have been widely described and debated (Leech, 1996; Lloyd, 2008; Myers, McCaulley, Quenk & Hammer, 1998; Myers & Myers, 1980).

A number of studies have suggested that there may be associations among religious people between general tendencies towards conservativism and type preferences, especially in the perceiving and judging processes. In the perceiving process, the sensing function favours the routine, expected and predictable, whereas the intuitive function favours the novel, new and unexpected. Sensing types tend to express Christianity in ways that are orthodox and traditional, perceiving spirituality within the confines of the institution, whereas intuitive types tend to express religion in ways that are unusual and which draw on more general spiritual perceptions (Francis & Ross, 1997). Among churchgoers there is often a preference for both sensing and judging (Francis, Butler, Jones & Craig, 2007; Francis, Duncan, Craig & Luffman, 2004; Village, Francis & Craig, 2009) and the 'SJ' combination tends to indicate people who are preservers of tradition, rather than innovators (Francis & Village, 2012; Keirsey & Bates, 1978; Muskett & Village, 2015).

In the judging process, thinking types tend to make rational decisions that are driven by principles rather than the expectations of others. Thinking (rather than feeling) has been associated with conservatism in a study of 1047 clergy in the Church of England (Village, 2013), which used single-item scales to measure tradition, conservatism and charismaticism (Randall, 2005). Conservatism was associated with sensing (rather than intuition), thinking (rather than feeling), and judging (rather than perceiving). More detailed examination within the different traditions showed that sensing predicted conservatism among Anglo-catholic and broad-church clergy, but not evangelical clergy, whereas thinking predicted conservatism among evangelical clergy, but not in the other two traditions. The suggestion was that this may imply different sorts of conservatism, with sensing being associated with conservatism in ritual and worship, but thinking with conservatism in matters of doctrine or morality. In contexts where doctrinal belief or moral behaviour may be changing from traditional conservatism to more contemporary liberalism, it may be the more tough-minded, rational

thinking function that is more likely to resist the pressure of the new consensus. Hence the possible link between conservatism and preferences in the judging process.

1.4 *Bible beliefs and psychological type in the Church of England*

A number of studies have examined the relationship of interpretation or literalism to psychological type among churchgoers. Some studies have drawn on the SIFT method of preaching and hermeneutics (Francis, 2003; Francis & Village, 2008) to show that readers tend to prefer interpretations of Scripture that match their preferred functions in the perceiving or judging processes (Francis, Robbins & Village, 2009; Village, 2010; Village & Francis, 2005). Other studies have shown that literalism is associated with preference for sensing over intuition (Village, 2012a, 2014). Village (2005a, 2007) developed a 12-item scale among Church of England laity to assess the degree of conservative versus liberal belief about the Bible. When applied to a sample of 1039 recently ordained clergy (in a shortened form removing literalism items) biblical conservatism was shown to be positively correlated with extraversion, sensing, thinking, and judging (Village, 2012a: table 2). The main focus of that study was literalism, and the biblical conservatism scale was used only as a control variable. The present study uses a larger sample of Church of England laity and clergy, and examines psychological-type predictors of the full 12-item Village Bible Scale (VBS). From the previous studies of psychological type, church tradition, and bible beliefs among English Anglicans the following hypotheses will be tested using this dataset:

H1: Extraversion is positively correlated with biblical conservatism, but only because evangelicals and charismatics tend to be both more extraverted and more theologically conservative than other traditions.

H2: Sensing is positively correlated with biblical conservatism. If this is due mainly to sensing types generally preferring traditional forms religious expression the

correlation will be strongest in those traditions where biblical conservatism is held as a familiar tradition (i.e. broad-church or Anglo-catholic), rather than being linked to central matters of dogma (as among evangelicals).

H3: Thinking is positively correlated with biblical conservatism. This follows from studies that suggest conservatism in some traditions is about maintaining key beliefs in the face of pressure to change, so that the tough-minded principles displayed by thinking types are more able to maintain unpopular or outmoded beliefs. If this is so, the correlation with thinking should be strongest among evangelicals, where the pressure to maintain biblical conservatism is strongest.

