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Accessing visitor perception of an immersive cathedral experience:

Applying the Jungian lenses of sensing and intuition and Bailey's theory of implicit religion

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Abstract

The SIFT hermeneutical approach, rooted in Jungian psychological type theory, distinguishes between two core cognitive processes: perceiving concerned with gathering information and judging concerned with evaluating information. The present study applies this approach to eliciting and interpreting visitor perceptions of an immersive cathedral installation (a pre-Christmas *son et lumiere*) by focusing on the perceiving lenses of sensing and intuition. Drawing on data from 545 visitors, analysis of qualitative responses to the sensing prompt ‘What details, factors and features of the installation caught your attention and have stayed with you?’ identified six main themes. Analysis of qualitative responses to the intuitive prompt ‘What big ideas, themes, dreams or possibilities inspired your imagination during the installation?’ identified five main themes. These two prompts generated quite different responses, suggesting that a complementary and richer perception of the total experience could be accessed by engaging both the sensing function and the intuitive function.

Keywords: cathedral studies, sensing, intuition, psychological type, *son et lumiere*, visitor studies

Introduction

Psychological type theory, as originally proposed by Jung (1961) and operationalised by and modified by a series of psychometric instruments, including the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS; Keirsey & Bates, 1978), the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI; Myers & McCaulley, 1985) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS; Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017), provides an insightful model of human cognition. At its roots, psychological type theory distinguishes between the two core cognitive processes of perceiving and judging (or evaluating) and proposes that each of these processes is reflected in two contrasting functions. The two perceiving functions are styled sensing and intuition; the two judging functions are styled feeling and thinking. Psychological type theory proposes that optimal human function needs to draw on all four cognitive functions but observes that within each process individuals tend to prefer one of the two functions over the other. As a consequence, the preferred function is deployed and developed while the less preferred function may remain under-deployed and under-developed, residing in the unconscious rather than the conscious personality.

Hermeneutical theory has come to recognise the important part played by psychological type preferences in the ways in which individuals construct their experience and shape their world. Sensing types and intuitive types perceive their world through different lenses. Feeling types and thinking types evaluate this world through different lenses. For example, the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics, as encapsulated by Francis and Village (2008), has foregrounded the role of psychological type preferences within the reader-perspective approach to the interpretation of scripture. The theory underpinning the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics has been validated in a series of empirical studies, in which participants have been assigned to different groups according to their psychological type preferences and invited to explore the same passage of scripture. The behaviours and

conversations within these groups have been carefully documented and analysed, as evidenced in studies reported by Francis (2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2015, 2017), Francis and ap Siôn (2016a, 2016b, 2017) Francis and Jones (2011, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2022), Francis, Jones, and Hebden (2019), Francis, Jones, and Martinson (2019), Francis Jones, and Ross (2020), Francis, McKenna, and Sahin (2018, 2020), Francis and Ross (2018, 2022), Francis and Smith (2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018), Francis, Smith, and Astley (2022a, 2022b), Francis, Smith, and Corio (2018), Francis, Smith, and Evans (2021), Francis, Smith, and Francis-Dehqani (2017, 2018), Francis, Smith, et al. (2023), Francis and Stevenson (2024), Francis, Strathie, and Ross (2019), Jones and Francis (2019, 2024), and Smith and Francis (2016).

Psychological type theory was introduced to the broad field of visitor studies in a group of three papers by Gountas and Gountas (2000, 2001) and Gountas (2003) and then to the specific field of cathedral studies by Francis, Williams, et al. (2008), Francis, Mansfield, et al. (2010a), Francis, Annis, et al. (2012), Francis, Robbins, and Annis (2015) and Francis and Mansfield (2022). The emphasis in this stream of research was in identifying the psychological type profile of individuals attracted to visiting cathedrals.

A second stream of research applying psychological type theory within the context of cathedral studies concentrated on identifying the linkages between the psychological type profile of cathedral visitors and their professed expectations regarding their visit. This stream of research generated the Visitor Expectation Type Scales (VETS; Francis, Mansfield, et al., 2010b) and the Visitor Expectations Type Scales 2.0 (VETS 2.0; Francis, Mansfield, & McKenna, 2021). These studies confirmed the usefulness of psychological type theory for providing a lens through which to view different emphases in the expectations of visitors to cathedrals.

