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Spiritual awakening among church members during the pandemic:

An empirical study in England and Wales

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Abstract

For some church members the pandemic may have been a challenge to faith, while for others the pandemic may have been an opportunity to re-kindle faith and to trigger spiritual awakening. A sample of 3,673 churchgoers (Anglican and Catholic) completed an online survey during the early months of the lockdown including the Lewis Index of Spiritual Awakening (LISA). The data demonstrated that more participants experienced a sense of spiritual awakening than a spiritual decline. Spiritual awakening was associated with personal factors (being female and older), with psychological factors (feeling types, intuitive types, and emotional stability), with religious identity (being Catholic), with theological tradition (being charismatic and conservative), and with active engagement in online services (lighting candles or typing in prayer requests). Experiencing spiritual awakening during the early months of the lockdown is, thus, associated with religious, theological, and spiritual practices, as well as with personal and psychological factors.

Keywords: Covid-19, religious experience, churchgoers, psychological type, Christian theology

Introduction

The Great British lockdown and churches

The Covid-19 pandemic took the world by surprise and travelled the globe quickly. Decisive action was needed and decisive action was effected. In England the government imposed a lockdown on the nation on 23 March 2020, a lockdown that had implications for the ways in which churches functioned (McGowan, 2020). Recognising that the ecclesial landscape was changing rapidly before our very eyes, we designed the *Coronavirus, Church & You Survey* in order to assess the impact of this lockdown on clergy and lay people. The survey was designed for the Anglican Church in England and Wales in dialogue with the *Church Times*, building on the successful collaboration experienced in the 2001 *Church Times* survey (see Francis, Robbins, & Astley, 2005; Village & Francis, 2009) and the 2013 *Church Times* survey (see Village, 2018a). A second version of the survey was designed for the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales and was distributed through links with *The Tablet.* The survey was constructed to address a range of discrete but interrelated issues arising from the pandemic, from the national lockdown, and from the Church's response with the national lock-up of churches.

Initial analyses of these data examined the experiences of rural Church of England clergy and laity during the pandemic (Village & Francis, 2020), tested the impact of the pandemic on the fragile churches thesis through the eyes of clergy and laity (Francis, Village, & Lawson, 2020, 2021a, 2021b), examined the attitude of rural laity to the Church of England's leadership during the pandemic (McKenna, in press), gave close attention to the experiences of retired clergy (Francis & Village, 2021a), gave close attention to the experience of churchgoers aged seventy and over (Francis & Village, 2021b), explored the effect of psychological type on shaping responses to the pandemic (Francis & Village, 2021c), compared the experience of male and female churchgoers (Francis & Village,

2021d), assessed the impact of feeling supported on the wellbeing of clergy through the pandemic (Village & Francis, 2021a), introduced The Index of Balanced Affect Change (TIBACh; Francis & Village, 2021e), explored affect balance of positive and negative wellbeing on Church of England clergy and laity during the pandemic (Village & Francis, 2021b), explored attitude toward church buildings during the lockdown (Village & Francis, 2021c), examined the diverging responses of clergy shaped in the Anglo-Catholic tradition and of clergy shaped in the Evangelical tradition (Francis & Village, 2021f), examined the experiences of clergy and laity to online communion (Francis & Village, 2021g), and explored the effect of personal, psychological, social and theological factors on shaping attitudes toward church during the pandemic (Village & Francis, 2021d).

Against this background, the aim of the present study is to explore the thesis that the initial experience of the pandemic may have served as a trigger for spiritual awakening among active church members. This thesis is contextualised within two areas of discussion. The first area concerns the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the notion of spiritual awakening as applied to empirical research. The second area concerns the theological response of the Christian tradition to human suffering.

Spiritual awakening: theory and measurement

The notions of spiritual awakening and the Covid-19 pandemic have been linked in many and diverse popular discussions. For example, in the early days of the pandemic the *Wall Street Journal* (26 March 2020) ran the heading, 'A coronavirus great awakening?' arguing that sometimes the most important ingredient for spiritual renewal is a cataclysmic event. On 6 April 2020 Empowered and Authentic Living posted a blog 'Spiritual awakening and Covid-19' explaining that spiritual awakening occurs when we rise to the challenge of enduring extremely difficult circumstances. On 15 September 2020 Congregatio Jesu (an international congregation of sisters founded in 1609 by Mary Ward) posted a blog, 'Covid-

19: An invitation to spiritual awakening' arguing that the pandemic has brought the greatest spiritual awareness the world has ever known. In the title of his book, Forrest Rivers (2021) speaks directly of *Covid-19 and humanity's spiritual awakening*. For him, 'from a spiritual perspective this public health crisis has been something of a collective blessing in disguise' (p. 1). The title of the book by Husfelt (2021) also links spiritual awakening with Covid-19: *Morning Star's seven steps to spiritual awakening: A book of love in the time of Covid-19*.

The notion of 'spiritual awakening' is employed in contemporary academic literatures in a variety of ways, as helpfully illustrated by a special topic section on spiritual awakening in 2018 within: the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*. In his general editorial introduction to the issue in which the special topic section is located, Hartelius (2018) warns that 'there are likely a number of discrete phenomena that could be referenced by a term such as spiritual awakening' (p. iv). Reflecting on how the term may be employed in Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, and Judaism, as well within New Age Spiritualities, Hartelius (2018) also warns against cultural colonialism from Western, and specifically Protestant connotations.

