We propose that the internalization of orthodox Christian beliefs serves as a basis for a personal moral standard that discourages prejudice against others as well as for self-critical emotions that follow upon behaving in a discriminatory manner. Two correlational studies tested hypotheses derived from our theory. Study 1 demonstrated that to the extent people endorse orthodox Christian beliefs, they report an internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals. Study 2 demonstrated that, when controlling for the effects of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was related to positive attitudes toward homosexuals as individuals or as a group, but not toward homosexuality as a behavior or lifestyle.

The role of religion is paradoxical. It makes prejudice and it unmakes prejudice. . . . The sublimity of religious ideals is offset by the horrors of persecution in the name of these same ideals. Some people say the only cure for prejudice is more religion; some say the only cure is to abolish religion. (Allport 1954:413)

As the quotation from Allport suggests, empirical findings on the relationship between religion and prejudice have historically been far from straightforward. Early studies on racial prejudice demonstrated that people who claimed to be more religious also reported greater levels of prejudice (Adorno et al. 1950; Allport and Kramer 1946; Rokeach 1960). However, it is now widely accepted, based on the weight of empirical research, that upon controlling for certain variables, internalization of religious (Christian) beliefs is inversely related to racial prejudice among whites (e.g., Herek 1987; Rowatt and Franklin 2004; see Donahue 1985 for a review).

The relationship between religion and prejudice against homosexuals, however, remains complex. Studies on self-reported attitudes as well as studies about the behavioral expression of prejudice have defined and measured both religion and prejudice against homosexuals differently. Furthermore, studies have found religion to relate to prejudice against homosexuals to different degrees or even in opposite directions (Laythe et al. 2002). It is difficult to sort out a clear picture of the relationship between religion and homosexual prejudice from the myriad of empirical findings, in part, because the literature lacks a coherent theoretical framework for explaining how the internalization of religious beliefs affects attitudes and behavior toward homosexuals specifically and out-groups more generally.

Our research aims to fill this gap in the existing literature. Social-psychological theories about motivation to respond to out-groups without prejudice provide the basis for a theory about how the content of religious beliefs—specifically orthodox Christian beliefs—affect attitudes and behavior toward homosexuals and other out-groups. We present the results of two correlational studies that test our theory and reconcile seemingly paradoxical findings of previous research.
The Complex Relationship Between Christianity and Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

Researchers have argued that some prejudices such as racism are proscribed by organized religion, whereas others such as prejudice toward homosexuals are nonproscribed—tolerated or even encouraged (e.g., Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis 1993; Herek 1987; McFarland 1989). Indeed, some Protestant Christian denominations have formally developed anti-homosexual policies. For instance, the Presbyterian Church (United States) adopted a rule in 1996 to prevent the ordination of gay or lesbian ministers (Finlay and Walther 2003), and the Southern Baptist Convention opposes legalization of homosexual unions, including civil unions (Van Geest 2007). Christian denominations have opposed homosexuality because they define it as a moral issue, rather than simply a political issue (Van Geest 2007). The proponents of such opposition often draw support from the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22) and the New Testament (e.g., Romans 1:18–32), which they argue explicitly denounces homosexuality as immoral.

Given such positions, it is perhaps not surprising that numerous studies have found a positive relationship between religion defined in various ways and self-reported prejudice toward homosexuals (e.g., Finlay and Walther 2003; Haslam and Levy 2006; Herek 1987; Herek and Capitanio 1996; Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman 1980; McFarland 1989). For instance, McFarland (1989) found that religious fundamentalism (RF)—the belief in strict adherence to the fundamental or basic tenets of one’s religion (Pancer et al. 1995)—correlated positively with discriminatory attitudes toward homosexuals and other social groups. Hunsberger (1996), too, found that RF was predictive of prejudiced attitudes toward homosexuals among Christians as well as adherents of Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism.

The way people experience religion may also influence the relationship between religion and attitudes toward homosexuals. Allport and Ross (1967:434) defined two ways of experiencing religion. Those who have an extrinsic orientation are “disposed to use religion for their own ends.” These people hold casually to their religious beliefs or selectively shape them to fit more primary needs. In contrast, people who have an intrinsic orientation “find their master motive in their religion.” People with an extrinsic orientation use their religion whereas those with an intrinsic orientation live their religion. Herek (1987:34) found that, in a sample of presumably Christian students, intrinsic orientation positively predicted prejudice toward homosexuals. He concluded that an intrinsic orientation “does not foster unequivocal acceptance of others but instead encourages tolerance toward specific groups that are accepted by Judeo-Christian teachings.”

