The quest for the psychological Jesus through a Jungian lens

Leslie J. Francis*

Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR)
University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
World Religions and Education Research Unit
Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, UK
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2946-9980

Susan H. Jones

Liverpool Cathedral, England, UK
World Religions and Education Research Unit
Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, UK
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0092-5834

Author note:
*Corresponding author:
Leslie J. Francis
Professor of Religions and Psychology
Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR)
The University of Warwick
Email: leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk

Abstract

This study employs psychological type theory to advance the quest for the psychological Jesus within the reader-response approach to biblical hermeneutics, drawing on data provided by 192 participants from a Pentecostal background who completed two versions of the Francis Psychological Type Scales: one explored the participants' psychological type profile; the other explored the psychological type profile that they attributed to Jesus. In terms of the 16 complete types, 35% of the participants profiled Jesus as ESFJ, compared with 14% who profiled themselves as ESFJ. In terms of underlying scale scores, the data revealed a significant tendency for participants to construct their image of Jesus within the contours of their own psychological type profile. For example, thinking types were more likely to form an image of Jesus as a thinking type, while feeling types were more likely to form an image of Jesus as a feeling type.

Keywords: psychology of religion, psychological type, Pentecostal churches, images of Jesus

Introduction

Christian hymnody may sometimes be accused of presenting an idealised, and somewhat distorted image of Jesus, as exemplified by Charles Wesley's classic hymn for young children, 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild'. Verse 4 reads:

> Lamb of God, I look to thee;
>
> Thou shalt my example be;
>
> Thou art gentle, meek, and mild;
>
> Thou was once a little child.

In his gentle and skilful critique of this hymn, Sharpe (1981) points out that the same author also penned the following hymn:

> Jesu's tremendous name
>
> Puts all our foes to flight!
>
> Jesus the meek, the angry lamb
>
> A lion is in fight.

> The Gospel narrative too provides a more nuanced picture of Jesus. On the one hand, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed the Beatitude (Matthew 5: 3-11):

> Blessed are the peacemakers,
>
> for they will be called children of God.

On the other hand, in Luke's Gospel the only story from Jesus' childhood recorded in the canonical tradition portrays an independently-minded and disobedient young man who slips under the radar of parental attention to mingle among the scholars in Jerusalem, and who treats his parent's concern with distain, if not insolence (see Luke 2: 41-50). Back in Jerusalem toward the end of Jesus' life, Mark records the strange and troubling incident of Jesus cursing the fig tree that was in leaf but carrying no fruit when 'it was not the season for figs' (Mark 11: 12-14, 20-21). Perhaps more troubling still is the narrative recorded in all

four Gospels of Jesus' cleansing the temple in Jerusalem. In John's account the stakes are raised (John 2: 15).

> Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their table.

Quest for the historical Jesus

The development in the nineteenth century of scientific critical methods for analysing the Gospel narrative led to what has been styled the 'Quest for the historical Jesus'. That quest of New Testament scholarship to identify and to reveal a portrait of the historical Jesus 'as he really was' is evidenced by the writings of scholars such as David Friedrich Strauss, Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, and Bernhard Weiss (see Kümmel, 1970; Schweitzer, 1950). One of the most celebrated expressions of this quest emerged in the works of the Liberal Protestant Adolf Harnack (1900) in his *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*What is Christianity?*). In his quest he uncovered the historical Jesus as a preacher of inward, individual piety, and of the higher righteousness of love of neighbour.

Harnack's presentation provoked a sharp criticism from the Catholic Modernist George Tyrrell. George Tyrrell's own studies revealed a very different Jesus: a radical visionary proclaiming a cosmic, apocalyptic account of God's activity. For Tyrrell (1909, p. 57), 'there is not left a single shred' of the Jesus 'who died solely as a martyr of morality'. Tyrrell rebuked Harnack with words that have often been repeated.

> The Christ that Harnack sees, looking back through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness, is only the reflection of a Liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well. (Tyrrell, 1909, p. 491)

New Testament scholarship and the art and science of interpretation has developed considerably since the classic debate between Harnack and Tyrrell. The Liberal Protestant *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Schweitzer, 1950) has been followed by *A New Quest of the*

Historical Jesus (Robinson, 1959), by the *Quest for the Post-Historical Jesus* (Hamilton, 1993), and by continuing and diverse interest in the theme (see, for example, Bauckham, 2017, Beilby & Eddy, 2009; Bernier, 2016; Dunn, 2003; Keith & Le Donne, 2012, Porter, 2004). At the same time, Tyrrell's challenge still stands and may be applied more widely to understandings of Jesus. Francis and Astley (1997) accepted Tyrrell's challenge as presenting the psychology of religion with the plausible hypothesis that the Christian believer may tend to construct an image of Jesus, at least to some extent and in some sense, in his and her own likeness. Francis and Astley (1997) styled this re-tuned challenge as 'the quest for the psychological Jesus'.