H4: Judging is positively correlated overall with biblical conservatism, but mainly because of the association of judging with sensing among samples of churchgoers.

These hypotheses are tested by examining correlations between the VBS and measures of psychological type preferences among a sample of readers of the *Church Times* newspaper who attended worship regularly in the Church of England.

2. Method

2.1 *Sample*

In 2013, a four-page questionnaire was published in two editions of the *Church Times*, one in July and one in October. The newspaper is published in hard copy and online, and the questionnaire appeared in both formats. Items in the survey were partly based on the 2001 *Church Times* survey, which was designed to assess a wide range beliefs, attitudes and practices (Francis et al. 2005). The 2013 version included many of the same items, but also some new ones (including those related to beliefs about the Bible), and a measure of psychological type. The *Church Times* is the main newspaper of the Church of England, with

a circulation of around 25,000. It is widely read by a cross section of the Church of England laity and clergy who tend to be mainly, but not exclusively, broad church or Anglo-catholic. Evangelicals are probably under-represented in the readership, partly because the alternative weekly, The *Church of England Newspaper*, is aimed at this constituency. Despite this, *Church Times* readers come from across the Church of England, and survey respondents ranged from extremely Anglo-catholic to extremely evangelical. The *Church Times* readers who responded to the current survey were likely to represent a sample of committed Anglicans spanning most of the traditions of the Church of England, with some over-sampling of those who are more Anglo-catholic or broad church

2.2 *Instruments*

The Village Bible Scale (VBS). This 12-item scale used a five-point Likert response scale to assess biblical liberalism versus conservatism, with high scores indicating conservative rather than liberal views on matters such as literalism, inerrancy, exclusivity and authority (Table 1). It was developed for use within the Church of England and has been shown to have excellent internal reliability in samples of laity and clergy (Village, 2005a, 2007, 2012a). The full 12-item scale was presented in the survey and it had an equally high reliability among both laity ($\alpha = .90$) and clergy ($\alpha = .91$) in this sample. In what follows, high scores for the VBS are taken as a measure of biblical conservatism, and low scores a measure of biblical liberalism.

[Table 1 about here]

Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS). This is a 40-item instrument comprising four sets of ten forced-choice items related to each of the four components of psychological type: orientation (extraversion or introversion), perceiving process

(sensing or intuition), judging process (thinking or feeling), and attitude toward the outer world (judging or perceiving) (Francis, 2005). For each pair of characteristics participants were asked to: 'check the box next to that characteristic which is closer to the real you, even if you feel both characteristics apply to you. Tick the characteristics that reflect the real you, even if other people see you differently.' Previous studies have demonstrated that this instrument functions well in church-related contexts. For example, Francis, Craig, and Hall (2008) reported alpha coefficients of .83 for the EI scale, .76 for the SN scale, .73 for the TF scale, and .79 for the JP scale. In this sample, the equivalent reliabilities were .83 for the EI scale, .74 for the SN scale, .71 for the TF scale, and .76 for the JP scale. Scores for the two scales in each dimension were complementary, so it was necessary to use only one for each dimension: in this case scores for E, S, T and J. Scores on each scale were used to assign preferences in each dimension, using the conventional practice of assigning ties to I, N, F or P. These binomial preferences were used to compare profiles, but the original scores were used in the more detailed regression analyses because they contained more information and are better for this purpose (Cowan, 1989).

Control variables. Control variables were sex (1 = male, 2 = female), age group (1 = <50; 2 = 50-59; 3= 60-69; 4 = >69), Ordination status (0 = laity, 1 = clergy), education (highest qualification level: 1 = school, 2 = undergraduate, 3 = postgraduate), charismaticism (seven point scale), and church tradition. The latter was assessed using a 7-point bipolar scale labelled 'Anglo-catholic' at one end and 'evangelical' at the other. It has been shown to predict well a wide range of differences in belief and practice in the church of England (Randall, 2005; Village, 2012b) and was used to identify Anglo-catholic (scoring 1-2), broad church (3-5) and evangelical (6-7) respondents.

