

LATTER-DAY SAINT RELIGIOSITY AND ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS SEXUAL MINORITIES

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

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2009

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## ABSTRACT

Latter-day Saint Religiosity and Attitudes  
Towards Sexual Minorities

by

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Existing research has revealed a robust relationship between high religiosity and negative attitudes towards sexual minorities. To date, however, there have been few studies investigating this relationship within the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS Church). The unique history, doctrine, and organization of this religion, along with its large size, rapid growth, and sizeable influence, indicate that a study of homophobia among church members will provide additional information about the relationship between religiosity and negative attitudes. These data will shed additional light on the make-up and nature of homophobia, offer insight into the relationship between religious and homophobic attitudes and behaviors, and better inform mental health professionals working with individuals identifying as members of the LDS Church, as members of a sexual minority, or as members of both groups.

The following research includes the administration of a survey to college-age LDS church members gathering data regarding several dimensions of LDS religiosity, several dimensions of attitudes towards sexual minorities, and demographic data. Subsequent analysis of the gathered data has clarified the nature of the relationship between the measured dimensions of LDS religiosity and homophobia, specifically, that overall LDS religiosity correlates positively with negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, and that some individual dimensions of religiosity, particularly commitment to the LDS Church, are particularly predictive of negative attitudes.

(92 pages)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my wife, Lauree, and my two children, Dylan and Wren, for their love and support.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the faculty and staff in the Psychology Department. I would particularly like to thank my major professor, Dr. Melanie Domenech Rodriguez, whose help, support, and particularly, patience have been invaluable throughout the course of the work on this thesis.

Cory John Myler



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Public opinion about sexual minorities (individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or questioning their sexual orientation [GLBTQ]) is a prominent topic in both the popular and academic press (Hicks & Tien-Tsung, 2006, p. xvi). Whether characterized as homophobia, homonegativism, or heterosexism, the constellation of negative attitudes towards sexual minorities has been demonstrated to be both prevalent and harmful (Baker, 2002; Blumenfeld, 1992; Comstock, 1991). While the effects of overt discrimination and related abuse, crime, and violence have received more academic attention in recent years, many researchers have noted the need for additional research and education regarding homophobia and negative attitudes (Herrell et al., 1999; O'Hanlan et al., 1997). To date, research has identified several factors as predictors of an individual's attitude towards sexual minorities including gender, political affiliation, and religiosity (Davies, 2004; Dynes & Donaldson, 1992; Finlay & Walther, 2003; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Mar & Kite, 1998; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Stones, 2006; Wilkinson, 2004). Religiosity has been repeatedly demonstrated to positively correlate with negative attitudes towards persons who are GLBTQ (Wilkinson). A likely explanation for this relationship may be the tendency of most religious institutions to facilitate the maintenance of the social status quo, rather than encourage progression and reform (Allport, 1954). Members of religions commonly viewed as conservative, such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter referred to as "the LDS Church," "the Mormon Church," or simply, "the Church"), may be more likely to hold

negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, given the religion's doctrine and organized efforts to control homosexual behavior and promote heterosexuality.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between religiosity, homophobia, and attitudes towards gay men and lesbians in a sample of LDS college students. Specifically, this study will examine whether specific dimensions of religiosity (traditional orthodoxy, particularistic orthodoxy, spiritual commitment, church commitment, religious behavior, and religious participation) correlate with dimensions of homophobia (condemnation/tolerance, morality, contact, and stereotypes). A comparison will also be made between the broader categories of attitudes and beliefs, between and within both religiosity and homophobia.

Although some researchers have included LDS populations in their studies of religiosity and attitudes towards sexual minorities (Smith, 1977; Vernon, 1980), the small number of LDS participants in the studies do not allow for concrete conclusions to be drawn as to whether attitudes of LDS individuals correspond to the explicit messages of church leaders. Additionally, while many studies examine the relationship between the two constructs sociologically or anthropologically, little is known of the psychological aspects of the relationship. There may be particular aspects of an individual's religiosity that are more likely to correspond to particular attitudes, for example. The use of a multidimensional measure of religiosity, as opposed to a linear scale, will likely lend greater insight into intraindividual factors.

In light of the empirical support for a relationship between experiencing homophobia-related discrimination and the negative mental health outcomes (Friedman, 1999; Herrell et al., 1999), a careful examination of the constitution of homophobia is

warranted. A mental health professional who is aware of the development of homophobia, related attitudes, likely contributing factors, likely prevalence within a particular population, and possible mental health effects will be much more competent in his or her efforts to provide appropriate care and accurate empathy for the individual exposed to homophobic attitudes and communications (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Additionally, identifying homophobic attitudes and behaviors (and whether the two align) will better inform potential interventions in a religious context. In order to better understand the relationship between religiosity and negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, it will be useful to study the association between these two characteristics within the LDS population. The current study is designed to examine and describe this relationship.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature is divided into four sections and provides (a) an overview of homophobia, its harmful effects, and how these attitudes are measured; (b) background information regarding Christianity and homosexuality; (c) a review of religiosity and measures of religiosity; and (d) a review of the extant research investigating the relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards sexual minorities.

#### Homophobia and Measures of Homophobia

##### *Homophobia as a Construct*

When Weinberg first introduced the term homophobia in 1972, he defined it as “the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals” (Weinberg, 1972).<sup>1</sup> More recently, homophobia has been defined variously as “negative and/or fearful attitudes about homosexuals or homosexuality” (Sprecher & McKinney, 1993), “negative attitudes towards homosexual people” (Lock & Kleis, 1998), “a dislike or distrust of homosexuals’ life styles based on personal, social, or cultural beliefs” (Richmond & McKenna, 1998) and “an irrationally negative attitude toward [homosexuals]” (Ronner, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the relationship between religiosity and homophobia was suspected even at the term’s inception; Weinberg posited that the five motives underlying homophobia were: religion, the secret fear of being homosexual, repressed envy, the threat to values, and resentment stemming from the perception that homosexuals do not procreate.

There is wide disagreement as to whether the term homophobia is accurate as a descriptor of negative attitudes towards sexual minorities. Williamson (2000), for example, pointed to the perhaps misguided tendency to highlight the emotional element of fear instead of negative prejudicial thoughts and beliefs, as well as the emphasis on the homophobia of the individual rather than that of the institution. Other authors have remarked that homophobia conveys only a limited picture of the full extent of the harmful effects of discrimination based on sexual orientation (Blumenfeld, 1992).

Alternative terms that have been proposed include: “gay and/or lesbian hatred or hating,, “sexual orientationalism” (constructed using the same structure as racism and sexism), “homonegativism,” “antihomosexual prejudice,” “sexual prejudice,” and “heterosexism.” Disagreement over the usage of these alternative terms has likely prevented their wider acceptance. Blumenfield (1992), for example, defines heterosexism as “both the belief that heterosexuality is or should be the only acceptable sexual orientation and the fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex” (p. 15) and interprets the term to include both the cultural precedence given to heterosexuality and also what is currently understood as homophobia. In the present research, the term homophobia will be used in line with Warren Blumenfield’s position:

I find myself...in growing sympathy with the position proposing alternative terminology (to the term homophobia), although...I have chosen to use the term *homophobia*, however imperfect and imprecise it may be, because at this point in time it is well enough understood. (p. 15)

Indeed, other scholars have held similar views. For example, Wilkinson (2004), who was in turn concurring with Plummer (1999), wrote “because of its everyday use in the general population, and the fact that there is no agreement among scholars regarding an

alternate term, *homophobia* will be used...as a ‘provisional term not to be taken literally’” (p. 53).<sup>2</sup> Perhaps one of the struggles in the definition of the term has to do with the complexity of the construct, which is characterized as multidimensional.

In the introduction to his text *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price*, Blumenfield (1992) identified four distinct but interrelated expressions of homophobia. *Personal homophobia* is the belief system of an individual that includes the ideas that sexual minorities are usually inferior or deserving of pity. *Interpersonal homophobia* is described as the manifestation of personal bias within the context of a relationship. Blumenfield suggested that it is within this level that prejudice is transformed into active discrimination. Interpersonal homophobia appears to be broadly categorized as either positive (e.g., joke-telling, name-calling, verbal and physical harassment), or negative (e.g., withholding support, rejection, denial of services), in its expression. *Institutional homophobia* refers to systematic ways in which institutions such as governments, businesses, and organizations (e.g., educational, religious, professional) discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or identity. The ban on “homosexuals” in the military, the historical designation of homosexuality as a mental illness, the prohibition of same-sex marriages, and the exclusion of gay men and lesbians from many aspects of religious life are all examples of institutional homophobia. The fourth level of homophobia is *cultural homophobia*, and refers to unwritten codes of conduct or social norms that facilitate

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<sup>2</sup> There are, of course, many individuals who have no problems with a literal reading of the term homophobia. In the preface to his book *Homophobia: Description, Development, and Dynamics of Gay Bashing*, Kantor (1998) “emphatically disagrees” with the idea that homophobia is not “‘illness’; or that it can’t be cured by psychotherapy.” He points to statements from several researchers describing homophobia as “a defined medical, or psychological condition,” “a lethal disease—a public health hazard-- and [one that] must be fought as we would any other disease,” and calling for an understanding of “an adult’s [bigoted] social outlook or ideology [as] an aspect of her or his personality [really, personality *disorder*]” (Kantor, 1998, p. ix).

oppression (Blumenfeld). This level has been further developed by theologian James S. Tinney (1983) into seven subcategories: Conspiracy to silence, denial of culture, denial of popular strength, fear of overvisibility, creation of defined public spaces, denial of self-labeling, negative symbolism. See Table 1 for an explanation of each.

