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Article Title: Psychological type profile of Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom

Year of publication: 2009

Link to published version:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13617670902784568>

Publisher statement: 'This is an electronic version of an article published in Francis, L. et al. (2009). Psychological type profile of Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom . Journal of Beliefs & Values, vol. 30, pp. 61-69. Journal of Beliefs & Values is available online at:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a911581698>

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Psychological type profile of Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network
of churches in the United Kingdom

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alice\c\work\ articles\sg\lead elders

Abstract

This study set out to examine the psychological type profile of Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom and to compare this profile with the established profile of clergymen in the Church of England. A sample of 134 Lead Elders completed the Francis Psychological Type Scales. The study shows that Newfrontiers Lead Elders display slight preferences for extraversion over introversion, for sensing over intuition, and for thinking over feeling, and a strong preference for judging over perceiving. These findings contrast with the profile of Church of England clergymen who prefer introversion over extraversion, intuition over sensing, and feeling over thinking, but who also display a less pronounced preference for judging over perceiving. Within the Newfrontiers leadership the most frequently reported types were ISTJ (16%) and ESTJ (13%), while among Church of England clergymen the most frequently reported types were INTJ (11%) and ISTJ (10%). The implications of these findings are discussed for the distinctive strengths, challenges and opportunities facing the leadership within the Newfrontiers network of churches.

Psychological type profile of Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network
of churches in the United Kingdom

Jung's theory of psychological type generates important insights into human personality and individual differences that have been of interest and benefit to practical theology, both conceptually and empirically. At the conceptual level, the theory has been employed in discussions of many areas of relevance to practical theology, including prayer (Michael & Norrisey, 1984; Keating, 1987, Duncan, 1993), ministry and leadership (Oswald & Kroeger, 1988), Christian growth (Goldsmith & Wharton, 1993), communicating the gospel (Butler, 1999), preaching (Francis & Atkins, 2000, 2001, 2002; Francis & Village, 2008), congregations (Edwards, 1993; Baab, 1998), and faith (Francis, 2005). At the empirical level, the theory has been operationalised to examine the psychological profiles associated with distinctive expressions of the Christian faith, including charismatic experience (Francis & Jones, 1997; Jones, Francis, & Craig, 2005), styles of believing (Francis & Jones, 1998), religious attitudes (Jones & Francis, 1999; Fearn, Francis, & Wilcox, 2001; Francis, Robbins, Boxer, Lewis, McGuckin, & McDaid, 2003; Francis, Jones, & Craig, 2004), tolerance for religious uncertainty (Francis & Jones, 1999), mystical orientation (Francis & Loudon, 2000; Francis, 2002; Francis, Village, Robbins, & Ineson, 2007), religious orientations (Francis & Ross, 2000), dogmatism (Ross, Francis & Craig, 2005), biblical interpretation (Village & Francis, 2005), belief about the Bible and the Holy Spirit (Village, 2005), prayer preferences (Francis & Robbins, 2008), cathedral visiting (Francis, Williams, Annis, & Robbins, 2008), and Celtic Christianity (Francis, Craig, & Hall, 2008).

A particularly fruitful application of psychological type theory within the context of practical theology in the United Kingdom has focused on the exploration of the profile of those engaged in various forms of leadership within Christian ministry. These studies have

focused on Presbyterian Church of Scotland ministers (Irvine, 1989), male and female Bible College students (Francis, Penson, & Jones, 2001), Church in Wales clergymen (Francis, Payne, & Jones, 2001; Francis & Payne, 2002), evangelical church leaders (Francis & Robbins, 2002; Craig, Francis, & Robbins, 2004), male missionary personnel (Craig, Horsfall, & Francis, 2005), evangelical lay church leaders (Francis, Craig, Horsfall, & Ross, 2005), Roman Catholic priests (Craig, Duncan, & Francis, 2006), youth ministers (Francis, Nash, Nash, & Craig, 2007), Church of England clergymen and clergywomen (Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, & Slater, 2007), evangelical Anglican seminarians (Francis, Craig, & Butler, 2007) and Assemblies of God theological college students (Kay, Francis, & Craig, 2008; Kay & Francis, 2008). Two main conclusions emerge from these studies: namely that there are some fairly consistent differences between the psychological type profile of church leaders across denominations and the psychological type profile of the United Kingdom population as a whole; and that there are some significant differences in the psychological type profile of church leaders from different denominational, theological or ecclesial backgrounds.

