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Reading and proclaiming the resurrection: an empirical study in psychological type theory  
among trainee and experienced preachers employing Mark 16 and Matthew 28

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### **Abstract**

The SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching has its roots in a theological perspective grounded in the doctrine of creation, in a hermeneutical method grounded in reader perspective, and in a psychological model of individual differences concerning perceiving and evaluating rooted in Jungian psychological type theory. The present study set out to test the empirical bases of the SIFT method among one group of trainee preachers (26 ministry training candidates) and one group of experienced preachers (21 Anglican clergy and readers) who explored the resurrection narratives presented in Mark 16:1-8 and Matthew 28:1-15 within working groups constructed according to psychological type preferences. These data support the psychological principles underpinning the SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching.

*Keywords:* SIFT, hermeneutics, psychological type, psychology, bible, religion.

### **Introduction**

The SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching had its origins in extrapolation from Jungian psychological type theory, as proposed by Francis (1997) and developed by Francis and Atkins (2000, 2001, 2002), nested within a framework shaped by both systematic theology and hermeneutic models, as documented by Francis and Village (2008). The SIFT method takes its name from the four key functions of sensing (S), intuition (I), feeling (F), and thinking (T).

Jungian psychological type theory proposes individual differences in the two core psychological processes of perceiving and evaluating or judging that are rooted in the human condition (see Francis, 2005). The perceiving process is the irrational process concerned with the ways in which information is gathered; the perceiving process makes no judgement about that data. The evaluating or judging process is the rational process concerned with the ways in which information is evaluated. According to the theory, the perceiving process is expressed through two different approaches: the sensing function (S) concerned with ‘the detail’ and the intuitive function (I) concerned with ‘the big picture’. The evaluating or judging process is also expressed through two different approaches: the feeling function (F) concerned with ‘subjective values’ and the thinking function (T) concerned with ‘objective logic’. According to the theory most individuals have access to all four functions, but naturally prefer one perceiving function over the other (sensing or intuition) and naturally prefer one evaluating or judging function over the other (thinking or feeling). The analogy is with human handedness where most individuals prefer one hand over the other and develop their skills with that hand, to the comparative neglect of the other.

In its understanding of type dynamics, Jungian psychological type theory takes the notion of the differential development of the four psychological functions one step further. Not only do individuals tend to prefer one perceiving function over the other, and one judging

function over the other, but they also tend to develop more strongly either their preferred perceiving function (sensing or intuition) or their preferred judging function (thinking or feeling) over the other. In this area one function becomes visible as the individual's *dominant* function, and it is this function that shapes the dominant perspective on life. Thus dominant sensing shapes the practical person, dominant intuition shapes the imaginative and creative person, dominant thinking shapes the logical and strategic person, and dominant feeling shapes the humane and caring person.

Psychological type theory has been operationalised by several type indicators, temperament sorters, or type scales, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978), and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005). In addition to distinguishing between the two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition) and the two judging functions (feeling and thinking), these instruments also distinguish between two orientations (introversion and extraversion) and two attitudes toward the outer world (judging and perceiving). The orientations and the attitudes are not, however, relevant to the SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching.

At one level systematic theology is concerned with testing the developing insights of the Church against the classic formulation of the systemic doctrines concerned with the core building blocks of the Christian tradition, frequently summarised in areas like creation, fall, redemption, and sanctification. In developing and testing a theology of individual differences, Francis and Village (2008) assess the way in which different psychological characteristics may be said to reflect human differences rooted in the doctrine of creation or rooted in the doctrine of the fall. They anchor an individual-differences approach within the doctrine of creation by reference to the tradition of Genesis 1:27 where both male and female are established and embedded within the image of the divine creator. Neither being male nor

female is a consequence of the fall. By extrapolation, this understanding of a theology of individual difference conceives of both ethnicity and psychological type being equally rooted in the image of the divine creator. Neither being black nor white, neither being sensing nor intuitive, neither being thinking nor feeling is a consequence of the fall. This understanding of a theology of individual differences, rooted in the doctrine of creation, carries enormous implications for ways in which differences are respected and listened to within the Church.