Against this background McKenna, Francis, and Village (2024) initiated a third stream of research applying psychological type theory within the context of cathedral studies. Unlike the previous two streams, this third stream of research was qualitative, not quantitative, in nature and built on the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics. This stream was not designed to identify visitors preferred ways of perceiving and preferred ways of evaluating, but rather to encourage visitors to draw on both their preferred and their less preferred functions. Focusing specifically on the judging process McKenna et al. (2024) encouraged visitors to the 2022 pre-Christmas *son et lumiere* at Liverpool cathedral, *The light before Christmas: The angels are coming*, to evaluate this immersive cathedral experience through the two Jungian lenses of feeling and thinking. The feeling prompt encouraged them to address the question, ‘What most touched your heart?’. The thinking prompt encouraged them to address the question, ‘What big issues were raised in your mind?’. Drawing on data from 978 participants, analysis of the responses to the feeling prompt identified nine themes: valuing being moved by the visual images of the nativity; valuing the Christmas spirit; valuing multi-sensory engagement; valuing the opportunity to light a candle; valuing personal feelings; valuing reflection on family; valuing being moved by the responses of children; valuing the sense of community; and valuing the use of the cathedral space. Analysis of the responses to the thinking prompt identified eight themes: reflecting on the importance and meaning of Christmas; reflecting on shared experience; reflecting on relationships with others; reflecting on consumerism and commercialism; reflecting critically on the Cathedral’s engagement with consumerism; reflecting on religion; reflecting on the big questions of life; and reflecting on the world. These two prompts generated quite different responses, suggesting a complementary and wider evaluation of the total experience.

In a second study, still focusing specifically on the judging process, McKenna and Francis (in press) argued that there were limitations with the two prompts designed to engage

the feeling function and to engage the thinking function in their original study. Both prompts, were quite narrow in the way in which they tried to capture these distinctive functions. In response to this criticism, McKenna and Francis (in press) proposed alternative formulations of these two prompts. The revised prompt to engage the feeling function was, ‘What touched your heart during the installation or connected with your values?’. The revised prompt to engage the thinking function was, ‘What big questions were raised in your mind during the installation or connected with your interests?’. In this second study McKenna and Francis (in press) drew on data from 545 visitors to the 2023 pre-Christmas *son et lumiere* at Liverpool Cathedral, *The light before Christmas: The manger*. Analysis of the responses to the feeling prompt identified ten themes: valuing the affective impact of the installation; valuing the religious impact of the installation; valuing the opportunity to light a candle; valuing the spiritual impact of the installation; valuing the impact of the cathedral space; valuing the sense of community; valuing connections with family and friends; valuing the engagement of children; valuing the outreach ministry of the Cathedral, and valuing the cathedral staff. Analysis of responses to the thinking prompt identified seven themes: analysing and naming negatives; analysing and naming positives; analysing the source of creativity; analysing implications for spiritual formation; analysing implications for personal faith; analysing implications for the meaning of Christmas; and analysing implications for the Cathedral today. Once again, these two prompts generated quite different responses, confirming that a complementary and richer evaluation of the total experience could be accessed by engaging both the feeling function and the thinking function.

Research question

The two studies reported by McKenna et al. (2024) and by McKenna and Francis (in press) both focused on the judging process as core to evaluating the visitor experience. However, the survey completed by visitors to the 2023 *son et lumiere* also included two prompts to

access the two functions of the perceiving process, sensing and intuition. The aim of the present paper is to analyse the responses to these two perceiving prompts.

Method

Procedure

When booking to attend the Christmas 2023 *son et lumiere*, those doing the booking were invited to give assent to receiving a follow-up survey from the cathedral team to assess their experience. 545 of these people submitted survey responses.