2.3 *Analysis*

Analysis was in three stages. First, bivariate correlations were calculated for all variables to examine the total effects of psychological type scores and other variables on biblical conservatism. Hierarchical multiple linear regression was then used to examine whether the total effects of type variables could be explained by correlations with control variables. To aid interpretation, a series of models were fitted by adding variables in successive batches:

Model 1: Psychological type scores for extraversion, sensing, thinking, and judging.

Model 2: Sex, age, education and ordination.

Model 3: Church tradition dummy variables Anglo-catholic and evangelical.

Model 4: Charismaticism score.

In the final stage of analysis, the full model (excluding tradition dummy variables) was run separately within each of the three church traditions.

3. Results

3.1 *Profiles of laity and clergy*

Laity and clergy had profiles that differed as might be expected, given the nature of the Church of England. The sex ratio was even for laity (which is more heavily weighted towards men compared with the usual two-thirds of women among worshippers) but nearly three-quarters of clergy were men (Table 2), reflecting the historic barring of women from ordination. Compared with clergy, laity also tended to be older, less likely to have postgraduate education, and more likely to have just school-level education. Other differences may have reflected the nature of the readership; for example, there were higher proportions of clergy who were Anglo-catholic or evangelical, rather than broad-church, compared with laity.

In terms of psychological type there were strong overall preferences for introversion over extraversion, sensing over intuition, and judging over perceiving, but no preference between feeling and thinking. Compared to laity, clergy showed slightly less preference for introversion but stronger preferences for intuition, feeling, and perceiving. These profiles are as might be expected from previous studies of clergy and laity in the Church of England (Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley & Slater, 2007; Francis, Robbins & Craig, 2011; Francis, Robbins, Duncan & Whinney, 2010; Village, 2013).

3.2 *Bivariate correlations*

In the overall data, the VBS was positively correlated (implying higher conservatism) with extraversion, sensing and judging, but uncorrelated with thinking (Table 5). Correlations with control variables were as might be expected from previous studies: there were negative correlations with age and education level, and correlations with church tradition showed that evangelicals and charismatics were more likely to be biblically conservative than those who were broad church or Anglo-catholic. Charismaticism was positively associated with extraversion, sensing, feeling (i.e. negatively with thinking) and perceiving (i.e. negatively with judging). Evangelicals were more likely, and Anglo-catholics less likely, to score higher on extraversion, but otherwise there were no significant correlations with tradition.

[Table 3 about here]

3.3 *Multiple regression*

The positive correlation between the VBS and extraversion, and between the VBS and sensing, remained statistically significant after controlling for the association of the type variables (Table 4, Model 1). The bivariate effect of judging disappeared when sensing was in the model, confirming H4. When church tradition was added to Model 3, it explained a great deal more of the overall variance, but the effect of extraversion was halved (β .08 to

.04) because evangelicals were more likely, and Anglo-catholics less likely, to be extravert. When charismaticism scores were added in Model 4 the effect of extraversion was no longer significant, apparently because extraverts were more likely to be charismatic and charismatics were more likely to be biblically conservative. Thus, as predicted by H1, the correlation of extraversion and biblical conservatism was an indirect effect related to the correlation of church tradition and type. The effect of sensing was little changed by the addition of variables in the regression analysis. Sensing was associated with being more biblically conservative and intuition was associated with being more biblical liberal, supporting H2. Thinking had little or no effect on biblical conservatism in the overall data, so H3 was not supported by this analysis.