A major contribution to hermeneutical theory has been made by the notion of ‘reader perspective’. Different readers read the text in different ways, and among the people of God different readers perceive the revelation of God in different ways. The theology of individual differences would urge the people of God to take these different reader perspectives seriously. Initially reader perspectives in hermeneutical theory were shaped by sociological categories. Using sociological categories, it was recognised that men and women read the text differently and may bring different perspectives on the revelation of God to the people of God. Perspectives shaped by feminist theology challenged the supremacy of male perspectives. It was recognised that black and white read the text differently and may bring different perspectives on the revelation of God to the people of God. Perspectives shaped by black theology challenged the supremacy of the white perspectives. The theology of individual differences takes the process one step further and places psychological categories alongside sociological categories in broadening the understanding of reader perspective in hermeneutical theory.

The SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching takes the view that individuals’ preferred psychological functions shape how different readers read the text in different ways, and how different readers perceive the revelation of God through the lens of their dominant type preferences. The theology of individual differences would urge the

people of God to take these different reader perspectives seriously in order to develop a rounded and composite view of God's revelation within the contemporary context.

In order to develop this composite perspective, the SIFT method addresses, to each passage of scripture, the four sets of questions posed by the four psychological functions of sensing and intuition (the two perceiving functions) and of feeling and thinking (the two evaluating or judging functions) in that set order. The two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition) are applied first, since the perceiving process is concerned with gathering information and ideas. This is the irrational process unconcerned with making judgements or with formulating evaluations. The two evaluating or judging functions (feeling and thinking) are applied second, since the judging process is concerned with evaluating information and ideas. Both feeling and thinking are rational functions.

The first step in the SIFT method is to address the sensing perspective. It is the sensing perspective which gets to grip with the text itself and which gives proper attention to the details of the passage and may wish to draw on insights of historic methods of biblical scholarship in order to draw in 'facts' from other parts of the Bible. The first set of questions asks, 'How does this passage speak to the sensing function? What are the facts and details? What is there to see, to hear, to touch, to smell, and to taste?'

The second step in the SIFT method is to address the intuitive perspective. It is the intuitive perspective which relates the biblical text to wider issues and concerns. The second set of questions asks, 'How does this passage speak to the intuitive function? What is there to speak to the imagination, to forge links with current situations, to illuminate issues in our lives?'

The third step in the SIFT method is to address the feeling perspective. It is the feeling perspective which examines the human interest in the biblical text and learns the lessons of God for harmonious and compassionate living. The third set of questions asks,

‘How does this passage speak to the feeling function? What is there to speak about fundamental human values, about the relationships between people, and about what it is to be truly human?’

The fourth step in the SIFT method is to address the thinking perspective. It is the thinking perspective which examines the theological interest in the biblical text and which reflects rationally and critically on issues of principle. The fourth set of questions asks, ‘How does this passage speak to the thinking function? What is there to speak to the mind, to challenge us on issues of truth and justice, and to provoke profound theological thinking?’

While the SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching had its origins in extrapolation from Jungian psychological type theory, a small (but growing) body of empirical research has begun to interrogate and to underpin this approach, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative research traditions. Within the quantitative research traditions some of the insights of the SIFT approach were anticipated in a pioneering study reported by Bassett, Mathewson, and Gailitis (1993) who examined the link between preferred interpretations of scripture and psychological preferences established partly by psychological type theory and partly by a measure of problem solving styles. Participants were asked to read four passages from New Testament epistles and then offered a choice of interpretations that were intended to express preferences for ‘thinking’ or for ‘feeling’ (as defined by psychological type theory) and preferences for ‘collaborative’, for ‘deferring’, or for ‘independent’ (as defined by this problem solving typology). Although mixing two personality models makes the results difficult to interpret, the data provided some support for a link between psychological type preference and choice of interpretations. Most obviously those classed as feeling types showed a preference for feeling-type interpretations.

In the second study, Village and Francis (2005) invited a sample of 404 lay adult Anglicans from 11 different churches to read a healing story from Mark’s Gospel and then to

choose between pairs of interpretative statements designed to distinguish between the perceiving functions (sensing and intuition) or between the evaluating or judging functions (thinking and feeling). The participants also completed the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey & Bates, 1978) as a measure of psychological type. The data demonstrated that, when forced to choose between contrasting options, participants preferred interpretations that matched their psychological type preferences in both the perceiving process and the evaluating or judging process.