Instrument

The survey was hosted on the Qualtrics platform of York St John University. The quantitative survey also included two open-ended invitations to engage the sensing function and to engage the intuition function. The sensing prompt posed the question, ‘What details, factors or features of the installation caught your attention and have stayed with you?’. The intuition prompt posed the question, ‘What big ideas, themes, dreams or possibilities inspired your imagination during the installation?’.

Measure

The quantitative survey included the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005; Francis, Laycock, & Brewster, 2017). This 40-item instrument comprises four sets of ten forced-choice items related to each of the four components of psychological type theory: orientation (extraversion or introversion), perceiving process (sensing or intuition), judging process (thinking or feeling), and attitude toward the outer world (judging or perceiving).

Participants

Among the 545 participants who completed the survey, 22% were male, 78% were female, and one preferred not to say; 12% were under forty, 12% were in their forties, 25% were in their fifties, 33% were in their sixties, 17% were in their seventies, and 2% were aged eighty

or over. Among these 545 participants, 352 responded to the sensing prompt, and 210 responded to the intuition prompt.

Analysis

The written responses to the sensing prompt and the intuition prompt were extracted into separate *Word* documents. Participants voicing similar responses were grouped together. These were then read through to identify the key categories of response in relation to each prompt. Using content analysis (Cohen, et al., 2018; Robson, 1993) these categories were then re-read and revised. They were then shared and discussed between the two co-authors. Emerging themes were identified and illustrated with examples taken from the corresponding categories. Within the sensing category six themes were identified and within the intuition category five themes were identified. To preserve anonymity each participant was assigned a unique number and differentiated by sex (M/F), age, religious affiliation, and psychological type (e.g., INTJ, but where participants did not report their type this is indicated as ???). Participant responses indented and cited at length have been given their full identifier. Others cited within the prose show only their numerical identifier in order to preserve the flow of the text.

Results

Engaging the sensing function

The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the way in which the experience engaged the senses, particularly through eyes and through ears. Eyes captured ‘the incredible lights’ (8), ‘the light over the altar’ (107), ‘the reflections of the windows’ (110), ‘the colours and movement, breath taking’ (166), ‘the light and colours projected on the walls were beautiful and worked so well’ (295), and ‘the colours, the patterns, the images’ (322). Ears captured ‘the beautiful sounds’ (14), ‘the music was haunting, the sound was amazing’ (166), ‘beautiful carols’ (261) and ‘the music of the installation was beautiful and very emotional’

(156). Further analysis of the varied responses to the question, ‘What details, factors and features of the installation caught your attention and have stayed with you?’ identified six main groups of responses characterised as: recalling the details; noting the Christmas narrative; observing the building; describing the immersive impact; describing the personal impact; and describing the experience of candles. Each of these six groups of responses will be reviewed in turn.

Recalling the detail

The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the precise capture of details. One detail captured by a number of participants concerned the use made of images and quotations from Charles Dickens in the installation: ‘the Dickens installation’ (15), ‘the Dickens display’ (16), ‘enjoyed the Charles Dickens theme and in particular the quotations situated in the Well’ (153), ‘loved the Charles Dickens Christmas Carol’ (263), ‘A Christmas Carol was magnificent’ (194), ‘Scrooge installation’ (79). One participant recalled specifically:

Charles Dickens quotes on not dwelling on the past but counting your current blessings and not being sad at leaving someone but look forward to meeting again. (293, Female, 40s, Catholic, ISFJ)

Another detail captured by a number of participants concerned the use made of the Holly and the Ivy theme within one of the ambulatories: ‘the holly and ivy trail beautiful’ (197), ‘the holly and the ivy with the song being sung as we walked through the installation’ (227), ‘the holly installation in the side passage’ (274), ‘I especially enjoyed the holly and the ivy corridor’ (267). One participant recalled specifically:

The side aisle with the music of Holly and the Ivy being played while the graphics appeared to cover the backs of the visitors walking through the 'scene'. (166, Female, 80s+, Anglican, ESFJ)

A third detail captured by a number of participants concerned the use of the final walkway to profile stained glass windows, culminating with a reference to Notre Dame: ‘I

really enjoyed the final walkway displaying Notre Dame window’ (139), ‘I liked the colour everywhere and the nod to Notre Dame at the end’ (143), ‘the stained-glass window installations’ (104), ‘the stained glass windows illuminated on the walls’ (372), ‘the kaleidoscope effect, the stained glass window figures’ (280). One participant recalled specifically:

Beautiful stain glass window pictures and the story of the nativity was amazing right up to the ceiling it was spellbinding. (192, Female, 60s, Anglican, ISTJ)

Noting the Christmas narrative

The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the attention given to the Christmas narrative within the installation. For a number of participants the images of Mary were of particular prominence: ‘I thought the Madonna and Child was beautifully positioned’ (141), ‘I loved the music and the religious images, in particular the Marian imagery’ (247), ‘Angel and Madonna’ (300), ‘Wise Men and Madonna’ (96), ‘the depiction of Mary’ (338), ‘the images of Mary and the angels’ (86), ‘the holy family image’ (220). One participant noted specifically:

The projection on the ceilings were so impressive. The depiction of Mary and baby Jesus were beautiful. (84, Female, 40s, Catholic, ISFJ)

A number of participants noted the wider coverage of the Christmas narrative: ‘the nativity scenes and the carols’ (241), ‘clear images of faces of the Christmas story’ (47), ‘the image of the star, followed by Jesus and Mary, then the Magi on camels’ (68), ‘the angel projections and baby Jesus. It was beautiful’ (125), ‘the large golden angel was stunning’ (253). One participant noted specifically:

The nativity story was particularly beautiful as was the walk around the sides of the space. The ceiling projections were also very magical. (151, Female, 30s, Catholic, ISFJ)

Some of the participants noted in particular how the space of the cathedral was used strategically to unfold the Christmas narrative: ‘loved the Christmas story on the main altar’ (95), ‘the Christmas story over the main altar - beautiful - could have watched it over and over for hours’ (115), ‘amazing the way the lights projected the Christmas story onto the walls and ceiling’ (184). One participant captured the strategy behind these projections:

The images projected in the most appropriate locations, with the most sacred projected in the High Sanctuary. (34, Male, 60s, Anglican, ISFJ)

Observing the building

The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the observations made about Liverpool Cathedral itself in relation to the installation: ‘I know the cathedral well but was still impressed with its immensity’ (5), ‘the use of the huge spaces for projection, combined with sound’ (3), ‘sheer grandeur’ (36), ‘the volume of the space, the acoustics of the space, the details you wouldn't always notice’ (27), ‘it enhanced the vastness of the Cathedral’ (307), ‘how it filled the vast space in the Cathedral’ (276), ‘the feeling of enormity how the lights filled the space’ (147), ‘the sheer size of the projections on the cathedral walls’ (66).

Four participants summed up these observations:

The whole presentation was spectacular and took advantage of the scale and significance of the building. (218, Female, 70s, Anglican, ISFJ)

It made me far more aware of the size and majesty of the actual building, especially the displays above the altar. (208, Female, 70s, Methodist, ISFJ)

I enjoyed the light show enhancing the architecture of the cathedral and the beautiful stained-glass windows. (350, Female, 50s, No religion, ISTJ)

The way the light brought out aspects of the building work and appreciating such a beautiful building in a different way. (226, Female, 30s, No religion, INFP)

Describing the immersive impact

The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the way in which participants described the immense impact of the installation: ‘the hallways with the projections on felt like we were within the story’ (200), ‘the immersive aspect of walking through the installations and being part of the landscape’ (109), ‘the whole experience felt all-encompassing and I felt as if I was part of it’ (57), ‘it was all around so you felt part of it’ (238). Two participants summed up the immersive impact thus:

I enjoyed all aspects - walking through moving lights, the feeling of being inside a kaleidoscope, the lights in the dome in the ceiling. The whole thing was fascinating and stimulated all sorts of sensations. (367, Female, 70s, No religion, ????)