The picture is complicated by studies that tease apart the effects of different dimensions of religion and by studies that control for the influence of other variables that relate to prejudice such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). For example, Kirkpatrick (1993) examined whether an intrinsic orientation and Christian orthodoxy (CO)—the degree to which one accepts central, fundamental tenets of the Christian faith—predicted attitudes toward homosexuals based on selected items from Herek’s (1987) scale of attitudes toward homosexuals. In the total sample, both an intrinsic orientation and CO significantly predicted prejudiced attitudes (r = .18 and r = .15, respectively). However, when controlling for the effects of RF, CO emerged as a negative predictor of prejudice in one sample and as unrelated to prejudice in another. Similarly, Fulton, Gorsuch, and Maynard (1999) found that, when they controlled for RF, the relationship between an intrinsic orientation and anti-gay attitudes was essentially zero.

Furthermore, Laythe et al. (2002) found that, by itself, CO was unrelated to racial prejudice but positively related to prejudice toward homosexuals. When controlling for both RWA and RF, CO emerged as a negative predictor of racial prejudice and also of homosexual prejudice. This empirical evidence seems to support Laythe et al.’s (2002:630–31) conclusion that “orthodox Christian beliefs per se, when empirically disentangled from the confounding influences of authoritarianism and fundamentalism, appears to be a factor that ‘unmakes’ prejudice against gays and lesbians much as it does with racial prejudice.” Similarly, Duck and Hunsberger (1999) found
that statistically controlling for RWA resulted in an increase in the negative relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and proscribed prejudice (racism) and a decrease in the positive relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and nonproscribed prejudice (prejudice against homosexuals).

Presumably, then, had Herek (1987), McFarland (1989), and others controlled for RWA, they would not have found a positive relationship between the internalization of Christian beliefs and prejudice against homosexuals. In addition, as Batson et al. (1999) noted, measures of attitudes toward homosexuals as a social group (e.g., Herek 1987, 1988; Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman 1980) often have been confounded with attitudes toward homosexuality as a behavior or lifestyle. Thus, it is possible that the endorsement of Christian beliefs serves as a basis for a personal standard that prohibits prejudice against homosexuals as a group in the same way that it prohibits prejudice against African Americans as a group.

Several researchers have addressed this possibility (e.g., Bassett et al. 2003, 2005; Rosik 2007a, 2007b; Wilkinson and Roys 2005). Bassett et al. (2005) found that responses on their Sexual Orientation and Practice (SOAP) scale—a measure designed to differentiate attitudes toward homosexual persons from attitudes toward homosexual behavior—predicted the amount of money participants were willing to donate to a church that accepted both homosexual persons as members and homosexual behavior in the context of a committed relationship.

Rosik (2007a) subjected Herek’s (1998) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG-R) to an exploratory factor analysis and four factors emerged. The first—a “Condemnation-Tolerance” factor—consisted of items relating to the morality and naturalness of homosexual practice. The conservative Christian participants interpreted all of these items as “anti-religious.” The remaining factors comprised items that related to homosexuals and attitudes on gay civil rights issues. Rosik (2007b:150) subsequently found that three other measures of orthodox Christian beliefs—religious commitment, intrinsic religiousness, and belief in the authority of the Bible—“were all significantly predicted by the Condemnation-Tolerance component of the ATLG-R.” Also, none of the religious dependent variables were significantly related to the items comprising the other components of the ATLG-R. Thus, for devout orthodox Christians, the relationship between the religious variables and the four factors of the ATLG-R was significant only for the items perceived as anti-religious that comprised the condemnation-tolerance component.

The Present Research

Rowatt and Franklin (2004) suggested that genuine internalization of orthodox Christian beliefs underlies the faith of the intrinsically religious but not that of the extrinsically religious. Supporting this idea, they found that the Christian orthodox scale is strongly correlated with an intrinsic orientation but not with an extrinsic orientation. It is possible, then, that the internalization of orthodox Christian beliefs is responsible for the negative relationships between prejudice and an intrinsic orientation as well as between prejudice and RF reported in studies that controlled for the effects of RWA.

