

# Learning relationships: Church of England curates and training incumbents applying the SIFT approach to the Road to Emmaus

**Authors:**

Leslie J. Francis<sup>1,2</sup>  
Greg Smith<sup>1,2</sup>

**Affiliations:**

<sup>1</sup>Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, University of Warwick, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup>Department of New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa

**Research Project Registration:**

**Project Leader:** A.G. van Aarde   
**Project Number:** 2334682

**Description:**

Prof. Dr Leslie Francis and Dr Greg Smith are participating in the research project, 'Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics', directed by Prof. Dr Andries G. van Aarde, Post Retirement Professor in the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria.

**Corresponding author:**

Leslie Francis,  
leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk

**Dates:**

Received: 14 Mar. 2017  
Accepted: 15 Apr. 2017  
Published: 20 June 2017

**How to cite this article:**

Francis, L.J. & Smith, G., 2017, 'Learning relationships: Church of England curates and training incumbents applying the SIFT approach to the Road to Emmaus', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(4), 4546. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4546>

**Read online:**

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

This study invited curates and training incumbents attending a 3-day residential programme to function as a hermeneutical community engaging conversation between the Lucan post-resurrection narrative concerning the Road to Emmaus and the learning relationship in which they were engaged. Building on the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics the participants were invited to work in type-alike groups, structured first on the basis of the perceiving process (sensing and intuition) and second on the basis of the judging process (thinking and feeling). This approach facilitated rich and varied insights into the Emmaus Road narrative and into the theme of learning relationships.

## Introduction

The idea of serving a period of time as a curate before taking on responsibility for sole charge of a parish has a long and established pedigree in the Church of England, consistent with the idea of the transitional diaconate whereby the newly ordained serve for a year or so in the order of deacon before being ordained into the order of priest. Implied in this practice has been the view that the deacon serves under the supervision of a senior priest. More recently the period served as a curate has become much more rigorously integrated into the notion of initial ministerial education and training. Currently initial ministerial development is conceptualised as embracing a 7-year period: years one to three under the tutelage of a training institution and years four to seven under the tutelage of a training incumbent in partnership with a diocesan training officer.

Historically, the phenomenon of the young, male curate fresh out of theological college, with little or no life experience, attached to a successful parish priest, led the Church to think in terms of the relationship between training incumbent and curate as one of apprenticeship (Adams 2002), where the emphasis is on the skill and control of the master with secret knowledge to impart (Lawrence 2004). The two-stage system was founded on the premise that spiritual and academic formation was undertaken in the college arena, while the parish was the place to learn the practical skills of ministry.

As the age of the newly ordained has increased, the newly ordained are bringing to their curacies much greater life experience, and indeed experience of real-life ministry, and consequently the apprenticeship model of the learning relationship has served the Church less and less well. By the publication of *Beginning Public Ministry* (Advisory Board for Ministry 1998), the Church of England began to redefine what it is looking for in its training incumbents, identifying for example that they ought not to be those who are 'merely wanting an assistant' (p. 8). The next attempt to refine expectations, *Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church*, colloquially known as *The Hind Report* (Archbishops' Council 2003) moved further away from the apprenticeship model, envisaging training incumbents who had a 'record of allowing colleagues to develop in different ways from their own' and who had 'demonstrated a collaborative approach' (p. 115).

Thinking has tended to focus on the role of the training incumbent in this new world. Alan Wilson (Lamdin & Tilley 2007:143–149) proposes Stewards, Shepherds, Teachers and Mediators as four possible ways of training incumbents considering their roles but neglects to take the next step in exploring how this affects the dynamic of the relationship with their curates. Scripture is also consistently concerned with learning. Jesus teaches one to one (Jn 21:15–19), in small groups of 2–3 (Mk 9:2–13), in groups of 12 (Mt 13:10–23) and in large crowds (Lk 9:10–11). Paul instructs Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Elijah teaches Elisha. Samuel upbraids King David. Learning interactions abound and a number of different learning relationships may flourish.

**Copyright:** © 2017. The Authors. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

In spite of the potential importance of the training relationship between training incumbents and curates, very little research has been invested in examining the relationship. One recent innovative study in this area has been reported by Tilley et al. (2011), building on work initially reported by Tilley (2006). Tilley conceptualised the training relationship within a conceptual framework proposed by psychological type theory.

## Psychological type theory

Psychological type theory as introduced originally by Jung (1971) and as developed through a series of self-report type measures, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley 1985), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates 1978) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis 2005), proposes four fundamental individual differences distinguishing between two orientations (introversion and extraversion), two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition), two judging functions (thinking and feeling) and two attitudes towards the outer world (judging and perceiving). Psychological type discusses individual differences not in terms of traits, dimensions or continuous factors, as employed in the models of personality advanced by Costa and McCrae (1985), by Eysenck and Eysenck (1991) or by Cattell, Cattell and Cattell (1993), but in terms of clearly defined types. Taken together, these four bipolar preferences generate 16 discrete psychological types.

The two orientations are defined as introversion (I) and extraversion (E). Introverts draw their energy from the inner world of ideas, while extraverts draw their energy from the outer world of people and things. Extraverts are energised by people and drained by too much solitude, while introverts are energised by solitude and drained by too many people.