A key study in this series is the profile of 626 Church of England clergymen reported by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007). The study is important for two reasons: the sample is sufficiently diverse to provide a good representative overview of Church of England clergymen in general, and the sample is sufficiently large to enable secure comparisons to be made with the United Kingdom population norms for men in general. In terms of a straightforward psychological type profile, these data portray Church of England clergymen as demonstrating clear preferences for introversion (57%) over extraversion (43%), for intuition (62%) over sensing (38%), for feeling (54%) over thinking (47%), and for judging (68%) over perceiving (32%). The three predominant types among Church of England clergymen were INTJ (11%), INFP (10%), and ISTJ (10%). In comparison with the United Kingdom population norms for men in general as reported by Kendall (1998), these

data portray Church of England clergymen as comprising significantly higher proportions of intuitive types (62% compared with 27%), feeling types (54% compared with 35%), and judging types (68% compared with 55%). There was no significant difference between the proportions of introverts among clergymen (57%) and among men in general (53%).

In their discussion of the relevance of these findings for practical and empirical theology, Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) formulated two main conclusions. First, they argued that an understanding of type theory can highlight areas of potential strength and weakness among clergy in terms of the four indices of psychological type. In terms of the two orientations, Church of England clergymen prefer introversion. On the one hand, introverted clergy may be energised by many aspects of ministry such as private study and preparation, one-to-one encounters in counselling and in spiritual direction, silent prayer and reflection, and focusing deeply on interior spiritual issues. On the other hand, introverted clergy may be drained by many other aspects of ministry, such as attending social events, speaking in public (especially without preparation), talking with strangers as part of evangelism or parish visiting, and assuming a high profile within the parish. In terms of the two perceiving processes, Church of England clergymen prefer intuition. On the one hand, intuitive clergy may be energised by many aspects of ministry, such as the opportunity to speculate about meanings and possibilities in scripture, drawing inspiration from the symbols and teachings of the church, welcoming change and experimentation in liturgy, and developing a vision for the future of their church. On the other hand, intuitive clergy may be drained by other aspects of ministry, such as the value placed on tradition, encountering resistance to change, the need to focus on practical realities, and the importance of detail and accuracy in church administration. In terms of the judging process, Church of England clergymen prefer feeling. On the one hand, feeling clergy may be energised by many aspects of ministry, such as spending time caring for others through visiting, counselling or pastoral

care, needing to support and empathise with those in need, and the importance of interpersonal values in Christian teaching, such as love, harmony, peace, and compassion. On the other hand, feeling clergy may be drained by other aspects of ministry, such as having to look at problems objectively and logically, the need to make tough decisions which affect other people's lives, the need to be critical when necessary, and parish management. In terms of the two attitudes toward the outer world, Church of England clergymen prefer judging. On the one hand, judging clergy may be energised by many aspects of ministry, such as the need for organisation both in their own lives and in the life of their parishes, arranging services and events well in advance, maintaining efficient administrative systems and managing local affairs. On the other hand, judging types may be drained by other aspects of ministry, such as the need to think on their feet, responding effectively to unanticipated crises, and adapting to changing situations. This kind of discussion helps to situate the way in which the ministry and mission of the Church of England may be perceived.