In her specific editorial introduction to the special topic section, Kilrea (2018) draws attention to a range of synonyms with which spiritual awakening may be associated 'such as nondual realisation, enlightenment, oneness, self-transcendence, cosmic consciousness, unitive consciousness, and wakefulness – though it is not clear that all these terms refer to the same thing' (p. 66). For Kilrea (2018), the phenomenon of awakening is connected with a range of positive psychological outcomes, including wellbeing, inner peace, fulfilment and joy, as well as some negative psychological outcomes, including 'mental health and relationship issues' (p. 66). Kilrea's understanding and experience of the phenomenon is expressed in the following way:

> Awakening includes a particular quality, a particular felt sense of resonance, knowing, accessed through the animate body-being, and also potentially through the eyes held

> in mutual gaze. Awakening often has more to do with the absence of things than with the presence of things. (Kilrea, 2018, p. 69)

Within this special topic section, Taylor (2018) draws on his earlier publications (Taylor, 2012a, 2012b, 2016, 2017; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017) to illuminate a phenomenological investigation into the psychological transformation interpreted as spiritual awakening by 25 participants who responded to the call for in-depth interview of 'people who have undergone the transformational experience of "spiritual awakening" or "enlightenment"' (p. 132). His participants reported the following kinds of outcomes: wellbeing or positive affective states, ongoing or permanent new state of being, increased present-ness or ability to live in the present, reduced cognitive activity or less identification with thoughts, reduced or disappearance of fear of death, decreased sense of group identity or need for belonging, episodes of intense turmoil or trauma preceding transformation, increased altruism, and enhanced relationships.

Also within this special topic section, Newberg and Waldman (2018) draw on the results from 'The Spiritual Awakening Survey', where approximately 2,000 individuals responded to an online survey of people's most intense spiritual experiences (Yaden et al., 2015, 2016, 2017). In summary, they conclude that in their research of spiritual awakening experiences 'there is a sense of oneness in which the individual awakens to a new relationship with God or the universe and no longer experiences the personal ego but a higher state in which all things are one' (p. 127). Here the notion of spiritual awakening is closely aligned with Hardy's scientific quest to identify and to explore religious experience (Hardy, 1979) and with the psychological quest to characterise and to explore mystical experience (Hood & Francis, 2013).

In light of the range of ways in which the notion of spiritual awakening has been employed in the academic literature, it is not surprising that the construct has been

operationalised in a variety of ways. In particular for empirical measurement the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the notion of 'spiritual awakening' has been developed in two contrasting ways, one attempting to be broad and inclusive and the other attempting to be narrow and focused. An example of the broader inclusive approach is provided by Friedman (2020) who proposed the 18-item Friedman Spiritual Awakening Scale (FSAS) alongside the 17-item Friedman Life Balance Scale, and the 15-item Friedman Mini 5 Factor Personality Scale, as a set of tools to offer an evidence-based approach to change occurring during psychotherapy. The scale properties of these instruments were established on data provided by 563 Texas Tech University undergraduate students.

The narrower and focused approach has been documented by Francis, Village, and Lewis (2021) who proposed the four-item LISA. This instrument conceptualised spiritual awakening as rooted within the Christian tradition and as being expressed in a rekindling of commitment to that tradition in light of potentially traumatic experience. This conceptualisation was operationalised by four items that expressed positive change in prayerfulness, closeness to God, closeness to the church, and personal faith. The scale properties of this instrument were established on data provided by 1,050 Anglican clergy serving in England. It is this narrower and more focused conceptualisation and operationalisation of spiritual awakening that better fits the specific context of quantitative research concerned with assessing the experience of the pandemic within a church-related context.

Christian tradition and human suffering

The Christian conceptualisation of the nature of God is sophisticated and complex. In Christian tradition the mystery of God is conceptualised as three coeternal and consubstantial persons, revealed as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three persons are distinct, yet are one substance (*homoousios*), essence, or nature (see further, Astley, 2010). How

individual Christians respond to human suffering may vary according to the way in which they understand, evaluate and internalise this core doctrine of the faith. A reading that focuses primarily on the teaching that God the Father is all powerful and all loving may struggle to reconcile such a theological emphasis with the human experience of the pandemic. How could such a beneficent creator God allow the creation of such a devastating and destructive virus in the first place? How could such an omnipotent creator God not step in to overturn such destructive obstruction of the divine purposes for the human race? Such a reading may lead to the experience of the pandemic questioning faith and to a withdrawal of personal commitment to such a God.

Another reading, however, focuses primarily on the teaching that God the Son (Jesus Christ) has revealed solidarity with the vulnerable human condition by accepting birth in a stable, identifying with an oppressed people within occupied territory, and by accepting humiliating death through crucifixion, alongside two common criminals. The theological emphasis prioritised by the second reading may be much easier to reconcile with the human experience of the pandemic. Here God the Son is suffering with humanity through the pandemic and working within humanity to harvest the salvific purposes revealed in the Easter Resurrection. Such a reading may lead the experience of the pandemic to strengthening faith, to enhancing personal commitment to such a God, and to spiritual awakening.

