

A Complimentary Ministry? The Psychological Type of Clergy Women in the Church in Wales

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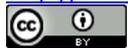
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Abstract

The debate around the admission of women to the ministry of the Anglican churches has focused on a number of issues, not least, the extent to which women bring “balance” to ministry (see for example [Furlong, 1991](#)). Balance, when used in this context is usually seen as bringing different gifts to ministry. The assumption often made is that these “different gifts” will be those traditionally associated with women such as work with children. This argument has been employed by both those for and against the entry of women into holy orders ([Harris & Shaw, 2004](#); [Baker, 2004](#)). Benjamin Schneider’s attraction-selection-attrition theory suggests that the group of people within an organisation move toward homogeneity. Schneider’s theory would suggest that the argument that women bring balance to ministry would not be supported. The current study employs psychological type theory to explore whether clergywomen in the Church in Wales do bring “balance” to ministry or “homogeneity”. The psychological type profile of a sample of 75 Church in Wales clergywomen measured by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS) is compared with a sample of 266 Church in Wales clergymen ([Francis, Payne, & Robbins, 2013](#)). The findings present no significant differences between the clergymen and clergywomen with regard to their judging function, perceiving function, orientation to the outer world or attitude toward the outer world. This finding lends support to Schneider’s theory. The implications of these findings for ministry in the Church in Wales are discussed.

Keywords

Clergywomen, Psychological Type, Anglican, Church in Wales

1. Introduction

In 2013, the Church in Wales’ Governing Body voted in favour of women bishops. The vote represented a

strong endorsement of the three fold ministry of clergywomen with 57 of the laity voting yes (14 against and two abstentions); 37 of the clergy voting yes (10 against); and all the bishops (6) voting yes. The path to ministry for clergywomen in the Church in Wales began in 1980 when the legislation in support of women deacons was passed by the Governing Body. This was followed in 1996 by the ordination of women to the priesthood. It has taken a total of thirty-three years for the threefold ministry in the Church in Wales to be open to women. The recent passing of the vote for women bishops is not without an important caveat. The Governing Body have charged the bishops with drawing up legislation to safe guard the rights of those who do not feel in conscience that they can accept this decision. This exemption was an expediency deemed necessary on the day of the vote to enable a straightforward “yes” or “no” vote to take place on the legislation to enable women bishops.

Behind the voting figures across the thirty-three years, there has been an ongoing debate regarding women in the church, particularly with regard to holy orders. The debate has centred on a number of areas including theological issues; ecumenical issues; tradition and equality (for a clear summary of this debate see [Avis, 1999](#)). The area of debate on which this article focuses is the view that women bring a complimentary ministry and thus a balance to ministry. This view has been employed by those both for and against the entry of women into ministry: those who support the ordination of women suggest that there is an imbalance in ministry that can only be dealt with by ordaining women; those who are opposed to the ordination of women suggest that women can most effectively bring balance to ministry by remaining part of the laity.

Research among clergywomen and those served by clergywomen adds support to this perspective of women bringing balance to ministry. For example Helen [Thorne's](#) study in 2000 of the first group of women priests in the Church of England is based on 17 in-depth interviews and 1247 questionnaires discussed how women could change the church because of their unique experience of “being on the margins” (p. 135) for so many years. Thorne raises the question if this difference could be maintained as more women entered holy orders and thus ceased to be on the fringes of the “official” ministry of the church. Ian [Jones \(2004\)](#), in his research using case studies of nine parishes, reported a view that the entry of women into holy orders led to the priesthood reflecting “more fully both the diversity of humanity and the inclusiveness of God” (p. 102). The research by Thorne and by Jones represents the view that women bring balance to ministry. Jones' research was conducted on the ten year anniversary of women entering the priesthood in the Church of England and his case studies support Thorne's argument ten years earlier that clergywomen bring balance to ministry.