In the third study, Francis, Robbins, and Village (2009) invited a sample of 389 experienced preachers to read Mark 1:29-39 and to record their evaluations of the four reflections on this passage proposed originally by Francis (1997) and which were derived from the SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching. The participants also completed the 126-item Form G (Anglicised) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) as a measure of psychological type. The data demonstrated that preachers were four times more likely to prefer a sensing interpretation of the text rather than a thinking interpretation, emphasising the richness of the narrative rather than facing the theological questions posed by it. Moreover, there was little evidence to suggest that preachers were less likely to appreciate interpretations consonant with their less preferred function than those consonant with their most preferred or dominant function. In this sense, the SIFT method should be accessible to preachers of all psychological types.

In the fourth study, Village (2010) invited a sample of 718 recently ordained Anglican clergy serving in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to read the healing story from Mark 9:14-29 and to select between interpretative statements designed to appeal to particular psychological type preferences. The participants also completed the Francis Psychological Type Scale (Francis, 2005) as a measure of psychological type. The data demonstrated that, after controlling for differences in biblical conservatism, preferences for interpretation were

significantly correlated with psychological type function preferences in both the perceiving process and the judging process. These findings confirmed and expanded the findings from the earlier study among Anglican lay people reported by Village and Francis (2005).

Within the qualitative research tradition, Francis (2010) invited two different groups of Anglican preachers (24 licensed readers in England and 22 licensed clergy in Northern Ireland) to work in groups defined by their dominant psychological type preferences (dominant sensors, dominant intuitives, dominant thinkers and dominant feelers). Within these dominant type groups they were asked to prepare a presentation on Mark 6: 34-44 (the feeding of the five thousand). In his analysis of their presentations, Francis distinguished and displayed the four clear voices of the dominant type perspectives.

In a second qualitative study conducted within the same tradition, Francis (in press) focused on a different passage of scripture, Mark 11: 11-21 (the cleansing of the temple and the incident of the fig tree), working this time with three different groups (31 Anglican clergy, a group of 14 clergy and lay preachers, and a mixed group of 47 lay people and clergy). Instead of inviting the participants to work in dominant type groups, on this occasion Francis invited the participants to discuss the passage in two stages. For stage one, the participants were divided according to the perceiving process, distinguishing between groups of sensing types and groups of intuitive types. For stage two, the participants were divided according to the evaluating or judging process, distinguishing between groups of feeling types and groups of thinking types. Again, in his analysis of these presentations made by different groups, Francis (in press) distinguished and displayed the four clear voices of sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling.

## **Method**

### **Research question**

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to build on the recent

qualitative research tradition established by Francis (2010) and by Francis (in press) in order to explore how psychological type preferences are reflected in approaches to the resurrection narratives presented in Mark 16 and Matthew 28. The hypothesis was that participants who are largely naive about the SIFT method, when placed in groups of individuals sharing the same psychological type preferences, will generate interpretations of (or reflections on) scripture broadly consistent with their personal psychological type style.

### **Procedure**

In the context of two residential programmes, the participants were invited to complete a recognised measure of psychological type and to experience working in groups structured on the basis of psychological type theory. Reading, reflecting on and proclaiming scripture was an integral part of the group experience. The results from these two residential programmes are presented separately as two case studies (study one and study two). The first study was conducted during April 2010 and the second study during May 2010.

### **Measure**

Psychological type was assessed by the 126-item Form G (Anglicised) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). This instrument uses a force-choice questionnaire format to indicate preferences between the two orientations (extraversion or introversion), the two perceiving functions (sensing or intuition), the two judging functions (feeling or thinking), and the two attitudes (judging or perceiving). The preference between introversion and extraversion is assessed by questions like : When you are with a group of people, would you rather: a) join in the talk of the group (extraversion), or b) talk with one person at a time (introversion)? The preference between sensing and intuition is assessed by questions like: Would you rather have as a friend: a) someone who is always coming up with new ideas (intuition), or b) someone who has both feet on the ground (sensing)? The preference between feeling and thinking is assessed by questions like: Do you more often let:

a) your heart rule your head (feeling), or b) your head rule your heart (thinking)? The preference between judging and perceiving is assessed by questions like: When you go somewhere for the day, would you rather: a) plan what you will do and when (judging), or b) just go (perceiving)? Broad support for the reliability and validity of the instrument is provided in the international literature as summarised by Francis and Jones (1999) who additionally demonstrated the stability of the scale properties of the instrument among a sample of 429 adult churchgoers. In another study among 863 Anglican clergy, Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007) reported the following alpha coefficients: extraversion, .80; introversion, .79; sensing, .87; intuition, .82; thinking, .79; feeling, .72; judging, .85; perceiving, .86.