Research objectives

Against this background, the first research objective of the present study is to employ the Lewis Index of Spiritual Awakening (LISA; Francis, Village, & Lewis, 2021) to assess the extent to which the lived experience of the pandemic among individuals shaped within the Anglican and Catholic streams of the Christian tradition in England and Wales led to spiritual awakening or distracted from it. In operational terms this research objective involves assessing the perceived changes within spirituality experienced during the pandemic.

The second research objective of the present study, rooted in the traditions of empirical theology and of the empirical psychology of individual differences, is to explore the relevant factors that may help to shape individual variations in the experience of spiritual awakening among those shaped within the Christian tradition. Building on previous research, the present study employs seven categories of predictor variables that we characterise as personal factors, psychological factors, contextual factors, church tradition, charismatic expression, theological stance, and religious participation. Each of these categories of predictor variables will be introduced briefly.

Exploring individual differences in spiritual awakening

Personal factors

Two key personal factors are routinely taken into account in exploring individual differences in spiritual or religious experience: sex and age. In his pioneering assessment of empirical findings within the field of the psychology of religion, Argyle (1958) identified the most secure finding as that of sex differences. Across a range of religious variables women emerged as more religious than men. This finding was re-affirmed by Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975), Beit-Hallahami and Argyle (1997), and Francis (1997). Francis and Penny (2014) continued to affirm the same outcome, but with the caveat that the supporting evidence is rooted in Christian or post-Christian societies. The connection between spiritual or religious experience and age is more complex, although the evidence generally supports greater religious commitment among older people (see Francis & Village, 2021b).

Psychological factors

The connection between spiritual or religious experience and personality has been explored from a range of perspectives. Within the individual differences tradition four distinctive perspectives have employed the sixteen factor model of personality proposed by Cattell (Cattell, Cattell, & Cattell, 1993), the three-dimensional model proposed by Eysenck

and Eysenck (1975), the Big Five Factor model proposed by Costa and McCrea (1985), and the model of psychological type theory proposed by Jung (1971) and developed by instruments like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS; Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). Consistent patterns have emerged from studies using all four models. The present study is rooted in the tradition employing psychological type theory, as evidenced by recent collections of studies edited by Village (2011) and by Lewis (2012, 2015, 2021a, 2021b).

At its heart psychological type theory distinguishes between two core mental processes: the perceiving process is concerned with gathering information; the judging process is concerned with evaluating information. In psychological type theory the perceiving process distinguishes between two functions (sensing and intuition) and the judging process also distinguishes between two functions (thinking and feeling). Spiritual or religious experiences within the Christian tradition tends to prioritise feeling over thinking, and to prioritise intuition over sensing (see Francis, 2005).

By concentrating exclusively on core mental processes, unlike the models of personality proposed by the sixteen factor model, the major three dimensions model, and the Big Five Factor model, psychological type theory does not include a dimension concerned with affect. It is for this reason that the FPTS have been extended to include a measure of emotional temperament (see Village & Francis, under review). The connection between spiritual or religious experience and emotionality remains contested within the psychology of religion, as historically explored by Francis and Jackson (2003).

Contextual factors

Contextual factors were introduced into the design of the present study to take into account how variations in exposure to the virus may have influenced individual differences in spiritual awakening. The following factors were identified as of potential significance:

geographical variation in the transmission of the virus, especially distinguishing between rural and inner city environment, and personal contact with or avoidance of the virus, especially distinguishing those who had definitely had the virus, those who had friends or relatives who had been seriously affected by the virus, and those who had selected to self-isolate to ensure distance from the virus.

Church tradition

The design of the study allowed contrast to be made between the experience of Roman Catholics and Anglicans. The inclusion of Anglicans, however, introduced complexity, since the Anglican tradition emerged from the Reformation embracing characteristics rooted both in the Catholic tradition and in the Reformed tradition. During the early nineteenth century the distinctiveness of these two roots were emphasised, and to some extent polarised, by the emergence of the Tractarian Movement rooted in the Catholic tradition (Hylson-Smith, 1993; Nockles, 1994; Pererio, 2017) and the Evangelical Movement rooted in the Reformed tradition (Atherstone, 2017; Hylson-Smith, 1989; Manwaring, 1985). The distinctive influence of these two movements were still clearly evident toward the end of the twentieth century when Saward (1987) reviewed the Evangelical stream, Penhale (1986) reviewed the Catholic stream, and Walker (1988) drew attention to the Middle Way of central Anglicanism, often also described as Broad Church. Randall (2005) charted the continuing significance of these movements into the twentieth century.

Charismatic expression

From the late 1950s the Charismatic movement introduced to mainline Christian denominations beliefs and practices characteristic of the established Pentecostal Churches. Within England and Wales the Charismatic movement impacted both the Anglican Church (see Francis, Lankshear, & Jones, 2000) and the Catholic Church (see Francis, Louden, &

Robbins, 2013). Charismatic expression may be especially associated with spiritual or religious experience.