Benjamin [Schneider \(1987\)](#) put forward a theory that sought to explain the apparent homogeneity often found among personnel in organisations. [Schneider \(1987\)](#) labelled this phenomenon the “attraction-selection-attrition framework” ([Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995](#)). He recognised that many people are attracted to different careers, but then might change career/organisation because they felt that they did not “fit in”, leaving behind them a ‘more homogeneous group than those who were initially attracted to the setting ([Schneider, 1987: p. 443](#)). Schneider viewed personality theory as having a part to play in explaining this process ([Schneider, 1987](#)). If Schneider's theory is accepted then it would suggest that rather than women bringing a different and complimentary approach to ministry, instead they would, over time, represent the same type of ministry as the men. It would seem that Schneider's theory directly contradicts the view that women bring a complimentary ministry but rather that they will bring a similar type of ministry. This paper will explore these two perspectives through the tool of psychological type theory.

Psychological type theory originated with [Jung \(1971\)](#). Jung's theory of psychological type can be explained in terms of three dichotomous preferences: two orientations, two perceiving preferences, and two judging preferences. The two orientations, are defined as extraversion (E) and introversion (I), and are concerned with how individuals obtain their energy; extraverts preferring to draw energy from the outer world of people and things and introverts preferring to draw energy from the inner world of ideas. The two perceiving functions are defined as sensing (S) and intuition (N), and are concerned with how individuals perceive the world; sensors preferring to focus on the details and on present realities and intuitives preferring to focus on the “big picture” and on future possibilities. The two judging functions, are defined as thinking (T) and feeling (F), and are concerned with how individuals reach their judgements; thinkers preferring to rely on objective logic and feelers preferring to rely on their subjective appreciation of the personal and interpersonal factors involved. A fourth dichotomous preference that explores attitude toward the outer world was added by Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers ([Myers & Myers, 1980](#); [Myers & McCaulley, 1985](#)). Attitude toward the outer world is defined as judging (J) and perceiving (P), and are concerned with how individuals approach day-to-day life; judges preferring an organised and planned approach and perceivers preferring a flexible and spontaneous approach. Taken to-

gether, these four dichotomous preferences generate 16 discrete psychological types (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

In addition to discussing the four dichotomous preferences (introversion *or* extraversion, sensing *or* intuition, thinking *or* feeling, judging *or* perceiving), psychological type theory also uses the language of “dominant type”. The four dominant types are: dominant sensing, dominant intuition, dominant thinking, and dominant feeling. Dominant type is viewed as the preference that is the “strongest” within the makeup of an individual’s psychological type (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

Psychological type theory has increasingly been used among religious professionals and a picture is beginning to emerge of the predominant psychological type across a number of different Christian denominations, including Anglicans (Francis, Robbins, Duncan, & Whinney, 2010), Catholics (Burns, Francis, Village, & Robbins, 2013), and Methodists (Burton, Francis, & Robbins, 2010).

This developing picture of psychological type among religious professionals supports Schneider’s theory of attraction-selection-attrition in the sense that there is a preference for certain psychological types both among clergy (for example Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, & Slater, 2007) and congregations (for example Francis, Robbins, Williams, & Williams, 2007). This research shows that across the samples cited judging and feeling types predominate.

This new study explores the psychological type profile of a sample of clergywomen from the Church in Wales alongside a sample of Church in Wales clergymen (Francis, Payne, & Robbins, 2013). Schneider’s theory and previous research conducted among clergy suggest that the psychological type profile of the clergywomen will not be significantly different to the psychological type profile of the clergymen. Conversely those who support the view of a complimentary ministry of clergywomen might expect that the psychological type profile of clergywomen will be significantly different to the psychological type profile of clergymen.

2. Method

2.1. Procedure

A twenty-four page questionnaire was sent to all clergywomen under the age of 71 years in the Church in Wales. A total of 178 questionnaires were successfully mailed and 75 useable questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 42%.