The scope and array of the music and light. I felt enveloped by the show and the spirit of Christmas. It brought a sense of peace and comfort which I find hard to describe. Escapism from the stresses of life. (201, Female, 60s, Anglican, INFJ)

For some participants the immersive experience was enhanced by the beanbags and cushions scattered across the expansive floor of the cathedral: ‘loved the bean bags on the floor allowing many to look up at the ceiling pictures’ (320), ‘lying on the floor and looking at the ceiling in a calm and relaxed manner’ (365), ‘ability to lay on beanbags to enjoy experience’ (21), ‘the cushions on the floor to lie on to admire the lights on the ceiling’ (289). One participant summed up this experience thus:

The lights on the inside of the roof were amazing and being able to lie back on the bean bags provided was an excellent experience. (131, Female, 50s, No religion, ENFJ)

Describing personal impact

The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the way in which participants described the personal impact of the installation: ‘warm welcome, the senses were awakened at every corner’ (26), ‘the magic of the Nativity story was physically and emotionally felt’

(198), ‘an awesome sense of peace as I just stood and watched the colours’ (294). One participant described the experience thus:

The wonderful artistry, beauty and completely immersive nature of the show with the glorious backdrop of the Cathedral building. The range of content from a Christmas Carol, Father Christmas and the story of Christmas which would appeal to all nationalities, ages and religions. The gloriously uplifting music throughout. (284, Female, 70s, Anglican, ESTJ)

Other participants described the personal impact of the other visitors: ‘the happy and smiling faces of people’ (44), ‘people were just enjoying the moment, it gave you a really nice feeling and was uplifting’ (62), ‘even though there were lots of people including small children it felt serene’ (307), ‘how much people, particularly children, were enjoying themselves’ (129), ‘it was so lovely to see families and children happy and comfortable there’ (142), ‘I noticed lots of children present and it was fascinating to see their little faces’ (117).

One participant summed up this observation:

The friendly atmosphere and helpfulness of everyone. The wide age ranges and respectful and thoughtful demeanour of the visitors. (251, Female, 60s, Catholic, ISTJ)

For some participants the personal impact of the experience felt spiritual: ‘the beautiful setting of the cathedral ... made it awe inspiring’ (333), ‘the installation ... helped to make it resonate as a spiritual place’ (347). Two participants summed up their experience thus:

How the lighting made you look at the actual features of the building - its vaulted ceilings and high altar. The gathering together of so many people to experience that space felt spiritual and moving. (154, Female, 60s, Catholic, ENFJ)

I like the way the light show uses the height and size of the cathedral. I enjoy the way the music is used in the light show. The Holly and Ivy lights and music was lovely. I enjoy the telling in lights of the Christmas story. We enjoyed the Dickens and

Christmas Carol lights and the messages that they gave. I find the whole experience quite spiritual and moving. (188, Female, 60s, Anglican, ISFJ)

Describing the experience of candles

The experience of the directed journey through the Cathedral during the light show culminated by emerging from a dimly lit ambulatory into the south-west transept, known as the Baptistry. There the participants were greeted by multiple votive candle stands and the opportunity to light a candle themselves. The distinctive voice of the sensing function was heard in the way in which participants described this aspect of their experience: ‘the numbers of candles lit was beautiful’ (172), ‘the reflection candles were a lovely touch’ (221), ‘loved the nativity story and lighting a candle for my mum’ (287), ‘the prayerfulness of the candle lit area was a beautiful way to conclude the visit’ (251). Two participants summed up this experience of emerging into the Baptistry thus:

Having the opportunity to light a candle for someone we’ve lost. I didn’t expect that, and it was a lovely touch. (339, Female, 50s, Anglican, ????)

It also brought me a lot of peace. I lit a candle for my brother I lost from cancer, that really meant a lot and touched me as he would have loved this. (279, Female, 50s, Catholic, ????)

