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DOES RELIGION TEACH EMPATHY AND HELPFULNESS?
THE ROLE OF FUNDAMENTALISM AND TARGET OF NEED IN
THE RELIGION -- HELPING RELATION

By

Lynne Marie Jackson

B.A., University of Western Ontario, 1988

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
1993

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Abstract

The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that when social expectation for helping is low, empathy will facilitate, and distress will attenuate, helping (Batson, 1991). Based on this prediction, this study explored the relations among religious fundamentalism, emotional reactions of empathy and distress, and helping behaviour, for differing targets of need. One hundred thirty-three introductory psychology students (38 male, 95 female), of varying levels of religious fundamentalism, read a letter ostensibly written by a person hoping to attend university during the coming academic year. The letter indicated that the author had concerns about coping with the demands of university studies. The potential student was represented as being either a young heterosexual adult or a young homosexual adult. Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to offer help to such a student. Emotional reactions to the individual in need were assessed, as were numerous attitudinal and dispositional variables. It was predicted that individuals higher in religious fundamentalism would react with low empathy and high distress to the homosexual target, and hence, helping would be attenuated for this target. While fundamentalism was positively correlated with distress in reaction to the homosexual target, the predicted impact upon helping was not found. Results did indicate, however, that individuals high in fundamentalism were more likely to help when they perceived the target to be similar to themselves, and less likely to help when the target was perceived as dissimilar. Additionally, the helping of those higher in religious fundamentalism was less likely to be mediated by emotion than it was for those lower in religious fundamentalism. It is suggested that the helping behaviour of individuals higher in religious fundamentalism may be motivated by a desire to maintain values.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Abstract..... | i |
| Acknowledgements..... | ii |
| List of Tables..... | v |
| List of Figures..... | vi |
| Introduction and Review of Literature..... | 1 |
| Research Goal #1..... | 10 |
| Research Goal #2..... | 12 |
| Research Goal #3..... | 14 |
| Research Goal #4..... | 16 |
| Overview of the Study..... | 16 |
| Hypotheses..... | 17 |
| Method..... | 20 |
| Results..... | 27 |
| Help Measures..... | 27 |
| Attitudes Toward Homosexuals..... | 28 |
| Social Desirability..... | 28 |
| Hypothesis #1..... | 29 |
| Hypothesis #2..... | 30 |
| Hypothesis #3..... | 36 |
| Hypothesis #4..... | 36 |
| Hypothesis #5..... | 39 |
| Hypothesis #6..... | 43 |
| Fundamentalism and Similarity..... | 44 |
| Other Analyses..... | 51 |

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Discussion.. .. . | 52 |
| Preliminary Findings..... | 52 |
| Goals of the Research..... | 53 |
| Limitations..... | 63 |
| Summary..... | 64 |
| Conclusions..... | 65 |
| Implications..... | 65 |
| Notes..... | 68 |
| References..... | 70 |
| Appendix A..... | 76 |
| Appendix B..... | 80 |
| Appendix C..... | 82 |
| Appendix D..... | 84 |
| Appendix E..... | 85 |
| Appendix F..... | 87 |
| Appendix G..... | 89 |
| Appendix H..... | 92 |
| Appendix I..... | 94 |
| Appendix J..... | 95 |
| Appendix K..... | 96 |
| Appendix L..... | 97 |

List of Tables

- Table 1: Regression Statistics with Empathy Entered after Similarity
- Table 2: Regression Statistics with Distress Entered after Similarity
- Table 3: Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four
- Table 4: Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four Controlling for Similarity
- Table 5: Pearson Correlations of Fundamentalism with Empathy and Distress
- Table 6: Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Five
- Table 7: Mean Time Offered by Type of Help and Fundamentalism Level
- Table 8: Regression Statistics for Similarity Analysis
- Table 9: Regression Statistics for Low Fundamentalism Analysis
- Table 10: Regression Statistics for High Fundamentalism Analysis
- Table 11: Pearson Correlations among Similarity, Empathy, Distress and Fundamentalism
- Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Empathy, Distress, Help and Similarity by Gender

List of Figures

Figure 1. Similarity by Empathy Interaction for Help Intentions

Figure 2. Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Figure 3: Target by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Figure 4. Fundamentalism by Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Introduction and Review of the Literature

Are people who are religious more compassionate and giving than those who are not religious? Religious teachings related to loving and helping others have led some psychologists to suggest that being religious is associated with facilitation of compassion or empathy.¹ Studies in which participants provide estimates of their own degree of religiousness and compassion or empathy support this claim (e.g., Hsieh, 1987; Watson, Hood & Morris, 1985; Watson, Hood, Morris & Hall, 1984). If this relation actually exists, then we might expect religiousness to be associated with prosocial behaviour. Studies of religiousness and prosocial behaviour, however, have generally found no relation between these variables (see Batson, Schoenrade & Ventis, 1993, for a review). Additionally, positive relations have been found between religiosity and antisocial attitudes and behaviours such as prejudice and discrimination (see Batson et al., 1993; Gorsuch & Aleshire, 1974; Spilka, Hood and Gorsuch, 1985, for reviews). A common suggestion is that a person's religious orientation, or personal "style" of religion, is an important consideration with respect to resolving this paradox related to the social implications of religiousness.

In this regard, most of the relevant research examines relations of an intrinsic or extrinsic religious orientation with empathy and helping behaviour. The conceptualisation of these orientations is based on Allport's (1950) classic discussion of "mature" and "immature" religion, which was developed further by Allport and Ross (1967). Intrinsic religion refers to devout faith which is an end in itself, and which is a

central motive in life. Extrinsic religion refers to the use of, or affiliation with, religion as a means to other generally more selfish ends, such as self-presentation or security. According to Allport and Ross (1967) the intrinsic and extrinsic orientations are independent dimensions. This description of religious orientations suggests that an intrinsic, but not an extrinsic, religious orientation should be associated with increased concern for others, empathy and prosocial behaviour, since by definition only intrinsic religion is associated with incorporation of religious teachings into one's life. It has been argued that it is only to the extent that one incorporates religious teachings into one's life that the prosocial implications of religion will be apparent (e.g., Allport, 1966).

Some research has substantiated this claim. For example, Watson et al. (1985) studied the relation between religious orientation and dispositional emotional empathy. They reported positive correlations between intrinsic religion and dispositional empathy, and negative relations between extrinsic religion and empathy. This study, however, used self-report questionnaires to assess the variables of interest. Such self-report measures could be subject to social desirability biases (Batson et al., 1993). Watson et al. (1984), however, found empathy to be positively related to an intrinsic religious orientation and inversely related to an extrinsic orientation, and the authors claimed that a concern with social desirability was not responsible for the pattern of relations found. (Apparently they controlled social desirability statistically, using analysis of covariance.)

Hunsberger and Platonow (1986) addressed the issue of self-

report bias by examining the behavioural implications of religious orientation. The researchers provided an opportunity for students to engage in actual helping behaviour, by volunteering to help a charitable group. They found students who volunteered to help, and also actually did so, had higher intrinsic religion scores and lower extrinsic religion scores than did students who did not volunteer. Very few students of either religious orientation actually did help after volunteering, however, calling into question the appropriateness of suggesting that religion facilitates helping.

One explanation of the findings related to more compassion and helping associated with intrinsic than extrinsic religion is that some religions do teach compassion and concern for others, and that devout, intrinsic religion leads to an incorporation of these values into one's life, whereas an extrinsic orientation toward religion does not. This explanation is consistent with the reasoning of Allport and Ross (1967). A different explanation has been proposed by Batson et al. (1993). They have suggested that it is not the sincere concern for others of the individual with an intrinsic religious orientation which leads her or him to help, but rather the desire to see oneself and be seen by others in a favourable light which explains the relations. Intrinsic religion, according to these authors, is associated with a desire to present oneself as socially desirable. As such, they argue that the devoutly religious person reports being more compassionate in order to self-present, and helps for the egoistic reason of acquiring reward (social approval), not for the more altruistic goal of increasing the other's well being, as Allport likely would

have argued.

According to the account put forth by Batson et al. (1993), religion does have the potential to have a positive impact upon helping behaviour, but it is neither an intrinsic nor extrinsic orientation which is associated with the positive impact. They propose that a third independent dimension of religiosity, a "quest" religious orientation, should be associated with a positive impact upon helping behaviour. Quest refers to "an open-ended, active approach to existential questions that resists clear-cut, pat answers" (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991, p. 416). For the individual with a strong quest orientation, particular beliefs are not nearly so important as is grappling with existential questions. Unlike intrinsic religiosity, a quest orientation is associated with a creative and complex approach to religious issues. It is associated with looking to religion as a source for exploring existential questions, rather than as a source for providing pat answers. Accordingly, Batson et al. (1993) argue that an individual with a strong quest orientation is more likely than an individual stronger in intrinsic or extrinsic religiosity to explore the meaning of religious teachings, such as teachings related to loving and caring for others. So, according to Batson et al. (1993), a quest orientation could be expected to be associated with thinking carefully about such issues, whereas an intrinsic orientation is associated with reporting that loving and caring for others is important, for the sake of self-presentation.

In terms of the motivation for helping others in need, Batson et al. (1993) predicted that quest is associated with helping which is motivated

by the desire to improve the well being of others in need, because brotherhood is seriously considered, whereas an intrinsic religious orientation is associated with egoistic helping based on the pursuit of reward. Along with his coworkers, Batson has provided data which he suggests support his contentions.

At least four studies suggest that the helping of the person with an intrinsic religious orientation is egoistically motivated. In two of these studies, both whether or not help was offered and type of help offered to a person in need were examined. In both cases an intrinsic orientation was associated with a persistent form of helping. That is, help was given even when the target of need explicitly stated that she or he did not want help. A quest orientation related to a more tentative form of helping. Help was offered when it was wanted, and not when it was not wanted. The authors suggested that this tentative helping was more responsive to the actual needs of the individual "in need" than the persistent helping characteristic of people with a stronger intrinsic orientation. They reasoned that the "intrinsic" (those for whom this orientation was strong) responded to their own desires to appear helpful, or to the perceived needs of the victim, rather than to the expressed needs of this "victim" (Batson & Gray, 1981; Darley & Batson, 1973).

In more direct tests of the motivation underlying helping, Batson et al. (1989) and Batson and Flory (1990) again found evidence that the intrinsic orientation is associated with the desire to appear helpful. In the first case, the difficulty of a "qualifying task for helping" and the provision of social expectation for helping (or not) were manipulated. The authors

reasoned that if helping was motivated by the sincere desire to improve the well-being of the individual in need, people would volunteer to help regardless of the difficulty of the qualifying task, and regardless of social expectation. An intrinsic orientation was associated with volunteering to help only when told that the qualifying task would be difficult, and effort on the qualifying task was low. These findings indicated a desire to "get out of helping" while maintaining the appearance of wanting to be helpful. Additionally, an intrinsic orientation was associated with attenuated helping when social expectation for helping was low, suggesting that responsiveness was more to self-presentation than to the person in need. Findings related to the quest orientation were equivocal.

In the second study (Batson & Flory, 1990), participants of differing religious orientations did a Stroop test in which words were used which related to gaining rewards, avoiding punishment, and relieving the target's needs, after hearing of a person in need and before being given an opportunity to offer help. The Stroop test involves presenting participants with words in a variety of colours. The task is to identify the colour in which the word is presented, as quickly as possible. The test reveals whether thoughts about the meaning of the word presented are salient. If the word presented evokes thoughts about the meaning of the word (versus simply noticing the colour), then this should interfere with speed of response about the colour in which the word is presented (Batson & Flory, 1990). A positive relationship was found between offering help and response latencies for reward-relevant words on the Stroop test for participants having an intrinsic religious orientation. For

individuals who scored above the median on the quest dimension, there was a relation of quest with latencies for victim-directed words. The authors concluded that an intrinsic orientation was related to concern with rewards associated with helping and that a quest orientation showed some relation to concern for the victim.

In summary, research related to religion and helping has examined two main issues. First, whether intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religiosity are associated with empathy, compassion, and/or helping has been examined. Second, the motivations to help associated with the intrinsic, extrinsic and quest religious orientations have been explored. Whereas studies using self-reports of empathy or compassion have reported positive relations with intrinsic religion (Watson et al., 1984, Watson et al., 1985), the self-reported concern of the religious individual doesn't seem to translate to helpful behaviour (Batson et al., 1993). Studies which have examined the motivation to help have suggested that intrinsic religion is associated with the egoistic motivation of reward seeking (Batson & Gray, 1981; Batson et al., 1989; Batson & Flory, 1990; Darley & Batson, 1973), and that helping associated with an intrinsic orientation may occur only in response to social expectations for helping (Batson & Flory, 1990). There is some suggestion that a quest orientation may be associated with the more altruistic motive of helping to improve the well-being of the individual in need (Batson & Flory, 1990; Batson & Gray, 1981).

The relation between religion and empathy, and between religion and helping, remains as yet unclear, however. In the majority of

research, the personality variables related to religious orientation which have been considered are the intrinsic-extrinsic dimensions, and quest religiosity. The intrinsic-extrinsic distinction has suffered serious criticism since its inception. Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) pointed out a number of problems with the constructs as well as the scales used to measure them. First, the definitions of the orientations are ambiguous, given that they combine motivational, personality, cognitive stylistic, attitudinal and behavioural components. The authors point to a lack of agreement among researchers regarding the basic nature of the constructs. Measurement is also problematic. Differing factor structures have been found in various studies to describe the original item pool, rendering the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness problematic. Also, the relation between the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions has long been a source of confusion for researchers. With reference to the study of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) conclude that "much of this research has been theoretically impoverished and only of marginal value in increasing our understanding of the psychology of religion" (p. 459). Quest religiosity has also been criticised as being conceptually problematic (Hood & Morris, 1985). Additionally, Batson's quest scale has been criticised for having poor psychometric properties (it is vulnerable to response sets) (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Clearly, then, findings regarding the relation between religion and helping could be strengthened by using a measure of religion which is theoretically and methodologically sound.

Religious Orientation. Recently, researchers interested in religion

have been considering religious fundamentalism to be an important dimension of religiosity. Fundamentalism has been defined as a belief in the absolute, unchanging truth of one religion which must be followed without exception (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Altemeyer and Hunsberger have suggested that consideration of fundamentalism might aid the elucidation of the prosocial and antisocial implications of religion better than the intrinsic-extrinsic concept has. In order to facilitate this process, the authors published a 20-item Religious Fundamentalism Scale congruent with the above definition. The scale has excellent psychometric properties and therefore addresses many of the concerns regarding measuring religious orientations put forth by Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990). Given the conceptual clarity of the construct of fundamentalism and the strong psychometric properties of the fundamentalism scale, the suggestion that consideration of fundamentalism might better clarify the religion-social behaviour relation than the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions seems warranted.

While clearly fundamentalism refers to a very specific orientation to religion, it does share some conceptual similarities with intrinsic and quest religiosity. Donahue (1985) reviewed evidence suggestive of a positive relation between intrinsic religion and fundamentalism. He identified six studies in which an intrinsic orientation correlated significantly with theologically conservative beliefs, whereas an extrinsic orientation did not. Thus intrinsic religion and theological conservatism seem to share some similarities, probably related to religious devoutness. Religious fundamentalism also shares conceptual

similarities with the quest religious orientation. Whereas quest refers to a questioning and flexible approach to religion, fundamentalism refers to absolute commitment to a set of beliefs. Thus, it seems that fundamentalism and quest religiosity are inversely related.

Fundamentalism and intrinsic religion are similar, probably because they are both related to religious devoutness. Therefore, it could be expected that findings related to fundamentalism and helping would parallel those for intrinsic religion. Fundamentalism and quest religion seem quite opposite; fundamentalism refers to rigidity of beliefs, quest refers to flexibility of belief. While findings related to quest religiosity and helping have not been clear, it could be expected that fundamentalism and quest religion would have very different implications for helping behaviour. Given the relations among these religious orientations, and the psychometric superiority of the fundamentalism scale, the nature of the relations among religiousness, empathy and helping might be best tapped using the fundamentalism scale.

No research to date has examined the relation of religious fundamentalism with compassion, empathy, or helping behaviour. The first purpose of this study was, therefore, to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with empathy and helping behaviour. It was expected that findings for fundamentalism would parallel those for intrinsic religion. Thus, fundamentalism was expected to be positively related to self-reported dispositional empathy but unrelated to a behavioural measure of helping.

Target of Need. A second shortcoming in the literature related to

religion and helping is a lack of research which examines the role of the target of need. Only two studies have considered the target as an important variable in the religion-helping relation (Batson & Gray, 1981, Hunsberger & Platonow, 1986). Batson and Gray (1981) found no significant differences between relations of religion with helping for a "socially acceptable" and a "socially unacceptable" target. Hunsberger and Platonow (1986) found that Christian orthodoxy (strength of belief in the central tenets of Christianity) correlated positively with reports of helping through one's church, and attitudes toward volunteering within a religious context. In the same study, however, orthodoxy did not correlate with reports of helping "charitable causes" (when no mention was made of religion), or with actual volunteering to help a charitable organisation, through opportunity provided in the study. Given that only two studies have examined the role of the target of need, and the results of the two studies are not entirely compatible, more work is needed in order to elucidate the role of target in the religion-helping relation.

Might we expect differential, target-specific helping among those with a fundamentalist religious orientation? It is tempting to make this prediction in light of the substantial amount of research which has demonstrated relations between fundamentalism and prejudice against specific groups. These targets of prejudiced attitudes include homosexual people, women, communists, and a wide variety of minority groups (see Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Herek, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Hunsberger, 1990; Maret, 1984; McFarland, 1989). With reference to orthodox or fundamentalist approaches to religion, Herek (1987)

claimed that religion "does not foster an unequivocal acceptance of others but instead encourages tolerance toward specific groups that are accepted by contemporary Judeo-Christian teachings" (p. 34). It seems reasonable to explore the possibility that the prejudice associated with fundamentalism leads to attenuation of helping for targets of prejudice or nonacceptance. The second goal of this work was, therefore, to examine the role of the target of need in the religion-helping relation. It was expected that the helping behaviour of individuals high in religious fundamentalism would be more target-specific than would the helping of those lower in fundamentalism. Helping by individuals high in fundamentalism was expected to be attenuated when the person in need was a target of prejudiced attitudes, specifically, a homosexual.

Empathy. The prediction of target-specific helping among those with prejudiced attitudes presumes a process which mediates the relation between the prejudice associated with fundamentalist religiosity and helping. Prejudice alone could be unrelated to helping if it is independent of the motivation to help. For example, if the primary motivation to help is self-presentation (cf. Batson et al., 1993), then prejudice might be unrelated to helping. If, however, prejudice is somehow associated with the motivation to help, we would expect target-specific helping.

Batson and colleagues have provided substantial evidence that our emotional reactions to others in need, specifically empathy and distress, are related to the motivation for helping. Empathy, in this context, refers to "other-focused, congruent emotion" (Batson, Fultz, &

Schoenrade, 1987, p.20), whereas distress refers to feelings of alarm, upset and general distress.² Empathy has been associated with the motivation to improve the well being of the other, whereas distress has been associated with a variety of egoistic motivations for helping. These egoistic motivations associated with distress often result in not helping (Batson, 1991).

A good deal of evidence supports the contention that empathy and distress are, in fact, qualitatively distinct emotional reactions, and that they have differing motivational consequences for helping. At least six studies have reported factor analytic results revealing empathy and distress as distinct. Furthermore, five studies have demonstrated the differential motivational consequences of empathy and distress (see Batson, 1991, for a review). These studies have demonstrated that if people are presented with a help-needed situation in which it is easy to leave the situation without helping (there is low social expectation for helping), people who react with distress to the situation tend not to help. However, those who react empathically tend to help, regardless of the low expectation for helping. This suggests that only empathically aroused individuals are motivated by the goal to improve the others' well-being.

If fundamentalism is negatively related to empathy, or if it is positively related to distress in reaction to the target of need, we could expect it to be associated with attenuated helping, when there is a lack of clear social expectation for helping. Given that fundamentalism is associated with prejudice against homosexuals, it seems plausible to

predict that it would be related to decreased empathy and increased distress in reaction to a homosexual person.

While research has examined the type of motivation that religious individuals have for helping, there have been no related empirical investigations of the emotional reactions to varying targets of need (distress or empathy) which precede helping. The third goal of this work was, therefore, to examine the role of emotional mediation in the religion-helping relation. It was expected that any relation of religious fundamentalism and helping would be mediated by emotional responses.

The argument made is that the tendency of individuals high in religious fundamentalism to be prejudiced against homosexuals should lead them to experience low empathy and high distress in response to a homosexual person, and that these emotional responses will attenuate helping. However, helping could also be influenced by differential perceptions of similarity to the person in need. Krebs (1975) demonstrated that leading people to believe they were similar to another increased their empathic reactions to that person, and people who were empathically aroused were more likely than others to help the individual. He argued that perceptions of similarity facilitate understanding another's perspective. This understanding then enhances emotional empathy, and empathy facilitates helping. According to this approach, in the present study, helping should occur when the targets are perceived to be similar, hence evoking empathy. When the targets are perceived to be dissimilar, helping should be attenuated. If, for example, the homosexual

target is perceived as less similar than the heterosexual target, helping the homosexual target could be attenuated for this reason.

Perceived similarity cannot always be expected to increase helping, however. Lerner and Agar (1972) proposed that the impact of perceived similarity on the desire to interact with another person depends upon what goals motivate a potential interaction, and what the implications of being similar to the relevant other are for those goals. Consistent with this reasoning, they demonstrated that research participants preferred to avoid a similar other when he was represented as being addicted to drugs (through his own actions). On the other hand, participants indicated a desire to interact with a similar other when he was not presented as being addicted to drugs. The authors reasoned that maintaining personal security was a goal of these interactions, and, in the case of the drug addict, perceived similarity represented a threat to personal security. Regarding the present study, it is possible that a target perceived to be similar could evoke avoidance responses, if the target represents a personal threat to the research participants. It is possible that participants who are prejudiced against homosexuals could perceive the homosexual target to represent such a threat. This would lead to attenuated helping.

Similarity, then, could either evoke empathy, facilitating helping (cf. Krebs, 1975), or evoke perceived threat, hence attenuate helping (cf. Lerner & Agar, 1972). Given that various relations among similarity, empathy, helping, and the desire for interaction have been found in previous studies, the role of perceived similarity to the target in the

religion-helping relation was also examined.

Sensitivity to Expressed Needs. Batson and Gray (1981) and Darley and Batson (1973) found that devout religion was associated with helping which was not responsive to the expressed needs of the individual 'in need,' but appeared more responsive to the need of the "helper" to appear helpful. It was expected, based on these findings, that those high in fundamentalism would be less sensitive to the expressed needs of the individual "in need" than those lower in fundamentalism. No studies to date have examined sensitivity to others' needs associated with religious fundamentalism. The fourth goal of this work was, therefore, to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism and sensitivity to others' needs.

Overview of the Present Study

In this experiment, the relation of religious fundamentalism with empathy, distress, and helping for different targets of need was examined. Since Batson's work suggests that under conditions of low expectation for helping, empathy will facilitate helping whereas distress will attenuate helping, helping was examined only under the condition of low social expectation. This study, therefore, was intended to shed light on the impact of fundamentalist religion in either facilitating or attenuating empathy and distress, and thus helping, for different targets of need.

Students of varying levels of religious fundamentalism were asked to indicate their willingness to help a student who was presented as needing academic guidance and was either (1) a target of prejudiced

attitudes for people high in religious fundamentalism (a young homosexual adult), or (2) not a target of prejudiced attitudes for people high in religious fundamentalism (a young heterosexual adult).

Students were told that the researchers were doing a feasibility study for a mentor-system in the university, and were asked to indicate how likely they would be to act as a buddy to this individual if there were a mentor system in place. Additionally, they were asked how much time they would be willing to spend with this person to provide two types of help, academic guidance and personal advice. Emotional responses of empathy and distress, and perceived similarity to the person in need, were assessed. A survey including measures of dispositional empathy, religious fundamentalism, attitudes toward homosexuals, and social desirability was also completed.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis #1. *Given a factor analysis of emotional reactions, a (two) factor structure revealing empathy and distress as distinct factors for the emotional reactions ratings was expected.*

According to Batson et al. (1987), empathy and distress are distinct emotions. It was, therefore, hypothesized that emotional reaction terms would follow the same patterning as has been found in previous research. Support of this hypothesis would permit examination of relations of empathy and distress with helping.

Hypothesis #2. *It was predicted that empathy would correlate positively with helping whereas distress would correlate negatively. It was also predicted that the relations between emotional reactions and helping*

would exist above and beyond any relation between perceived similarity between self and target, and helping behaviour.

Empathy and distress have different implications for helping, according to Batson et al. (1987). Under conditions of low expectation for helping as used in this study, empathy should facilitate helping whereas distress should attenuate it. The prediction that emotional reactions would predict helping above and beyond a similarity effect was based on the reasoning of Krebs (1975) that similarity impacts upon helping because it evokes emotional empathy.

Hypothesis #3. *It was expected that religious fundamentalism would be positively correlated with self-reported dispositional empathy, but uncorrelated with the behavioural-intent measure of helping.*

Positive relations of intrinsic religion with self-reported dispositional empathy have been reported (Watson et al., 1984, Watson et al., 1985). Batson et al. (1993) have argued that the reported compassion of those high in an intrinsic orientation does not translate into helping behaviour. The prediction made by hypothesis three was, therefore, based on the general expectation that findings for fundamentalism would parallel the pattern related to intrinsic religion proposed by Batson et al. (1993).

This hypothesis addressed the first goal of the study; to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with self-reported dispositional empathy and helping.

Hypothesis #4 *A fundamentalism by target interaction was predicted for the dependent variable, 'willingness to help.' A main effect of target*

was also expected.

For the homosexual target, helping was expected to be moderated by religious fundamentalism. Particularly low helping of the homosexual target was expected of individuals high in religious fundamentalism. It was also expected that all participants would generally be less willing to help the homosexual than the other target (based on literature related to the negative impact of perceived dissimilarity on helping, e.g., Krebs, 1975; Weiner, 1980).