The two perceiving functions (concerned with taking in information) are defined as sensing (S) and intuition (N). Sensing types perceive their environment through their senses and focus on the details of the here and now, while intuitive types perceive their environment by making use of the imagination and inspiration. Sensing types are distrustful of jumping to conclusions and of envisioning the future, while intuitive types are overloaded by too many details and long to try out new approaches.

The two judging functions (concerned with evaluating information) are defined as thinking (T) and feeling (F). Thinking types reach their judgement by relying on objective logic, while feeling types reach their judgements by relying on subjective appreciation of the personal and interpersonal factors involved. Thinking types strive for truth, fairness and justice, while feeling types strive for harmony, peace and reconciliation.

The two attitudes towards the outer world are defined as judging (J) and perceiving (P). Judging types use their preferred judging function (either thinking or feeling) to deal with the outside world. Their outside world is organised, scheduled and planned. Perceiving types use their preferred

perceiving function (either sensing or intuition) to deal with the outside world. Their outside world is flexible, spontaneous and unplanned.

Two studies by Francis and Payne (2002) and Francis and Robbins (2008) employed psychological type theory to conceptualise different approaches that clergy may adopt to ministry and to prayer. In the first of these two studies, Francis and Payne (2002) developed the Payne Index of Ministry Styles (PIMS). To develop this index, Francis and Payne selected eight sets of seven statements from a wider initial pool to operationalise each of the eight functions proposed by psychological type, as illustrated by the following examples: I am energised by meeting new people in the parish (extraversion); I feel energised by giving time to prepare sermons (introversion); I examine the church fabric carefully to ensure that it is kept in order (sensing); I like to think up new ways of doing things in the parish (intuition); I am usually objective in pastoral crises (thinking); Dealing with emotional problems of parishioners I find rewarding (feeling); I prefer to run my parish according to a strict schedule (judging); I enjoy being spontaneous in services (perceiving).

In the second of these two studies, Francis and Robbins (2008) developed the Prayer Preference Index. To develop a set of prayer preference scales, Francis and Robbins selected eight sets of seven statements from a wider initial pool to operationalise each of the eight functions proposed by psychological type theory, as illustrated by the following examples: Belonging to a prayer group energises me (extraversion); I am energised by praying in silence (introversion); My prayer life is enhanced by an awareness of my posture (sensing); My prayer life is enhanced by using my imagination (intuition); My prayer life is shaped in my mind (thinking); My prayer life is shaped in my heart (feeling); I often follow a set pattern of praying (judging); I often pray what comes into my mind at the time (perceiving).

Building on the research tradition illustrated by Francis and Payne (2002) and Francis and Robbins (2008), Tilley et al. (2011) developed the Tilley Index of Training Expectations (TITE). To develop this index Tilley, Francis, Robbins and Jones selected eight sets of 10 statements from a wider pool to operationalise each of the eight functions proposed by psychological type theory, as illustrated by the following examples: My training incumbent expected me easily to form friendships with different people (extraversion); My training incumbent expected me to work well in solitude (introversion); My training incumbent expected me to pay attention to detail (sensing); My training incumbent expected me to be imaginative and speculative (intuition); My training incumbent expected me to enjoy persuading people by arguments (thinking); My training incumbent expected me to value compassion above frankness (feeling); My training incumbent expected me to have things decided and settled in advance (judging); My training incumbent expected me not to be upset by last-minute changes (perceiving).

Tilley et al. (2011) then examined the scores of 98 curates who responded to the eight scales of the TITE alongside the curates' psychological type profile and the profile of their training incumbent. The purpose was to explore whether curates' perception of the expectations placed on them reflected their own psychological type preferences or the psychological type preferences of their training incumbents. The data demonstrated that the ministry expectations placed on curates were significantly related to the psychological type profile of the training incumbents but not to the psychological type profile of the curates themselves. This suggests that training incumbents were more inclined to shape curates in their own image than to develop the curates' own preferred disposition for ministry.

### Psychological type and the training relationship

For some years, some dioceses within the Church of England have drawn on the insights of psychological type theory in their educational programmes for developing the relationship between training incumbents and curates, including, for example, Coventry and Winchester. The programme within the Winchester diocese introduces psychological type theory during a 3-day residential programme 4–5 months into the relationship. The theme is then re-visited 2 years later during a 2-day residential when the curacy is well established. These residential have included workshop sessions designed to experience working in type-alike groups (that tend to affirm and accentuate type preferences) and then to sharing the experiences across type groups. In this way curates and training incumbents working within their cohort can witness and experience the implications of type preferences in different contexts. A recent series of four articles has illustrated the learning outcomes of these workshops.

In the first article, Smith (2015) discusses four workshops employed during one residential training event to explore each of the four dichotomous pairs proposed by psychological type theory. To illustrate differences in the ways in which introverts and extraverts gain and lose energy, the groups of introverts and groups of extraverts were invited to discuss the aspects of ministry that they found draining and the aspects of ministry that they found energising. To explore differences between sensing and intuition, groups of sensing types and groups of intuitive types were invited to discuss a scenario that needed both careful assessment of what is practical and vision for what may be possible. To explore differences between thinking and feeling, training incumbents and curates were invited to work together (irrespective of psychological type preference) and to consider a scenario that involved human judgement affecting individual lives and church structures. To explore differences between judging and perceiving, groups of judging types and groups of perceiving types were invited to consider hosting a Sea Sunday Celebration in their church.