2.2. Instrument

The Francis Psychological Type Scales were employed to assess psychological type (Francis, 2005). This is a 40-item instrument comprising 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) (Francis, 2005). The scales have been demonstrated to be reliable for example Francis, Craig, and Hall (2008) reported the following reliabilities among a sample of Anglican clergy and lay church officers in the UK: E/I = 0.83; S/N = 0.76; T/F = 0.73; JP = 0.79.

2.3. Data Analysis

The research literature concerning psychological type has developed a highly distinctive method for analysing, handling, and displaying statistical data in the form of “type tables”. This convention has been followed in the following presentation. The commentary on this table will be restricted to those aspects of the data relevant to the research question.

2.4. Sample

Of the 75 respondents 4 were in their thirties, 10 in their forties, 25 in their fifties, 27 in their sixties and 9 were aged 70 or over. Nearly a third of the respondents were single (30%), 7% were divorced and the majority (63%) were married.

A sample of 266 clergymen from the Church in Wales (Francis, Payne, & Robbins, 2013) is employed to compare with the sample of clergywomen. Of the 266 clergymen who participated in the project, 2 were under the age of thirty, 15 were in their thirties, 44 were in their forties, 129 were in their fifties, 70 were in their six-

ties, 5 were in their seventies, and 1 did not disclose his age; 208 were married, 36 were single, 11 were divorced and not remarried, 6 were divorced and remarried, 3 were widowed, 1 was separated, and 1 did not disclose his marital status.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the type distribution of the clergywomen in the Church in Wales. With regard to dichotomous

Table 1. Type distribution of clergywomen in the church in Wales.

(a)

Dichotomous Preferences							
ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ	E	<i>n</i> = 28	(37.3%)	<i>I</i> = 1.05
<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 7	<i>n</i> = 8	I	<i>n</i> = 47	(62.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.97
(12.0%)	(22.7%)	(9.3%)	(10.7%)	S	<i>n</i> = 43	(57.3%)	<i>I</i> = 1.00
<i>I</i> = 0.94	<i>I</i> = 1.04	<i>I</i> = 0.95	<i>I</i> = 1.29	N	<i>n</i> = 32	(42.7%)	<i>I</i> = 1.00
++++	++++	++++	++++	T	<i>n</i> = 24	(32.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.01
++++	++++	+++	++++	F	<i>n</i> = 51	(68.0%)	<i>I</i> = 0.99
++	++++		+	J	<i>n</i> = 62	(82.7%)	<i>I</i> = 1.06
	++++			P	<i>n</i> = 13	(17.3%)	<i>I</i> = 0.79
	+++						
Pairs and Temperaments							
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP	IJ	<i>n</i> = 41	(54.7%)	<i>I</i> = 1.04
<i>n</i> = 0	<i>n</i> = 0	<i>n</i> = 5	<i>n</i> = 1	IP	<i>n</i> = 6	(8.0%)	<i>I</i> = 0.69
(0%)	(0%)	(6.7%)	(1.3%)	EP	<i>n</i> = 7	(9.3%)	<i>I</i> = 0.92
<i>I</i> = 0	<i>I</i> = 0	<i>I</i> = 1.04	<i>I</i> = 0.71	EJ	<i>n</i> = 21	(28.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.10
		++++	+	ST	<i>n</i> = 13	(17.3%)	<i>I</i> = 0.96
		++		SF	<i>n</i> = 30	(40.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.02
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP	NF	<i>n</i> = 21	(28.0%)	<i>I</i> = 0.95
<i>n</i> = 0	<i>n</i> = 1	<i>n</i> = 5	<i>N</i> = 1	NT	<i>n</i> = 11	(14.7%)	<i>I</i> = 1.08
(0%)	(1.3%)	(6.7%)	(1.3%)	SJ	<i>n</i> = 42	(56.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.12
<i>I</i> = 0	<i>I</i> = 0.39	<i>I</i> = 1.04	<i>I</i> = 0.39	SP	<i>n</i> = 1	(1.3%)	<i>I</i> = 0.19
	+	++++	+	NP	<i>n</i> = 12	(16.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.09
		++		NJ	<i>n</i> = 20	(26.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.95
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ	TJ	<i>n</i> = 22	(29.3%)	<i>I</i> = 1.03
<i>n</i> = 4	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 4	<i>n</i> = 1	TP	<i>n</i> = 2	(2.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.89
(5.3%)	(16.0%)	(5.3%)	(1.3%)	FP	<i>n</i> = 11	(14.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.78
<i>I</i> = 1.29	<i>I</i> = 1.42	<i>I</i> = 0.79	<i>I</i> = 0.39	FJ	<i>n</i> = 40	(53.3%)	<i>I</i> = 1.07
++++	+++++	++++	+	IN	<i>n</i> = 21	(28.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.06
	+++++			EN	<i>n</i> = 11	(14.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.89
	+++++			IS	<i>n</i> = 26	(37.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.91
	+			ES	<i>n</i> = 17	(22.7%)	<i>I</i> = 1.18
				ET	<i>n</i> = 6	(8.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.01
				EF	<i>n</i> = 22	(29.3%)	<i>I</i> = 1.05
				IF	<i>n</i> = 29	(38.7%)	<i>I</i> = 0.95
				IT	<i>n</i> = 18	(24.0%)	<i>I</i> = 1.01

