Why Don't We Practice What We Preach? A Meta-Analytic Review of Religious Racism

Deborah L. Hall,[1] David C. Matz,[2] and Wendy Wood[3]

Abstract

A meta-analytic review of past research evaluated the link between religiosity and racism in the United States since the Civil Rights Act. Religious racism partly reflects intergroup dynamics. That is, a strong religious in-group identity was associated with derogation of racial out-groups. Other races might be treated as out-groups because religion is practiced largely within race, because training in a religious in-group identity promotes general ethnocentrism, and because different others appear to be in competition for resources. In addition, religious racism is tied to basic life values of social conformity and respect for tradition. In support, individuals who were religious for reasons of conformity and tradition expressed racism that declined in recent years with the decreased societal acceptance of overt racial discrimination. The authors failed to find that racial tolerance arises from humanitarian values, consistent with the idea that religious humanitarianism is largely expressed to in-group members. Only religious agnostics were racially tolerant.

Keywords

religion, prejudice, racism, racial tolerance, motives, values

> At 11am Sunday morning . . . we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation.
>
> Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963

Americans' religious experience is marked by a color line. In 1998, almost half of U.S. congregations were composed of only one racial group, and just 12% of congregations had even a moderate amount of racial diversity (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008). Notwithstanding historical and cultural tradition, it is surprising to find racial segregation in religious institutions that otherwise are oriented toward social equality and tolerance of others.

More than 50 years ago, Allport (1950) puzzled over why people who endorsed religious ideologies of humanitarianism and equality also seemed to support prejudice (also see Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). Racial prejudice is proscribed by many mainstream religions (Duck & Hunsberger, 1999), and racism conflicts with religious teachings of egalitarian and humanitarian values. This paradox of religious racism might reflect basic group dynamics in which identification with a religious in-group promotes out-group prejudices, including racial prejudices that build on the color line marking religious practice (Burris & Jackson, 2000; Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999).

Religious racism also might emerge from the values, or guiding life principles, that underlie people's devotion to their religious faith. That is, particular social-cognitive motives for being religious might also motivate racism. These motives include social conventionalism and a dogmatic, authoritarian belief system, which correspond to the broader value clusters of *social conformity* and *respect for tradition* (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995). Another set of motives for religiosity that includes humanitarianism and a search for spiritual meaning might not promote racism. These motives reflect the broad life values of *benevolence* toward others, a *universal* appreciation for others' welfare, and *self-directed questioning* (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995). Thus, the sets of conformity and benevolence motives are compatible in that they both promote devotion to a religious in-group, but they may have different implications for racial prejudice.[1] To clarify the motivated reasoning that underlies religiosity and racial prejudice or tolerance, we conducted a meta-analytic review of prior research exploring the link between religious orientations and racism in the United States. The religious orientations in our review reflected strength of religious identification, motives associated with social conformity, motives associated with humanitarianism, and an agnostic questioning of religion. The participants in the reviewed studies were primarily White and Christian, and the racism assessed was primarily

[1]Duke University, Durham, NC
[2]Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN
[3]University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Corresponding Author:
Wendy Wood, University of Southern California, Department of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90089
Email: wendy.wood@usc.edu

toward Blacks. Our review began in 1964, the year in which the Civil Rights Act was passed to outlaw racial segregation in schools, public places, and employment. Expressions of explicit racism became increasingly proscribed through the period of our review, as people became more accepting of the spirit of the civil rights laws. By focusing on this time period in U.S. history, we could identify the social pressures promoting and inhibiting racism among the participants in the reviewed studies.

Religious Group Identification. Why should a strong religious identity promote racial prejudice? If religious group identity organizes social perceptions in the same way as political, national, and other social identities, then religious people are likely to respond to others based on whether they are in-group or out-group members. Especially given religious doctrine that sharply differentiates believers and nonbelievers, people who strongly identify with a religion are likely to derogate out-group members (Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999).

To the extent that religion tends to be practiced within race, people of other races may appear to belong to religious out-groups. Thus, one basis for the religious identity–racism link is that race serves as a proxy for religious affiliation. Another reason for this link is that people who strongly identify with a religion may be ethnocentric in general. Especially when people undergo early socialization into a particular religion, they might develop a strong tendency to differentiate their own faith from others, and social categorization that contrasts an "us" as opposed to "them" might generalize to other social distinctions including race (Altemeyer, 2003). Further supporting race distinctions, people who appear to be different from the self may be judged to hold different values, perhaps values that are in competition for resources such as political representation or even religious converts. Such perceived competition promotes intergroup prejudice (Sherif, 1966). For example, religious fundamentalists discriminated against homosexuals and single mothers to the extent that these groups were judged to threaten their personally important values (Jackson & Esses, 1997).

Values Promoting Racism. Why might the basic life values of social conformity and respect for tradition underlie both religiosity and racism? Religion is a set of beliefs and practices that explains and justifies societal norms and thereby encourages acceptance of the social order (Roccas, 2005; Schwartz & Huismans, 1995). In support, greater religiosity was associated with greater respect for tradition ($r = .45$) and greater conformity to others' expectations and norms ($r = .23$) in a meta-analytic review across 15 countries and five religious denominations including Christian, Muslim, and Jew (Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004).[2] Also, across cultures, greater religiosity is associated with more political conservatism among Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, although less so among Jews (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). This relationship is evident among political conservatives in the United States who

tend to be more favorable than liberals toward religious institutions (Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008).