This quest for the psychological Jesus, as Francis and Astley (1997) defined and operationalised it, is neither a quest shaped in biblical studies to interrogate the gospel narratives with the intention of uncovering the psychological profile of the Jesus of history, nor a quest shaped in systematic theology with the intention of unravelling the implications of developed Christologies for the psychological profile of the Christ of Faith. Rather this quest for the psychological Jesus, as Francis and Astley (1997) defined and operationalised it, is grounded in the reader-response approach to biblical hermeneutics as shaped in a psychological vein by Francis and Village (2008).

Quest for the psychological Jesus

Francis and Astley (1997) positioned the quest for the psychological Jesus within the broader context of the psychology of personality and individual differences (see, for example, Capara & Cervone, 2000; Deaux & Snyder, 2019; Funder, 1997). Within this field, four main models of personality have gained prominence in the literatures and each of them has found a place within the empirical psychology of religion: the sixteen factor model proposed by Cattell, Eber, and Tatsuoka (1970), the major three dimensions model proposed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975), the Big Five Factor model proposed by Costa and McCrea (1985), and the

four component model developed from Jung (1971) and operationalised by Myers and

McCaulley (1985).

Francis and Astley (1997) rooted their initial quest for the psychological Jesus within

the major three dimensions model of personality as operationalised by the Eysenck

Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), the Revised Eysenck Personality

Questionnaire (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985), and the Eysenck Personality Scales

(Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991). Eysenck's dimensional model of personality proposed that

individual differences can be most adequately and economically summarised in terms of the

three orthogonal factors of extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Eysenck's

operationalisation of these factors also incorporates a lie scale.

Eysenck's neuroticism scales measure emotional lability and over-reactivity and

identify the underlying personality traits which at one extreme define neurotic disorders. The

opposite of neuroticism is emotional stability. The high scorer on the neuroticism scale is

characterised by the test manual as an anxious, worrying individual, who is moody and

frequently depressed, likely to sleep badly and suffer from various psychosomatic disorders.

Eysenck and Gudjonsson (1989) characterise the high scorer as anxious, depressed, tense,

irrational, shy, moody, emotional, suffering from guilt feelings and low self-esteem. The low

scorer on this dimension is characterised by the absence of these traits.

Eysenck's extraversion scales measure sociability and impulsivity. The opposite of

extraversion is introversion. The high scorer on the extraversion scale is characterised by the

test manual as a sociable individual who likes parties, has many friends, needs to have people

to talk to, and prefers meeting people to reading or studying alone. The typical extravert

craves excitement, takes chances, acts on the spur of the moment, is carefree, easy-going,

optimistic, and likes to laugh and be merry. Eysenck and Gudjonsson (1989) characterise the

high scorer as sociable, lively, active, assertive, sensation-seeking, carefree, dominant,

surgent, and venturesome. The low scorer on this dimension is characterised by the opposite set of traits.

Eysenck's psychoticism scales identify the underlying personality traits which at one extreme define psychotic disorders. The opposite of psychoticism is normal personality. The high scorer on the psychoticism scale is characterised by Eysenck and Eysenck (1976), in their foundational study of psychoticism as a dimension of personality, as being 'cold, impersonal, hostile, lacking in sympathy, unfriendly, untrustful, odd, unemotional, unhelpful, lacking in insight, strange' and paranoid. In the test manual Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) draw particular attention to the characteristic absence of certain emotions from high scorers on the psychoticism scale: 'empathy, feelings of guilt, sensitivity to other people are notions which are strange and unfamiliar to them'. The low scorers are empathetic, unselfish, altruistic, warm, peaceful, and generally more pleasant, although possibly less socially decisive individuals.

Francis and Astley (1997) explored the association between individuals' own personality profile and their image of Jesus by inviting them to complete two versions of the 24-item abbreviated form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Francis, Brown, & Philipchalk, 1992). On the first presentation, the 24 items were in the third person singular and the participants were asked to answer 'for what you think about Jesus'. An example question from the extraversion scale was: 'Is he mostly quiet when he is with other people?' An example question from the neuroticism scale was: 'Does his mood often go up and down?' An example question from the psychoticism scale was: 'Does he try not to be rude to people?' On the second presentation, the 24 items were in the second person singular and the participants were asked to answer 'for what you think about yourself'. An example item from the extraversion scale was: 'Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people?'. An

example from the neuroticism scale was: 'Does your mood go up and down?'. An example

from the psychoticism scale was: 'Do you try not to be rude to people?'

Francis and Astley (1997) administered their survey among three different samples in

Great Britain: 473 secondary school students between the ages of 12 and 15 years (234 males

and 239 females); 317 students studying religion at A level, attending day conferences at the

North of England Institute for Christian Education (65 males and 252 females); and 398 adult

churchgoers attending three Anglican and two Pentecostal churches (148 males and 250

females). The consistency of the data drawn from these three diverse samples led to two main

conclusions.

