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My Religion and My People: Levels of Ingroup Identification and Christian Religious Orientations

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Abstract: *People adopt a variety of approaches to practice their religion, but to date there has been no examination as to how identification with one's community, with Americans, and with all humanity may relate to different religious orientations. Two studies tested the hypotheses that 1) intrinsic religious orientation would be associated with all three levels of ingroup identification, 2) extrinsic religious orientation would be associated with community-level identification only, 3) quest religious orientation would be associated with humanity-level identification only, and 4) orthodox religious orientation would be associated with community- and country-level identification only. Study 2 controlled for several individual difference variables. In both studies, participants (n = 285 for Study 1, n = 507 for Study 2) completed online surveys. The results across both studies showed that identifying with country was associated with orthodox Christianity, and identifying with all humanity was associated with intrinsic Christianity. Implications for research on religion and outgroup prejudice are discussed.*

Keywords: *Religion, religious orientation, human identification, identification with all humanity*

One of the most prominent topics in social psychology is the process in which individuals categorize the self and others into social groups. Also known as Social Categorization Theory (Turner, Hoggs, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), this process allows for the creation of an “us vs. them” mindset within social groups, including those involving religion. The line that divides one's own group from others, however, can vary widely. For many individuals, ingroups consist of people who are found in their immediate environment. These proximal ingroup members may include family members, co-workers, or members of a church. More distal forms of ingroup identity can include national (e.g., American), ethnic (e.g., Latin American), or religious identities (e.g., Christian). There is also the potential for some individuals to extend positive feelings to all humanity, treating everyone as part of an inclusive ingroup. The purpose of the present study is to identify how variations in how people identify with others at proximal and distal levels predicts their religious orientation.

Levels of Identification and Religion

Identification with all humanity refers to the tendency to view each member of the human race as family. Through a series of studies, McFarland and his colleagues demonstrated that it is distinct from other constructs, such as ethnocentrism, empathy, moral reasoning and identity, and universalism (McFarland, Webb, & Brown, 2012). They also found that it predicted global concerns, priority given to human rights over national self-interests, willingness to invest national resources to defend human rights, less ethnocentric valuation of human life, greater knowledge of global humanitarian concerns and a greater desire to learn more, and a willingness to give to international relief efforts.

Although some preliminary evidence with IWAH shows that levels of ingroup identification are associated with outcomes associated with concern for others' welfare, there has been no examination as to how levels of ingroup identification relate to outcomes related to religion and religious practice. It stands to reason that these two variables are associated, because religious practice often occurs within the context of social gatherings (Smidt, 2003), and there are strong connections to religious groups as a form of social identity (Welch, Sikkink, & Loveland, 2007). Delhey and his colleagues also showed some evidence that people's connections with others tie in loosely with religion (Delhey, Newton, & Welzel, 2011). We expanded upon this work to examine identification with others and religious orientations by assessing them directly and by defining them as multidimensional.

Religion as a psychological phenomenon is exceptionally complex. Past literature has identified many ways to measure religious beliefs, motivations, and behavior. We will examine four dimensions of belief and practice within Christianity: intrinsic, extrinsic, quest, and orthodox. Allport and Ross (1967) first distinguished between conceptions of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations. The *intrinsic orientation* involves a belief in one's religion that informs one's daily life (Allport & Ross, 1967; Whitley & Kite, 2010). Sanders et al. (2015) found intrinsic religiosity to predict positive psychological wellbeing, including high levels of self-esteem, identity integration, moral self-approval, and meaning in life. In contrast, the *extrinsic orientation* is described as religious practice for a means to an end (Allport & Ross, 1967). Extrinsic religiosity is centered on fulfilling personal needs such as providing security, solace, sociability, distraction, status, and self-justification. In using religion for these purposes, the particular creed is usually held lightly so that it does not interfere with personal fulfillment. Past literature has consistently found correlations with poorer mental health (Smith, 2003) and less adequate self-functioning (Watson, Morris, & Hood, 1988, 1989), suggesting that using religion in an extrinsic way does not entirely provide the outcomes that an individual may desire. The social conformity basis of extrinsic religious orientation suggests that it may be strongly associated with identifying with community members, the most proximal form of identification, because of the social

pressure within the more proximal ingroup levels. Thus, intrinsic orientation may be linked to emphasizing the kinship with all humanity, whereas extrinsic orientation may be linked to identifying with more proximal ingroups.