In the second article, Francis and Smith (2016) described an exercise designed to help introverts and extraverts reflect on the experience of ministry. In this workshop curates and

incumbents worked together in pairs to discuss the question, 'What does talk about introversion and extraversion illuminate in the ministry of incumbent and curate in the life of the parish?' The six themes from the perspective of introverts included experiencing and managing tiredness and exhaustion and difficulties experienced dealing with extravert church members. The six themes from the perspective of extraverts included reflection and reflective practice, and engagement with others as a source of inspiration.

In the third article, Smith and Francis (2015) described an exercise designed to engage feeling types and thinking types in appreciating their distinctive preferred ways of evaluating issues, and volunteers from within the group were sought who would be prepared to explore in a small group, in which confidentiality would be privileged, a current real-life ongoing situation from their parish ministry; a problem that involved people in some way – for example not building or financial issues – and was in genuine need of resolution. Care was taken to forewarn prospective volunteers of the task so that there would be a reasonable mix of extraverts and introverts. Each volunteer was placed in a group with four others: three work consultants and one observer. The volunteers were tasked with sharing their situation, taking up to 15 min to describe the difficulties and challenges they faced; the other members of the group were instructed not to speak during this period. Each work consultant, in turn, was then provided with the opportunity to assist the volunteer in taking forward the situation, with questions and advice. Work consultants were explicitly asked neither to attempt a therapeutic intervention nor to interrupt each other, with each input also lasting 15 min. The role of the observer was to keep time and provide feedback in plenary, ensuring that confidentiality was preserved in that feedback.

In the fourth article, Francis and Smith (2015) described an exercise designed to explore the different approaches of judging types and perceiving types to a common task. The common task on this occasion was designing an Advent Fun Day in an educational setting. The different groups behaved true to type. The perceiving types working together enjoyed the exercise and would no doubt have carried on for much longer and potentially imagined brand new schemes. The very act of calling time closed down possibilities. By the time feedback was required, only an outline idea had been identified. In contrast, the judging types working together were evidently mindful of the deadline to which they were working and worked methodically to ensure that the planning was complete by the time of feedback. Although their plan was ostensibly effective, there was little energy or enthusiasm for its implementation.

### Psychological type and biblical hermeneutics

Another insight from psychological type theory, rooted in the reader perspective approach to biblical hermeneutics (Segovia & Talbert 1995a; 1995b), has recognised how both the reading and the proclamation of scripture may be

influenced by psychological type preferences (Francis & Village 2008). This theory has been explored in a series of recent studies that have invited type-alike groups to discuss their interpretation of scripture and then to share their interpretations with each other. The following passages of scripture have been explored in this way: the feeding of the five thousand reported in Mark 6:34–44 (Francis 2010); the resurrection narratives reported in Mark 16:1–8 and Matthew 28:1–15 (Francis & Jones 2011); the cleansing of the Temple and the incident of the fig tree reported in Mark 11:11–21 (Francis 2012a; Francis & ap Siôn 2016b); the Johannine feeding narrative reported in John 6:4–22 (Francis 2012b); the narrative of separating sheep from goats reported in Matthew 25:31–46 (Francis & Smith 2012); the birth narratives reported in Matthew 2:13–20 and Luke 2:8–16 (Francis & Smith 2013); two narratives concerning John the Baptist reported in Mark 1:2–8 and Luke 3:2b–20 (Francis 2013; Francis & Smith 2014); the Johannine feeding narrative reported in John 6:5–15 (Francis & Jones 2014); two passages from Mark exploring different aspects of discipleship reported in Mark 6:7–14 and Mark 6:33–41 (Francis & Jones 2015a); the foot-washing account reported in John 13:2b–15 (Francis 2015); two healing narratives reported in Mark 2:1–12 and Mark 10:46–52 (Francis & Jones 2015b); the narrative of blind Bartimaeus reported in Mark 10:46–52 (Smith & Francis 2016); and the Road to Emmaus narrative in Luke 24:13–35 (Francis & ap Siôn 2016a). More recently this research tradition has also been developed in Poland by Chaim (2013; 2014; 2015).

## Research question

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to invite curates and training incumbents attending a 3-day residential programme to function as a hermeneutical community engaging conversation between the Lucan post-resurrection narrative concerning the Road to Emmaus and the learning relationship in which they were engaged. Building on the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics the curates and training incumbents were invited to work in type-alike groups, structured first on the basis of the perceiving process (sensing and intuition) and second on the basis of the judging process (thinking and feeling). It was hypothesised that sensing types and intuitive types would perceive the training relationship differently, and that thinking types and feeling types would evaluate the training relationship differently.

## Method

### Procedure

In the context of a residential programme for curates and training incumbents, participants were given the opportunity to take part in workshops designed to provide an experience of studying scripture in type-alike groups. In the first workshop groups were constituted according to preferences on the perceiving process, distinguishing between sensing and intuition. In the second workshop groups were constituted according to preferences on the judging process, distinguishing between feeling and thinking.