Second, Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) argued that an understanding of the ways in which Church of England clergymen differ significantly from the population norms for men in the United Kingdom can highlight areas of opportunity and challenge in ministry and mission. To begin with, Church of England clergymen prefer feeling as a way of making decisions and judgements significantly more frequently than the male United Kingdom population norms. Given that in the general population women are more likely to prefer feeling than men, this finding may go some way to explaining the underrepresentation of men in Church of England congregations, as noted for example, by Brierley (1991) and Gelder and Escott (2001). There is a danger that the wider male population may view male clergy as displaying a characteristically feminine personality profile, appearing sentimental, and reluctant to handle difficult questions about beliefs and social justice. Male clergy should be aware when engaged in ministry and mission that they

may often be communicating with men who do not share their preference for feeling. Church of England clergymen prefer judging significantly more frequently than the male United Kingdom population norms. There is a danger that the wider male population may view male clergy as rigid, inflexible, and unable to handle change or spontaneity. Male clergy should be aware when engaged in ministry and mission that they may often be communicating with men who do not share their preference for judging. Church of England clergymen prefer intuition significantly more frequently than the male United Kingdom population norms. This finding is consistent with the case argued by Goldsmith and Wharton (1993, p. 143) that, according to type theory, clergy should comprise more intuitive types than the wider population. They suggest that many intuitive types “move into ministry or into church leadership as part of their search for meaning.” Further, intuitive persons “tend to look at reality holistically, and so it is not surprising that they are drawn into the ministry in a greater proportion than their numbers in the population generally”. Given that approximately three-quarters of the United Kingdom population prefer sensing over intuition (73% among males, 79% among females), there is a danger that the wider population may view clergy as having little to say to ‘the real world’ and as people who are too ‘heavenly-minded to be any earthly good.’ Clergy should be aware when engaged in ministry and mission that they may often be communicating with people who do not share their preference for intuition.

During recent decades a number of new churches have developed in the United Kingdom which seem to be complementing the ministry of the Established Church of England and reaching sections of the population apparently untouched by the ministry and mission of that Church. The Newfrontiers network of churches is pre-eminent among these new churches.

Against this background, the aim of the present study is to examine the extent to which the Lead Elders working within the Newfrontiers network of churches replicate the

psychological type characteristics of Church of England clergymen or display psychological type characteristics that may equip them for a somewhat different style of ministry.

Method

Procedure

A database of names and postal addresses of the Lead Elders of all the 198 Newfrontiers churches in England was obtained from the Newfrontiers website in February 2007. These leaders were mailed the anonymous 16-page survey along with a return postage-paid envelope and covering letter. Over a three month period two follow-up letters were sent resulting in the return of 134 thoroughly completed surveys (67.7% response).

Measures

Psychological type was assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005). This 40-item instrument comprises four sets of 10 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). Recent studies have demonstrated this instrument to function 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.

Sample

Of the 134 Lead Elders who participated in the project, all were male: 4 were in their twenties, 28 in their thirties, 50 in their forties, 44 in their fifties, and 8 in their sixties; none were single, 131 were married, and 3 were divorced and remarried; 15 were in part-time

secular employment, 8 were in full-time secular employment, and the remaining 111 were employed full-time in ministry.

Results

Table 1 presents the type distribution for the 134 Newfrontiers Lead Elders who

- insert table 1 about here -

participated in the survey, compared with the type profile of 626 Church of England clergymen reported by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007). These data demonstrate that, as a group, the Newfrontiers Lead Elders displayed a slight preference for extraversion (52%) over introversion (48%), a slight preference for sensing (52%) over intuition (48%), a slight preference for thinking (54%) over feeling (46%), and a marked preference for judging (78%) over perceiving (22%). The two predominant types among the Lead Elders were ISTJ (16%) and ESTJ (13%).