Racism also plausibly originates in values of social conformity and respect for tradition. Like religion, racism is a set of beliefs that explain societal traditions, especially those associated with social hierarchies involving White dominance in America. Consistent with this reasoning, stronger values of social conformity and traditionalism are associated with greater intergroup prejudice (Schwartz, 1996). Similarly, political conservatives in the United States are more likely than liberals to endorse ethnocentrism and racism (Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Napier & Jost, 2008). Also relevant, the traditional values associated with the Protestant work ethic are central components of ambivalent racism (I. Katz & Hass, 1988) and have been linked with the expression of modern racism (McConahay, 1986) and symbolic racism (Tarman & Sears, 2005).

Religious motives that reflect the values of social conformity and respect for tradition are tapped through measures of *extrinsic* religiosity and *fundamentalist* religious beliefs. We explain below how each of these specific motives might be related to racism.

Extrinsic religiosity. People who are extrinsically religious have an instrumental approach to religion that is motivated by external factors such as desires for social status, security, and acceptance from others (Allport & Ross, 1967). Because the extrinsically religious value religion primarily as a way to achieve social needs, they may be especially susceptible to prejudices shared with valued others. Consistent with this idea, an earlier meta-analysis found that extrinsic religiosity correlated positively with self-reports of racism ($r = .28$, $k = 7$; Donahue, 1985). In more direct evidence that extrinsic religiosity and racial prejudice both reflect social conformity motives, racial prejudice related only to responses to extrinsic scale items concerning social needs and not to items concerning personal needs or religious seriousness (McFarland, 1989). From an attitude functions perspective, religious identity and racist attitudes both serve *social adjustment* functions by affirming relationships with valued reference groups over devalued ones (Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956).

Religious fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a religious orientation reflecting an unquestioning, unwavering certainty in basic religious truths (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Like extrinsic religiosity, fundamentalism is rooted in the values of conformity and tradition. High fundamentalism scores characterize political conservatives (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2005) and fundamentalist Protestants (e.g., Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Evangelicals, Pentecostals; Altemeyer, 2003), whereas low scores characterize Jews and those with no religious affiliation (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Unlike other religious motives, we can estimate the prevalence of fundamentalism. In national surveys, 13% of Americans described their religion as "fundamentalist" (Bader, Froese, Johnson, Mencken, & Stark, 2005), and almost 30%

used "fundamentalist" over "moderate" or "liberal" to describe their religious orientation (Davis & Smith, 2008).

Religious fundamentalism may be linked with prejudice because of a constellation of factors, especially a rigid, dogmatic cognitive style (Hunsberger, Alisat, Pancer, & Pratt, 1996). In addition, fundamentalism is often considered the religious manifestation of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), reflecting obedience to authority, aggression toward out-groups, and conventionalism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2005). It is not surprising, then, that fundamentalism was linked with prejudice in earlier narrative reviews (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005).

Values of Racial Tolerance. Why might humanitarian values underlie both religiosity and racial attitudes? All major religions preach love and acceptance, and many religious people experience their faith as oriented toward social welfare. For these individuals, religiosity and racial tolerance might serve a *value-expressive* function (D. Katz, 1960) by affirming their humanitarianism.

Nonetheless, religious motivations tend to be linked to a circumscribed form of humanitarianism that is expressed primarily to in-group members (Graham & Haidt, 2010 Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008). Highly religious people endorse benevolent values of humanitarianism, which reflect selflessness in relations with close others ($r = .14$), but not universalism, which involves accepting diversity and expressing concern for the welfare of all people and nature ($r = -.09$; see Saroglou et al., 2004). Also indicating that religiosity is linked to circumscribed forms of compassion, highly religious people were more likely to help family members and close others but not unidentified others (Saroglou, Pichon, Trompette, Verscheuren, & Dernelle, 2005). In addition, religious people give more to religious but not secular charities than do nonreligious people (Monsma, 2007). Because tolerance of out-groups emerges from universalist, broadly humanitarian values but relates less strongly to concern for close others (Schwartz, 1996), forms of religious humanitarianism may not promote racial tolerance.

Religious motives that reflect benevolence may be tapped through measures of *intrinsic* religiosity. Our review also considered the motive of *doubting agnosticism* (i.e., *quest*), which opposes social conformity values in that it promotes questioning of religious and perhaps racial institutions. We explain below how each motive might be related to racial tolerance.

Intrinsic religiosity. In Allport and Ross's (1967) initial conception, people who were intrinsically religious were committed to religion as an end in itself and were racially tolerant because they had "no place for rejection, contempt, or condescension" toward others (p. 441). A meta-analytic review of six studies provided preliminary evidence of this negative relation between intrinsic religiosity and racism ($r = -.09$; Donahue, 1985).

Despite the initially promising evidence, however, intrinsic religiosity is not clearly associated with racial tolerance. People

who are intrinsically motivated engage in self-stereotyping by applying to themselves the ideal attributes of their religious group (Burris & Jackson, 2000). They may express racial acceptance as a kind of social desirability bias associated with their religious identity. If so, intrinsically religious people may appear racially tolerant on *direct*, self-report measures but not on *indirect* measures that are less obviously indicative of racism or are less easily controlled (Batson, Flink, Schoenrade, Fultz, & Pych, 1986; Batson, Naifeh, & Pate, 1978). In support, greater intrinsic religiosity (but not extrinsic religiosity or quest) was linked with decreased self-reported hostility and vengeance to others, but not an actual decrease in hostile, vengeful behavior (Greer, Berman, Varan, Bobryki, & Watson, 2005; Leach, Berman, & Eubanks, 2008). The grounding of intrinsic (but not extrinsic religiosity or quest) in socially desirable responding was confirmed in Sedikides and Gebauer's (2010) meta-analysis (also see Trimble, 1997). Thus, intrinsically religious people may report racial tolerance largely because of a desire to appear nonracist (Batson & Stocks, 2005) but nevertheless may show racial prejudice when it is indirectly measured.