The reason that genuine internalization of orthodox Christian beliefs is associated with lower levels of prejudice may be found in social-psychological theories about the motivations underlying the expression and suppression of prejudice (e.g., Crandall and Eshleman 2003; Devine et al. 2002; Monteith, Devine, and Zuwerink 1993; Plant and Devine 1998). According to these theories, prejudice is related to the source of an individual’s motivation to respond in a nonprejudiced manner; that is, whether motivation is derived from internal standards (i.e., convictions) or from external standards (i.e., social norms). Plant and Devine (1998) developed scales to measure the degree to which motivation to respond without prejudice is derived from internal versus external sources (the IMS and EMS, respectively). They found that
racial prejudice was positively related to scores on the EMS and negatively related to scores on the IMS.

In this view, people who are low in prejudice have personal standards that call for less prejudiced conduct than people high in prejudice. Moreover, their standards appear to be derived from their own internalized convictions. As a result, they feel a strong obligation to abide by their internal standards as well as feel guilt and self-criticism when they violate them (Monteith 1993). In contrast, people high in prejudice have only weakly internalized nonprejudiced convictions, and thus are more responsive to prevailing social norms—their perception of how others expect them to behave (Devine et al. 1991; Monteith, Devine, and Zuwerink 1993). Consequently, people high in prejudice suppress prejudice, not out of motivation to live up to internal moral standards, but out of fear of social sanctions (Monteith, Deenen, and Tooman 1996; Wittenbrink and Henly 1996).

We contend that religion differentially provides a basis for an internal nonprejudiced standard of conduct. The research described above suggests that for people who have strongly internalized orthodox Christian beliefs (i.e., score high on the Christian orthodoxy scale), religion serves as a standard of conduct that has been fully adopted as part of their definitions of self. They feel a strong motivation to abide by this “Christian standard” and experience negative, self-critical emotions such as guilt and shame when they violate it. For those who score low on the CO scale, religion merely provides a set of external norms to which they feel more or less compelled to conform.

Our theory is that insofar as orthodox Christian beliefs are strongly internalized, they serve as a basis for a personal moral standard that does not allow prejudice. Our theory, however, does not preclude the acceptance of a biblical view of homosexuality as immoral. We conducted two correlational studies to test hypotheses derived from our theory. Study 1 tested the hypothesis that insofar as people endorse orthodox Christian beliefs, they have a high internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals. Study 2 addressed the methodological ambiguities in previous self-report studies on the relationship between religion and prejudice against homosexuals. Study 2 tested the hypothesis that orthodox Christian beliefs are differentially related to attitudes toward homosexuals as individuals or as a group, versus attitudes toward homosexuality as a behavior or lifestyle.

**Study 1**

In Study 1, we examined the relationship between endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs and the degree to which people possess an internal nonprejudiced standard of conduct toward homosexuals. Importantly, we used measures that do not confound homosexuals as a social group with homosexuality as a behavioral practice or lifestyle. We also examined the relationship between the endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs and the degree to which people possess an internal nonprejudiced standard of conduct toward African Americans. Furthermore, we measured and statistically controlled for both RWA and political conservatism.

**Method**

**Participants**

Sixty-four undergraduate students (26 males, 38 females) participated in this study in exchange for extra credit in their sociology courses. We analyzed data only from white heterosexual students ($N = 53$: 21 males, 32 females). Of those participants, 23 (43 percent) were Protestants, 12 (23 percent) were Catholics, 1 was Jewish, 8 (15 percent) were Muslims, and 9 (17 percent) indicated “other” as their religious affiliation.
**Procedure**

Participants completed the study individually. Upon arriving at the laboratory, the researcher invited participants to complete five questionnaires. The first questionnaire included two items that measured political conservatism (“Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a republican, democrat, independent, or what?”—1 = strong democrat, 7 = strong republican, and “Where would you place yourself on the following scale of political views?”—1 = extremely liberal, 7 = extremely conservative). Responses to the two items were highly correlated ($r = .69$, $p < .01$). Therefore, we averaged responses to the two items to form an aggregate measure of political conservatism.