Comparison with the Church of England clergymen demonstrate that, although the Lead Elders were more likely to prefer extraversion (52% compared with 43%), and more likely to prefer thinking (54% compared with 47%), these two differences did not reach statistical significance. There were, however, two ways in which the two groups of church leaders were significantly different. There was a significantly higher level of preference for sensing among the Newfrontiers Lead Elders (52% compared with 38%) and a consequent lower preference for intuition (48% compared with 62%). There was a significantly higher level of preference for judging among the Newfrontiers Lead Elders (78% compared with 68%) and consequent lower preference for perceiving (22% compared with 32%). Closer examination of the pairs and temperaments demonstrate that there were among the Newfrontier Lead Elders a higher proportion of SJ (47% compared with 31%), a higher proportion of ST (30% compared with 20%), a higher proportion of TJ (46% compared with

35%), and a higher proportion of ET (26% compared with 18%). The opposite perspective demonstrates that there were among the Newfrontiers Lead Elders a lower proportion of NF (24% compared with 35%), a lower proportion of NP (16% compared with 25%), a lower proportion of IN (20% compared with 36%), and a lower proportion of IF (20% compared with 28%).

Conclusion

Building on the work of Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007), the present study set out to test the broad hypothesis that the Newfrontiers network of churches would attract Lead Elders who displayed a different psychological type profile from that modelled by clergymen within the Church of England. This broad hypothesis has been largely supported by the data. A number of statistically significant differences have been identified between the two groups of church leaders and further trends have been suggested that would have been likely to reach statistical significance had the sample size of Lead Elders been larger. The following main conclusions follow from the identified differences that suggest some important strengths among Newfrontiers church leaders to complement the strengths associated with Church of England clergymen and that also suggests some potential weaknesses.

First, the indication (although not statistically significant) is that Newfrontiers Lead Elders are more likely to prefer extraversion than Church of England clergymen. As a consequence they may be in a stronger position to build a social church that engages participants in interpersonal activity. While Church of England clergy tend to attract introverted churchgoers (Craig, 2005), Newfrontiers Lead Elders may be in a stronger position to attract more extraverts into membership.

Second, the indication (although not statistically significant) is that Newfrontiers Lead

Elders are more likely to prefer thinking than Church of England clergymen. This is an important observation for two reasons. The first reason is that current research demonstrates that Anglican congregations tend to be shaped by a feeling preference (Craig, 2005) similar to the feeling preferences modelled by Church of England clergymen. The predominance of the feeling preference is reflected in a highly feminised environment in which men and those with a strong preference for thinking may feel marginalised. Newfrontiers Lead Elders may be in a stronger position to attract more men and more thinkers into membership. The second reason is that thinkers and feelers display quite different management styles. Newfrontiers Lead Elders may be in a stronger position to develop a systems approach to church management.

Third, the (statistically significant) indication is that Newfrontiers Lead Elders are more likely to prefer sensing than Church of England clergymen. Leadership with a preference for sensing is closer to the United Kingdom population profile (Kendall, 1998) and consequently likely to be in tune with a larger proportion of the population. Compared with Church of England clergymen, this higher preference for sensing is likely to be reflected in establishing a firmly grounded, regular pattern of worship on which individuals can rely and in which they can establish a clear role for themselves.

Fourth, the (statistically significant) indication is that Newfrontiers Lead Elders are more likely to prefer judging than Church of England clergymen. Leadership with a preference for judging is likely to develop tightly structured and closely supervised organisations. Congregations within the Newfrontiers network of churches are likely to be given firm leadership. Such leadership may, however, appear inflexible and unappreciative of members who, for whatever reason, wish to step out of line.

Fifth, insights generated from the pairs and temperaments provide further clues regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the style of leadership shaped by Newfrontiers Lead Elders. The strengths are associated with the organisational and management skills

shaped by preferences for SJ, ST, TJ and ET. There is a toughness about this style of leadership that is unlikely to be distracted by opposition. The disadvantage is that this style of leadership can leave some individuals hurt and marginalised for what is seen by the leadership as the overall benefit to the organisation. It is, however, precisely the awareness of the implications of type preferences for leadership styles that can enable the continuing professional development of Lead Elders to become increasingly aware not only of the strengths that they bring to ministry but also of the dangers and weaknesses that they may face in exercising this personal strength.