## Measure

Psychological type was assessed by Form G (Anglicised) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley 1985). This 126-item instrument uses a forced-choice format to indicate preferences for introversion and extraversion (the two orientations), between sensing and intuition (the two perceiving functions), between thinking and feeling (the two judging functions) and between judging and perceiving (the two attitudes to the outside world). Preference between the two orientations is assessed by questions like: Do you: (1) talk easily to almost anyone for as long as you have to (extraversion) or (2) find a lot to say only to certain people or under certain conditions (introversion)? Preference between the two perceiving functions is assessed by questions like: Do you usually get along better with: (1) imaginative people (intuition) or (2) realistic people (sensing)? Preference between the two judging functions is assessed by questions like: Do you usually: (1) value sentiment more than logic (feeling) or (2) value logic more than sentiment (thinking)? Preference between the two attitudes to the outer world is assessed by questions like: Do you prefer to: (1) arrange dates, parties, etc. well in advance (judging) or (2) be free to do whatever feels like fun when the time comes (perceiving)? Francis and Jones (1999) provided broad support for the reliability and validity of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator within a church-related context. Francis et al. (2007) reported the following alpha coefficients in a study among 863 Anglican clergy: introversion .79, extraversion .80, intuition .82, sensing .87, feeling .72, thinking .79, perceiving .86 and judging .85.

## Participants

The workshops were attended by 11 participants: 5 curates, 5 training incumbents and 1 diocesan officer, 7 men and 4 women. There were 6 introverts and 5 extraverts, 8 intuitive types and 3 sensing types, 6 feeling types and 5 thinking types, and 7 judging types and 4 perceiving types.

## Analysis

Each of the two workshops divided the participants into three groups: in the first case distinguishing between higher-scoring intuitive types, lower-scoring intuitive types and sensing types; in the second case distinguishing between higher-scoring feeling types, lower-scoring feeling types together with lower-scoring thinking types and higher-scoring thinking types. In each case the middle group was not observed, but the two authors attended the other two groups as non-participant observers who were given permission to note the details of the discussion. The Results section of this article presents a summary of the notes taken in this context.

## Results

### Employing the perceiving function (Lk 24: 13–24)

For the first workshop the participants were divided into three groups according to their preferences on the perceiving

process: four high-scoring intuitive types (43, 41, 41, 35), four low-scoring intuitive types (27, 25, 15, 3) and three sensing types (31, 7, 3). They were invited to read the first part of the Emmaus narrative (Lk 24:13–24) and to address the following question:

For now focus on just this first part of the narrative, and on what has gone before in Luke's narrative. Engage your preferred perceiving function (sensing *or* intuition) to examine and to explore what you see in the passage about learning relationships.

### Sensing

The group of sensing types comprised three participants (two men and one woman) together with the observer. The group of sensors adhered to the instructions they had been given and read first the passage and then the task aloud. Having done so, they deconstructed the question. They found the phrase 'what has gone before in Luke's narrative' insufficiently precise, wondering whether this referenced the earlier part of Luke 24, the Passion or the entirety of Luke's Gospel. In the event, the group made little reference to anything that was not immediately before them in the text. Their next critique of the question concerned the term 'learning relationship' unwilling or unable as they were to relate this phrase to the wider context of attending a training event with a curate or training incumbent colleague, and wishing the question was 'more concrete'.

The group's analysis of the text was quick to focus on particular phrases, giving full attention and weight to each one. These phrases included: 'They stood still looking sad'; 'they did not see him'; 'astounded us'; 'talking and discussing'; 'prophet mighty in word and deed'; and 'vision of angels'. This latter phrase prompted questions about its meaning.

As the group attempted to explore how learning might be unfolding in the passage, they noted how the two disciples report facts and feelings to Jesus. They also noted how the women who visited the tomb were facilitators of this new learning, despite not being regarded as reliable witnesses in that society. These were women, they supposed, who had earned the trust and respect of the men in the group and were practical types because they had been the ones to visit the tomb to tend to Jesus' body.

This sensing group recognised that Jesus had employed an open question to prompt the response of Cleopas and his fellow disciple. A brief analysis of this response by the group led to the only analogy or reference to a world beyond the text. One participant likened this discussion to that of two football fans walking back from a match, debating the action with each other. Interestingly, in this analogy, the fans check facts with each other – 'did you see what I saw' – rather than an interpretation of those facts or the meaning behind them.

The group additionally found itself exploring another facet of the narrative: how it was that the two disciples did not recognise Jesus. In lieu of referencing the possible symbolism

in the story or employing analogy as a hermeneutical tool, they attempted to recreate in their minds' eye what Jesus must have looked like to solve the puzzle.

Although the group continued to struggle with a task that was too esoteric for their tastes, they were able to identify that some degree of experiential learning might have been going on as the two disciples expressed their feelings, while mentioning Jewish scholars who learned together collaboratively, yet failed to draw parallels with contemporary thinking about learning communities or their present situation of attendance at a conference with a training incumbent or curate colleague.

The group drew to a close very promptly when its highest scoring sener called time. They were glad it was all over.

### Intuition

The group of higher-scoring intuitive types comprised four participants (all men) together with one observer. After the passage had been read aloud and the task had been read aloud, one of the participants jumped straight in with what he described as 'a naughty idea': the two disciples were clearly sensing types; they had all the data at their fingertips, but they needed an intuitive type to come alongside them and show how it all fitted into a bigger picture. This view was immediately challenged by another participant who argued that the crucial piece of data was missing; those disciples had not yet seen Jesus and even the chain of hearsay was weak. The fun that intuitive types have sparking off ideas was already well off the ground. The sheets of paper carrying the text were put to one side and the invitation not to anticipate the second (as yet unread) part of the narrative was quickly forgotten. True to form the intuitive types moved from one idea to another.