First, the data demonstrated the widely different images of Jesus held within these

three very different groups of people. While more of the participants image Jesus as the

extravert who is lively, talkative, and at home in parties and social gatherings, a significant

number image Jesus as the introvert who tends to keep in the background on social occasions

and is mostly quiet when with other people. While more of the participants image Jesus as the

stable individual who does not often feel fed-up or suffer from 'nerves', a significant number

image Jesus as the neurotic individual whose mood often goes up and down and who worries

about things. Some of the participants image Jesus as the tenderminded individual, scoring

low on the psychoticism scale, who would prefer to follow society's rules than go his own

way. Others of the participants image Jesus as the toughminded individual, scoring high on

the psychoticism scale, who would prefer to go his own way rather than act by the rules.

Second, the data demonstrated that there is a tendency for people to hold an image of

Jesus after their own self-image. In all three samples self-location on the psychoticism scale

is a significant predictor of the location of their image of Jesus on the same dimension of

personality, although this self-location remains largely irrelevant in predicting their image of

Jesus on the extraversion and neuroticism scales. In other words, a tenderminded individual is

more likely to image Jesus with tenderminded qualities, while a toughminded individual is more likely to image Jesus with toughminded qualities. In all three samples, self-location on the neuroticism scale is a significant predictor of the location of their image of Jesus on the same dimension of personality, although this self-location remains largely irrelevant in predicting their image of Jesus on the extraversion and psychoticism scales. For example, a stable individual is more likely to image Jesus with stable qualities, while a neurotic individual is more likely to image Jesus with neurotic qualities. In two of the three samples, self-location on the extraversion scale is a significant predictor of the location of their image of Jesus on the same dimension of personality, although this self-location remains irrelevant in predicting their image of Jesus on the neuroticism and psychoticism scales. That is, an extraverted individual is more likely to image Jesus with extraverted qualities, while an introverted individual is more likely to image Jesus with introverted qualities.

A second approach has rooted the quest for the psychological Jesus within the Big Five Factor model of personality as operationalised by the Revised NEO Personality Inventory and the NEO Five-Factor Inventory, both of which are documents by Costa and McCrae (1992). The Big Five Factor model proposed that individual differences can be most adequately and economically summarised in terms of the five factors styled as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In their professional manual, Costa and McCrae (1992) define each of the Big Five Factors in terms of six facets. Neuroticism comprises anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. Extraversion comprises warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions. Openness to experience comprises fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values. Agreeableness comprises trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tendermindedness.

Conscientiousness comprises competence, order, dutifulness, achievement-striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.

Working with the Big Five Factor model of personality, Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi (1997) invited participants to complete the 60-item NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992) to assess their own personality profile together with the Adjective Checklist (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983) to assess their personality profile of Jesus. They employed the extraction of the five-factor model from the 300-item adjective check list as proposed by John (1990). Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi (1997) employed data from a convenience sample of 115 undergraduates, students on adult education courses, and the wider population (38 males and 77 females). They drew two conclusions from these data. First, Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi (1997) reported that the personality profile of Jesus reflected:

> an emotionally stable, confident, peaceful individual who maintains a compassionate, straightforward, tender orientation toward others. Secure and self-satisfied on the inside, he was perceived to be soft-hearted, forgiving, altruistic, and good natured in his relations with others. (p. 368)

This Jesus received high scores on agreeableness and low scores on neuroticism. Second, Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi (1997) reported that, with the exception of agreeableness, self-rated perceptions of personality are significantly associated with perceptions of Jesus' personality. In a subsequent paper, Ciarrocchi, Piedmont, and Williams (1998) drew on the same data with a slightly different presentation of the analyses, but without changing the substance of the findings.

Building on the research reported by Piedmont, Williams, and Carrocchi (1997) and by Carrocchi, Piedmont, and Williams (1998), Strawn and Alexander (2008) employed two forms of the 240-item Revised NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992): Form S

designed for self-report, and Form R designed for observer settings. Their sample consisted

of 241 participants, comprising 153 undergraduate students, 23 Protestant pastors, and 55

Protestant laity. For the entire population there were significant correlations between ratings

for self and ratings for Jesus on four of the five big factors: neuroticism, extraversion,

agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

A third approach has rooted the quest for the psychological Jesus within the model of

psychological type theory developed from Jung (1971) and operationalised by the Keirsey

Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978), the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers &

McCaulley, 1985), and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005; Francis,

Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). In its operationalised form psychological type theory

distinguishes between two orientations or sources of energy, two perceiving functions or

ways of accessing information, two judging functions or ways of evaluating information, and

two attitudes toward or ways of engaging with the external world.

The two modes in which the energy orientations are recognised have been styled

extraversion and introversion. Those who prefer extraversion tend to be energised by

engagement with others. Those who prefer introversion tend to be energised by solitude and

inner reflection. The two modes in which the perceiving process operates have been styled

sensing and intuition. Those who prefer sensing tend to build their picture of the world by

paying close attention to detail and to facts. Those who prefer intuition tend to build their

picture of the world by giving priority to the bigger vision and to theories. The two modes in

which the evaluating or judging process operates have been styled thinking and feeling.