The second questionnaire consisted of Plant and Devine’s (1998) IMS and EMS for African Americans. The IMS consists of five items assessing internal motivation to respond without prejudice (e.g., “Because of my personal values, I believe that using stereotypes about African Americans is wrong”). The EMS consists of five items assessing motivation to respond without prejudice derived from external sources (e.g., “Because of today’s politically correct standards, I try to appear nonprejudiced toward African Americans”). For both scales, participants indicated their agreement with each item using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .86 for the IMS and .81 for the EMS.

Next, participants completed Altemeyer’s (1996) RWA scale. The RWA consists of 34 items measuring authoritarian submission, aggression, and conventionalism (e.g., “Once our government leaders give us the ‘go ahead,’ it will be the duty of every patriotic citizen to help stomp out the rot that is poisoning our country from within”). Participants responded to each item using a scale that ranged from −4 (very strongly disagree) to +4 (very strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .94.

Fourth, participants completed versions of Plant and Devine’s (1998) IMS and EMS scales adapted to measure motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals.¹ For each item, the target group, “homosexuals” simply replaced “African Americans” from the original scales (for the IMS, Cronbach’s alpha was .86, for the EMS, it was .83).

Finally, participants completed Fullerton and Hunsberger’s (1982) CO scale. The CO consists of 24 items that assess endorsement of central tenets of orthodox Christianity (e.g., “Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God provided a way for the forgiveness of humanity’s sins”). Participants responded to each item using a scale ranging from −4 (strongly disagree) to +4 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .97.

**Results**

**Gender Effects**

We coded gender (1 = male, −1 = female) and then regressed scores on the IMS for African Americans onto the gender variable, CO, and the gender × CO interaction term. Importantly, there were no interaction effects involving gender and CO on either measure. The relationship between CO and overt expressions of prejudice toward African Americans and homosexuals on the IMS scale was the same for men and women. Therefore, all remaining analyses were collapsed across gender.

¹ We use the term “homosexual” in this article to refer to same-sex sexual relations in general. However, many respondents may interpret the term “homosexuals” to refer only to gay men; therefore, measures that use this term (such as the IMS in Study 1 and the HATH in Study 2) may not fully assess attitudes toward lesbians. This, of course, would limit applicability of the present findings to lesbian attitudinal targets.
Table 1: Zero-order intercorrelations between CO, RWA, and political conservatism and the dependent variables: IMS and EMS scores for African-American targets, and IMS and EMS scores for homosexual targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RWA</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Political conservatism</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EMS for African Americans</td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. IMS for African Americans</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. EMS for homosexuals</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. IMS for homosexuals</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>-.47**</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant, \( p < .01 \).

Note: CO = Christian orthodoxy; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; EMS = external motivation to respond without prejudice; IMS = internal motivation to respond without prejudice.

Predictors of Prejudice Toward Homosexuals

Table 1 displays the zero-order correlations between the IMS for homosexuals and the various predictor variables. As Table 1 indicates, CO was not related to homosexual IMS scores (\( r = -.04, ns \)). In contrast, RWA and political conservatism were each strongly predictive of homosexual IMS scores (\( r = -.61, p < .001 \) and \( r = -.47, p < .001 \), respectively). Also, consistent with previous research (Rowatt and Franklin 2004), CO was strongly correlated with RWA (\( r = .50, p < .001 \)) and the measure of political conservatism (\( r = .44, p < .01 \)). RWA was also strongly correlated to the measure of political conservatism (\( r = .74, p < .001 \)). Not surprisingly, then, political conservatism was related to IMS scores (\( r = -.47, p < .001 \)).

We conducted a multiple regression analysis on the IMS scores to simultaneously control for the influence of RWA, political conservatism, and CO. When this was done, CO related positively to the homosexual IMS score (\( \beta = .28, t = -2.08, p < .05 \)). In keeping with our hypothesis, endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was positively related to an internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals. RWA remained negatively associated with the homosexual IMS score (\( \beta = -.71, t = -4.15, p < .01 \)) and political conservatism did not predict the homosexual IMS score (\( \beta = -.10, ns \)).

In addition, the partial correlation between CO and the homosexual IMS score, controlling for the effects of RWA and political conservatism, was .29, \( p < .05 \). For people with the same scores on the RWA and political conservatism measures, there was a significant positive correlation between CO scores and homosexual IMS scores.