Agnosticism. Another form of religiosity that might promote racial tolerance is a spiritual quest or readiness to face existential questions, acknowledge religious doubts, and accept change (a *quest* motivation; Batson, 1976; Batson & Stocks, 2005). However, quest may be more a form of agnosticism than a motive to be religious (Donahue, 1985). In terms of Schwartz's life values, the quest motive is most closely related to curiosity, independence, and choice of one's own goals—the self-directedness values that were negatively related to self-reported religiosity in Saroglou et al.'s (2004) meta-analysis. Furthermore, greater quest orientation was negatively correlated with attendance at religious services and personal prayer (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Lavrič & Flere, 2008) and was not strongly associated with a belief in God (Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999). In addition, people who did not believe in any religion scored highest on quest, with especially low scores typifying Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants and somewhat higher scores among Jews (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Thus, relations between quest and racial tolerance in the general population are best understood in terms of a lack of religiosity.

The best-known research on quest has focused on Christian college students who are at least moderately interested in religion (Batson & Stocks, 2005). Among this demographic, higher quest scores plausibly reflect a stage in personal development of questioning of religious and other social institutions, including race relations. Thus, these students might also show positive associations between quest and racial tolerance (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005).

Present Research. The present meta-analytic review examined the relations between racism and social-cognitive motives for religion. Our predictions were as follows: To the extent that religious identification establishes intergroup dynamics

that encourage derogation of out-groups, greater identification will be associated with racism. Also, to the extent that extrinsic religiosity and religious fundamentalism reflect conformity to societal traditions, these motives will be positively related to racism. Fundamentalism also might be linked with racial prejudice because it is a product of RWA, which itself is associated with the rejection of dissimilar others. In addition, intrinsic religiosity, to the extent that it is grounded in social desirability, will motivate people to follow religious ideals and express racial tolerance on direct, self-report measures, but this effect will be less evident on indirect measures that are less subject to desirability biases. Also, greater agnosticism, as the self-directed questioning of social institutions, should be associated with greater racial tolerance.

We also tested the limits of our motivational analysis. If the forms of religiosity in our review link to racism through underlying motives, then religious scales that assess belief in Christian orthodoxy and other specific belief content should not relate to racial attitudes. Furthermore, we anticipated that extrinsic and fundamentalist religiosity, as expressions of conventionalism and conservative values, would promote racism regardless of the specific belief content of the race scales. In other words, religious racism should not merely reflect the overlap in belief content between conservative religiosity and measures of prejudice that also tap conservative beliefs (e.g., modern racism; McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981).

We also tested the extent to which religious racism is susceptible to changes in social conformity pressures over time. Religious racism that reflects social conformity norms should have diminished since the 1964 Civil Rights Act with the decreased social acceptance of overt racism. In recent years, racism has become more subtle and implicit (e.g., aversively racist beliefs; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2008). For example, in 1968, only 20% of respondents to a national survey overtly approved of marriages between Blacks and Whites; in 1991 this number increased to 48%, and in 2007 it increased to 77% (Carroll, 2007). If individuals who are religious for extrinsic and fundamentalist reasons are motivated by social acceptance and conformity, then they should show decreased racism over time with the changes in racial norms. Intrinsic religiosity and quest do not tap social conformity, and their relations with overt racism should not alter over time. We were uncertain whether the relation between religious identification and racism would change over time—it might diminish with lessened racial group differentiation in the broader society, or it might stay constant given the continuing evidence of racial segregation in religious practice.

Insight into motives also comes from the identity of the participants in the original studies. If racism arises from the same values that motivate religion, then religious racism should be greatest in studies with primarily religious participants (e.g., church members, seminary students) who are likely to hold the values especially strongly.

Finally, we tested for effects of the discipline in which the research was published or conducted (for unpublished reports). If social science journals are perceived by researchers to be—or are in actuality—more inclined than religious journals to publish research that casts religion in a negative light, stronger evidence of religious racism may be found in social science journals.

Method

Literature Search. Eligible articles were identified using PsycINFO and the American Theological Library Association Religion Database, the primary reference sources in the fields of psychology and religion, using the following search terms: religion *or* spirituality *with* prejudice, stereotypes, *or* discrimination, *and* race/racial, ethnic, Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino/a, *or* Asian. The specific search terms were *religio**, *spiritua**, *stereotyp**, *prejudic*, discriminat**, *rac**, *ethnic**, *Black**, *African**, *Hispanic**, *Latin**, and *Asian**. We also searched the reference lists of key review articles (Altemeyer, 2003; Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993; Donahue, 1985; Gorsuch & Aleshire, 1974; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005) and contacted the Society for Personality and Social Psychology listserv to request unpublished reports. We screened the abstracts of 866 reports to identify studies that met our inclusion criteria.

Criteria for Inclusion. To be included in our analyses, a study must have (a) included solely or primarily U.S. participants, (b) been reported between the years of 1964 and 2008, (c) included a measure of religious motivation or belief content (see below), (d) included a measure of racial attitudes or prejudice, and (e) reported data to estimate the bivariate correlation between religiosity and racism.

Study Coding. Studies were evaluated by two independent raters for the following: (a) publication year, (b) whether the field in which the research was conducted or published involved theology and religion (e.g., *Review of Religious Research*), social science (e.g., *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*), or a combination of social science and religion (e.g., *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*), (c) percentage female in the sample, and (d) degree of religiosity of the sample (all religious vs. a mixed sample of some religious, some nonreligious). Agreement among raters was high (93%), and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. In addition, we identified studies that included potential mediators of the relationship between religiosity and prejudice, including authoritarianism and social desirability.

Measures of Religious Motivation and Racism. Religious identification was measured with ratings of the subjective importance of religion in one's life or self-reported degree of religiosity (e.g., Roof & Perkins, 1975).

Intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity was measured most frequently using the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967). Respondents rate their agreement with statements such

as, "What religion offers me most is comfort when sorrows and misfortune strike" (extrinsic subscale) and "My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life" (intrinsic subscale).

Religious fundamentalism was most often measured with the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Respondents rated their agreement with such statements as, "God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed."

Agnosticism/quest was most often measured using the interactional subscale of the Religious Life Inventory (Batson, 1976). Respondents rate their agreement with items such as, "Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers."

Religious belief content was measured most often with the Christian Orthodoxy Scale (Fullerton & Hunsberger, 1982), on which respondents rate the extent to which they hold specific beliefs associated with the Christian faith (e.g., belief in God).

Measures of racial prejudice most commonly assessed modern and symbolically racist attitudes toward Blacks (McConahay et al., 1981) or preferred level of social distance from Blacks or other racial minorities (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992).[3]

Effect Sizes. Effect sizes in the form of bivariate correlations were scored so that positive numbers indicated that greater religiosity was associated with greater racism. Negative numbers indicated that greater religiosity was associated with more racial tolerance. Separate correlations were estimated from each study that provided information on the relationship between racial prejudice and each measure of religiosity. To compute mean effect sizes across studies, each individual effect was weighted by the inverse of its variance, thus allowing studies with larger samples (and more precise population estimates) to exert a stronger influence.

For studies reporting separate effects for multiple social-cognitive religious motives, we adopted a shifting unit of analysis (see H. Cooper, 1998), whereby multiple effects reported in a single study were treated as independent to the extent that only one effect size from each study was pertinent to a specific analysis. For analyses across the different religious motives, we averaged all effects for a single study only, so that each study contributed once. In addition, we performed all meta-analytic tests twice, once assuming a fixed error model (appropriate when sampling error stems only from differences between participants) and once assuming a random error model (appropriate when random variation between studies in the sample may contribute to sampling error). We thereby examined the effects of these different assumptions (using Comprehensive Meta-Analysis 2.2; Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2008).

Table 1. General Characteristics of the Studies

Characteristic	Number of Studies (*k*)
Year of report	
1964–1969	8
1970–1979	18
1980–1989	6
1990–1999	9
2000–2008	14
Publication status	
Published (i.e., journal, book)	33
Unpublished (i.e., dissertation, conference paper, under review)	22
Field	
Religion	4
Social science	23
Social science of religion	18
Unknown	10
Religiosity of sample	
All religious	22
Religious and nonreligious	33

Results

Descriptive Summary. In all, 55 independent studies met our inclusion criteria, with a total of 22,075 participants. As shown in Table 1, the typical study was published in 1985 (median year = 1982) and had a sample size of 401.36 participants, of which 57% were female (for detailed study information, see http://college.usc.edu/wendywood).

Overall Pattern of Results. As predicted, the answer to the question of whether religious people are more racially prejudiced depended on the social-cognitive motives underlying religiosity. Table 2 displays the mean effect size for each dimension of religiosity. Consistent with our hypotheses, greater religious identification, greater extrinsic religiosity, and greater religious fundamentalism were all positively related to racism.[4] Greater intrinsic religiosity and greater quest were negatively related to racism, a relation that reflected racial tolerance. Suggesting that these effects reflected the specific social-cognitive motives tapped by each form of religiosity, scales assessing orthodoxy and other aspects of religious belief content did not reliably correlate with racism.

For each religious motive, we tested for potential publication bias by estimating the number of missing effects using Duval and Tweedie's (2000) trim and fill procedure, performing Egger's test of the regression intercept (Egger, Davey Smith, Schneider, & Minder, 1997), examining whether plots of effect size against standard errors were approximately symmetric and funnel shaped, and comparing the effects reported in published research versus unpublished papers. For extrinsic religiosity and quest, we found no evidence of publication bias. For religious identification and religious fundamentalism, one

Table 2. Summary of Effect Sizes for Religiosity and Prejudice

Religious Dimension	r	Range	95% CI	Z	k	Q
Religious identification		−.19/.56			20	369.57**
Fixed	.10		.08/.12	10.74**		
Random	.12		.04/.21	2.88**		
Extrinsic religiosity		−.02/.35			22	83.15**
Fixed	.17		.14/.20	12.20**		
Random	.17		.12/.23	5.90**		
Religious fundamentalism		−.11/.35			14	68.92**
Fixed	.13		.10/.16	7.90**		
Random	.13		.06/.21	3.49**		
Intrinsic religiosity		−.36/.24			21	59.81**
Fixed	−.07		−.10/−.05	−5.56**		
Random	−.05		−.10/−.002	−2.06*		
Quest		−.24/.20			10	18.30*
Fixed	−.07		−.11/−.03	−3.46**		
Random	−.07		−.13/−.01	−2.24*		
Beliefs/Christian orthodoxy		−.42/.37			22	721.09**
Fixed	−.04		−.06/−.02	−3.77**		
Random	.03		−.09/.15	0.53		

Note: r = mean effect size coded so that positive numbers reflect greater religious racism and negative numbers reflect greater racial tolerance; 95% CI = 95% confidence interval for effect size; Z = standardized effect size and significance test; Q = homogeneity statistic.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3. Comparison of All Religious Samples and Samples With Some Nonreligious Participants

Moderator	k	Fixed			Random		
		r	95% CI	Q_B	r	95% CI	Q_B
Extrinsic religiosity				21.05**			4.04*
All religious	8	.24	.20/.28		.24	.14/.33	
Some nonreligious	14	.12	.08/.15		.13	.07/.18	
Religious fundamentalism				21.17**			4.74*
All religious	6	.22	.17/.26		.21	.13/.30	
Some nonreligious	8	.07	.03/.12		.07	−.02/.16	
Quest				6.64*			0.92
All religious	3	−.15	−.23/−.08		−.12	−.28/.04	
Some nonreligious	7	−.04	−.09/.01		−.04	−.09/.01	