Those who prefer thinking tend to evaluate situations on the basis of objective logic. Those

who prefer feeling tend to evaluate situations on the basis of subjective values. The two

attitudes toward the external world have been styled judging and perceiving. Those who

prefer judging employ their preferred judging function (either thinking or feeling) to operate

in the external world, with the consequence that their external world is well structured and organised. Those who prefer perceiving employ their preferred perceiving function (either sensing or intuition) to operate in the external world, with the consequence that their external world is flexible and spontaneous.

Working with the model of psychological type theory, Howell (2004) invited participants to complete the online version of the Keirsey Temperament Sorter II (Keirsey, 1998), answering the questions as they believe Jesus would answer them. Some of the participants had also completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1998) to record their own psychological type profile. For this study, Howell employed data from 79 students (27 males and 52 females) who provided their perception of the profile of Jesus, of whom 35 had also provided their own profile. Howell drew two main conclusions from these data.

First, in terms of establishing the psychological type profile of Jesus, Howell (2004) reported that 97% of the participants saw Jesus as an extravert, and that 87% saw Jesus as a feeling type. There was less clarity among the participants as to whether Jesus was seen as an intuitive type or as a sensing type, and as to whether Jesus was seen as a judging type or as a perceiving type. In terms of the 16 complete types, approximately 25% of the participants perceived Jesus as an ESFJ, approximately 22% perceived Jesus as an ENFP, approximately 20% perceived Jesus as an ENFJ, and approximately 18% perceived Jesus as an ESFP. Second, in terms of the connection between the participants own psychological type profile and their perception of Jesus' psychological type profile, Howell (2004) reported that sensing type participants were more likely to see Jesus as a sensing type, and intuitive type participants were more likely to see Jesus as an intuitive type.

Evaluating the three models of personality

By drawing on the three different models of personality proposed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975), Costa and McCrae (1985), and measures of psychological type theory (Myers &

McCaulley, 1985), the four diverse sets of data that have initiated and established the quest

for psychological Jesus (Francis & Astley, 1997; Piedmont, Williams, & Ciarrocchi, 1997;

Strawn & Alexander, 2008; Howell, 2004) all support the basic thesis that there is a

significant connection between self-rated perceptions of personality and perceptions of Jesus'

personality. Moreover, setting studies employing these three models of personality side-by-

side provides the opportunity to assess which of these models may best advance the quest for

the psychological Jesus within broader concerns of Christian scholarship. Three

considerations suggest the distinctive advantage of rooting further research within the

tradition of psychological type theory.

First, Lloyd (2015) demonstrates clearly how the components of personality mapped

by psychological type theory are not value-laden. By contrast he argues that one pole of each

of the five factors proposed by the five factor model is shaped as a socially desirable quality.

High scoring openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness are reflected in low scorers

being characterised by deficiency in essential social skills, displaying undesirable personality

characteristics. High scoring neuroticism is also positioned as an undesirable personality

characteristic. By implications on the extraversion factor, introversion emerges as the lack of

extraversion. Similarly, within the three dimensional model of personality two of the three

dimensions are shaped, not only as socially undesirable qualities, but also as pathologies.

High scoring neuroticism and high scoring psychoticism are mapping precursors of neurotic

and psychotic disorders. On the other hand, within psychological type theory, the contrasting

types remain value neutral. No superiority is implied between introversion and extraversion,

between sensing and intuition, between thinking and feeling, or between judging and

perceiving. In rating Jesus, participants would be assessing neither the perceived social

desirability of Jesus' personality, nor the incipient pathologies within Jesus' personality.

Second, Francis and Village (2008) offer a similar critique to that proposed by Lloyd (2015), but rooted in a different approach. Drawing on the classic Christian doctrines of creation, fall and redemption, Francis and Village (2008) propose a theology of individual differences that makes a strong distinction between character and personality. Character, they argue, carries moral connotations: character can be rooted in the fall and transformed by redemption. Personality, on the other hand, may be rooted in creation and aligned with features like gender and ethnicity. For Francis and Village (2008), the view that the components of psychological type theory are value neutral aligns this model with the view of personality proposed by their theology of individual differences. In rating Jesus, participants would be rating Jesus' personality, not his character.

Third, psychological type theory has emerged prominently in the fields of clergy studies and congregation studies. For example, Payne, Lewis, and Francis (2021) draw attention to 26 studies published between 2009 and 2020 on the psychological type profile of different groups of church leaders, and to 10 studies on the psychological type profile of church congregations. It is these studies about variations in the profile of church leaders and church congregations that may provide richer contextualisation for locating the quest for the psychological Jesus.

Although there is a clear case for preferring the model of personality proposed by psychological type theory, there also needs to be an acknowledgement of broader arguments against this approach. These arguments concentrate on the derivation of the approach from Jungian theory, on the model of binary preferences rather than continua, and on the disputed quality of measures of psychological type. These issues have been discussed in a variety of places, including Francis (2005, pp. 88-95), Francis and Jones (1999), Francis, Robbins, and Craig (2007), and Lloyd (2007, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2022).