Predictors of Prejudice Toward African Americans

As shown in Table 1, zero-order correlations indicate that CO was only weakly correlated with the IMS for African Americans (\( r = .14, p = .32 \)). In addition, RWA was negatively correlated with IMS scores (\( r = -.35, p < .01 \)), as was political conservatism (\( r = -.46, p < .001 \)).

We subjected the African-American IMS scores to the same multiple regression analyses described above for homosexual IMS scores (see Table 2). CO was positively related to
Table 2: Multiple regression of the homosexual IMS and African-American IMS on measures of Christian orthodoxy, right-wing authoritarianism, and political conservatism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Homosexual IMS</th>
<th></th>
<th>African Americans</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian orthodoxy</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.123)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.103)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-wing authoritarianism</td>
<td>−.837</td>
<td>−.71**</td>
<td>−.221</td>
<td>−.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.202)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.175)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political conservatism</td>
<td>−.119</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−.424</td>
<td>−.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.209)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.175)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.939)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.811)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$ .45

$F$ 12.55 (3, 46)***

| | | | | |
| | | | | |

$^*p < .05; \text{**}p < .01; \text{***}p < .001$.

**Note:** Standard errors are presented in parentheses.

African-American IMS scores ($\beta = .32$, $t = −2.14$, $p < .05$), and endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was positively related to the internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward African Americans. In contrast, RWA and political conservatism were negatively related to African-American IMS scores ($\beta = −.24$, $t = −1.26$, $p = .22$ and $\beta = −.45$, $t = −2.43$, $p < .05$, respectively). The partial correlation between CO and African-American IMS scores, controlling for the effects of RWA and political conservatism, was .30, $p < .05$.

**Discussion**

The results of Study 1 support our hypothesis. Using a measure that did not confound attitudes toward homosexuals with attitudes toward homosexuality, we found that CO was positively related to the IMS scores for both homosexuals and African Americans when controlling for the effects of RWA and political conservatism. The internalization of orthodox Christian beliefs was associated with greater internal motivation to respond in a nonprejudiced manner toward both homosexuals and African Americans. These findings extend previous research (e.g., Batson et al. 1986; Rowatt and Franklin 2004) by showing that orthodox Christian beliefs can serve as a basis for an internal standard to respond without prejudice against homosexuals and African Americans.

Consistent with Rosik (2007b), the findings of Study 1 suggest that the negative relationship between CO and homosexual attitudes that Herek (1987) and others found is likely due to scale items assessing attitudes toward homosexuality (rather than homosexuals) as well as a failure to hold RWA constant. Study 2 was designed to more directly test this possibility.

**STUDY 2**

As other researchers (e.g., Bassett et al. 2001; Rosik 2007b) have suggested, it is a common and legitimate position in Christian ideology that one can have different attitudes toward homosexuals as individuals and homosexuality as a practice. Yet, self-report measures of homosexual prejudice have obscured this distinction (e.g., Herek 1987, 1988; Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman 1980). Study 2 addresses this issue. It expands upon research by Rosik (2007b) by using different measures of homosexual prejudice, different measures of religion, and different data analytic...
methods. Our study examined more directly the relationship between endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs and attitudes toward both homosexual people and toward homosexuality. We also measured and statistically controlled for RWA. Finally, we included participants from two state universities: Western Michigan University (WMU) and Western Carolina University (WCU) rather than from only a small Christian liberal arts college. Using Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman’s (1980) Heterosexuals Attitudes Toward Homosexuals (HATH) scale, Study 2 tested the hypothesis that CO is differentially related to attitudes toward homosexuals as individuals or as a group versus homosexuality as a behavior or lifestyle.

Method

Subjects

A total of 187 undergraduate students (62 males, 125 females) participated in this study in exchange for extra credit in their sociology or psychology courses. We analyzed data only from white, heterosexual students (N = 169: 59 males, 110 females). Of those participants, 34 (20 percent) were Protestants, 40 (23 percent) were Catholics, 4 (2 percent) were Jewish, 0 were Muslim, 18 (11 percent) claimed no religious affiliation, and 72 (43 percent) indicated “other” as their religious affiliation.

