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Francis, L.J., McKenna, U., Casson, A., Eccles, E.L. and Stewart, F. (2026) *Drawing on the concept of implicit religion and psychological type theory: shaping a cathedral congregation survey and listening to diverse voices*. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 46 (4). pp. 711-727. ISSN 1361-7672

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Accepted 21/11/25: *Journal of Beliefs & Values*

Drawing on the concept of implicit religion and psychological type theory:

Shaping a cathedral congregation survey and listening to diverse voices

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Abstract

Conceptualising cathedrals as welcoming spaces that soften the boundaries between common ground and sacred space, the present paper tests the thesis that a rich account of participants' experience of a cathedral Sunday Choral Eucharist can be facilitated by intentionally engaging each of the four psychological functions identified by psychological type theory: sensing, intuition, feeling, and thinking (SIFT). Of the 139 participants who completed a quantitative survey during the service in the Anglican cathedral in Liverpool, 81 also addressed the qualitative section that posed four questions designed to access each of the cognitive functions. The sensing function provided rich description, the intuitive function forged links and insights, the feeling function engaged the human heart, and the thinking function analysed the implications and voiced the criticisms. The SIFT approach can be commended for further application in cathedral studies and more widely.

Keywords: implicit religion, psychological type, cathedral studies, qualitative data, congregation studies, knowledge transfer partnership

Introduction

The present study is situated within the broader literatures of the science of cathedral studies (Francis, 2015) and the science of congregation studies (Francis & Lankshear, 2021a). The specific aim is to chart the development and implementation of a survey among participants at the regular Sunday morning Choral Eucharist held in Liverpool Cathedral and to present an analysis of responses to the qualitative component of a survey that combined qualitative and quantitative sections. The introduction sets the scene for this study by discussing three core matters: the conceptual framework within which this family of research conceptualises cathedral studies (Edward Bailey's concept of implicit religion); the methodological framework within which the qualitative data were gathered (psychological type theory); and the distinctive character of the service within which the survey was set (Knowledge Transfer Partnership).

Conceptual framework

The science of cathedral studies has been significantly influenced and shaped by Edward Bailey's concept of implicit religion (see Bailey, 1997, 1998, 2002). The concept of implicit religion was first introduced to the field of cathedral studies by Hammond (2007) focusing on an Italian cathedral and has subsequently been sharpened and refined in a series of studies conducted in cathedrals in England and Wales reported by Francis and colleagues (Francis, McKenna, & Stewart, 2024; McKenna, Francis, & Stewart, 2022, 2023). In essence, the concept of implicit religion helps to explore and to explain the distinctive feature of Anglican cathedrals as they function today within the diverse religious landscape of England and Wales. At a time when Christian affiliation is rapidly declining, as revealed by the religious question within the decadal census (see Francis, 2022), and when Anglican church attendance is also declining (Eames, 2024), cathedrals have emerged as being more resilient than parish

churches. The concept of implicit religion identifies those points at which the boundaries between the sacred and the secular are softened.

The insight from the theory of implicit religion that cathedrals offer specific points at which the boundaries between the sacred and the secular are softened is consistent with the way in which Muskett (2019) privileges the metaphor of Sacred Space and Common Ground to illuminate the distinctive capacity for cathedrals to draw people over the threshold that separates those two worldviews. The threshold seems lower in cathedrals than in parish churches. In their initial study, ‘Anglican cathedrals and implicit religion: Softening the boundaries of sacred space through innovative events and installations’, McKenna, Francis, and Stewart (2022) drew on the conceptual framework offered by implicit religion to illuminate the ways in which eight diverse categories of events are currently drawing people across the thresholds into cathedrals: scientific exhibitions, festivals, musical events, art exhibitions, theatre, markets, community events, and installations. Entering on common ground, participants find themselves coming face-to-face with sacred space. In their second study, ‘The inclusivity of Anglican cathedrals and the coronation of King Charles III: Embracing explicit religion, civic religion, and implicit religion’, McKenna, Francis, and Stewart (2023) distinguished among three different kinds of provision offered by cathedrals to celebrate and commemorate the coronation. These different kinds of provision were designed to attract different constituencies of participants across the threshold into the sacred space. In their third study, ‘Implicit religion, Anglican cathedrals, and spiritual wellbeing: The impact of carol services’, Francis, McKenna, and Stewart (2024) draw on the conceptual framework offered by implicit religion to illuminate the experience reported by people who do not believe in God of attendance at the Christmas Eve carol services in Liverpool Cathedral.