The *quest orientation* is characterized as an active and open-minded approach to existential questions. More specifically, Batson and Schoenrade (1991) suggested three characteristics of quest: readiness to face existential questions, religious doubt, and openness to change. Quest individuals recognize that they do not know (and will likely never know) the answers to existential questions, so they value religious doubt and resist clear-cut answers (Batson, 1976; Batson & Ventis, 1982; Batson, Denton, & Vollmeck, 2008). Quest also is positively associated with interest and awareness of global events (Spilka, Kojetin, & McIntosh, 1985). Taken together, this suggests that identifying with all humanity (but not necessarily with the more proximal identification types of community and country) may be associated with the quest orientation. Those who identify with an all-inclusive ingroup may be more open to new ideas, which could manifest itself into a questioning form of religious practice.

The *orthodox dimension* of religion is based on the acceptance of well-defined, core beliefs. Orthodoxy is often related to fundamentalism, however the distinction is that orthodoxy is defined as the acceptance of a belief systems as truth, while fundamentalism takes this definition a step further to include reactivity, or hostility towards out-groups (Herriot, 2007). In general, people possess multiple identities (e.g. Religious, ethnic, national identities); however, religious identity offers a distinct worldview and eternal group membership that other identities do not (Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Certain identities become more central to an individual's self-concept when the identity is socially embedded or threatened (Stryker & Serpe, 1994; Jettern Schmitt, Branscombe, & McKimmie, 2005). This is not exclusive to Christians. Studies of Muslim immigrants to Europe have shown that individuals identify more with their proximal ingroups when they perceive more rejection from the dominant outgroup (Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Saroglou and Mathijsen (2007) found that for both Muslim immigrants and non-Muslim immigrants to Belgium, high religiousness predicted stronger attachments to their own cultural identity while low religiousness predicted acculturation within their new host country. Furthermore, classic religiosity (which includes a high importance of God, religion, and prayer; similar to orthodoxy) was not found to predict universalism (Saroglou & Garland, 2004). Strong identification with proximal ingroups (such as community and country) may therefore be linked to orthodox religious beliefs.

The Role of Ideology

When examining the differences in religious orientations, it is also important to account for potential confounding factors, particularly in terms

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of individual difference variables that are associated with both religion and group identification. These factors include right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. *Right wing authoritarianism (RWA)* is defined by three attitudinal and behavioral clusters: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (Altemeyer, 1996). RWA was originally assumed to be a unidimensional measure of personality, but Duckett and Fischer (2003) and Funke (2005) recently challenged this. RWA has also been used alongside fundamentalism to predict various forms of prejudice because of their similarity; however, fundamentalism is distinct in that it is a measure of religious authoritarianism, or the combination of authoritarianism and religious orthodoxy (Altemeyer, 1996; Laythe, Finkel, Bringle, & Kirkpatrick, 2002). In terms of religion, conventionalism has stronger correlations with orthodoxy, fundamentalism, and prejudice against homosexuals than the other two components (Mavor, Louis, & Laythe, 2011). Others have found negative associations of RWA with intrinsic, extrinsic and quest religiosity (Tsang & Rowatt, 2007). In addition, McFarland et al. (2012) showed in two studies that RWA was a negative predictor of IWAH while controlling for the more proximal ingroup identities. Because RWA influences how people think about religion and connections with others, it is important to control for it while examining the associations among ingroup identification levels and religious orientation. It is also necessary to examine conventionalism separately from the other two subcomponents, given their differential correlations concerning religion and prejudice.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is defined as the tendency to favor practices that create or reinforce social hierarchies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and it is frequently linked to RWA both conceptually and empirically (Dallago, Cima, Rocco, Ricolfi, & Mirisola, 2008). Similar to RWA, people high in SDO also express high levels of ethnocentrism and prejudice against outgroups (see Sibley & Duckitt, 2008 for a meta analysis). The association of SDO to religion, however, is less evident than it is for RWA. Because the major world religions contain messages that both promote and attenuate social hierarchies, the association between SDO and religion tends to be either null (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998, 2004; Dallago et al., 2008) or negative (e.g., De Regt, 2012; Rocatto, 2008). Similar to the findings with RWA, McFarland et al. (2012) showed that SDO was a negative predictor of IWAH while controlling for the more proximal ingroup identities. SDO is therefore another individual difference variable associated with ingroup identification that should be treated as a covariate when examining the associations among identification levels and religious orientations.