They saw the two disciples through the lens of theological reflection. Walking along the road they were reflecting on their recent experiences and drawing on what they knew from the scriptures: Jesus was a prophet mighty in deed and word. They had identified him as the one who would redeem Israel. They were not just rehearsing facts, but testing interpretations. As theological reflectors, they are on a journey, literally putting greater geographical distance between themselves and where the events had happened, and with greater distance came better perspective.

Drawing on imaginative links the group of intuitive types interpreted the narrative through the lens of the Jonah tradition. Like Jonah these disciples were turning their backs on the place where God wanted them to be, but having turned their backs, they were sent right back.

Drawing on a lens offered by John's Gospel the group of intuitive types speculated that the Emmaus Road event had been divinely managed to convince future generations of the resurrection event. These things have been written down that others may believe.

Drawing on a conversation about how people come to faith, the Emmaus journey was seen as an alternative model to the instant conversion experience. Some people come to faith in one way. Some people come to faith in another way.

Returning again to Jesus' way of dealing with disciples, the group of intuitive types employed the lens of gentle playfulness. They saw a wry smile on Jesus' face as he accepted their lack of understanding, feigned ignorance himself, listened to their perspective and refrained from spelling out the answers that he himself knew from the inside.

Returning to the image of the road, the group of intuitive types speculated about the context in which they effect their most significant pastoral work. It is not in the church, or even in the house group, but in the chance encounters on the pavement. There on the pavement encounters take place with confused people whose confusion is clarified not by giving answers but by asking questions.

Returning to conversation on the pavement led to a reflection not on the questions that we ask, but rather on the questions that people ask us, and our need to ask them why they ask. Often their initial question is not the real question. Often questions that appear to come from intellectual curiosity may really arise from emotional crises. The encounter on the pavement has to allow for such factors. The questioner may be less concerned with informing the mind and more concerned with shaping the heart.

Overall the Emmaus narrative offered a very rich resource of stimulation to the intuitive types. While they found little need to examine the details of the text, they experienced no shortage of ideas sparked by what they remembered of the narrative. Yet the time passed too quickly, and the workshop ended well before the task was exhausted.

### Employing the judging function (Lk 24: 25–35)

For the second workshop the participants were divided into three groups according to their preferences on the judging process: five higher-scoring feeling types (41, 27, 15, 13, 13), one lower-scoring feeling type (1), two lower-scoring thinking types (5, 5) and three higher-scoring thinking types (25, 9, 7). They were invited to read the second part of the Emmaus narrative (Lk 24:25–35) and to address the following question:

For now focus on just this second part of the narrative, and on what comes afterwards in the Lucan narrative. Engage your preferred judging (evaluating) function (thinking *or* feeling) to value and assess the implications for discipleship.

#### Feeling

The group of higher-scoring feeling types comprised five participants (two men and three women) together with the observer. The higher-scoring feeling group was drawn to the characters, the people, in the account and the relationship unfolding between them, as the phrase 'stay with us'

resonated with one member, with its affirmation of the importance of fellowship. However, the encouragement offered by the potential for deepening fellowship was soon superseded by the voicing of significant worries about the way in which Jesus rebuked the disciples for their foolishness and slowness of heart. The criticism, they opined, was harsh, and while they might take the criticism of their intellects in their stride, they would find his rebuke of their hearts far more difficult to accept or accommodate. So perturbed was the group by this stinging rebuke that there were a number of attempts to soften the blow that punctuated their discussion.

Perhaps Jesus' tone of voice and body language might have mitigated the negative impact of his words? The group was able to imagine the warmth in his eyes and a playful humour in his voice. And at any rate, it would have been reassuring to hear those particular words because it sounded like Jesus – the kind of thing he would customarily have said. The issue at stake was so important to him, another in the group suggested in defence of Jesus' harsh words and robust approach, that he was forced to be direct. Finally, one member took consolation in the thought that the two disciples were '65% there, which wasn't bad for humans'. The need to settle the interpersonal dynamics that might have been in play before turning to the task of identifying how learning could have been taking place might be considered to be typical of a group with a preference for feeling.

Eventually, the group exhausted possible ways of mitigating the apparent harshness of Jesus' rebuke and was ready to move on. They subsequently engaged with the task of seeing the possibilities for learning well. They noted the presence in the passage of direct teaching, as Jesus rehearses and then explains the scriptures. They also noted how Christ models future Church praxis through the breaking of the bread. Thirdly, they identified a degree of direct divine revelation in the moment that the two disciples have their eyes opened. The learning of Cleopas and his companion gives birth to a learning cycle in which the two return to the Emmaus Road in order to return to the 11 and share with them their new experience, thereby passing on what they have themselves gleaned from Jesus. Finally, the group recognised both the importance of fellowship for learning and the significance of the learning being experiential, not just intellectual. Learning, they conclude, is not a solitary activity, but one mediated with the intervention of a teacher in a small and temporary learning community. Although there is the factual (academic) input of scripture being unfolded before them, understanding arrives only when they participate in the breaking of the bread.