### **Analysis**

The groups (structured on the basis of psychological type theory) were assigned specific tasks (defined below), they were invited to work on these tasks and to agree on a common presentation of their conclusions. These presentations were both written in text form and spoken in plenary when the groups reassembled to share their conclusions with each other. It is these written texts and these spoken presentations (carefully noted by the authors) that provide the data for analysis. The results section of the paper presents a summary of the written and spoken presentations, in order to allow the different perspectives emphasised by the groups to become clearly visible.

## **Results: Study one**

### **Participants**

A total of 26 ministry training candidates (mainly Anglican, but including Methodist and United Reformed Church candidates) participated in the two-day residential programme organised as a requirement of their training (9 men and 17 women). The results provided by the Myers-Brigg Type Indicator described a group characterised by preference for

introversion (17) over extraversion (9), by preference for feeling (19) over thinking (7), by preference for judging (18) over perceiving (8), and by equal preferences for sensing (13) and for intuition (13). In terms of dominant types there were 10 dominant intuitive types, 9 dominant sensing types, 4 dominant feeling types, and 3 dominant thinking types. Further information on the 16 complete types is presented in table 1.

-insert table 1 about here -

### **The perceiving process**

The participants were divided into three groups: one group comprising the nine highest scoring sensing types; one group comprising the nine highest scoring intuitive types; and the third group comprising four low scoring intuitive types and four low scoring sensing types. Before leaving for three separate rooms, the Marcan resurrection narrative was read aloud to all participants (Mark 16: 1-8), and they were given the common instruction to discuss what they saw and perceived in the narrative and then to discuss what they would wish to preach based on the passage.

The group of high scoring sensing types placed their emphasis on the first of the questions and offered a detailed listing of what they had seen, drawing attention to: seeing three women walking in the early morning light soon after sunrise; seeing these women carrying spices on their way to the tomb; seeing these women looking anxious and hearing them worry about moving the stone from the tomb; seeing their look of surprise when the stone was rolled away. This group mentioned the young man sitting by the tomb, noted the colour of his robe (white), and recognised the terror in the women's eyes. This group heard the command to go to Galilee, and noted that the women fled in fear and said nothing to anyone. Using their less preferred perceiving function (intuition), the group noted that the return to Galilee completed the circle of Jesus' ministry where Galilee had been so important, and puzzled over the significance of ending the gospel with the claim that the first witnesses

to the resurrection said nothing to anyone.

The group of high scoring intuitive types placed their emphasis on the second of the questions, and unified their observations around the theme of ‘unfinished business’. By the time the women went looking for him, Jesus had already gone on ahead. The women had gone looking in the wrong place – they had misunderstood. The women had gone looking for the wrong thing – they had misunderstood. Jesus had gone on ahead of them and had taken them by surprise. The God of surprise still takes us by surprise. Because the women had gone looking in the wrong place and for the wrong thing, they were throughout anxious, worried, terrified. And they stayed that way until their encounter with the risen Jesus was complete. This group’s message to the women was to lift their eyes above the sight of an empty tomb, to trust their intuition and to grasp the greater vision of the risen saviour. Using their less preferred perceiving function (sensing) this group made but a cursory list of the details: they mentioned the women, but neither counted them nor gave them names. Then, oddly, they went on to talk about Peter (who appears in John’s account) and about the guards (who appear in Matthew’s account): they observed the characters who were not part of the narrative on which they were asked to focus.

### **The judging process**

The participants were divided into three groups: one group comprising the seven thinking types; one group comprising the nine highest scoring feeling types; and the third group comprising the ten low scoring feeling types. Before leaving for three separate rooms, the Matthean resurrection narrative was read aloud to all participants (Matthew 28: 1-15), and they were given the common instruction to identify the major themes and the major issues raised by the narrative and then to discuss what they would wish to preach based on the passage.