### *Psychological Impact of Homophobia*

Regardless of semantic disagreements, the psychological impact of homophobia is unambiguous. The research focusing on the effects of homophobia on gay and lesbian youth, for example, has made clear the damaging effects of prejudice and discrimination. O'Hanlan, an American physician who has conducted extensive research on the subject, and her colleagues have gone so far as to label homophobia "a health hazard" (O'Hanlan et al., 1997, p. 712). She and other researchers have determined that gay and lesbian youth face increased rates of assault, suicide, substance abuse, and family discord (sometimes in the form of abuse) as a result of homophobia. Overall psychological distress, depression, somatic symptoms, poor self-esteem, loneliness, and distrust are also associated with high levels of homophobia (Shidlo, 1994).

Perhaps the most extreme of these consequences is death. Historically, research has found higher rates of suicide attempts over the lifespan for gay men as compared to their straight counterparts. However this research has been fraught with methodological weaknesses that put into question the validity of the findings (Herrell et al., 1999). In the October 1999 edition of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, a special issue presented the most current body of work in this area, addressing previous limitations and moving the field forward. One study (Hodges & Parkes, 2005) found that same-sex attraction had a

Table 1

*Tinney's Categories of Cultural Homophobia*

Type of cultural homophobia	Description	Example(s)
Conspiracy to silence	Informal attempt to prevent large numbers of sexual minorities from congregating	Denial of social or political functions, restriction of representation in educational institution
Denial of culture	Censorship of homosexuality in history	Alteration of pronouns signifying gender in historical texts, deletion of references to same-sex relationships in literature
Denial of popular strength	Cultural assumption that one is heterosexual until "proven guilty"	"Society's (refusal) to believe how many lesbians and gays (and bisexuals) there are out there passing as heterosexuals"(Tinney, 1983)
Fear of overvisibility	Suppression of self-definition in terms of sexuality or gender identity	Accusations of being "blatant" by expressing signs of affection in public
Creation of defined public spaces	Denial of integration into the general life of community	Setting aside of neighborhoods, business establishments, professions for sexual minorities
Denial of self-labeling	Imposition of descriptive terms originating from outside the target group	Use of epithets and other derogatory labels, refusal to accept and use self-definition terms (e.g., gay and lesbian)
Negative symbolism	Stereotyping	Propagation of stereotypes regarding physical appearance of gay men, their alleged predatory appetites, and so forth

significant positive correlation with suicidality. Due to the nature of the controls used in this study, they also concluded that the risk of suicide could not be explained by substance abuse or comorbidity (Herrell et al., 1999). Another group of researchers found that GLBTQ youth have a higher risk of mental health problems, particularly suicidality (Britton, 1990; Janoff, 2005).

In commentaries following the articles in the aforementioned edition of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, it was recognized that mental health professionals could react to these findings by concluding that homosexuality should be considered a disorder, or by attributing the findings to the unavoidable results of “choosing” a homosexual lifestyle. Commitment to these positions was discouraged, however, and a third conclusion was suggested: that discrimination and prejudice against GLBTQ individuals is the likely cause for the findings. In the concluding statements, the archives pointed to the “immediate effects of antihomosexual prejudice,” “past traumas resulting from homophobia,” and “negative internalizations (of homophobia)” as the most likely explanations for the presented findings (Friedman, 1999, p. 888). Much care needs to be taken to apply conceptual models in understanding these results that take into account the lives and experiences of persons who are GLBTQ. There is the dangerous potential to engage in yet another form of prejudice by pathologizing gay men and women. On the other side of the fulcrum of this delicate balance lies the risk of neglecting the realities of mental illness among sexual minorities, as related to homophobia or otherwise.

While the aforementioned research seems to refer particularly to interpersonal homophobia, institutional homophobia may also be of particular concern to mental health professionals, especially in the form of heterosexual bias in psychological research. For

the vast majority of its history, psychology has held and to some degree promoted the belief system that heterosexuality is better and more normal than homosexuality (Morin, 1977). Writings from 19th century psychologists reveal that all nonprocreative sexuality was considered abnormal, “paederasts, sodomites, and saphists [*sic*],” (Morin, 1977, p. 630) were believed to be insane, and homosexual behavior was considered aberrant. Even psychologists with more progressive views made their biases clear. In a letter to a worried mother concerned about her son, Freud (1935) wrote:

Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; consider it a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain *arrest of sexual development* [emphasis added]. (p. 786)

The possible effects of institutional and cultural homophobia were described in severe terms by Garnets and Kimmel (1993):

Discrimination, prejudice, homophobia, and heterosexist bias affect not only lesbians and gay men but all of society as well. There is a cost to society of a military policy that excludes gays and lesbians and involves secrecy, deceit, and hypocrisy, resulting in the loss of some of the best personnel. There is a cost to society in rigid adherence to traditional gender roles, enforced by homophobia, and antigay/lesbian violence, threats, and reciprocal fear and mistrust. (p. 601)

### *Current Views and Recommendations*

As Hooker (1968), Kinsey (1948), and others began to conduct their pioneering research on sexual behavior, it became apparent that same-sex sexual encounters are relatively common, and not indicative of pathology. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the official list of mental disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1974), and in 1975 the American Psychological Association adopted a resolution to support the action, saying, “homosexuality per se implies no

impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities” (American Psychological Association, 1975, p. 625). While this move was applauded by many, the change in position was viewed as controversial by many others. The continued heterosexual bias in psychological research is demonstrated by the continued disagreement regarding terminology, and in applied practice by the continued use of “reparative,” “conversion,” or “reorientation” therapies (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Morin, 1977) and indicates that some mental health professionals’ views may parallel the one voiced by Freud; an official, explicit, rejection of the idea of homosexuality as pathological (Gay, 1986), that harbors within implicit negative attitudes.

As the APA urges “all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations” (American Psychological Association, 1975, p. 633), the current research intends to address the first part of Morin’s recommendation that research should not only include a study of the makeup and characteristics of negative attitudes, but also investigation into how those attitudes can be changed. Other suggestions from Morin (1977) and other researchers to which the current research pertains include the calls for research on “the positive and negative variables associated with self-disclosure to significant others including families, relatives, friends, and co-workers” (p. 637), the antagonistic, detrimental environment of the GLBTQ client, and the development of counselor education that includes a component on religion and values (Sears & Williams, 1997; Wood, 2005).

Moses and Hawkins (1982) outlined three considerations for mental health professionals regarding homophobia. They recommended that professionals who work with gay clients “must be aware that fear of gays and gayness is pervasive in this culture and that it is unfounded,” and that “counselors should try to be aware of the ways that their own fear of gay people and gayness may be manifested.” Their third suggestion is:

[professionals] who live in a rural area or an area where traditional religion, especially fundamentalism, is a strong force are likely to find clients faced with extremely heterosexist...attitudes. These professionals can anticipate more problems for their clients and themselves than they might in a more urban or less religiously oriented environment. Professionals can help clients cope with this by educating *them* about homophobia and the other attitudes and beliefs that often go along with it and by helping them realize that others have irrational beliefs about gay people and that these beliefs do not necessarily mean there is anything wrong with the gay person himself or herself. Mental health professionals can also expect that clients who fit into the homophobic stereotypes themselves--that is, hold fundamental religious beliefs, and are sexist and racist--are also going to be more afraid of their own gayness and of the gay community than those who do not have these characteristics. (p. 179)

The mental health professionals' efforts to comply with these suggestions will be facilitated not only by an understanding of the theory of homophobia, but also by a familiarity with how homophobia and related negative attitudes can be measured and assessed.

### *Measures of Homophobia*

The disagreement about the definition of homophobia is, not surprisingly, reflected in the varied approaches to measuring the construct. Some scales measure homophobic behavior (Van de Ven, Bornholt, & Bailey, 1998), others purport to measure knowledge about homosexuality (Harris, 1998), while still others measure homophobia as specifically related to fear of AIDS (Bouton et al., 1987). Others measure attitudes, for

example, the Attitudes Toward Homosexuals scale (ATH; Altemeyer, 1996) and the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale (ATLG; Herek, 1994). The ATLG is one of the most widely used scales in the field (LaMar & Kite, 1998; Wilkinson, 2004) and stands out for its high reliability and validity (Davis, 1998), for its measurement of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men separately in addition to responses to homosexuality generally, and for its relatively rare primary placement of women in the title. However, the ATLG is limited in that it, along with the ATH, is unidimensional, restricting its consideration of homophobia to a single constellation of attitudes. Since the development of these scales, several researchers have called for the investigation of homophobia as a multidimensional phenomenon (e.g., Kite & Whitely, 1996). This proposed study will attempt to address the complex nature of attitudes towards homosexuality by using a multidimensional scale of homophobia developed by LaMar and Kite and titled Components of Attitudes toward Homosexuality (CATH). This scale continues the tradition of distinguishing between attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, as well as identifying and measuring four distinct “components” of homophobia: contact apprehension, morality beliefs, condemnation/tolerance, and stereotypic beliefs.

The CATH has four scales. *Contact apprehension* assesses respondents’ reactions regarding social contact with gay men and lesbians (e.g., “I would feel nervous about being in a group of gay men”). *Social norms* assesses acceptance of traditional moral prohibitions against homosexuality (e.g., “Lesbians endanger the institution of the family”). *Condemnation/tolerance* assesses level of agreement regarding statements of civil rights for gay men and lesbians (e.g., “Gay men should not be allowed to hold responsible positions”). Finally, *stereotypic beliefs* assesses acceptance of stereotypic

statements, (e.g., “Most lesbians like to dress in opposite-sex clothing”). The use of a multidimensional scale of homophobia is consistent with the decision to use a multidimensional scale of religiosity and is appropriate given the limited nature of the investigation of homophobia within the LDS population (Smith, 1977; Vernon, 1980) and the complex history between religion and homosexuality.