[Table 4 about here]

3.4 *Regressions within traditions*

The effect of psychological type on biblical conservatism varied between the three different church traditions (Table 5). Among Anglo-catholics there were no correlations between the VBS and either extraversion or judging. However, sensing remained a significant predictor of biblical conservatism, and there was a slight negative correlation with thinking, implying that thinking types may be more biblically liberal than feeling types. Among those in the broad church tradition there was a significant correlation with sensing, but none with any of the other type scores. Among evangelicals there was a positive correlation with extraversion, even with charismaticism in the model, suggesting that, unlike the other two traditions, the extraversion effect was not solely an indirect effect of charismaticism. There was no correlation with sensing or judging, but there was a significant positive correlation with thinking. These results are consistent with H2 and H3 insofar that among catholic and broad-

church Anglicans, where biblical conservatism is likely to be part of accepted ecclesial tradition, it is the intuitive function that might aid a break with traditional conservatism, whereas for Anglican evangelicals, where biblical conservatism is more likely to be seen as a central doctrine under threat, it is the thinking function that may aid its maintenance.

4. Discussion

This study of a large sample of laity and clergy from the Church of England has demonstrated a number of findings in relation to liberal and conservative beliefs about the Bible. The main aim of the study was to test the effects of psychological type, but it is also first worth noting some of the effects of the various control variables used in the multiple regression models.

4.1 *Sex, age, education and ordination*

In general there was little difference between men and women in their degree of biblical conservatism, but a suggestion that women may have been slightly less conservative than men, at least among those in the broad-church tradition. Older people tended to be generally more biblically liberal, and this was true across all traditions. The liberalising effect of education on biblical and theological conservatism has been widely reported (Reimer, 2010; Stroope, 2011; Zigerell, 2012). Here, the effect of education on reducing biblical conservatism was apparent overall, but analysis within traditions showed this was not so among evangelicals, which is in line with an earlier study of literalism in a different sample of Church of England laity (Village, 2005b). This supports the idea that Anglican evangelicals tend to resist the eroding effect education on matters that they consider to be of key importance. Clergy were more biblically liberal than laity overall, but this effect remained only among Anglo-catholics when traditions were treated separately.

4.2 *Church traditions and charismaticism*

The results confirm the idea that, in the Church of England, Anglo-catholics tend to be the most biblically liberal tradition, and evangelicals the most conservative, with broad church lying between the two (Village, 2005a). Within these traditions charismaticism tends to be associated with more biblical conservatism, but this is especially so for Anglo-catholic and broad-church Anglicans. Charismaticism has penetrated many congregations through influencing styles of worship, without necessarily moving people to a more thorough-going Pentecostal belief or praxis (Hunt, 2000; Steven, 2002). Nonetheless, in terms of bible belief, the Charismatic Movement may have engendered the spread of more conservative beliefs among traditions where the trend has generally been towards liberalism.

4.3 *Psychological type and biblical conservatism*

The most obvious effect of psychological type on bible beliefs was the greater liberalism of those with higher intuition scores and conservatism among those with higher sensing scores. Biblical literalism, which is part of biblical conservatism, is associated with sensing rather than intuition (Village, 2012a, 2014), but this has been linked to the specific way in which intuition is associated with symbolic modes of interpretation. This may explain the link here if symbolic thinking, fostered by the intuitive function, is a key facet of biblical liberalism. It may also be that high sensing scores are typical of those who generally prefer more traditional beliefs and practices (Village, 2013). Intuitives tend to welcome new ideas and are less tied to the patterns of the past, so changing views of the Bible may be part of a more general desire to leave behind the familiar. This may explain why the perceiving process predicted liberal or conservative beliefs among Anglo-catholics and broad-church worshippers, but not among evangelicals. The same result was found for general theological conservatism in an earlier study using a different sample of clergy (Village, 2013). For

evangelicals, biblical beliefs are not a secondary matter that can be easily adjusted to changing times: they are core to evangelical identity and the evangelical way of expressing faith. Intuitive evangelicals seem to operate within the same level of conservative biblical beliefs as their sensing colleagues.

