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Wesley James (Murdoch University)

Brian Griffiths (Curtin University)

Anne Pedersen (Murdoch University)

**The “making and unmaking” of prejudice against Australian Muslims and gay men  
and lesbians: The role of religious development and fundamentalism**

Running head: Prejudice and Religion

Author notes. Correspondence should be addressed to Adjunct Professor Brian Griffiths at the School of Psychology, Curtin University, Bentley, WA, 6102 (email address [b.griffiths@curtin.edu.au](mailto:b.griffiths@curtin.edu.au)).

## ABSTRACT

Despite the growing international interest in the relation between religion and prejudice, there has been a dearth of studies conducted within Australia. We used the Faith Development Scale to examine the relation between religious maturity and attitudes towards Muslims and towards gay men and lesbians in an Australian context using a sample of churchgoers from the Perth metropolitan area ( $N = 139$ ). Respondents who scored lower on the Faith Development Scale were more prejudiced towards both target groups than were high scorers. Furthermore, participants who scored lower on the Faith Development Scale were more prejudiced against gay men and lesbians than they were against Muslim Australians. The Faith Development Scale was a better predictor of attitudes towards the two groups than was the Quest Scale. Contrary to overseas studies, we found that religious fundamentalists held more prejudiced attitudes toward gay men and lesbians than towards those of a different religion (Australian Muslims). Right wing political orientation was also found to be predictive of prejudice against Australian Muslims and against gay men and lesbians independently of religious development. Results suggest that religious maturity, as well as fundamentalism and right-wing political views, play an important role in the “making” or “unmaking” of prejudice against Australian Muslims and against gay men and lesbians. Evidence is presented that suggests that the Quest Scale and the Faith Development Scale are measuring different aspects of religious development.

**The “making and unmaking” of prejudice against Australian Muslims and gay men and lesbians: The role of religious development and fundamentalism**

Within the psychology of religion the distinction between immature and mature forms of religious belief and commitment was first discussed by Allport (1950). Later, the intrinsic component of the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967) was constructed as a measure of religious maturity. Those with an intrinsic orientation, it was claimed, endeavoured to internalize and live by their religious beliefs, which included compassion and love of neighbour, and other aspects of a mature religious orientation as earlier described by Allport (1950). Clearly, those with an intrinsic orientation would be expected to be accepting of others different from themselves. That intrinsics would be less prejudiced than those who were less mature did receive some support in respect to racial attitudes (see Batson, Schoenrade & Ventris, 1993, for a review), but not in respect to attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, for example (Herek, 1987). It is now generally accepted that the intrinsic scale is a measure of commitment to one’s religious beliefs from which no inferences about the content of those beliefs can be made (Gorsuch, 1994). Consequently, the scale cannot now be accepted as a measure of religious maturity as defined by Allport, but any discussion of religious maturity must acknowledge his contribution.

Batson, Schoenrade and Ventris (1993) argued that the items that made up the intrinsic scale had in fact failed to measure important aspects of religious maturity. They developed the Quest Scale (Q) to better assess those aspects of religious maturity not tapped by the intrinsic scale; specifically, an open-ended, responsive dialogue with

existential questions that appreciates complexity and ascribes a positive role to doubt and where religious convictions are held tentatively. Research has given some support to Batson et al.'s claims that Q is a more adequate measure of maturity than the intrinsic scale. Q scores are not only negatively correlated with prejudice towards ethnic groups but also with prejudice towards gay men and lesbians (see, for example, Fulton, Gorsuch & Maynard, 1999). As a generalization, we may conclude that Q scores are negatively correlated with, or unrelated to, all discriminatory attitudes so far measured. It will be appropriate to defer further discussion of Q until a more recent attempt to measure religious development is presented below.

Working within a quite different theoretical framework, Leak and colleagues (Leak, Loucks & Bowlin, 1999) developed the Faith Development Scale (FDS), which they claimed was superior to previous attempts to measure religious, or more generally, faith maturity. Their scale was based on the work of James Fowler (1981) who argued that one's religious beliefs develop in distinct stages similar to cognition and moral justification. Fowler claimed that six stages of religious development can be identified on the basis of a series of detailed interviews with people with religious beliefs. The first two, "Intuitive-Projective faith" and "Mythic-Literal faith", are childhood stages. Because Stage 6 "universalizing faith" is extremely rare, it is only Stages 3, 4 and 5 that we will briefly comment on here.

Stage 3 "Synthetic-Conventional faith" is characteristic of adolescents with religious beliefs, although many adults do not 'progress' beyond this stage. Those at this stage are sensitive to the judgment and expectations of significant others and firmly hold the views of the group to which they belong. In that sense they are conventional. If,

however, within the group to which the person belongs, conflicting views are presented, this will cause the person to begin to question and critically examine previously held beliefs. This may precipitate a movement from Stage 3 to Stage 4, unless the person abandons their religion.