The group of thinking types analysed out the structure of the passage and identified four themes that all illustrated great contrast: the contrast between the fear of the women and the angel's salutation, 'Do not be afraid'; the contrast between the two emotions with which the women left the tomb going 'with fear and great joy'; the contrast between the appearance of the guards 'like dead men' and the realisation that Jesus is alive; the contrast between the lies spread by the priests and the elders and the good news proclaimed by the disciples. The Easter message preached by this group is that Christians today must proclaim the good news of the resurrection and face the implications of living with a life of contrasts: accepting life and death; experiencing fear and joy; knowing that the truth of the gospel will be met by lies and deceit.

The group of high scoring feeling types tried to experience the passage through identifying with the two key women. They discussed the impact of the dramatic effect of the events on the women; their experience of miraculous intervention; their sense of urgency; their mixed emotions of fear and joy; their awareness of the growing opposition and the oppression of the cover-up story spread by the authorities. They were women caught up in the midst of conspiracy, yet when Jesus met with them their immediate response was to fall at his feet and to worship him. The Easter message preached by this group is based on the women's responses to the risen Jesus. Our response to the Easter gospel should be to fall down in worship before Jesus and to be faithful in our proclamation of the good news to others.

### **Results: Study two**

#### **Participants**

A total of 21 clergy and readers participated in the three day non-residential programme organised for the continuing ministerial development of Anglican clergy and readers on the topic of preaching (11 women and 10 men; 15 clergy and 6 readers). The results provided by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator described a group characterised by clear

preference for introversion (15) over extraversion (6), by clear preference for judging (14) over perceiving (7), by slight preference for intuition (12) over sensing (9), and by slight preference for thinking (11) over feeling (10). In terms of dominant psychological types there was a clear balance: 5 dominant sensing types, 5 dominant intuitive types, 5 dominant thinking types, and 6 dominant feeling types. Further information on the 16 complete types is presented in table 1.

-insert table 1 about here -

### **The perceiving process**

The participants were divided into four groups: group one comprising the five highest scoring intuitive types; group two comprising the five highest scoring sensing types; group three comprising five lower scoring intuitive types; and group four comprising a mixture of the remaining lower scoring intuitive types and sensing types. The following analyses will be based on groups one and two. Before leaving for four separate rooms, the Marcan resurrection narrative was read aloud to all participants (Mark 16: 1-8), and they were given the common instruction to discuss what they saw and perceived in the narrative and then to discuss what they would wish to preach based on the passage.

The group of high scoring sensing types responded to the question ‘What do you see?’ by seeing the narrative as a live action play in which they had placed themselves. They were there in that space and at that time with the original actors. They saw it as a factual narrative and entered the reality of the original actors’ present moment. They were caught up in the details offered by the Marcan narrative. They noted the description of the day of the week, and the time of day. They were there as the women carried the spices. They were there as the women discovered that the stone had been removed. They were there when the young man came into view. They were there when the women ran away in fear. When pressed with the question, ‘What do you perceive?’, the group of high scoring sensing types focused on the

experience of the women. They perceived that the women were worried about not being believed when they told others what they had seen and heard. When pressed with the question, 'What do you want to preach?', the group of high scoring sensing types wanted to draw their congregation into the live action play that they themselves had found so engaging and spiritually profitable. Their message was to avoid hindsight and to experience the resurrection narrative for what it says. The message is that Jesus has been raised; he is not here. The response is amazement, awe, wonder and terror. The resurrection is real, in spite of all the feelings of doubt and uncertainty.

The group of high scoring intuitive types responded to the question, 'What do you see?', by seeing straight through to some of the deep themes of the narrative. The things that they saw were seen as symbols. They saw the sun breaking through the early morning sky, and recognised the coming victory of light over darkness. They saw the three women walking to the tomb, and recognised the pioneering role of women in the Christian tradition. They saw the changing expression on the women's faces, and recognised the roller-coaster of emotions that accompany the Christian journey. They saw the spices, and recognised the deep paradoxes of Christian death rituals. They saw the empty tomb and posed the biggest issues of all: where is Jesus, what now? In response to the question, 'What do you perceive?', the group of high scoring intuitives began to soar as they posed the issues of the feminist view, the opportunities for resurrection and change, the need to leave the old tomb behind to escape from the past, the need to trust the light that disperses darkness. In response to the question, 'What do you want to preach?', the group of high scoring intuitive types moved on to yet another set of inspirational ideas and identified four preaching themes: Jesus is always going on ahead of us, and does not wait where we last tried to place him; there are 'stones' that need rolling back in our Church today to set Jesus free; God has already done the hard work

by rolling away the stone; throughout his life, death and resurrection Jesus affirms the ministry of women.