Against this background, the present study extends this conceptual framework to a different constituency, namely participants attending a Sunday morning cathedral Choral Eucharist.

Methodological framework

The science of cathedral studies has been significantly influenced and shaped by psychological type theory as proposed in 1921 by Jung (1971) and developed by a series of instruments designed to operationalise that theory, including 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). This influence has extended both to quantitative and to qualitative studies. In the quantitative tradition, psychological type theory has demonstrated ways in which cathedrals are reaching a more inclusive range of people than reached by parish churches. Studies among church congregations in England (Francis, Robbins, & Craig, 2011) and Australia (Robbins & Francis, 2011) have demonstrated that thinking types are underrepresented in church congregations. However, higher proportions of thinking types are found in cathedral congregations, both on a Sunday morning (Francis & Lankshear, 2021b) and especially at carol services (Francis, Edwards, & ap Siôn, 2021; Francis, Jones, & McKenna, 2020, 2021b; Walker, 2012). Also in the quantitative tradition, psychological type theory has shaped ways in which visitor expectations can be conceptualised and assessed through the development of Visitor Expectations Type Scales (VETs) as discussed and designed by Francis, Mansfield, Williams, and Village (2010) and Francis, Mansfield, and McKenna (2021).

In the qualitative tradition, psychological type theory has been employed to shape prompting and probing questions designed to generate a rich range of responses. This development draws on three core insights offered by psychological type theory into human

cognition. The first insight differentiates between two key psychological processes, styled the perceiving process and the judging process. Perceiving is the process concerned with gathering information, while judging is the process concerned with evaluating information. The second insight posits two contrasting functions through which each process is expressed. Perceiving is expressed through the two functions of sensing and intuition. Judging is expressed through the two functions of thinking and feeling. The third insight posits that, while individuals have access to all four psychological functions, they tend to prefer one perceiving function over the other, and one judging function over the other. In order to encourage people to provide a rich account of their experience, questions are needed to draw all four functions into play, their less preferred functions as well as their preferred functions. Working from this understanding of psychological type theory, Francis and Village (2008) proposed the Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, Thinking (SIFT) method as a systematic way of engaging scripture with each of these cognitive functions in turn. The validity of this approach to biblical hermeneutics has been tested in a series of empirical studies (see Francis, 2010, 2012; Francis, Smith, & Astley, 2022a, 2022b; Jones & Francis, 2024).

The suggestion that specific well-shaped questions could call the four Jungian functions into play and thereby enable visitors to reflect more widely on their experiences of an immersive cathedral experience was tested for the first time by McKenna, Francis, & Village (2024) who turned attention to the qualitative component within Village and Francis' (2024) quantitative survey among visitors to Liverpool Cathedral during the 2022 installation 'The light before Christmas: The angels are coming'. This part of the survey was designed to test whether prompts specifically shaped to engage the distinctive lenses of feeling and thinking would focus and extend the range of evaluative responses elicited from participants. Among the 978 participants responding to the quantitative components of the survey, 398

responded to the feeling prompt, 'What most touched your heart?' and 238 responded to the thinking prompt, 'What big issues were raised in your mind?'