Stage 4 “Individuative-Reflective faith” is considered by Leak et al. (1999) to be the first of the mature faith stages. The most important characteristic of this stage is that the person reflects upon their previously held beliefs and subjects them to a critical examination so that the beliefs that are now held are their beliefs. If there comes a time when the person feels that their beliefs are justified on too rational or cognitive a ground and that myth and ritual may also be valid non-verbal means of strengthening their faith the person may move into the next stage of faith development.

Stage 5 “Conjunctive faith” is open to an examination of myth, of ritual and of taboos, with the consequence that at this stage the person understands that truth has many dimensions. A genuine acceptance of others different from oneself becomes possible. The ingroup to which one sees oneself as belonging is greatly expanded.

The focus of the FDS is not on the specific aspects of religious beliefs held by the individual. In this respect it is similar to Q, and in fact Batson assisted in the early stages of the development of the instrument. Evidence that the FDS is a valid measure of what it set out to measure has been presented, but with some reservations (Leak et al., 1999). Its correlation with Q was rather low (.36) which may suggest that it is measuring aspects of religious maturity not assessed by Q, but it needs to be noted that the six-item scale used in the first study had unacceptably low internal consistency (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991), so the obtained correlation is not unexpected. However, the low correlation

between the two scales purporting to measure religious maturity has prompted us to make a closer conceptual analysis of the two instruments. An initial inspection of the scales reveals that Q emphasizes questioning and doubting one's beliefs. None of the FDS items refers to doubt or questioning, but some items do refer, instead, to one's own efforts to reach understanding and to the critical examination of one's beliefs. There is a difference, of course, between doubting and critically examining. Donahue (1985) had wondered what that earlier and shorter version of Q was measuring. He suggested it could be seen to be an agnosticism scale and that, while people with a mature religious orientation might agree with such items, so might iconoclasts who respond "why" to every answer given. It may also be asked whether doubt and questioning are indicative of religious maturity. Allport (1950) certainly had stated that religious maturity is fashioned in the workshop of doubt, but the implication is that the mature person does not remain in that workshop. Indeed, Allport went on to state that with the strengthening of faith, through successive acts of commitment, moments of doubt gradually disappear (p. 83). Does Q then identify the religiously mature, or only those on their way to maturity? Where, then, is Q located in terms of Fowler's views on religious development?

If both Q and FDS are compared in respect to Fowler's stages, the Q items would belong at the transition from stage 3 to stage 4 (e.g. "I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs"), but, while one of the FDS items could perhaps be placed at the transition from stage 3 to 4 (e.g. "It is very important for me to critically examine my religious beliefs and values"), most are at stage 4 (e.g. "My religious orientation comes primarily from my own efforts to analyze and understand God") and stage 5 (e.g. "I believe that my church has much to offer, but that other religions can also provide many

religious insights”). Q is therefore a much more restricted measure of religious maturity than the FDS. If one accepts Fowler’s claim that only those who are at stage 4 and beyond are religiously mature, then Q is not a measure of maturity at all.

In any discussion of religious development the question of fundamentalism must arise and we now turn to a consideration of the relation between fundamentalism, as defined by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992), and religious maturity.

At what stage of religious development are those with fundamentalist beliefs? In our view, a fundamentalist would be located firmly within stage 3. One of the characteristics of stage 3 is that the deeply felt beliefs are sanctioned by authority and sustained by the group. The person “dwells” in them and interprets their world through these beliefs. For the fundamentalist, the Bible, literally interpreted, would be the ultimate authority. Persons at this stage are unable to examine their beliefs objectively. Those beliefs are simply true. Not all people at stage 3 are fundamentalists, of course, and they may hold quite liberal views if such are the beliefs of the denomination to which they belong.

Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) claimed that conceptually there is no difference between being a ‘nonquester’ and being a fundamentalist. The highly negative correlation between Q and measures of fundamentalism that they refer to gives some support to considering religious maturity and fundamentalism as being bi-polar opposites. In studies of the relationship between religious maturity and prejudiced attitudes, it is useful to investigate fundamentalism so that the full effect of this possibly bi-polar religious orientation may be assessed.