## Religion and Homosexuality

### *Attitudes Towards Homosexuality Within Christianity*

Until relatively recently, Christian religions have been nearly united in their condemnation of homosexuality as sinful, both in regards to theology and policy. Notable exceptions include the Episcopal Church, which recognizes and supports same-sex cohabitating couples on the same terms as their opposite-sex counterparts (Renzetti & Curran, 1989), and the United Methodist Church, which accepted a declaration that extended to gay men and lesbians an invitation to community and redemption (Rosten, 1975).<sup>3</sup> As a whole, Christianity’s position towards homosexuality has undergone major historical changes. In his text, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, Boswell (1980) identified the following as themes:

The Early Christian Church does not appear to have opposed homosexuality, per se, and neither Christian society nor Christian theology as a whole evinced or supported any particular hostility to homosexuality, but both reflected and in the end retained positions adopted by some governments and theologians which could be used to derogate homosexual acts. (p. 333)

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<sup>3</sup> Non-Christian religions are much more varied in their positions (or lack thereof) regarding same-sex behavior, sex roles, gender roles, and so forth. The interested reader is referred to the introduction of “Homosexuality and Religion and Philosophy” (Dynes & Donaldson, 1992) for a brief survey.

Indeed, there are no surviving statements from Jesus regarding homosexuality. Verses in both the Old and New Testaments have been interpreted as condemning homosexuality; the Sodom story of Genesis 19:4-11, references to homosexuality in the Holiness Code in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in the Old Testament; and the epistles of Saint Paul in First Corinthians 6:9-10, First Timothy 1:9-10, and Romans 1:26-27. There is by no means a consensus as to whether or not these verses have been properly translated and interpreted (Boswell, 1980; McNeill, 1993).<sup>4</sup>

It appears likely that the current position of mainstream Christianity has its roots in Paul's introduction of the concept of homosexuality as unnatural, and was solidified with Thomas Aquinas' emphasis on homosexuality as a "sin against nature" (Boswell, 1980, p. 353). During periods of the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1630), sodomy was frequently punished by burnings at the stake and torture. Dynes and Donaldson (1992) characterized the Inquisition as the worst persecution of homosexuality documented in human history, second only to the holocaust of World War II. Little reformation of attitudes towards homosexuality took place with the Protestant Reformation 1517-1648; "Protestants executed sodomites with a zeal sometimes surpassing that of the Inquisitors" (Dynes).

In the mid-70s the Catholic Church released a statement recognizing a difference between the more acceptable condition of "being homosexual" and the clearly sinful engagement in "homo-genital acts" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1986). The official position of the Catholic Church was detailed in a 1986 statement from the

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<sup>4</sup> The prohibition against female-female relationships seems to be a relatively recent one; there are apparently no specific scriptural references to lesbianism.

Vatican entitled “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons.” In this letter, the church asserted that “homosexual orientation” was not a “natural condition” but an “objective disorder” and an “orientation to evil” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1986). Some have interpreted portions of the letter as encouraging violence against gay men and lesbians (McNeill, 1993). Catholic Bishops have since released somewhat more lenient statements encouraging sensitivity towards gay men and lesbians among family members and ministering officials. The Vatican, however, released a follow-up letter in 1992 that repeated its previous stance and added a requirement for all American Bishops to oppose gay rights legislation (McNeill).

The position of Protestant churches in regards to homosexuality has been largely comparable to that of the Catholic church. The previously mentioned changes in the Methodist and Episcopal churches are considered by many sociologists of religion as harbingers of more tolerant attitudes and the movement of GLBTQ individuals into the mainstream of most Protestant denominations (Dynes & Donaldson, 1992).

#### *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter referred to as “the LDS Church”) is a religion emerging as one of the major American dominations. Some debate exists about the actual growth and population figures for the LDS church; one source, the National Council of Churches (NCC) 2006 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, reports that the LDS church grew at a rate of 1.7% to a total U.S. membership of 5,999,177 (second to the Assemblies of God church’s growth rate of 1.8% to a total

U.S. membership of 2,779,095).<sup>5</sup> The yearbook also reports that the LDS church is the fourth largest “denomination/communion” within the U.S., behind the Roman Catholic Church (67,820,833 members), the Southern Baptist Convention (16,267,494 members), and the United Methodist Church (8,186,254 members; Lindern, 2006). The NCC numbers, it should be noted, represent church reports of their membership. A more objective source, the American Religious Identity Survey (ARIS), surveyed a random sample of American households by telephone and found that, in 2001, the LDS church was the 9<sup>th</sup> largest Christian denomination, and the 10<sup>th</sup> largest overall. The ARIS indicated that the LDS church grew at a rate of 1.12% from 1990 to 2001 (Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001). Even using these more conservative figures, the rapid growth rate of the LDS church, along with the increased recent visibility of the church associated with events like the 2002 Winter Olympics, Mitt Romney’s recent presidential campaign, the HBO series “Big Love,” and a recent PBS documentary series “The Mormons,” indicates that the Church’s teachings, including those regarding homosexuality, are reaching an ever increasing number of individuals in the U.S.

Worldwide, the LDS Church reports a membership of 12,868,606 members. The church actively works to increase its membership. According to LDS church reports, there are currently 53,000 LDS missionaries serving in over 350 missions worldwide (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007). The Church makes its curriculum available in 178 different languages. Given, then, the increasing likelihood that mental health professionals will come into contact with individuals whose attitudes toward gay men and lesbians that have been influenced by Mormon (or other similar

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<sup>5</sup> The Assemblies of God church’s position on homosexuality is nearly identical to that of the LDS church.

Christian) doctrines, it behooves the psychological community to investigate current attitudes among LDS individuals. This is especially true given the already identified link between homophobia and religiosity.

### *The LDS Church and Homosexuality*

The LDS Church has undergone several changes in its stance towards homosexuality, homosexual behavior, and gay men and lesbian women. Quinn (1996) devoted an entire text to exploring the *Same-Sex Dynamics Among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example*. Quinn quoted Peter Gay's conclusion that mainstream 19th-century Britain and America "fostered, even institutionalized, the segregation of young men and women in dress, in general appearance, in clubs, in sports, at work and play--and idealized the differences. The two sexes lived distinct lives, occupied distinct spheres, seemed to have distinct natures" (Gay, 1986, p. 215). Quinn used the term homosociality to describe this sex-segregation and notes that it was strongly encouraged among 19<sup>th</sup> century Mormons. Congregations were segregated by gender, as were various affiliated organizations, such as sports, educational, and charitable groups within the church (Quinn).

As with most patriarchal religions, Mormon men administered sacred ordinances to other men and boys, a process that is described as homopastoral. The administration of sacred ordinances to women by women during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is also well documented and included prophetic blessings, anointments with consecrated oil, blessings for health, assistance with childbirth, and endowment ceremonies. Additionally LDS leaders historically encouraged women to be cared for by female physicians.

The homotactility construct refers to the “close physical interaction” of men with men that was found in early Mormonism. Same-sex dyads, especially those traveling as church leaders or missionaries, often slept together. LDS Church President Brigham Young often organized male-only dances, same-sex kissing (on the cheeks and on the lips) was common, and Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded the founding prophet Joseph Smith as saying that “two who were vary [*sic*] friends indeed should lie down upon the same bed at night locked in each other[’s] embrace talking of their love & should awake in the morning together. They could immediately renew their conversation of love even while rising from the bed” (Quinn, 1996, p. 87).

Examples of the homoemotional nature of early Mormon relationships is evident in the frequent use of the term, “David-and-Jonathan-friendship,” which refers to one of the most famous male friendships in the bible. In second Samuel 1:26, David spoke of his relationship with Jonathan, saying, “thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.” Joseph Smith often referred to himself and his friend William Taylor (younger brother to LDS president John Taylor) as David and Jonathan; other prominent church leaders have also described their friendships using these terms.

While there is evidence that very few people regarded any of these previously described experiences and statements as erotic, it appears that the favorable climate for same-sex dynamics allowed for either a greater degree of lenience regarding homosexuality or a more conceptual flexibility as to what constituted homosexuality. In a chapter entitled, “From Relative Tolerance to Homophobia in Twentieth Century Mormonism,” Quinn (1996) described the reaction of the First Presidency of the Church in 1913 upon learning that prominent Mormon educator James Dwyer had been “teaching

young men that sodomy and kindred vices are not sins” (p. 367). Dwyer’s local leadership had requested his excommunication, but the First Presidency allowed Dwyer to voluntarily remove his name from the records of the church, a practice practically unheard of at the time.

With the revelation that Patriarch to the Church Joseph F. Smith (grandson of LDS President Joseph F. Smith) had engaged in same-sex sexual behavior, the 47-year-old man was released from his calling as Patriarch (officially due to illness) and “instructed not to perform religious ordinances or accept church assignments,” a response considered “very informal and mild” (Quinn, 1996, p. 371), especially when compared to the punishments meted to those who had engaged in homosexual misconduct. There are many other instances of church leaders’ relative tolerance for homosexual activities that continue into the 1950s, including the account of one Brigham Young University student that President George Albert Smith declined to excommunicate. In fact, President Smith encouraged the student and his partner to “live their lives as decently as they could” (Quinn, p. 372) within their relationship.