Note: r = mean effect size coded so that positive numbers reflect greater religious racism and negative numbers reflect greater racial tolerance;; 95% CI = 95% confidence interval for effect size; Q_B = portion of homogeneity statistic explained by religiosity of sample.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

missing effect was identified; for intrinsic religiosity, three missing effects were identified. Adjusting for these putatively missing studies, however, did not significantly alter the mean effect sizes.[5]

Religiosity of Sample. Suggesting that motives for religiosity were stronger in studies with primarily religious participants, extrinsic religiosity and fundamentalism were more strongly associated with racism in primarily religious samples than in mixed samples (Table 3). Furthermore, quest was more strongly associated with racial tolerance in religious than in mixed samples, but the effect was only significant with the fixed effects model. Intrinsic religiosity was not more strongly related to tolerance in more religious samples, perhaps because the social desirability bias was not accentuated in the highly religious. Unexpectedly, religious identification was linked with racism less strongly in the religious samples, although this effect was significant only in the fixed effects model.

Has Religious Racism Changed Over Time? To test whether the relation between religiosity and racism varied over time with changes in social norms, we conducted separate metaregressions in which year of publication predicted the relationship between each social-cognitive religious motive and racism. As expected, the positive relation between extrinsic religiosity and racism decreased significantly in recent years (see Figure 1), fixed $\beta = -.004$, $Q_M(1) = 19.24$ ($p < .01$); random $\beta = -.004$, $Q_M(1) = 5.04$ ($p < .05$). The random but not the fixed model was appropriately specified, fixed $Q_R(20) = 63.91$ ($p < .01$); random $Q_R(20) = 19.15$ (*ns*).
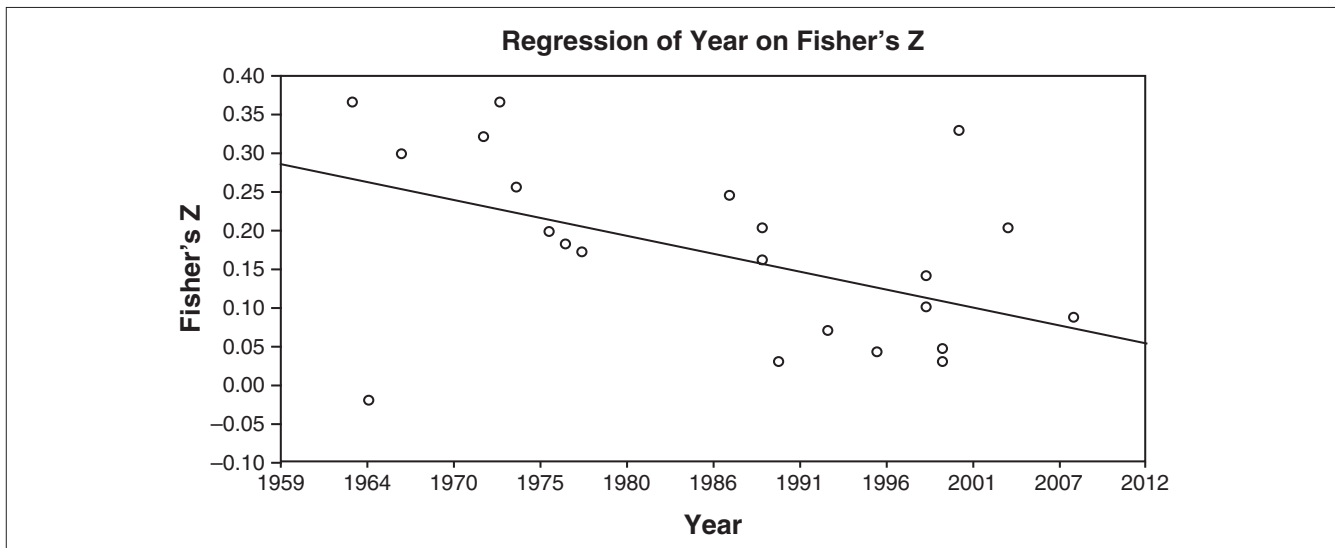
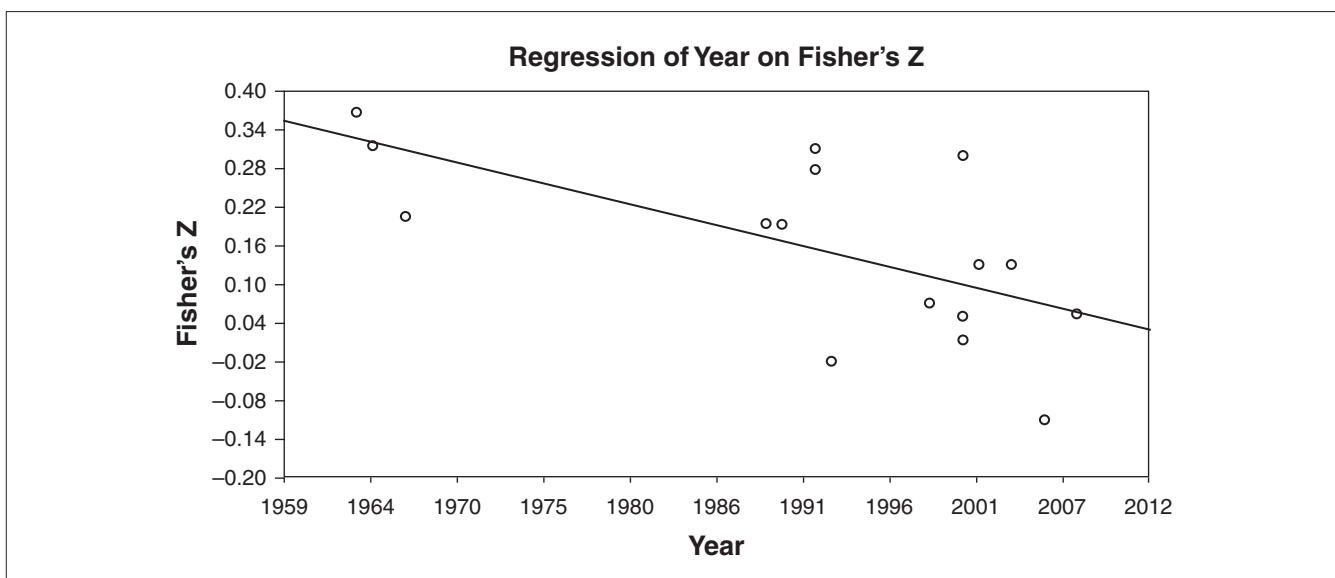**Figure 1.** Metaregression of publication date on extrinsic religiosity–prejudice correlation