The major focus of our study was to examine the relation between religious maturity, as measured by the FDS, and prejudice in an Australian context. We are not aware of any studies where the FDS has been used in prejudice research. The very large majority of studies on religious maturity, as a determinant of prejudice have been conducted in the United States of America where the role of religion in public and private life is quite different from that in Australia, which is more secular. Research outside the United States is required to discover to what extent findings there are culture specific. We have chosen to examine the attitudes of churchgoers towards gay men and lesbians and towards Australian Muslims. Because homosexual behaviour is proscribed in the Bible, it may be argued that prejudice against gay men and lesbians is largely determined by an individual's religion compared with attitudes towards other minority groups. While the interpretation of the relevant Biblical texts is debated within some branches of the Christian church it does remain a very contentious issue (Carnley, 2004). With respect to religious maturity and its converse, it has been well established that intrinsics and especially fundamentalists have a negative attitude towards gay men and lesbians, while those with a quest orientation tend to be accepting of this group (Batson, Floyd, Meyer & Winner, 1999; Rowatt, LaBouff, Johnson, Froese, & Tsang, 2009; Whitley, 2009). In one of the few Australian studies on this issue, it was found that intrinsics reported a negative attitude towards gay men and lesbians, and even towards celibate homosexual clergy, but measures of religious maturity and fundamentalism were not included in that study (Griffiths, Dixon, Stanley & Weiland, 2001).

We have chosen Australian Muslims as our second target group as they are members of a religion different from that of most Australians. Given that, historically and

currently, differences in religions have been the source of major conflicts, it is surprising that so little psychological research has been directed to identifying the factors that are involved in the development of attitudes of those with religious beliefs towards those of another religion. We are certainly of the view that the attitudes of Christians towards members of other religions have not received the attention they deserve. There are, however, some studies that have examined the attitudes of believers towards those of a different religion (Altemeyer, 2003; Griffin, Gorsuch & Davis, 1987; Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999). Results clearly indicated that Christian fundamentalists were prejudiced against those whose religious position was different from their own, and that Q was unrelated to such attitudes. Altemeyer (2003) concluded that "...as relatively prejudiced as religious fundamentalists tend to be towards racial and ethnic minorities, and homosexuals, they are even more likely, compared with others, to make ethnocentric judgments on religious grounds" (p. 23). In the one study that assessed stages of religious development, Green and Hoffman (1989) found that students at higher levels of Fowler's stages of faith did not discriminate against students whose Christian denomination differed from their own or who were agnostic or atheist, unlike those at a lower level of faith development.

Finally, socio-demographic variables have also been found to predict prejudice towards marginalized groups. In a review of 16 community surveys by Pedersen and Griffiths (2008) in Perth, Western Australia - the location of the present study - it was found that prejudice was related to a lack of education (all of 16 studies; 100%), right-wing political orientation (12 out of 14 studies; 86%), being older (9 out of 16 studies; 56%), and being male (8 out of 16 studies; 50%). Similar socio-demographic results

have been found elsewhere in Australia (e.g., Dunn, Forrest, Burnley & McDonald, 2004).

### **Overview of the present study**

In our study we examined prejudice against Australian Muslims and against gay men and lesbians with a focus on the relation between such prejudice and religious maturity as measured by the recently developed Faith Development Scale (Leak, et al, 1999), by Q, and by the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). We include this latter scale because we hold, tentatively, that fundamentalism is the bi-polar opposite of religious maturity. We were particularly interested in prejudice against those of a different religion from that of our Christian respondents because of our belief that this is an important and neglected area of investigation. While the prejudices of people with religious beliefs towards gay men and lesbians have been the focus of a good deal of research, particularly in North America, less work has been done in Australia. Results obtained in the Australian context would enable an estimate to be made of the extent to which those overseas findings are culture specific. Where such cultural differences can be identified it would be important to identify what those differences might be and how they influence attitudes. In respect to attitudes towards Australian Muslims, Poynting and Mason (2007) provide an excellent example by examining in detail the influence of the different historical and cultural factors between Britain and Australia that have generated attitudes towards Muslims in those two countries. Given the socio-demographic findings outlined previously, we also include measures of those variables.

Our primary expectations were as follows: First, religious maturity, as measured by the Faith Development Scale and the Quest Scale, will be associated with acceptance of gay men and lesbians and Australian Muslims. Furthermore, the Faith Development Scale will be a better predictor of these attitudes than the Quest Scale if the claims of Leak et al. (1999) are justified. Second, religious fundamentalism, as measured by the Religious Fundamentalism Scale, will be associated with prejudice against both gay men and lesbians and Australian Muslims and that, in accordance with Altemeyer's (2003) findings, fundamentalists will be more rejecting of Muslims than of gay men and lesbians. Third, religious maturity, as measured by the Faith Development Scale and Quest Scale, will be the bi-polar opposite of fundamentalism, as measured by the Religious Fundamentalism Scale, on a religious maturity factor.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Of the 139 questionnaires returned, most respondents identified themselves as Anglicans (61%), while other participants identified themselves simply as Christian (16%), Baptist (8%), Catholic (6%) and Pentecostal (3%). One respondent was a Spiritualist and another Greek Orthodox. Five respondents did not state their denomination. There were more female (61%) than male (39%) participants. The mean age was 57, with a range between 18 and 90. Most participants were Caucasian (93%). Because the study is primarily concerned with the Christian religion all references to religion henceforth will be based on this assumption, unless otherwise stated.