This hypothesis addressed the second goal of the study, to examine the role of the target of need in the religion-helping relation.

Hypothesis #5. *It was expected that the fundamentalism by target interaction for the dependent variable of helping, would be mediated by emotional reactions. Fundamentalism was expected to correlate positively with distress and negatively with empathy in reaction to the homosexual target.*

If the homosexual target elicited reactions of high distress and low empathy among those with a fundamentalist approach to religion, and if these emotional reactions predicted helping, then it could be suggested that emotional reactions mediated the fundamentalism by target interaction on helping.

The third goal of the study, to examine the role of emotion in the religion-helping relation, was addressed by this hypothesis.

Hypothesis #6. *It was predicted that individuals low in religious fundamentalism would offer more academic than personal advice whereas individuals higher in religious fundamentalism would offer*

equal amounts of personal and academic advice. A fundamentalism by type of help interaction was, therefore, expected for the dependent variable 'amount of time offered'.

Again, based on the general expectation that findings for fundamentalism would parallel research findings related to intrinsic religion, it was expected that higher levels of religious fundamentalism would be associated with lower levels of sensitivity to the expressed needs of the targets. In this study, the targets requested academic guidance only. Offering only academic guidance (and not personal advice) would, therefore, indicate sensitivity to the expressed need, whereas offering both would indicate a lack of such sensitivity.

This hypothesis addressed the fourth goal of the research which was to examine the sensitivity to others' needs as a function of religious fundamentalism.

Method

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out to get feedback regarding the "believability" of materials developed for the experiment, and to determine whether or not an experimental design could be used to control for perceptions of similarity across the targets. The materials of interest were letters, presumably written by the targets of need. They indicated concerns and thoughts about attending university. Findings of the pilot study resulted in a minor change to the letters. As well, the pilot study revealed that statistical rather than experimental control (for similarity) would be preferable for the main study. For details regarding

the pilot study, see Appendix A.

Main Experiment

Participants. Research participants were 136 introductory psychology students (38 male, 95 female) of mean age 20.0 (range 18-47) at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada. Students participated voluntarily in exchange for token course credit. Approximately equal proportions of males to females were included in each of the conditions of the experiment. Since participants' similarity/dissimilarity of sexual orientation to the target needed to be controlled, only heterosexual participants were included in the analyses. Three participants (two male, one female) indicated on the survey demographic information that their sexual orientation was other than heterosexual, and thus their data were excluded. Of the remaining 133 participants, 42 (32%) indicated affiliation with a liberal Protestant group, 8 (6%) reported affiliation with a conservative Protestant religion, 33 (25%) were Catholic, 13 (9.8%) chose "personal" to describe their religious affiliation, 10 (7.5%) chose "other" as the category to describe their religious affiliation, 21 (15.8%) reported being agnostic, and 5 (3.8%) claimed being atheist. One participant did not provide religious affiliation information.

Materials. A survey was used, composed of (1) a measure of (dispositional) Emotional Empathy (Mehrabian and Epstein (1972), (2) the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), (3) Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), (4) the Crowne and Marlow (1964) Social Desirability Scale, and (5) items related to age, sex, religious affiliation and sexual orientation.

The measure of dispositional empathy used (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972, see Appendix B) is a commonly used 33-item scale which assesses a dispositional tendency to experience emotional empathy. The scale is reported to have a split-half reliability coefficient of .84, and is apparently not confounded with a social desirability bias (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). Items were rated using a 9-point Likert-type response format (-4 to +4) and were converted to a 0 to 8 range such that scores potentially ranged from 0 to 264.

The Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, see Appendix C) measures the extent to which a person believes that:

there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable, practices of the past, and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity (p. 118).

Notably, the scale measures how a person holds religious belief, as opposed to measuring specific belief content. Additionally, the scale is applicable to fundamentalist belief in most religions (it may not be meaningful for some non-Christian religions). It is a 20-item scale with excellent internal consistency (coefficient alpha of .92, mean inter-item correlation of .72). The 20 items were rated with a 9-point Likert-type

response format (-4 to +4) and were subsequently converted to a 0 to 8 range such that scores on the scale potentially ranged from 0 to 160.

The Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale (see Appendix D) is a 12-item scale with statements which assess "condemning, vindictive, and punitive sentiments toward gays" (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, p. 121). The scale has good psychometric properties with a Cronbach's alpha of .89 and mean interitem correlation of .39 (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Items were rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format (-4 to +4) and converted to a 0 to 8 range such that scores potentially ranged from 0 to 108. This measure was included so that the previous finding in the literature that fundamentalism is positively related to prejudice against homosexuals could be tested with this sample.

The Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), as shown in Appendix E, measures an individual's tendency to describe him or herself in socially desirable terms for the purpose of gaining social approval. It is a 33-item scale with adequate reliability, a test-retest r of .88 (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). In the original version of the scale, a true or false response format is used. In this study, the response format was changed to a 9-point Likert-type format (-4 to +4). Responses were recoded on a 0 to 8 range such that scores on the scale potentially ranged from 0 to 264. This scale was included because social desirability concerns have been implicated as relevant to the religion-helping relation (Batson et al., 1993).

The target manipulation was represented in the form of a letter (see Appendix F), ostensibly gathered from a pilot study in which future

students were contacted and asked to write letters to the researchers which indicated their thoughts and concerns about university life. The letter was actually written by the experimenter. The letter was said to "represent the sort of student who might want to attend this university, and the types of concerns such a person might have." The letter was presented as being from a male future university student and outlined his thoughts and concerns about university life. The "student" was represented as being either a heterosexual young adult, or a homosexual young adult. Within each letter was a clear statement that help was needed and desired with academic issues. The letters were identical aside from the manipulation of sexual orientation.

Participants responded to questions regarding whether or not they would act as a buddy to the student who wrote the letter if there were a mentor programme at the university (rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format, -4, "definitely not" to +4, "definitely yes"), how much time they would volunteer to give academic advice as well as personal advice (from 0 to 4 hours, rated in half hour increments), an emotional reactions questionnaire (each emotion was rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format, -4, "not at all" to +4 "a great deal"), a question related to the participant's perceived similarity to the target (rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format, -4 "not at all similar" to +4 "very similar"), and attribution-related questions which assessed the perceived controllability, stability and locus of the need situation. These questions were also assessed on 9-point Likert-type response formats (-4 to +4). The items which assessed attributions of controllability, locus and stability of the

"student's" problem were modelled after those used by Betancourt (1990). They were included for exploratory purposes, and are not relevant to the present study, and thus are not discussed further. Two open-ended questions which corroborated the cover story for the experiment were also included. These items are shown in Appendix G.

Emotional reactions to the targets were assessed using the measures devised to assess empathy and distress developed by Batson and colleagues (see Appendix G). Twenty-one emotional reaction items were included, 11 to assess distress and 10 to assess empathy. Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas and Isen (1983) reported Cronbach's alphas of .94 and .79 for the distress and empathy indices respectively. Because the particular emotional reaction terms which have loaded on separate factors in analyses of emotional reactions have varied slightly from study to study, empathy and distress scales were formed based on a factor analysis of the emotional reaction adjectives.

The behavioural intent questions regarding acting as a buddy to the target, and time offered to help, were intended as the primary dependent variables (see Appendix G). The question regarding perceived similarity to the student in need was included because the literature suggests an impact of similarity on empathy and helping (e.g., Krebs, 1975) and hence this issue needed to be considered.

Procedure. The study was conducted by a female graduate student experimenter with groups of two to 10 participants. Booklets containing one of the letters and the remaining materials were shuffled into random order, and distributed to participants. The restriction that

equal proportions of males to females were included in each condition was employed, however. Students were told that the experiment was part of a project concerned with how students cope with beginning university. Specifically, it was called a 'feasibility' study regarding the development of a mentor programme for incoming university students. It was explained that it might be useful to have a mentor system (a sort of buddy programme) whereby upper level students could pair up with incoming students to "show them the ropes". Participants were told that, to gain some preliminary information, the experimenters contacted students who hoped to attend Wilfrid Laurier University in the near future, and asked some of these students to write a brief letter indicating their thoughts and concerns about university life. Participants were told that they would be given a letter which represented the sort of letter which was received, and would be asked to read the letter, and then provide some information regarding how they felt this person could be best assisted. For exact verbal instructions, see Appendix H.

After signing a consent form (provided in Appendix I), each participant read one of the letters described in the previous section, and then indicated on paper how likely he or she would be to act as a "buddy" to this person, and how many hours per week she or he would be willing to spend with this person providing the two types of help (academic guidance and personal advice) if there were a buddy system in place. Subsequently, the participants completed the questionnaire to assess their emotional reactions to the student's letter. Following this, participants rated their perceived similarity to the target. The open-ended

questions were then answered, followed by the survey. Demographic information, provided in Appendix J, was provided last. Each session took approximately one hour to complete. Participants were provided with a written debriefing immediately after they completed the study (see Appendix K), and any questions asked were answered by the experimenter. It was also noted on the debriefing form, and mentioned verbally during the introduction to the study, that participants could contact the experimenter through the psychology department should they want to discuss the research further. Following analyses of the data, written feedback regarding the results of the study was posted on a bulletin board for participants to read (see Appendix L).

The experimenter attempted to create low social expectation for helping for all participants. It was made clear to participants that their responses were anonymous. As well, it was explained that the experimenter would not examine the data until the participants' materials had been placed together such that she would not remember who completed any given set of materials. Also, tables were set up in such a way that it was not possible for participants to see each others' responses. No mention was made of norms for helping, nor was any indication given that offering help was expected. For these reasons, it seems appropriate to consider the experiment as involving low social expectation for helping.

Results

Helping Dependent Measures

Because the three items "willingness to act as a buddy", "time

offered to provide academic guidance” and “time offered to provide personal guidance” used different response formats [a -4 (very unlikely) to +4 (very likely) format, versus amount of time (0 to 4 hours, using half-hour intervals)], scores from these items were transformed into standard (Z) scores. Pearson correlations among the three variables were then computed. The intercorrelations ranged from .40 to .54. Reliability analysis revealed a coefficient alpha for the three help items of .73 (mean inter-item correlation of .47). Given the high associations among the items, an overall helping composite score (HCS, the average standard score of the three items) was computed. ³

Attitudes Toward Homosexuals

The justification for the manipulation of sexual orientation of the target was based on past research findings of a relation between religious fundamentalism and prejudice against homosexuals. This relation was upheld in these data. The Pearson correlation between religious fundamentalism and negative attitudes toward homosexuals was significant, $r(131) = .58, p < .01$.

Social Desirability

In response to Batson et al.'s (1993) argument regarding a relation of devout religion with social desirability which confounds reports of the religion and helping relation, Pearson correlations between social desirability and fundamentalism, and between social desirability and HCS, were computed. Neither correlation was significant, $r(131) = .003, n.s.$ and $r(131) = .069, n.s.$, respectively. Social desirability was, therefore, excluded from further analyses.

Hypothesis #1

Following Batson et al. (1987), a two factor structure for emotional reactions was expected. The 21 emotional reaction items were subjected to a principal axis factor analysis, using varimax rotation.⁴ A two-factor solution resulted, with 26.9% of the variance accounted for by the first factor (eigenvalue of 5.64) and 21.8% of the variance accounted for by the second factor (eigenvalue of 4.58). Two other factors were extracted, but they had eigenvalues of less than one, and together accounted for only 6% of the variability in the measures. Items with loadings of greater than .5 were identified as defining the factors. As such, the first factor was defined by the emotional reactions of touched, kind, soft-hearted, moved, tender, warm, compassionate, sympathetic and empathic. This factor was called the empathy factor. Using the same criteria, the second factor was defined by the terms disturbed, bothered, uneasy, troubled, perturbed, alarmed, distressed, upset and grieved. This was called the distress factor.

Items which defined these two factors were analysed as scales for reliability. The empathy scale had a coefficient alpha of .90 (mean inter-item correlation = .51) and the distress scale had an alpha of .89 (mean inter-item correlation = .46). Empathy and distress were uncorrelated, $r(131) = .02$, n.s.

Hypothesis one was, therefore, supported. Reactions of empathy and distress appeared to be distinct.⁵ Therefore, it was appropriate to examine relations of empathy and distress with helping.

Hypothesis #2

Hypothesis two predicted that empathy would be positively related to helping, and distress negatively related to helping. Furthermore, it was predicted that empathy and distress would predict helping over and above a similarity-helping relation.

In order to determine whether emotional reactions and similarity uniquely contributed to helping, four multiple regression analyses were performed, two using empathy as a predictor and two using distress. The dependent variable HCS was regressed on emotional reaction (empathy or distress), similarity, and the interaction of emotional response and similarity, using hierarchical entry. The two equations for each emotional response differed only in the order of entry of the main effects: In the first case emotional response was entered first (empathy in one equation, and distress in the other), followed by similarity, followed by the interaction term. In the second set of equations, similarity was entered first, followed by emotion (empathy in one equation, and distress in the other). By reversing the order of the entry of the main effects, it was possible to identify the bivariate relations (i.e., essentially the Pearson correlations) of the emotional reactions, and of similarity, with helping in the first step of each equation. These could then be compared to the unique contributions emotions and similarity made when both were in the equations. Additionally, whether emotions predicted above and beyond similarity could be assessed. The unique contribution of each predictor was revealed by the partial correlation (pc) for each variable of interest. This represents the correlation of the predictor variable of interest with

helping, with the shared variance with all other predictors, and their relations with the dependent variable, held constant.

Empathy Regressions. The bivariate relations of empathy and similarity with helping were revealed by the first step in each of the two equations. As expected, empathy was positively correlated with helping, $r = .37, t(131) = 4.50, p < .001$. Similarity also correlated positively and significantly with helping, $r = .36, t(131) = 4.37, p < .001$. On the second step of the equations, with similarity and empathy both in the equation, both uniquely predicted helping, similarity: $\beta = .24, t(130) = 2.85, p < .01$; empathy: $\beta = .26, t(130) = 3.03, p < .01$, and empathy added significantly to the equation above the effect of similarity (see Table 1). The interaction term achieved significance also, $\beta = -.20, t(129) = -2.37, p < .05$. When perceived similarity and empathy were both low, helping was particularly low (see Figure 1).⁶ Given the contribution of the interaction, similarity still predicted helping, $\beta = .29, t(129) = 3.45, p < .01$, as did empathy, $\beta = .31, t(129) = 3.73, p < .01$. The overall equation for predicting help with similarity, empathy and their interaction was significant, $F(3,129) = 12.06, p < .001$ and accounted for 22% of the variance in helping.

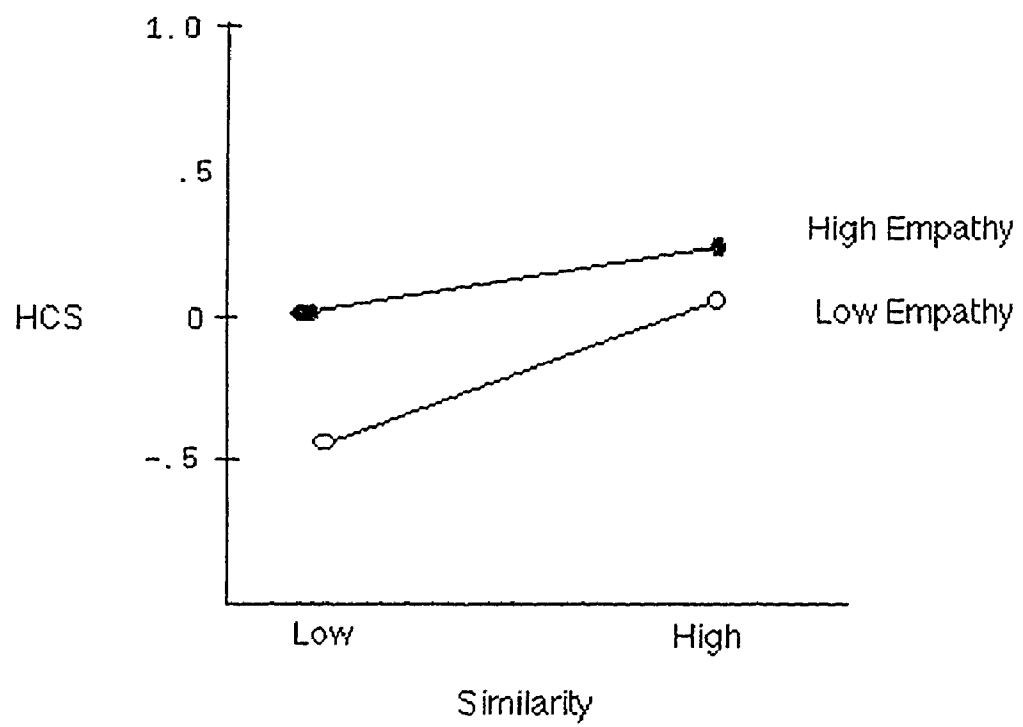


Figure 1. Similarity by Empathy Interaction for Help Intentions

Table 1

Regression Statistics with Empathy Entered after Similarity

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .13 | 19.11 | .000 |
| 2 | •empathy | .19 | 9.20 | .003 |
| 3 | •similarity by empathy | .22 | 5.62 | .019 |

Distress Regressions. The bivariate relations of distress and similarity with helping were revealed by the first step in each of the two equations. As in the equation for empathy, similarity predicted helping, $r = .36$, $t(131) = 4.37$, $p < .001$. Distress had a significant negative relation with helping, $r = -.26$, $t(131) = -3.02$, $p < .01$. On the second step of the equations, with similarity and distress both entered, similarity predicted helping significantly, $\beta = .30$, $t(130) = 3.58$, $p < .001$. Distress was negatively related to helping, and was of marginal significance, $\beta = -.16$, $t(130) = -1.82$, $p = .07$. The interaction term achieved significance, $\beta = .18$, $t(129) = 2.07$, $p < .05$. At low levels of similarity, distress was associated with particularly low helping (see Figure 2). With the contribution of the interaction in the equation, distress predicted helping significantly, $\beta = -.23$, $t(129) = -2.74$, $p < .01$, and similarity did not uniquely predict helping, $\beta = .05$, $t(129) = 0.60$, n.s. The overall equation for predicting help with similarity, distress and the interaction was significant, $F(3,129) = 9.22$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 18% of the

variance in helping.

Interestingly, before the addition of the similarity by distress interaction term, similarity did uniquely contribute to helping (independently of distress). After the addition of the interaction term, however, similarity predicted help only through interaction with distress. Therefore, distress attenuated helping, especially when perceived similarity was low (see Table 2).

Table 2

Regression Statistics with Distress Entered after Similarity

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .13 | 19.11 | .000 |
| 2 | •distress | .15 | 3.32 | .070 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .18 | 4.30 | .040 |

Hypothesis two was supported for empathy. Empathy predicted helping in the expected direction, above and beyond the similarity-helping relation. Some support was found for distress as well. Distress added to the prediction of helping above the effects of similarity, but was of marginal significance. Both empathy and distress predicted help in interaction with similarity. When similarity was perceived to be low, a lack of empathy attenuated helping, as did high distress. These effects were not present when perceived similarity was higher. Under conditions of

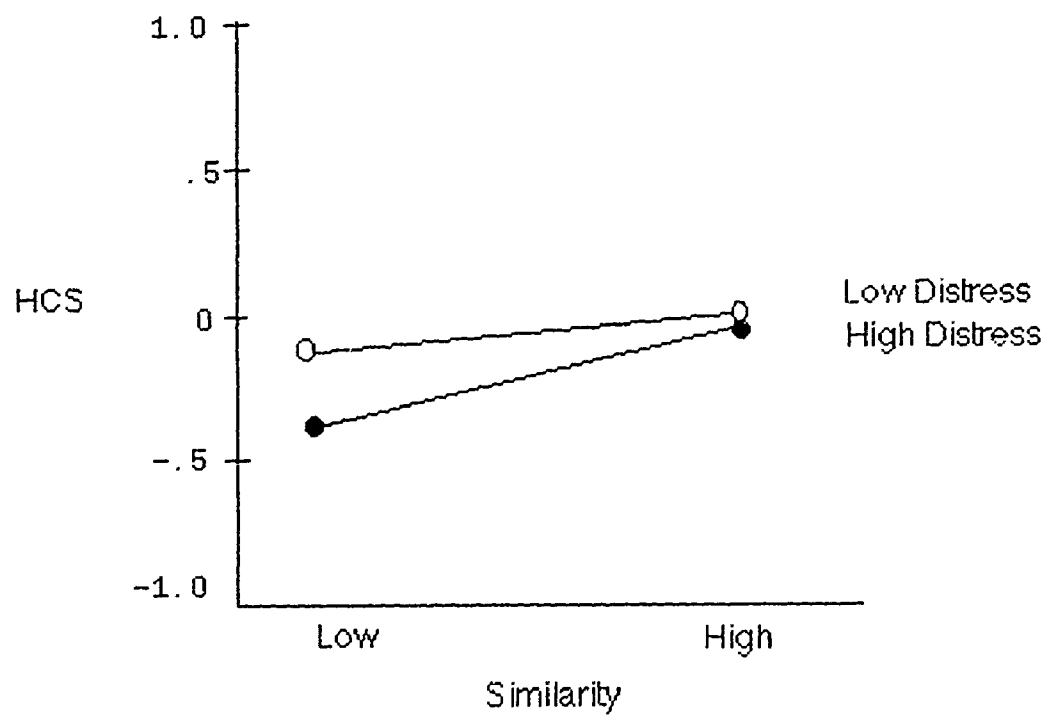


Figure 2. Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

low social expectation for helping, empathy facilitated helping, and to a lesser extent, distress attenuated helping. Thus, exploration of the role of emotional mediation of the religion-helping relation was justified.

Hypothesis#3

The goal of the research addressed by hypothesis three was to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with dispositional empathy and helping behaviour. Hypothesis three predicted a positive correlation between fundamentalism and dispositional empathy, and no correlation between fundamentalism and HCS. Contrary to expectation, fundamentalism correlated negatively with dispositional empathy, although the correlation was not significant, $r(131) = -.15$, n.s. As expected, the correlation between fundamentalism and HCS was near zero and nonsignificant, $r(131) = .02$, n.s.

Hypothesis three was only partially supported. As expected, there was no general relation of religious fundamentalism with intentions to help. Contrary to expectation, individuals higher in religious fundamentalism did not report being more empathic than people lower in fundamentalism.

Hypothesis #4

Hypothesis four addressed the goal of examining the role of the target of need in the religion-helping relation. This hypothesis predicted a fundamentalism by target interaction, and a main effect of target for the dependent variable of helping. Less helping was expected for the homosexual target than for the heterosexual target, and the difference between amount of help offered for the two targets was expected to be

greater for individuals of higher levels of religious fundamentalism than for those with lower levels. Using hierarchical multiple regression, HCS was regressed on fundamentalism and target (entered together on the first step) and the interaction (entered on the second step). While the overall equation was significant, $F(3, 129) = 2.75$, $p < .05$, it only accounted for 6% of the variance in 'help'. The one significant effect was for target, $\beta = -.22$, $t(130) = -2.58$, $p < .05$. Less help was offered to the homosexual target ($M = -.18$, $SD = .89$) than the heterosexual target ($M = .18$, $SD = .67$), as expected. Neither the effect of fundamentalism nor the fundamentalism by target interaction achieved significance. See Table 3

Table 3
Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •Fundamentalism •Target | .05 | 3.35 | .038 |
| 2 | •Fundamentalism by Target | .06 | 1.53 | .218 |

Similarity. Analysis of variance revealed that participants did perceive the homosexual target to be significantly less similar to themselves, $M = 2.80$, $SD = 2.47$, than was the heterosexual target, $M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.78$, $F(1, 131) = 73.41$, $p < .001$. Thus, to determine whether this difference in perceived similarity could account for the effect of target

on helping, the above regression was recomputed with similarity controlled. The variables were entered hierarchically, with similarity entered first, fundamentalism and target entered second, and the interaction of target by fundamentalism entered last. By entering similarity first, only effects which predicted help over and above the impact of similarity would be revealed. On the first step of the equation, similarity predicted helping, $\beta = .37$, $t(131) = 4.37$, $p < .0001$. Neither the addition of target and fundamentalism nor their interaction contributed significantly to the model. The final equation accounted for 14% of the variance in help, $F(4,128) = 5.23$, $p < .001$. See Table 4.

Table 4

Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four, controlling for Similarity

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .13 | 19.11 | .000 |
| 2 | •fundamentalism •target | .13 | .01 | .989 |
| 3 | •fundamentalism by target | .14 | 1.92 | .168 |

Hypothesis four was not supported. Although there was a main effect of target on help, this was fully explained in terms of differences in perceived similarity. Furthermore, the main prediction that the effect of target would be stronger for those high versus low in fundamentalism

was not supported.

Hypothesis #5 The goal addressed by the fifth hypothesis was to examine the role of emotional mediation of the religion-helping relation. Hypothesis five predicted that emotional reactions would mediate the predicted fundamentalism by target interaction on helping. Pearson correlations between fundamentalism and empathy and distress for the heterosexual and homosexual targets, together and separately, were computed. As shown in Table 5, for the heterosexual target, fundamentalism neither correlated significantly with empathy, nor with distress. For the homosexual target, fundamentalism did not correlate with empathy, but did correlate significantly with distress.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations of Fundamentalism with Empathy and Distress

| | Empathy | Distress |
|---|---------|----------|
| <u>Fundamentalism</u> | | |
| Overall Sample (<u>N</u> = 133) | .00 | .16 |
| Heterosexual Target (<u>n</u> = 67) | -.04 | .16 |
| Homosexual Target (<u>n</u> = 66) | -.04 | .30* |

Note. * $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$

Hypothesis five was partially supported. Fundamentalism was associated with a distressed reaction to the homosexual target, as

expected. However, given that the fundamentalism by target interaction for helping was not found, it could not be concluded that the relation of fundamentalism with distress for the homosexual target mediated such a relation. The predicted negative relation of fundamentalism with empathy for the homosexual target was not found.