### **The judging process**

The participants were divided into four groups: group one comprising the five highest scoring feeling types; group two comprising the five highest scoring thinking types; group three comprising the five lower scoring feeling types; and group four comprising the six lower scoring thinking types. The following analysis will be based on groups one and two. Before leaving for four separate rooms, the Matthean resurrection narrative was read aloud to all participants (Matthew 28:1-15), and they were given the common instruction to identify the major themes and the major issues raised by the narrative and then to discuss what they would wish to preach based on the passage.

The group of high scoring thinking types approached the Matthean resurrection narrative from the redaction-critical perspective. They wanted to get inside the mind of the author and to understand the distinctive slant being placed on the resurrection narrative by Matthew. They spoke in terms of the ‘conspiracy theory’ designed to put the priests and the Jews in a bad light. They went on to test the literary devices employed in the narrative and to link these devices to an Old Testament understanding of theophany: earthquakes, lightning, moving stones, and dazzling angels. They were sceptical about the historicity underpinning such literary devices. They also focused on the theme of bribery and recognised the network of lies and corruption, and the violation of truth and justice. Finally they noted the inconsistencies between the accounts in Matthew and in Luke. When pressed with the question, ‘What do you want to preach?’, the group of high scoring thinking types could not come to a consensus. Instead they identified three themes, although they lacked the time to develop them. Theme one was: Do not be afraid. Theme two was: Go to Galilee in faith.

Theme three was: Resurrection is critical (let it die – it can be reborn). Having run out of time the group was keen to continue the debate.

The group of high scoring feeling types approached the Matthean account of the resurrection directly by trying to access the feelings of the key participants. They put themselves in the shoes of the guards and appreciated how they felt like ‘dead men’, overcome by fear and by shock. They put themselves in the shoes of ‘the other Mary’ and appreciated how she had been marginalised by that description. They put themselves in the shoes of the Angel and appreciated the Angel’s stance of empathy with the feelings of the women. They appreciated where the key participants positioned themselves in relation to Jesus, drawing close or keeping at a distance. They appreciated the difference between the Angel’s mission of offering comfort and Jesus’ direct assurance ‘fear not’. They appreciated the worship and adoration that came from recognising Jesus. Taking a second look at the narrative, the group of high scoring feeling types wanted to discuss the whole theme of bribery, lies and deceit. Passion and feeling began to rise. What they saw going on in the narrative made them feel ‘outrage’ and ‘disgust’, and the link was quickly drawn with outrage and disgust at the ways in which the Church has suppressed its awareness of child abuse to protect the system. When pressed with the question, ‘What do you want to preach?’, the group of high feeling types was keen to come to a consensus. They agreed on wanting to share their own mode of access into the narrative by inviting members of their congregation to step into the shoes of one of the key participants. They agreed on wanting to select one of the marginal participants to take centre stage, and the conversation moved backwards and forwards between one of the unnamed guards and the ‘other’ Mary. It was the ‘other’ Mary who won the consensus.

### **Conclusion**

The present study set out to build on two pioneering studies that had employed a qualitative research tradition to examine the empirical bases for the SIFT method of biblical hermeneutics and liturgical preaching by inviting preachers (who were largely naive about the SIFT method) to reflect on given passages of scripture within working groups that drew together individuals who shared the same psychological type preference. In the first study, Francis (2010) examined the responses of two groups of Anglican preachers (24 licensed readers in England and 22 licensed clergy in Northern Ireland) who reflected on the Marcan feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:34-44). In the second study, Francis (in press) examined the responses of three groups (a group of 31 Anglican clergy, a group of 16 clergy and lay preachers, and a mixed group of 47 lay people and clergy) who reflected on the Marcan cleansing of the temple and the incident of the fig tree (Mark 11: 11-21). The present study added to the growing body of knowledge by inviting two groups of preachers (26 ministry training candidates and 21 Anglican clergy and readers) to reflect on the resurrection narratives presented in Mark 16:1-8 and Matthew 28:1-15. Three main conclusions can be drawn from this growing body of qualitative research.