## Measures

The first section of the questionnaire asked for information about age, sex (1 = male; 2 = female), political preference (1 = strongly left; to 5 = strongly right), cultural background, education level (1=Did not complete Secondary School; 2=Completed Secondary School; 3=Vocational Training (part or completed); 4=Undergraduate Diploma (part or completed); 5=Bachelor Degree (part or completed); 6=Higher Degree (e.g. PhD, Masters) (part or completed), denomination and their most frequent place of worship. The next section consisted of the instruments used to measure the major variables employed in the study.

**Attitudes Towards Muslim Australians Scale (ATMA).** This 16 item scale (Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009) asked participants to rate both positive and negative statements about Muslim Australians on a Likert-scale of 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The higher the scores the more prejudiced the respondent.

**Attitudes Towards Homosexuals Scale (ATH).** This 20-item scale based on Herek (1988) asked participants to rate both positive and negative statements about gay men and lesbians on a Likert-scale of 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The scale includes statements such as “Homosexuals should *not* be allowed to teach school”. The original scale was comprised of two subscales, with 10 questions addressing attitudes toward male homosexuality and 10 questions addressing female homosexuality. As a stable general factor has been found to account for most of the explained variance (Herek, 1994), it is considered to be acceptable to interchange references to lesbian and gay men with the general description of “homosexual” (Griffiths et al., 2001). Griffiths et al. found that the use of this general version of the Attitudes Towards Homosexuals Scale has been

found to be reliable with a coefficient alpha of .96. The item “The growing number of homosexuals indicates a decline in American morals” was altered to “The growing number of homosexuals indicates a decline in Australian morals”. The higher the scores the more prejudiced the respondent.

**Quest Scale (Q).** This 12-item scale (Batson, & Schoenrade, 1991) asked participants to rate Quest statements on a Likert-scale of 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). Higher scores indicate a higher Quest level.

**Faith Development Scale (FDS).** This eight-item scale (Leak, Loucks & Bowlin, 1999) asked participants to rate FDS statements on a Likert-scale of 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). One item we excluded for reasons referred to below, leaving seven items. To make scores easier to compare with scores from the other scales we multiplied respondent mean scores by 7. This provides an index of overall faith development, with higher scores indicating higher faith development.

**Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RFS).** This 12-item scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004) asked participants to rate RFS statements on a Likert-scale of 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The higher scores, the more fundamentalist is the religious commitment.

**Qualitative data.** We included a space for the participant to provide further qualitative comments about the issues as they felt necessary.

## **Procedure**

Clergy from within the Perth metropolitan area were contacted and asked if they would be prepared to allow access to their congregation to acquire participants for the

study. Of all the clergy contacted only four were willing to cooperate. Some additional contact with churchgoers was made through snowballing.

## RESULTS

**Scale descriptives.** Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation (SD), number of items ( $n$ ), the range of possible scores and alpha coefficients. Most scales had acceptable alphas, with the exception of FDS ( $\alpha = .563$ ). When question 6 was deleted from the scale, the alpha increased to a more satisfactory .663. Item 6 refers to conflict within the family as a consequence of one's religious growth, but clearly religious development may occur without causing disagreements within the family. This item's correlation with the total of the remaining items in the scale was  $-.132$ , and on these grounds we felt justified in removing it from the scale.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

**Religious Maturity and Prejudice against Australian Muslims.** Correlations among the attitudes and the religious development variables are presented in Table 2. Of these variables, RFS had the highest correlation with ATMA, being positively predictive of prejudice against Australian Muslims. Both the FDS and Q were negatively correlated with prejudice against Australian Muslims. While the FDS does appear to be the better predictor of prejudice against Muslims, the two correlations of  $-.472$  and  $-.409$ , respectively, were not significantly different from one another,  $t(120) = 0.076$ ,  $p = .435$ .

[Insert Table 2 about here]

To further investigate the relative advantage of FDS and Q as predictors of prejudice against Australian Muslims, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis. Political preference and education level, the only two of the socio-demographic variables that were significantly correlated with the ATMA, were entered at step 1. Q was entered at step 2 and FDS at step 3. While we were specifically interested in Q and FDS as measures of religious maturity, we included RFS at step 4 as we considered that fundamentalism may be the bi-polar opposite of religious maturity. At step 2, both political preference (beta = .26) and Q (beta = -.30) were significant predictors of ATMA, but at step 3, only political preference (beta = .20) and FDS (beta = -.26) were predictive of attitudes towards Australian Muslims. After the variance associated with FDS has been taken into account, Q no longer contributed any unique variance to the prediction of ATMA. With the sample used in our study, FDS is the better predictor of prejudice against Australian Muslims. While both FDS and Q are correlated with a positive attitude towards Australian Muslims, it would seem that high scorers on FDS are more accepting than high scorers on Q.