The Role of Personality

Developed by Costa and McCrae (1992), the Big Five personality dimensions are: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Each dimension describes a broad domain of psychological functioning that is composed from a set of more specific

and narrow traits. Past literature has shown that the traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness are consistently associated with general religiosity (Saroglou, 2010; see also Aghababaei, 2012; Robbins, Francis, McIlroy, Clarke, & Pritchard, 2010; Williamson, Hood, Ahmad, Sadiq, & Hill, 2010). Further investigation by Saroglou (2010) looked at three religious dimensions: religiosity, spirituality, and fundamentalism. Although all three dimensions are independent, they were all positively associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness. Additionally, the findings revealed a positive association between openness to experience and spirituality (similar to quest) and a negative association with fundamentalism. Neuroticism is positively associated with extrinsic religiosity (see also Williamson et al., 2010). Williamson et al (2010) also found that quest was negatively associated with conscientiousness, and positively associated with neuroticism and openness. McFarland et al. (2012) found that all five traits were associated with IWAH, but only agreeableness, neuroticism and openness to experience were unique predictors of it. Unfortunately, they did not report associations among the Big Five traits and the other forms of identification, although it is likely that there are several significant associations among the five traits and identifying with one's community and country.

Overview and Hypotheses

Despite the extensive literature on religious orientation and prejudiced attitudes toward outgroup members, and the developing literature on IWAH and concerns for humankind, to date no one has examined how variations in ingroup identification are uniquely associated with the four religious orientations. It is important to examine these associations to further understand the distinctions among the types of religious orientation. Study 1 examined how the three levels of ingroup identification are associated with the four religious orientations. We proposed four hypotheses: 1) Intrinsic religious orientation would be positively associated with all three levels of ingroup identification, 2) Extrinsic religious orientation would be positively associated with community-level identification only, 3) Quest religious orientation would be positively associated with humanity-level identification only, and 4) Orthodox religious orientation would be positively associated with community- and country-level identification only. The purpose of Study 2 was to test the hypotheses while controlling for RWA, SDO and the Big Five personality traits.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine how different levels of identification (community, country and all humanity) are associated with the different forms of religious orientation (intrinsic, extrinsic, quest and orthodoxy).

Method

Participants and Procedure. Participants in this study consisted of 285 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology classes at Eastern Kentucky University (225 females and 59 males, 88% Caucasian). Participants volunteered for this study in exchange for course completion credit. They were given an informed consent statement and then instructed to complete an online survey. Upon completion, a debriefing statement was presented as the closing screen.

Materials

Each variable was measured using Likert type scales that consisted of values 1 to 5 (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise specified.