Procedure

The procedure was similar to that of Study 1. Participants completed this study in small groups. The researcher invited participants to complete four questionnaires allegedly designed to assess social attitudes toward a variety of social groups and social issues. Participants completed the following questionnaires: Altemeyer’s (1996) RWA scale, Fullerton and Hunsberger’s (1982) CO scale, Plant and Devine’s (1998) IMS and EMS adapted to measure internal and external motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals, Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman’s (1980) HATH scale, and finally a questionnaire that assessed a variety of demographic variables.

Results

The HATH Scale

We first reverse-coded items on the HATH scale so that greater agreement with each item indicated a more positive attitude. We then subjected all 20 items to a reliability analysis. Cronbach’s alpha for the 20 items was .94. Therefore, we averaged responses to all 20 items to represent the HATH scale score. Next, we separated items on the HATH scale into two categories: those that reference homosexuals (e.g., “Homosexuals should not be allowed to work with children”—reverse coded, “Homosexuals should have equal opportunity employment”) and those that reference homosexuality (e.g., “Homosexuality is immoral”—reverse coded, “Homosexuality endangers the institution of the family”—reverse coded). Twelve items clearly referenced homosexuals and seven items clearly referenced homosexuality. In one item (“Homosexuals do need psychological treatment”), the expressed referent is homosexuals but the implied referent is homosexuality. Therefore, it was not included in either category.

We subjected the 12 “homosexuals referent” items to a reliability analysis. The Cronbach’s alpha was .90. We averaged the responses to the 12 items to represent the homosexual-referent scale. The Cronbach’s alpha for the seven “homosexuality-referent” items also was .90. Therefore, we also averaged responses to those seven items to represent the homosexuality-referent scale.
Table 3: Zero-order intercorrelations between Christian orthodoxy and right-wing authoritarianism and the four dependent variables: IMS for homosexuals, the HATH scale, the homosexual-referent scale, and the homosexuality-referent scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RWA</td>
<td>.63*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. IMS for homosexuals</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
<td>-.58*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. HATH scale</td>
<td>-.41*</td>
<td>-.76*</td>
<td>.73*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Homosexual-referent</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.69*</td>
<td>.69*</td>
<td>.97*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Homosexuality-referent</td>
<td>-.45*</td>
<td>-.76*</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.94*</td>
<td>.83*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scale</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Significant, \( p < .01 \).

*Note:* CO = Christian orthodoxy; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; IMS = internal motivation to respond without prejudice; HATH = heterosexuals’ attitudes toward homosexuals scale (Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman 1980).

**Gender Effects**

Following the procedures of Study 1, we regressed the HATH scale and IMS scores separately onto the gender variable, CO, and the gender \( \times \) CO interaction term. Again, the gender \( \times \) CO interaction effect was not significant on either of the dependent measures. Therefore, all remaining analyses were collapsed across the gender variable.

**Zero-Order Correlations**

The zero-order correlations among the four dependent variables (i.e., HATH scale, the homosexual-referent scale, the homosexuality-referent scale, and the homosexual IMS scale) and each of the predictor variables are presented in Table 3. As in Study 1, CO was strongly correlated with RWA (\( r = .63, p < .01 \)). Furthermore, both CO and RWA were negatively correlated with the measures of all four dependent variables (rs ranging from \(-.33, p < .01\) to \(-.76, p < .01\)).

**Multiple Regression Analyses**

We conducted a multiple regression analysis on the HATH scale to simultaneously control for the influence of RWA and CO.\(^2\) When RWA and CO were entered simultaneously into the regression analysis, CO related positively to scores on the HATH scale (\( \beta = .12, t = 1.84, p = .07 \)). The partial correlation between CO and scores on the HATH scale was .14, \( p = .07 \).

We found similar results on the homosexual-referent scale. As shown in Table 4, when RWA and CO were entered simultaneously into the regression analysis, CO related positively to scores on the homosexual-referent scale (\( \beta = .18, t = 2.52, p < .05 \)). The partial correlation between CO and the homosexual-referent scale was .19, \( p = .01 \). In keeping with our hypothesis, endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was associated with more positive attitudes toward homosexuals as individuals or as a social group when controlling for the effects of RWA.