In recent decades, however, LDS church policy regarding homosexuality has been much more condemning in nature.<sup>6</sup> Homosexuality has been described in the official church magazine as “sexual perversion” (Benson, 1986, p. 46), “an abuse of the sacred power to create [life]” (Kimball, 1982, p. 4), by prominent church apostle Bruce R. McConkie (1980) as “the norm of life among the wicked and ungodly,” (p. 50), and by Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth prophet of the church, as “repugnant,” “wretched

<sup>6</sup> Quinn attributes the change to the changing demographics of church leadership, specifically the higher population of male leaders who had reached adulthood in the 20th century. In his thesis, “Prophets and Preference,” Richard Phillips (1993) explains the change as a reaction to the higher visibility of the gay rights movement.

wickedness,” “degenerate,” “unnatural,” and “ugliness.” (Kimball, 1969). The LDS *Church News*, the official newspaper of the Mormon Church, addressed the controversy over gay rights by asking:

On what basis do the adherents of this practice [homosexuality] demand special privilege? Who are they that they should parade their debauchery and call it clean? They even form their own churches and profess to worship the very God who denounces their behavior--and they do not repent. They form their own political groups and seek to compel the public to respect them. Do other violators of the law of God receive special consideration? Do the robbers, the thieves, the adulterers? (Petersen, 1978, p. 16)

In addition to the general Christian objections to homosexuality, there are several points of doctrine unique to Mormonism that seem to be in direct conflict with any tolerance for same-sex relationships. Mormon teachings hold to the idea of a “pre-existence,” a sort of pre-life heaven in which people live as spirits before taking on a body on earth. Exaltation is dependent on obtaining a body and successfully navigating the trials and challenges of terrestrial life, so it is expected that Mormon couples procreate to give the opportunity of a physical body for as many preexistence spirits as possible. The infertility, then, of same-sex relationships, “strikes at the very heart of Mormon sexual ethics” (Le Blanc, 1987, p. 10). Kimball (1969) elaborated on this very point almost two decades earlier:

Of the adverse social effects of homosexuality, none is more significant than the effect on marriage and home. The normal, God-given sexual relationship is the procreative act between man and woman in honorable marriage....[The] institution of marriage is further elevated in the 132nd section of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (detailed below), wherein the Lord makes clear that only through eternal union of man and woman can they achieve eternal life. As an example he says that the wife is given to the man “to multiply and replenish the earth....” In this context, where stands the perversion of homosexuality? Clearly it is hostile to God’s purpose in that it negates his first and great commandment to “multiply and replenish

the earth.” If the abominable practice became universal it would depopulate the earth in a single generation. It would nullify God’s great program for his spirit children in that it would leave countless unembodied spirits in the heavenly world without the chance for opportunities of mortality. (pp. 80-81)

Also, the Church distinguishes between “temporal” marriages, those performed under the auspices of the state or of other faiths, and “eternal” marriages, which take place only in LDS temples, and are sanctioned both by the state and by God. According to Mormon belief, eternal or temple marriages persist not only in the present life, but for eternity (McConkie, 1966). Eligibility for entrance to the temple is contingent upon strict adherence to the commandments of the church, eligibility that is determined through interviews with local church leaders. In addition to securing an eternal relationship with one’s spouse, Mormon Doctrine holds that temple marriage is essential for entrance into the “highest degree of heaven--a place where people are allowed to become gods...create worlds of their own...[and] create spirit children” (Phillips, 1993, p. 37). The fate of those who do not enter into temple marriage was spelled out in LDS scripture in 1843:

Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the worlds and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead....Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angles in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. For these angels did not abide by my law; therefore they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835, 132:15-16)

Despite the obvious benefits of a heterosexual lifestyle within the Mormon Church, there are people who are both LDS and GLBTQ. These individuals find myriad ways of integrating the two identities. In a particularly interesting example, Phillips

(1993) demonstrated the effect of this doctrine on one LDS gay college student:

Researcher: So then, what about eternal progression?

Informant: What about it?

Researcher: Well, how do you see yourself fitting in?

Informant: Well, the D&C [Doctrine and Covenants] says that we'll be ministering angels if we aren't married, but I think that will be okay, you know, I'll be a ministering angel. I think that is kind of what the Holy Ghost does, you know, kind of a messenger for the gods type of thing.

Researcher: So maybe you can't be like God the Father, but you can be like the Holy Ghost?

Informant: Yeah, something like that.

Researcher: So do you think that the Holy Ghost might be gay?

Informant: No. (p. 39)

Documented attitudes of (presumably) non-gay Mormons are less nuanced. A study conducted in 1980 indicated that when LDS college students rated the sinfulness of certain activities on a scale of 1 to 10, 92% of them rated homosexuality as a 10 (i.e., extremely wrong; Vernon, 1980). Only adultery and murder received higher ratings. Another study asked respondents to rank a list of sins "according to their seriousness"--homosexuality was ranked first (Smith, 1977). Neither of these studies assessed religiosity beyond level of church attendance.<sup>7</sup>

Another indicator of the direct effect of LDS doctrine can be found during the same time period at Brigham Young University, where gay students were encouraged to participate in aversion therapy in an attempt to change their sexual orientation. Aversion

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<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, homosexuality was ranked number one regardless of the respondent's gender or whether they attended church frequently or infrequently.

therapy was based on the principles of classical conditioning and consisted of pairing an aversive stimulus (usually an electric shock to the genitals, sometimes a drug intended to induce vomiting) with exposure to homoerotic films or other materials (McBride, 1976). This so-called “reparative” or “conversion” therapy was rejected by the APA and other organizations. In its Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, the APA (1998) endorsed this statement:

The American Psychological Association opposes portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation and supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation, and mental health, and appropriate interventions in order to counteract bias that is based in ignorance or unfounded beliefs about sexual orientation. (p. 7)

Additional statements have since been made by the APA, including the “Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients” (Division 44/Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Joint Task Force on Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients, 2000), which includes language even more dismissive of the literature that categorized homosexuality and bisexuality as mental illnesses. In 2004, three separate resolutions were adopted calling for the end of discrimination towards GLBTQ individuals seeking to marry, enter the military, and adopt children. Recent years have also seen a number of amicus briefs filed by the APA on behalf of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

While the LDS Church appears to have responded to these statements and has officially discontinued its use of reparative therapy, the continued popularity of the nonprofit organization “Evergreen International” seems to indicate that the positions of the larger mental health organizations have not been accepted by the general LDS

population. Evergreen's mission statement declares: "Evergreen attests that individuals can overcome homosexual behavior and can diminish same-sex attraction, and is committed to assisting individuals who wish to do so." Evergreen is based in Salt Lake City, Utah, and, according to the group's website, is

... not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but we sustain the doctrines and standards of the Church without reservation or exception. Our Board of Trustees usually includes one or more emeritus General Authorities and we continue to build relationships with Area Presidencies and other Church leaders. Upon request, we provide training to hundreds of stake and ward leaders each year. (Evergreen International, 2007, p. 12)

Elsewhere on the organization's website, it is stated that "Evergreen International, Inc. is not directed by any public or private mental health-care agency or individual, nor does it claim to have any professional training or licensing," but also, "Evergreen offers training for professional counselors and organizations" (Evergreen International).

Also of interest is the statement of Church Elder Lance B. Wickman, in an interview intended to clarify the Church's stand on "same-gender attraction." In response to the question from a public affairs interviewer, "Is therapy of any kind a legitimate course of action if we're talking about controlling behavior? If a young man says, 'Look, I really want these feelings to go away... I would do anything for these feelings to go away,' is it legitimate to look at clinical therapy of some sort that would address those issues?" Elder Wickman responded, "Certainly the Church doesn't counsel against that kind of therapy" ("Same-gender attraction," [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).

There are also reports from gay Mormon men indicating that they were encouraged to seek marriage with a heterosexual woman as a remedy for same-sex attraction (Phillips, 1993). In his text examining the "Mormon Attitude Towards

Homosexuality,” former BYU student Cloy Jenkins (1978) explained that

... many people are convinced that the homosexual is simply afraid of having sex with a girl and that he only needs to try and discover how much he likes it to get over his fears. Some church authorities have encouraged the young man along this line, urging him to just go ahead and get married and that he will like having sex with his wife. Does such a charade warrant invoking the vows of eternal marriage? I have talked with the women who have been on the receiving end of this emotional duplicity. For many, their lives have been irreparably damaged. (p. 15)

Recent Church President Gordon B. Hinckley officially denounced this practice in 1987, saying, “Marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve problems such as homosexual inclinations or practices” (Phillips, 1993, p. 47).

The LDS Church’s position on homosexuality was recently spelled out in the PBS Documentary, “The Mormons,” which aired in May, 2007. In an interview for this documentary, LDS Church Historian and General Authority Marlin K. Jensen stated that “there is really no allowance within our doctrine for a homosexual relationship of woman to woman or man to man,” and “there’s no room in doctrine, and there’s no room within the plan of salvation, as we call it, or God’s plan for our life, for homosexuality to be accepted.” In the same documentary, Church Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland said that

I do know that this will not be a postmortal condition. It will not be a postmortal difficulty. I have a niece who cannot bear children. That is the sorrow and the tragedy of her life. She who was born to give birth will never give birth, and I cry with her. ... I just say to her what I say to people struggling with gender identity: ‘Hang on, and hope on, and pray on, and this will be resolved in eternity.’ These conditions will not exist postmortality. (Whitney, 2007)

Even more recently, the Church released a pamphlet entitled “God Loveth His Children” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2007), which continues the emphasis on the distinction between attraction and behavior. According to the pamphlet,

“attraction alone does not make you unworthy,” while “all sexual relations outside of marriage are unacceptable.” The pamphlet continues the tradition of avoidance of the terms “gay,” “lesbian,” or “homosexuality,” referring instead to “same-gender attraction.” Regarding exploration of sexual identity and relationships with gay men and lesbians, the pamphlet counsels the avoidance of “obsession with or concentration on same-gender thoughts and feelings. It is not helpful to flaunt homosexual tendencies or make them the subject of unnecessary observation or discussion. It is better to choose as friends those who do not publicly display their homosexual feelings.” While no statements are made regarding the origin of “same-gender attraction,”<sup>8</sup> the pamphlet states that “while many Latter-day Saints, through individual effort, the exercise of faith, and reliance upon the enabling power of the Atonement, overcome same-gender attraction in mortality, others may not be free of this challenge in this life” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints).<sup>9</sup>

### Religiosity

Religiosity began its existence as a quantifiable psychological construct as a unidimensional phenomena, with either church attendance or belief as the typical unit of investigation. Later, religiosity was commonly conceptualized as existing along two dimensions; intrinsic and extrinsic orientation, as was evidenced by the widespread use