Because fundamentalism predicted distress for the homosexual target, it was possible that fundamentalism related to helping only through interaction with distress and target. This would be the case if helping the homosexual target was attenuated among individuals high in fundamentalism when they reacted with high levels of distress. In this case, a three-way interaction (fundamentalism by target by distress) could be expected. This possibility was tested using hierarchical multiple regression. HCS was regressed on fundamentalism and target (entered on the first step), distress (entered on the second step), all possible two-way interactions (entered on the third step) and the three-way interaction (entered on the last step).

Target predicted helping, $\beta = -.22$, $t(130) = -2.58$, $p < .05$ (presumably due to differences in perceived similarity), and fundamentalism did not, $\beta = -.01$, $t(130) = -.12$, ns. Distress contributed significantly to the prediction of help, $\beta = -.20$, $t(129) = -2.27$, $p < .05$. With distress entered, target no longer was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.13$, $t(129) = -1.54$, n.s., suggesting that distress mediated this relation. Fundamentalism remained nonsignificant. Of the two-way interactions, only target by distress achieved significance, $\beta = -.18$, $t(126) = -2.01$, $p < .05$. For the homosexual target, distress was associated with very low

levels of helping (see Figure 3). Given the interaction of target and distress, the main effects were no longer significant. The three-way interaction did not achieve significance. The final equation accounted for 12% of the variance in help, and was significant, $F(7, 125) = 2.51, p < .05$. See Table 6.

Table 6
Regression Statistics, Hypothesis Five

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •Fundamentalism •Target | .05 | 3.35 | .038 |
| 2 | •Distress | .09 | 5.15 | .025 |
| 3 | •Fundamentalism by Distress •Fundamentalism by Target •Target by Distress | .12 | 1.76 | .158 |
| 4 | •Fundamentalism by Target by Distress | .12 | .17 | .678 |

The prediction that fundamentalism would relate to help through interaction with distress and target was not supported.

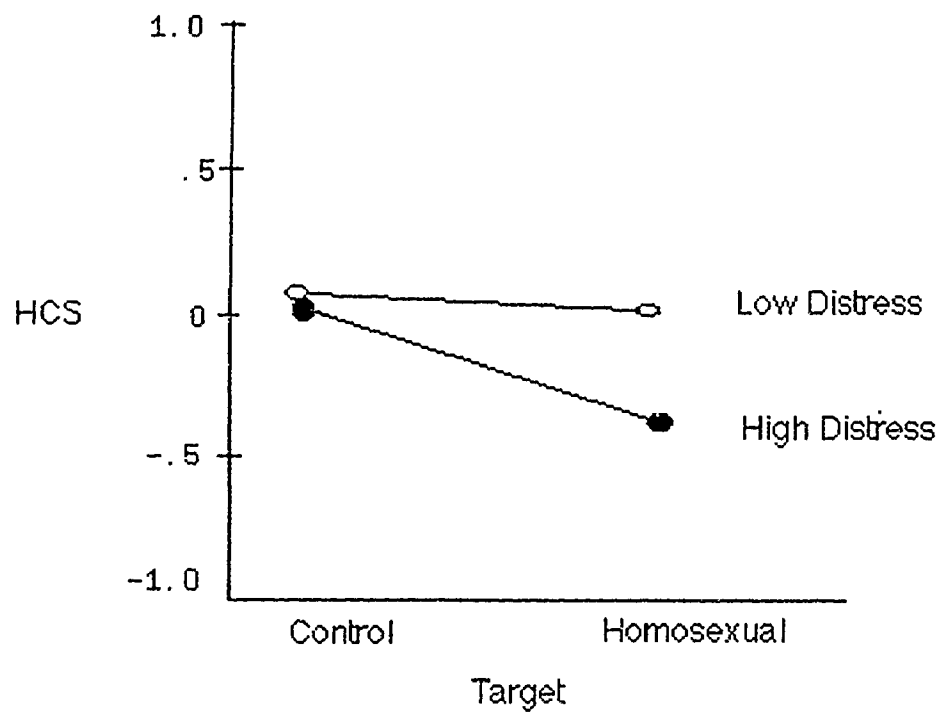


Figure 3. Target by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Hypothesis #6 Hypothesis six addressed the goal of examining the sensitivity to others' needs as a function of religious fundamentalism. A fundamentalism by type of help interaction for amount of time offered to help was predicted. A 2 X 2 mixed factorial ANOVA was computed for the dependent variable 'time offered', by the independent variables of fundamentalism (high versus low based on a median split) and type of help (academic versus personal). Type of help was a within-subject variable. Time offered was analysed using the original response format. Responses, therefore, could range from 0 to 8 (representing 0 to 4 hours in half hour increments). There was a main effect of type, with more time offered for academic help, $M = 1.93$ (almost one hour), $SD = .74$, than personal guidance, $M = 1.71$ (almost three quarters of an hour), $SD = 1.08$; $F(1,131) = 7.52$, $p < .01$. Neither the effect of fundamentalism nor the fundamentalism by type of help interaction achieved significance. Relevant descriptive statistics are provided in Table 7.

Hypothesis six was not supported since the type of help offered did not vary as a function of religious fundamentalism. There was, therefore, no evidence of differential sensitivity to targets' needs for individuals of varying levels of religious fundamentalism.

Table 7

Mean Time Offered by Type of Help and Fundamentalism Level

| | Type of Help | | <u>M</u> (SD) |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Academic | Personal | |
| High Fundamentalism | 2.00 (.76) | 1.80 (1.06) | <u>M</u> (SD) |
| | <u>n</u> = 64 | | |
| Low Fundamentalism | 1.87 (.72) | 1.63 (1.1) | <u>M</u> (SD) |
| | <u>n</u> = 69 | | |

Fundamentalism and Similarity

Given that the effect of target on help was explained in terms of differences in perceived similarity (hypothesis four), the possibility that fundamentalism interacted with similarity to predict help was examined. That is, it was possible that the predicted target-specific relation of fundamentalism with helping existed, not for target per se, but according to perceived similarity to the target. Using hierarchical multiple regression, help (HCS) was regressed on fundamentalism and similarity (entered together on the first step), distress (entered second), all possible 2-way interactions (entered third) and the three-way interaction (entered last). Distress was included because of its relation with fundamentalism for the homosexual target. Effects not redundant with previous analyses

are reported.

Similarity, distress, and the interaction of similarity and distress predicted help as in the analysis for hypothesis two. Similarity related positively, and distress negatively, with help. Distress had more of an impact at low levels of similarity than at high levels of similarity. The expected fundamentalism by similarity interaction did not achieve significance, nor did the fundamentalism by distress interaction. However, these findings should be considered in light of the significant three-way fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction revealed in this analysis, $\beta = -.21$, $t(125) = -2.37$, $p < .05$. The finding that distress had more impact at low versus high levels of perceived similarity applied only to those lower in religious fundamentalism. As well, for individuals lower in religious fundamentalism, distress had more of an impact on help than similarity did (the impact of similarity was minimal), whereas for those higher in fundamentalism, similarity had more of an impact on help than distress did, and help varied quite a bit across similarity levels (see Figure 4).

Thus, it appeared that for individuals low in fundamentalism, experiencing distress when similarity was perceived to be low attenuated help, whereas for those high in fundamentalism, it was similarity which predominantly impacted on helping, regardless of level of distress. Regression statistics are provided in Table 8.

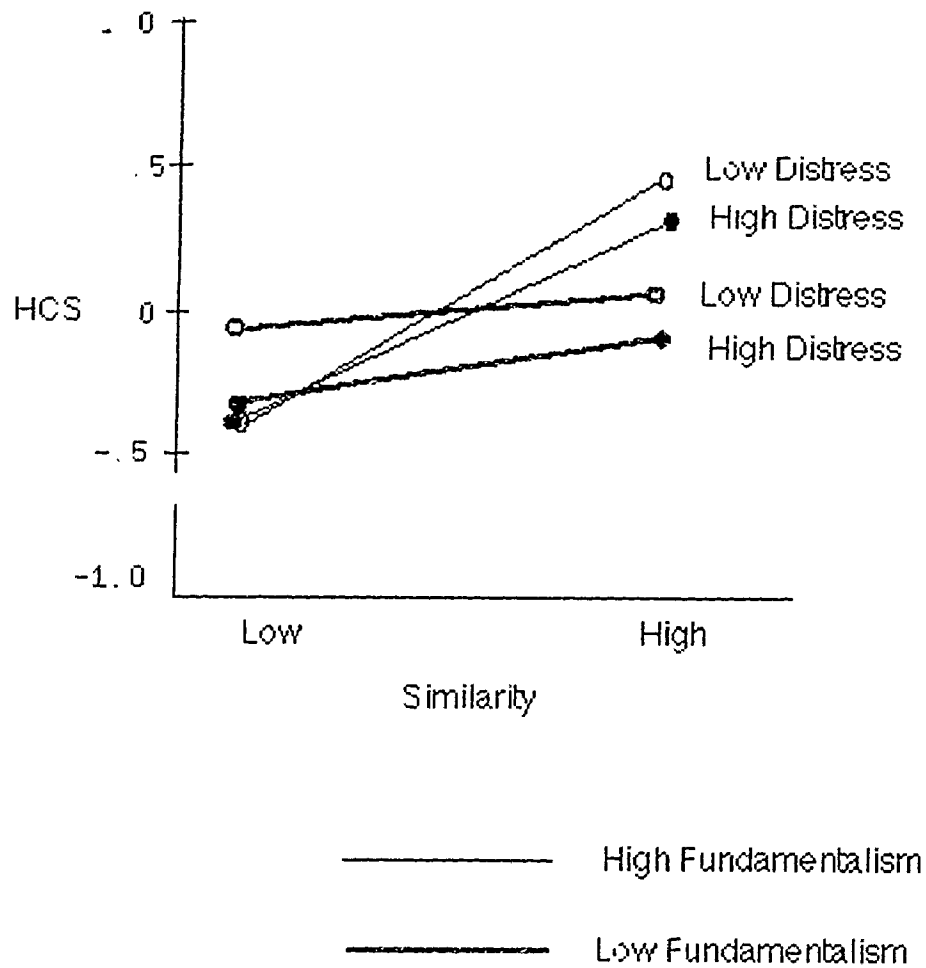


Figure 4 Fundamentalism by Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help-Intentions

Table 8

Regression Statistics for Similarity Analysis

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •Fundamentalism •Similarity | .13 | 9.49 | .000 |
| 2 | •Distress | .15 | 3.37 | .069 |
| 3 | •Fundamentalism by Distress •Fundamentalism by Similarity •Similarity by Distress | .19 | 2.10 | .103 |
| 4 | •Fundamentalism by Similarity by Distress | .23 | 5.63 | .019 |

If the interpretation of the three-way interaction was appropriate, different prediction equations should emerge when regressing HCS on similarity, distress, and their interaction, for individuals high versus low in fundamentalism. Thus, in order to clarify the interpretation of the above three-way interaction, the sample was divided into high and low fundamentalism groups (based on a median split), and two regressions were performed with each sample. For both groups, help was regressed on similarity (entered on step one), distress (entered on step two), and the interaction (entered last). Then the regression was recomputed with the order of entry of the main effects reversed. By reversing the order of the main effects, it was possible to determine for each group whether distress would predict help above and beyond the effect of similarity, and

whether similarity would predict above and beyond the effect of distress. Based on the previous three-way interaction, it was expected that for the low-fundamentalism sample, a similarity by distress interaction would predict help, as would distress, whereas for the high-fundamentalism sample, similarity was expected to be the strongest predictor of help.

Low Fundamentalism. The first step of each equation revealed that distress predicted help, $r = -.27$, $t(67) = -2.29$, $p < .05$, and similarity did also, $r = .24$, $t(67) = 2.03$, $p < .05$. At the second step, similarity did not add significantly above the effects of distress, nor did distress add above the effects of similarity. The similarity by distress interaction did significantly contribute to the equation, $\beta = .25$, $t(65) = 2.07$, $p < .05$. When similarity was perceived to be low, distress was associated with particularly low helping. The complete equation accounted for 15% of the variance in help, $F(3,65) = 3.76$, $p < .05$. See Table 9.

High Fundamentalism. The first step of each equation revealed that distress predicted help, $\beta = -.29$, $t(62) = -2.39$, $p < .05$, and similarity did also, $\beta = .48$, $t(62) = 4.16$, $p < .001$. At the second step, distress did not add to the equation above the effect of similarity, but similarity did contribute significantly above the effect of distress, $\beta = .42$, $t(61) = 3.57$, $p < .001$. The interaction was not significant. See Table 10.

Table 9

Regression Statistics for Low-Fundamentalism Analysis

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig. F change</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .06 | 4.13 | .046 |
| 2 | •distress | .09 | 2.46 | .121 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .15 | 4.27 | .043 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 1 | •distress | .07 | 5.25 | .025 |
| 2 | •similarity | .09 | 1.40 | .241 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .15 | 4.27 | .043 |

Table 10

Regression Statistics for High-Fundamentalism Analysis

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .22 | 17.30 | .000 |
| 2 | •distress | .24 | 1.95 | .167 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .25 | .21 | .652 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 1 | •distress | .08 | 5.73 | .020 |
| 2 | •similarity | .24 | 12.71 | .001 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .25 | .21 | .652 |

As expected, for those low in fundamentalism, the similarity by distress interaction predicted help, and the main effects were of approximately equal predictive power. For those high in fundamentalism, while both similarity and distress predicted help, similarity predicted above and beyond the effects of distress. As well, similarity was the strongest predictor of helping for those higher in fundamentalism. These analyses, in conjunction with the 3-way fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction reported previously, provide support for the contention that for those low in fundamentalism, the combination of similarity and distress predicted help, whereas for those high in fundamentalism, it was similarity which was primarily responsible for variations in help.

Pearson correlations among similarity, empathy, distress and fundamentalism are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

Pearson Correlations Among Similarity, Empathy, Distress and Fundamentalism

| | Similarity | Empathy | Distress | Fundamentalism |
|------------|------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Similarity | | .41** | -.32** | .07 |
| Empathy | | | .02 | .00 |
| Distress | | | | .16 |

Note. ** p < .01

Other Analyses

Dispositional Empathy

The helping literature reveals a relation of dispositional empathy with helping (see Eisenberg & Miller, 1987, for a review). Consequently, the Pearson correlation of dispositional empathy with helping was computed. It was significant, $r(131) = .21, p < .05$. When Pearson correlations were computed between dispositional empathy and helping in each of the two target conditions, the correlation between dispositional empathy and helping in the homosexual target condition was significant, $r(131) = .27, p < .05$, whereas in the control condition it was not, $r(131) = .14, n.s.$ Dispositional empathy correlated significantly with empathic reactions, $r(131) = .36, p < .01$, but not with distress, $r(131) = -.13, n.s.$ Thus, differences in dispositional empathy probably explain some of the differences in empathic reactions in these data.

Gender Differences

There were clear gender differences for the variables of interest to this study. T-tests were performed for the dependent variables of empathy, distress, HCS, and similarity for the independent variable of gender. Females reacted more empathically to the targets than did males, $t(131) = -4.82, p < .001$. Males and females did not differ in amount of experienced distress, $t(131) = .18, n.s.$ Females indicated stronger intentions to help than males, $t(131) = -2.24, p < .05$. Interestingly, females perceived themselves to be more similar to the male targets than males did, $t(131) = -2.39, p < .05$. Descriptive statistics for these analyses are provided in Table 12. It could be expected, then,

that the effects reported in this study were to some extent moderated by gender.⁷

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Empathy, Distress, Help and Similarity by Gender

| | Males | Females |
|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Empathy | 26.55 (14.84) | 40.02 (14.46) |
| Distress | 16.21 (12.24) | 15.74 (14.44) |
| Help | -.24 (.92) | .10 (.74) |
| Similarity | 3.55 (2.86) | 4.76 (2.53) |

Discussion

Preliminary Findings

Hypothesis one, that a factor analysis of emotional reactions would reveal a two factor structure defining empathy and distress, was supported. This supports the contention of Batson et al. (1987) that empathy and distress are distinct emotional responses. It also replicates work which has tested this suggestion (see Batson, 1991, for a review). Replication of this finding is noteworthy because the assumption that empathy and distress are qualitatively distinct emotional responses is the

cornerstone of the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991).

The empathy-altruism hypothesis also predicts that empathy and distress have different motivational consequences for helping. Under conditions of low social expectation for helping, empathy facilitates helping, whereas distress attenuates it (Batson, 1991). Hypothesis two tested these predictions. The suggestion that empathy facilitates helping was supported by the significant positive relation of empathy with helping revealed in the regression analysis. This relation existed above and beyond the relation of similarity with helping. Empathy also interacted with similarity in the prediction of helping, however. When similarity was perceived to be low, a lack of empathy was associated with very little helping. The prediction that distress attenuates helping was also supported, albeit less clearly than was the case for empathy. It was negatively related to helping, and was of marginal significance. Distress did significantly predict help in interaction with similarity, distress attenuated helping, especially when perceived similarity was low. The relations of empathy and distress with helping support Batson's contentions, although the relation was more direct for empathy than for distress. The importance of supporting the claim of the empathy-altruism hypothesis for this study was to provide justification for an examination of emotional mediation of the religion-helping relation. Since emotions predicted helping, it appeared that such an investigation was warranted.

Goals of the Research

The first goal of this study was to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with dispositional empathy and helping behaviour. The

test of hypothesis three revealed no significant relation of fundamentalism with dispositional empathy, indicating that individuals with a fundamentalist approach to religion neither were, nor desired to present themselves as, generally more empathic than others. There was also no general relation of religious fundamentalism with helping intentions.

These findings are not consistent with research which suggests that devout, intrinsic religion is associated with enhanced compassion (e.g., Watson et al., 1984; Watson et al., 1985). To the extent that religious fundamentalism is similar to intrinsic religion in terms of devoutness and importance placed upon religion, we might expect the argument made by Allport (1966) to apply to fundamentalism as well as intrinsic religion. That is, religion which is incorporated into one's life as a central value should have prosocial implications. As a general pattern, this was not the case with this sample.

Of course, distinctions between fundamentalism and intrinsic religion could render the Allport argument irrelevant to fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is associated with absolute commitment to a particular set of religious beliefs. As well, teachings of just reward and punishment are characteristic of fundamentalist forms of religion. Perhaps for those who are committed to fundamentalist religions, teachings of caring and compassion are in conflict with teachings of divinely dictated reward and punishment. This latter teaching might attenuate empathic reactions and feelings of personal responsibility for helping others, if response to personal needs is believed to be divinely determined.

Consistent with this suggestion, interpersonal compassion would not be expected to be facilitated if teachings of divine reward and punishment encourage more of a "justice" versus "care" approach to interpersonal or moral issues (see Gilligan, 1982). Interpersonal or social behaviour of fundamentalists may be motivated by dynamics other than compassion or care, such as commitment to upholding morals or beliefs. It may be the fundamentalists' particular approach to personal need, therefore, which renders the argument made by Allport regarding the prosocial implications of intrinsic religion not relevant to fundamentalism. An interesting possibility for future research would be to examine the moral reasoning styles (i.e., justice versus care) of individuals of varying degrees of religious fundamentalism. Differences in these orientations would no doubt have implications for interpersonal relations.

Given the lack of a relation of fundamentalism with self-reported dispositional empathy, it is clear that fundamentalism was not associated with a desire to self-present as compassionate, a tendency which Batson et al. (1993) have argued is characteristic of those with a devout (intrinsic) religious orientation. While the condition of low social expectation used in this study should have minimised self-presentation, it is possible that a relation of fundamentalism with self-reported compassion could still have emerged, although less strongly. That it did not emerge is not surprising, given that items on the religious fundamentalism scale are more consistent with absolute commitment to a

particular faith than with socially-sanctioned attitudes. For example, it is likely not socially desirable to agree with the statement "When you get right down to it, there are only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not", as individuals high in religious fundamentalism do. Additionally, it could be expected that individuals high in religious fundamentalism are more likely to want to appear desirable "in the eyes of God" than in the eyes of the general population. Thus, social desirability may not be a meaningful construct for describing the possible tendency of fundamentalists to want to appear in a particular light for the sake of self-presentation, if such a tendency exists at all.

The second goal of this research was to examine the role of the target of need in the relation of religion and helping, and the third goal was to examine the role of emotional mediation of this relation. A fundamentalism by target interaction was hypothesized (hypothesis four), whereby helping of a homosexual target was expected to be lower than helping of a heterosexual target, and this difference would be particularly strong for those high in fundamentalism. This prediction was based on Herek's reasoning regarding the differential acceptance of others among the conservatively religious, and also upon research findings related to fundamentalism and prejudice against homosexuals. It was anticipated, in hypothesis five, that those high in fundamentalism would experience low empathy and high distress in reaction to the homosexual target, and that this would lead to attenuated helping. The relation of

fundamentalism with helping did not emerge as predicted. There was, however, a significant correlation of fundamentalism with distress within the homosexual target condition.

The helping of those high in fundamentalism did vary according to perceptions of the target of need, but it was not the target per se which influenced helping as was expected. Rather the perceived similarity of the person in need to the potential helper was the apparent mediating factor. Furthermore, as the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction for helping revealed, distress had more of an impact on those low versus those high in fundamentalism. For those higher in fundamentalism, similarity was a better predictor of help than the emotional reaction was.

Why was helping of those high in fundamentalism a function of perceived similarity, and not of target? In order to explore this issue, the analysis which provided the above findings (the regression which revealed the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction) was recomputed within each target group. Within each target condition, HCS was regressed on distress, fundamentalism, similarity, and their interactions. For the control target, the only significant effect was the similarity by distress interaction, $\beta = -.30$, $t(59) = -2.44$, $p < .05$. Distress attenuated helping, especially given low similarity. For the homosexual target condition, however, help was predicted by similarity, $\beta = .38$, $t(61) = 3.26$, $p < .01$, distress, $\beta = -.28$, $t(61) = -2.32$, $p < .01$, and the similarity by distress interaction, $\beta = .24$, $t(58) = 1.93$, $p = .058$. Again, distress attenuated helping, especially given low similarity. Importantly,

also, the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction, $\beta = -.29$, $t(57) = -2.33$, $p < .05$, predicted helping in this condition. The patterning of means for this interaction was comparable to that for the interaction found for the entire sample. That is, for those lower in fundamentalism, it was primarily the interaction of similarity and distress which impacted upon help, whereas for those higher in fundamentalism, it was similarity which primarily impacted upon help.

Interestingly, in this analysis, the three-way interaction existed only within the homosexual target condition, suggesting that the sexual orientation of the target did, in fact, impact upon the relation of fundamentalism and helping, albeit indirectly. To the extent that those high in religious fundamentalism perceived the homosexual target to be similar to themselves, they were more likely to offer help, and to the extent that he was perceived as dissimilar, they were less likely to help.

The relative influence of perceived similarity versus emotional reactions for high versus low fundamentalists is consistent with work which has examined relations of emotion and symbolic belief with interpersonal relations. Symbolic beliefs about a group refer to thoughts about how social groups function to either threaten or maintain one's values, and preferences for social norms (Esses, Haddock & Zanna, 1992). As such, symbolic belief might be expected to be particularly relevant to individuals high in religious fundamentalism. It seems plausible that those high in religious fundamentalism would think that people who are very similar would uphold their values, whereas those who are different, particularly homosexuals, would threaten cherished

values. This could be expected to have implications for helping behaviour.

Although the functioning of symbolic beliefs among those with a fundamentalist approach to religion has not been examined, Esses et al. (1992) did find individual differences for high versus low authoritarians on the weighting of emotion and symbolic belief for intergroup attitudes. High authoritarians were more influenced by symbolic belief than emotions, whereas low authoritarians were more influenced by emotion than symbolic belief. As well, symbolic beliefs were found to be more predictive of intergroup attitudes than emotions for an "unfavourable target," but not for a favourable target.

Given that positive relations have been found between authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), the notion that the same dynamic might have applied in this study seems plausible. That is, those high in religious fundamentalism may have perceived that a dissimilar, homosexual target threatened valued beliefs and norms, and this may have influenced helping behaviour. Whether or not symbolic beliefs were responsible for the pattern of results found is an empirical question, and could be examined in future research.

The impact of similarity on helping for those high in religious fundamentalism is contrary to the findings of Lerner and Agar (1972). In their research, perceived similarity to a potentially threatening individual related to avoidance responses. In that study, the individual at issue was proposed to be personally threatening to participants because he was

represented as a drug addict. Presumably, this threatened the participants' sense of safety from such problems since the addicted individual was ostensibly similar to them. The sort of threat which this target represented differed from the sort of threat which may have been evoked in the present study, however. In Lerner and Agar's (1972) study, the threat was to participants' sense of personal security, and it was evoked by the target's being stigmatised, given that he was perceived as similar. In the present study, it is suggested that the threat which may have been perceived was to values and preferred social norms, not personal security. Also, it was evoked by perceptions of dissimilarity to a stigmatised target. That is, it is suggested that, in the present research, the threat arose from perceived dissimilarity, and this attenuated helping. In sum, the different pattern of results in the two studies probably arose because, in Lerner and Agar's (1972) study, a stigmatised similar other evoked threat, hence avoidance, whereas in the present research, another perceived as dissimilar, not similar, evoked threat, hence avoidance.

In addition to any impact of threat to values and preferred norms, helping behaviour could have been influenced through a dynamic such as the belief in a just world. The belief in a just world has been implicated as relevant to, or increased by, religion (e.g., Lea & Hunsberger, 1990, Lerner, 1991, Rubin & Peplau, 1973). Given that fundamentalists endorse beliefs that adherence to one religion only (presumably their religion) is acceptable in "the eyes of God", it could be that only similar others, those who uphold cherished norms and values,

are deemed to be acceptable, or deserving of help. It could also be the case that, due to teachings of divine reward and punishment, others deemed dissimilar who are in need are thought to deserve such a state (see Lerner, 1975). Help would not be expected to be offered in this case. An examination of the relation of fundamentalism with the belief in a just world could also prove revealing.