Theological stance

Research in the Church of England has recognised that the broad category of liberal versus conservative is a key measure to which a number of religious beliefs, attitudes and experiences are linked. A single item 'liberal-conservative' scale has been a widely used measure of this stance (Randall, 2005). A detailed investigation among 9,339 lay and ordained members of the Church of England suggested that there are three main components to this general stance: preference for modern versus traditional worship, liberal versus conservative doctrinal belief, and liberal versus conservative views on morality (Village, 2018b). We have used three separate scales, rather than the usual single generic scale, in this study because the pandemic may have raised issues about worship and doctrine, and these may not necessarily predict the same sets of beliefs or attitudes.

Religious participation

The prohibition of public gatherings and the lock-up of churches as part of the national lockdown presented church leaders with the challenge and with the opportunity for offering the online provision of services for members of their churches who had access to the internet. One of the challenges of this new provision was to encourage active participation, in the sense of encouraging spectators to become participants. Initial observation of the variety of practices encouraged by different church leaders identified the following six practices, inviting: recitation of parts of the service, signing, speaking prayers aloud, lighting candles, typing in prayer requests, and taking communion at home with their own bread and wine. Inclusion of these aspects of religious participation within the survey allowed the project to assess their impact on spiritual awakening during the pandemic.

Method

Procedure

During April 2020, an online survey was developed using the Qualtrics platform. The survey was intended initially for Anglicans and was distributed through the *Church Times* and dioceses. The survey was launched on 8 May and closed on 23 July 2020, by which time there were 6,612 responses from people living in England or Wales, of which 5,647 were from Anglicans and 172 from Roman Catholics. A version of the main survey was produced specifically for Roman Catholic churches in the UK, and this was distributed through a link in *The Tablet* and by requests to promote it directly sent to bishops, clergy, religious orders, and Catholic networks. This version of the survey was launched on 19 May and closed on 26 July, by which time there were 2,201 responses from Roman Catholics living in England or Wales that were sufficiently complete to be used in this survey. The items used in this analysis were common to both surveys, so data were combined. From this pool we selected only those lay people who had accessed online worship during the lockdown but who had not been engaged in ministry (4,212) and who had sufficiently complete responses for variables used in the analyses (3,673).

Dependent measure

Spiritual awakening was assessed by the four-item LISA (Francis, Village, & Lewis, 2021). In the survey these items were merged within a pool of 20 items designed to assess the perceived impact of the pandemic on the participants. These 20 items were introduced by the following rubric: ‘How would you rate the effect of the lockdown on you so far? (Please click one button EACH row to indicate positive (+) or negative (-) effect. The middle button indicates no effect of the lockdown)’. The four items relating to spiritual awakening concerned: prayerfulness, closeness to God, closeness to the church, and personal faith (table 1). Factor analysis (principal components extraction and varimax rotation) identified a single factor, suggesting there was a unidimensional underlying construct of spiritual change.

Internal consistency reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha was .79, a level that is generally thought to indicate adequate reliability. The correlations between the individual items and the sum of the other three items range from .43 to .71. This range extends the width of the construct being assessed and mitigates against a short instrument measuring effectively the same limited constructed with each item.The scores recorded on these four items were combined to create the LISA, with a high score indicating someone who had seen improvements in prayerfulness, faith, closeness to God and closeness to the church during the lockdown.

- insert table 1 about here -

Predictor variables

Personal factors: Two personal factors were included: sex (0 = male, 1 = female) and age (by decade, treated as continuous variable).

Psychological factors: Two psychological factors were included, psychological type and emotionality. Psychological type preferences were assessed using the FPTS (Francis, 2005; Village, 2021). This is a 40-item instrument comprised 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). Previous studies have demonstrated that this instrument functions well in a range of church-related contexts (Francis, Edwards, & ap Sion, 2020; Francis, Robbins, & Craig, 2011; Village, 2016). In this sample the alpha reliabilities were .83 for the EI Scale, .75 for the SN Scale, .73 for the TF Scale, and .71 for the JP Scale. Scores rather than binary preferences were used as predictor variables. The scores in each component are complementary, so it is necessary to use only one: in this case scores for E, S, T and J were employed. In addition to these scales, there

was also a 10-item scale measuring emotionality (Village & Francis, under review), with a high score indicating a tendency to emotional instability.

Contextual variables: Three contextual variables were included, concerning geographical location, living alone, and experiencing the virus. Geographical location was based on the question 'Which of these best describes where you live?', with four choices: rural, town, suburb, and inner city. The four options were recoded to give two dummy variables, rural and inner city, with town and suburb combined as the reference category. Living alone was computed as a dummy variable, indicating that the participant lived alone. Experience of the virus was coded by three variables indicating whether or not the participant had caught the virus, had to self-isolate during the lockdown, or knew of friends or relatives who had been seriously affected by the virus.

Church tradition: Church tradition was coded as a dummy variable 'Anglican' with Roman Catholics as the reference category.

Charismatic expression: Charismatic expression was measured on a seven-point bipolar scale, labelled 'not charismatic' at one end and 'charismatic' at the other. Experience suggests this measure is best used as a continuous variable indicating the degree of 'Charismaticism'.