Other intriguing insights emerged. These included a recognition that Jesus started where they were, employing a narrative and theological exposition with which they were familiar, commencing with Moses and the Prophets. In addition, yet more weight was attached to the two disciples' invitation to Jesus to stay with them, evidence not merely of their desire for fellowship but of their hunger to learn:

a declaration that they wanted more. Vulnerability and brokenness were also named as key facets in this place of learning.

The group worked empathically together, with no evidence of conflict between members. With different theological insights and perspectives, they shared an unspoken agenda to explore the human dimension in the story, concerning themselves, as might be expected of ministers with a preference for feeling, with how the disciples *felt* and not just how they learnt.

### Thinking

The group of higher-scoring thinking types comprised three participants (two men and one woman), together with the observer. Before tackling the task in hand, the group wanted to establish the legitimate place for thinking types in ordained ministry. One man made the point that some people could find his pastoral approach cold. The other explained that early on in ministry he had placed a notice above the telephone, 'Remember this is a pastoral conversation'. Then after the passage had been read aloud and the task analysed, one member of the group jumped in with the solution to the task: 'The answer is really quite straight forward. Jesus tells them and sets their hearts on fire'. This opening remark led to the analysis that the learning relationships on the Emmaus Road embraced both considerable instruction and deep relationality, involving walking, talking and social activity. In this sense the learning relationship is more than intellectual instruction; it involves engaging the heart as well. It is more than dumping information on others but involves engaging them in a proper relationship.

The conversation then focused on the way in which Jesus addressed the disciples, criticising both the quality of their minds and the state of their hearts: 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart'. The group of thinking types concluded that Jesus was not shy of admonishing people. Jesus was capable of confronting them with the truth. Jesus was capable of voicing appropriate criticism. Only after they have heard the truth are they ready to meet Jesus in the breaking of the bread. These thinking types saw no necessity to offer justification for Jesus' rebuke to search for a means of mitigating the discomfort his words might bring.

Next the group of thinking types analysed Jesus' approach to scripture. The turn of phrase that caught their attention was this: 'Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in the scriptures'. He may well not have been drawing their attention to scriptures that they did not already know. The two disciples had already confessed their conviction that Jesus was a prophet mighty in word and deed. They had already confessed their hope that Jesus was the one to redeem Israel. Clearly the Law and the Prophets were not unknown to these two travellers. But what Jesus did was to offer a fresh interpretation on what they knew and to translate abstract learning into concrete reality.

The careful analysis of the way in which Jesus handled the conversation with the two disciples on the Emmaus Road really caught the attention of the group of thinking types, and they proceeded to check out whether this strategy may have been seen by Luke as pragmatic for the future life of the Church. This was checked out by analysing the next and final resurrection appearance recorded in Luke's gospel. When the disciples were back in Jerusalem later on the very same day, Jesus startled them by standing there among them. As on the Emmaus Road, Jesus began by asking them questions. As on the Emmaus Road, Jesus took food and ate with them (on one occasion bread, on the other occasion cooked fish). As on the Emmaus Road, Jesus drew on the Law and the Prophets to recall the foundations in scripture and to offer fresh interpretation on these foundations. Now, going one step further than on the Emmaus Road, Jesus re-states and retunes the prophecies that he had made earlier in his ministry: 'It is written that the Messiah is to suffer death and to rise from the dead on the third day'.

In this way Jesus was preparing the disciples for this departure at the ascension, and equipping them with the narrative that they would pass on to others when he was no longer standing alongside them in such a clear and physical manner.

Next the group of thinking types pressed a little harder the specific question regarding the lessons that could be gleaned from the Emmaus Road narrative for the training relationship between incumbents and curates. The Emmaus Road narrative displays an effective supervisory experience. Those two disciples are sharing their lives, their experiences, their hopes and fears and their vulnerability at a very deep level. They are reflecting on what they have experienced, what they have heard and what they know in the light of scripture. They share a profound, revelatory and transformatory moment when the bread is broken. The supervisor moves on, and so do they.

## Conclusion

This study set out to explore the conversation between the Lucan post-resurrection narrative of the Road to Emmaus and the experience of the training relationships between curates and training incumbents. It was hypothesised that sensing types and intuitive types would read and perceive the narrative differently, and that thinking types and feeling types would read and evaluate the narrative differently. This hypothesis emerged from and was intended to contribute to three bodies of knowledge.

The first body of knowledge concerns the way in which psychological type theory may provide a lens through which to review different approaches to and different experience of ministry. In this context Francis and Payne (2002) explored clergy preferences for different ministry styles as assessed by the PIMS. Francis and Robbins (2008) explored clergy preferences for different ways of praying through the Prayer Preference Index. Then Tilley et al. (2011) applied the lens to

explore curates' perceptions of the expectations of their training incumbents through the Tilly Index of Training Expectations. The present qualitative study builds especially on Tilly's quantitative study by amplifying the ways in which psychological type theory may help to explain variations in the expectations of curates and training incumbents concerning learning relationships.

The second body of knowledge concerns practical ways in which psychological type theory may provide a theoretical framework through which creative experimental learning may be designed to enable curates and training incumbents to explore similarities and differences in their approaches to conceptualising and implementing Christian vocation and ministry. In this context Smith (2015) discussed four workshops employed during one residential training event for curates and training incumbents to explore each of the four dichotomous pairs proposed by psychological type theory: introversion and extraversion, sensing and intuition, thinking and feeling, and judging and perceiving. Francis and Smith (2016) discussed in greater depth an exercise designed to help introverts and extraverts reflect on their different experiences of ministry. Francis and Smith (2015) discussed an exercise designed to explore the different approaches of judging types and perceiving types to engaging with a common task involving both creativity and management skills. Smith and Francis (2015) discussed an exercise designed to engage feeling types and thinking types in appreciating their distinctive ways of evaluating issues. The present qualitative study builds on this tradition by exploring how a judicial choice of scripture may help curates and training incumbents to make explicit their implicit notions about aspects of the learning relationship.