The relation of similarity with helping among those higher in religious fundamentalism is suggestive of differential motivations to help among individuals of varying degrees of religious fundamentalism. Batson (1990) indicated that we can make inferences about a person's motivation if we observe behaviour across different situations which could be expected to be associated with different goals. We could consider the opportunity to offer help to the different targets to involve such different situations. If the goal of individuals in this experiment was to address the need of the student who wrote the letter, then they could be expected to have helped the student regardless of the target's sexual orientation, and regardless of how similar that student was perceived to be. Individuals high in religious fundamentalism, however, helped according to their perceptions of similarity to the homosexual student, indicating that the goal was not simply to improve the well being of the target.

It is possible that the goal of those high in fundamentalism was to uphold their own values. In this case, helping a similar other would do this, but helping a dissimilar other, in particular a homosexual, would not. If this was the goal of those high in fundamentalism, it would suggest that

concern was more for their own values than for the person in need. This would certainly seem consistent with the reasoning of Batson (1990) regarding the motivation for helping behaviour of the devoutly religious, that "the problem is not that the legendary scribes and Pharises, or priest and Levite, never helped. The problem is that, because of the underlying motivational genotype, their helping was limited to situations in which it would be recognized and applauded" (p. 761). The data presented here are consistent with this suggestion. Of course, this reasoning is speculative. The question regarding motives to help associated with fundamentalism remains open and would be a fruitful avenue for future exploration.

The fourth goal of the research was to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with sensitivity to the expressed need of the targets. It was anticipated, by hypothesis six, that individuals higher in religious fundamentalism would offer equal amounts of academic and personal guidance, whereas those lower in fundamentalism would offer more academic than personal guidance. This would indicate greater sensitivity to the expressed needs of the targets by individuals of lower levels of fundamentalism. Contrary to prediction, no differential sensitivity to the expressed needs of the targets, as a function of religious fundamentalism, was found. This finding is questionable, however. The reasoning regarding assessing sensitivity to the needs of the target was based on the assumption that because the targets requested academic advice, that offering academic advice would indicate sensitivity to the targets' expressed need, whereas offering personal advice would

indicate a lack of sensitivity. The questions may have been perceived as ambiguous, however (see Appendix G). It may be that participants interpreted the question related to offering personal advice to assume that it meant "given that it were requested". If this were the case, then comparing the types of help offered would not adequately assess sensitivity to the targets' needs.

Limitations

The findings of differential helping according to fundamentalism level were somewhat indirect and complex. Neither a straightforward relation of fundamentalism with helping, nor the predicted target by fundamentalism interaction for helping was found. The findings should thus be interpreted with appropriate caution.

Additionally, the sample was relatively homogeneous. Given that it consisted of first year psychology students, generalisations should be made carefully. The homogeneity of the sample may also have been problematic in that a full range of religious fundamentalism scores was not represented. On a scale which potentially ranges from 0 to 160, the range of scores represented in these data was 2-139. Thus individuals who have been referred to as "high" in religious fundamentalism did not actually represent the extreme high end of the scale. While a reasonable range of scores was represented, it is possible that different, or stronger effects could be found within a more truly fundamentalist sample. This possibility could be explored with future research.

It was clear to participants in the study that the helping situation was hypothetical. It is possible that people indicated a greater likelihood

of helping than would actually be the case in a true helping situation. Helping has been found to be influenced by social expectation for helping (see Batson, 1991). While the condition of low social expectation for helping used in this study should have minimised participants' tendency to want to appear helpful, there may still have been some tendency for individuals to give generous reports of their likelihood of helping, given that they did not expect to have to actually do the helping. Clearly, a similar study using a real helping scenario would be useful.

It is also potentially problematic that all of the materials used in this study were completed during one session. It is possible that responses to some questions impacted on later responses, perhaps due to a self-perception process (see Bem, 1967). Given that the helping intention questions were asked prior to completion of the questionnaires, help-intent ratings could have influenced other ratings. For example, offering help might have encouraged participants to perceive themselves as empathic individuals, and thus to report greater empathy. Again, this is an issue that future work might address.

Finally, it should be noted that the main finding of interest, the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction, existed only within the homosexual target condition. Generalisations of this effect to other target groups should not be made. To what extent the same effect might exist for a variety of groups or individuals in need is, in fact, an empirical question which could be explored.

Summary

The prediction of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, that empathy

and distress are distinct emotional responses to another in need which lead to different consequences for helping, was supported. Empathy facilitated, and distress attenuated, helping.

Religious fundamentalism was not related to dispositional empathy, nor was it related, overall, to helping intentions. Target-specific helping by individuals high in religious fundamentalism occurred, not according to the manipulation of sexual orientation as was predicted, but rather according to perceptions of similarity to the homosexual target. Also, for people who had a fundamentalist approach toward religion, it appeared that, perceived similarity aside, the emotional reaction to the person in need was a less important determinant of helping behaviour than for those who did not have a fundamentalist approach to religion.

Conclusion

The basic question driving this research was “are people who have a fundamentalist approach to religion more or less compassionate and giving than those who do not have a fundamentalist approach to religion?” If being compassionate and giving involves helping others in need, then the answer found in this study was that it depends upon the identity of the person in need. At least for a homosexual target of need, if the potential helper perceives the person in need to be similar to him/herself, then the answer is yes, fundamentalism is associated with helpfulness. If the person in need is perceived to be dissimilar, the answer is no, fundamentalism is not associated with helpfulness

Implications

Caring for and loving others is a central moral principle of all world

religions. The suggestion has often been offered that humans' natural impulses are relatively selfish, and that religions function as a socialising social dynamic. Religion has been considered both necessary and effective (e.g., Campbell, 1975), and neither necessary nor particularly effective (e.g., Freud, 1930/1961). Conflicting theorising and empirical evidence exist regarding both the question of our basic nature (whether at our core we are selfish or loving) and regarding the role of religion in facilitating prosocial tendencies.

Based on evidence from sociobiology, Batson (1983) speculated that we have a natural tendency to care for immediate family, and that religions have the potential to teach an extension of this caring to a larger, extended family, through imagery of the oneness of humankind. He also noted that for religious imagery to be effective in extending notions of family, it would need to be universalistic, and not promote ingroup - outgroup comparisons. Without truly universalistic religious imagery, Batson notes that "at the same time that religion encourages compassion within the 'family', it may encourage callousness toward those outside." Or, it could teach that "the 'elect' may be one in the 'family of God', but others are the 'unwashed', the 'heathens', or the 'infidel'" (p. 1384). The data in this study suggest that religious fundamentalism may lead to this latter dynamic of ingroup compassion and outgroup callousness, rather than facilitating compassion for humankind in general.

We know that religiosity is associated with social attitudes and behaviour. Apparently religion has the potential to enhance compassion and helpfulness, but it does not always do so. If it is possible to identify

how religion relates to social attitudes and behaviour, then perhaps the means by which the prosocial potential of religion can be realised could be understood. This study suggests that, for individuals with a fundamentalist approach to religion, intergroup behaviour may be influenced more by perceptions of similarity, or perhaps symbolic belief, than is the case for others. It seems that an important task for researchers interested in the social implications of religion is to continue to explore the processes by which differing approaches to religion impact upon interpersonal perception.

Notes

1. Theory and research to which this paper refers focus primarily upon Judeo-Christian religion, and may not be relevant to other religious traditions.

2. This affective definition of empathy incorporates the more cognitively-oriented definition of empathy as dispassionate understanding of another's position (perspective taking), since cognitive perspective taking is presumed to be a prerequisite of emotional empathy (Coke, Batson & McDavis, 1978).

3. Analyses which were performed using this composite measure were also computed using the help-intention item alone. An almost identical pattern of results was found as when using the composite measure. Results for analyses using the composite measure were reported since it likely represented a more stable measure of helping intentions than the single item measure.

4. An oblique rotation provided an almost identical factor structure. Based on the recommendation of Batson et. al. (1987) and C.D. Batson (Feb., 1993, personal communication) an orthogonal rotation with principal axis factoring was used in order to identify the independent aspects of empathy and personal distress.

5. Because factor analysis requires large samples, this analysis was computed using the entire sample of 203 participants (see Appendix A) The analysis was also recomputed using the smaller sample used for all other analyses, however. An almost identical structure emerged. Two factors had eigenvalues of greater than one (5.77 and 4.47) and

accounted for 27.5% and 21.3% of the variance, respectively. Using the same criteria for defining factors (loadings of greater than .5), the only difference in this analysis was that for the empathy factor, the item "empathic" had a loading of less than .5 (but was still quite reasonable at .48), and for the distress factor, "upset" had a loading of less than .5, (but was also quite reasonable at .47). Otherwise the factors were defined by the same items as in the original factor analysis. The empathy and distress scales thus were maintained as described.

6. Figures for all interactions are derived from mean scores on the dependent measures, based on median splits of continuous independent variables. The vertical axis represents HCS, expressed as a standard score.

7. These analyses were recomputed as 2 X 2 ANOVAS with the variable target included. In no case was there a gender by target interaction.

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Appendix A

Pilot Study and Resulting Analysis in Main Study

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done for two reasons. (1) to determine whether the letters written as the main stimulus materials would be perceived as realistic and convincing by participants, and (2) to determine whether it would be possible to control for perceptions of similarity to the targets using experimental control. A third target, a man aged 68 who was returning to school, was included in the pilot study in addition to the other targets. It was hoped that participants would rate the elderly and homosexual target equally in terms of similarity. The elderly target could thus be a control for perceived similarity (i.e., it would not be sexual orientation per se which differed in this case).

Participants. Fifty-eight undergraduate psychology students (17 males, 41 females) participated voluntarily in the pilot study, either during a developmental psychology class, or immediately following an introductory psychology class. None of these participants took part in the main study.

Materials and Procedure. Each participant read one of the letters developed for use in the main study, then answered three questions. First, using a 9-point Likert-type response format, they rated how similar they perceived themselves to be to the person who wrote the letter. Response alternatives ranged from -4 (not at all similar) to +4 (very similar). Next, they responded to two open-ended questions which probed for general and emotional reactions to the letter.

The letters were presented as being either from a heterosexual male aged 18, a homosexual male aged 18, or a heterosexual male, aged 68. Each letter indicated concern with academic issues. Aside from the manipulation of age and sexual orientation, the letters were identical.

Results and Conclusions. Similarity ratings were converted to a 0 to 8 scale, and a oneway ANOVA was performed for the dependent variable of similarity rating, by the independent variable, target. None of the means differed significantly, $F(2,55) = .12$, n.s. Mean similarity ratings for the young heterosexual, young homosexual, and elderly target were, 5.21, 4.95 and 5.35 respectively.

It was anticipated that the homosexual and elderly targets would both be perceived as less similar than the young heterosexual target, and would not be perceived as different from each other in terms of similarity. This was not the case. These data did not clarify that the use of the elderly target would be appropriate as a control for similarity. It was decided, however, to keep the elderly target condition in the experiment and to assess similarity ratings as well. A similar analysis to that done for the pilot study could be performed. If appropriate, the elderly target would be used as a control for similarity, if not appropriate, it would be dropped from the study.

A second reason for the pilot study was to determine if the letters were reasonable stimuli. Inspection of responses to the open-ended questions revealed that the content of the letters was believable, and close to the experience of students beginning university. A number of

participants indicated, however, that the letter seemed too informal. In particular, the letters had been hand-written. For example, one participant wrote "This letter seems very informal. I think a student who wanted to attend university would make the letter more formal by typing it". The letters used in the main study were, therefore, typed.

Resulting Analysis in the Main Experiment

Analysis of the Elderly Target Condition. As mentioned above, the elderly target condition was used in the main study in case similarity ratings would be as predicted with this larger sample. With the elderly target condition included in the sample for the main experiment, research participants were 203 introductory psychology students (59 males, 144 females) of mean age 20.2 (range 17-49). Of the 200 students whose data were used (two males and one female were removed due to having a sexual orientation other than heterosexual), 62 (31%) indicated affiliation with a liberal Protestant religious denomination, 15 (7.5%) were affiliated with a conservative Protestant religion, 47 (23.5%) were Catholic, 17 (8.5%) indicated having a personal religion, 19 (9.5%) chose "other" to describe their religious affiliation, 32 (16%) reported being agnostic, and 6 (3%) reported being atheist. Two participants did not provide information regarding religious affiliation .

Similarity. The appropriateness of the use of the elderly target was assessed based on participants' perceived similarity to the targets. It was anticipated that the homosexual and elderly targets would be perceived as equally (dis)similar. A oneway analysis of variance was performed for the dependent variable, similarity rating, by the

independent variable, target. Similarity scores had a potential range of 0 to 8, with higher scores indicating stronger perceived similarity. Mean similarity ratings for the young heterosexual, young homosexual and elderly target were, respectively, 6.0 ($sd = 1.78$), 2.8 ($sd = 2.47$) and 4.0 ($sd = 2.37$). Overall, the means differed significantly, $F(2,197) = 34.87$, $p < .001$. Multiple comparisons using Tukey's Least Significant Difference test revealed significant differences at $\alpha = .05$ for all pairwise comparisons.

Given that the mean similarity ratings for the homosexual and elderly target differed significantly, it was not appropriate to use the elderly target as a control for similarity. This condition was, therefore, excluded from further analyses. (Controlling for similarity was the only reason for inclusion of the elderly target.) The homosexual-target group remained the experimental condition of interest and the young-heterosexual group was considered the control. In order to control for similarity, ratings of perceived similarity to the targets were considered in further analyses where relevant.

Appendix B
Dispositional Empathy Questionnaire

1. It makes me sad to see a lonely stranger in a group.
2. People make too much of the feelings and sensitivity of animals.
3. I often find public displays of affection annoying.
4. I am annoyed by unhappy people who are just sorry for themselves.
5. I become nervous if others around me seem to be nervous.
6. I find it silly for people to cry out of happiness.
7. I tend to get emotionally involved with a friend's problem.
8. Sometimes the words of a love song can move me deeply.
9. I tend to lose control when I am bringing bad news to people.
10. The people around me have a great influence on my moods.
11. Most foreigners I have met seemed cool and unemotional.
12. I would rather be a social worker than work in a job training centre.
13. I don't get upset just because a friend is acting upset.
4. I like to watch people open presents.
15. Lonely people are probably unfriendly.
16. Seeing people cry upsets me.
17. Some songs make me happy.
18. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
19. I get very angry when I see someone being ill-treated.

20. I am able to remain calm even though those around me worry
21. When a friend starts to talk about his/her problems, I try to steer the conversation to something else.
22. Another's laughter is not catching for me.
23. Sometimes at the movies I am amused by the amount of crying and sniffing around me.
24. I am able to make decisions without being influenced by people's feelings.
25. I cannot continue to feel OK if people around me are depressed.
26. It is hard for me to see how some things upset people so much
27. I am very upset when I see an animal in pain.
28. Becoming involved in books or movies is a little silly.
29. It upsets me to see helpless old people.
30. I become more irritated than sympathetic when I see someone's tears.
31. I become very involved when I watch a movie.
32. I often find that I can remain cool in spite of the excitement around me.
33. Little children sometimes cry for no apparent reason.

Appendix C

Religious Fundamentalism Scale

1. God has given humankind a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.
2. All of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings.
3. Of all the people on this earth, one group has a special relationship with God because it believes the most in his revealed truths and tries the hardest to follow his laws.
4. The long established traditions in religion show the best way to honour and serve God, and should never be compromised.
5. Religion must admit all its past failings, and adapt to modern life if it is to benefit humanity.
6. When you get right down to it, there are only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not.
7. Different religions and philosophies have different versions of the truth, and may be equally right in their own way.
8. The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.
9. It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion.
10. No one religion is especially close to God, nor does God favour any particular group of believers.
11. God will punish most severely those who abandon his true religion.
12. No single book of religious writings contains all the important truths about life.
13. It is silly to think people can be divided into "the Good" and "the Evil". Everyone does some good, and some bad things.

14. God's true followers must remember that he requires them to constantly fight Satan and Satan's allies on this earth.
15. Parents should encourage their children to study all religions without bias, then make up their own minds about what to believe.
16. There is a religion on this earth that teaches, without error, God's truth.
17. "Satan" is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is no such thing as a diabolical "Prince of Darkness" who tempts us.
18. Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, science must be wrong.
19. There is no body of teachings, or set of scriptures, which is completely without error.
20. To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, true religion.

Appendix D

Attitudes Toward Homosexuals scale

1. I won't associate with known homosexuals if I can help it.
2. The sight of two men kissing does NOT particularly bother me.
3. If two homosexuals want to get married, the law should let them.
4. Homosexuals should be locked up to protect society.
5. Homosexuals should never be given positions of trust in caring for children.
6. I would join an organisation even though I knew it had homosexuals in its membership.
7. In many ways, the AIDS disease currently killing homosexuals is just what they deserve.
8. Homosexuality is "an abomination in the sight of God."
9. Homosexuals have a perfect right to their lifestyle, if that's the way they want to live.
10. Homosexuals should be forced to take whatever treatments science can come up with to make them normal.
11. People should feel sympathetic and understanding of homosexuals, who are unfairly attacked in our society.
12. I wouldn't mind being seen smiling and chatting with a known homosexual.

Appendix E

Social Desirability scale

1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
9. If I could get into a movie without paying for it and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. I like to gossip at times.
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
13. No matter who I am talking to, I'm always a good listener
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.

- 17 I always try to practice what I preach.
- 18 I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.
19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.
- 21 I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
- 24 I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.
25. I never resent being asked to return a favour.
- 26 I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
- 28 There have been times when I have been quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
- 29 I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.
- 31 I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
- 32 I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.
- 33 I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Appendix F

Letters

Male, 18

Hi. I'm writing this letter to tell you about my thoughts about attending university, as you asked me to do. I'm hoping to go to WLU next year. I looked into a few universities and I really want to go to Laurier. It has a programme that I'm very interested in, and I like the fact that it's not too big. It seems a bit less frightening, that way.

I'm looking forward to university. I think it will be a lot of work, and hard too. I'm planning to work really hard, but I want to do other things, too. You can't work all the time! I hope that there are some clubs that I can join, for recreation. I'm also hoping to be able to go home once in a while to visit my girlfriend, since we will be living in different places. I think I'll probably miss her a lot - we have been together for almost a year now!

I guess my main concern about university is whether or not I will be able to manage the workload. In high school, I had a hard time managing my time and knowing how to study most productively, so I'm concerned about that. Actually, this could be a big problem for me and I'm really worried about it. I don't really know how to take good notes and things like that. I'm sure it would be really helpful to talk to other students to see how they manage. So I guess that's what would help me - if a Laurier student would give me some advice about how to keep up with all the work. That's, about all, I think.

Male, 18

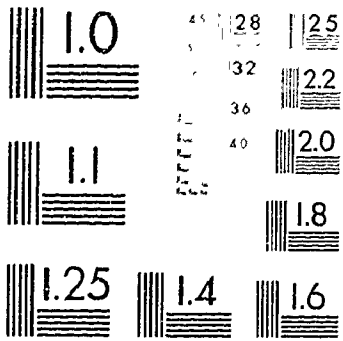
Hi. I'm writing this letter to tell you about my thoughts about attending university, as you asked me to do. I'm hoping to go to WLU next year. I looked into a few universities and I really want to go to Laurier. It has a programme that I'm really interested in, and I like the fact that it's not too big. It seems less frightening that way.

I'm looking forward to university. I think it will be a lot of work, and hard too. I'm planning to work really hard, but I want to do other things, too. You can't work all the time! I hope there is a club for gay students which I can join. I'm also hoping to be able to go home once in a while to visit my boyfriend, since we will be living in different places. I think I'll probably miss him a lot - we've been together for almost a year now!

I guess my main concern about university is whether or not I will be able

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DOES RELIGION TEACH EMPATHY AND HELPFULNESS?
THE ROLE OF FUNDAMENTALISM AND TARGET OF NEED IN
THE RELIGION -- HELPING RELATION

By

Lynne Marie Jackson

B.A., University of Western Ontario, 1988

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
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1993

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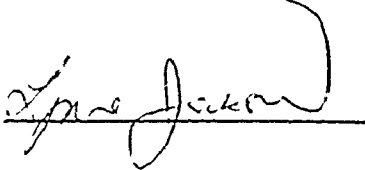
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Abstract

The empathy-altruism hypothesis predicts that when social expectation for helping is low, empathy will facilitate, and distress will attenuate, helping (Batson, 1991). Based on this prediction, this study explored the relations among religious fundamentalism, emotional reactions of empathy and distress, and helping behaviour, for differing targets of need. One hundred thirty-three introductory psychology students (38 male, 95 female), of varying levels of religious fundamentalism, read a letter ostensibly written by a person hoping to attend university during the coming academic year. The letter indicated that the author had concerns about coping with the demands of university studies. The potential student was represented as being either a young heterosexual adult or a young homosexual adult. Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to offer help to such a student. Emotional reactions to the individual in need were assessed, as were numerous attitudinal and dispositional variables. It was predicted that individuals higher in religious fundamentalism would react with low empathy and high distress to the homosexual target, and hence, helping would be attenuated for this target. While fundamentalism was positively correlated with distress in reaction to the homosexual target, the predicted impact upon helping was not found. Results did indicate, however, that individuals high in fundamentalism were more likely to help when they perceived the target to be similar to themselves, and less likely to help when the target was perceived as dissimilar. Additionally, the helping of those higher in religious fundamentalism was less likely to be mediated by emotion than it was for those lower in religious fundamentalism. It is suggested that the helping behaviour of individuals higher in religious fundamentalism may be motivated by a desire to maintain values.

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Should anyone who participated in this study ever happen across this thesis, a heartfelt "thank you" to you for making this study possible.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Abstract..... | i |
| Acknowledgements..... | ii |
| List of Tables..... | v |
| List of Figures..... | vi |
| Introduction and Review of Literature..... | 1 |
| Research Goal #1..... | 10 |
| Research Goal #2..... | 12 |
| Research Goal #3..... | 14 |
| Research Goal #4..... | 16 |
| Overview of the Study..... | 16 |
| Hypotheses..... | 17 |
| Method..... | 20 |
| Results..... | 27 |
| Help Measures..... | 27 |
| Attitudes Toward Homosexuals..... | 28 |
| Social Desirability..... | 28 |
| Hypothesis #1..... | 29 |
| Hypothesis #2..... | 30 |
| Hypothesis #3..... | 36 |
| Hypothesis #4..... | 36 |
| Hypothesis #5..... | 39 |
| Hypothesis #6..... | 43 |
| Fundamentalism and Similarity..... | 44 |
| Other Analyses..... | 51 |

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Discussion. | 52 |
| Preliminary Findings..... | 52 |
| Goals of the Research..... | 53 |
| Limitations..... | 63 |
| Summary..... | 64 |
| Conclusions..... | 65 |
| Implications..... | 65 |
| Notes. | 68 |
| References..... | 70 |
| Appendix A..... | 76 |
| Appendix B..... | 80 |
| Appendix C..... | 82 |
| Appendix D..... | 84 |
| Appendix E..... | 85 |
| Appendix F..... | 87 |
| Appendix G..... | 89 |
| Appendix H..... | 92 |
| Appendix I..... | 94 |
| Appendix J..... | 95 |
| Appendix K..... | 96 |
| Appendix L..... | 97 |

List of Tables

- Table 1: Regression Statistics with Empathy Entered after Similarity
- Table 2: Regression Statistics with Distress Entered after Similarity
- Table 3: Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four
- Table 4: Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four Controlling for Similarity
- Table 5: Pearson Correlations of Fundamentalism with Empathy and Distress
- Table 6: Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Five
- Table 7: Mean Time Offered by Type of Help and Fundamentalism Level
- Table 8: Regression Statistics for Similarity Analysis
- Table 9: Regression Statistics for Low Fundamentalism Analysis
- Table 10: Regression Statistics for High Fundamentalism Analysis
- Table 11: Pearson Correlations among Similarity, Empathy, Distress and Fundamentalism
- Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Empathy, Distress, Help and Similarity by Gender

List of Figures

Figure 1: Similarity by Empathy Interaction for Help Intentions

Figure 2: Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Figure 3: Target by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Figure 4: Fundamentalism by Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Introduction and Review of the Literature

Are people who are religious more compassionate and giving than those who are not religious? Religious teachings related to loving and helping others have led some psychologists to suggest that being religious is associated with facilitation of compassion or empathy.¹ Studies in which participants provide estimates of their own degree of religiousness and compassion or empathy support this claim (e.g., Hsieh, 1987; Watson, Hood & Morris, 1985; Watson, Hood, Morris & Hall, 1984). If this relation actually exists, then we might expect religiousness to be associated with prosocial behaviour. Studies of religiousness and prosocial behaviour, however, have generally found no relation between these variables (see Batson, Schoenrade & Ventis, 1993, for a review). Additionally, positive relations have been found between religiosity and antisocial attitudes and behaviours such as prejudice and discrimination (see Batson et al., 1993; Gorsuch & Aleshire, 1974; Spilka, Hood and Gorsuch, 1985, for reviews). A common suggestion is that a person's religious orientation, or personal "style" of religion, is an important consideration with respect to resolving this paradox related to the social implications of religiousness.

In this regard, most of the relevant research examines relations of an intrinsic or extrinsic religious orientation with empathy and helping behaviour. The conceptualisation of these orientations is based on Allport's (1950) classic discussion of "mature" and "immature" religion, which was developed further by Allport and Ross (1967). Intrinsic religion refers to devout faith which is an end in itself, and which is a

central motive in life. Extrinsic religion refers to the use of, or affiliation with, religion as a means to other generally more selfish ends, such as self-presentation or security. According to Allport and Ross (1967) the intrinsic and extrinsic orientations are independent dimensions. This description of religious orientations suggests that an intrinsic, but not an extrinsic, religious orientation should be associated with increased concern for others, empathy and prosocial behaviour, since by definition only intrinsic religion is associated with incorporation of religious teachings into one's life. It has been argued that it is only to the extent that one incorporates religious teachings into one's life that the prosocial implications of religion will be apparent (e.g., Allport, 1966).