Theological stance: Measures of theological stance were based on seven-point semantic scales assessing modern – traditional worship, liberal – conservative doctrine, and liberal – conservative morality, with high scores in each case indicating a more traditional or conservative stance. They were used in preference to the more widely used 'liberal – conservative' scale because these different stances may have related in different ways to spiritual awakening (see Village, 2018b).

Participation during online worship: The survey explored six ways in which participants may have been invited to take part actively during online services: reciting

liturgy, singing, speaking prayers aloud, lighting candles, typing in prayer requests during streamed worship, or taking communion at home with their own bread and wine. In each case they were asked whether they had been invited to take part in this way, if so, whether they had then done so. The six dummy variables compared those who had participated with those who had either not been invited to participate in this way, or who had been invited but declined to do so.

- insert table 2 about here -

Participants

Of the 3,673 participants employed in the analyses, 3,503 were from England and 170 from Wales; 2,280 were Anglicans and 1,393 Roman Catholics. Details of age and sex profiles are shown in table 2, along with frequencies of other variables used in the analyses. These data demonstrate that there were two females for every one male among the participants, a ratio that closely matches the profile of church congregations (see Francis & Lankshear, 2021) and that more than half of the participants were aged 60 or over (57%). The psychological type profile of the participants was weighted strongly toward introversion (68%), sensing (73%), and judging (90%), with a balance between thinking (53%) and feeling (47%). By way of comparison, Francis, Wright, and Robbins (2016) reported the profile for church congregations as preferring introversion (54%), sensing (80%), feeling (60%), and judging (86%). The levels of participation in online services showed considerable variation, with 38% praying aloud, 34% reciting parts of the service, 24% singing, 12% lighting a candle, 6% typing in prayer requests, and 6% taking communion at home from their own bread and wine.

Analysis

The first stage of analysis was to use bivariate correlation to indicate which predictor variables were correlated among themselves and how they correlated individually with the

LISA. The second stage was to use hierarchical linear regression to test the effects of predictors after allowing for others in the model. The rationale behind the nested models was to enter variables related to personal factors and psychological factors in the first three models (sex and age, followed by psychological type scores and then emotionality), then model four added variables related to contextual factors (geographical location, living alone, and virus experience), model five added a variable related to denomination (Anglican or Catholic), model six added variables related to charismaticism and theological stance (traditional or conservative approaches to worship, doctrine, and morality), and finally model seven added variables related to participatory practice in online worship. The aim was to identity how far spiritual change could be predicted from personal factors or psychological factors rather than contextual, theological or worship-experience factors. Results are reported using standardised beta weights.

Results and discussion

The first step in data analysis concerned an examination of the responses recorded on the measure of spiritual awakening. Table 1 presented core information about the psychometric properties of the LISA in terms of the alpha coefficient ($\alpha = .79$) and in terms of the correlations between each of the four items and the sum of the other three items (ranging from .43 to .71). Table 1 also presents the item endorsements for each of the four items. Overall, these item endorsements indicate that more participants experienced an improved sense of spiritual awareness during lockdown (a sense of spiritual awakening) than experienced a deteriorating sense of spirituality. Thus, 57% reported enhanced personal faith, compared with 7% who reported deterioration in personal faith; 50% reported enhanced prayerfulness, compared with 12% who reported less prayerfulness; and 43% reported feeling closer to God, compared with 10% who reported feeling more distant from God. Perhaps as

an inevitable consequence of being locked out of their churches, just 25% reported feeling closer to the church, compared with 37% who reported feeling more distant from the church.

The second step in data analysis concerned a close examination of the interconnections between the predictor variables. The bivariate correlations displayed in table 3 showed trends that were predicted from the social and religious structure of the sample. For example, women tended to have lower Thinking (and higher Feeling) scores, a trend observed in the general population (Kendall, 1998). Older people were more likely to live in rural areas, were more likely to have self-isolated, and more likely to live alone. Younger people were more likely to have caught the virus and tended to be less emotionally stable. There were differences between Anglicans and Catholics related to doctrine and practice. For example, Anglicans were more likely to have participated in taking communion at home, probably because this group include Evangelical Anglicans, for whom this practice was less problematic than it was for those in more Catholic traditions (Francis & Village, in press b). These correlations suggested a multiple regression analysis was necessary to isolate the independent effects of predictor variables on spiritual awakening.

- insert table 3 about here -

The third step in data analysis employed a sequence of regression models that introduced the predictor variables in seven steps in the following order: personal factors, psychological type, emotionality, contextual factors, religious denomination, charismaticism and theological stance, and finally participatory practices in online worship. The data presented in table 4 demonstrate that the bivariate correlations of spiritual awakening scores with predictor variables showed a number of significant correlations that persisted when controlling for other variables. In view of the sample size, the significance level for discussion in the following section has been set at one percent.

- insert table 4 about here -

Personal factors

Women showed more positive spiritual change than did men. This trend was reduced when allowing for psychological type (particularly thinking scores), but persisted in all models, suggesting that there may have been specific spiritual challenges for men during lockdown. Older people tended to show more positive change than younger people, even after controlling for other variables.