The initial study reported by McKenna, Francis, and Village (2024) was refined and extended the following year to study the responses of visitors to Liverpool Cathedral during the 2023 installation, 'The light before Christmas: The manger'. This time the survey included questions to explore the perceiving process as well as the judging process. In one paper, McKenna and Francis (under review) drew on the responses to the two judging functions. The feeling function was engaged by the prompt, 'What touched your heart during the installation or connected with your values?' The thinking function was engaged by the prompt, 'What big questions were raised in your mind during the installation or connected with your interests?' In a second paper, Francis and McKenna (under review) drew on the responses to the two perceiving functions. The sensing function was engaged by the prompt, 'What details, factors or features of the installation caught your attention and have stayed with you?' The intuitive function was engaged by the prompt, 'What big ideas, themes, dreams or possibilities inspired your imagination during the installation?'

Against this background, the present study applies this methodological approach to a different constituency, namely participants attending a Sunday morning cathedral Choral Eucharist.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme is an established initiative operated by Innovate UK designed to draw together the specific expertise of a university research group and the desired trajectory of a 'business partner'. Principally focused on the profitability of commercial enterprises, working within the natural sciences, KTPs are showing a greater interest in collaborating with the third sector, not-for-profit businesses, 'to tackle strategic innovation challenges to deliver economic, societal, or environmental outcomes' in

association with social sciences and with arts and humanities. In January 2024, Liverpool Cathedral began a three-year KTP in partnership with expertise in the field of cathedral studies nurtured within the World Religions and Education Research Unit at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln. This partnership placed a full-time KTP Associate (employed by the university) within the cathedral structure with the objective of enabling the Cathedral to evaluate and develop the societal impacts of its multifaceted business model (mission) through the creation of an evidence-based pan-organisational collaborative research community. The study reported in the present paper was designed and executed as part of and under the wider oversight of this KTP.

The idea of congregation surveys had already been introduced to Liverpool in the context of 'special services', but had not been previously experienced in the regular Sunday pattern of worship. In terms of special services, surveys had been conducted during 2019 at the Holly Bough service on the evening of Advent Four and at the two carol services on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. In both contexts participants were invited to complete the first part of the survey while waiting for the service to begin and the second part during a dedicated piece of organ music toward the end of the service. Three papers emerged from the data provided by 564 participants at the Holly Bough service (Francis, Jones, McKenna, Pike, & Williams, 2020; Francis & Jones, 2020; Francis, Jones, & McKenna, 2020) and three papers emerged from the data provided by 1,234 participants at the Christmas Eve Carol Services (Francis, Jones, McKenna, Pike, & Williams, 2021; Francis, Jones, & McKenna, 2021a, 2021b).

Against this background, the survey discussed in the present paper was conducted on Sunday 2 March 2025 (Sunday next before Lent) when the Gospel reading was the Lucan account of the Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9: 78-30). The Exploring the Sunday Gospel programme developed by Liverpool Cathedral (see McKenna & Francis, 2024) had invited

members of the congregation to reflect on this passage of scripture during the preceding weekdays and offered the image of 'White Clouds' to focus attention on the passage.

As people entered the Cathedral to attend the service the welcomers handed them a white envelope, containing the survey and a pen, and invited them to participate. In the notices before the service began, the Sub-Dean introduced the survey. The Canon Theologian had been invited to preach that morning and, in so doing, to offer a theological rationale for inviting the congregation to participate in the survey as a reflective exercise. A ten-minute reflective space was provided in the service immediately before the post-communion prayer and blessing, accompanied by reflective music by the cathedral organist.

Research aim

Against this background, the aim of the present paper is to analyse and discuss the qualitative responses to the four open-end questions designed to access in turn each of the four cognitive functions identified by psychological type theory: sensing, intuition, feeling, and thinking.

Method

Procedure

The survey was conducted during the 10.30 Choral Eucharist held in Liverpool Cathedral on Sunday 2 March 2025. A reflective space of ten minutes was provided before the post-communion prayer and blessing for members of the congregation to complete the survey.

