Introduction

- The relationship between religion, prejudice and prosocial behavior is complex.
- Past research from our lab demonstrated that believers, compared to non-believers, evidenced higher prejudice toward Blacks, Muslims, gay and lesbian individuals, and women who have had an abortion. However, with the exception of the abortion rights group, we did not find significant differences between believers and non-believers on a self-report measure of helping attitudes toward the various social groups. (Butcher, DeLaPena, Selvanathan, & Goodman, 2013).
- In the present study, we aimed to extend our consideration of the relationship between religion, prejudice and prosocial behavior, by tapping into unconscious or uncontrolled processes.
- Religious primes may increase prosociality for both believers and non-believers (e.g., Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). However, the prosocial option we employed in the present study involves donating money to a minority group charitable organization that tends to elicit higher prejudice toward non-believers (e.g., Leak & Finken, 2011; Butcher et al., 2013).
- We hypothesize that priming religious concepts will result in higher rates of donation to the minority organization among non-believers, but lower levels of donation among believers. We predict that priming with secular concepts, compared to control concepts, will result in higher rates of donation among both believers and non-believers. Regardless of priming, we also anticipate non-believers to donate more than believers. Additionally, we will evaluate religious orientation and empathy as potential correlates.

Methods

Participants
- N = 59 UWEC students (86.4% Female; 91.5% Caucasian; mean age = 19.83; 81.4% Believers)

Procedure
- Participants signed-up for the study through the SONA system, and arrived to the lab at a timeslot during which they were scheduled.
- Participants completed a word-scrambling task, in which they were randomly assigned to either religious, secular or control primes (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007).
- Participants were awarded 100 “lab dollars” for their performance.
- Participants were told that the lab dollars could be used to purchase snacks at the end of the study, and were also given the option to donate any or all of their lab dollars to the “charitable partner organization of the week” (10 lab dollars = 1 actual $), which is an LGBTQ Resource Center.
- Next, participants completed measures of religious orientation, belief in God, religious affiliation, and empathy, as well as non-identifying demographic information.
- Participants were permitted to exchange any remaining lab dollars for snacks before they were debriefed, thanked and dismissed.

Results

ANOVA Analysis Testing Primary Predictions
- A 3 (Priming: Religious vs. Secular vs. Control) x 2 (Religious Belief: Believer vs. Non-believer) ANOVA was conducted with donation amount as the dependent variable.
- The hypothesized interaction between priming and religious belief was not significant, F(2, 53) < 1, p > .1
- The main effect of priming was not significant, F(2, 53) < .1, p > .1.
- However, the hypothesized main effect of Religious Belief was significant, F(1, 53) = 4.15, p < .05, η²p = .07. Non-believers donated significantly more than believers.

Correlations
- Correlational analyses revealed several significant associations among donation amount and other variables.
- As would be expected, intrinsic and fundamentalist religiosity were positively correlated with one another, and were both negatively correlated with quest religiosity.
- Intrinsic and fundamentalist religiosity were both negatively correlated with donation amount.
- Quest religiosity was positively correlated with donation amount.
- Empathy scores were unrelated to any other variables.

Conclusion

We thank UWEC’s Learning & Technology Services for printing this poster.
Many thanks to UWEC’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for support of this project.