Some research has substantiated this claim. For example, Watson et al. (1985) studied the relation between religious orientation and dispositional emotional empathy. They reported positive correlations between intrinsic religion and dispositional empathy, and negative relations between extrinsic religion and empathy. This study, however, used self-report questionnaires to assess the variables of interest. Such self-report measures could be subject to social desirability biases (Batson et al., 1993). Watson et al. (1984), however, found empathy to be positively related to an intrinsic religious orientation and inversely related to an extrinsic orientation, and the authors claimed that a concern with social desirability was not responsible for the pattern of relations found. (Apparently they controlled social desirability statistically, using analysis of covariance.)

Hunsberger and Platonow (1986) addressed the issue of self-

report bias by examining the behavioural implications of religious orientation. The researchers provided an opportunity for students to engage in actual helping behaviour, by volunteering to help a charitable group. They found students who volunteered to help, and also actually did so, had higher intrinsic religion scores and lower extrinsic religion scores than did students who did not volunteer. Very few students of either religious orientation actually did help after volunteering, however, calling into question the appropriateness of suggesting that religion facilitates helping.

One explanation of the findings related to more compassion and helping associated with intrinsic than extrinsic religion is that some religions do teach compassion and concern for others, and that devout, intrinsic religion leads to an incorporation of these values into one's life, whereas an extrinsic orientation toward religion does not. This explanation is consistent with the reasoning of Allport and Ross (1967). A different explanation has been proposed by Batson et al. (1993). They have suggested that it is not the sincere concern for others of the individual with an intrinsic religious orientation which leads her or him to help, but rather the desire to see oneself and be seen by others in a favourable light which explains the relations. Intrinsic religion, according to these authors, is associated with a desire to present oneself as socially desirable. As such, they argue that the devoutly religious person reports being more compassionate in order to self-present, and helps for the egoistic reason of acquiring reward (social approval), not for the more altruistic goal of increasing the other's well being, as Allport likely would

have argued.

According to the account put forth by Batson et al. (1993), religion does have the potential to have a positive impact upon helping behaviour, but it is neither an intrinsic nor extrinsic orientation which is associated with the positive impact. They propose that a third independent dimension of religiosity, a "quest" religious orientation, should be associated with a positive impact upon helping behaviour. Quest refers to "an open-ended, active approach to existential questions that resists clear-cut, pat answers" (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991, p. 416). For the individual with a strong quest orientation, particular beliefs are not nearly so important as is grappling with existential questions. Unlike intrinsic religiosity, a quest orientation is associated with a creative and complex approach to religious issues. It is associated with looking to religion as a source for exploring existential questions, rather than as a source for providing pat answers. Accordingly, Batson et al. (1993) argue that an individual with a strong quest orientation is more likely than an individual stronger in intrinsic or extrinsic religiosity to explore the meaning of religious teachings, such as teachings related to loving and caring for others. So, according to Batson et al. (1993), a quest orientation could be expected to be associated with thinking carefully about such issues, whereas an intrinsic orientation is associated with reporting that loving and caring for others is important, for the sake of self-presentation.

In terms of the motivation for helping others in need, Batson et al. (1993) predicted that quest is associated with helping which is motivated

by the desire to improve the well being of others in need, because brotherhood is seriously considered, whereas an intrinsic religious orientation is associated with egoistic helping based on the pursuit of reward. Along with his coworkers, Batson has provided data which he suggests support his contentions.

At least four studies suggest that the helping of the person with an intrinsic religious orientation is egoistically motivated. In two of these studies, both whether or not help was offered and type of help offered to a person in need were examined. In both cases an intrinsic orientation was associated with a persistent form of helping. That is, help was given even when the target of need explicitly stated that she or he did not want help. A quest orientation related to a more tentative form of helping. Help was offered when it was wanted, and not when it was not wanted. The authors suggested that this tentative helping was more responsive to the actual needs of the individual "in need" than the persistent helping characteristic of people with a stronger intrinsic orientation. They reasoned that the "intrinsic" (those for whom this orientation was strong) responded to their own desires to appear helpful, or to the perceived needs of the victim, rather than to the expressed needs of this "victim" (Batson & Gray, 1981; Darley & Batson, 1973).

In more direct tests of the motivation underlying helping, Batson et al. (1989) and Batson and Flory (1990) again found evidence that the intrinsic orientation is associated with the desire to appear helpful. In the first case, the difficulty of a "qualifying task for helping" and the provision of social expectation for helping (or not) were manipulated. The authors

reasoned that if helping was motivated by the sincere desire to improve the well-being of the individual in need, people would volunteer to help regardless of the difficulty of the qualifying task, and regardless of social expectation. An intrinsic orientation was associated with volunteering to help only when told that the qualifying task would be difficult, and effort on the qualifying task was low. These findings indicated a desire to "get out of helping" while maintaining the appearance of wanting to be helpful. Additionally, an intrinsic orientation was associated with attenuated helping when social expectation for helping was low, suggesting that responsiveness was more to self-presentation than to the person in need. Findings related to the quest orientation were equivocal.

In the second study (Batson & Flory, 1990), participants of differing religious orientations did a Stroop test in which words were used which related to gaining rewards, avoiding punishment, and relieving the target's needs, after hearing of a person in need and before being given an opportunity to offer help. The Stroop test involves presenting participants with words in a variety of colours. The task is to identify the colour in which the word is presented, as quickly as possible. The test reveals whether thoughts about the meaning of the word presented are salient. If the word presented evokes thoughts about the meaning of the word (versus simply noticing the colour), then this should interfere with speed of response about the colour in which the word is presented (Batson & Flory, 1990). A positive relationship was found between offering help and response latencies for reward-relevant words on the Stroop test for participants having an intrinsic religious orientation. For

individuals who scored above the median on the quest dimension, there was a relation of quest with latencies for victim-directed words. The authors concluded that an intrinsic orientation was related to concern with rewards associated with helping and that a quest orientation showed some relation to concern for the victim.

In summary, research related to religion and helping has examined two main issues. First, whether intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religiosity are associated with empathy, compassion, and/or helping has been examined. Second, the motivations to help associated with the intrinsic, extrinsic and quest religious orientations have been explored. Whereas studies using self-reports of empathy or compassion have reported positive relations with intrinsic religion (Watson et al., 1984; Watson et al., 1985), the self-reported concern of the religious individual doesn't seem to translate to helpful behaviour (Batson et al., 1993). Studies which have examined the motivation to help have suggested that intrinsic religion is associated with the egoistic motivation of reward seeking (Batson & Gray, 1981; Batson et al., 1989; Batson & Flory, 1990; Darley & Batson, 1973), and that helping associated with an intrinsic orientation may occur only in response to social expectations for helping (Batson & Flory, 1990). There is some suggestion that a quest orientation may be associated with the more altruistic motive of helping to improve the well-being of the individual in need (Batson & Flory, 1990; Batson & Gray, 1981).

The relation between religion and empathy, and between religion and helping, remains as yet unclear, however. In the majority of

research, the personality variables related to religious orientation which have been considered are the intrinsic-extrinsic dimensions, and quest religiosity. The intrinsic-extrinsic distinction has suffered serious criticism since its inception. Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) pointed out a number of problems with the constructs as well as the scales used to measure them. First, the definitions of the orientations are ambiguous, given that they combine motivational, personality, cognitive stylistic, attitudinal and behavioural components. The authors point to a lack of agreement among researchers regarding the basic nature of the constructs. Measurement is also problematic. Differing factor structures have been found in various studies to describe the original item pool, rendering the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness problematic. Also, the relation between the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions has long been a source of confusion for researchers. With reference to the study of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) conclude that "much of this research has been theoretically impoverished and only of marginal value in increasing our understanding of the psychology of religion" (p. 459). Quest religiosity has also been criticised as being conceptually problematic (Hood & Morris, 1985). Additionally, Batson's quest scale has been criticised for having poor psychometric properties (it is vulnerable to response sets) (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Clearly, then, findings regarding the relation between religion and helping could be strengthened by using a measure of religion which is theoretically and methodologically sound.

Religious Orientation. Recently, researchers interested in religion

have been considering religious fundamentalism to be an important dimension of religiosity. Fundamentalism has been defined as a belief in the absolute, unchanging truth of one religion which must be followed without exception (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Altemeyer and Hunsberger have suggested that consideration of fundamentalism might aid the elucidation of the prosocial and antisocial implications of religion better than the intrinsic-extrinsic concept has. In order to facilitate this process, the authors published a 20-item Religious Fundamentalism Scale congruent with the above definition. The scale has excellent psychometric properties and therefore addresses many of the concerns regarding measuring religious orientations put forth by Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990). Given the conceptual clarity of the construct of fundamentalism and the strong psychometric properties of the fundamentalism scale, the suggestion that consideration of fundamentalism might better clarify the religion-social behaviour relation than the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions seems warranted.

While clearly fundamentalism refers to a very specific orientation to religion, it does share some conceptual similarities with intrinsic and quest religiosity. Donahue (1985) reviewed evidence suggestive of a positive relation between intrinsic religion and fundamentalism. He identified six studies in which an intrinsic orientation correlated significantly with theologically conservative beliefs, whereas an extrinsic orientation did not. Thus intrinsic religion and theological conservatism seem to share some similarities, probably related to religious devoutness. Religious fundamentalism also shares conceptual

similarities with the quest religious orientation. Whereas quest refers to a questioning and flexible approach to religion, fundamentalism refers to absolute commitment to a set of beliefs. Thus, it seems that fundamentalism and quest religiosity are inversely related.

Fundamentalism and intrinsic religion are similar, probably because they are both related to religious devoutness. Therefore, it could be expected that findings related to fundamentalism and helping would parallel those for intrinsic religion. Fundamentalism and quest religion seem quite opposite; fundamentalism refers to rigidity of beliefs, quest refers to flexibility of belief. While findings related to quest religiosity and helping have not been clear, it could be expected that fundamentalism and quest religion would have very different implications for helping behaviour. Given the relations among these religious orientations, and the psychometric superiority of the fundamentalism scale, the nature of the relations among religiousness, empathy and helping might be best tapped using the fundamentalism scale.

No research to date has examined the relation of religious fundamentalism with compassion, empathy, or helping behaviour. The first purpose of this study was, therefore, to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with empathy and helping behaviour It was expected that findings for fundamentalism would parallel those for intrinsic religion. Thus, fundamentalism was expected to be positively related to self-reported dispositional empathy but unrelated to a behavioural measure of helping.

Target of Need. A second shortcoming in the literature related to

religion and helping is a lack of research which examines the role of the target of need. Only two studies have considered the target as an important variable in the religion-helping relation (Batson & Gray, 1981, Hunsberger & Platonow, 1986). Batson and Gray (1981) found no significant differences between relations of religion with helping for a "socially acceptable" and a "socially unacceptable" target. Hunsberger and Platonow (1986) found that Christian orthodoxy (strength of belief in the central tenets of Christianity) correlated positively with reports of helping through one's church, and attitudes toward volunteering within a religious context. In the same study, however, orthodoxy did not correlate with reports of helping "charitable causes" (when no mention was made of religion), or with actual volunteering to help a charitable organisation, through opportunity provided in the study. Given that only two studies have examined the role of the target of need, and the results of the two studies are not entirely compatible, more work is needed in order to elucidate the role of target in the religion-helping relation.

Might we expect differential, target-specific helping among those with a fundamentalist religious orientation? It is tempting to make this prediction in light of the substantial amount of research which has demonstrated relations between fundamentalism and prejudice against specific groups. These targets of prejudiced attitudes include homosexual people, women, communists, and a wide variety of minority groups (see Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Herek, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Hunsberger, 1990; Maret, 1984; McFarland, 1989). With reference to orthodox or fundamentalist approaches to religion, Herek (1987)

claimed that religion "does not foster an unequivocal acceptance of others but instead encourages tolerance toward specific groups that are accepted by contemporary Judeo-Christian teachings" (p. 34). It seems reasonable to explore the possibility that the prejudice associated with fundamentalism leads to attenuation of helping for targets of prejudice or nonacceptance. The second goal of this work was, therefore, to examine the role of the target of need in the religion-helping relation. It was expected that the helping behaviour of individuals high in religious fundamentalism would be more target-specific than would the helping of those lower in fundamentalism. Helping by individuals high in fundamentalism was expected to be attenuated when the person in need was a target of prejudiced attitudes, specifically, a homosexual.

Empathy. The prediction of target-specific helping among those with prejudiced attitudes presumes a process which mediates the relation between the prejudice associated with fundamentalist religiosity and helping. Prejudice alone could be unrelated to helping if it is independent of the motivation to help. For example, if the primary motivation to help is self-presentation (cf. Batson et al., 1993), then prejudice might be unrelated to helping. If, however, prejudice is somehow associated with the motivation to help, we would expect target-specific helping.

Batson and colleagues have provided substantial evidence that our emotional reactions to others in need, specifically empathy and distress, are related to the motivation for helping. Empathy, in this context, refers to "other-focused, congruent emotion" (Batson, Fultz, &

Schoenrade, 1987, p.20), whereas distress refers to feelings of alarm, upset and general distress.² Empathy has been associated with the motivation to improve the well being of the other, whereas distress has been associated with a variety of egoistic motivations for helping. These egoistic motivations associated with distress often result in not helping (Batson, 1991).

A good deal of evidence supports the contention that empathy and distress are, in fact, qualitatively distinct emotional reactions, and that they have differing motivational consequences for helping. At least six studies have reported factor analytic results revealing empathy and distress as distinct. Furthermore, five studies have demonstrated the differential motivational consequences of empathy and distress (see Batson, 1991, for a review). These studies have demonstrated that if people are presented with a help-needed situation in which it is easy to leave the situation without helping (there is low social expectation for helping), people who react with distress to the situation tend not to help. However, those who react empathically tend to help, regardless of the low expectation for helping. This suggests that only empathically aroused individuals are motivated by the goal to improve the others' well-being.

If fundamentalism is negatively related to empathy, or if it is positively related to distress in reaction to the target of need, we could expect it to be associated with attenuated helping, when there is a lack of clear social expectation for helping. Given that fundamentalism is associated with prejudice against homosexuals, it seems plausible to

predict that it would be related to decreased empathy and increased distress in reaction to a homosexual person.

While research has examined the type of motivation that religious individuals have for helping, there have been no related empirical investigations of the emotional reactions to varying targets of need (distress or empathy) which precede helping. The third goal of this work was, therefore, to examine the role of emotional mediation in the religion-helping relation. It was expected that any relation of religious fundamentalism and helping would be mediated by emotional responses.

The argument made is that the tendency of individuals high in religious fundamentalism to be prejudiced against homosexuals should lead them to experience low empathy and high distress in response to a homosexual person, and that these emotional responses will attenuate helping. However, helping could also be influenced by differential perceptions of similarity to the person in need. Krebs (1975) demonstrated that leading people to believe they were similar to another increased their empathic reactions to that person, and people who were empathically aroused were more likely than others to help the individual. He argued that perceptions of similarity facilitate understanding another's perspective. This understanding then enhances emotional empathy, and empathy facilitates helping. According to this approach, in the present study, helping should occur when the targets are perceived to be similar, hence evoking empathy. When the targets are perceived to be dissimilar, helping should be attenuated. If, for example, the homosexual

target is perceived as less similar than the heterosexual target, helping the homosexual target could be attenuated for this reason.

Perceived similarity cannot always be expected to increase helping, however. Lerner and Agar (1972) proposed that the impact of perceived similarity on the desire to interact with another person depends upon what goals motivate a potential interaction, and what the implications of being similar to the relevant other are for those goals. Consistent with this reasoning, they demonstrated that research participants preferred to avoid a similar other when he was represented as being addicted to drugs (through his own actions). On the other hand, participants indicated a desire to interact with a similar other when he was not presented as being addicted to drugs. The authors reasoned that maintaining personal security was a goal of these interactions, and, in the case of the drug addict, perceived similarity represented a threat to personal security. Regarding the present study, it is possible that a target perceived to be similar could evoke avoidance responses, if the target represents a personal threat to the research participants. It is possible that participants who are prejudiced against homosexuals could perceive the homosexual target to represent such a threat. This would lead to attenuated helping.

Similarity, then, could either evoke empathy, facilitating helping (cf. Krebs, 1975), or evoke perceived threat, hence attenuate helping (cf. Lerner & Agar, 1972). Given that various relations among similarity, empathy, helping, and the desire for interaction have been found in previous studies, the role of perceived similarity to the target in the

religion-helping relation was also examined.

Sensitivity to Expressed Needs. Batson and Gray (1981) and Darley and Batson (1973) found that devout religion was associated with helping which was not responsive to the expressed needs of the individual 'in need,' but appeared more responsive to the need of the "helper" to appear helpful. It was expected, based on these findings, that those high in fundamentalism would be less sensitive to the expressed needs of the individual "in need" than those lower in fundamentalism. No studies to date have examined sensitivity to others' needs associated with religious fundamentalism. The fourth goal of this work was therefore, to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism and sensitivity to others' needs.

Overview of the Present Study

In this experiment, the relation of religious fundamentalism with empathy, distress, and helping for different targets of need was examined. Since Batson's work suggests that under conditions of low expectation for helping, empathy will facilitate helping whereas distress will attenuate helping, helping was examined only under the condition of low social expectation. This study, therefore, was intended to shed light on the impact of fundamentalist religion in either facilitating or attenuating empathy and distress, and thus helping, for different targets of need.

Students of varying levels of religious fundamentalism were asked to indicate their willingness to help a student who was presented as needing academic guidance and was either (1) a target of prejudiced

attitudes for people high in religious fundamentalism (a young homosexual adult), or (2) not a target of prejudiced attitudes for people high in religious fundamentalism (a young heterosexual adult).

Students were told that the researchers were doing a feasibility study for a mentor-system in the university, and were asked to indicate how likely they would be to act as a buddy to this individual if there were a mentor system in place. Additionally, they were asked how much time they would be willing to spend with this person to provide two types of help, academic guidance and personal advice. Emotional responses of empathy and distress, and perceived similarity to the person in need, were assessed. A survey including measures of dispositional empathy, religious fundamentalism, attitudes toward homosexuals, and social desirability was also completed.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis #1. *Given a factor analysis of emotional reactions, a (two) factor structure revealing empathy and distress as distinct factors for the emotional reactions ratings was expected.*

According to Batson et al. (1987), empathy and distress are distinct emotions. It was, therefore, hypothesized that emotional reaction terms would follow the same patterning as has been found in previous research. Support of this hypothesis would permit examination of relations of empathy and distress with helping.

Hypothesis #2. *It was predicted that empathy would correlate positively with helping whereas distress would correlate negatively. It was also predicted that the relations between emotional reactions and helping*

would exist above and beyond any relation between perceived similarity between self and target, and helping behaviour.

Empathy and distress have different implications for helping, according to Batson et al. (1987). Under conditions of low expectation for helping as used in this study, empathy should facilitate helping whereas distress should attenuate it. The prediction that emotional reactions would predict helping above and beyond a similarity effect was based on the reasoning of Krebs (1975) that similarity impacts upon helping because it evokes emotional empathy.

Hypothesis #3. *It was expected that religious fundamentalism would be positively correlated with self-reported dispositional empathy, but uncorrelated with the behavioural-intent measure of helping.*

Positive relations of intrinsic religion with self-reported dispositional empathy have been reported (Watson et al., 1984, Watson et al., 1985). Batson et al. (1993) have argued that the reported compassion of those high in an intrinsic orientation does not translate into helping behaviour. The prediction made by hypothesis three was, therefore, based on the general expectation that findings for fundamentalism would parallel the pattern related to intrinsic religion proposed by Batson et al. (1993).

This hypothesis addressed the first goal of the study; to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with self-reported dispositional empathy and helping.

Hypothesis #4. *A fundamentalism by target interaction was predicted for the dependent variable, 'willingness to help.' A main effect of target*

was also expected.

For the homosexual target, helping was expected to be moderated by religious fundamentalism. Particularly low helping of the homosexual target was expected of individuals high in religious fundamentalism. It was also expected that all participants would generally be less willing to help the homosexual than the other target (based on literature related to the negative impact of perceived dissimilarity on helping, e.g., Krebs, 1975; Weiner, 1980).

This hypothesis addressed the second goal of the study; to examine the role of the target of need in the religion-helping relation.

Hypothesis #5. *It was expected that the fundamentalism by target interaction for the dependent variable of helping, would be mediated by emotional reactions. Fundamentalism was expected to correlate positively with distress and negatively with empathy in reaction to the homosexual target.*

If the homosexual target elicited reactions of high distress and low empathy among those with a fundamentalist approach to religion, and if these emotional reactions predicted helping, then it could be suggested that emotional reactions mediated the fundamentalism by target interaction on helping.

The third goal of the study, to examine the role of emotion in the religion-helping relation, was addressed by this hypothesis.

Hypothesis #6. *It was predicted that individuals low in religious fundamentalism would offer more academic than personal advice whereas individuals higher in religious fundamentalism would offer*

equal amounts of personal and academic advice. A fundamentalism by type of help interaction was, therefore, expected for the dependent variable 'amount of time offered'.

Again, based on the general expectation that findings for fundamentalism would parallel research findings related to intrinsic religion, it was expected that higher levels of religious fundamentalism would be associated with lower levels of sensitivity to the expressed needs of the targets. In this study, the targets requested academic guidance only. Offering only academic guidance (and not personal advice) would, therefore, indicate sensitivity to the expressed need, whereas offering both would indicate a lack of such sensitivity.

This hypothesis addressed the fourth goal of the research which was to examine the sensitivity to others' needs as a function of religious fundamentalism.

Method

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out to get feedback regarding the "believability" of materials developed for the experiment, and to determine whether or not an experimental design could be used to control for perceptions of similarity across the targets. The materials of interest were letters, presumably written by the targets of need. They indicated concerns and thoughts about attending university. Findings of the pilot study resulted in a minor change to the letters. As well, the pilot study revealed that statistical rather than experimental control (for similarity) would be preferable for the main study. For details regarding

the pilot study, see Appendix A.

Main Experiment

Participants. Research participants were 136 introductory psychology students (38 male, 95 female) of mean age 20.0 (range 18-47) at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada. Students participated voluntarily in exchange for token course credit. Approximately equal proportions of males to females were included in each of the conditions of the experiment. Since participants' similarity/dissimilarity of sexual orientation to the target needed to be controlled, only heterosexual participants were included in the analyses. Three participants (two male, one female) indicated on the survey demographic information that their sexual orientation was other than heterosexual, and thus their data were excluded. Of the remaining 133 participants, 42 (32%) indicated affiliation with a liberal Protestant group, 8 (6%) reported affiliation with a conservative Protestant religion, 33 (25%) were Catholic, 13 (9.8%) chose "personal" to describe their religious affiliation, 10 (7.5%) chose "other" as the category to describe their religious affiliation, 21 (15.8%) reported being agnostic, and 5 (3.8%) claimed being atheist. One participant did not provide religious affiliation information.

Materials. A survey was used, composed of (1) a measure of (dispositional) Emotional Empathy (Mehrabian and Epstein (1972), (2) the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), (3) Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), (4) the Crowne and Marlow (1964) Social Desirability Scale, and (5) items related to age, sex, religious affiliation and sexual orientation

The measure of dispositional empathy used (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972, see Appendix B) is a commonly used 33-item scale which assesses a dispositional tendency to experience emotional empathy. The scale is reported to have a split-half reliability coefficient of .84, and is apparently not confounded with a social desirability bias (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). Items were rated using a 9-point Likert-type response format (-4 to +4) and were converted to a 0 to 8 range such that scores potentially ranged from 0 to 264.

The Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, see Appendix C) measures the extent to which a person believes that:

there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable, practices of the past, and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity (p. 118).

Notably, the scale measures how a person holds religious belief, as opposed to measuring specific belief content. Additionally, the scale is applicable to fundamentalist belief in most religions (it may not be meaningful for some non-Christian religions). It is a 20-item scale with excellent internal consistency (coefficient alpha of .92, mean inter-item correlation of .72). The 20 items were rated with a 9-point Likert-type

response format (-4 to +4) and were subsequently converted to a 0 to 8 range such that scores on the scale potentially ranged from 0 to 160.

The Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale (see Appendix D) is a 12-item scale with statements which assess "condemning, vindictive, and punitive sentiments toward gays" (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, p. 121). The scale has good psychometric properties with a Cronbach's alpha of .89 and mean interitem correlation of .39 (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Items were rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format (-4 to +4) and converted to a 0 to 8 range such that scores potentially ranged from 0 to 108. This measure was included so that the previous finding in the literature that fundamentalism is positively related to prejudice against homosexuals could be tested with this sample

The Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), as shown in Appendix E, measures an individual's tendency to describe him or herself in socially desirable terms for the purpose of gaining social approval. It is a 33-item scale with adequate reliability, a test-retest r of .88 (Crowne & Marlow, 1964). In the original version of the scale, a true or false response format is used. In this study, the response format was changed to a 9-point Likert-type format (-4 to +4). Responses were recoded on a 0 to 8 range such that scores on the scale potentially ranged from 0 to 264. This scale was included because social desirability concerns have been implicated as relevant to the religion-helping relation (Batson et al., 1993).

The target manipulation was represented in the form of a letter (see Appendix F), ostensibly gathered from a pilot study in which future

students were contacted and asked to write letters to the researchers which indicated their thoughts and concerns about university life. The letter was actually written by the experimenter. The letter was said to "represent the sort of student who might want to attend this university, and the types of concerns such a person might have." The letter was presented as being from a male future university student and outlined his thoughts and concerns about university life. The "student" was represented as being either a heterosexual young adult, or a homosexual young adult. Within each letter was a clear statement that help was needed and desired with academic issues. The letters were identical aside from the manipulation of sexual orientation.

Participants responded to questions regarding whether or not they would act as a buddy to the student who wrote the letter if there were a mentor programme at the university (rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format, -4, "definitely not" to +4, "definitely yes"), how much time they would volunteer to give academic advice as well as personal advice (from 0 to 4 hours, rated in half hour increments), an emotional reactions questionnaire (each emotion was rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format, -4, "not at all" to +4 "a great deal"), a question related to the participant's perceived similarity to the target (rated on a 9-point Likert-type response format, -4 "not at all similar" to +4 "very similar"), and attribution-related questions which assessed the perceived controllability, stability and locus of the need situation. These questions were also assessed on 9-point Likert-type response formats (-4 to +4). The items which assessed attributions of controllability, locus and stability of the

"student's" problem were modelled after those used by Betancourt (1990). They were included for exploratory purposes, and are not relevant to the present study, and thus are not discussed further. Two open-ended questions which corroborated the cover story for the experiment were also included. These items are shown in Appendix G.