Identification with Others. To assess identification with others, the 9-item Identification with All Humanity scale was used (*IWAH*; see McFarland et al., 2012 for psychometric properties). The scale was changed slightly for our purposes. In the original scale, participants would provide ratings based on a response format that changed for each question. For example, when asked, “How close do you feel to each of the following groups?” participants would rate their responses to three stems a) People in my community, b) Americans, c) People all over the world on a 5-point scale specific to the item (1 = *not at all close*, 5 = *very close*). On another question for the original scale, participants are asked, “How often do you use the word ‘we’ to refer to the following groups of people?” and they rate their responses on a different 5-point scale (1 = *almost never*, 5 = *very often*). For our version of the scale, we had participants read items that completed the sentence, “To what degree do you...” using the same 5-point scale for each item (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). Examples included, “Feel close to people in your community?” “Feel close to Americans?” and “Feel close to people all over the world?” Thus, the overall constructs were assessed in a similar manner but with a standard response format across all items. Each type of identification variable therefore consisted of 9 items, for a total of 27 items. The ratings across each of the 9 items belonging to the type of identification were then averaged to obtain the overall score. This resulted in total mean scores for Identification with Community ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.71$, $\alpha = .89$), Identification with Country ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.63$, $\alpha = .84$), and Identification with All Humanity ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.73$, $\alpha = .87$).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Orientations. Intrinsic and Extrinsic orientations were measured using the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967). The 9-item intrinsic scale measures the extent of an individual’s commitment to their religion, as it reflects the extent to which their religious commitment is the master motive in their life ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.93$, $\alpha = .90$). The 11-item extrinsic sub scale measures the extent to which a person acknowledges that they use religion as a way to gain solace

or social approval ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.66$, $\alpha = .80$).

Quest Orientation. Batson's 12-item Interactional (Quest) scale (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991; $M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.54$, $\alpha = .68$) was used to measure the quest dimension. Quest includes the participant's readiness to face existential questions, positive perception of doubt, and openness to change.

Orthodox Orientation. To assess Christian orthodoxy (the degree to which one accepts beliefs central to the Christian religion), we used the 24-item Christian Orthodoxy scale (Fullerton & Hunsberger, 1982; $M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.70$, $\alpha = .93$).

Religion Type. Participants were also asked to type in the religion they most identify with. These responses were then coded into one of seven categories (1 = *denominational Christian*, 2 = *non-denominational Christian*, 3 = *spiritual, not religious*, 4 = *non-Christian religion*, 5 = *Atheist*, 6 = *Agnostic*, 7 = *None*). The majority of the sample identified as Christian (40% denominational, 40% non-denominational), while 12% did not identify with any religion, 3% identified as agnostic, 2% identified as atheist, 2% identifying with a religion other than Christianity, and 1% stating that they were spiritual but not religious.

Results

To compare the first two religious groups to the others, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted by the principal investigator using a recoded Religion Type score (1 = *Christian*, 2 = *non-Christian*) as the independent variable and the remaining variables as the dependent variables. The results indicated that Christians scored significantly higher than non-Christians (all $ps < .01$) on Identification with Community ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.69$ vs. $M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.63$), Identification with Country ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.61$ vs. $M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.55$), Intrinsic Orientation ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.74$ vs. $M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.83$) and Orthodoxy ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.44$ vs. $M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.68$). Due to these results, all analyses were conducted using the Christian only sample.

Preliminary analyses examining the zero-order correlations among the variables revealed some significant associations between the identification and religious orientation variables (see Table 1). All three types of identification were positively correlated with Intrinsic and Orthodox Orientations. Identification with All Humanity was also negatively associated with Extrinsic Orientation.