Research question

Against this background, the aim of the of the present study is to build on the work of Howell (2004) by adopting the framework of psychological type theory in order to advance the quest for the psychological Jesus, and to do so by inviting participants to complete the same measure of psychological type on two occasions: once to report their own psychological type profile and once to report their assessment of the psychological type profile of Jesus. Two theses were being tested by this study. The first thesis is that there will be a set of significant correlations between the participants own psychological type profile and the psychological type profile that they attribute to Jesus. The way to operationalise this thesis is by employing the continuous scale scores that underpin the allocation to discrete psychological types. It is hypothesised that significant correlations will emerge between the two versions (self and Jesus) of the four scales (introversion – extraversion, sensing – intuition, thinking – feeling, and judging – perceiving). The second thesis is that, following the findings from Howell (2004), the most prevalent psychological type profile of Jesus will emerge as ESFJ. In particular a higher proportion of participants will profile Jesus as an extravert than profile themselves as an extravert, and a higher proportion of participants will profile Jesus as a feeling type than profile themselves as a feeling type. The opportunity to test these theses arose in the context of a series of seminars conducted in three Pentecostal churches and a Pentecostal Bible College.

Method

Procedure

The *Your Image of Jesus Project* was conducted in the context of six educational events: three seminars within Pentecostal churches and three seminars within a Pentecostal Bible College. Participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous.

Measures

Psychological type preferences were assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). 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). Recent studies have demonstrated that this instrument functions well in church-related contexts. For example, Francis, Craig, and Hall (2008) reported alpha coefficients of .83 for the EI scale, .76 for the SN scale, .73 for the TF scale, and .79 for the JP scale. On the first presentation of this instrument, the participants were given the following instructions:

> Each of us carries in our mind our preferred image of Jesus, based on our reading of the Gospels and on our personal experiences. The following questions are designed to help us reflect on our image of Jesus. The way you answer these questions is personal to you. For each pair tick (✓) ONE box next to that characteristic which is *closer* to your image of Jesus, even if you feel that both characteristics apply to Jesus from time to time.

On the second presentation of this instrument, the participants were given a different set of instructions.

> Please ensure you have finished part one first. The following list contains pairs of characteristics. For each pair tick (✓) ONE box *next to that characteristic which is closer to the* real you, even if you feel both characteristics apply to you. Tick the characteristic that reflects the real you, even if people see you differently.

Participants

The two presentations of the Francis Psychological Type Scales were completed by 192 participants: 83 from the churches and 109 from the college. The participants comprised: 81

males, 108 females, and 3 who preferred not to disclose their sex; 15 people under the age of

twenty, 57 in their twenties, 38 in their thirties, 40 in their forties, 27 in their fifties, 9 in their

sixties, 3 in their seventies, and 3 who preferred not to disclose their age.

Analysis

The research literature concerning the empirical investigation of 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 adopted in the following presentation

in order to integrate these new data within the established literature and to provide all the

detail necessary for secondary analysis and further interpretation within the rich theoretical

framework afforded by psychological type. Type tables have been designed to provide

information about the sixteen discrete psychological types, about the four dichotomous

preferences, about the six sets of pairs and temperaments, about the dominant types, and

about the introverted and extraverted Jungian types. Commentary on these tables will,

however, be restricted to those aspects of the data strictly relevant to the research question. In

the context of type tables, the statistical significance of the difference between two groups is

established by means of the selection ratio index (I), an extension of chi-square (McCaulley,

1985).

Results and discussion

- insert table 1 about here -

The first step in data analysis concerned exploring the psychological type profile of the 192

participants in the project. These data are presented in table 1. The key findings from these

data demonstrate that there was a clear balance between extraverts (51%) and introverts

(50%) and almost a clear balance between thinking types (52%) and feeling types (48%) on

the judging process. On the perceiving process there were more sensing types (69%),

compared with intuitive types (31%). On the attitudes toward the external world there were more judging types (82%), compared with perceiving types (18%).

The profile of the participants can be helpfully contextualised against the population norms for the UK published by Kendall (1998). In the present study 51% reported as extraverts, compared with 52% in the population; 52% reported as thinking types, compared with 46% in the population; 31% reported as intuitive types, compared with 24% in the population; 82% reported as judging types, compared with 58% in the population. The profile among a group of Pentecostal participants is consistent with the wider variability found among different Christian groups as demonstrated, for example, among Assemblies of God Bible College students (Kay, Francis, & Craig, 2008; Kay & Francis, 2008), the Newfrontiers network of churches (Francis, Robbins, & Ryland, 2012), and Anglican churchgoers (Francis, Robbins, & Craig, 2011).