The first conclusion concerns the psychological theory that underpins the SIFT method. This theory posits that the ways in which individuals read, reflect on and interpret scripture reflect their own personal psychological preferences. The data from all three studies support this psychological theory. In reading text, sensing types really do take trouble over the details, intuitive types really do grasp the bigger vision, feeling types really do give priority to the personal and interpersonal implications, and thinking types really do go for an analysis of the issues raised. Clearly a reader perspective on biblical hermeneutics is incomplete if the contribution of psychological type theory is not taken into account.

The second conclusion concerns the theological principles that underpin the SIFT method. These principles posit that the four key psychological functions of sensing, intuition,

feeling, and thinking reflect the richness of individual differences that are part of the intentionality of the divine creator and that are embedded within the rich image of God in whose image human beings are themselves created. This view posits that when the people of God corporately approach the word of God they need to attend to all of the four perspectives generated from the four psychological functions. In other words, the hermeneutical process is incomplete without taking seriously this range of voices. The data from all three studies support these theological principles by demonstrating that the four voices are indeed distinctive and complementary.

The third conclusion concerns the practical out-working of the SIFT method within the personal and professional development of those who hold responsibility for reading, interpreting and proclaiming scripture among the assembled people of God (for examples, preachers within congregations). Where preaching so often remains within the hands of individual leaders, preachers need their awareness raised of the four distinctive voices of the hermeneutical process advocated by the SIFT method (sensing, intuition, feeling, and thinking). It is important for preachers to be trained to approach scripture through their less preferred psychological type functions as well as through their dominant function. Experience-based workshops like those employed in the present study provide one efficient and effective method for implementing this kind of practical training.

Two main limitations still remain with the present state of empirical research in this field. When all these studies are considered together, only three biblical themes were explored; and only seven groups of preachers were involved in the research. These two limitations need to be addressed by further replication studies capable of extending the range of scripture employed and capable of working with other groups of preachers. The present study suggests that further research of this nature is likely to illustrate more fully the link between psychological type preferences and hermeneutical approaches.

Table 1

*The 16 psychological types for study one and study two*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Study one</b>	<b>Study two</b>
ISTJ	4	3
ISFJ	3	2
INFJ	7	1
INTJ	0	3
ISTP	1	1
ISFP	1	0
INFP	0	3
INTP	1	2
ESTP	0	0
ESFP	2	0
ENFP	3	1
ENTP	0	0
ESTJ	1	2
ESFJ	1	1
ENFJ	2	2
ENTJ	0	0
total	26	21

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**Appendix 1****Mark 16:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup>And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup>They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” <sup>4</sup>When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. <sup>5</sup>As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup>But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” <sup>8</sup>So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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**Appendix 2****Matthew 28:1-15**

<sup>1</sup>After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ <sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me. <sup>11</sup> While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. <sup>12</sup>After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup>telling them, ‘You must say, “His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.” <sup>14</sup>If this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’ <sup>15</sup>So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.

Table 1

*Ministry training candidates*

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences		
ISTJ <i>n</i> = 4 (15.4%)	ISFJ <i>n</i> = 3 (11.5%)	INFJ <i>n</i> = 7 (26.9%)	INTJ <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	E	<i>n</i> = 9	(34.6%)
+++++	+++++	+++++		I	<i>n</i> = 17	(65.4%)
+++++	+++++	+++++		S	<i>n</i> = 13	(50.0%)
+++++	++	+++++		N	<i>n</i> = 13	(50.0%)
		+++++		T	<i>n</i> = 7	(26.9%)
		+++++		F	<i>n</i> = 19	(73.1%)
		+++++		J	<i>n</i> = 18	(69.2%)
		++		P	<i>n</i> = 8	(30.8%)
The Sixteen Complete Types				Pairs and Temperaments		
ISTP <i>n</i> = 1 (3.8%)	ISFP <i>n</i> = 1 (3.8%)	INFP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	INTP <i>n</i> = 1 (3.8%)	IJ	<i>n</i> = 14	(53.8%)
++++	++++		++++	IP	<i>n</i> = 3	(11.5%)
				EP	<i>n</i> = 5	(19.2%)
				EJ	<i>n</i> = 4	(15.4%)
				ST	<i>n</i> = 6	(23.1%)
				SF	<i>n</i> = 7	(26.9%)
				NF	<i>n</i> = 12	(46.2%)
				NT	<i>n</i> = 1	( 3.8%)
				SJ	<i>n</i> = 9	(34.6%)
				SP	<i>n</i> = 4	(15.4%)
				NP	<i>n</i> = 4	(15.4%)
				NJ	<i>n</i> = 9	(34.6%)
				TJ	<i>n</i> = 5	(19.2%)
				TP	<i>n</i> = 2	( 7.7%)
				FP	<i>n</i> = 6	(23.1%)
				FJ	<i>n</i> = 13	(50.0%)
				IN	<i>n</i> = 8	(30.8%)
				EN	<i>n</i> = 5	(19.2%)
				IS	<i>n</i> = 9	(34.6%)
				ES	<i>n</i> = 4	(15.4%)
				ET	<i>n</i> = 1	( 3.8%)
				EF	<i>n</i> = 8	(30.8%)
				IF	<i>n</i> = 11	(42.3%)
				IT	<i>n</i> = 6	(23.1%)