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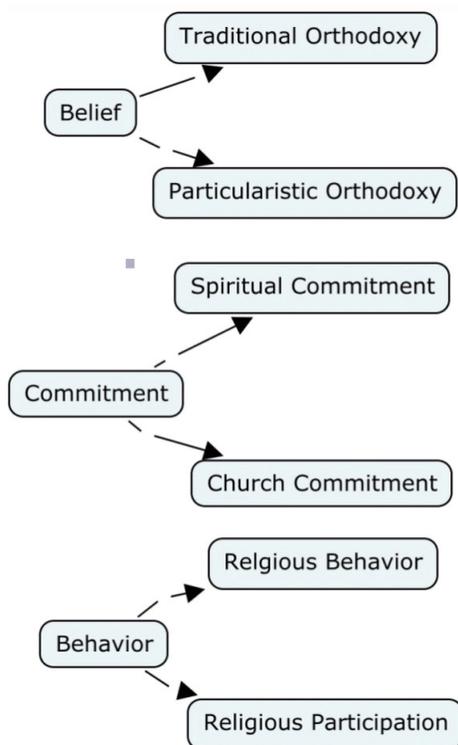
<sup>8</sup> In the past, the general authorities of the church have posited a number of theories regarding the etiology of homosexuality; suggested causes include parental failure, disease, satanic influence, pornography, masturbation, molestation in childhood, and monogamy (the last was suggested during the time period in which polygamy was practiced; O’Donovan, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> The executive director of Evergreen International indicated to the press that while his organization did not have a “formal role” in the production of the pamphlet, it was “aware of the effort and provided limited input”(Moore, 2007).

of the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967) and the Age-Universal Intrinsic-Extrinsic scale (Gorsuch & Venable, 1983). Allport defined intrinsic orientation as the extent to which an individual lives their religion, while extrinsic orientation typically emphasizes the role of religion in providing “protection, consolation, and social status” (Allport & Ross, p. 435).

Over time, researchers have become dissatisfied with the limitations inherent in a two-dimensional model of religiosity. Glock (1985) was among the first to break with convention and propose an investigation of religiosity among five dimensions: experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential. These dimensions describe emotional, behavioral, attitudinal, and knowledge dimensions as well as the consequences of these four outside of a religious context. Glock’s multidimensional model is not unique. In 1961, another model was proposed with four conceptually derived dimensions through examination of mathematical relationships (Hill & Hood, 1999; Lenski, 1961). Finally, Cornwall, Albrecht, Cunningham, and Pitcher (1986) applied a multidimensional theory specifically to LDS religiosity. They developed a scale suited to the unique context of Mormon doctrine and culture. Their scale, Dimensions of LDS Religiosity (DLDSR), measures religiosity among six distinct dimensions within three main areas. The dimensions are organized as shown in Figure 1.

Within the belief dimension are traditional orthodoxy, defined as “belief in traditional Christian doctrines such as the existence of God, the divinity of Jesus Christ, life after death, Satan, and the Bible ... beliefs that are not unique to Mormonism” and particularistic orthodoxy, which here refers to “acceptance or rejection of beliefs peculiar to a particular religious organization” (Cornwall et al., 1986, p. 230), in this case, the



*Figure 1.* Cornwell and Albrecht's Dimensions of LDS Religiosity.

LDS Church. The commitment dimension is made up of spiritual commitment or “the personal faith relationship with the transcendental” and church commitment that “encompasses the attachment, identification, and loyalty of the individual toward the church organization or the religious community” (p. 231). Finally, the two dimensions of religiosity contained in the behavioral component are religious behavior, “the behaviors which are by nature religious, but do not require membership or participation in a religious group or community” (p. 232) and religious participation, which includes meeting attendance, financial contribution, and home religious observance.

### Religiosity and Homophobia

As the central relationship examined in this study, a comprehensive, data-driven review of the relationships documented in research findings between religiosity and homophobia was undertaken. Some of the more comprehensive studies regarding homophobia are the meta-analyses conducted by Whitley and his colleagues (Whitley, 2001a, 2001b). They have identified the following factors as determinant of attitudes toward gays and lesbians: gender, race/ethnicity, and relationships of authoritarianism. While Whitley’s work was well-conducted, and is of value to the research community, he did not directly investigate the effect of religiosity on the attitudes of interest, or at least no findings in this area have yet been reported.

In a study with specific focus on religious issues, the Pew Research Center (2006) found a correlation between religiosity and homophobia. This survey used information collected over previous years in order to document trends. While subject to many of the problems inherent to telephone survey research, this survey utilized a random selection of

phone numbers, drew on a large number of respondents, and used respondent selection techniques that have been shown to produce samples that closely represent the population. The overall finding of the study was that “religious beliefs are often the basis of opposition to homosexuality.” Unfortunately, the opportunity for respondents to identify their religious affiliation was limited to Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, or Catholic. While this study does provide a basis for continuing research in this area, it does not address attitudes of LDS individuals.

There are a number of published, empirical studies that have documented a link between religiosity and attitudes. Most of the articles reviewed herein were identified in much the same way as the previous reviews, with the exclusion of the term “meta-analysis” from the search criteria. Several articles were also found by reviewing the reference lists of the meta-analyses. This search identified over 25 articles for possible inclusion, and all but three of these were obtained for review. Each of these sources were reviewed for pertinence to this review and in the end, eight were identified as including a comparison of some sort of homophobia with another characteristic and therefore appropriate for discussion.

The following characteristics were common among the studies reviewed: a positive correlation was found between religiosity of heterosexual individuals and negative attitudes towards gay men, lesbians, bisexual men and women, and the number of LDS individuals within the group was either zero, or small enough that no statistical inferences could be made. There were several elements that complicated analysis of these research findings. First and foremost was the lack of information presented in the original studies. Many of the studies reported their findings in simple percentages, and none

reported standard deviations. For this reason it was not feasible to report findings as standardized mean difference effect sizes. Another problem was the lack of consistency in terminology. Many studies used the blanket term “homosexuality” instead of the more specific term “gay men and lesbians”; because of the male bias of the term “homosexual” it is unclear whether such studies actually dealt with attitudes towards lesbians. Some others used established measures of homophobia, but did not report their findings as such, but rather as attitudes. For these reasons, a variation of the vote-counting method was used to analyze the collected data. Table 2 provides an overview of the research and the related findings.

From these studies, it is clear that there is a robust finding of a positive correlation between high levels of religiosity and negative attitudes towards sexual minorities in the United States. It is notable that this relationship is found regardless of whether the study intends to investigate tolerance, attitudes, or homophobia, whether “homosexuals,” bisexuals, gay men, or lesbians are the subject of questioning, whether the sample is drawn from a university population, and whether religiosity is defined as church attendance or strength of beliefs. Although there is remarkable consistency among the findings of these studies, it is notable that the LDS population is underrepresented within the sample populations.

### Purpose and Objectives

The preceding information indicates that the attitudes of the LDS population towards sexual minorities deserve further research attention. This study investigated this relationship by gathering demographic information and religiosity data that was

Table 2

*Research Overview*

Study	Quality (1 = low, 5 = high)	“General attitudes” or homophobia	Population label	Definition of religiosity	Relationship between high religiosity and negative attitudes	Sample
Finlay & Walther 2003	3	Homophobia	Gay, lesbia, bisexual	affiliation, service attendance	yes	U.S. university
Herek, 2002	4	Attitudes	Bisexual	service attendance, self- report of “importance” of religion	yes	U.S.
Kelley, 2001	5	Attitudes	Homosexual	strong religious beliefs, church attendance	yes	International
Lottes, 1992	3	Attitudes	Homosexual men	affiliation, service attendance	yes	U.S. university
Mohr, 1999	4	Attitudes	Bisexual people	attendance	Yes for heterosexuals; No for gay men and lesbians	U.S.
Plugge-Foust, 2000	3	Homophobia	Homosexual	Christian ideology	yes	U.S. university
Steffens, 2002	3	Attitudes	Gay, lesbian, bisexual	not identified	not investigated	German
Wagenaar, 1977	2	Attitudes	Homosexual	leadership position within church	yes	Ohio clergymen

compared to data regarding homophobia and attitudes in the LDS population towards gay men and lesbians. This study also specifically examined which dimensions of religiosity correlate with which dimensions of homophobia.

### Hypotheses

This thesis reexamined the dimensions specified within each of the measures and provided information about the validity of these multidimensional measures, as opposed to unidimensional ones. It was hypothesized:

H1: Analyses will reveal that the constructs identified as dimensions within the CATH and the DLDSR are indeed valid factors that can be measured.

This thesis asked which, if any, demographic characteristics, correlate most strongly with negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians and which correlate most strongly with tolerant attitudes. It was hypothesized:

H2: One or more demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income level) will correlate more strongly than others with negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians

H3: One or more demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income level) will correlate more strongly than others with positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

The central purpose of this thesis was to examine the relationship between the dimensions of religiosity and the dimensions of homophobic attitudes to better understand the formation and maintenance of the constellation of attitudes commonly referred to as homophobia. Initially the general relationship between overall religiosity and attitudes was examined. It was hypothesized:

H4: A significant positive relationship between overall religiosity and general negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians will be found.

The relationship between an LDS individual's specific dimensions of religiosity (traditional orthodoxy, particularistic orthodoxy, spiritual commitment, church commitment, religious behavior, and religious participation) and their general attitudes towards gay men and lesbians was also investigated. It was hypothesized:

H5: A significant positive relationship between high religiosity in one or more dimensions and general negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians will be found.

Also examined was the relationship between an LDS individual's overall religiosity and specific dimensions of their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians (condemnation/tolerance, morality, contact, and stereotypes). It was hypothesized:

H6: A significant positive relationship between overall religiosity and one or more dimensions of negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians will be found.