\(^2\) Because political conservatism correlated so highly with RWA in Study 1, we did not include it as a control variable in Study 2.
Table 4: Multiple regression of the HATH scale, homosexual-referent scale, the homosexuality-referent scale, and the homosexual IMS scale on measures of Christian orthodoxy and right-wing authoritarianism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>HATH</th>
<th>Homosexual-Referent</th>
<th>Homosexuality-Referent</th>
<th>Homosexual IMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian orthodoxy</td>
<td>.0466</td>
<td>.0683</td>
<td>.0195</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.025)</td>
<td>(.027)</td>
<td>(.030)</td>
<td>(.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-wing authoritarianism</td>
<td>−.567</td>
<td>−.537</td>
<td>−.628</td>
<td>−.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.044)</td>
<td>(.047)</td>
<td>(.051)</td>
<td>(.110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.091)</td>
<td>(.099)</td>
<td>(.212)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (2, 166)</td>
<td>115.60***</td>
<td>83.28***</td>
<td>115.35***</td>
<td>44.19***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Note: Standard errors are presented in parentheses.
As can be seen in Table 4, the results on the homosexuality-referent scale revealed a different pattern of results. When RWA and CO were entered simultaneously into the regression analysis, CO was unrelated to scores on the homosexuality-referent scale ($\beta = .04, t = .66, ns$). Similarly, the partial correlation between CO and the homosexuality-referent scale was not significant, $p = .05$. Finally, supporting our hypothesis, the difference in the correlation between CO and the homosexual-referent scale ($\beta = .18$) and the correlation between CO and the homosexuality-referent scale ($\beta = .04$) was significant, $t(168) = 3.21, p < .01$.

We also conducted a multiple regression analysis on the IMS scores. When RWA and CO were entered simultaneously into the regression analysis, CO related positively to homosexual IMS scores ($\beta = .17, t = 2.15, p < .05$). The partial correlation between CO and IMS scores also was $.17, p < .05$. Replicating the findings of Study 1, endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was positively related to an internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals when the effects of RWA are controlled.

**Discussion**

The results of Study 2 support our hypothesis. When statistically holding constant the effect of RWA, participants reported more positive attitudes toward homosexuals to the extent that they endorsed orthodox Christian beliefs. The results also revealed that the endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was not related to attitudes toward homosexuality as a practice or lifestyle. Consistent with Bassett et al. (2001), these results suggest that Christians do indeed distinguish between homosexual individuals and homosexual practices or lifestyles. The results of Study 2 also replicated the findings of Study 1 indicating that orthodox Christian beliefs can serve as an internal standard that calls for nonprejudiced responses toward homosexuals.

**DISCUSSION**

In both Studies 1 and 2, the CO scale was negatively correlated to internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals. However, when controlling for RWA, the endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was associated with greater internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals (Studies 1 and 2) and less self-reported negative attitudes toward homosexuals (Study 2). This pattern of results suggests that RWA functioned to suppress the positive relationship between endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs and internal motivation to respond without prejudice. In addition, the results from Study 2 suggest that endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs was not related to attitudes toward homosexuality as a practice or lifestyle.

Taken together, the findings from Studies 1 and 2 support our theoretical framework for understanding how the endorsement of Christian teachings relates to prejudice and for reconciling seemingly disparate empirical findings. Studies that have found a positive relationship between religion and self-reported prejudice have either not controlled for the effects of RWA or have used measures that confounded attitudes toward homosexuals with attitudes toward homosexuality. Our findings suggest that, when controlling for authoritarian processes, the internalization of orthodox Christian beliefs serves as a basis for greater tolerance and acceptance of out-groups, including homosexuals. This standard, does not, however, preclude the acceptance of other Christian teachings that homosexuality is immoral. Thus, contrary to the conclusion made by Batson et al. (1999), when attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexuality are unconfounded, Christians can indeed separate their attitudes toward homosexual people from their attitudes toward homosexual behavior.
Directions for Future Research

Devine et al. (1991) and Monteith (1993) found that when people behave in a manner that is more prejudiced than is allowed by their personal standards, they feel some degree of guilt and regret. Thus, if endorsement of Christian beliefs is associated with an internal nonprejudiced standard of conduct then it seems plausible to hypothesize that people should feel more guilt and self-criticism upon behaving in a prejudiced manner to the extent that they have truly internalized Christian beliefs. Explicit tests of this hypothesis would expand the scope of our theory to address how endorsement of Christian beliefs moderates the psychological consequences of behaving in a prejudiced manner.

