APPRENTICE CLERGY? THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS IN MINISTRY AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE PROFILE OF TRAINING INCUMBENTS AND CURATES IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between the ministry expectations experienced by newly ordained clergy in the Church of England and both their personal psychological type profile and the psychological type profile of the training incumbent alongside whom they were apprenticed to learn the practice of ministry. Data were provided by 98 curates who completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and a set of items designed to map their perception of the expectations placed on them by their training incumbent. Analysis of these items generated the Tilley Index of Training Expectations (TITE). The MBTI was also completed by the training incumbent. The data demonstrated that the ministry expectations placed on curates were significantly related to the psychological type profile of the training incumbents but not of the curates. The implications of incumbents shaping curates in their own image (rather than developing the curate’s own preferred predisposition for ministry) are discussed for the long-term work-related psychological health of trainee clergy.

Keywords: Anglican Church, curates, MBTI, psychological type, training

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 processes (sensing and...

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intuition), two judging processes (thinking and feeling), and two attitudes toward 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 energized by people and drained by too much solitude, while introverts are energized by solitude and drained by too many people.

The two perceiving processes are defined as sensing (S) and intuition (N). Sensers perceive their environment through their senses and focus on the details of the here and now, while intuitives perceive their environment by making use of the imagination and inspiration. Sensers are distrustful of jumping to conclusions and of envisioning the future, while intuitives are overloaded by too many details and long to try out new approaches.

The two judging processes are defined as thinking (T) and feeling (F). Thinkers reach their judgments by relying on objective logic, while feelers reach their judgments by relying on subjective appreciation of the personal and interpersonal factors involved. Thinkers strive for truth, fairness, and justice, while feelers strive for harmony, peace, and reconciliation.

The two attitudes toward the outer world are defined as judging (J) and perceiving (P). Judgers use their preferred judging process (either thinking or feeling) to deal with the outside world. Their outside world is organized, scheduled, and planned. Perceivers use their preferred perceiving process (either sensing or intuition) to deal with the outside world. Their outside world is flexible, spontaneous, and unplanned.

A growing body of empirical research has begun to document the power of psychological type theory to account for individual differences in the expression and practice of Christian ministry (Francis, 2005, 2009). One set of recent studies has mapped the similarities and dissimilarities between individuals either serving in or training to serve in a variety of Christian denominations. These studies have included Presbyterian Church of Scotland ministers (Irvine, 1989),