Emotional reactions to the targets were assessed using the measures devised to assess empathy and distress developed by Batson and colleagues (see Appendix G). Twenty-one emotional reaction items were included, 11 to assess distress and 10 to assess empathy. Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas and Isen (1983) reported Cronbach's alphas of .94 and .79 for the distress and empathy indices respectively. Because the particular emotional reaction terms which have loaded on separate factors in analyses of emotional reactions have varied slightly from study to study, empathy and distress scales were formed based on a factor analysis of the emotional reaction adjectives.

The behavioural intent questions regarding acting as a buddy to the target, and time offered to help, were intended as the primary dependent variables (see Appendix G). The question regarding perceived similarity to the student in need was included because the literature suggests an impact of similarity on empathy and helping (e.g., Krebs, 1975) and hence this issue needed to be considered.

Procedure. The study was conducted by a female graduate student experimenter with groups of two to 10 participants. Booklets containing one of the letters and the remaining materials were shuffled into random order, and distributed to participants. The restriction that

equal proportions of males to females were included in each condition was employed, however. Students were told that the experiment was part of a project concerned with how students cope with beginning university. Specifically, it was called a 'feasibility' study regarding the development of a mentor programme for incoming university students. It was explained that it might be useful to have a mentor system (a sort of buddy programme) whereby upper level students could pair up with incoming students to "show them the ropes". Participants were told that, to gain some preliminary information, the experimenters contacted students who hoped to attend Wilfrid Laurier University in the near future, and asked some of these students to write a brief letter indicating their thoughts and concerns about university life. Participants were told that they would be given a letter which represented the sort of letter which was received, and would be asked to read the letter, and then provide some information regarding how they felt this person could be best assisted. For exact verbal instructions, see Appendix H.

After signing a consent form (provided in Appendix I), each participant read one of the letters described in the previous section, and then indicated on paper how likely he or she would be to act as a "buddy" to this person, and how many hours per week she or he would be willing to spend with this person providing the two types of help (academic guidance and personal advice) if there were a buddy system in place. Subsequently, the participants completed the questionnaire to assess their emotional reactions to the student's letter. Following this, participants rated their perceived similarity to the target. The open-ended

questions were then answered, followed by the survey. Demographic information, provided in Appendix J, was provided last. Each session took approximately one hour to complete. Participants were provided with a written debriefing immediately after they completed the study (see Appendix K), and any questions asked were answered by the experimenter. It was also noted on the debriefing form, and mentioned verbally during the introduction to the study, that participants could contact the experimenter through the psychology department should they want to discuss the research further. Following analyses of the data, written feedback regarding the results of the study was posted on a bulletin board for participants to read (see Appendix L).

The experimenter attempted to create low social expectation for helping for all participants. It was made clear to participants that their responses were anonymous. As well, it was explained that the experimenter would not examine the data until the participants' materials had been placed together such that she would not remember who completed any given set of materials. Also, tables were set up in such a way that it was not possible for participants to see each others' responses. No mention was made of norms for helping, nor was any indication given that offering help was expected. For these reasons, it seems appropriate to consider the experiment as involving low social expectation for helping.

Results

Helping Dependent Measures

Because the three items "willingness to act as a buddy", "time

offered to provide academic guidance” and “time offered to provide personal guidance” used different response formats [a -4 (very unlikely) to +4 (very likely) format, versus amount of time (0 to 4 hours, using half-hour intervals)], scores from these items were transformed into standard (Z) scores. Pearson correlations among the three variables were then computed. The intercorrelations ranged from .40 to .54. Reliability analysis revealed a coefficient alpha for the three help items of .73 (mean inter-item correlation of .47). Given the high associations among the items, an overall helping composite score (HCS: the average standard score of the three items) was computed. ³

Attitudes Toward Homosexuals

The justification for the manipulation of sexual orientation of the target was based on past research findings of a relation between religious fundamentalism and prejudice against homosexuals. This relation was upheld in these data. The Pearson correlation between religious fundamentalism and negative attitudes toward homosexuals was significant, $r(131) = .58, p < .01$.

Social Desirability

In response to Batson et al.'s (1993) argument regarding a relation of devout religion with social desirability which confounds reports of the religion and helping relation, Pearson correlations between social desirability and fundamentalism, and between social desirability and HCS, were computed. Neither correlation was significant, $r(131) = .003, n.s.$ and $r(131) = .069, n.s.$, respectively. Social desirability was, therefore, excluded from further analyses.

Hypothesis #1

Following Batson et al. (1987), a two factor structure for emotional reactions was expected. The 21 emotional reaction items were subjected to a principal axis factor analysis, using varimax rotation.⁴ A two-factor solution resulted, with 26.9% of the variance accounted for by the first factor (eigenvalue of 5.64) and 21.8% of the variance accounted for by the second factor (eigenvalue of 4.58). Two other factors were extracted, but they had eigenvalues of less than one, and together accounted for only 6% of the variability in the measures. Items with loadings of greater than .5 were identified as defining the factors. As such, the first factor was defined by the emotional reactions of touched, kind, soft-hearted, moved, tender, warm, compassionate, sympathetic and empathic. This factor was called the empathy factor. Using the same criteria, the second factor was defined by the terms disturbed, bothered, uneasy, troubled, perturbed, alarmed, distressed, upset and grieved. This was called the distress factor.

Items which defined these two factors were analysed as scales for reliability. The empathy scale had a coefficient alpha of .90 (mean inter-item correlation = .51) and the distress scale had an alpha of .89 (mean inter-item correlation = .46). Empathy and distress were uncorrelated, $r(131) = .02$, n.s.

Hypothesis one was, therefore, supported. Reactions of empathy and distress appeared to be distinct.⁵ Therefore, it was appropriate to examine relations of empathy and distress with helping.

Hypothesis #2

Hypothesis two predicted that empathy would be positively related to helping, and distress negatively related to helping. Furthermore, it was predicted that empathy and distress would predict helping over and above a similarity-helping relation.

In order to determine whether emotional reactions and similarity uniquely contributed to helping, four multiple regression analyses were performed, two using empathy as a predictor and two using distress. The dependent variable HCS was regressed on emotional reaction (empathy or distress), similarity, and the interaction of emotional response and similarity, using hierarchical entry. The two equations for each emotional response differed only in the order of entry of the main effects: In the first case emotional response was entered first (empathy in one equation, and distress in the other), followed by similarity, followed by the interaction term. In the second set of equations, similarity was entered first, followed by emotion (empathy in one equation, and distress in the other). By reversing the order of the entry of the main effects, it was possible to identify the bivariate relations (i.e., essentially the Pearson correlations) of the emotional reactions, and of similarity, with helping in the first step of each equation. These could then be compared to the unique contributions emotions and similarity made when both were in the equations. Additionally, whether emotions predicted above and beyond similarity could be assessed. The unique contribution of each predictor was revealed by the partial correlation (pc) for each variable of interest. This represents the correlation of the predictor variable of interest with

helping, with the shared variance with all other predictors, and their relations with the dependent variable, held constant.

Empathy Regressions. The bivariate relations of empathy and similarity with helping were revealed by the first step in each of the two equations. As expected, empathy was positively correlated with helping, $r = .37, t(131) = 4.50, p < .001$. Similarity also correlated positively and significantly with helping, $r = .36, t(131) = 4.37, p < .001$. On the second step of the equations, with similarity and empathy both in the equation, both uniquely predicted helping, similarity: $\beta = .24, t(130) = 2.85, p < .01$; empathy: $\beta = .26, t(130) = 3.03, p < .01$, and empathy added significantly to the equation above the effect of similarity (see Table 1) The interaction term achieved significance also, $\beta = -.20, t(129) = -2.37, p < .05$. When perceived similarity and empathy were both low, helping was particularly low (see Figure 1).⁶ Given the contribution of the interaction, similarity still predicted helping, $\beta = .29, t(129) = 3.45, p < .01$, as did empathy, $\beta = .31, t(129) = 3.73, p < .01$. The overall equation for predicting help with similarity, empathy and their interaction was significant, $F(3,129) = 12.06, p < .001$ and accounted for 22% of the variance in helping.

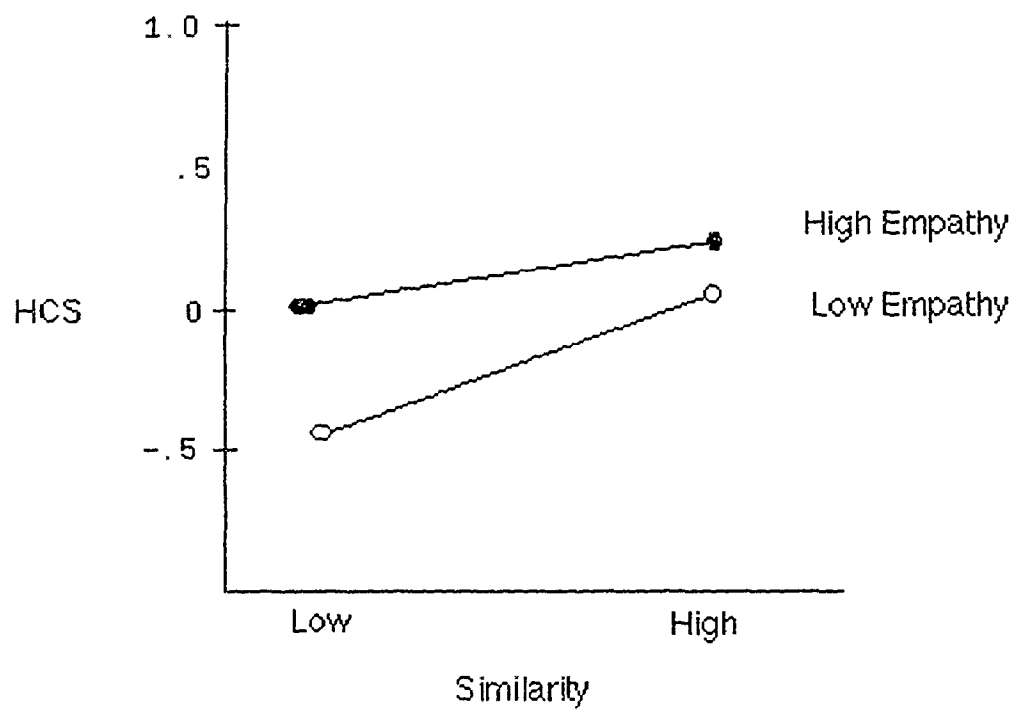


Figure 1. Similarity by Empathy Interaction for Help Intentions

Table 1

Regression Statistics with Empathy Entered after Similarity

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .13 | 19.11 | .000 |
| 2 | •empathy | .19 | 9.20 | .003 |
| 3 | •similarity by empathy | .22 | 5.62 | .019 |

Distress Regressions. The bivariate relations of distress and similarity with helping were revealed by the first step in each of the two equations. As in the equation for empathy, similarity predicted helping, $r = .36$, $t(131) = 4.37$, $p < .001$. Distress had a significant negative relation with helping, $r = -.26$, $t(131) = -3.02$, $p < .01$. On the second step of the equations, with similarity and distress both entered, similarity predicted helping significantly, $\beta = .30$, $t(130) = 3.58$, $p < .001$. Distress was negatively related to helping, and was of marginal significance, $\beta = -.16$, $t(130) = -1.82$, $p = .07$. The interaction term achieved significance, $\beta = .18$, $t(129) = 2.07$, $p < .05$. At low levels of similarity, distress was associated with particularly low helping (see Figure 2). With the contribution of the interaction in the equation, distress predicted helping significantly, $\beta = -.23$, $t(129) = -2.74$, $p < .01$, and similarity did not uniquely predict helping, $\beta = .05$, $t(129) = 0.60$, n.s. The overall equation for predicting help with similarity, distress and the interaction was significant, $F(3,129) = 9.22$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 18% of the

variance in helping.

Interestingly, before the addition of the similarity by distress interaction term, similarity did uniquely contribute to helping (independently of distress). After the addition of the interaction term, however, similarity predicted help only through interaction with distress. Therefore, distress attenuated helping, especially when perceived similarity was low (see Table 2).

Table 2

Regression Statistics with Distress Entered after Similarity

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .13 | 19.11 | .000 |
| 2 | •distress | .15 | 3.32 | .070 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .18 | 4.30 | .040 |

Hypothesis two was supported for empathy. Empathy predicted helping in the expected direction, above and beyond the similarity-helping relation. Some support was found for distress as well. Distress added to the prediction of helping above the effects of similarity, but was of marginal significance. Both empathy and distress predicted help in interaction with similarity. When similarity was perceived to be low, a lack of empathy attenuated helping, as did high distress. These effects were not present when perceived similarity was higher. Under conditions of

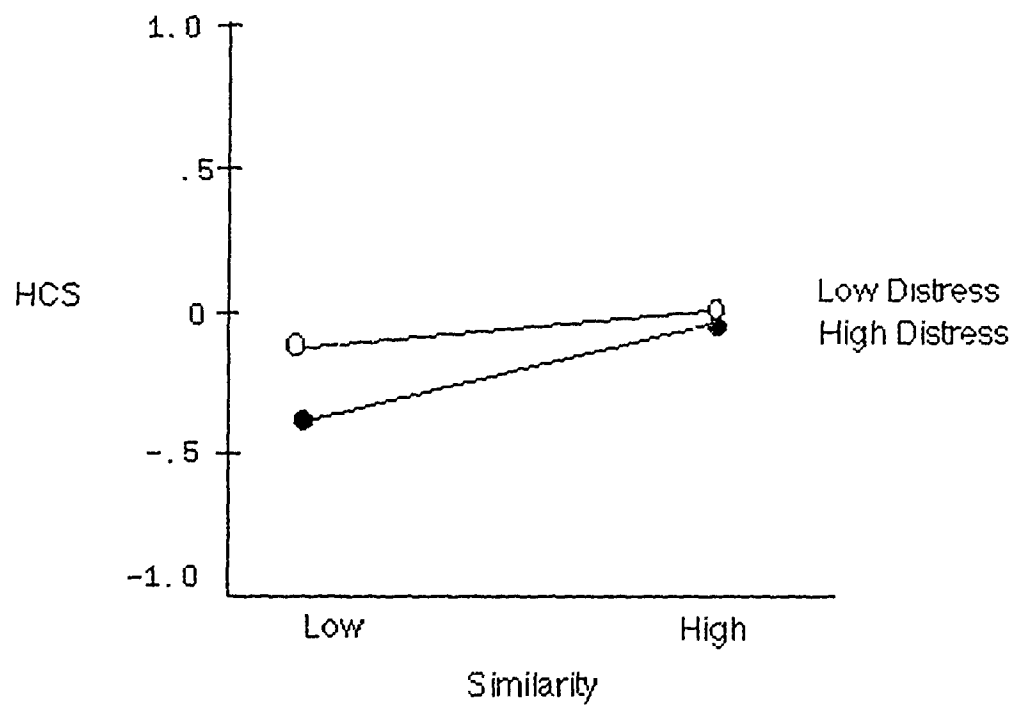


Figure 2. Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

low social expectation for helping, empathy facilitated helping, and to a lesser extent, distress attenuated helping. Thus, exploration of the role of emotional mediation of the religion-helping relation was justified.

Hypothesis#3

The goal of the research addressed by hypothesis three was to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with dispositional empathy and helping behaviour. Hypothesis three predicted a positive correlation between fundamentalism and dispositional empathy, and no correlation between fundamentalism and HCS. Contrary to expectation, fundamentalism correlated negatively with dispositional empathy, although the correlation was not significant, $r(131) = -.15$, n.s. As expected, the correlation between fundamentalism and HCS was near zero and nonsignificant, $r(131) = .02$, n.s.

Hypothesis three was only partially supported. As expected, there was no general relation of religious fundamentalism with intentions to help. Contrary to expectation, individuals higher in religious fundamentalism did not report being more empathic than people lower in fundamentalism.

Hypothesis #4

Hypothesis four addressed the goal of examining the role of the target of need in the religion-helping relation. This hypothesis predicted a fundamentalism by target interaction, and a main effect of target for the dependent variable of helping. Less helping was expected for the homosexual target than for the heterosexual target, and the difference between amount of help offered for the two targets was expected to be

greater for individuals of higher levels of religious fundamentalism than for those with lower levels. Using hierarchical multiple regression, HCS was regressed on fundamentalism and target (entered together on the first step) and the interaction (entered on the second step). While the overall equation was significant, $F(3, 129) = 2.75, p < .05$, it only accounted for 6% of the variance in 'help'. The one significant effect was for target, $\beta = -.22, t(130) = -2.58, p < .05$. Less help was offered to the homosexual target ($M = -.18, SD = .89$) than the heterosexual target ($M = .18, SD = .67$), as expected. Neither the effect of fundamentalism nor the fundamentalism by target interaction achieved significance. See Table 3

Table 3

Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •Fundamentalism •Target | .05 | 3.35 | .038 |
| 2 | •Fundamentalism by Target | .06 | 1.53 | .218 |

Similarity. Analysis of variance revealed that participants did perceive the homosexual target to be significantly less similar to themselves, $M = 2.80, SD = 2.47$, than was the heterosexual target, $M = 6.00, SD = 1.78, F(1, 131) = 73.41, p < .001$. Thus, to determine whether this difference in perceived similarity could account for the effect of target

on helping, the above regression was recomputed with similarity controlled. The variables were entered hierarchically, with similarity entered first, fundamentalism and target entered second, and the interaction of target by fundamentalism entered last. By entering similarity first, only effects which predicted help over and above the impact of similarity would be revealed. On the first step of the equation, similarity predicted helping, $\beta = .37$, $t(131) = 4.37$, $p < .0001$. Neither the addition of target and fundamentalism nor their interaction contributed significantly to the model. The final equation accounted for 14% of the variance in help, $F(4,128) = 5.23$, $p < .001$. See Table 4.

Table 4

Regression Statistics for Hypothesis Four, controlling for Similarity

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .13 | 19.11 | .000 |
| 2 | •fundamentalism •target | .13 | .01 | .989 |
| 3 | •fundamentalism by target | .14 | 1.92 | .168 |

Hypothesis four was not supported. Although there was a main effect of target on help, this was fully explained in terms of differences in perceived similarity. Furthermore, the main prediction that the effect of target would be stronger for those high versus low in fundamentalism

was not supported.

Hypothesis #5 The goal addressed by the fifth hypothesis was to examine the role of emotional mediation of the religion-helping relation. Hypothesis five predicted that emotional reactions would mediate the predicted fundamentalism by target interaction on helping. Pearson correlations between fundamentalism and empathy and distress for the heterosexual and homosexual targets, together and separately, were computed. As shown in Table 5, for the heterosexual target, fundamentalism neither correlated significantly with empathy, nor with distress. For the homosexual target, fundamentalism did not correlate with empathy, but did correlate significantly with distress.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations of Fundamentalism with Empathy and Distress

| | Empathy | Distress |
|---|---------|----------|
| <u>Fundamentalism</u> | | |
| Overall Sample (<u>N</u> = 133) | .00 | .16 |
| Heterosexual Target (<u>n</u> = 67) | -.04 | .16 |
| Homosexual Target (<u>n</u> = 66) | -.04 | .30* |

Note. * $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$

Hypothesis five was partially supported. Fundamentalism was associated with a distressed reaction to the homosexual target, as

expected. However, given that the fundamentalism by target interaction for helping was not found, it could not be concluded that the relation of fundamentalism with distress for the homosexual target mediated such a relation. The predicted negative relation of fundamentalism with empathy for the homosexual target was not found.

Because fundamentalism predicted distress for the homosexual target, it was possible that fundamentalism related to helping only through interaction with distress and target. This would be the case if helping the homosexual target was attenuated among individuals high in fundamentalism when they reacted with high levels of distress. In this case, a three-way interaction (fundamentalism by target by distress) could be expected. This possibility was tested using hierarchical multiple regression. HCS was regressed on fundamentalism and target (entered on the first step), distress (entered on the second step), all possible two-way interactions (entered on the third step) and the three-way interaction (entered on the last step).

Target predicted helping, $\beta = -.22$, $t(130) = -2.58$, $p < .05$ (presumably due to differences in perceived similarity), and fundamentalism did not, $\beta = -.01$, $t(130) = -.12$, ns. Distress contributed significantly to the prediction of help, $\beta = -.20$, $t(129) = -2.27$, $p < .05$. With distress entered, target no longer was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.13$, $t(129) = -1.54$, n.s., suggesting that distress mediated this relation. Fundamentalism remained nonsignificant. Of the two-way interactions, only target by distress achieved significance, $\beta = -.18$, $t(126) = -2.01$, $p < .05$. For the homosexual target, distress was associated with very low

levels of helping (see Figure 3). Given the interaction of target and distress, the main effects were no longer significant. The three-way interaction did not achieve significance. The final equation accounted for 12% of the variance in help, and was significant, $F(7, 125) = 2.51$, $p < .05$. See Table 6.

Table 6

Regression Statistics, Hypothesis Five

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •Fundamentalism •Target | .05 | 3.35 | .038 |
| 2 | •Distress | .09 | 5.15 | .025 |
| 3 | •Fundamentalism by Distress •Fundamentalism by Target •Target by Distress | .12 | 1.76 | .158 |
| 4 | •Fundamentalism by Target by Distress | .12 | .17 | .678 |

The prediction that fundamentalism would relate to help through interaction with distress and target was not supported.

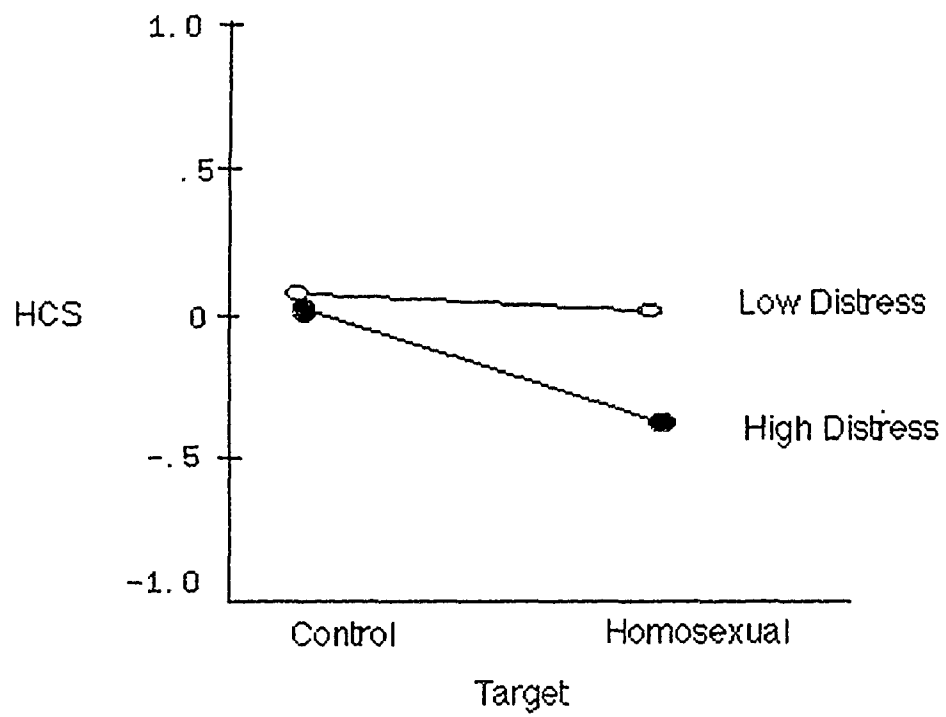


Figure 3. Target by Distress Interaction for Help Intentions

Hypothesis #6 Hypothesis six addressed the goal of examining the sensitivity to others' needs as a function of religious fundamentalism. A fundamentalism by type of help interaction for amount of time offered to help was predicted. A 2 X 2 mixed factorial ANOVA was computed for the dependent variable 'time offered', by the independent variables of fundamentalism (high versus low based on a median split) and type of help (academic versus personal). Type of help was a within-subject variable. Time offered was analysed using the original response format. Responses, therefore, could range from 0 to 8 (representing 0 to 4 hours in half hour increments). There was a main effect of type, with more time offered for academic help, $M = 1.93$ (almost one hour), $SD = .74$, than personal guidance, $M = 1.71$ (almost three quarters of an hour), $SD = 1.08$; $F(1,131) = 7.52$, $p < .01$. Neither the effect of fundamentalism nor the fundamentalism by type of help interaction achieved significance. Relevant descriptive statistics are provided in Table 7.

Hypothesis six was not supported since the type of help offered did not vary as a function of religious fundamentalism. There was, therefore, no evidence of differential sensitivity to targets' needs for individuals of varying levels of religious fundamentalism.

Table 7

Mean Time Offered by Type of Help and Fundamentalism Level

| | Type of Help | | <u>M</u> (SD) |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Academic | Personal | |
| High Fundamentalism | 2.00 (.76) | 1.80 (1.06) | <u>M</u> (SD) |
| | <u>n</u> = 64 | | |
| Low Fundamentalism | 1.87 (.72) | 1.63 (1.1) | <u>M</u> (SD) |
| | <u>n</u> = 69 | | |

Fundamentalism and Similarity

Given that the effect of target on help was explained in terms of differences in perceived similarity (hypothesis four), the possibility that fundamentalism interacted with similarity to predict help was examined. That is, it was possible that the predicted target-specific relation of fundamentalism with helping existed, not for target per se, but according to perceived similarity to the target. Using hierarchical multiple regression, help (HCS) was regressed on fundamentalism and similarity (entered together on the first step), distress (entered second), all possible 2-way interactions (entered third) and the three-way interaction (entered last). Distress was included because of its relation with fundamentalism for the homosexual target. Effects not redundant with previous analyses

are reported.