The effect of thinking versus feeling on the VBS was in line with the idea that biblical conservatism in the Church of England is perceived by evangelicals to be under threat from liberals, so that changes towards a more liberal consensus must be resisted. If this is so, then it is those who see faith as being about maintaining principles and 'rightness', even at the expense of harmony, who will be most likely to display high conservatism. This was the conclusion of an earlier study among Anglican clergy, where a single measure of conservatism (versus liberalism) was correlated with preference for thinking rather than feeling among evangelicals, but not in other traditions (Village, 2013). In the current study the effect was less pronounced but statistically significant, and there was also a significant *negative* correlation among Anglo-catholics. This was not predicted, but it is consistent with the explanation for evangelicals because among Anglo-catholics the consensus view is liberal, rather than conservative. If this consensus is seen to be under threat from more conservative ideas, it would be thinking types who would be more likely to hold to liberal ideas and to resist the move to a harmonised 'middle ground'.

The effect of extraversion in predicting biblical conservatism is not easy to explain, apart from the fact that evangelicals and charismatics tend generally to be more extraverted than those in other traditions (Craig, Horsfall & Francis, 2005; Francis, 2002; Francis, Craig & Butler, 2007; Francis & Thomas, 1997). Among *Church Times* readers, extraverts were more biblically conservative because they also happened to be more likely to be evangelical or charismatic. The association disappeared within traditions, apart from among evangelicals, where extraversion still predicted conservatism, even after controlling for charismaticism.

Extravert evangelicals may be those who are most likely to share their faith with others, and for whom core evangelical beliefs about the Bible are even more central to their faith.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that the beliefs associated with biblical liberalism or conservatism are not wholly predicted by which tradition of the Church of England someone belongs to, nor wholly by their educational background, age or ordination status. Over and above these things, psychological type was able to predict bible beliefs, but this was not a simple matter of certain types being more liberal than others. Instead it seemed that psychology may be related to the tendency to retain or discard the familiar and traditional, provided it is not central to way that someone understands and expresses their faith. The sensing function may favour the familiar and well-tried beliefs and patterns of faith within Christian churches, and this is what is generally understood to be conservatism. The intuitive function looks for the novel and unusual, but intuitives may not easily relinquish traditional conservatism if it entails changing the content of core beliefs. The thinking function may influence liberal or conservative belief by engendering a resistance to going along with the majority for the sake of harmony. In conservative circles, the thinking function seemed to maintain conservative beliefs in the face of liberalising tendencies; in liberal circles, the thinking function seemed to maintain liberal beliefs in the face of conserving tendencies.

The data presented here have not proven these ideas, but they have moved forward the study of psychological type and religious beliefs by suggesting ways in which some of the well-established links between type profiles and religious traditions come about. Psychological functioning does not directly determine the content of religious belief but it might influence the way that beliefs are held (or relinquished) or expressed in relation to the beliefs of particular faith communities. Further work would be needed to test this idea, and

this might involve examining the variations in core beliefs between individuals in different religious traditions. The prediction would be that, whatever the nature of the belief, individuals who maintain those beliefs while also perceiving them to be under threat, would be more likely to prefer thinking over feeling than those who are willing to relinquish some beliefs to maintain the harmony of the community.

Table 1: Details of the biblical interpretation scales

		Laity	Clergy
Cronbach's alpha: All = .90; Laity = .90; Clergy = .91	*N* =	1974	1269
Items in scale:	CITC	%E	%E
The Bible contains truth, but it isn't always true†	.71	77	74
I have never found the Bible to be wrong about anything	.74	12	15*
Some parts of the Bible are more true than others†	.64	73	74
Christians can learn about God from the writings of other faiths†	.51	68	71
Once you start doubting bits of the Bible, you end up doubting it all	.54	10	8
You can't pick and choose which bits of the Bible to believe	.62	31	33
The Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct	.69	28	33**
The people who wrote the Bible created stories to explain things they didn't understand†	.48	61	61
If the Bible says something happened, then I believe that it did	.72	21	22
I use the Bible as the only reliable guide for life	.60	25	27
The Bible contains some human errors†	.63	76	80*
Science shows that some things in the Bible cannot have happened†	.62	54	57

Note. CITC = Corrected item-total scale correlation; %E = % Endorsement (agree or strongly agree). Difference between laity and clergy endorsement of individual items was tested by chi-squared on frequencies: * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, otherwise not significant. † These items were reverse coded for reliability calculations and to create the summated scale.