Instrument

The survey was presented as a 12-page booklet, divided into four sections. Section one was concerned with demographic profiling, section two with assessing spiritual wellbeing and psychological wellbeing, and section three with psychological type profiling. These quantitative aspects of the survey will be dealt with in a subsequent paper. The present paper is concerned only with part four, the qualitative component of the survey. Drawing on psychological type theory this qualitative component posed four questions to draw into play

each of the four cognitive functions identified by psychological type theory (as discussed in the introduction). The sensing function was drawn into play by the question, ‘What features of the service and cathedral caught your attention today?’. The intuitive function was called into play by the question, ‘What big themes inspired your imagination during the service today?’ The feeling function was brought into play by the question, ‘What touched your heart or connected with your values during the service today?’ The thinking function was brought into play by the question, ‘What big issues or questions were raised in your mind during the service today?’.

Participants

Following the service 139 participants submitted surveys sufficiently completed to be included in the analyses. Of these 81 provided qualitative data, of whom 39 were male, 38 female, and 4 preferred not to say; 12 were under the age of thirty, 9 were in their thirties, 10 in their forties, 9 in their fifties, 14 in their sixties, 22 in their seventies, and 5 were aged eighty or over.

Analysis

The written responses to the four open ended SIFT questions were typed into a Word document. Data were read through twice to identify the key ideas being expressed in relation to each prompt. Participants expressing similar responses in relation to these ideas were then grouped together. These groups of ideas and their corresponding illustrative responses were then re-read and ordered to form the narrative as presented below. To preserve anonymity each participant was assigned a unique number and differentiated by sex and age. In the analysis a citation is supported by sex and age. Responses recorded as ‘other’ or ‘prefer not to say’ are coded as ?

Results and discussion

Sensing

The sensing function was engaged by posing the question, ‘What features of the service and cathedral caught your attention today?’. The sensing function tends to be alert to details and to speak with a powerfully descriptive voice. The sensing function was quick to pick up that there were three aspects of the service on this Sunday that were different from the regular routine. The president presiding at the eucharist was a self-supporting priest who has recently joined the staff team one Sunday a month, the canon theologian was preaching, but not in his normal style, and the idea of freezing the service for ten minutes to facilitate a survey had not been previously introduced to the morning service.

The sensing function spotted and commented on all three innovations. The ‘new’ president attracted the following comments: ‘the new lady as president’ (F, 60-69), ‘the voice of the president, clear and distinctive’. The survey generated both positive and negative observations. One participant observed ‘I found it hard to engage. I was unsure of what the spiritual lesson was’ (M, 30-39). Another participant had been listening carefully to the explanation for conducting the survey and showed appreciation for that:

The survey being introduced to support the cathedral’s effort to apply for funds to help investigate and identify ways to grow and develop to suit the varied congregation that attends. (M, 70-79)

The canon theologian’s general style of preaching is to focus on the Gospel reading and to link the reading with a concrete image. On this Sunday the Gospel was Luke’s account of the transfiguration. The canon theologian introduced the concrete image as ‘white clouds’ and the theme as ‘transfiguration and transformation’. For him the transfiguration was the affirmation of Jesus’ method of an observing and listening approach to empirical theology. Prior to the transfiguration the disciples were working out for themselves who Jesus is, and Peter had voiced that growing consensus ‘You are the Christ’. For the canon theologian this

observing and listening approach to empirical theology grounds in tradition the approach taken by the survey. Not all participants were convinced. One participant noted:

Sermon isn't like being preached to usually, but today was weird, repetitive, about him and the survey. I want to reflect on readings like we normally do. (F, 50-59)

Other participants saw things differently: one wrote, 'the sermon was challenging and thought provoking' (F, 70-79); another wrote:

I enjoyed the sermon – liked transformation through encounter theme. Found repetition engaging. I enjoyed the encounter of communion. (F, 40-49)

Other participants seemed to agree and commented on 'the scientific approach to theology' (F, 40-49), 'hearing about the research activities at the cathedral' (M, 40-49), and 'the address gives me hope' (?, 70-79).

The sensing function allowed participants to comment on the usual experience of worshipping in the cathedral as well as on the specifics of the day. The music generated a series of accolades: 'the uplifting music' (F, 70-79), 'the choir and the music are spectacular' (M, 60-69), 'the music – the Brahms motet and the hymn 'Let us build a house'' (M, 80+), 'the wonderful choir with its super harmonies. The talented organists' (M, 60-69), 'excellent music and liturgy' (F, 70-79), 'the music gives me peace (?, 70-79), 'loved the arrangement of the Kyrie' (F, 60-69).