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types			<i>L. J. Francis and S. H. Jones Psychological type of ministry training candidates</i>
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	
E-TJ	1	3.8	I-TP	2	7.7	Dt.T	3	11.5	
E-FJ	3	11.5	I-FP	1	3.8	Dt.F	4	15.4	
ES-P	2	7.7	IS-J	7	26.9	Dt.S	9	34.6	
EN-P	3	11.5	IN-J	7	26.9	Dt.N	10	38.5	

Note: N = 26    + = 1% of N

Table 2

*Anglican clergy and readers*

The Sixteen Complete Types				Dichotomous Preferences		
ISTJ <i>n</i> = 3 (14.3%)	ISFJ <i>n</i> = 2 (9.5%)	INFJ <i>n</i> = 1 (4.8%)	INTJ <i>n</i> = 3 (14.3%)	E	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
+++++	+++++	+++++	+++++	I	<i>n</i> = 15	(71.4%)
+++++	+++++		+++++	S	<i>n</i> = 9	(42.9%)
++++			++++	N	<i>n</i> = 12	(57.1%)
				T	<i>n</i> = 11	(52.4%)
				F	<i>n</i> = 10	(47.6%)
				J	<i>n</i> = 14	(66.7%)
				P	<i>n</i> = 7	(33.3%)
				Pairs and Temperaments		
ISTP <i>n</i> = 1 (4.8%)	ISFP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	INFP <i>n</i> = 3 (14.3%)	INTP <i>n</i> = 2 (9.5%)	IJ	<i>n</i> = 9	(42.9%)
+++++		+++++	+++++	IP	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
		+++++	+++++	EP	<i>n</i> = 1	( 4.8%)
		++++		EJ	<i>n</i> = 5	(23.8%)
				ST	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
				SF	<i>n</i> = 3	(14.3%)
				NF	<i>n</i> = 7	(33.3%)
				NT	<i>n</i> = 5	(23.8%)
ESTP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	ESFP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	ENFP <i>n</i> = 1 (4.8%)	ENTP <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	SJ	<i>n</i> = 8	(38.1%)
		+++++		SP	<i>n</i> = 1	(4.8%)
				NP	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
				NJ	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
				TJ	<i>n</i> = 8	(38.1%)
				TP	<i>n</i> = 3	(14.3%)
				FP	<i>n</i> = 4	(19.0%)
				FJ	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
ESTJ <i>n</i> = 2 (9.5%)	ESFJ <i>n</i> = 1 (4.8%)	ENFJ <i>n</i> = 2 (9.5%)	ENTJ <i>n</i> = 0 (0.0%)	IN	<i>n</i> = 9	(42.9%)
+++++	+++++	+++++		EN	<i>n</i> = 3	(14.3%)
+++++		+++++		IS	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
				ES	<i>n</i> = 3	(14.3%)
				ET	<i>n</i> = 2	( 9.5%)
				EF	<i>n</i> = 4	(19.0%)
				IF	<i>n</i> = 6	(28.6%)
				IT	<i>n</i> = 9	(42.9%)

Jungian Types (E)			Jungian Types (I)			Dominant Types			L. J. Francis and S. H. Jones Psychological type of Anglican clergy and readers
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	
E-TJ	2	9.5	I-TP	3	14.3	Dt.T	5	23.8	
E-FJ	3	14.3	I-FP	3	14.3	Dt.F	6	28.6	
ES-P	0	0.0	IS-J	5	23.8	Dt.S	5	23.8	
EN-P	1	4.8	IN-J	4	19.0	Dt.N	5	23.8	

Note: N = 21    + = 1% of N