- insert table 2 about here -

The second step in data analysis concerned exploring the psychological type profile attributed to Jesus by the 192 participants. These data are presented in table 2. The key findings from these data demonstrate that there is strong consensus among the participants to conceptualise Jesus as preferring extraversion (84%), sensing (66%), feeling (67%), and judging (92%). The consequence of these clear choices on the four dichotomous preferences is that the most frequently identified complete type for Jesus emerges as ESFJ (35%). ESFJ was also the profile most frequently identified by 25% of the 79 participants in the earlier study reported by Howell (2004). In her *Introduction to type*, Myers (2000, p. 13) describes the profile of ESFJs in the following terms:

> Warm-hearted, conscientious, and cooperative. Want harmony in their environment, work with determination to establish it. Like to work with others to complete tasks accurately and on time. Loyal, follow through even in small matters. Notice what

others need in their day-to-day lives and try to provide it. Want to be appreciated for

who they are and for what they contribute.

Table 2 also tests the statistical significance of the differences between the overall

profile of the participants and their image of Jesus. They see Jesus as significantly more

extraverted than themselves (84% compared with 51%), significantly more inclined toward

feeling than themselves (67% compared with 48%), and significantly more inclined toward

judging than themselves (92% compared with 82%). On the other hand, they position Jesus as

occupying the same place as themselves on the perceiving process: 69% of the participants

prefer sensing, and 66% deem Jesus to prefer sensing. If Jesus were to join their church or

college they may feel unsettled by his extraverted energy and by his strong commitment to

harmony and to peace.

Another way to nuance the image of Jesus nurtured by these participants is to chart

their percentage endorsement of four items from the Francis Psychological Type Scales in

respect of the four dichotomous preferences. In terms of Jesus the extravert: 90% imagined

that Jesus would be happier working in groups than working alone; 87% imagined Jesus as

sociable rather than as private; 85% imagined Jesus as liking parties; and 80% imagined Jesus

as being energised by others. In terms of Jesus the sensing type: 91% imagined Jesus as being

down to earth rather than up in the air; 88% imagined Jesus as being more interested in facts

than in theories; 79% imagined Jesus as preferring to make things rather than design things;

66% imagined Jesus as sensible rather than as imaginative. In terms of Jesus the feeling type:

89% imagined Jesus as trusting rather than as sceptical; 83% imagined Jesus as sympathetic

rather than analytic; 82% imagined Jesus as warm-hearted rather than as fair-minded; and

70% imagined Jesus as gentle rather than as firm. In terms of attitude toward the external

world: 90% imagined Jesus preferring to act on decisions rather than on impulse; 69%

imagined Jesus to like detailed planning; 68% imagined Jesus as systematic rather than

casual; and 62% imagined Jesus as organised rather than spontaneous.

- insert table 3 about here -

The third step in data analysis concerned exploring the association between the

individual participants' psychological type profile and their image of Jesus. These data are

presented in table 3. The key findings from these data demonstrate that participants who

score more highly on extraversion also score Jesus more highly on extraversion. Participants

who score more highly on sensing also score Jesus more highly on sensing. Participants who

score more highly on feeling also score Jesus more highly on feeling. Participants who score

more highly on judging also score Jesus more highly judging. These data also record a

positive association between sensing and judging.

Conclusion

The present paper set out to advance the quest for the psychological Jesus as originally

formulated by (Francis & Astley 1997) in terms of examining the correlations between the

personality profile reported by individuals and the personality profile that they attributed to

Jesus. Francis and Astley (1997) first tested their thesis within the context of the major three

dimensions of personality as proposed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975). Subsequently, the

thesis was tested within the context of the Big Five Factors of personality, as proposed by

Costa and McCrae (1985), by Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi (1997), Ciarrocchi,

Piedmont, and Williams (1998), and Strawn and Alexander (2008). The thesis was also tested

within the context of the model of psychological type theory, as proposed by Jung (1971) and

operationalised and developed by Myers and McCaulley (1985), Keirsey and Bates (1978),

and Francis (2005), by Howell (2004)

Evaluating the insights generated within the context of these three different models,

the model of psychological type theory was deemed to be the most fruitful and adopted for

the present study. A sample of 192 participants, recruited from three seminars in Pentecostal churches and three seminars in a Pentecostal Bible College, completed two versions of the Francis Psychological Type Scale: one version designed to record their own psychological type profile, and one version designed to record their perception of the psychological type profile of Jesus. These data were employed to test two theses.

The first thesis was that the underlying scale scores, used to construct the discrete psychological type categories, would reveal significant correlations between the scores generated to profile the participants' own psychological type and the scores generated to profile their perception of Jesus' psychological type. This thesis was supported by the data. The participants who scored more highly on extraversion also scored Jesus more highly on extraversion. The participants who scored more highly on sensing also scored Jesus more highly on sensing. The participants who scored more highly on feeling also scored Jesus more highly on feeling. The participants who scored more highly on judging also scored Jesus more highly on judging. These findings confirm with greater clarity the basic conclusion drawn from the earlier studies reported by Francis and Astley (1997), Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi (1997), Ciarrocchi, Piedmont, and Williams (1998), Strawn and Alexander (2008), and Howell (2004), that individuals tend to shape an image of Jesus that builds on components of their image of themselves.