The care taken with flowers resonated with some: 'I very much appreciated the floral display under the altar, knowing that flowers will then be removed for Lent' (F, 60-69). The practice of a meditative period after the sermon was noted: 'the moment of quiet after the sermon' (F, 70-79) and 'time for reflection' (F, 60-69). The general visibility of both men and women in leadership was noted:

The main thing is, as a Catholic, I like to see women play a significant part. It reminds me of how St Paul and Priscilla worked together. (M, 70-79)

The general visibility of diversity within the congregation attending the service was also noted:

Just the wide variety of congregation that attends the eucharist service – such a mixture drawn to worship in and/or perhaps just to observe and experience the cathedral. (M, 70-79)

The sensing function allowed participants to give voice to their own spiritual journey and intersection with the cathedral in ways that they may not have found the opportunity or the volition to voice in person to a member of the Cathedral staff. One participant reported:

My sister died yesterday in New Zealand. After a long service the Gospel mentioning the white cloud was lovely and the prayers of intercession mentioned people's struggles with grief, people about to pass away and the departed. (F, 60-69)

For this participant the concrete image of the white cloud clearly resonated with the Māori *Aotearoa* 'the long white cloud'.

The sensing function allowed participants to describe aspects of the Cathedral that they found to their liking. One participant wrote, 'I particularly like the Friday lunchtime service because it is BCP' (F, 60-69). Another wrote that what had caught her attention was the processional cross:

The procession of the cross with a wooden simple cross. It reflects on the humility of Christ and his earthly family of carpentry. (M, 40-49)

The sensing function also allowed participants to describe aspects of the cathedral that they found not to their liking. One participant focused on the entrance to the cathedral:

I still miss the central metal railing on the entrance steps outside. They've been gone a long while. They have required repair/renovation for even longer. I was hoping they'd have been re-established by now. (F, 60-69)

Another participant expressed her dislike for the altar frontal:

The hideous modern green altar frontal. The cathedral has a fabulous collection, why do we have to look at the hideous '70s/80s' stuff? (M, 40-49)

Intuition

The intuitive function was engaged by posing the question, 'What big themes inspired your imagination during the service today? The intuitive function tends to be alert to the connections between disparate ideas and to future possibilities. This tendency was exemplified by the participant who connected themes suggested by the hymns and by the readings concerning Moses coming face-to-face with God and Jesus on the mount of transfiguration:

Some of the hymns focus on grace and peace. I think grace was in my mind from the first hymn which I have sung since childhood assemblies. The readings that focus on a veil to hide the face of one who looks upon the face of God provides a very vivid image and one which I feel needs more explanation. (F, 60-69)

The way in which the sermon connected themes of transfiguration, transformation, and encounter seemed to encourage the intuitive function to explore these connections further. One participant was particularly interested in pressing the notion of transformation:

Transformation for certain. As all souls move towards their revelation, changes occur and what was important fades into insignificance (M, 70-79)

Another participant was inspired by the 'importance of transformation, transfiguration (? , 30-39), while another wanted to link further ideas into this sequence: 'You talk of cathedrals as a place of encounter. It is also a place of reassurance and comfort' (M, 50-59). One participant was inspired by 'the intriguing paradoxes of hiding both glory and shame, of plainly speaking truth and also keeping silence' (F, 60-69).

A couple of other themes from the sermon also caught the imagination of participants. The theme of empirical theology caused one participant to speculate further about the connection between science and religion. His imagination was caught by:

The religion versus science false dichotomy when talking about the evidence and research in the community. I use this when teaching research methods (positivism/science versus interpretation/belief). (M, 40-49)

The theme of Jesus drawing his disciples into a community of facilitated learning caused one participant to draw connections with contemporary practice:

From the sermon that the disciples in following Jesus were involved in a 'community of facilitated learning'. How can church communities replicate that today? (M, 80+)

Another participant concluded that 'encounter and learning can happen together' (F, 60-69).