Engaging the intuitive function

The distinctive voice of the intuitive function was heard in the way in which the experience raised the why and how questions, explored connections, sparked the imagination, provoked wonder, and gave hope for the future. The why and how questions included: ‘why Jesus came to earth’ (96), ‘how it can appeal to all ages’ (223), ‘how clever, inspiring and creative people are’ (177). The connections explored included: ‘relationship between child and mother’ (246), ‘to look upwards to God’s bigger purpose’ (201), ‘echoes of medieval figures to haunt and inspire’ (297). The sparked imagination included; ‘my 7-year-old niece said it was like being in a fairytale and I agreed, magical’ (139). The sense of wonder included: ‘the

wondrous portrayal of the people and stories' (214), 'the wonder of the Christmas story' (163), 'to inspire awe and a feeling of individual insignificance' (236). The sense of hope for the future included: 'the story of Christ's birth still gives us hope for the future' (188), 'the future possibilities of using our magnificent cathedrals' (3), 'a dream of some peace in this world we live in' (240). Further analysis of the responses to the question, 'What big ideas, themes, dreams or possibilities inspired your imagination during the installation?' identified five main groups of responses characterised as: connecting with the religious significance of Christmas; connecting with God or a greater power; connecting with the Christian community; connecting with the needs of self or others; and connecting with a sense of gratitude.

Connecting with the religious significance of Christmas

The distinctive voice of the intuitive function was heard in connecting with the religious significance of Christmas. The installation reminded one participant 'of the importance of Christmas as a religious festival to think about the birth of Christ' (2). It reminded another participant 'that Christmas should be more religious' (146). A third participant recognised that the installation 'helps people without faith or questioning faith to interact with the Christmas Story in a "safe" way' (338). Three further participants reflected more fully on this particular point:

I loved all the projections of the Angels, Mother Mary and baby Jesus and other visual references to the Biblical Christmas story. I feel keeping a Biblical theme is important, both for the time of year and for the architectural context. We were also impressed by the scale of the illuminations. (83, Female, 30s, Christian, ISTJ)

Light appeared to radiate out of the reredos which was inspiring reminding me of the light of the world. The illumination of the central tower like a host of shooting stars as if the star was over Bethlehem. (11, Male, 50s, Anglican, ISTJ)

The stars falling from the high space under the tower reinforced the theme of the light coming down to our darkness - the Advent Hope. (34, Male, 60s, Anglican, ISFJ)

Connecting with God or a greater power

The distinctive voice of the intuitive function was heard in connecting with God or a greater power. For one participant the installation spoke of ‘the greatness of God’ (47), for another it spoke of the ‘grandeur of God’ (163), and for a third participant it spoke of ‘a greater power’ (164). Three further participants spoke more fully about this particular connection:

The idea that God and the Holy Spirit are all around. It is a reminder to look upwards to God’s bigger purpose and a sense of peace. I liked the mix of Christian and secular themes. The featuring of Charles Dickens which connects us to the past and our heritage. The quotes within the display brought hope and comfort. (201, Female, 60s, Anglican, INFJ)

The heavens! The stars on the roof of the tower. The way the beautiful altar is illuminated by the gorgeous lights. It really shows the glory of God. (157, Female, 60s, Catholic, ISTJ)

Dickens Christmas Carol and the Nativity are both about love, love that transforms people ... imagine a world where everything is done from love; for people to know the love of God, steadfast and true. (176, Female, 60s, Catholic, ESFJ)

Other participants preferred to speak about connecting with a more general spiritual experience. One participant reported simply, ‘felt spiritual. I don’t practice any formal religion’ (161), and a second participant said that she ‘loved the vortex of stars during the nativity story. I felt a small part of a large, beautiful story/world’ (151). Another participant said, ‘I enjoy the intense peace ... feeling like a tiny piece of an enormous whole’ (267).

Similar thoughts were expressed by three further participants in the following ways:

I found the installation very moving and emotional. It made me question my beliefs (or lack of beliefs) and made me think more about the spiritual side of the experience. It was very powerful and thought-provoking. (57, Male, 60s, Other, ISFJ)

The size and grandeur were breathtaking. It somehow demonstrated why cathedrals were built on such a huge scale - to inspire awe and a feeling of individual insignificance. (236, Female, 70s, No religion, INTJ)

Light in darkness, weaving of stories, awakening of the senses, childlike awe of greatness. Ancient mysteries and wonder at the turn of the year. Light in a cold, dark world. ... Living seasonally, beyond the material world. The use of colour to evoke feeling. (297, Female, 60s, No religion, INTJ)

For some participants the spiritual experience was enhanced by the Cathedral itself. The following three participants illustrate this perspective:

The enormity of the implications of the Christmas story seemed to be enhanced by the enormity of the building. (86, Female, 70s, Anglican, ESTJ)

The hugeness of the interior is elevating and when colourful art is added it triggers the mystical sensitivity humans have to life. (322, Female, 70s, No religion, ????)