The second thesis, grounded on the earlier findings of Howell (2004) was that the most prominent psychological type profile of Jesus would emerge as ESFJ. This thesis was supported by the data, with over one third of the participants profiling Jesus as ESFJ (35%). Conceptualising the idealised Jesus in these terms distances the idealised Jesus from a number of those attempting to relate to him. While 35% of the participants conceptualised Jesus as ESFJ, fewer than half that number (14%) saw themselves in this way. Here are people who may be beginning to feel that they fall short of the religious ideal in whose

footsteps they may wish to walk. Looked at from the perspective of the four dichotomous types, these participants saw Jesus as significantly more extraverted than themselves, significantly more inclined toward feeling than themselves, and significantly more inclined toward judging than themselves.

Uncovering the psychological Jesus in this way through the lens of psychological type theory carries implications both for religious leadership and for congregational life. If Jesus the ESFJ were to provide the role model for religious leadership, it is worth examining the pool from which the Church could draw. According to Kendall (1998) ESFJs account for 6% of the male population and 19% of the female population. According to the study of Anglican clergy reported by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007), ESFJs account for 7% of Anglican clergymen and for 7% of Anglican clergywomen. According to the study of Anglican congregations reported by Francis, Robbins, and Craig (2011), ESFJs account for 11% of male churchgoers and for 25% of female churchgoers. What is clear from these statistics is that ESFJ leadership is a style found more among women than among men. It is a style of leadership characterised by Ross and Francis (2020) as 'the supportive contributor'. It is a style of leadership that works hard to develop peaceful coexistence and to avoid conflicts. When conflict cannot be readily resolved ESFJ leaders suffer dreadfully. It is a style of leadership that is appreciated more by women than by men.

Both the findings from this study and the implications for pastoral leadership are intriguing. There are, however, significant limitations with the present study. The sample size was relatively small (N = 192) and the participants were all drawn from a specific tradition (Pentecostal). These are limitations that can only be addressed by further research that both replicates and extends the present study among a diverse group. At present the scientific quest for the psychological Jesus remains in its infancy.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval was received from the St Mary's Centre Ethics Committee

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Table 1

Type distribution for participants

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences			
ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ	E	$n =$ 97	(50.5%)
$n = 39$	$n = 23$	$n = 7$	$n = 9$	I	$n =$ 95	(49.5%)
(20.3%)	(12.0%)	(3.6%)	(4.7%)			
+++++	+++++	++++	+++++	S	$n =$ 132	(68.8%)
+++++	+++++			N	$n =$ 60	(31.3%)
+++++	++					
+++++				T	$n =$ 100	(52.1%)
				F	$n =$ 92	(47.9%)
				J	$n =$ 158	(82.3%)
				P	$n =$ 34	(17.7%)
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP			
$n = 3$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 4$	**Pairs and Temperaments**		
(1.6%)	(2.6%)	(2.6%)	(2.1%)	IJ	$n =$ 78	(40.6%)
++	+++	+++	++	IP	$n =$ 17	(8.9%)
				EP	$n =$ 17	(8.9%)
				EJ	$n =$ 80	(41.7%)
				ST	$n =$ 69	(35.9%)
				SF	$n =$ 63	(32.8%)
				NF	$n =$ 29	(15.1%)
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP	NT	$n =$ 31	(16.1%)
$n = 1$	$n = 8$	$n = 5$	$n = 3$			
(0.5%)	(4.2%)	(2.6%)	(1.6%)	SJ	$n =$ 115	(59.9%)
+	++++	+++	++	SP	$n =$ 17	(8.9%)
				NP	$n =$ 17	(8.9%)
				NJ	$n =$ 43	(22.4%)
				TJ	$n =$ 89	(46.4%)
				TP	$n =$ 11	(5.7%)
				FP	$n =$ 23	(12.0%)
				FJ	$n =$ 69	(35.9%)
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ			
$n = 26$	$n = 27$	$n = 12$	$n = 15$	IN	$n =$ 25	(13.0%)
(13.5%)	(14.1%)	(6.3%)	(7.8%)	EN	$n =$ 35	(18.2%)
+++++	+++++	+++++	+++++	IS	$n =$ 70	(36.5%)
+++++	+++++	+	+++	ES	$n =$ 62	(32.3%)
++++	++++					
				ET	$n =$ 45	(23.4%)
				EF	$n =$ 52	(27.1%)
				IF	$n =$ 40	(20.8%)
				IT	$n =$ 55	(28.6%)

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types		
	n	%		*n*	%		*n*	%
E-TJ	41	21.4	I-TP	7	3.6	Dt.T	48	25.0
E-FJ	39	20.3	I-FP	10	5.2	Dt.F	49	25.5
ES-P	9	4.7	IS-J	62	32.3	Dt.S	71	37.0
EN-P	8	4.2	IN-J	16	8.3	Dt.N	24	12.5