The relationship between LDS individuals' specific dimensions of religiosity and specific dimensions of their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians was investigated. It was hypothesized:

H7: One or more dimensions of high religiosity will be found to have a significant positive relationship with one or more dimensions of negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

### Proposed Study

This study proposed to address, to some degree, the recognized need for additional research into both the phenomenon of homophobia and its correlates,

specifically, religiosity. Religiosity was measured in depth within an LDS population in an attempt to correct for the relative invisibility of a major religious group in the research. The researcher took advantage of being located in Utah, a state with a particularly high LDS population.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Setting and Population

A correlational design was used in this study to examine the associations between dimensions of LDS religiosity and dimensions of homophobia. Participants were recruited from an undergraduate student population. Instructors of various 1000-level classes were asked to announce the study and instructions for the survey. In order to ensure a sufficiently large sample size, instructors from various colleges were contacted about the study; the final study included students from psychology, English, business, engineering, and biology courses. The pool of participants consisted of Utah State University students.

The survey included an informed consent section, a demographic section that assessed race, age, gender, education, and religious affiliation, and the Components of Attitudes toward Homosexuality measure, and the Multidimensional Measure of LDS religiosity (Appendix A, and discussed in more detail in the next section). Only LDS participants were asked to complete the entire Multidimensional Measure of LDS religiosity; participants of different Christian religious affiliation were only asked to answer the portions of the measure that deal with nonspecific Christian religiosity, and participants of non-Christian religious affiliation were only asked to answer the non-Christian-specific portions of the measure. The survey was made available in electronic form, and through an online survey hosting service. The use of an electronic survey allowed for the implementation of logic that directed participants to appropriate sections

of the questionnaire based on their responses. For instance, a participant that indicates Christian, non-LDS affiliation was directed past LDS-specific items directly to the appropriate questions. The survey in its entirety can be found in Appendix B.

## Measures

### *Components of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality (CAH).*

The CAH scale (LaMar & Kite, 1998) assesses four components of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians: condemnation/tolerance, morality, contact, and stereotypes. Two of the components, morality and contact, have neutral items; that is, they are not specific to gay men or lesbians. Participants answer using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1), to *strongly agree* (5). LaMar and Kite reported adequate alphas for all subscales, as calculated for gay male and lesbian targets, and ranged from .75-.96. Scale alphas for the current sample ranged from .90-.97 (see Table 3).

### *Dimensions of LDS Religiosity (DLDSR)*

The DLDSR assesses six dimensions of LDS religiosity, traditional orthodoxy, particularistic orthodoxy, spiritual commitment, church commitment, religious behavior, and religious participation within three areas, belief commitment, and behavior (see Figure 1). Cornwall and colleagues (1986) reported alphas that ranged from .76-.92, showing adequate reliability for each of the six scales. Scale alphas for the current sample ranged from .90-.98 (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Item Analysis of Religiosity and Attitude Scales for Current Sample*

Scale	Dimension	Cronbach's alpha
DLDSR	Traditional Orthodoxy	0.95
	Particularistic Orthodoxy	0.98
	Spiritual commitment	0.94
	Church commitment	0.91
	Religious behavior	0.90
	Religious participation	0.91
CAH	Condemnation/tolerance	0.95
	Social norms/morality	0.96
	Contact	0.97
	Stereotypes	0.90

## Participation and Data

There were 214 total respondents to the online questionnaire. Of these, two indicated that they were either under 18 years of age or that they did not wish to participate in the study. Ten more respondents agreed to the initial informed consent item and then failed to answer any of the subsequent questions. In all, there were 202 participants who provided data and whose responses were included in the analysis. The exact response rate is not known, as there may have been instructors that did not respond to the researcher's communications but nevertheless made the study available to their students. Registration data from the courses of the instructors that did agree to offer the study show that approximately 388 students were presented with information about the

study, indicating a maximum overall response rate of 55% and a maximum valid response rate of 52%.

After all of the responses were collected, the variables were examined and re-coded as appropriate. There were items on both of the scales that were reverse-scored, for instance, and the frequency of behavior questions on the religiosity scale that were originally answered on a 7-point scale were re-coded onto a 5-point scale to ensure equal weighting.

### Descriptive Data

Participants in the survey answered 15 demographic questions about themselves: age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, year in college, college major, college minor, current relationship status, current living situation, personal income, household income, and highest level of education completed for self, mother and father. Information for selected demographic questions is presented in Table 4. Participants were young, with an overwhelming majority (69%) between 18 and 24 years of age, White (82.1%), and straight (83.7%). Recruiting participants across departments resulted in a nearly equal representation of male and female students; the departments with a higher percentage of women, like psychology and education, were balanced out by the participation of students in engineering and business. The majority of participants ( $n = 161$ , 80%) identified as either currently or historically affiliating with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; data from these individuals was used to address the following

Table 4

*Descriptive Data*

		<i>n</i>	Percent
Age	18-19	58	29.4
	20-24	78	39.6
	25-29	31	15.7
	30-34	14	7.1
	35-39	6	3.1
	40-44	4	2.0
	45-49	1	0.5
	50-54	5	2.5
Gender	Male	96	50.5
	Female	94	49.5
Ethnicity	African-American	3	1.6
	Asian-American	4	2.1
	Hispanic/Latino	13	6.8
	Native American	2	1.1
	White, non-Hispanic	156	82.1
	Other	12	6.3
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual (straight)	159	83.7
	Homosexual (lesbian or gay)	16	8.4
	Bisexual	7	3.7
	Questioning	5	2.6
	Other	3	1.6
Religious affiliation	LDS	161	79.3
	Evangelical Christian	5	2.5
	Hindu	3	1.5
	Muslim	5	2.5
	Protestant Christian	8	3.9
	Roman Catholic	7	3.5
	Other	14	6.9

*Note.* Percent figures refer to valid percentages.

hypotheses. One individual identified as LDS but did not complete any of the attitudes measures, leaving a valid  $n$  of 160 that was used for each of the analyses.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Preliminary Analyses

Initially, means and standard deviations were collected for each of the variables of interest. Within the religiosity variables, traditional orthodoxy was found to have the highest mean (4.41) and church commitment to have the lowest (3.79). The overall mean for general religiosity was 4.13. Within the attitudinal variables, social norms had the highest mean (2.85), and condemnation tolerance the lowest (1.73). The overall mean for attitudes was 2.38 (Table 5).

Correlations were each of the variables were also calculated and charted (Table 6). The relationship between religious behavior and overall religiosity was particularly high, at .94, a correlation equal to that between contact and overall attitudes. condemnation/tolerance and traditional orthodoxy had the lowest correlation, .21, although this figure was still significant at the .01 level.

#### Results Summary

The analysis of the collected data confirmed several of the identified hypotheses. The other tested hypotheses were either disconfirmed or resulted in data that suggested that further clarification and investigation were warranted. A detailed discussion of each hypothesis follows.

Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations for Religiosity and Attitude Variables*

Variable	Mean	SD
Traditional Orthodoxy	4.41	1.02
Particularistic Orthodoxy	4.12	1.37
Spiritual commitment	4.13	1.05
Church commitment	3.79	1.15
Religious behavior	4.12	0.98
Religious participation	4.25	1.59
Overall religiosity	4.13	1.02
Condemnation/tolerance	1.73	0.67
Social norms	2.85	0.91
Contact	2.41	0.82
Stereotypes	2.58	0.60
Overall attitudes	2.38	0.67

*Hypothesis One*

The hypothesis proposed analysis will reveal that the constructs identified as dimensions within the CATH and the DLDSR are indeed valid factors that can be measured. In this case, each of the factors of both measures was found to correlate with each other at statistically significant levels ( $p < .01$ ). Within the CATU scale, correlation coefficients ranged from .61 (between the condemnation/tolerance and stereotypes dimensions) to .80 (between the social norms and contact dimensions). The range of coefficients within the DLDSR scale started at .53 (between the religious participation and traditional orthodoxy dimensions) and .90 (between the spiritual commitment and religious behavior dimensions (Tables 7 and 8.)

Table 6

*Pearson's r Correlations for Religiosity and Attitude Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Traditional Orthodoxy	1.0	.730**	.810**	.628**	.755**	.530**	.835**	.214**	.533**	.330**	.307**	.409**
2. Particularistic Orthodoxy		1.0	.703**	.642**	.681**	.582**	.832**	.340**	.562**	.416**	.415**	.512**
3. Spiritual commitment			1.0	.797**	.904**	.724**	.929**	.298**	.639**	.400**	.334**	.499**
4. Church commitment				1.0	.813**	.775**	.885**	.433**	.726**	.525**	.418**	.631**
5. Religious behavior					1.0	.792**	.935**	.294**	.608**	.358**	.235**	.459**
6. Religious participation						1.0	.857**	.349**	.640**	.418**	.280**	.510**
7. Overall religiosity							1.0	.333**	.667**	.432**	.328**	.528**
8. Condemnation/tolerance								1.0	.660**	.781**	.610**	.858**
9. Social norms									1.0	.804**	.626**	.903**
10. Contact										1.0	.660**	.935**
11. Stereotypes											1.0	.802**
12. Overall attitudes												1.0

*Note:* All figures are presented as standardized correlations and all are significant at the .01 level.

\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 7

*Correlations of Dimensions of Religiosity*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Traditional Orthodoxy	1.0	0.73	0.81	0.63	0.76	0.53
2. Particularistic Orthodoxy		1.0	0.70	0.64	0.68	0.58
3. Spiritual commitment			1.0	0.80	0.90	0.72
4. Church commitment				1.0	0.81	0.78
5 Religious behavior					1.0	0.79
6. Religious participation						1.0

*Note.* All figures are presented as standardized correlations and all are significant at the .01 level.