Thinking differently about the space and the fact that such a place of worship welcomed it in. God definitely embraced the event! (310, Female, 50s, Catholic, ISTJ)

Connecting with the Christian community

The distinctive voice of the intuitive function was heard in connecting with the wider Christian community. One participant ‘thought about ideas of the Christian community, and how it can be a force for good’ (298). Another participant imagined ‘the Cathedral as a place for community and mystery’ (211). A third participant observed that the cathedral can ‘appeal to all ages and bring people into the cathedral that may not have been before’ (223). Three further participants expressed their sense of connection in the following ways:

For me, I had this sense of being connected to all that had gone before - right back to the manger and then forward to the more contemporary elements of a modern Christmas. (111, Female, 30s, No religion, INFJ)

Slightly surreal feeling but not in a negative sense. Feeling of walking along new pathways that I had never before encountered. I likened walking with the other people to a kind of pilgrimage. (288, Female, 70s, Anglican, ENFJ)

The whole presentation was so immersive. The colour and sound united all the visitors as one. It made me think that although all those present had come from

various places and backgrounds, during the time we were in the cathedral together, we were all equal, which is God's teaching. My companions and I all felt swept away with the whole experience. (166, Female, 80s+, Anglican, ESFJ)

Connecting with the needs of self and others

The distinctive voice of the intuitive function can be heard in connecting with the needs of self and others. For one participant the installation prompted 'thinking of past and present family and friends' (131). Another participant who 'had a tough past year' was prompted to 'reminisce those that I will miss this Christmas' (25). A third participant observed, 'it made me emotional, always thinking of this time of year, and how I wish my mum could see me thrive right now' (362). One participant was encouraged to think of her grown up children:

I thought of people I love and how blessed I am to be here, safe, well, and feeling so happy. I also was inspired by the beauty to wish my grown children could have this feeling too. (132, Female, 50s, Other, INFP)

For one participant, the installation prompted 'time to reflect and be kind to family and strangers' (207). For another participant the installation 'reminded me of morality and goodness and standards and values' (142). For a third participant the installation:

Made me think of those who will not have much this Christmas, the story of Bob Cratchet and his family, is similar to that of a lot of people these days. (170, Female, 50s, Anglican, ESTJ)

Connecting with a sense of gratitude

The distinctive voice of the intuitive function was heard in connecting with a sense of gratitude. One participant was grateful that 'the historical biblical images gave a reassuring feeling and calming effect' (208). This view was expressed more fully by the following two participants:

The effect of endless patterns and interchanging colours brought me back to the happy, innocent days of my childhood. The simplicity of colour, patterns and their interchanging speeds allows you to just stand and watch and reflect - the bitterness,

violence and dissatisfaction of humans is made to feel so pointless - just enjoy simplicity and be grateful. (294, Female, 70s, Anglican, ISFJ)

I'm aware that the theme of the lights was the nativity, but the Charles Dickens quotes stayed with me more - trying to be thankful for what I have. Lots of angels and stars were also a big theme and these are both joyous and wonderful things that we as humans adore but don't fully understand. (293, Female, 40s, Catholic, ISFJ)

Discussion and Conclusion

Jung's (1971) model of cognitive functioning differentiates between two core cognitive processes: a process concerned with perceiving, and a process concerned with evaluating. In Jung's model each process is expressed through two contrasting functions: perceiving through sensing and intuition, and evaluating through feeling and thinking. In Jung's model sensing and intuition sees the world through different lenses, and feeling and thinking evaluates the world through different lenses. Jung takes the view that, while with maturity and individuation people may be able to draw on all functions, people tend to prefer one function within each process over the other. The SIFT hermeneutical approach, as encapsulated by Francis and Village (2008), takes the view that individuals can be encouraged to draw on their less preferred functions by being invited to address questions that draw these functions into play. By so doing individuals can enrich their perceptions and their evaluations of experience.