Psychological factors

After controlling for other variables, there were no significant correlations with extraversion or judging, but those with higher sensing, thinking, and emotionality scores tended to have lower spiritual awakening scores, suggesting those who preferred intuition and feeling, and who were more emotionally stable, were more likely to experience spiritual awakening during lockdown.

Contextual variables

Contextual variables had relatively little effect on spiritual awakening during lockdown. There were no differences between those living in rural or inner-city areas and those living in towns and suburbs, and the initial positive correlation with living alone disappeared when age was taken into account. Having the virus seemed to have little effect, but those who self-isolated showed more positive spiritual change, on average, than those who had not self-isolated. The negative correlation for those who knew of someone who had been affected with the virus seemed to arise because the incidence of this was higher among Anglicans than among Catholics.

Church Tradition

Catholics seemed to fare better than Anglicans in terms of experiencing spiritual awakening during lockdown. This trend was weakened a little when controlling for theological stance, but nonetheless persisted. Among Anglicans, spiritual awakening scores

lowest among Anglo-Catholics (mean 8.57, SD = 2.20, *n* = 603*)*, highest among Evangelicals (mean 9.42, SD = 1.99, *n* = 391), and intermediate among those in the Broad-Church tradition (mean 8.94, SD = 2.07, *n* = 1286). The Anglo-Catholics had lower scores than Roman Catholics, (mean 9.34, SD = 2.20, n = 1363), whose scores were nearer to those of Anglican Evangelicals. It seemed that the denominational difference was largely due to Anglo-Catholics in the Anglican Church faring worse spiritually than other Anglicans during the lockdown.

Charismaticism and theological stance

Those who identified as charismatic recorded higher scores of spiritual awakening. The theological stance variables worked in different directions: those who preferred traditional over modern worship recorded lower spiritual awakening scores, whereas those who held more conservative rather than liberal doctrine or moral stances recorded higher spiritual awakening scores. This may have been because preferences for modern worship, and more conservative doctrinal and moral stances are associated with Evangelicals and Charismatics in the Church of England (Village, 2018a), and these two groups seemed generally to show more positive than negative spiritual change during the lockdown.

Participation during online worship

In the bivariate correlations, all forms of participation, except for singing, were positively correlated with spiritual awakening scores. In the final multiple regression model, the two key forms of participation that remained positive predictors of higher spiritual awakening scores were lighting candles and typing in prayer requests. These imply different sorts of engagement, one rather private, the other more social. The disappearance of praying and taking communion at home as participatory predictors may have been because they were related to denomination and theological stances. Evangelicals were more likely to take communion at home (and had higher spiritual awakening scores), and Charismatics (who also

had higher spiritual awakening scores) were also more likely to take communion at home and to pray. Lighting candles seemed less tied to traditions and may have been an important way in which many people felt spiritually connected with and supported by online worship during the pandemic.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to explore the connection between spiritual awakening and the initial experience of the Covid-19 pandemic among churchgoing Anglicans and Catholics in England and Wales. Data were drawn from the *Coronavirus, Church & You Survey* that was available online between 8 May 2020 and 26 July 2020 when the experience of the first national lockdown imposed by the government on 23 March 2020 was having its impact. Responses were analysed from 3,673 lay participants who had identified as living in England or Wales, as being members of either the Roman Catholic Church or the Anglican Church (Church of England or Church in Wales), and as having accessed online worship during the lockdown, but who had not been engaged in ministry. These data were employed to address two distinct, but interrelated, research questions.

The first research question was designed to test the thesis that the Christian theological account of the nature of God as Trinity would nuance the experience of the pandemic as a time for spiritual awakening (strengthening faith in God) rather than a time for questioning and abandoning faith. This articulation of the Christian theological account was grounded in the Second Person of the Trinity, in God the Son (Jesus Christ) who fully shares the suffering of humanity and who brings salvation as healing through suffering. In order to explore this first research question the study employed the LISA, developed by Francis, Village, and Lewis (2021). Two conclusions emerged from the data in response to this first research question.

First, the study has tested the LISA. This four-item measure demonstrated good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .79$) and acceptable face validity. High scores on this index identify individuals who report over a specific period of time: increased prayerfulness, feeling closer to God, feeling closer to the church, and strengthened personal faith. Here is an instrument that is fit for purpose in the present study and that can be commended for future use.

Second, using the LISA, the data demonstrated that a higher proportion of the participants reported that the experience of the pandemic exerted a positive influence on their faith rather than a negative influence. For example, 57% reported enhanced personal faith, compared with 7% who reported deterioration in personal faith; 50% reported enhanced prayerfulness, compared with 12% who reported less prayerfulness; and 43% reported feeling closer to God, compared with 10% who reported feeling more distance from God. On the other hand, as an inevitable consequence of being locked out of their churches, just 25% reported feeling closer to the church, compared with 37% who reported feeling more distant from the church. Here is evidence that Christian theology is able to resource trust in God during times of adversity, and is able to stimulate at such times spiritual awakening to sustain hope and confidence in the traditions of faith.