Similarity, distress, and the interaction of similarity and distress predicted help as in the analysis for hypothesis two. Similarity related positively, and distress negatively, with help. Distress had more of an impact at low levels of similarity than at high levels of similarity. The expected fundamentalism by similarity interaction did not achieve significance, nor did the fundamentalism by distress interaction. However, these findings should be considered in light of the significant three-way fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction revealed in this analysis, $\beta = -.21$, $t(125) = -2.37$, $p < .05$. The finding that distress had more impact at low versus high levels of perceived similarity applied only to those lower in religious fundamentalism. As well, for individuals lower in religious fundamentalism, distress had more of an impact on help than similarity did (the impact of similarity was minimal), whereas for those higher in fundamentalism, similarity had more of an impact on help than distress did, and help varied quite a bit across similarity levels (see Figure 4).

Thus, it appeared that for individuals low in fundamentalism, experiencing distress when similarity was perceived to be low attenuated help, whereas for those high in fundamentalism, it was similarity which predominantly impacted on helping, regardless of level of distress. Regression statistics are provided in Table 8.

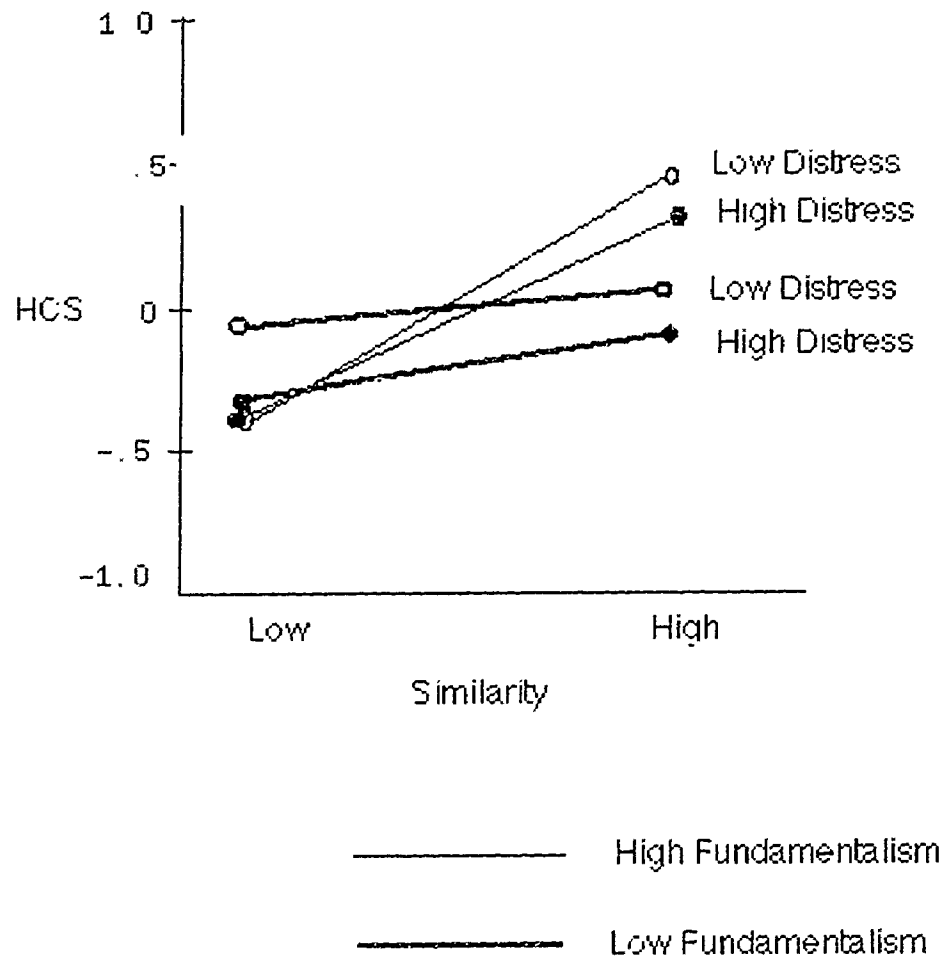


Figure 4. Fundamentalism by Similarity by Distress Interaction for Help-Intentions

Table 8

Regression Statistics for Similarity Analysis

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable(s) Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •Fundamentalism •Similarity | .13 | 9.49 | .000 |
| 2 | •Distress | .15 | 3.37 | .069 |
| 3 | •Fundamentalism by Distress •Fundamentalism by Similarity •Similarity by Distress | .19 | 2.10 | .103 |
| 4 | •Fundamentalism by Similarity by Distress | .23 | 5.63 | .019 |

If the interpretation of the three-way interaction was appropriate, different prediction equations should emerge when regressing HCS on similarity, distress, and their interaction, for individuals high versus low in fundamentalism. Thus, in order to clarify the interpretation of the above three-way interaction, the sample was divided into high and low fundamentalism groups (based on a median split), and two regressions were performed with each sample. For both groups, help was regressed on similarity (entered on step one), distress (entered on step two), and the interaction (entered last). Then the regression was recomputed with the order of entry of the main effects reversed. By reversing the order of the main effects, it was possible to determine for each group whether distress would predict help above and beyond the effect of similarity and

whether similarity would predict above and beyond the effect of distress. Based on the previous three-way interaction, it was expected that for the low-fundamentalism sample, a similarity by distress interaction would predict help, as would distress, whereas for the high-fundamentalism sample, similarity was expected to be the strongest predictor of help.

Low Fundamentalism. The first step of each equation revealed that distress predicted help, $r = -.27$, $t(67) = -2.29$, $p < .05$, and similarity did also, $r = .24$, $t(67) = 2.03$, $p < .05$. At the second step, similarity did not add significantly above the effects of distress, nor did distress add above the effects of similarity. The similarity by distress interaction did significantly contribute to the equation, $\beta = .25$, $t(65) = 2.07$, $p < .05$. When similarity was perceived to be low, distress was associated with particularly low helping. The complete equation accounted for 15% of the variance in help, $F(3,65) = 3.76$, $p < .05$. See Table 9.

High Fundamentalism. The first step of each equation revealed that distress predicted help, $\beta = -.29$, $t(62) = -2.39$, $p < .05$, and similarity did also, $\beta = .48$, $t(62) = 4.16$, $p < .001$. At the second step, distress did not add to the equation above the effect of similarity, but similarity did contribute significantly above the effect of distress, $\beta = .42$, $t(61) = 3.57$, $p < .001$. The interaction was not significant. See Table 10.

Table 9

Regression Statistics for Low-Fundamentalism Analysis

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig. F change</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .06 | 4.13 | .046 |
| 2 | •distress | .09 | 2.46 | .121 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .15 | 4.27 | .043 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 1 | •distress | .07 | 5.25 | .025 |
| 2 | •similarity | .09 | 1.40 | .241 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .15 | 4.27 | .043 |

Table 10

Regression Statistics for High-Fundamentalism Analysis

| <u>Step</u> | <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>R²</u> | <u>F Change</u> | <u>Sig F Change</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | •similarity | .22 | 17.30 | .000 |
| 2 | •distress | .24 | 1.95 | .167 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .25 | .21 | .652 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 1 | •distress | .08 | 5.73 | .020 |
| 2 | •similarity | .24 | 12.71 | .001 |
| 3 | •similarity by distress | .25 | .21 | .652 |

As expected, for those low in fundamentalism, the similarity by distress interaction predicted help, and the main effects were of approximately equal predictive power. For those high in fundamentalism, while both similarity and distress predicted help, similarity predicted above and beyond the effects of distress. As well, similarity was the strongest predictor of helping for those higher in fundamentalism. These analyses, in conjunction with the 3-way fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction reported previously, provide support for the contention that for those low in fundamentalism, the combination of similarity and distress predicted help, whereas for those high in fundamentalism, it was similarity which was primarily responsible for variations in help.

Pearson correlations among similarity, empathy, distress and fundamentalism are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

Pearson Correlations Among Similarity, Empathy, Distress and Fundamentalism

| | Similarity | Empathy | Distress | Fundamentalism |
|------------|------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Similarity | | .41** | -.32** | .07 |
| Empathy | | | .02 | .00 |
| Distress | | | | .16 |

Note. ** p < .01

Other Analyses

Dispositional Empathy

The helping literature reveals a relation of dispositional empathy with helping (see Eisenberg & Miller, 1987, for a review). Consequently, the Pearson correlation of dispositional empathy with helping was computed. It was significant, $r(131) = .21, p < .05$. When Pearson correlations were computed between dispositional empathy and helping in each of the two target conditions, the correlation between dispositional empathy and helping in the homosexual target condition was significant, $r(131) = .27, p < .05$, whereas in the control condition it was not, $r(131) = .14, n.s.$ Dispositional empathy correlated significantly with empathic reactions, $r(131) = .36, p < .01$, but not with distress, $r(131) = -.13, n.s.$ Thus, differences in dispositional empathy probably explain some of the differences in empathic reactions in these data.

Gender Differences

There were clear gender differences for the variables of interest to this study. T-tests were performed for the dependent variables of empathy, distress, HCS, and similarity for the independent variable of gender. Females reacted more empathically to the targets than did males, $t(131) = -4.82, p < .001$. Males and females did not differ in amount of experienced distress, $t(131) = .18, n.s.$ Females indicated stronger intentions to help than males, $t(131) = -2.24, p < .05$. Interestingly, females perceived themselves to be more similar to the male targets than males did, $t(131) = -2.39, p < .05$. Descriptive statistics for these analyses are provided in Table 12. It could be expected, then,

that the effects reported in this study were to some extent moderated by gender.⁷

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Empathy, Distress, Help and Similarity by Gender

| | Males | Females |
|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Empathy | 26.55 (14.84) | 40.02 (14.46) |
| Distress | 16.21 (12.24) | 15.74 (14.44) |
| Help | -.24 (.92) | .10 (.74) |
| Similarity | 3.55 (2.86) | 4.76 (2.53) |

Discussion

Preliminary Findings

Hypothesis one, that a factor analysis of emotional reactions would reveal a two factor structure defining empathy and distress, was supported. This supports the contention of Batson et al. (1987) that empathy and distress are distinct emotional responses. It also replicates work which has tested this suggestion (see Batson, 1991, for a review). Replication of this finding is noteworthy because the assumption that empathy and distress are qualitatively distinct emotional responses is the

cornerstone of the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991).

The empathy-altruism hypothesis also predicts that empathy and distress have different motivational consequences for helping. Under conditions of low social expectation for helping, empathy facilitates helping, whereas distress attenuates it (Batson, 1991). Hypothesis two tested these predictions. The suggestion that empathy facilitates helping was supported by the significant positive relation of empathy with helping revealed in the regression analysis. This relation existed above and beyond the relation of similarity with helping. Empathy also interacted with similarity in the prediction of helping, however. When similarity was perceived to be low, a lack of empathy was associated with very little helping. The prediction that distress attenuates helping was also supported, albeit less clearly than was the case for empathy. It was negatively related to helping, and was of marginal significance. Distress did significantly predict help in interaction with similarity; distress attenuated helping, especially when perceived similarity was low. The relations of empathy and distress with helping support Batson's contentions, although the relation was more direct for empathy than for distress. The importance of supporting the claim of the empathy-altruism hypothesis for this study was to provide justification for an examination of emotional mediation of the religion-helping relation. Since emotions predicted helping, it appeared that such an investigation was warranted

Goals of the Research

The first goal of this study was to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with dispositional empathy and helping behaviour. The

test of hypothesis three revealed no significant relation of fundamentalism with dispositional empathy, indicating that individuals with a fundamentalist approach to religion neither were, nor desired to present themselves as, generally more empathic than others. There was also no general relation of religious fundamentalism with helping intentions.

These findings are not consistent with research which suggests that devout, intrinsic religion is associated with enhanced compassion (e.g., Watson et al., 1984; Watson et al., 1985). To the extent that religious fundamentalism is similar to intrinsic religion in terms of devoutness and importance placed upon religion, we might expect the argument made by Allport (1966) to apply to fundamentalism as well as intrinsic religion. That is, religion which is incorporated into one's life as a central value should have prosocial implications. As a general pattern, this was not the case with this sample.

Of course, distinctions between fundamentalism and intrinsic religion could render the Allport argument irrelevant to fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is associated with absolute commitment to a particular set of religious beliefs. As well, teachings of just reward and punishment are characteristic of fundamentalist forms of religion. Perhaps for those who are committed to fundamentalist religions, teachings of caring and compassion are in conflict with teachings of divinely dictated reward and punishment. This latter teaching might attenuate empathic reactions and feelings of personal responsibility for helping others, if response to personal needs is believed to be divinely determined.

Consistent with this suggestion, interpersonal compassion would not be expected to be facilitated if teachings of divine reward and punishment encourage more of a "justice" versus "care" approach to interpersonal or moral issues (see Gilligan, 1982). Interpersonal or social behaviour of fundamentalists may be motivated by dynamics other than compassion or care, such as commitment to upholding morals or beliefs. It may be the fundamentalists' particular approach to personal need, therefore, which renders the argument made by Allport regarding the prosocial implications of intrinsic religion not relevant to fundamentalism. An interesting possibility for future research would be to examine the moral reasoning styles (i.e., justice versus care) of individuals of varying degrees of religious fundamentalism. Differences in these orientations would no doubt have implications for interpersonal relations.

Given the lack of a relation of fundamentalism with self-reported dispositional empathy, it is clear that fundamentalism was not associated with a desire to self-present as compassionate, a tendency which Batson et al. (1993) have argued is characteristic of those with a devout (intrinsic) religious orientation. While the condition of low social expectation used in this study should have minimised self-presentation, it is possible that a relation of fundamentalism with self-reported compassion could still have emerged, although less strongly. That it did not emerge is not surprising, given that items on the religious fundamentalism scale are more consistent with absolute commitment to a

particular faith than with socially-sanctioned attitudes. For example, it is likely not socially desirable to agree with the statement "When you get right down to it, there are only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not", as individuals high in religious fundamentalism do. Additionally, it could be expected that individuals high in religious fundamentalism are more likely to want to appear desirable "in the eyes of God" than in the eyes of the general population. Thus, social desirability may not be a meaningful construct for describing the possible tendency of fundamentalists to want to appear in a particular light for the sake of self-presentation, if such a tendency exists at all.

The second goal of this research was to examine the role of the target of need in the relation of religion and helping, and the third goal was to examine the role of emotional mediation of this relation. A fundamentalism by target interaction was hypothesized (hypothesis four), whereby helping of a homosexual target was expected to be lower than helping of a heterosexual target, and this difference would be particularly strong for those high in fundamentalism. This prediction was based on Herek's reasoning regarding the differential acceptance of others among the conservatively religious, and also upon research findings related to fundamentalism and prejudice against homosexuals. It was anticipated, in hypothesis five, that those high in fundamentalism would experience low empathy and high distress in reaction to the homosexual target, and that this would lead to attenuated helping. The relation of

fundamentalism with helping did not emerge as predicted. There was, however, a significant correlation of fundamentalism with distress within the homosexual target condition.

The helping of those high in fundamentalism did vary according to perceptions of the target of need, but it was not the target *per se* which influenced helping as was expected. Rather the perceived similarity of the person in need to the potential helper was the apparent mediating factor. Furthermore, as the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction for helping revealed, distress had more of an impact on those low versus those high in fundamentalism. For those higher in fundamentalism, similarity was a better predictor of help than the emotional reaction was.

Why was helping of those high in fundamentalism a function of perceived similarity, and not of target? In order to explore this issue, the analysis which provided the above findings (the regression which revealed the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction) was recomputed within each target group. Within each target condition, HCS was regressed on distress, fundamentalism, similarity, and their interactions. For the control target, the only significant effect was the similarity by distress interaction, $\beta = -.30$, $t(59) = -2.44$, $p < .05$. Distress attenuated helping, especially given low similarity. For the homosexual target condition, however, help was predicted by similarity, $\beta = .38$, $t(61) = 3.26$, $p < .01$, distress, $\beta = -.28$, $t(61) = -2.32$, $p < .01$, and the similarity by distress interaction, $\beta = .24$, $t(58) = 1.93$, $p = .058$. Again, distress attenuated helping, especially given low similarity. Importantly,

also, the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction, $\beta_c = -.29$, $t(57) = -2.33$, $p < .05$, predicted helping in this condition. The patterning of means for this interaction was comparable to that for the interaction found for the entire sample. That is, for those lower in fundamentalism, it was primarily the interaction of similarity and distress which impacted upon help, whereas for those higher in fundamentalism, it was similarity which primarily impacted upon help.

Interestingly, in this analysis, the three-way interaction existed only within the homosexual target condition, suggesting that the sexual orientation of the target did, in fact, impact upon the relation of fundamentalism and helping, albeit indirectly. To the extent that those high in religious fundamentalism perceived the homosexual target to be similar to themselves, they were more likely to offer help, and to the extent that he was perceived as dissimilar, they were less likely to help.

The relative influence of perceived similarity versus emotional reactions for high versus low fundamentalists is consistent with work which has examined relations of emotion and symbolic belief with interpersonal relations. Symbolic beliefs about a group refer to thoughts about how social groups function to either threaten or maintain one's values, and preferences for social norms (Esses, Haddock & Zanna, 1992). As such, symbolic belief might be expected to be particularly relevant to individuals high in religious fundamentalism. It seems plausible that those high in religious fundamentalism would think that people who are very similar would uphold their values, whereas those who are different, particularly homosexuals, would threaten cherished

values. This could be expected to have implications for helping behaviour.

Although the functioning of symbolic beliefs among those with a fundamentalist approach to religion has not been examined, Esses et al (1992) did find individual differences for high versus low authoritarians on the weighting of emotion and symbolic belief for intergroup attitudes. High authoritarians were more influenced by symbolic belief than emotions, whereas low authoritarians were more influenced by emotion than symbolic belief. As well, symbolic beliefs were found to be more predictive of intergroup attitudes than emotions for an "unfavourable target," but not for a favourable target.

Given that positive relations have been found between authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), the notion that the same dynamic might have applied in this study seems plausible. That is, those high in religious fundamentalism may have perceived that a dissimilar, homosexual target threatened valued beliefs and norms, and this may have influenced helping behaviour. Whether or not symbolic beliefs were responsible for the pattern of results found is an empirical question, and could be examined in future research.

The impact of similarity on helping for those high in religious fundamentalism is contrary to the findings of Lerner and Agar (1972). In their research, perceived similarity to a potentially threatening individual related to avoidance responses. In that study, the individual at issue was proposed to be personally threatening to participants because he was

represented as a drug addict. Presumably, this threatened the participants' sense of safety from such problems since the addicted individual was ostensibly similar to them. The sort of threat which this target represented differed from the sort of threat which may have been evoked in the present study, however. In Lerner and Agar's (1972) study, the threat was to participants' sense of personal security, and it was evoked by the target's being stigmatised, given that he was perceived as similar. In the present study, it is suggested that the threat which may have been perceived was to values and preferred social norms, not personal security. Also, it was evoked by perceptions of dissimilarity to a stigmatised target. That is, it is suggested that, in the present research, the threat arose from perceived dissimilarity, and this attenuated helping. In sum, the different pattern of results in the two studies probably arose because, in Lerner and Agar's (1972) study, a stigmatised similar other evoked threat, hence avoidance, whereas in the present research, another perceived as dissimilar, not similar, evoked threat, hence avoidance

In addition to any impact of threat to values and preferred norms, helping behaviour could have been influenced through a dynamic such as the belief in a just world. The belief in a just world has been implicated as relevant to, or increased by, religion (e.g., Lea & Hunsberger, 1990, Lerner, 1991, Rubin & Peplau, 1973). Given that fundamentalists endorse beliefs that adherence to one religion only (presumably their religion) is acceptable in "the eyes of God", it could be that only similar others, those who uphold cherished norms and values,

are deemed to be acceptable, or deserving of help. It could also be the case that, due to teachings of divine reward and punishment, others deemed dissimilar who are in need are thought to deserve such a state (see Lerner, 1975). Help would not be expected to be offered in this case. An examination of the relation of fundamentalism with the belief in a just world could also prove revealing.

The relation of similarity with helping among those higher in religious fundamentalism is suggestive of differential motivations to help among individuals of varying degrees of religious fundamentalism. Batson (1990) indicated that we can make inferences about a person's motivation if we observe behaviour across different situations which could be expected to be associated with different goals. We could consider the opportunity to offer help to the different targets to involve such different situations. If the goal of individuals in this experiment was to address the need of the student who wrote the letter, then they could be expected to have helped the student regardless of the target's sexual orientation, and regardless of how similar that student was perceived to be. Individuals high in religious fundamentalism, however, helped according to their perceptions of similarity to the homosexual student indicating that the goal was not simply to improve the well being of the target.

It is possible that the goal of those high in fundamentalism was to uphold their own values. In this case, helping a similar other would do this, but helping a dissimilar other, in particular a homosexual, would not. If this was the goal of those high in fundamentalism, it would suggest that

concern was more for their own values than for the person in need. This would certainly seem consistent with the reasoning of Batson (1990) regarding the motivation for helping behaviour of the devoutly religious, that "the problem is not that the legendary scribes and Pharises, or priest and Levite, never helped. The problem is that, because of the underlying motivational genotype, their helping was limited to situations in which it would be recognized and applauded" (p. 761). The data presented here are consistent with this suggestion. Of course, this reasoning is speculative. The question regarding motives to help associated with fundamentalism remains open and would be a fruitful avenue for future exploration.

The fourth goal of the research was to examine the relation of religious fundamentalism with sensitivity to the expressed need of the targets. It was anticipated, by hypothesis six, that individuals higher in religious fundamentalism would offer equal amounts of academic and personal guidance, whereas those lower in fundamentalism would offer more academic than personal guidance. This would indicate greater sensitivity to the expressed needs of the targets by individuals of lower levels of fundamentalism. Contrary to prediction, no differential sensitivity to the expressed needs of the targets, as a function of religious fundamentalism, was found. This finding is questionable, however. The reasoning regarding assessing sensitivity to the needs of the target was based on the assumption that because the targets requested academic advice, that offering academic advice would indicate sensitivity to the targets' expressed need, whereas offering personal advice would

indicate a lack of sensitivity. The questions may have been perceived as ambiguous, however (see Appendix G). It may be that participants interpreted the question related to offering personal advice to assume that it meant "given that it were requested". If this were the case, then comparing the types of help offered would not adequately assess sensitivity to the targets' needs.

Limitations

The findings of differential helping according to fundamentalism level were somewhat indirect and complex. Neither a straightforward relation of fundamentalism with helping, nor the predicted target by fundamentalism interaction for helping was found. The findings should thus be interpreted with appropriate caution.

Additionally, the sample was relatively homogeneous. Given that it consisted of first year psychology students, generalisations should be made carefully. The homogeneity of the sample may also have been problematic in that a full range of religious fundamentalism scores was not represented. On a scale which potentially ranges from 0 to 160, the range of scores represented in these data was 2-139. Thus individuals who have been referred to as "high" in religious fundamentalism did not actually represent the extreme high end of the scale. While a reasonable range of scores was represented, it is possible that different, or stronger effects could be found within a more truly fundamentalist sample. This possibility could be explored with future research.

It was clear to participants in the study that the helping situation was hypothetical. It is possible that people indicated a greater likelihood

of helping than would actually be the case in a true helping situation. Helping has been found to be influenced by social expectation for helping (see Batson, 1991). While the condition of low social expectation for helping used in this study should have minimised participants' tendency to want to appear helpful, there may still have been some tendency for individuals to give generous reports of their likelihood of helping, given that they did not expect to have to actually do the helping. Clearly, a similar study using a real helping scenario would be useful.

It is also potentially problematic that all of the materials used in this study were completed during one session. It is possible that responses to some questions impacted on later responses, perhaps due to a self-perception process (see Bem, 1967). Given that the helping intention questions were asked prior to completion of the questionnaires, help-intent ratings could have influenced other ratings. For example, offering help might have encouraged participants to perceive themselves as empathic individuals, and thus to report greater empathy. Again, this is an issue that future work might address.

Finally, it should be noted that the main finding of interest, the fundamentalism by similarity by distress interaction, existed only within the homosexual target condition. Generalisations of this effect to other target groups should not be made. To what extent the same effect might exist for a variety of groups or individuals in need is, in fact, an empirical question which could be explored.

Summary

The prediction of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, that empathy

and distress are distinct emotional responses to another in need which lead to different consequences for helping, was supported. Empathy facilitated, and distress attenuated, helping.

Religious fundamentalism was not related to dispositional empathy, nor was it related, overall, to helping intentions. Target-specific helping by individuals high in religious fundamentalism occurred, not according to the manipulation of sexual orientation as was predicted, but rather according to perceptions of similarity to the homosexual target. Also, for people who had a fundamentalist approach toward religion, it appeared that, perceived similarity aside, the emotional reaction to the person in need was a less important determinant of helping behaviour than for those who did not have a fundamentalist approach to religion.

Conclusion

The basic question driving this research was "are people who have a fundamentalist approach to religion more or less compassionate and giving than those who do not have a fundamentalist approach to religion?" If being compassionate and giving involves helping others in need, then the answer found in this study was that it depends upon the identity of the person in need. At least for a homosexual target of need, if the potential helper perceives the person in need to be similar to him/herself, then the answer is yes, fundamentalism is associated with helpfulness. If the person in need is perceived to be dissimilar, the answer is no, fundamentalism is not associated with helpfulness.

Implications

Caring for and loving others is a central moral principle of all world

religions. The suggestion has often been offered that humans' natural impulses are relatively selfish, and that religions function as a socialising social dynamic. Religion has been considered both necessary and effective (e.g., Campbell, 1975), and neither necessary nor particularly effective (e.g., Freud, 1930/1961). Conflicting theorising and empirical evidence exist regarding both the question of our basic nature (whether at our core we are selfish or loving) and regarding the role of religion in facilitating prosocial tendencies.