When RFS is entered at step 4, neither of the two measures of religious maturity contributes any unique variance to the prediction of ATMA. The importance of this finding is explored in further analyses below, but here we are concerned with the relation between measures of religious maturity and attitudes towards Australian Muslims.

The results of the above analyses, based on correlations, indicate that participants with a mature level of faith development, and those with a high score on Q, have lower



scores on the ATMA, but those results do not provide information about the extent to which these respondents are accepting or rejecting of Muslims. In order to assess this, we classified those with FDS scores greater than 4.5 on the 7-point scale as high on religious maturity, those with scores between 3.5 and 4.5 as moderate, and those with scores below 3.5 as low on religious maturity. Because we are interested in those participants who score high and low in religious maturity, respondents who scored at the mid-point (moderate) are not included in the following analyses. We used the same procedure with Q to classify respondents as high and low questers. The appropriate ANOVAs were conducted.

ATMA means of those high and low on faith development were 2.74 (1.09) and 4.04 (1.15) respectively and differed significantly,  $F(1,96) = 28.27, p < .001$ . Of those high on faith development, 55 scored towards the accepting end of the ATMA and only 6 towards the rejecting end of the scale. Those low in faith development scored at the mean, however, it should be noted that, of those low in faith development, 8 respondents did score towards the accepting end of the scale and 10 towards the rejecting end. ATMA means of the high and low questers were 2.74 (1.23) and 3.88 (1.00) respectively,  $F(1,81) = 19.09, p < .001$ . Again, high questers scored well towards the accepting end of the ATMA; 39 acceptors and only 6 rejecters. Low questers scored just above the mean. There were 13 respondents who scored towards the accepting end of the scale and 8 who scored towards the rejecting end.

In respect to political preference, those on the political right report more prejudice against Australian Muslims regardless of their level of religious maturity.

**Religious Maturity and Prejudice against Gay Men and Lesbians.** Both the FDS and Q were negatively correlated with prejudice against gay men and lesbians as shown in Table 2. While FDS, again, initially appeared to be the better predictor of prejudice against gay men and lesbians, the two correlations of  $-.551$  and  $-.470$ , respectively, were not significantly different from one another,  $t(120) = 0.083, p = .390$ .

To further investigate the relative advantage of FDS and Q as predictors of prejudice against gay men and lesbians we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis. Political preference and education level, the only two of the socio-demographic variables that were significantly correlated with the ATH, were entered at step 1. Q was entered at step 2 and FDS at step 3. For the reasons stated in the previous analysis we included RFS at step 4. At step 2 both political preference (beta =  $.20$ ) and Q (beta =  $-.38$ ) were significant predictors of ATH, but at step 3 only Q (beta =  $-.22$ ) and FDS (beta =  $-.32$ ) were predictive of attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. When RFS was entered at step 4, neither of the two measures of religious maturity contributes any unique variance to the prediction of ATH. As mentioned earlier, the importance of this finding is explored in further analyses below, but here we are concerned with the relation between measures of religious maturity and attitudes towards gay men and lesbians.

While those with a mature level of faith development and questers had lower scores on the ATH scale, again those results do not provide information about the extent to which these respondents are accepting or rejecting of gay men and lesbians. Using the same steps as outlined before, the participants were divided into those high in religious maturity and those low in religious maturity and the appropriate ANOVAs conducted.

ATH means of those high and low on FDS were 2.56 (1.34) and 4.44 (1.64) respectively,  $F(1,94) = 34.19, p < .001$ . Of those high on FDS, 52 scored towards the accepting end of the scale and only 8 towards the rejecting end. ATH means of the high and low questers were 2.57 (1.37) and 4.39 (1.58) respectively,  $F(1, 75) = 28.21, p < .001$ . Of the high scorers, 36 were acceptors and only 7 were rejecters. Of the low scorers, 16 scored towards the rejecting end of the scale but 10 did score towards the accepting end.

**Religious Fundamentalism and Prejudice against Gay Men and Lesbians and against Australian Muslims.** Altemeyer (2003) found in his research, conducted in Canada, that Christian fundamentalists were more prejudiced against those of a different religion than they were of gay men and lesbians. Because of the possible differences between Canada and Australia, research findings in respect to the relation between religion and prejudice need to be assessed to determine the extent to which those findings are culture specific. The following analyses were directed to that issue.

Results indicated that fundamentalism was significantly more highly correlated with prejudice against gay men and lesbians ( $r = .79$ ) than towards Australian Muslims ( $r = .51$ ),  $t(117) = 3.04, p = .01$ . Their mean scores on ATMA and ATH were 3.83 (1.00) and 5.35 (1.12) respectively. Only 45% of the fundamentalists were rejecting of Australian Muslims but almost all (92%) were rejecting of gay men and lesbians. Clearly these results are contrary to those reported by Altemeyer.

**Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Maturity as Bi-Polar Opposites of Religious Development.** To put our speculation that religious fundamentalism and religious maturity are bi-polar opposites of religious development to the test, we conducted a principal axis factoring of Q, FDS, and RFS. The Scree test clearly indicated

that a two factor solution was appropriate. The results of an oblique rotation (oblimin) are shown in the Appendix. All of the RFS items, three of the FDS items, and one Q item loaded on the first factor. All other of the Q items loaded on the second factor but two of them (“It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties” and “For me doubting is an important part of what it means to be religious”) did have loadings on both factors. We feel some justification for labeling the first factor “Religious Maturity” and the second “Transition” for reasons that will be made clear in the Discussion section.

## **DISCUSSION**

Because the results of our factoring of the religion variables are relevant to the interpretation of our other findings we will discuss these first. We are of the view that these results may be an important outcome of our research.

We argued earlier that the items that make up the Quest scale can be interpreted as those that would be responded to by religious believers who are beginning to question previously held beliefs but have not yet arrived at a position where they have thought their way through to a set of personally held beliefs. In Allport’s (1950) terms they are still in the workshop of doubt. In Fowler’s (1981) terms they are at the transition between stage 3 and stage 4. It would not be unreasonable to expect that the doubts being held by some questers would lead them to abandon their religious beliefs altogether, while others would move to stage 4. It will be recalled that it is not until believers reach stage 4 that they are considered to be religiously mature. Stage 3 and below are stages of religious development that have not yet reached maturity.

Factoring of the religious variables produced two factors. All the fundamentalism items, three of the religious maturity items and one quest item loaded on the first factor. The remaining two maturity items loaded on neither factor. The second factor, that we have labelled “Transition”, was made up of the quest items. Quest was clearly not part of what we have called the “Religious Maturity” factor. Altemeyer (2003) had claimed that conceptually there is no difference between a “nonquester” and a fundamentalist. Our results do not support that claim. Quest and fundamentalism are located on separate factors. It would be more appropriate to assert that conceptually there is no difference between religious immaturity and fundamentalism, although, being religiously immature does not imply that one is necessarily a fundamentalist. It does, however, indicate that in Fowler’s (1981) system, fundamentalism is a form of religious immaturity.

Q and FDS are significantly correlated and their relation to the two attitude scales used in our study is very similar. It is puzzling that the items making up those two religion scales did not load on the same factor. We believe the results are interesting enough to warrant further serious investigation of the relation between Q and FDS in the context of Fowler’s (1981) theoretical framework. Even Batson et al.’s (1993) assertion that Q is a measure of religious maturity, as defined by Allport, would not be justified if our findings are confirmed.

Our first aim was to examine the relation between a measure of religious maturity, the Faith Development Scale, and prejudice in Australia against Muslims and against gay men and lesbians.

Overall, the mean scores of our respondents on the two prejudice scales were in a slightly positive direction. It was clear, however, that religious maturity, as measured by

the FDS, was an important determinant of attitudes towards Australian Muslims and towards gay men and lesbians. The religiously mature respondents were accepting of both Muslims and of gay men and lesbians. Leak et al (1999) had argued that the FDS, as a valid measure of religious maturity, would have advantages over alternative measures of religious maturity. The Q scale was mentioned specifically. We found that high and low questers expressed remarkably similar attitudes towards gay men and lesbians and towards Muslims as those reported by the respondents to the FDS. The results of our multiple regression analyses suggested that the FDS is a better predictor of attitudes towards our target groups than is Q, but generally we must conclude that the two scales perform in remarkably similar ways. This might be expected if the FDS is measuring a somewhat more advanced level of religious development than Q.

Despite both education and political preference returning significant beta-weights, once the religious variables were factored in, education returned a non-significant beta-weight, while political preference only returned a significant beta-weight for attitudes toward Muslims. When considering why a more right-wing political ideology was related to higher prejudice against Muslims, it is helpful to recall what are said to be the core components of a right-wing political ideology. Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski and Sulloway (2003) proposed that individuals with a right-wing ideology were more resistant to change (sometimes referred to as a preference for traditionalism) and more accepting of inequality than those of a left-wing political ideology. Further evidence can be found from Australian research showing that voting for Pauline Hanson (a far right political figure) was strongly linked with symbolic racism (Fraser & Islam, 2000).

From the regression analyses, it was found that political preference accounted for less of the variance than each of the religious variables in the equations predicting attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. However, it was found that political preference accounted for more variance than each of the religious variables in the equations predicting attitudes toward Muslims. This could suggest that political preference contributes more to the explanation of attitudes toward Muslims than attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. Perhaps this is reflective of the increased relevance Muslim related issues, such as asylum seekers who are often seen as being Muslim, have in Australian political culture, compared with homosexual issues.