The present study and the earlier study reported by McKenna and Francis (in press) were designed to encourage visitors to an immersive cathedral experience to perceive and to evaluate that experience by drawing on all four Jungian functions. The earlier paper has concentrated attention on the evaluating functions of feeling and thinking; the present paper has concentrated attention on the perceiving functions of sensing and intuition. Taken together these two papers have demonstrated the diversity of perspectives that are brought into visibility through these four distinctive lenses.

In the earlier paper, the feeling prompt (What touched your heart during the installation and connected with your values?) brought ten areas of evaluation into visibility: valuing the affective impact of the installation; valuing the religious impact of the installation; valuing the opportunity to light a candle; valuing the spiritual impact of the installation; valuing the impact of the cathedral space; valuing the sense of community; valuing connections with family and friends; valuing the engagement of children; valuing the outreach ministry of the Cathedral, and valuing the cathedral staff. The thinking prompt (What big questions were raised in your mind during the installation or connected with your interests?) brought seven themes into visibility: analysing and naming negatives; analysing and naming positives; analysing the source of creativity; analysing implications for spiritual formation; analysing implications for personal faith; analysing implications for the meaning of Christmas; and analysing implications for the Cathedral today. These two prompts uncovered different aspects of the evaluating process.

In the present paper, the sensing prompt (What details, factors and features of the installation caught your attention and have stayed with you?) brought six aspects of perception into visibility: recalling the details; noting the Christian narrative; observing the building; describing the immersive impact; describing the personal impact; and describing the experience of the candles. The intuition prompt (What big ideas, themes, dreams, or possibilities inspired your imagination during the installation?) brought five aspects of perception into visibility: connecting with the religious significance of Christmas; connecting with God or a greater power; connecting with the Christian community; connecting with the needs of self or others; and connecting with a sense of gratitude. These two prompts uncovered different aspects of the perceiving process.

Two main conclusions can be drawn from these findings. The first conclusion is related to methodology. The present study, together with two earlier studies reported by

McKenna et al. (2024) and McKenna and Francis (in press), have now tested the application of the SIFT hermeneutical approach for eliciting visitor responses to an immersive cathedral experience. In this context the approach has worked and can be commended for further application and development in future projects. The four prompts utilised in the present study in respect of perceiving and in the study by McKenna and Francis (in press) in respect of evaluating, have been found to be adequate for their task. Each has stimulated pertinent and apt responses.

The second conclusion is related to the substantive research question raised by the project, namely assessing visitor responses to the pre-Christmas *son et lumiere*, The light before Christmas: The manger. Installations of this nature have been conceptualised as having potential to meet both the financial and missional objectives of the cathedrals that host them (see McKenna & Francis, in press). For these two objectives to have been met visitors should have enjoyed the experience (and so be motivated to return) and should have experienced the encounter envisaged within the Cathedral's mission statement:

People encounter us in many ways. But in each way, we hope they encounter a warm welcome and sense of God.

The comparative narrative generated by the four Jungian lenses document ways in which this mission statement has been fulfilled. The rich experience derived from this immersive cathedral event is consistent with the theory rooted in Bailey's (1997, 1998) notion of implicit religion as applied to the distinctive environment of cathedrals by Hammond (2007) and McKenna, Francis, and Stewart (2022). On this account, the positioning of innovative events and installations within cathedrals is effective in softening boundaries between sacred and secular and holds capacity to focus attention on matters that are meaningful and germane to human flourishing. Such encounters are of spiritual significance.

Limitations with the present study include the focus on one location and on one event within that location. The conclusions may be relevant more widely within the cathedral sector, but this needs establishing by further research designed to implicate and to extend the present study.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflicts of interest were reported by the authors.

Availability of data

Data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics approval

Ethical approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee for the School of Humanities, Religion and Philosophy at York St John University (approval code: HRP-RS-AV-05-22-01). All participants had to affirm they were 18 or over and give their informed consent by checking a box that gave access to the rest of the survey.

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