The intuitive function also enabled participants to draw links between this service and the recent turmoil in the diocese. The service had begun with the announcement that interim episcopal oversight was now in place. One participant was looking hopefully to the future:

Hearing the news that there is progress in re-establishing the spiritual support of a bishop (or perhaps bishops) back into the diocese and cathedral. Leading to hoping these troubled times will pass and uncertainty removed. (M, 70-79)

Another participant was exploring how the Church could do better in the future:

How will we safeguard against senior church leaders engaging in sexual abuse/harassment? (M, 20-29)

Feeling

The feeling function was engaged by posing the question, 'What touched your heart or connected with your values during the service today?' The feeling function tends to respond to the human narrative and the personal and interpersonal values within or behind the event or experience. The feeling function is alert to such matters. Three responses exemplify this

with particular poignancy, illustrating how some participants were alert to the relational dynamics within the environment. One participant's attention was caught during the Gospel reading:

During the reading of the Gospel catching the sight of, in the congregation, a wonderful daughter and mother partnership across the aisle. They attend perhaps once a month, the daughter being the dedicated, tender carer of her wheelchair bound mother who, her daughter tells us, has limited speech but seems to soak in the spiritual atmosphere this Cathedral creates. Remarkable determination and dedication. And mutual love and trust. It just moves me every time I see them make the effort to attend and take part. (M, 70-79)

One participant's attention was caught during the sermon. What touched her heart was 'the bored choirboys during the sermon – can't they have a break then?' (F, 70-79). Another participant's attention was caught during the period within the service when the signs of peace were being exchanged. What touched his heart was 'The vergger going to share the peace with "Raffy" the dog' (M, 70-79). Raffy, a mature border collie, is a regular attendee alongside his faithful human companion.

Other participants found that their hearts were touched by 'the beauty of the building combined with the choral singing by the girls choir' (F, 70-79), by the readings and the opportunity to reflect on them (F, 60-69), by 'the architecture and music' (M, 30-37), by 'the warmth and feeling of fellowship during the sign of peace and holy communion' (F, 70-79), by 'the clergy spending time with the congregation at the end of the service' (F, 50-59), by 'the communion of similar minded people who need the few hours together praying and commemorating in unison (M, 70-79), by 'the welcome, singing, children playing and the peace signs' (F, 70-79), by 'Grace. Encounter and feeling welcomed both by community and by God' (F, 40-49), and by 'the presence of God/Jesus in holy communion' (M, 70-79).

For other participants there were specific aspects of this particular service that had touched their hearts. One participant found the survey ‘a very good reflective exercise’ (M, 40-49), while another had been touched by the preacher’s image of the white cloud: ‘I have been observing these during the week and reflecting on God’s creation’ (F, 40-49). One participant had been touched by a specific hymn, ‘Praise to the Lord the Almighty’: ‘Hymn 365 is a beautiful hymn, thank you’ (F, 60-69), while another had been touched by the inclusion of ‘a modern hymn’: ‘Two Oaks by Marty Haugen’ (M, 60-69) with the refrain ‘All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place’.

Thinking

The thinking function was engaged by posing the question, ‘What big issues or questions were raised in your mind during the service today?’ The thinking function tends to analyse and to critique the event or experiences. The thinking function is alert to such matters and consequently the sermon may be a critical point of attention for this function. One participant provided a succinct analysis of the argument proposed by the preacher and was left pondering the implications:

Listening to the sermon and wondering what it took to ‘listen’, ‘understand’ and ‘put into practice’ learning by experience and then living a new, changed life - as these Disciples did following Jesus’s footsteps. (M, 70-79)

Another participant raised a critical concern with the preacher’s choice of describing Jesus’ pedagogy as ‘facilitated learning’:

‘Facilitated learning’ I pondered this as I used to be a teacher, twenty years locally and eight years in Cairo. To me ‘facilitated learning’ is simply good teaching. As the former dean, Pete, was recognised here as a good preacher, I think (or like to think) that Jesus would have been happy to be called ‘teacher’ not ‘facilitator’. (F, 60-69)

A third participant took the preacher to task for referring to psychological type theory: 'Psychological types were discussed from the pulpit. Not convinced by them' (F, 40-49).