Our second aim was to measure the attitudes of fundamentalists towards Australian Muslims and towards gay men and lesbians, specifically to examine the extent to which Altemeyer's (2003) findings could be replicated in a somewhat different cultural setting. Our results did not support the findings of Altemeyer. We did not find that fundamentalists in our sample were more rejecting of people of a different religion than they were of gay men and lesbians. They were strongly prejudiced against gay men and lesbians but less so towards Australian Muslims.

That fundamentalists are prejudiced against gay men and lesbians has long been established, but their reported attitudes towards Muslims and the contradiction of previous research, along with some of the unexpected findings discussed above requires some explanation. In offering possible explanations of our findings, we will consider the characteristics of the respondents, the location in which the research was conducted, and the time at which the data were collected. Most of our respondents were Anglican and, importantly, were members of congregations whose priests were willing to give us access

to their parishioners. The refusal of other clergy to participate may have been determined by their attitude towards Muslims and/or towards gay men and lesbians. Those who *did* cooperate may have had a more accepting attitude towards these groups and that may have had a corresponding effect on their congregation. Our respondents may not be representative of Perth Anglicans, and because members of other denominations were not adequately represented, our findings may be based on an atypical subset of local churchgoers. Future research on the issues raised here should sample more adequately than we were able to do, but why so few of the clergy approached were prepared to give us access to their parishioners is a question to which we are unable to give a satisfactory answer.

The Anglican respondents were from Perth, where the recently retired Archbishop was an outspoken critic of fundamentalism and of literal interpretations of biblical texts concerning homosexuality (Carnley, 2004). The present Archbishop holds similar views. As is clear in his 2004 book, theologically and in respect to some social issues, Carnley's position is quite different from that of the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney. To the extent that attitudes of Anglicans towards gay men and lesbians and towards Muslims are influenced by their Archbishops, we would expect to find that Perth Anglicans would have a more positive attitude towards those groups than would be the case in Sydney. The point being made here is that local conditions may be of considerable importance in producing results and consequently restricting the extent to which the findings may be generalized. Certainly, many people have argued that "context matters" with regard to prejudice-related issues (see, for example, Dunn et al., 2004; Pedersen, Walker & Wise, 2005).



Furthermore, our data were collected some time after the September 11 attacks on the United States of America and the Bali bombings. In respect to the Bali bombings, the perpetrators were identified and punished in a Muslim country where there was official condemnation of those Muslim extremists. Consequently, it may be easier for Australians to distinguish between Muslim migrants and Islamic fundamentalists than it is in the United States where the situation is more complex and there was no comparable resolution to the attacks. Had we collected our data at a time closer to those terrorists' attacks, our results may have been quite different.

Additionally, it should be noted that the FDS returned an alpha level of .663, even after one question was deleted. Although Leak, Loucks and Bowlin (1999) similarly report an alpha of .71, this low alpha is cause for concern. However, Leak, et al had argued that, because of the inherent complexity within faith stages, high levels of internal consistency may not be possible to achieve. Their position was that "We preferred to have a scale that is sensitive to several stages in order to enhance breadth of coverage and content validity, even at the expense of internal consistency, which is likely to be elusive in a comprehensive faith development scale" (p. 108).

In conclusion, our results indicate that any generalizations made about those who have religious beliefs based simply on church attendance are of very little value. There are just too many ways in which those who hold religious beliefs differ from one another. Allport drew attention to the importance of religious orientation, and fundamentalism has long been known to be a significant determinant of social attitudes. Our study has demonstrated that religious maturity is an important variable that needs to be considered in research that focuses on the relation between religion and other variables. This may be

of particular importance in attitude studies. While we found that both Q and FDS related in very similar ways to the attitudes we focused on in this study, the results of our factoring of the religion scales suggests that how these two scales are to be conceptualized in terms of Fowler's faith development stages warrants further investigation. Furthermore, it is clear from our findings that local and cultural factors have a significant influence and that the results obtained in one context do not necessarily generalize to other contexts. Additionally, as political orientation was found to be related to prejudice independently of the religious variables, socio-demographics need to be considered in studies that look at the relationship between religion and prejudice.

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Table 1. *Descriptive characteristics of prejudice and religious scales*

Scale	Mean (SD)	<i>n</i>	Range	$\alpha$
Faith Development	4.66 (1.78)	7	0-7	.663
Fundamentalism	3.675 (1.573)	12	1-7	.904
Quest	4.203 (1.252)	12	1-7	.780
ATMA	3.072 (1.187)	16	1-7	.915
ATH	3.303 (1.700)	20	1-7	.963

*Note:* ATMA = Attitudes Towards Muslim Australians; ATH = Attitudes Towards

Homosexuals

Table 2. *Correlation Matrix: Prejudice, religion-related variables and socio-demographics*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ATMA	1	.60**	-.47**	-.41**	.51**	.10	.04	.46**	-.34**
2. ATH		1	-.55**	-.47**	.79**	-.02	-.08	.35**	-.31**
3. Faith Development			1	.57**	-.58**	.06	-.05	-.39**	.28**
4. Quest				1	-.48**	-.10	-.05	-.29**	.31**
5. Fundamentalism					1	-.07	-.01	.32**	-.27**
6. Age						1	-.03	.14	-.14
7. Gender							1	.10	-.15
8. Political Position								1	-.39**
9. Education									1

*Note:* \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$  (all two tailed).