To test the hypotheses, four linear regression analyses were conducted using the three identification variables as the independent variables and the four religious orientation variables as the dependent variables (see Table 2). Hypothesis 1 was partially supported; both Identification with Community and Identification with All Humanity predicted Intrinsic Orientation, but Identification with Country did not. Hypothesis 2 was not supported; Identification with Community was not associated with

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Extrinsic Orientation. Instead, Identification with All Humanity was a negative predictor of Extrinsic Orientation. Hypothesis 3 was not supported; Identification with All Humanity was not associated with Quest Orientation. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported; Identification with Country positively predicted Orthodox Orientation, but Identification with Community did not.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 provide the first evidence that identifying with ingroup members at different levels predict distinct religious orientations. Identifying with all humanity encourages people to become focused on the needs of people on a global scale, which explains in part why it was positively associated with intrinsic Christianity (which emphasizes compassion for all) and negatively associated with extrinsic Christianity (which emphasizes meeting personal needs). Identifying with proximal ingroups allows for more immediate service to others and sharing of similar ideas, which explains in part why it is associated with Christian orthodoxy. Although we were able to answer some questions about how identification with others relates to religious orientations, some unanswered questions remain, namely whether these results remain consistent when accounting for individual difference variables. This resulted in the development of Study 2.

Study 2

The results of Study 1 showed that different forms of identification predict different types of religious orientation. We did not, however, control for individual differences in ideology or personality. As mentioned previously, identification with others and religious orientation are associated with individual difference variables such as RWA, SDO and the Big Five personality traits. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the degree to which variation in religious orientation is accounted for by how people identify with others versus individual differences. The purpose of Study 2 was to test the same hypotheses as in Study 1 while controlling for RWA, SDO and the Big Five personality traits.

Method

Participants and Procedure. Participants used in this study were 507 undergraduate student enrolled in psychology classes at Eastern Kentucky University. There were a total of 119 males and 386 females in the sample, with 90% of participants being Caucasian. The age range consisted of eighteen to fifty-eight years old, with 77% of participants in the age range of seventeen through twenty-three. Participants volunteered to complete the measures in exchange for course completion credit. They were instructed to read an informed consent statement then complete an online survey

measure. Upon completion, they were given a full debriefing statement.

Materials

This study used the same scales that were used in Study 1 to measure Identification with Community ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.75$, $\alpha = .88$), Identification with Country ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.65$, $\alpha = .86$), Identification with All Humanity ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.67$, $\alpha = .83$), Intrinsic ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.99$, $\alpha = .91$), Extrinsic ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.62$, $\alpha = .78$), Quest ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.57$, $\alpha = .75$), and Orthodox Orientations ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.04$, $\alpha = .98$). The additional individual difference variables are listed below.

Right Wing Authoritarianism. Altemeyer's (1981) 24-item Right Wing Authoritarianism scale was used to assess perceptions of responsibility, obedience and morality. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to identify items that loaded onto the Conventional and Aggression/Submission factors. The results of this analysis yielded two factors (eigenvalues = 3.85 and 3.83), with 10 items loading onto the Conventional factor and 14 items loading onto the Aggression/Submission factor. Two subscores were then obtained by taking the mean rating across the items for each subscale ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 0.52$ for Conventional, $M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.44$ for Aggression/Submission). The two subscales yielded acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$ and $.79$).

Social Dominance Orientation. Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Melle's (1994) 16-item Social Dominance Orientation scale was used to assess the degree to which participants showed a preference for inequality among social groups ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 0.69$, $\alpha = .91$).

Big Five Personality Traits. The Big Five Personality Traits were assessed using John, Donahue, and Kentle's (1991) 44-item Big Five Inventory Scale. Participants responded using a 1-5 Likert type response scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale assessed for participants levels of Extraversion ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.70$, $\alpha = .84$), Agreeableness ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.54$, $\alpha = .78$), Conscientiousness ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.54$, $\alpha = .77$), Neuroticism ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.69$, $\alpha = .82$), and Openness ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.47$, $\alpha = .78$).

Religion Type. The same prompt and coding system from Study 1 was used to categorize participants by religion type. As was the case in Study 1, the majority of the sample identified as Christian (42% denominational, 33% non-denominational), while 16% did not identify with any religion, 1% identified as agnostic, 2% identified as atheist, 3% identifying with a religion other than Christianity, and 3% stating that they were spiritual but not religious.