The second research question was designed to test the extent to which individual differences in levels of spiritual awakening experienced by churchgoers during the pandemic could be predicted by a range of factors. Based on insights from earlier research, the study identified seven categories of predictors that may have been relevant to individual differences in levels of spiritual awakening, discussed as: personal factors, psychological factors, contextual factors, church tradition, charismaticism, theological stance, and participation during online services. Six conclusions emerged from the data in response to this second research question.

In terms of personal factors, the data demonstrated that both sex and age were significant predictors of spiritual awakening. Women recorded higher scores of spiritual awakening than men. This finding is consistent with the general finding that women tend to be more religious than men (Francis & Penny, 2014) and with the specific finding that male churchgoers were less positive about the Church's response to the pandemic (Francis & Village, 2021b). Older churchgoers recorded higher scores of spiritual awakening than younger churchgoers. This is consistent with the finding that younger people were more badly affected by the social and financial disruption of the pandemic and less likely to be able to shield from exposure to the virus (Village & Francis, 2021b).

In terms of psychological factors, the data demonstrated that both psychological type and emotionality were significant predictors of spiritual awakening. Feeling types and intuitive types recorded higher scores of spiritual awakening than thinking types and sensing types. This finding is consistent with the general finding that intuitive types tend to be more open to religious and spiritual experience (Francis, Littler, & Robbins, 2012; Francis, Robbins, & Cargas, 2012; Francis, Village, Robbins, & Ineson, 2007) and with the general finding that feeling types affiliate more readily with Christian churches (Francis, Robbins, & Craig, 2011). Higher scores of spiritual awakening were associated with great emotional stability. This finding is consistent with the general finding that emotional stability is associated with positive affect, while emotional instability is associated with negative affect (see Francis, Brown, Lester, & Philipchalk, 1998).

In terms of contextual factors, the data demonstrated that neither geographical location nor direct experience of the virus carried any predictive power. The only significant predictor within this set of variables concerned the experience of self-isolation. Those who self-isolated recorded significantly higher scores of spiritual awakening.

In terms of church tradition, the data demonstrated that Roman Catholics recorded higher scores of spiritual awakening than Anglicans, and that, within Anglicans, Evangelicals recorded higher scores of spiritual awakening than Anglo-Catholics. In other words, among Anglicans, Evangelicals were closer than Anglo-Catholics to the position recorded by Roman Catholics. At first glance this finding seems puzzling, since theologically and spiritually Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics share much in common. The answer, however, may reside in the increasingly marginalised position that Anglo-Catholics hold within the Church of England. Writing in the mid-1980s, Penhale (1986) spoke of Anglo-Catholics being in crisis. Other studies comparing the response of Evangelical Anglicans and Anglo-Catholics to the pandemic have demonstrated that Anglo-Catholics felt more discomforted by the closure of churches (Francis & Village, 2021f).

In terms of charismaticism, the data demonstrated that higher scores of spiritual awakening were associated with closer connection to the Charismatic movement. This finding is consistent with the experiential emphases of the Charismatic movement (Bax, 1986; Goldingay, 1996).

In terms of theological stance, the data demonstrated that three factors were significant predictors. Higher scores of spiritual awakening were associated with preferring modern worship, and with holding conservative moral values. These findings help to situate spiritual awakening during the time of the pandemic within defined styles of Christian belief and practice.

In terms of participation during online services, the data demonstrated that two of the six listed activities were associated with higher scores of spiritual awakening. Individual differences in spiritual awakening were not associated with reciting parts of the service, with singing, with speaking prayers aloud, or with taking communion at home. Higher scores of spiritual awakening were, however, associated with lighting candles during online services

and with typing prayer requests during online services. These findings generate new insights into how opportunities may be maximised for online worship to move those watching from the position of passive spectators to the position of engaged participants.

The present study was established to explore the impact of the pandemic on churchgoers at the beginning of the national lockdown in England and Wales during the period 8 May to 26 July 2020. There are three clear limitations within this study that restrict the generalisability of the findings. The research was conducted over a limited period (less than three months) during the initial phase of the pandemic. The population studied was limited to Roman Catholics and Anglicans in England and Wales. The survey was conducted online and the analyses restricted to participants who had taken part in watching online services during the period. The findings from the study are, however, sufficiently interesting to deserve proper replication and extension, before the meaning of the initial impact of the pandemic fades from people's minds and now that this experience can be placed within a longer trajectory.

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Table 1

Properties of the Lewis Index of Spiritual Awakening

Alpha = .79		Less	Same	More
Item:	CITC	%	%	%
Prayerfulness	.65	12	38	50
Closeness to God	.71	10	47	43
Closeness to the church	.43	37	38	25
Personal Faith	.64	7	36	57

Note: CITC = Corrected Item-Total Correlation

Table 2

Sample profile (n = 3673)

		Percent
Sex	Male	33.6
	Female	66.4
Age	20s	4.5
	30s	6.9
	40s	11.9
	50s	19.6
	60s	26.9
	70s	25.2
	80s+	5.1
Psychological preferences	Extraversion	31.9
	Introversion	68.1
	Sensing	73.2
	Intuition	26.8
	Thinking	52.8
	Feeling	47.2
	Judging	89.5
	Perceiving	10.5
Location	Rural	28.7
	Town / Suburb	61.5
	Inner City	9.7
Virus	Definitely had virus	3.2
	Self-isolated	36.0
	Others affected	26.0
Denomination group	Anglican	62.1
	Roman Catholic	37.9
Service participation	Praying aloud	37.9
	Singing	33.5
	Reciting service	23.6
	Lighting candles	12.2
	Typing prayer requests	6.1
	Taking communion	5.9