The third body of knowledge concerns a growing body of qualitative studies designed to test the theoretical foundations of the SIFT approach to biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching as advanced by Francis and Village (2008). This approach maintains that sensing types and intuitive types read and perceive the text of scripture with distinctive emphases, and that thinking types and feeling types read and evaluate the themes and issues raised by the text of scripture with different emphases.

Previous studies have explored these distinctive readings of Mark 6:34–44 (Francis 2010), Mark 16:1–18 and Matthew 28:1–15 (Francis & Jones 2011), Mark 11:11–21 (Francis 2012a; Francis & ap Siôn 2016b), John 6:4–22 (Francis 2012b), Matthew 25:31–46 (Francis & Smith 2012), Matthew 2:13–20 and Luke 2:8–16 (Francis & Smith 2013), Mark 1:2–8 and Luke 3:2b–20 (Francis 2013; Francis & Smith 2014), John 6:5–15 (Francis & Jones 2014), Mark 6:7–14 and Mark 6:33–41 (Francis & Jones 2015a), John 13:2b–15 (Francis 2015), Mark 2:1–12 and Mark 10:46–52 (Francis & Jones 2015b), Mark 10:46–52 (Francis & Smith 2016) and Luke 24:13–35 (Francis & ap Siôn 2016a). The present qualitative study builds on this tradition by extending the range of scriptural passages explored to include Luke 24:13–35.

Cumulatively these three bodies of knowledge suggest that there may be significant benefits for those taking clergy formation and development seriously also taking psychological type theory seriously.

## Acknowledgements

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

### Authors' contributions

L.J.F. and G.S. equally contributed to the research and writing of this article.

## References

- Adams, R., 2002, *Clergy training ... well, sort of*, An unpublished paper privately circulated by the author, viewed n.d., from 12 Wheatcroft Avenue, Fence, Burnley, BB12 9QL.
- Advisory Board for Ministry, 1998, *Beginning public ministry*, Ministry Paper 17, ABM, London.
- Archbishops' Council, 2003, *Formation for ministry within a learning church*, Church House Publishing, London.
- Cattell, R.B., Cattell, A.K.S. & Cattell, H.E.P., 1993, *Sixteen personality factor questionnaire: Fifth edition (16PF5)*, NFER-Nelson, Windsor.
- Chaim, W., 2013, 'Typy psychologiczne w recepcji i przekazie słowa bożego [Psychological typology in the reception and transmission of the Word of God]', *Roczniki Pastoralno-Katechetyczne* 5, 155–170.
- Chaim, W., 2014, 'Metoda interpretacji i przepowiadania słowa bożego SIFT w służbie kaznodziejstwa całego dusza [The SIFT method in the service of preaching with all our souls]', *Roczniki Teologiczne* 61, 117–136.
- Chaim, W., 2015, 'Profil typu psychologicznego, interpretacja biblii i głoszenie słowa bożego (badania empiryczne) [Psychological type profile, biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching (empirical research)]', *Resovia Sacra* 22, 45–69.
- Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R., 1985, *The NEO personality inventory*, Psychological Assessment Resources, Odessa, FL.
- Eysenck, H.J. & Eysenck, S.B.G., 1991, *Manual of the Eysenck personality scales*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.
- Francis, L.J., 2005, *Faith and psychology: Personality, religion and the individual*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London.
- Francis, L.J., 2010, 'Five loaves and two fishes: An empirical study in psychological type and biblical hermeneutics among Anglican preachers', *HTS Theological Studies* 66(1), Article #811, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v66i1.811>
- Francis, L.J., 2012a, 'What happened to the fig tree? An empirical study in psychological type and biblical hermeneutics', *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 15, 873–891. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2012.676252>
- Francis, L.J., 2012b, 'Interpreting and responding to the Johannine feeding narrative: An empirical study in the SIFT hermeneutical method among Anglican ministry training candidates', *HTS Theological Studies* 68(1), Article #1205, 1–9.
- Francis, L.J., 2013, 'Ordinary readers and reader perspectives on sacred texts: Drawing on empirical theology and Jungian psychology', in J. Astley & L.J. Francis (eds.), *Exploring ordinary theology: Everyday Christian believing and the Church*, pp. 87–96, Ashgate, Farnham.
- Francis, L.J., 2015, 'Footwashing and diaconal ordination', in J. Vincent (eds.), *The farewell discourses in practice*, pp. 21–28, Deo Publishing, Blandford Forum.
- Francis, L.J. & ap Siôn, T., 2016a, 'Empirical theology and biblical hermeneutics: Exploring lessons for discipleship from the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13–35)', *Journal of Empirical Theology* 29, 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15709256-12341000>
- Francis, L.J. & ap Siôn, T., 2016b, 'Jesus, psychological type and conflict: A study in biblical hermeneutics applying the reader perspective and SIFT approach to Mark 11:11–21', *HTS Theological Studies* 72(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3573>
- Francis, L.J., Craig, C.L., Whinney, M., Tilly, D. & Slater, P., 2007, 'Psychological profiling of Anglican clergy in England: Employing Jungian typology to interpret diversity, strengths, and potential weaknesses in ministry', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 11, 266–284. <https://doi.org/10.1515/IJPT.2007.17>
- Francis, L.J. & Jones, S.H., 1999, 'The scale properties of the MBTI Form G (Anglicised) among adult churchgoers', *Pastoral Sciences* 18, 107–126.
- Francis, L.J. & Jones, S.H., 2011, 'Reading and proclaiming the resurrection: An empirical study in psychological type theory among ministry training and experienced preachers employing Mark 16 and Matthew 28', *Journal of Empirical Theology* 24, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157092511X571141>