Results

As was the case in Study 1, a MANOVA was conducted to examine differences between Christians and non-Christians on the study variables.

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In replication of Study 1, Christians scored significantly higher than non-Christians (all $ps < .01$) on Identification with Community ($M = 3.51, SD = 0.70$ vs. $M = 2.90, SD = 0.72$), Identification with Country ($M = 3.58, SD = 0.61$ vs. $M = 3.22, SD = 0.70$), Intrinsic Orientation ($M = 3.44, SD = 0.74$ vs. $M = 2.31, SD = 0.86$), Orthodoxy ($M = 4.11, SD = 0.78$ vs. $M = 2.61, SD = 0.97$), Extraversion ($M = 3.29, SD = 0.68$ vs. $M = 2.61, SD = 0.97$), Agreeableness ($M = 3.85, SD = 0.51$ vs. $M = 3.66, SD = 0.62$), RWA^{AggSub} ($M = 3.44, SD = 0.44$ vs. $M = 3.18, SD = 0.60$) and RWA^{Conventional} ($M = 2.87, SD = 0.52$ vs. $M = 2.16, SD = 0.58$). Non-Christians scored significantly higher than Christians (all $ps < .05$) on Quest ($M = 2.98, SD = 0.64$ vs. $M = 2.85, SD = 0.55$) and Openness ($M = 3.64, SD = 0.56$ vs. $M = 3.48, SD = 0.45$). All subsequent analyses were again conducted using the Christian only sample.

Preliminary analyses examining the zero-order correlations among the variables revealed some consistencies with Study 1 (see Table 3). As was the case in Study 1, all three types of identification were positively correlated with Intrinsic and Orthodox Orientations. The differences between Studies 1 and 2 were that Identification with Community and with Country were negatively associated with Quest Orientation, and Identification with All Humanity was unrelated to Extrinsic Orientation. Both Identification with Community and Country were also associated with all Big Five traits (except for Openness) as well as with SDO (negatively) and RWA (positively). Identification with All Humanity was positively associated with Agreeableness, and Openness, and it was negatively associated with SDO.

To test the hypotheses, a series of four hierarchical linear regressions were conducted with the three identification variables entered as independent variables in Block 1. The seven individual difference variables were then entered as independent variables in Block 2. The four religious orientations were entered as the dependent variables (see Table 4). Hypothesis 1 was partially supported, Identification with All Humanity was positively associated with Intrinsic Orientation (replicating Study 1), but Identification with Country - rather than Community - was positively associated with Intrinsic (contrary to Study 1). Hypothesis 2 was supported (contrary to Study 1); Identification with Community was positively associated with Extrinsic Orientation. Hypothesis 3 was disconfirmed (replicating Study 1); Identification with All Humanity was unrelated to Quest Orientation. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported; Identification with Country was positively associated with Orthodox Orientation, but Identification with Community was not (replicating Study 1). Identification with Country was associated with all four religious orientations in Block 1, but only the positive association with Orthodoxy remained significant after controlling for ideology and personality.

Discussion

The results in Study 2 replicated several of the results in Study 1,

even while controlling for seven individual difference variables associated with group identification and religious practice. First, we found that both identifying with one's country and with all humanity is associated with intrinsic Christianity, even while accounting for RWA and SDO, both of which are strongly associated with nationalism and negative reactions to outgroups (including members of other cultures). This suggests that the link between identifying with all humanity and intrinsic religious practice is not explained by people taking on a so-called liberal perspective. Instead, it suggests that practicing Christianity for its own sake allows for people to identify with everyone on a global scale. The results regarding extrinsic and orthodox religious orientations were not consistent with Study 1, which may be due in part to including RWA as a covariate. RWA is associated with nationalism (Crowson, 2009), which may explain why the significant associations of identification with one's country with intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest orientations became non-significant, and the association with orthodoxy became weaker, after accounting for RWA. The failure to replicate Study 1's results for extrinsic orientation may be because of the contextualized social pressures that people experience when they are extrinsically oriented. In some cases, those pressures may emphasize distancing oneself from outgroups (as suggested in Study 1), whereas in other cases they may emphasize the importance of connecting with immediate ingroups (as suggested in Study 2).