Based on evidence from sociobiology, Batson (1983) speculated that we have a natural tendency to care for immediate family, and that religions have the potential to teach an extension of this caring to a larger, extended family, through imagery of the oneness of humankind. He also noted that for religious imagery to be effective in extending notions of family, it would need to be universalistic, and not promote ingroup - outgroup comparisons. Without truly universalistic religious imagery, Batson notes that "at the same time that religion encourages compassion within the 'family', it may encourage callousness toward those outside." Or, it could teach that "the 'elect' may be one in the 'family of God', but others are the 'unwashed', the 'heathens', or the 'infidel'" (p. 1384). The data in this study suggest that religious fundamentalism may lead to this latter dynamic of ingroup compassion and outgroup callousness, rather than facilitating compassion for humankind in general.

We know that religiosity is associated with social attitudes and behaviour. Apparently religion has the potential to enhance compassion and helpfulness, but it does not always do so. If it is possible to identify

how religion relates to social attitudes and behaviour, then perhaps the means by which the prosocial potential of religion can be realised could be understood. This study suggests that, for individuals with a fundamentalist approach to religion, intergroup behaviour may be influenced more by perceptions of similarity, or perhaps symbolic belief, than is the case for others. It seems that an important task for researchers interested in the social implications of religion is to continue to explore the processes by which differing approaches to religion impact upon interpersonal perception.

Notes

1. Theory and research to which this paper refers focus primarily upon Judeo-Christian religion, and may not be relevant to other religious traditions.

2. This affective definition of empathy incorporates the more cognitively-oriented definition of empathy as dispassionate understanding of another's position (perspective taking), since cognitive perspective taking is presumed to be a prerequisite of emotional empathy (Coke, Batson & McDavis, 1978).

3. Analyses which were performed using this composite measure were also computed using the help-intention item alone. An almost identical pattern of results was found as when using the composite measure. Results for analyses using the composite measure were reported since it likely represented a more stable measure of helping intentions than the single item measure.

4. An oblique rotation provided an almost identical factor structure. Based on the recommendation of Batson et. al. (1987) and C.D. Batson (Feb., 1993, personal communication) an orthogonal rotation with principal axis factoring was used in order to identify the independent aspects of empathy and personal distress.

5. Because factor analysis requires large samples, this analysis was computed using the entire sample of 203 participants (see Appendix A). The analysis was also recomputed using the smaller sample used for all other analyses, however. An almost identical structure emerged. Two factors had eigenvalues of greater than one (5.77 and 4.47) and

accounted for 27.5% and 21.3% of the variance, respectively. Using the same criteria for defining factors (loadings of greater than .5), the only difference in this analysis was that for the empathy factor, the item "empathic" had a loading of less than .5 (but was still quite reasonable at .48), and for the distress factor, "upset" had a loading of less than .5, (but was also quite reasonable at .47). Otherwise the factors were defined by the same items as in the original factor analysis. The empathy and distress scales thus were maintained as described.

6. Figures for all interactions are derived from mean scores on the dependent measures, based on median splits of continuous independent variables. The vertical axis represents HCS, expressed as a standard score.

7. These analyses were recomputed as 2 X 2 ANOVAS with the variable target included. In no case was there a gender by target interaction.

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Appendix A

Pilot Study and Resulting Analysis in Main Study

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done for two reasons. (1) to determine whether the letters written as the main stimulus materials would be perceived as realistic and convincing by participants, and (2) to determine whether it would be possible to control for perceptions of similarity to the targets using experimental control. A third target, a man aged 68 who was returning to school, was included in the pilot study in addition to the other targets. It was hoped that participants would rate the elderly and homosexual target equally in terms of similarity. The elderly target could thus be a control for perceived similarity (i.e., it would not be sexual orientation per se which differed in this case).

Participants. Fifty-eight undergraduate psychology students (17 males, 41 females) participated voluntarily in the pilot study, either during a developmental psychology class, or immediately following an introductory psychology class. None of these participants took part in the main study.

Materials and Procedure. Each participant read one of the letters developed for use in the main study, then answered three questions. First, using a 9-point Likert-type response format, they rated how similar they perceived themselves to be to the person who wrote the letter. Response alternatives ranged from -4 (not at all similar) to +4 (very similar). Next, they responded to two open-ended questions which probed for general and emotional reactions to the letter.

The letters were presented as being either from a heterosexual male aged 18, a homosexual male aged 18, or a heterosexual male, aged 68. Each letter indicated concern with academic issues. Aside from the manipulation of age and sexual orientation, the letters were identical.

Results and Conclusions. Similarity ratings were converted to a 0 to 8 scale, and a oneway ANOVA was performed for the dependent variable of similarity rating, by the independent variable, target. None of the means differed significantly, $F(2,55) = .12$, n.s. Mean similarity ratings for the young heterosexual, young homosexual, and elderly target were. 5.21, 4.95 and 5.35 respectively.

It was anticipated that the homosexual and elderly targets would both be perceived as less similar than the young heterosexual target, and would not be perceived as different from each other in terms of similarity. This was not the case. These data did not clarify that the use of the elderly target would be appropriate as a control for similarity. It was decided, however, to keep the elderly target condition in the experiment and to assess similarity ratings as well. A similar analysis to that done for the pilot study could be performed. If appropriate, the elderly target would be used as a control for similarity, if not appropriate, it would be dropped from the study.

A second reason for the pilot study was to determine if the letters were reasonable stimuli. Inspection of responses to the open-ended questions revealed that the content of the letters was believable, and close to the experience of students beginning university. A number of

participants indicated, however, that the letter seemed too informal. In particular, the letters had been hand-written. For example, one participant wrote "This letter seems very informal. I think a student who wanted to attend university would make the letter more formal by typing it" The letters used in the main study were, therefore, typed.

Resulting Analysis in the Main Experiment

Analysis of the Elderly Target Condition. As mentioned above, the elderly target condition was used in the main study in case similarity ratings would be as predicted with this larger sample. With the elderly target condition included in the sample for the main experiment, research participants were 203 introductory psychology students (59 males, 144 females) of mean age 20.2 (range 17-49). Of the 200 students whose data were used (two males and one female were removed due to having a sexual orientation other than heterosexual), 62 (31%) indicated affiliation with a liberal Protestant religious denomination, 15 (7.5%) were affiliated with a conservative Protestant religion, 47 (23.5%) were Catholic, 17 (8.5%) indicated having a personal religion, 19 (9.5%) chose "other" to describe their religious affiliation, 32 (16%) reported being agnostic, and 6 (3%) reported being atheist. Two participants did not provide information regarding religious affiliation .

Similarity. The appropriateness of the use of the elderly target was assessed based on participants' perceived similarity to the targets. It was anticipated that the homosexual and elderly targets would be perceived as equally (dis)similar. A oneway analysis of variance was performed for the dependent variable, similarity rating, by the

independent variable, target. Similarity scores had a potential range of 0 to 8, with higher scores indicating stronger perceived similarity. Mean similarity ratings for the young heterosexual, young homosexual and elderly target were, respectively, 6.0 ($sd = 1.78$), 2.8 ($sd = 2.47$) and 4.0 ($sd = 2.37$). Overall, the means differed significantly, $F(2,197) = 34.87$, $p < .001$. Multiple comparisons using Tukey's Least Significant Difference test revealed significant differences at $\alpha = .05$ for all pairwise comparisons.

Given that the mean similarity ratings for the homosexual and elderly target differed significantly, it was not appropriate to use the elderly target as a control for similarity. This condition was, therefore, excluded from further analyses. (Controlling for similarity was the only reason for inclusion of the elderly target.) The homosexual-target group remained the experimental condition of interest and the young-heterosexual group was considered the control. In order to control for similarity, ratings of perceived similarity to the targets were considered in further analyses where relevant.

Appendix B
Dispositional Empathy Questionnaire

1. It makes me sad to see a lonely stranger in a group.
2. People make too much of the feelings and sensitivity of animals.
3. I often find public displays of affection annoying.
4. I am annoyed by unhappy people who are just sorry for themselves.
5. I become nervous if others around me seem to be nervous.
6. I find it silly for people to cry out of happiness.
7. I tend to get emotionally involved with a friend's problem.
8. Sometimes the words of a love song can move me deeply.
9. I tend to lose control when I am bringing bad news to people.
10. The people around me have a great influence on my moods.
11. Most foreigners I have met seemed cool and unemotional.
12. I would rather be a social worker than work in a job training centre.
13. I don't get upset just because a friend is acting upset.
14. I like to watch people open presents.
15. Lonely people are probably unfriendly.
16. Seeing people cry upsets me.
17. Some songs make me happy.
18. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
19. I get very angry when I see someone being ill-treated.

20. I am able to remain calm even though those around me worry
21. When a friend starts to talk about his/her problems, I try to steer the conversation to something else.
22. Another's laughter is not catching for me.
23. Sometimes at the movies I am amused by the amount of crying and sniffing around me.
24. I am able to make decisions without being influenced by people's feelings.
25. I cannot continue to feel OK if people around me are depressed.
26. It is hard for me to see how some things upset people so much
27. I am very upset when I see an animal in pain.
28. Becoming involved in books or movies is a little silly.
29. It upsets me to see helpless old people.
30. I become more irritated than sympathetic when I see someone's tears
31. I become very involved when I watch a movie.
32. I often find that I can remain cool in spite of the excitement around me.
33. Little children sometimes cry for no apparent reason

Appendix C

Religious Fundamentalism Scale

1. God has given humankind a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.
2. All of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings.
3. Of all the people on this earth, one group has a special relationship with God because it believes the most in his revealed truths and tries the hardest to follow his laws.
4. The long established traditions in religion show the best way to honour and serve God, and should never be compromised.
5. Religion must admit all its past failings, and adapt to modern life if it is to benefit humanity.
5. When you get right down to it, there are only two kinds of people in the world. the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God, and the rest, who will not.
- 7 Different religions and philosophies have different versions of the truth, and may be equally right in their own way.
8. The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.
- 9 It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion.
10. No one religion is especially close to God, nor does God favour any particular group of believers.
- 11 God will punish most severely those who abandon his true religion.
12. No single book of religious writings contains all the important truths about life.
13. It is silly to think people can be divided into "the Good" and "the Evil". Everyone does some good, and some bad things.

14. God's true followers must remember that he requires them to constantly fight Satan and Satan's allies on this earth.
15. Parents should encourage their children to study all religions without bias, then make up their own minds about what to believe.
16. There is a religion on this earth that teaches, without error, God's truth.
17. "Satan" is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is no such thing as a diabolical "Prince of Darkness" who tempts us.
18. Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, science must be wrong
19. There is no body of teachings, or set of scriptures, which is completely without error.
20. To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, true religion.

Appendix D

Attitudes Toward Homosexuals scale

1. I won't associate with known homosexuals if I can help it.
2. The sight of two men kissing does NOT particularly bother me.
3. If two homosexuals want to get married, the law should let them.
4. Homosexuals should be locked up to protect society.
5. Homosexuals should never be given positions of trust in caring for children.
6. I would join an organisation even though I knew it had homosexuals in its membership.
7. In many ways, the AIDS disease currently killing homosexuals is just what they deserve.
8. Homosexuality is "an abomination in the sight of God."
9. Homosexuals have a perfect right to their lifestyle, if that's the way they want to live.
10. Homosexuals should be forced to take whatever treatments science can come up with to make them normal.
11. People should feel sympathetic and understanding of homosexuals, who are unfairly attacked in our society.
12. I wouldn't mind being seen smiling and chatting with a known homosexual.

Appendix E

Social Desirability scale

1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
9. If I could get into a movie without paying for it and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. I like to gossip at times.
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right
13. No matter who I am talking to, I'm always a good listener
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake

17. I always try to practice what I preach.
18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.
19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.
25. I never resent being asked to return a favour.
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
28. There have been times when I have been quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Appendix F

Letters

Male, 18

Hi. I'm writing this letter to tell you about my thoughts about attending university, as you asked me to do. I'm hoping to go to WLU next year. I looked into a few universities and I really want to go to Laurier. It has a programme that I'm very interested in, and I like the fact that it's not too big. It seems a bit less frightening, that way.

I'm looking forward to university. I think it will be a lot of work, and hard too. I'm planning to work really hard, but I want to do other things, too. You can't work all the time! I hope that there are some clubs that I can join, for recreation. I'm also hoping to be able to go home once in a while to visit my girlfriend, since we will be living in different places. I think I'll probably miss her a lot - we have been together for almost a year now!

I guess my main concern about university is whether or not I will be able to manage the workload. In high school, I had a hard time managing my time and knowing how to study most productively, so I'm concerned about that. Actually, this could be a big problem for me and I'm really worried about it. I don't really know how to take good notes and things like that. I'm sure it would be really helpful to talk to other students to see how they manage. So I guess that's what would help me - if a Laurier student would give me some advice about how to keep up with all the work. That's, about all, I think.

Male, 18

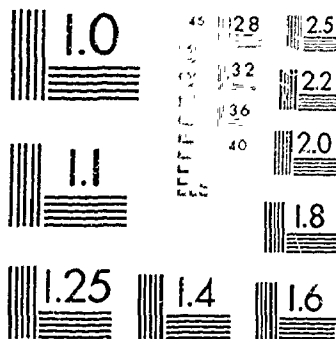
Hi. I'm writing this letter to tell you about my thoughts about attending university, as you asked me to do. I'm hoping to go to WLU next year. I looked into a few universities and I really want to go to Laurier. It has a programme that I'm really interested in, and I like the fact that it's not too big. It seems less frightening that way.

I'm looking forward to university. I think it will be a lot of work, and hard too. I'm planning to work really hard, but I want to do other things, too. You can't work all the time! I hope there is a club for gay students which I can join. I'm also hoping to be able to go home once in a while to visit my boyfriend, since we will be living in different places. I think I'll probably miss him a lot - we've been together for almost a year now!

I guess my main concern about university is whether or not I will be able

2 of /de 2

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT



to manage the workload. In high school, I had a hard time managing my time and knowing how to study most productively, so I'm concerned about that. Actually, this could be a big problem for me, and I'm really worried about it. I don't really know how to take good notes and things like that. I'm sure it would be really helpful to talk to other students to see how they manage. So I guess that's what would help me - if a Laurier student would give me some advice about how to keep up with all the work. That's about all, I think

Data from the condition using this letter was not used in the main analyses.

Male, 68

Hi. I'm writing this letter to tell you about my thoughts about attending university, as you asked me to do. I'm hoping to go to WLU next year. I looked into a few universities and I really want to go to Laurier. It has a programme that I'm really interested in, and I like the fact that it's not too big. It seems less frightening that way.

I'm looking forward to university. I think it will be a lot of work, and hard too. I'm planning to work really hard, but I want to do other things, too. You can't work all the time! I hope there is a club for "mature students" which I can join. I also want, of course, to be able to spend time with my family. I'm retired, you see, so I'm used to spending lots of time with my family.

I guess my main concern about university is whether or not I will be able to manage the workload. In high school, I had a hard time managing my time and knowing how to study most productively, so I'm concerned about that. Actually, this could be a big problem for me, and I'm really worried about it. I don't really know how to take good notes and things like that. I'm sure it would be really helpful to talk to other students to see how they manage. So I guess that's what would help me - if a Laurier student would give me some advice about how to keep up with all the work. That's about all, I think.

Appendix G

Measures of Help-Intentions, Emotional reactions, Similarity, Attributions, and
Open-ended questions

Please answer the following questions by circling the response on the rating scale below each question which you think most closely reflects how you feel.

- If there were a buddy system at Laurier, I would be willing to act as a buddy to the person who wrote the letter. (Circle the appropriate number)

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|-------------------|
| -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Definitely Not | | | | I'm Not Sure | | | | Definitely Yes |

- If there were a buddy system at Laurier, I would be willing to volunteer the following number of hours per week to help the person who wrote the letter by providing academic guidance. For example, I would be willing to help this person xx hours per week, for the duration of the fall term, doing things like giving advice on time management, how to take good notes in class, how to study for exams, etc. (Circle the appropriate number)

#of hours:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 0 | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3.5 | 4 |
|---|----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|

- If there were a buddy system at Laurier, I would be willing to volunteer the following number of hours per week to help the person who wrote the letter by helping this person sort out personal or interpersonal problems. For example, I would be willing to spend xx hours per week, for the duration of the fall term, doing things like talking to this person about his/her personal problems, helping him/her to sort out his/her values, helping him/her to deal with relationship issues, etc. (Circle the appropriate number)

#of hours:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 0 | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3.5 | 4 |
|---|----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|

Please indicate, in the space provided beside each word below, the extent to which you feel or felt that particular emotion in response to the letter the person wrote. That is, how much did the student's letter regarding his/her thoughts and concerns cause you to feel each of these emotions? Use the rating scale provided below and indicate the appropriate number on the line beside each emotion.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----|--------------|----|------------|----|------------|----|--------------|
| -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| not at all | | a little bit | | moderately | | a fair bit | | a great deal |

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. alarmed ____ | 2. sympathetic ____ | 3. grieved ____ |
| 4. moved ____ | 5. upset ____ | 6. compassionate ____ |
| 7. disturbed ____ | 8. tender ____ | 9. worried ____ |
| 10. warm ____ | 11. perturbed ____ | 12. soft hearted ____ |
| 13. distressed ____ | 14. kind ____ | 15. troubled ____ |
| 16. empathic ____ | 17. bothered ____ | 18. concerned ____ |
| 19. anxious ____ | 20. touched ____ | 21. uneasy ____ |

• How similar do you think you are to the person who wrote the letter? (Circle the appropriate number)

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|------------------|----|--------------|
| -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 |
| Not at all similar | | somewhat dissimilar | | neither similar nor dissimilar | | somewhat similar | | very similar |

Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate number on the rating scale provided below each question.

- Do you think that the future student's concern about managing the workload at university is something that he/she will be able to control? (e.g., is managing the workload something he/she will be able to influence if he/she wants to, or will it be "out of his/her control"?)

Is managing the workload something he/she can control?

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------|---|--------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Definitely No | | Probably No | | I don't know | | Probably Yes | | Definitely Yes |

- Do you think that the future student's concern about school work is something that is likely to remain the same? (i.e., will he/she continue to have concerns about coping with the work, or will those concerns "go away"?)

His/her concerns about school will:

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|---|--------------|---|---------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| definitely remain | | probably remain | | I don't know | | probably go away | | definitely go away |

- Do you think that the future student's concern about school work is because of something about him/her? (e.g., is it something about the person, or something about his/her situation or workload that causes the concern about school work?).

The concern is because of:

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------|---|------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Student Only | | Mostly the Student | | Both | | Mostly the Situation | | Situation Only |

- What do you think is the main problem faced by the person who wrote the letter? Why?

- How do you think this person could best be helped? Why?

Appendix H

Verbal Instructions

"My name is Lynne Jackson. I am a Master's student in the department of psychology here at WLU. As a part of my thesis, I am currently conducting a study (with my supervisor, Dr. Bruce Hunsberger) which I am hoping you might be interested in participating in. This research is designed to help us to explore how we might best help students adjust to university life. Specifically, we hope to determine the feasibility of developing some sort of "buddy", or mentor programme in the future. That is, possibly new students could be helped by having a senior student act as a buddy to them during their first year at school. So, we are interested in studying the sorts of issues facing new students to help us make these kinds of plans.

Over the last few years, my supervisor and I have contacted people who hope to attend Wilfrid Laurier. We asked some of these people to write a brief letter outlining their thoughts about attending university. We also asked them to tell us what sort of assistance, or information about university life, they would like. You can help us, if you want, by reading a letter which represents those written by applicants to the university, and then completing a number of questionnaires. The reason I would like you to read the letter is that we want to gather information about how current students think that new students might be best assisted with university life.

There are numerous factors which might influence the success of a buddy-system, and your input could be very valuable. For example, in

a buddy-system, it could prove to be difficult to match people with an appropriate buddy. A good match would seem to be important for the success of the programme. We have put together a questionnaire which addresses this sort of issue. So, I will also ask you to complete this questionnaire after you read the letter.

Your participation is, of course, voluntary. If you decide to participate, you can be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous. (You will be asked to sign a consent form, but it will be collected separately from your survey, and your name will not be on the survey.) No one will ever know how you responded to the questions. If you decide to participate, but find at any time that you do not want to complete the study, it is your right to withdraw from participation at any time. While it is most helpful to me if you answer all of the questions, if there are any questions which you do not want to answer, it is certainly your right to omit them.

Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Appendix I

Informed Consent Form

Please Read the Following Information Carefully

Participation in this study involves reading a letter which represents some of those written by people hoping to attend Wilfrid Laurier University next year. The letter concerns a person's thoughts and/or concerns about university life. You will be asked to indicate on a questionnaire your reactions to the person's letter. Additionally, there are questions in the questionnaire related to your views and attitudes on a wide variety of issues which you will be asked to complete. Completion of the study takes approximately 1 1/2 hrs.

The purpose of the research is to gather information about the feasibility of a "buddy" system where senior students could help new students to adjust to university. At this point, we are simply gathering information about how successful this sort of programme might be, and what sorts of issues would need to be addressed in developing this sort of programme.

Your participation is, of course, voluntary. If you decide to participate, you can be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous. No one will ever know how you responded to the questions. It is your right to withdraw from participation at any time. While it is most helpful to me if you answer all of the questions, if there are any questions which you do not want to answer, it is your right to omit them.

This research is being conducted by Lynne Jackson, a Master of Arts student in Psychology, under the supervision of Dr. B. Hunsberger, at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Having read and understood the above information, I agree to participate in this study.

Participant

Date

Appendix J
Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions in the space provided below:

With which religious group do you presently identify yourself with or think of yourself as being?

- Protestant ____ Which denomination? _____
- Catholic ____
- Personal religion (no affiliation to a religious group) ____
- Other religion ____
- No religion, though I am not an atheist ("agnosticism") ____
- No religion, since I am an atheist ____

What is your current age? _____

What is your sexual orientation? Heterosexual ____
Homosexual ____
Bisexual ____
I'm Not Sure ____

What sex are you? Male ____ Female ____

What is your planned major area of study? _____

Appendix K
Debriefing Form

Thank you very much for your assistance with this research. The following is information related to the purpose of this research. It is extremely important that people who participate in this research receive this information after participation. If, however, a person who participates reads this prior to participation, the research could be spoiled. For that reason, I ask you to please read this information carefully, then to put the paper away somewhere where others who might later participate in the research will not see it. Also, please do not discuss the purpose of this research with anyone who might possibly participate. Thanks very much for your cooperation.

This research examines the relation between affect and helping behaviour. The role of empathy in facilitating altruistic behaviour is currently at issue within the social psychological literature, as is the relationship between religion and empathy and helping. Daniel Batson, a social psychologist, has proposed a model of helping behaviour in which different emotional reactions to a person in need are proposed to evoke different forms of helping. He suggests that whereas self-directed negative affect leads to a selfish form of helping, empathy leads to altruistic helping. This model is extended to a study of the role of religion in helping by determining the role of religion in target-directed affect. This research will test Batson's theory that different emotions lead to different motivations to help, and will extend this theoretical framework to a consideration of the roles of religious fundamentalism and the target of need in this relationship.

There is currently no plan that we know of within the university to develop a buddy system. We are simply interested in this sort of programme, and the factors which could be related to successful help giving. It is necessary to tell participants that we are looking into planning a buddy system in order that the task of considering whether or not you would like to help be taken seriously. I hope you understand why that was necessary. The letter that you read was hypothetical, and was designed to represent some concerns typical of incoming students. There were actually a few different letters that people received, and I am interested in how people react to the different letters. Again, this is necessary if we are to understand the conditions under which people help, and how people help under different conditions.

If you wish to discuss the research with me you can contact me (Lynne Jackson) through the psychology department.

For information about the results of the research, see the bulletin board on the 3rd floor of the Central Teaching building after March 1, 1993.

Again, thanks so much for your participation. Please remember not to discuss this research with anyone who might, at some time, participate

Appendix L

Feedback Posted

UNIVERSITY LIFE / SOCIAL ATTITUDES STUDY

What the study was about (a reminder):

This study was designed to examine the relation between emotion and helping behaviour. We were interested in examining some of the implications of a theory called the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis. According to this theory, two different emotional reactions are common when we become aware of another person in need – empathy and self-directed negative affect. In other words, sometimes people react empathically -- they “feel for” the other, whereas sometimes people feel badly for themselves because it upsets them to be aware of others’ needs or problems. According to this theory, in the absence of social expectation for helping, people who experience self-directed negative affect are unlikely to help another in need whereas those who experience empathy are likely to help. We were interested in testing this prediction.

A second purpose of the research was to examine the relation between religious fundamentalism and emotional reactions in response to, and helping behaviours on behalf of, others in need. Some research has been done to explore the relations of religiousness and helping behaviour. The results are mixed. Some studies find that religiousness is associated with more helpfulness, others find it is associated with less. We were particularly interested in religious fundamentalism and its relation to helping.

What we did:

In this experiment, participants read of a student who requested academic guidance and were asked how likely they would be to help this person. In addition, participants filled out a questionnaire which measured empathy, self-directed negative affect, and religious fundamentalism. In one condition of the study, the “student in need” (a hypothetical person) was presented as heterosexual and in another condition this person was presented as homosexual.

What we found:

The first hypothesis was supported. The more empathically people responded to the individual in need, the more likely they were to indicate willingness to

help. The more people experienced self-directed negative affect, the less likely they were to help.

There was no overall relation of fundamentalism with helping. In general, those with a fundamentalist religious orientation were as likely to help or not help as anybody else. There was, however, a relation between religious fundamentalism and emotional reactions to the person in need. When people with a fundamentalist orientation to religion read of a homosexual person in need, the emotional reaction tended (on average) to be more self-directed negative affect than empathy. This was not the case for people who did not have a fundamentalist approach to religion, and it was not the case for the heterosexual target.

Conclusions First, this study supported the prediction of the empathy-altruism hypothesis that empathy leads to increased helping whereas self-directed negative affect leads to decreased helping (when social expectation for helping is minimised). Second, this study demonstrated that religious fundamentalism is associated with target-specific emotional reactions. That is, for those with a fundamentalist religious orientation, their emotional reaction to the person in need depended upon who it was that was in need.

For those people who helped by participating in this research -- Thank You Very Much!

If you would like more information about this research please feel free to contact Lynne Jackson (through the Psychology department)

Researcher: Lynne Jackson
Research Supervisor: Dr. B. Hunsberger