This research raises other theoretical questions to be addressed by future research. For instance, it raises the question of whether Christian beliefs operate on preconscious or automatic cognitive processes related to the activation of prejudice or whether they affect conscious, deliberate processes involved in the overt expression of prejudice. In other words, is the internalization of Christian teachings related to more positive implicit attitudes—evaluative appraisals that are activated unintentionally and spontaneously (Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Wittenbrink and Schwarz 2007)—or is it predictive only of explicit attitudes?

One possibility is that implicit attitudes do not vary as a function of endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs. High CO serves as the basis for an internal standard that disallows the overt expression of prejudice, while having no effect on the activation of implicit attitudes. This possibility is consistent with research by Devine (1989). She proposed that when a person encounters a member of a social group, cognitive activation of attitudes and attributes stereotypically associated with that group occurs preconsciously and automatically, based on a mental representation of the social group that had passively been formed through exposure to the mass culture. The person’s internal standards of nonprejudice conduct come into play at a subsequent, executive level of processing in which the person who has strongly internalized nonprejudiced convictions may overrule or suppress the stereotypic attributes and attitudes that had spontaneously come to mind. The person engages in a sort of mental self-censorship to align overt responses with internal standards.

Alternatively, it is possible that the nonprejudiced standard of conduct toward homosexuals held by those high in CO is so internalized that it inhibits or blocks the activation of prejudice and related stereotypes at a preconscious level. If that were the case, one would expect to find that CO is related to more positive attitudes toward homosexuals on measures of implicit attitudes. Consistent with this possibility, research suggests that preconscious facilitative and inhibitory processes are involved in the information processing needed to help people meet personal processing goals (Bargh and Barndollar 1996; Lepore and Brown 1997; Kawakami, Dion, and Dovidio 1998; Stangor, Thompson, and Ford 1998). Gollwitzer and Moskowitz (1996; Moskowitz et al. 1999), for instance, proposed that people who have strong motivations for egalitarian treatment of stigmatized groups have developed inhibition goals that operate preconsciously to inhibit stereotype activation upon exposure to a member of the stereotyped group. In a similar vein, Sinclair and Kunda (1999) found that a perceiver’s transient motivations to derogate or enhance a target can either augment or inhibit the cognitive accessibility of stereotypes corresponding to the target’s group membership.

Rowatt and colleagues (e.g., Rowatt and Franklin 2004; Rowatt et al. 2006) have directly addressed the relationship between CO and implicit prejudice. Rowatt and Franklin concluded that the internalization of Christian teachings of tolerance and acceptance of others could indeed reduce racial prejudice at the preconscious or implicit level of cognitive processing. However, Rowatt et al. (2006) found different results in a study that addressed the degree to which RF, CO, and RWA predicted implicit homosexual prejudice. Regression analyses revealed that RF was the strongest predictor of implicit attitudes toward homosexuals. To the extent that individuals believed their religion contains inerrant truths, the more negative their automatically activated
evaluations of homosexuals. CO and RWA also were related to negative implicit attitudes toward homosexuals.

Rowatt et al. (2006) measured implicit attitudes toward homosexuals and heterosexuals using an implicit association test (IAT) in which participants reacted to homosexual or heterosexual images (e.g., pictures of faces side-by-side: man-man; man-woman) that were paired with either positive or negative concepts (e.g., good, bad). It is possible that the homosexual images confounded homosexual persons and homosexuality. Thus, it remains possible that the endorsement of orthodox Christian beliefs is related to positive implicit attitudes toward homosexuals but not implicit attitudes toward homosexuality. Indeed, Wenger and Daniels (2006) found that, in domains not related to homosexuality, self-identified Christians distinguish between “sinful behavior” and “sinful people” at the implicit level of awareness.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that, when controlling for RWA, the acceptance of orthodox Christian beliefs was associated with stronger internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals (and African Americans) and less negative attitudes toward homosexuals. This research identifies orthodox Christian beliefs as a basis for an internal standard of nonprejudiced conduct, and a correlate of positive, tolerant attitudes toward homosexuals and other social out-groups. These findings have important implications for reducing prejudice. Consistent with Rowatt and Franklin (2004), our results suggest that the internalization of Christian teachings, in combination with the minimization of authoritarian processes, may contribute to the “unmaking” of prejudice.

REFERENCES