General Discussion

People approach their religious beliefs and activities with one of many perspectives. Some people participate in religion because of the personal benefits, other because of the social benefits, while others see it as a quest for answering questions about their existence. Across two studies, we found that the way people identify with others is associated with which orientations they adopt, and these associations are not confounded by personality traits that influence the formation and maintenance of social identities and relationships (i.e., RWA, SDO, or the Big Five traits).

We have expanded upon the literature by showing that there are clear distinctions among the religious orientations based on how people identify with others, particularly between the intrinsic and orthodox dimensions. For people who mostly identify with proximal, more concrete ingroups, they are exposed to a narrower – but clearer – set of expectations and rules for how to behave within religious contexts. Consequently, they are more inclined than others to adopt the orthodox orientation, and sometimes the extrinsic one as well. By identifying more so with proximal ingroups, they may be better able to maintain consistency in their beliefs and better anticipate the expectations of others. In contrast, people high in intrinsic Christianity tend to identify with both proximal, concrete ingroups and with integrative, abstract ingroups. By identifying with people around the world, they are better able to practice their belief in service and outreach to anyone in need.

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These distinctions may be due in part to the way that identity formation influences religious beliefs. As people focus more so on information than on normative practices, they later adopt a more symbolic and less literal religious belief system (Duriez, Smits, & Goossens, 2008). When people identify with all humanity, they allow themselves to be exposed to new experiences across cultures. By doing so, they open themselves to multiple sources of information and learn of the wide array of cultural norms that exist. They may, in turn, increase their reliance on the intrinsic orientation because it allows for a symbolic form of religiosity. In contrast, identifying only with one's country constrains those multicultural experiences, limits the amount of information available, and allows for a consistent set of normative behaviors that the person may follow. Consequently, this may lead to the adoption of the orthodox orientation. These associations may, however, be influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors, including degree of secularization, being a member of a culture's minority or majority group, and whether the culture is experiencing economic advancement, downturns or stagnation (see Saraglou & Cohen, 2013 for a review). This may partially explain the differences in intrinsic and orthodox orientations and their associations with proximal and distal ingroups.

There are some limitations to take into consideration with these studies. The first consideration is the limitations involved in sampling. This study only used undergraduate college students (mostly Caucasian females), which is not representative. There may be generational differences in religious approaches and commitment. Additionally, this study only examined dimensions of Christianity. For further research into human identification, it would be beneficial to examine other Christian dimensions (e.g., fundamentalism) and religious faiths (e.g., Islam) to see if these results can be replicated and/or expanded. Another interesting direction would be to examine atheism/ agnosticism and how they identify with others. It is unlikely that these groups would fit within the four orientation types traditionally ascribed to religious individuals. It may be beneficial to see if there are different ways of being non-religious, and if this affects identification with ingroups at various levels of proximity. In addition, it would be helpful to examine who the "other" people are in the community, country and world. If we were to focus on comparisons within one's religious denomination, within a similar denomination (or the same denomination in another country), and within a broader "religious" identity, we may find several important differences from the current study. As noted by Delhey et al (2011), both the radius of trust and the level of trust within those inner circles are important to note when examining how people view "most people."

Conclusion

Religious practice can take on a variety of forms, but it is not always clear why some people take on one more than the other. In two studies, we

demonstrated that the degree to which people identify with others as proximal or distal ingroups may explain why there are some of these differences in religious approach. People who identify with proximal ingroups seem to adopt orientations centered around beliefs and rules (e.g., orthodox), whereas people who identify with integrative ingroups seem to adopt orientations centered around spirituality and practice (e.g., intrinsic). By focusing on how people identify with others, we are better able to understand why people practice Christianity with such diversity.