Table 8

*Correlations of Dimensions of Attitudes*

	1	2	3	4
1. Condemnation/tolerance	1.0	0.66	0.78	0.61
2. Social norms		1.0	0.80	0.63
3. Contact			1.0	0.66
4. Stereotypes				1.0

*Note.* All figures are presented as standardized correlations and all are significant at the .01 level.

*Hypotheses Two and Three*

These two hypotheses concerned demographic characteristics and their relationship with negative attitudes and positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. Of the previously mentioned demographic characteristics, multiple regression analysis ( $n = 160$ ) revealed that none of the ordinal characteristics (age, year in college, education level, or income; entered simultaneously) significantly predicted attitudes. Taken together, these characteristics did not account for more than about 5% of the variance in attitudes (Table 9).

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the categorical demographic characteristics (religion, relationship status, living situation, ethnicity, and sexual orientation). Post-hoc analysis using Bonferroni's correction showed that attitudes of individuals within specific categories of religion, living situation, and sexual orientation were found to significantly differ from each other. Individuals who lived with their family of origin, their nuclear families, or with roommates (attitude mean = 2.50) had attitudes that were significantly more negative ( $p < .05$ ) than individuals who lived alone (attitude mean 1.83). Heterosexual individuals also had significantly more negative ( $p < .05$ ) attitudes (attitude mean = 2.48) than did participants who identified as gay or lesbian (attitude mean = 1.77).

In addition to the general demographic items, individuals who identified as LDS were asked to describe the beginning of their relationship with the church (e.g., whether or not they had converted as an adult), their current relationship with the church, and whether or not they had served or were planning to serve an LDS mission. As the data

Table 9

*Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Selected Demographic**Characteristics*

Characteristic	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Age	0.000	0.001	-0.003
Year in college	-0.015	0.053	-0.030
Education level	-0.121	0.069	-0.175
Income	0.006	0.023	0.025

Note.  $R^2 = .052$ .

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

did not meet the assumptions for normality required for a *t* test, a Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the mean attitude scores of the different groups. While, the mean attitude scores of the different convert groups did not differ, it was found that individuals who no longer participated in the church (attitude mean = 1.94) had significantly more positive attitudes ( $p < .01$ ) than those who continue to participate (attitude mean = 2.37), and that difference in scores between individuals who had served a mission (attitude mean = 2.52) and those who had not (attitude mean = 2.27) approached significance ( $p = .051$ ), with those who had served a mission reporting more negative attitudes.

*Hypothesis Four*

The hypothesis proposed a significant positive relationship between overall religiosity and general negative attitudes. A bivariate correlational analysis was used to generate Pearson's correlation coefficients for the 160 LDS participants that revealed overall religiosity did positively correlate with general negative attitudes, attitudes

towards gay men, and attitudes towards lesbians. The relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards lesbians ( $r = .60, p < .01$ ) was slightly stronger than the one between religiosity and gay men ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ). The Pearson's correlation coefficient between overall religiosity and gay men and lesbians together was .59.

#### *Hypothesis Five*

The hypothesis proposed a significant positive relationship between high religiosity in one or more dimensions and general negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. Linear regression was used for this analysis ( $n = 160$ , again, only data from the LDS participants was used), with the scores for each dimension of religiosity serving as the independent variables (entered simultaneously) and the global attitudes score serving as the dependent variable. This revealed that, when taken together, the six dimensions of religiosity accounted for just over 43% of the variance, and two of the dimensions were statistically significant. Particularistic orthodoxy (acceptance of doctrine unique to the LDS Church) was a significant predictor at the .05 level, while church commitment (loyalty to the organization of the church) was significantly predictive of attitudes at the .01 level. Analyses were run considering attitudes towards gay men, attitudes towards lesbians, and attitudes towards the two groups together. The effects were similar regardless of whether general or gender specific (towards gay men or lesbians) attitudes were considered (Table 10). Given the high correlations between the religiosity variables, additional multicollinearity statistics were run, requesting tolerance values and variance inflation factors for each dimension of religiosity. Tolerance values less than .20 indicate a multicollinearity issue, and indeed, two of the religiosity dimensions,

Table 10

*Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Dimensions of Religiosity Predicting Overall Attitudes*

Dimensions	Attitudes	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Traditional orthodoxy	General	-0.045	0.074	-0.072
	Gay	-0.046	0.080	-0.071
	Lesbian	-0.049	0.071	-0.082
Particularistic orthodoxy	General	0.110	0.047	0.233*
	Gay	0.111	0.051	0.228*
	Lesbian	0.102	0.045	0.226
Spiritual commitment	General	0.037	0.101	0.061
	Gay	0.077	0.109	0.121
	Lesbian	-0.025	0.096	-0.043
Church commitment	General	0.313	0.068	0.556**
	Gay	0.310	0.074	0.533**
	Lesbian	0.313	0.065	0.561**
Religious behavior	General	-0.091	0.106	-0.141
	Gay	-0.165	0.114	-0.248
	Lesbian	0.000	0.101	0.000
Religious participation	General	0.019	0.046	0.047
	Gay	0.029	0.049	0.070
	Lesbian	0.011	0.043	0.029

*Note.*  $R^2 = .42$  gen general attitudes,  $R^2 = .37$  for attitudes towards gaymen, and  $R^2 = .44$  for attitudes towards lesbians.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

spiritual commitment and religious behavior met these criteria, with tolerance values of .14 and .14, respectively. Additional inspection of variance inflation factors, Eigenvalues, and variance proportions revealed that there is indeed a multicollinearity problem between these two dimensions. Even though neither of the variables of concern were significant predictors of attitudes, as a precaution, the regression was run again

using the two recommended methods for dealing with multicollinearity (Graham, 2003); once with the removal spiritual commitment and religious behavior from the analysis, and once with the two dimensions combined into one variable. In each circumstance, the beta values changed only slightly for the remaining predictors, and there were no changes in the significance levels. For this reason, the values from the initial regression were considered representative and are reported for the sake of completeness.

#### *Hypothesis Six*

The hypothesis proposed a significant positive relationship between overall religiosity and one or more dimensions of negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. A correlational analysis was used to generate a Pearson correlation between the global religiosity score and the scores for each dimension of attitudes. Religiosity was found to correlate significantly with each of the individual dimensions of attitudes towards sexual minorities. Religiosity had the strongest relationship with the social norms dimension (acceptance of traditional moral prohibitions against homosexuality  $r \approx .70$  for general and gender specific attitudes), while coefficients for the other dimensions ranged from .37 to .48 (two-tailed; Table 11). All correlations were significant at  $p < .01$ .

#### *Hypothesis Seven*

The hypothesis proposed one or more dimensions of high religiosity will be found to have a significant positive relationship with one or more dimensions of negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Four linear regressions ( $n = 160$ ) were run using each of the attitude dimensions (towards gay men and lesbians together, rather than

Table 11

*Overall Religiosity with Dimensions of Attitudes*

Dimension	Attitudes	<i>r</i>
Condemnation/tolerance	General	0.38**
	Gay	0.37**
	Lesbian	0.38**
Social norms	General	0.72**
	Gay	0.69**
	Lesbian	0.71**
Contact	General	0.48**
	Gay	0.40**
	Lesbian	0.48**
Stereotypes	General	0.40**
	Gay	0.38**
	Lesbian	0.39**

\*\* $p < .01$ .

separately) as dependent variables and entering the religiosity dimension predictor scores simultaneously.  $R^2$  scores for each attitude dimension ranged from .56 for social norms to .22 for condemnation/tolerance. Church commitment once again stood out among the dimensions of religiosity; this dimension was a significant predictor of each of the dimensions of attitudes at the .01 level. Particularistic orthodoxy was identified as a significant predictor of the condemnation/tolerance, contact, and stereotype attitude dimensions. Interestingly, religious behavior was found to negatively correlate with the stereotypes dimension (Table 12). This may be explained by the multicollinearity problems between religious behavior and spiritual commitment; tolerance values and variance inflation factors were requested for each of the regressions and each revealed

Table 12

*Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Dimensions of Religiosity Predicting Dimensions of Attitudes*

Religiosity	Attitudes	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Traditional orthodoxy	Condemnation/tolerance	-0.127	0.085	-0.205
	Social norms	0.008	0.092	0.009
	Contact	-0.016	0.103	-0.020
	Stereotypes	0.001	0.074	0.002
Particularistic orthodoxy	Condemnation/tolerance	0.113	0.054	0.243*
	Social norms	0.071	0.058	0.109
	Contact	0.107	0.064	0.183
	Stereotypes	0.125	0.046	0.305**
Spiritual commitment	Condemnation/tolerance	-0.061	0.116	-0.102
	Social norms	0.121	0.125	0.142
	Contact	0.064	0.139	0.084
	Stereotypes	0.095	0.101	0.173
Church commitment	Condemnation/tolerance	0.250	0.078	0.451**
	Social norms	0.374	0.084	0.475**
	Contact	0.359	0.094	0.511**
	Stereotypes	0.221	0.068	0.451**
Religious behavior	Condemnation/tolerance	0.020	0.121	0.032
	Social norms	-0.068	0.131	-0.076
	Contact	-0.211	0.147	-0.261
	Stereotypes	-0.219	0.106	-0.388*
Religious participation	Condemnation/tolerance	0.006	0.052	0.014
	Social norms	0.091	0.056	0.160
	Contact	0.035	0.064	0.070
	Stereotypes	-0.26	0.046	-0.073

*Note.*  $R^2 = .22$  for condemnation/tolerance,  $R^2 = .56$  for social norms,  $R^2 = .30$  for contact, and  $R^2 = .25$  for stereotypes.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

issues of multicollinearity between these two variables. As before, each of the recommended procedures for dealing with multicollinearity problems were instituted, with little effect on the initially identified significant predictors.