Table 3 *Correlation matrix*

	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
1 Female	.02	.06***	.08***	.04*	.07***	.05**	.00	-.05**	-.13***	.13***	-.01	.03	.04*	-.03	.05**	-.04**	.02	.12***	-.03	-.24***	.06***	.08***	.01
2 Age	-.01	-.06***	-.04*	-.11***	-.13***	-.09***	.04*	-.08***	.03	-.13***	.14***	.04*	.14***	-.10***	.12***	-.02	.19***	-.20***	-.02	-.02	.11***	.02	
3 Extraversion	.00	-.02	.01	-.04*	-.02	-.03	-.04*	-.06**	-.07***	.09***	.00	.01	.05**	.01	-.09***	.01	.02	-.10***	-.18***	-.18***	-.03		
4 Sensing	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.03*	-.02	-.02	.13***	.10***	.06**	-.05**	.01	-.02	-.03	-.06***	.01	.01	.03	-.06***	.40***	.06***			
5 Thinking	-.01	-.05**	-.05**	.01	-.02	.01	.03	.07***	.11***	-.12***	.02	.00	-.07***	.00	.06***	.02	.00	.04*	.31***				
6 Judging	-.01	-.02	.01	.02	.03	.01	.06***	.08***	.08***	-.07***	.03	-.01	-.07***	-.06***	.01	.02	-.01	.07***					
7 High emotionality	.00	.02	.01	.02	.03	.01	.01	.01	.03*	.02	-.04**	.00	-.02	.01	-.02	-.01	-.03						
8 Rural	.03*	-.04*	.04*	.00	.01	.02	.03	-.03	.03	.01	.21***	.06***	.04*	-.03	-.07***	-.37***							
9 Inner City	-.03	.01	-.02	.00	-.01	-.01	.00	.03	-.01	-.04*	-.05**	.00	-.02	-.04*	.00								
10 Live alone	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.03	-.02	-.01	.03	.03	.06***	-.07***	-.05**	-.03	.02	.00									
11 Definitely had virus	.01	.04**	.02	.03	.00	.02	-.04**	-.01	.01	.01	-.02	.05**	.19***										
12 Self-isolated	.00	.00	.00	-.05**	-.03	-.06**	.06***	.05**	.03	.02	-.02	.01											
13 Others affected	.14***	.06**	.06***	.06***	.09***	.09***	-.15***	-.10***	.03*	-.02	.42***												
14 Anglican	.18***	-.01	.08***	.07***	.13***	.11***	-.22***	-.15***	.06***	-.06***													
15 Charismatic	.10***	.07***	.03	.04**	.06***	.03*	.13***	.08***	-.34***														
16 Traditional worship	-.07***	-.04**	-.02	-.06***	-.07***	-.05**	.18***	.29***															
17 Conservative doctrine	-.03	.02	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.03	.70***																
18 Conservative morality	-.01	.00	-.04*	-.05**	-.04*	-.07***																	
19 Reciting service	.18***	.21***	.34***	.67***	.58***																		
20 Singing	.20***	.20***	.32***	.58***																			
21 Praying aloud	.20***	.24***	.37***																				
22 Lighting candles	.20***	.25***																					
23 Typing prayer requests	.08***																						
24 Taking communion																							

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

Table 4 *Hierarchical linear regression of the Lewis Index of Spiritual Awakening*

		Multiple regression						
	r	Model						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Female	.13***	.13***	.09***	.10***	.10***	.10***	.09***	.08***
Age	.17***	.17***	.17***	.16***	.15***	.16***	.17***	.18***
Extraversion	.06***		.03	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
Sensing	-.03		-.06**	-.06***	-.06***	-.06***	-.07***	-.07***
Thinking	-.18***		-.15***	-.15***	-.14***	-.14***	-.14***	-.13***
Judging	-.05**		.03	.03	.04	.04*	.04*	.04*
High emotionality	-.10***			-.09***	-.09***	-.09***	-.08***	-.08***
Rural	.03				.00	.02	.01	.01
Inner city	-.02				-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
Live alone	.04*				.02	.01	.02	.02
Definitely had virus	-.01				-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
Self-isolated	.11***				.07***	.07***	.06***	.06***
Others affected	-.04*				-.05**	.00	.01	.00
Anglican	-.09***					-.12***	-.09***	-.10***
Charismatic	.11***						.05**	.05**
Traditional worship	-.10***						-.08***	-.08***
Conservative doctrine	.06***						.05*	.05*
Conservative morality	.12***						.07**	.07**
Reciting parts of the service	.04*							.01
Singing	.03							-.01
Speaking prayers aloud	.06**							.03
Lighting candles	.11***							.09***
Typing prayer requests	.10***							.06***
Taking communion at home	.04*							.02

Note. *r* = Pearson correlation coefficient for bivariate correlation. Multiple regression statistic is standardised beta weight. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.