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Tables

Table 1. Zero-Order Correlations among the Variables (Study 1)

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. ID with Community	---	.70**	.29**	.34**	-.10	-.07	.30**
2. ID with Country		---	.48**	.26**	-.08	-.02	.33**
3. ID with All Humanity			---	.29**	-.26**	.07	.22**
4. Intrinsic RO				---	-.44**	.05	.54**
5. Extrinsic RO					---	.26**	-.37**
6. Quest RO						---	-.13**
7. Orthodox RO							---

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. ID = Identification, RO = Religious Orientation.

Table 2. Identification Types Predicting Religious Orientations (Study 1)

Religious Orientation Types					
		Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Quest	Orthodox
Predictors					
Identification	with Community	.32**	-.11	-.10	.14
Identification	with Country	-.08	.12	.01	.18*
Identification	with Humanity	.24**	-.30**	.10	.09

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. All coefficients are standardized betas.

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Table 3. Zero-Order Correlations among Variables (Study 2)

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1. ID with Community	---	.73*	.39*	.29*	.28*	.13*	-.13*	.01	.17*	.23*	.29*	.39*	.05	-.06	.42**
2. ID with Country		---	.52*	.20*	.36*	.16*	-.17*	.04	.22*	.38*	.25*	.41*	-.03	-.08	.42**
3. ID with All Humanity			---	.12*	.25*	.03	-.03	.18*	.23*	-.06	.04	.23*	.01	.09*	.12**
4. Extraversion				---	.24*	.25*	-.32*	.14*	.12*	.06	.09*	.10*	-.04	-.01	.08
5. Agreeableness					---	.36*	-.23*	.13*	.54*	.15*	.07	.22*	-.07	-.12*	.26**
6. Conscientiousness						---	-.30*	.12*	.42*	.23*	.01	.11*	-.04	-.10*	.14**
7. Neuroticism							---	-.02	-.29*	-.03	-.06	-.11*	-.04	.06	-.06
8. Openness								---	.14*	-.09*	-.14*	.01	.00	.10*	-.10*
9. SDO									---	.10*	.06	.17*	-.08	-.17*	.14**
10. RWA Conventional										---	.37*	.28*	-.11*	-.28*	.44**
11. RWA Agg/Sub											---	.61*	-.15*	-.29*	.55**
12. Intrinsic RO												---	-.15*	-.14*	.74**
13. Extrinsic RO													---	.39*	-.24**
14. Quest RO														---	-.26**
15. Orthodox RO															---

Note. **p < .01, *p < .05. ID = Identification, RO = Religious Orientation.

Table 4. Identification Types Predicting Religious Orientations, Controlling for Personality (Study 2)

Religious Orientation Types				
	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Quest	Orthodoxy
Predictor Variables				
Block 1				
Identification with Community	-.01	.18**	.06	-.03
Identification with Country	.37**	-.22**	-.16**	.39**
Identification with Humanity	.22**	.07	.08	-.19
Block 2				
Identification with Community	.01	.18**	.05	.01
Identification with Country	.18*	-.07	-.06	.19**
Identification with Humanity	.14**	.06	.10	-.01
Extraversion	-.04	-.08	-.01	-.08
Agreeableness	.07	-.03	-.11*	.11*
Conscientiousness	.01	.04	.01	-.01
Neuroticism	-.04	.01	.07	-.06
Openness to Experience	.08	.00	.07	-.02
Social Dominance Orientation	-.13**	.32**	.15**	-.23**
RWA Aggression/Submission	.07	-.08	-.22**	.29**
RWA Conventional	.47**	-.27**	-.34**	.24**

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. All coefficients are standardized betas.