Figure 2. Metaregression of publication date on fundamentalism–prejudice correlation

Similarly, the correlation between religious fundamentalism and racism became less positive in recent years (see Figure 2), fixed $\beta = -.01$, $Q_M(1) = 29.09$; random $\beta = -.01$, $Q_M(1) = 10.81$ (p values $< .01$). The random but not the fixed model was appropriately specified, fixed $Q_R(12) = 39.82$ ($p < .01$); random $Q_R(20) = 12.63$ (*ns*). Also, the effect for religious identification diminished in recent years, but this effect was significant only for the fixed effects model, fixed $\beta = -.003$, $Q_M(1) = 25.21$ ($p < .01$). Nonetheless, the random but not the fixed model was appropriately specified for identification, fixed $Q_R(17) = 344.36$ ($p < .01$); random $Q_R(17) =$ 18.96 (*ns*). As anticipated, the magnitude of effects for intrinsic religiosity and quest did not vary over time.

To better understand how year moderated the effects of religious identification, extrinsic religiosity, and fundamentalism, we compared the results in studies before and after 1986 (the midpoint of our review). As shown in Table 4, stronger effects for extrinsic religiosity and fundamentalism emerged prior to 1986 than after 1986, although they were still significant in later years. The correlation between religious identification and racial prejudice was stronger in studies prior to 1986 than after 1986; however, the effect was significant only under the fixed effects model.

Table 4. Comparison of Pre-1986 and Post-1986 Effects

Moderator	k	Fixed			Random		
		r	95% CI	Q_B	r	95% CI	Q_B
Religious identification				11.59**			0.25
Pre-1986	11	.12	.10/.15		.14	.02/.25	
Post-1986	9	.06	.03/.09		.10	−.03/.22	
Extrinsic religiosity				25.52**			4.63*
Pre-1986	9	.25	.21/.29		.24	.14/.33	
Post-1986	13	.11	.08/.15		.12	.07/.17	
Religious fundamentalism				23.77**			10.03**
Pre-1986	3	.28	.22/.35		.29	.19/.38	
Post-1986	11	.09	.06/.13		.09	.02/.16	

Note: r = mean effect size coded so that positive numbers reflect greater religious racism and negative numbers reflect greater racial tolerance; 95% CI = 95% confidence interval for effect size; Q_B = portion of homogeneity statistic explained by pre- or post-1986 publications. 1986 = midpoint for year of publication.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 5. Correlations Among Fundamentalism, Prejudice, and Authoritarianism

Variables	Fixed		Random		
	r	95% CI	r	95% CI	Q
Fundamentalism and prejudice	.20	.15/.24	.17	.09/.25	19.39**
Fundamentalism and authoritarianism	.68	.65/.70	.66	.54/.75	101.42**
Authoritarianism and prejudice	.41	.37/.45	.40	.32/.47	21.90**
Fundamentalism and prejudice controlling for authoritarianism	−.11	−.16/−.07	−.12	−.19/−.04	16.98*

Note: k = 8. r = mean effect size coded so that positive numbers reflect greater religious racism and negative numbers reflect greater racial tolerance; 95% CI = 95% confidence interval for effect size; Q = homogeneity statistic.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Field of Research. For studies performed or published in social science fields (k = 23), greater religiosity was associated with greater racism, fixed r = .20 (95% confidence interval [CI] = .18/.23); random r = .20 (95% CI = .13/.26). For studies performed or published in religious fields (k = 4), greater religiosity was associated with greater racial tolerance, although the effect was significant only under the fixed effects model, fixed r = −.18 (95% CI = −.21/−.16); random r = −.10 (95% CI = −.39/.20). The effects reported in fields or outlets representing the integration of social science and religion (k = 18) yielded estimates in between these two groups, fixed r = .03 (95% CI = .01/.06); random r = .04 (95% CI = −.02/.09).

Type of Racial Prejudice. We also tested the limits of our motivational analysis by evaluating the role of specific beliefs in accounting for racism effects. Consistent with a motivational analysis, extrinsic and fundamentalist motives that express conservative values were not more closely linked to racial prejudice measures that also tap principled conservative beliefs (e.g., modern racism; McConahay, 1986) than to other measures of general anti-Black attitudes or affect.

Religious Fundamentalism, Authoritarianism, and Racism. We investigated whether the positive relation between religious fundamentalism and prejudice could be explained by the association with authoritarianism by comparing the zero-order correlation between fundamentalism and prejudice with the partial correlation controlling for authoritarianism. As shown in Table 5, eight studies included measures of fundamentalism and authoritarianism.[5] In strong support of mediation, the significant positive correlation between religious fundamentalism and prejudice disappeared after controlling for authoritarianism.