ATMA = Attitudes Towards Muslim Australians

ATH = Attitudes Towards Homosexuals



Table 3. *Hierarchical regressions predicting Attitudes Towards Muslim Australians*

Variables Entered	r	$\beta$ (a)	$\beta$ (b)	$\beta$ (c)	$\beta$ (d)	R <sup>2</sup> change	Total R <sup>2</sup>
Step 1							
Political Preference	.448***	.320**	.265**	.201*	.182*		
Education Level	-.342***	-.217*	-.142	-.143	-.126	.203***	
Step 2							
Quest	-.348***		-.298**	-.164	-.123	.077**	.279**
Step 3							
Faith Development	-.491***			-.263*	-.146	.043*	.322*
Step 4							
Fundamentalism	.504***				.257*	.041*	.363*

*Note:* \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$  (all two tailed).  $\beta$ (a) denotes beta weights for variables after the first step;  $\beta$ (b) denotes beta weights for variables after the second step.  $\beta$ (c) denotes beta weights for variables after the third step.  $\beta$ (d) denotes beta weights for variables after the fourth step.

Table 4. *Hierarchical regressions predicting Attitudes Towards Homosexuals.*

Variables Entered	r	$\beta$ (a)	$\beta$ (b)	$\beta$ (c)	$\beta$ (d)	R <sup>2</sup> change	Total R <sup>2</sup>
Step 1							
Political Preference	.359***	.273**	.201*	.113	.061		
Education Level	-.333***	-.173	-.061	-.077	-.058	.142***	
Step 2							
Quest	-.477***		-.381***	-.222*	-.106	.126***	.268***
Step 3							
Faith Development	-.520***			-.325**	-.044	.064**	.322**
Step 4							
Fundamentalism	.782***				.679***	.309*	.640***

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$  (all two tailed).  $\beta$ (a) denotes beta weights for variables after the first step;  $\beta$ (b) denotes beta weights for variables after the second step.  $\beta$ (c) denotes beta weights for variables after the third step.  $\beta$ (d) denotes beta weights for variables after the fourth step

Appendix. Oblimin rotated factor structure of the Quest, Faith Development and Religious Fundamentalism scales.

Item	Loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
I believe that my church offers a full insight into what God wants for us and how we should worship him. (FDS 2)	.746	
Scriptures may contain general truths, but they should NOT be considered completely, literally true from beginning to end. (RFS 7)	-.739	
When you get right down to it, there are basically only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not. (RFS 6)	-.728	
“Satan” is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is <i>no such thing</i> as a diabolical “Prince of Darkness” who tempts us. (RFS 9)	-.711	
It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion. (RFS 4)	-.697	
<i>All</i> of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings. There is <i>no</i> perfectly true, right religion. (RFS 12)	-.695	
The fundamentals of God’s religion should never be tampered with, or compromised with others’ beliefs. (RFS 11)	-.693	

Item	Loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed. (RFS 1)	-.679	
Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, <i>science</i> is probably right. (RFS 10)	-.665	
To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion. (RFS 8)	-.665	
The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God. (RFS 3)	-.642	
No single book of religious teachings contains all the intrinsic, fundamental truths about life. (RFS 2)	-.619	
I find myself disagreeing with my church over numerous aspects of my faith. (FDS 1)	.586	
There is a particular set of religious teachings in this world that are so true, you can't go any "deeper" because they are the basic, bedrock message that God has given humanity. (RFS 5)	-.501	
It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties (QS 3)	.478	.470
It does not bother me to become exposed to other religions. (FDS 5)	.460	
As I grow and change, I expect my religion also to grow and change. (QS 1)	.412	
God wasn't very important to me until I began to ask questions about the meaning of my own life. (QS 11)		.737

Item	Loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
I was not very interested in religions until I began to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life. (QS 4)		.690
Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers. (QS 12)		.606
My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious convictions. (QS 9)		.600
There are many religious issues on which my views are still changing. (QS 10)		.585
I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs. (QS 2)		.536
For me, doubting is an important part of what it means to be religious. (QS 5)	.413	.534
I have been driven to ask religious questions out of a growing awareness of the tensions in my world and in my relation to my world. (QS 8)		.532