Note: $N = 192$ (NB: + = 1% of N)

Table 2

Type distribution for images of Jesus, compared with participants

The Sixteen Complete Types

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
$n = 8$	$n = 9$	$n = 5$	$n = 3$
(4.2%)	(4.7%)	(2.6%)	(1.6%)
$I = 0.21^{***}$	$I = 0.39^{**}$	$I = 0.71$	$I = 0.33$
++++	+++++	+++	++

ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
$n = 1$	$n = 0$	$n = 2$	$n = 2$
(0.5%)	(0.0%)	(1.0%)	(1.0%)
$I = 0.33$	$I = 0.00^{*}$	$I = 0.40$	$I = 0.50$
+		+	+

ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
$n = 1$	$n = 3$	$n = 6$	$n = 0$
(0.5%)	(1.6%)	(3.1%)	(0.0%)
$I = 1.00$	$I = 0.38$	$I = 1.20$	$I = 0.00$
+	++	+++	

ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
$n = 36$	$n = 68$	$n = 36$	$n = 12$
(18.8%)	(35.4%)	(18.8%)	(6.3%)
$I = 1.38$	$I = 2.52^{***}$	$I = 3.00^{***}$	$I = 0.80$
+++++	++++++	+++++	+++++
+++++	++++++	+++++	+
+++++	++++++	+++++	
++++	++++++	++++	
	++++++		
	+++++		

Dichotomous Preferences

	n	%	Index
E	$n = 162$	(84.4%)	$I = 1.67^{***}$
I	$n = 30$	(15.6%)	$I = 0.32^{***}$
S	$n = 126$	(65.6%)	$I = 0.95$
N	$n = 66$	(34.4%)	$I = 1.10$
T	$n = 63$	(32.8%)	$I = 0.63^{***}$
F	$n = 129$	(67.2%)	$I = 1.40^{***}$
J	$n = 177$	(92.2%)	$I = 1.12^{**}$
P	$n = 15$	(7.8%)	$I = 0.44^{**}$

Pairs and Temperaments

	n	%	Index
IJ	$n = 25$	(13.0%)	$I = 0.32^{***}$
IP	$n = 5$	(2.6%)	$I = 0.29^{**}$
EP	$n = 10$	(5.2%)	$I = 0.59$
EJ	$n = 152$	(79.2%)	$I = 1.90^{***}$
ST	$n = 46$	(24.0%)	$I = 0.67^{**}$
SF	$n = 80$	(41.7%)	$I = 1.27$
NF	$n = 49$	(25.5%)	$I = 1.69^{**}$
NT	$n = 17$	(8.9%)	$I = 0.55^{*}$
SJ	$n = 121$	(63.0%)	$I = 1.05$
SP	$n = 5$	(2.6%)	$I = 0.29^{***}$
NP	$n = 10$	(5.2%)	$I = 0.59$
NJ	$n = 56$	(29.2%)	$I = 1.30$
TJ	$n = 59$	(30.7%)	$I = 0.66^{**}$
TP	$n = 4$	(2.1%)	$I = 0.36$
FP	$n = 11$	(5.7%)	$I = 0.48^{*}$
FJ	$n = 118$	(61.5%)	$I = 1.71^{***}$
IN	$n = 12$	(6.3%)	$I = 0.48^{*}$
EN	$n = 54$	(28.1%)	$I = 1.54^{*}$
IS	$n = 18$	(9.4%)	$I = 0.26^{***}$
ES	$n = 108$	(56.3%)	$I = 1.74^{***}$
ET	$n = 49$	(25.5%)	$I = 1.09$
EF	$n = 113$	(58.9%)	$I = 2.17^{***}$
IF	$n = 16$	(8.3%)	$I = 0.40^{***}$
IT	$n = 14$	(7.3%)	$I = 0.25^{***}$

Jungian Types (E)	n	%	Index	**Jungian Types (I)**	n	%	Index	**Dominant Types**	n	%	Index
E-TJ	48	25.0	1.17	I-TP	3	1.6	0.43	Dt.T	51	26.6	1.06
E-FJ	104	54.2	2.67***	I-FP	2	1.0	0.20*	Dt.F	106	55.2	2.16***
ES-P	4	2.1	0.44	IS-J	17	8.9	0.27***	Dt.S	21	10.9	0.30***
EN-P	6	3.1	0.75	IN-J	8	4.2	0.50	Dt.N	14	7.3	0.58

Note: $N = 192$ (NB: + = 1% of N)

$^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Table 3

Correlations between profile of self and profile of Jesus

	Jesus I	Jesus S	Jesus F	Jesus J
Introversion (I)	.34***	.02	-.11	.00
Sensing (S)	-.07	.35***	.05	.25***
Feeling (F)	-.09	-.13	.34***	-.12
Judging (J)	.09	.29***	-.04	.29***

Note: ***$p < .001$