The thinking function gave voice to various underlying issues that were annoying members of the congregation. The temporary sound system was unsatisfactory to one participant: 'I had difficulty listening to the sermon. The speaker was softly spoken and due to the echo some of his words and expressions were not clearly transmitted' (M, 50-59). The presence of art exhibitions in the cathedral were unacceptable to one participant: 'I find it hard to take worship seriously when art exhibitions are prioritised over everything. Jesus flipped the tables in the temple' (M, 20-29). The positioning of the nave altar and choir was unacceptable to one participant:

Why is God's altar (nave) so bare? Why is the spiritual golden thread which extends from the High Altar to the nave altar broken? (by the choir stalls). (F, 60-69)

Photography during the service was unacceptable to one participant: 'I don't believe photography or filming should be allowed during the service and this should be spelt out to the congregation' (M, 60-69).

Perhaps the most controversial issue identified by the thinking function concerned the car parking arrangements. One participant observed that: 'When I pay for the car park there are many others waiting, who like me, think that regular churchgoers should be exempt' (M, 60-69). A second participant expressed the same concern at greater length:

Much as I love the experience of weekly worship at the Sunday Eucharist, I cannot agree with the decision to require the congregation to pay for parking. It makes me uneasy, sometimes to see elderly/disabled people obliged to queue for parking at the payment stations, especially in cold and wet weather. (F, 70-79)

The thinking function gave voice to underlying concerns within the diocese focused by a recent Channel 5 broadcast and the disruption to episcopal ministry in the diocese. For

one participant questions were raised about ‘the whole Church direction and future considering changing leadership so fast and scandals’ (M, 40-49). For a second participant, ‘the bishop issue makes us lose confidence in church in general and raises many questions’ (M, 60-69). For another participant the question was somewhat wider: ‘How the Church of England leadership can be relevant in the present day and age particularly after what has happened recently’ (M, 30-39).

The thinking function also gave voice to constructive thought and planning for the future of the diocese, cathedral and the Church. One participant put the matter this way:

How we can leverage the power of the Cathedral to make a bigger difference in the city region. How can we continue an inclusive and progressive ministry. (M, 40-49)

Another participant made the same point in a different way: ‘How we can continue to be welcoming, inclusive, help people encounter God’ (F, 70-79).

In a similar way the thinking function gave voice to constructive thoughts and planning for individual participant’s own faith trajectory. Drawing on the sermon, one participant reflected on ‘how interacting with spirituality can make you glow from within and make you want to improve and share the glow with others (F, 50-59). A second participant spoke of the ‘continuous transformation of myself to grow in faith as a child of God’ (F, 40-49). A third participant spoke of ‘navigating difficult times of change, inspiring people to see it as transformational – from one degree of glory to the other’ (F, 60-69). A fourth participant summed up this perspective thus:

‘In the face of Jesus your light shines out flooding lives with goodness and truth gathering into one a divided and broken humanity’. What I wish for our faith. May it be so! (M, 70-79)

Reflecting on the survey, the thinking voice offered the following challenge: ‘I hope action is actually taken from this not just collecting data for nothing’ (M, 20-29). The authors

of the present paper hope that this paper goes some way toward addressing this participant's hope.

Conclusion

Set within the broader context of cathedral studies, informed by the insight of Bailey's concept of implicit religion that conceptualises cathedrals as spaces within which the boundaries between common ground and sacred space are softened, and promoted as an integral part of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership, the present study tested the thesis that a rich account of participants' experience of attending a Sunday Choral Eucharist could be facilitated by framing questions designed to access in turn each part of the four cognitive functions identified by psychological type theory. Overall, the data provided support for this hypothesis.