- Francis, L.J. & Jones, S.H., 2014, 'Life in the eucharistic community: An empirical study in psychological type theory and biblical hermeneutics reading John 6:5–15', *Pastoral Psychology* 63, 281–290. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-013-0540-x>
- Francis, L.J. & Jones, S.H., 2015a, 'An empirical approach to Mark's account of discipleship: Conversation between the Word of God and the People of God', *Rural Theology* 13, 69–81. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1470499415Z.00000000042>
- Francis, L.J. & Jones, S.H., 2015b, 'Preparing for disability awareness sunday: An educational exercise drawing on psychological perspectives for biblical hermeneutics', *International Journal of Christianity and Education* 19, 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056997115602485>
- Francis, L.J. & Payne, V.J., 2002, 'The Payne Index of Ministry Styles (PIMS): Ministry styles and psychological type among male Anglican clergy in Wales', *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 13, 125–141.
- Francis, L.J. & Robbins, M., 2008, 'Psychological type and prayer preferences: A study among Anglican clergy in the United Kingdom', *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 11, 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670701619445>
- Francis, L.J. & Smith, G., 2012, 'Separating sheep from goats: Using psychological type theory in a preaching workshop on Matthew 25:31–46', *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 9, 175–191. <https://doi.org/10.1179/ate.9.2.gw21522035374468>
- Francis, L.J. & Smith, G., 2013, 'Reading and proclaiming the Birth Narratives from Luke and Matthew: A study in empirical theology among curates and their training incumbents employing the SIFT method', *HTS Theological Studies* 69(1), Article 2001, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.2001>
- Francis, L.J. & Smith, G., 2014, 'Reading and proclaiming the Advent call of John the Baptist: An empirical enquiry employing the SIFT method', *HTS Theological Studies* 70(1), Article 2718, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2718>
- Francis, L.J. & Smith, G., 2015, 'Exploring organised and visionary approaches to designing an Advent Fun Day in an educational setting', *International Journal of Christianity and Education* 19, 57–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056997115575643>
- Francis, L.J. & Smith, G., 2016, 'Introverts and extraverts reflecting on the experience of parish ministry: Conversation between training incumbents and curates', *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 25, 76–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2016.1139999>
- Francis, L.J. & Village, A., 2008, *Preaching with all our souls*, Continuum, London.
- Jung, C.G., 1971, *Psychological types: The collected works*, vol. 6, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Keirse, D. & Bates, M., 1978, *Please understand me*, Prometheus Nemesis, Del Mar, CA.
- Lamdin, K. & Tilley, D., 2007, *Supporting new ministers in the local church: A handbook*, SPCK, Library of Ministry, London.
- Lawrence, J., 2004, *Growing leaders*, The Bible Reading Fellowship, Oxford.
- Myers, I.B. & McCaulley, M.H., 1985, *Manual: A guide to the development and use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA.
- Segovia, F.F. & Tolbert, M.A. (eds.), 1995a, *Reading from this Place: Social location and biblical interpretation in the United States*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Segovia, F.F. & Tolbert, M.A. (eds.), 1995b, *Readings from this Place: Social location and biblical interpretation in global perspective*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Smith, G., 2015, 'Psychological type and the training relationship: An empirical study among curates and training incumbents', *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 18, 556–565. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2014.963998>
- Smith, G. & Francis, L.J., 2015, 'Experiencing and reflecting on thinking and feeling in pastoral care: Deploying psychological type theory in continuing ministerial formation', *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 12, 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1740714115Z.00000000037>
- Smith, G. & Francis, L.J., 2016, 'Difficult texts: Mark 10:46–52', *Theology* 119, 200–203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X15623706>
- Tilley, D., Francis, L.J., Robbins, M. & Jones, S.H., 2011, 'Apprentice clergy? The relationship between expectations in ministry and the psychological type profile of training incumbents and curates in the Church of England', *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 22, 286–305. <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004207271.i-360.65>
- Tilley, D.R., 2006, *Psychological type and the supervisory relationship: An empirical study of curates and training incumbents of the Church of England*, Unpublished master's thesis, University of Wales, Bangor.

Appendix starts on the next page →

## Appendix 1

### Luke 24: 13–24

#### On the Road to Emmaus: Part 1

<sup>13</sup>Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' <sup>19</sup>He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of

Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him'.

Quotations from the Bible are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

## Appendix 2

### Luke 24: 25–35

#### On the Road to Emmaus: Part 2

<sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup>As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it,

and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Quotations from the Bible are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.