Intrinsic Religiosity and Social Desirability. To evaluate the role of social desirability in the responses of intrinsically religious people, we tested whether the racial tolerance that they showed on direct, self-report measures of racism was also found on indirect measures. Two studies reported the correlation between intrinsic religiosity and behavioral measures of prejudice in which White participants chose to interact with a White or Black person (Batson et al., 1978; Batson et al., 1986). Intrinsic religiosity was positively but nonsignificantly related to this behavioral indicator of prejudice, fixed r = .07 (95% CI = −.14/.27); random r = .06 (95% CI = −.20/.32); Q_w = 1.64 (*ns*). One of these studies also evaluated self-reported prejudice and reported a negative correlation with intrinsic religiosity (Batson et al., 1978), r = −.36 (95% CI = −.57/−.09). The comparison between the behavioral effects and the one self-report effect was significant, fixed $Q_B(1)$ = 6.14 (p < .05); random $Q_B(1)$ = 4.91 (p < .05). Also relevant to indirect assessments of racism, Rowatt and

Franklin (2004) reported that the race Implicit Association Test was unrelated to intrinsic religiosity ($r = .06$, *ns*).

Discussion

In our meta-analytic review, the paradox of religious racism was traced to the group-oriented motives that underlie religiosity. Simply identifying with a religious group seemed to establish intergroup dynamics of favoring the in-group and derogating racial out-groups. Furthermore, the specific values of social conformity and respect for tradition that motivated devotion to religious practice also motivated the acceptance of established racial divisions in society.

Although religious people might be expected to express humanitarian acceptance of others, their humanitarianism is expressed primarily toward in-group members. Thus, we found little evidence that religiosity motivated racial tolerance. People who were intrinsically religious did express racial tolerance on direct measures of racism, but this response appeared to reflect social desirability concerns (Sedikides & Gebauer, 2010). They were not racially tolerant on indirect measures of racism that were less controllable or less obviously markers of racial prejudice (e.g., choosing to engage in interracial interactions). Only those individuals with an agnostic, questioning orientation toward religion (i.e., quest) proved racially tolerant.

Religion as an Intergroup Phenomenon. Stronger religious identification seemed to organize people's social perceptions in much the same way as other social identities, leading the religious to respond to diverse others as out-group members. As noted in the introduction, this perception might reflect the practice of religion largely within race such that race serves as a proxy for religious group identity. Furthermore, religious groups may promote ethnocentrism by sharply differentiating between believers and nonbelievers (Altemeyer, 2003) and may perceive resource conflicts between themselves and out-group members (Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999). These factors explain why people with a stronger religious identity expressed more prejudice toward other races.

A related reason why religious in-groups may be prejudiced toward dissimilar others is that the divine in religious worship is often imbued with in-group attributes. That is, religious figures are constructed in believers' own images. As Xenophanes in the sixth century B.C. noted, "Greek gods were invariably fair skinned and blue-eyed whereas African gods were invariably dark skinned and dark-eyed (joking that cows would surely worship gods that were strikingly cowlike)" (quoted in Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007, p. 865). In psychological research, anthropomorphic images of God are evident in the findings that people with high self-esteem tend to have loving images of God (Benson & Spilka, 1973), people who are lonely tend to have wrathful images of God (Schwab & Petersen, 1990), and women tend to have

nurturing images of God (Potvin, 1977). In general, the tendency to depict deities as similar to self likely contributes to distinctions between a religious in-group of similar others and out-groups of differing others.

Although in-group identification does not always lead to out-group derogation, the moral superiority that religious groups afford to themselves and their beliefs may contribute to intergroup prejudice (Brewer, 1979). This sense of moral rightness is promoted by teachings of in-group loyalty that strengthen a sense of a moral community (Graham & Haidt, 2010). As a consequence, the religious may derogate out-group members as morally inferior.

Religious Conventionalism and Racism. Our review also traced religious racism to the life values of social conformity and respect for tradition. Social conformity values motivated two forms of religiosity in our review—extrinsic religiosity, which is focused on the instrumental, social benefits of religion, and fundamentalism, which reflects an unwavering certainty in the truth of religious belief. As evidence that the extrinsically religious and religious fundamentalists expressed racism as part of their acceptance of social convention, the magnitude of these religious racism effects decreased over time as normative support for the overt expression of prejudice declined in U.S. society. As expected, no changes over time were found for intrinsic religiosity and quest, religious motivations unrelated to social conformity, and, furthermore, religious in-group identification showed an unreliable change over time.

That fundamentalism is the religious manifestation of RWA (Altemeyer, 2003; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) provides a complementary explanation for why fundamentalism correlated positively with racial prejudice. Religious fundamentalism is associated with a rigid, dogmatic cognitive style that preferences one truth and way of being over others and thereby promotes in-group favoritism and out-group derogation. In support, the positive correlation between fundamentalism and prejudice disappeared after controlling for authoritarianism. Thus, the religious fundamentalism–racism relation plausibly was because of authoritarian beliefs as well as conformity values.

Agnostic Beliefs and Racial Tolerance. Agnosticism, as reflected in an open-minded questioning of religious doctrine, emerged as the one disposition in our review that was consistently related to racial tolerance. Although this orientation is sometimes treated as a form of religiosity (Batson & Stocks, 2005), high scores on the quest scale typify people who do not participate in organized religion or have a strong belief in God (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Lavrič & Flere, 2008). In addition, questioning agnosticism is closely linked with self-directedness, a value orientation negatively related to self-reported religiosity (Saroglou et al., 2004). Although the quest scale initially was developed to capture a type of religiosity (Batson, 1976), in our review only a minority of studies assessed quest with solely religious participants

($k = 4$ and $k = 7$, for all religious and for varied religiosity, respectively). For these reasons, we interpret quest as agnostic doubt about religion, with the racial tolerance expressed by questioning agnostics as one piece of our overall conclusion that religiosity is not associated with racial tolerance.