The question designed to draw the sensing function into play was 'What features of the service and cathedral caught your attention today?' The sensing question resulted in a rich description of the distinctive features of the service: the presence of a 'new' priest whom some had not seen preside before; the experience of a different approach to preaching; the inclusion of a survey within the formal structure of the liturgy. The sensing question resulted in a rich listing of general characteristics of the service: the music, the choir, the organists; the flowers, the meditative period after the sermon, the visibility of men and women in leadership, the diversity evident in the congregation. The sensing question allowed people to describe their own life journey (my sister died yesterday) and to describe what they disliked in the cathedral (the hideous modern green altar frontal).

The question designed to draw the intuitive function into play was 'What big themes inspired your imagination during the service today?' The intuitive question sparked big themes arising from the Gospel reading: themes of transfiguration and transformation, led to discussion of theological ideas like grace and peace, glory and shame, speaking truth and

keeping silence. The intuitive question sparked engagement with themes raised in the sermon: the theme of empirical theology led to discussion of the ‘false dichotomy’ between science and religion; the theme of Jesus drawing his disciples into a community of facilitated learning led to discussion of capturing the approach in today’s church. The intuitive question sparked engagement with the recent turmoil in the diocese and with exploring how the Church could do better in future.

The question designed to draw the feeling function into play was ‘What touched your heart or connected with your values during today’s service?’ The feeling question brought to the fore specific aspects of the total experience that may have escaped the attention of many participants but that had profound impact on those who observed them: the daughter as tender carer of her wheelchair bound mother; and the verger sharing the peace with a border collie alongside his human companion. The feeling question brought to the fore the *impact* of the beauty of the building, the choir, the readings, the sign of peace, the encounter in communion. While the sensing function offered description, the feeling function offered evaluation. The feeling question brought to the fore the *impact* of the choice of hymns (all are welcome), of the survey (a good reflective exercise), and of the preacher’s image of the white cloud (reflecting on God’s creation).

The question designed to draw the thinking function into play was ‘What big issues or questions were raised in your mind during the service today?’ The thinking question brought clear analysis into play: listening to the sermon caused a participant to think about what it took to engage with a looking and listening approach to theology; pondering on the description of Jesus’ pedagogy as facilitated learning caused a participant to argue that Jesus would have preferred to be known as a teacher rather than a facilitator. The thinking question brought clear critique and criticism to the fore: discontent with the sound system; dislike of art exhibitions; disapproval of the positioning of the choir stalls; unacceptability of

photography during the service; and most of all disdain for introducing a parking charge for church attenders. The thinking question also brought positive and constructive thoughts and planning for individual participant's own faith trajectory.

Set within the context of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership, the present study has illustrated two clear outcomes from this partnership between the research group at Bishop Grosseteste University and Liverpool Cathedral. The first outcome is evidence of a core group of participants within the life of the Cathedral beginning to function as a research-engaged and research-active community. Participants involved in one of the key worship events in the regular spiritual life of the Cathedral were growing accustomed to functioning as a research-active community. The second outcome was the generation of material that enabled the Cathedral to hear the voices of these core participants accessed in a rich and systematic way. Alongside having helpful notes of affirmation, the research has also identified notes of criticism, criticism pointing to factors that may both impair participant satisfaction and damage revenue streams. Future studies now need to replicate this survey within the context of other regular Sunday worship events, including the afternoon Choral Evensong and the early evening Catholic Charismatic service.

The limitation with the present study concerns the focus on just one service with qualitative data provided by 81 of the 139 participants who completed the quantitative survey. However, taken alongside the three earlier studies concerned with visitor experience that utilised the same methodological framework (McKenna, Francis, & Village, 2024; Francis & McKenna, under review; McKenna & Francis, under review), all four studies lend weight to the theory that a richer and fuller source of qualitative data can be generated by drawing on the insight from psychological type theory and the wider research associated with the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics (see review in the introduction to this paper).

When individuals are encouraged to bring all four psychological functions into play they access richer veins of perception and evaluation.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflicts of interest were reported by the authors.

Funding

No funding was received.

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 clicking a box that gave access to the rest of the survey.

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