(b)

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types					
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>Index</i>		<i>n</i>	%	<i>Index</i>		<i>n</i>	%	<i>Index</i>
E-TJ	5	6.7	0.89	I-TP	1	1.3	0.51	Dt.T	6	8.0	0.79
E-FJ	16	21.3	1.18	I-FP	5	6.7	0.74	Dt.F	21	28.0	1.03
ES-P	1	1.3	0.35	IS-J	26	34.7	1.00	Dt.S	27	36.0	0.94
EN-P	6	8.0	1.25	IN-J	15	20.0	1.11	Dt.N	21	28.0	1.15

preferences the clergywomen prefer introversion (63%) over extraversion (37%); sensing (57%) over intuition (43%); feeling (68%) over thinking (32%); and judging (83%) over perceiving (17%). The predominant type is ISFJ which accounts for nearly a quarter (23%) of the sample. The highest dominant type preference is sensing (36%).

Table 1 also compares the type distribution of the clergywomen with the clergymen. These data demonstrate that there are no significant differences between the clergywomen and the clergymen on either the dichotomous preferences, the whole type preference or the dominant type preference.

4. Conclusion

Thorne (2000) questioned if the unique experience of the first wave of clergywomen brought with them would be maintained as more women entered holy orders. From the perspective of psychological type this is not the case among clergywomen in Wales. Jones (2004) suggested that women entering holy orders would bring a priesthood that reflected “the diversity of humanity”, psychological type theory also suggests that this is not the reality among clergywomen in Wales.

Schneider’s theory of “attraction-selection-attrition framework” is however supported, as from the perspective of psychological type theory clergymen and clergywomen present a homogenous group. The evidence of psychological type suggests that clergymen and clergywomen do not bring balance to ministry, for both clergymen and clergywomen the most common type is ISFJ (23% for clergywomen and 22% for clergymen).

Francis and Robbins (2012) identified among a sample of 1867 churchgoers a preference for introversion, sensing, feeling and judging. They suggested that those who did not fit this profile were significantly more like to leave the church. This is reflected in the title of their article “not fitting in and getting out.” It seems that this could also be true for this sample of clergymen and clergywomen in the Church in Wales. Further research is now needed to identify those clergy who do not fit this dominant psychological type profile to establish if they experience lower levels of satisfaction in their ministry as a consequence of not fitting into the predominant psychological type. What these findings are not able to do is explain if it is that certain psychological types are not being selected for ministry in the first instance or if they are being selected but then leaving because they feel they do not fit within the organisation.

The debate around men and women bringing different perspectives to ministry is not supported when examined through the lens of psychological type theory.

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