Individual Differences in Motivations. In our review, the life values that promote religious racism were inferred from specific scales of religious motivations, especially extrinsic and fundamentalist religiosity. This inference is bolstered by the evidence that religious racism varied across subject samples, depending on how strongly individuals held the relevant life values. One such analysis compared findings in highly religious samples to those in samples of varied religiosity. As anticipated, racism was more strongly related to extrinsic and fundamentalist religiosity in samples solely composed of religious people, who should have been especially motivated by social conformity values.

Additional support for our inference that basic life values underlie religious racism comes from supplementary analyses on the sex composition of the samples. Religious racism should vary with sex because women, compared with men, tend to hold stronger benevolent values that promote religiosity and stronger universalist values that promote tolerance toward out-group members (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). To test this idea, we performed a metaregression using the studies in our sample that reported the specific proportion of male to female participants ($k = 36$) and obtained the anticipated negative relation between percentage of female participants and religious–racism effect size (fixed $\beta = -.007$, random $\beta = -.006$, p values $< .01$). That is, studies with higher percentages of women were more likely to report that religiosity promoted racial tolerance. In summary, analyses on the attributes of the participants in the original studies were consistent with our claim that basic life values underlie the religion–prejudice relation.

Church Attendance. Past investigations of the relation between religiosity and racism have used frequency of church attendance as a proxy for religious motives (Allport & Ross, 1967). People who attended only infrequently were thought to be extrinsically motivated for social benefit, whereas those who attended more frequently were thought to be intrinsically motivated. In this view, greater racism would be found among occasional attendees, who are likely especially responsive to social tradition.

We investigated this possibility with five studies that met the criteria for inclusion in our review.[7] A high level of racial prejudice was expressed by 52% (fixed) and 49% (random) of people who never or rarely attended church, 66% (fixed and random) of people with moderate attendance (a few times a year to almost weekly), and 60% (fixed) and 57% (random) of people who attended often (once a week or more). Although this overall pattern suggests an inverted U shape, with the most prejudice among the moderate attendees, comparisons between these groups revealed a significant difference only between the low and moderate frequency groups ($p < .01$). These findings converge with the overall pattern of results in our review, with evidence of racism among those who are religious for social conformity reasons and a lack of evidence that those who are religious for more benevolent reasons are more racially tolerant than the nonreligious.

Conclusion

Our account of the relation between religiosity and racism highlighted the broader motives and values that guide these two sets of beliefs. Specifically, the intergroup dynamics established by religious identification along with conventional life values appeared to drive religious racism.

The participants in the studies we reviewed were predominantly White Christians in the United States. To what extent can our conclusions about religiosity and prejudice be generalized to other cultures and religious faiths? Given that divinities are accorded attributes of the religious groups and that all religions teach moral superiority, we anticipate that religious group identification is typically associated with out-group derogation. An additional reason to suspect that our findings hold across world religions comes from evidence that the conservative values that promote both religiosity and racism are stable across cultures and across religious faiths. Cross-cultural investigations have yielded a surprising degree of convergence in the values underlying world religions (Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Saroglou et al., 2004). For example, in Saroglou et al.'s (2004) cross-cultural analysis, religiosity was promoted by values of conventionalism and benevolence among Catholics, Muslims, and Jews, and religious participation was associated with conservative values across 71 nations and most world religions in a review by Norris and Inglehart (2004). Moreover, we found no relation between the endorsement of religious doctrine specific to the Christian faith and racial prejudice. It thus seems that the motives to be religious also are a motivator of racism, and these motives appear to be broadly applicable as a framework for understanding religious racism.

Notes

1. These broad values or life principles span particular content domains and thereby organize the belief systems of religiosity and of racial attitudes. The organizing influences of values might reflect that people form specific beliefs about religion and racism and infer broader value orientations from these beliefs or that people establish broader values and then develop specific beliefs in line with them.

2. Values of social convention promote religiosity even in countries in which religion is not a government-sanctioned social tradition. For example, in a cross-national analysis, individuals' conventionalist values enhanced their religiosity in Eastern European countries (albeit slightly less than in other countries) that had experienced opposition between church and state (Roccas & Schwartz, 1997).

3. We investigated whether the magnitude of the effects averaging across religious motivations varied based on whether the type of prejudice measured was exclusively toward Blacks or toward multiple racial groups. Religious racism was stronger with prejudice toward Blacks; however, this effect was significant only under the fixed effects model.

4. One outlying effect size was excluded from the analyses involving extrinsic religiosity (i.e., King & Hunt, 1972; $r = -.05$). This was one of only two negative effects for extrinsic religiosity. The specific extrinsic scale items in this study were associated with a socially desirable, proreligious response bias that also might promote reports of racial tolerance. When the effect was retained in the analyses, the overall mean effect size for extrinsic religiosity remained positive and significant.

5. For belief/orthodoxy, 10 studies were missing using the fixed effect model. No studies were missing using the random effects model.

6. To increase the reliability of the test for mediation, we included two studies with Canadian participants in the analysis of religious fundamentalism and authoritarianism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Wylie & Forest, 1992). However, excluding these studies did not change the results.

7. The studies included in the analysis of church attendance were Aldrich, Freeze, Wood, Labrecque, and Hall (2008), Burnham, Connors, and Leonard (1969), Eckhardt (1970), Friedrichs (1971), and Johnson (1977).

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