The present study was conducted in 2007 at a time when Newfrontiers was set to promote significant expansion. There would be real value in a few years time to replicate the present study in order to learn whether rapid expansion of the number of Lead Elders required to develop these new churches perpetuates or modifies the psychological type profile of the Lead Elders who have established the current strengths of the Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom.

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Table 1 Type distribution for Newfrontiers Lead Elders

N = 134 (NB += 1% of N)

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences			
ISTJ n = 21 (15.7%) I = 1.58 +++++ +++++ +++++ +	ISFJ n = 13 (9.7%) I = 1.24 +++++ +++++ +++++ +	INFJ n = 8 (6.0%) I = 0.66 +++++ +	INTJ n = 13 (9.7%) I = 0.88 +++++ +++++	E n = 70 (52.2%) I = 1.21 I n = 64 (47.8%) I = 0.84 S n = 70 (52.2%) **I = 1.36 N n = 64 (47.8%) **I = 0.77 T n = 72 (53.7%) I = 1.16 F n = 62 (46.3%) I = 0.86 J n = 105 (78.4%) *I = 1.15 P n = 29 (21.6%) *I = 0.68			
ISTP n = 1 (0.7%) I = 0.33 +	ISFP n = 2 (1.5%) I = 1.04 ++	INFP n = 4 (3.0%) I = 0.30** +++	INTP n = 2 (1.5%) I = 0.28 ++	Pairs and Temperaments			
ESTP n = 1 (0.7%) I = 0.67 +	ESFP n = 3 (2.2%) I = 0.93 ++	ENFP n = 10 (7.5%) I = 1.11 +++++ +++	ENTP n = 6 (4.5%) I = 1.75 +++++	IJ n = 55 (41.0%) I = 1.08 IP n = 9 (6.7%) ***I = 0.35 EP n = 20 (14.9%) I = 1.17 EJ n = 50 (37.3%) I = 1.23 ST n = 40 (29.9%) **I = 1.51 SF n = 30 (22.4%) I = 1.21 NF n = 32 (23.9%) *I = 0.68 NT n = 32 (23.9%) I = 0.90 SJ n = 63 (47.0%) ***I = 1.51 SP n = 7 (5.2%) I = 0.73 NP n = 22 (16.4%) *I = 0.67 NJ n = 42 (31.3%) I = 0.85 TJ n = 62 (46.3%) *I = 1.31 TP n = 10 (7.5%) I = 0.67 FP n = 19 (14.2%) I = 0.69 FJ n = 43 (32.1%) I = 0.98 IN n = 27 (20.1%) ***I = 0.57 EN n = 37 (27.6%) I = 1.05 IS n = 37 (27.6%) I = 1.29 ES n = 33 (24.6%) *I = 1.45 ET n = 35 (26.1%) *I = 1.45 EF n = 35 (26.1%) I = 1.04 IF n = 27 (20.1%) *I = 0.71 IT n = 37 (27.6%) I = 0.97			
ESTJ n = 17 (12.7%) I = 1.94* +++++ +++++ +++++	ESFJ n = 12 (9.0%) I = 1.30 +++++ +++++	ENFJ n = 10 (7.5%) I = 0.82 +++++ +++	ENTJ n = 11 (8.2%) I = 1.05 +++++ +++				

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types			Francis, Gubb and Robbins Psychological types of Newfrontiers Lead Elders in the United Kingdom		
n	%	I	n	%	I	n	%	I			
E-TJ	28	20.9	1.45	I-TP	3	2.2	0.30	Dt. T	31	23.1	1.06
E-FJ	22	16.4	1.03	I-FP	6	4.5	0.39*	Dt. F	28	20.9	0.76
ES-P	4	3.0	0.85	IS-J	34	25.4	1.43*	Dt. S	38	28.4	1.33
EN-P	16	11.9	1.29	IN-J	21	15.7	0.78	Dt. N	37	27.6	0.94