Table 2: Profiles of laity and clergy

		Laity	Clergy	Both
	N =	1974	1269	3243
		%	%	%
Sex	Male	50	73	59
	Female	50	27***	41
Age group	<50s	15	13	14
	50s	14	24	18
	60s	30	31	31
	>60s	41	31***	37
Education	School	17	2	11
	Undergraduate	56	57	56
	Postgraduate	28	41***	33
Church tradition	Anglo-catholic	38	43	40
	Broad church	51	40	47
	Evangelical	11	17***	14
Charismaticism score	1-2	55	42	50
	3-5	38	47	42
	6-7	7	11***	8
Orientation	Extraversion	31	34	32
	Introversion	69	66*	68
Perceiving process	Sensing	68	55	63
	Intuition	32	45***	37
Judging process	Thinking	52	46	50
	Feeling	48	54***	50
Attitude to outer world	Judging	91	85	88
	Perceiving	9	15***	12

Note. Difference between laity and clergy tested with chi-squared using frequencies. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

Table 3: Bivariate correlations of dependent and independent variables

		13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
1	Village Bible Scale	.29***	.49***	-.09***	-.25***	-.12***	-.10***	-.03	-.02	.06***	-.02	.14***	.07***
2	Extraversion	.14***	.07***	.02	-.06***	-.02	.02	.02	.05**	-.14***	-.13***	-.01	
3	Sensing	-.13***	-.02	.01	.01	-.26***	.17***	.05**	-.17***	.43***	.05*		
4	Thinking	-.10***	.00	-.01	.01	.10***	-.01	-.10***	-.10***	.29***			
5	Judging	-.13***	.00	-.02	.03	-.05**	.07***	.02	-.10***				
6	Ordained	.14***	.09***	-.10***	.05**	.22***	-.08***	-.22***					
7	Female	.08***	-.08***	.08***	-.03	-.13***	.02						
8	Age	-.15***	-.10***	.05**	.02	-.23***							
9	Education	.02	.03	-.05**	.03								
10	Anglo-catholic	-.27***	-.32***	-.76***									
11	Broad church	.03	-.37***										
12	Evangelical	.33***											
13	Charismaticism												

Note. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

Table 4: Multiple regression of Village Bible Scale

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	β	β	β	β
Extraversion	.08***	.08***	.04**	.03
Sensing	.13***	.12***	.12***	.13***
Thinking	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.01
Judging	.02	.03	.03	.03
Female		-.05**	-.03	-.04**
Age		-.15***	-.10***	-.09***
Education		-.13***	-.12***	-.11***
Ordained		.01	-.02	-.04*
Anglo-catholic			-.10***	-.07***
Evangelical			.45***	.41***
Charismaticism				.15***
R^2 (adjusted)	.02	.05	.288	.306
ΔR^2	.03	.03***	.23***	.02***

Note. Coefficients are standardized beta weights. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

Table 5: Regressions of VBS for separate traditions

	Anglo-catholic	Broad church	Evangelical
N =	1296	1508	439
Extraversion	.01	.01	.14**
Sensing	.18***	.15***	.09
Thinking	-.06*	-.01	.10*
Judging	.05	.02	.07
Female	-.05	-.06*	-.05
Age group	-.07*	-.10***	-.15**
Education	-.12***	-.18***	-.06
Ordained	-.09**	-.04	.04
Charismaticism	.13***	.23***	.03

Note. For explanation, see Table 4.

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