CHAPTER V  
DISCUSSION AND FUTURE  
RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As indicated by the review of the literature, there has been an LDS-shaped hole in the body of scientific knowledge about homophobia and religiosity. The importance of LDS attitudes towards sexual minorities was emphasized when, during the preparation of the findings of this thesis, a California ballot proposition (Proposition 8) to restrict the definition of marriage to opposite-sex couples, passed with just over 50% of the vote, thereby eliminating the rights to marry of same-sex couples in California. The involvement of the LDS church in helping with the passage of the proposition was controversially significant, with individual LDS donors contributing as much as \$20 million to the “Yes on 8” campaign (nearly half of the campaigns reported expenditures), and the church itself spending nearly \$190,000 on the campaign (Goldmacher, 2009).

While the commonalities between LDS religiosity and general Christianity are clear, the various unique elements of the religion, that self-proclaimed “peculiarity,” have introduced just enough difference to discourage unconsidered generalization. With this study, not only has there been significant progress towards filling that particular hole, but also towards advancing general understanding of religiosity, homophobia, and the relationship between the two.

This study confirms that in many ways, LDS religiosity does follow the patterns indicated by previous research with other religious groups. That religiosity is correlated with negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, for example, will come as no surprise

to those familiar with the extant research. The regular appearance of “church commitment” as a significant predictor of negative attitudes also appears to be consistent with what is known about LDS religiosity. The “church commitment” dimension consists of items assessing the individual’s level of “attachment, identification and loyalty” to the LDS Church (Cornwall et al., 1986, p. 229). At this point, the reader may find it useful to review these items in Appendix A.

The participants in this study that professed high levels of loyalty and that rejected what might be perceived as criticism of the LDS Church were more likely to report negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, in all of the measured forms, towards gay men and lesbians considered together or separately, and in each of the specific dimensions of attitudes. The converse of this finding is rather intuitive; those participants who acknowledged a degree of difficulty in acceptance of church doctrines or standards were more likely to report more positive attitudes towards a group of people often considered to be living outside these doctrines and standards.

The findings regarding the “particularistic orthodoxy” dimension are also congruent with what might be predicted. The items in this dimension are intended to assess an individual’s acceptance of uniquely LDS beliefs. Again, the reader is referred to Appendix A for a review of the specific items. Close examination of these items reveals that they also likely assess the placement of the LDS Church in an individual’s “hierarchy of truthfulness”; item c specifically references the LDS Church as “the only true church,” and this designation is also implied by the other three items. Logically, individuals more invested in their sense of belonging to the single most correct religion

would be less likely to foster attitudes that apparently contradict the teachings of that religion.

While “particularistic orthodoxy” predicted general attitudes somewhat less strongly than “church commitment,” the dimension’s prediction of specific dimensions of attitude followed the pattern one might expect from an LDS individual familiar with the church’s recent statements on homosexuality. These individuals were less likely to report negative attitudes about the more abstract or distant elements making up the “social norms” dimension than about the direct, personal elements present in the “contact,” “condemnation/tolerance,” and “stereotypes” dimensions (see appendix A).

In addition to the ways in which these findings indicated a consistency between the LDS and general population, there were several results of this study that were contrary to what might have been predicted. Perhaps chief among these is the lack of differentiation between attitudes regarding gay men and lesbians when considered individually. At no point in the analysis did any significant differences emerge between attitudes towards gay men and attitudes towards lesbian women, a finding contrary to some other studies that have found that gay men are often considered more negatively than lesbians (Lamar & Kite, 1998). As this effect is often related to gender difference of participants, additional analyses were conducted separately for the male and female participants of this study; attitudes towards gay men and lesbians still did not statistically differ. This may indicate that LDS religiosity includes a sort of blanket moral rejection of homosexuality, erasing the distinction between gay men and lesbians apparent in the

general population, or that attitudes are so negative that it is difficult to detect differences with existing measures.

Also of interest was the high correlation found between each of the dimensions on both the religiosity and attitude scales. Within the religiosity scale, “religious behavior” and “spiritual commitment” were particularly highly correlated ( $r = .90$ ), and were revealed to have multicollinearity issues. The relationship between these two dimensions is particularly interesting as “religious behavior” and “spiritual commitment” seem somewhat analogous to extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity, long considered to be two of the more distinct dimensions of religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967). One explanation for this finding may be the relatively abstract nature of the behaviors specified in the “religious behavior” scale. Apart from frequency of personal prayer, the items included are subject to wide, personal interpretation. While the items used to measure each of these variables are ostensibly quite distinct, with the spiritual commitment items focusing on statements of dedication and the religious behavior items focusing on acts, the case could be made that all of the items are tapping into a heretofore unidentified, unnamed construct dealing perhaps with religious intent, or that the items are written in such a way that even sporadic or inconsistent adherence to the items allows the respondents to highly endorse each item. In any case, it appears that while a multidimensional investigation of religiosity is justified, the particular dimensions identified in the measure used in this study will benefit from further study and refinement.

Within the attitudes scale, the dimensions of “contact” and “social norms” were the most strongly correlated ( $r = .80$ ), indicating that the items intended to measure

reactions about social contact with gay men and lesbians were closely related to the items intended to measure acceptance of moral prohibitions against homosexuality. One explanation for this might be that, because the “contact” items directly followed the “social norms” items in the questionnaire, and because the language of the items within the “social norms” scale is consistent with the previously mentioned terminology that has been used by Church officials to condemn homosexual relationships, participants may have been “primed” by the negative statements of the “social norms” scale in such a way that they would be more likely to report discomfort with direct interaction with gay men and lesbians.

As the strong relationships within the religiosity and attitude dimensions are in conflict with the description of the development of the scales, it is important to recognize that the relative homogeneity of the sample may have contributed to this effect. A more diverse sample in regards to age, geography, ethnicity, among other variables, may yield different results that confirm the uniqueness of the specific dimensions. In addition, the fact that individual dimensions of religiosity did correlate differently with attitudes speaks to the value of considering separate elements of religiosity rather than treating it as a unitary concept.

In addition to advancing the scientific understanding of the relationship between LDS religiosity and homophobia, there are some significant practical implications of these findings. The nature of the items comprising the “church commitment” dimension, for example, suggests that this dimension is one expression of a more fundamental psychological construct. Various terms “cognitive closure,” “psychological

inflexibility,” “black-and-white thinking,” and perhaps most commonly “cognitive rigidity” (Crowson, Thoma, & Hestevold, 2005; Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006), this construct has been demonstrated to correlate positively with “right-wing authoritarianism” (RWA). RWA has been used as shorthand for three related sets of attitudes:

submission to individuals or groups deemed as holding legitimate authority in society ...aggressiveness, which is believed to be sanctioned by legitimate authorities,...and a willingness to support existing conventions and standards as endorsed by societal authorities. (Altemeyer, 1996, p.1)

The clinician working with an individual who espouses negative attitudes towards sexual minorities may do well to probe for cognitive rigidity, as there is a growing amount of material dealing with the relationship between psychological inflexibility and psychopathology (Hayes et al., 2006). Additionally, as demonstrated by Crowson and colleagues in 2005, RWA is not necessarily synonymous with a conservative political ideology.

Similarly, it appears that activity and involvement in the LDS Church is not necessarily synonymous with high levels of church commitment (or any of the individual dimensions). It appears, then, that the two groups of interest in this thesis (the LDS population and the sexual minority population) have this in common; both groups are subject to stereotypes that likely oversimplify their complex nature and disguise the variety of the experiences of the individual. The mental health professional once again has the duty of balancing deliberation of this new information about the group, in this

case, the LDS population, with careful investigation and consideration of the characteristics of the individual.

While this study provided valuable information about LDS religiosity and related attitudes towards sexual minorities, the relatively small percentage of non-LDS individuals in the sample makes it difficult to compare the two groups, or to draw any meaningful conclusions about the attitudes of the non-LDS participants. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the relative homogeneity of the sample may have resulted in some artificial conflation of the individual dimensions. For these reasons, replication of this study with a more heterogeneous group would be valuable; not only would this allow for appropriate comparison of attitudes of LDS individuals with those with different or no religious affiliation, it would also provide the opportunity for additional exploration of the validity of the individual dimensions of religiosity and attitudes. Interaction effects could also be more effectively studied in a heterogeneous group; the interaction between gender and religiosity, for instance, may significantly contribute to attitudes.

Moreover, it would be useful to use the CATH scale with other religious groups. As noted in the discussion, there may be some elements of attitudes specific to LDS culture that would become more salient upon comparison with individuals of different faiths. Additional research could also focus on using the Components of Attitudes toward homosexuality scale to determine whether established relationships between attitude and behavior hold true in regards to treatment of sexual minorities.

The apparently strong predictive power of the “church commitment” dimension revealed in this study suggests several additional avenues of research. Does this effect

hold true when considering other controversial topics, such as abortion, or political affiliation? Would changing the wording of the items so that they are no longer negatively phrased have any effect on outcome? Does a “church commitment” effect appear when considering other religious affiliations? Additionally, it would be worthwhile to examine the dimension of church commitment together with measures of right-wing authoritarianism and of cognitive rigidity, to discover if the apparent relationship can be demonstrated empirically.

Replication of this study over time would also result in valuable information about how LDS attitudes do or do not change relative to the change in the official church communications regarding homosexuality. It would have been very interesting, for example, to have conducted this same study before and after the LDS Church released the “God Loveth His Children” pamphlet clarifying the Church’s position on “same-sex attraction.”

As it is likely that research regarding attitudes towards sexual minorities will continue with the general population and with other specific groups, those interested in and affected by the subject would benefit from knowing how the attitudes of the members of the politically active, quickly growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints compare.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Measures

### **Components of Attitudes toward Homosexuality**

Items marked with a \* are reverse scored

#### **Condemnation/Tolerance**

1. Apartment complexes should not accept lesbians (gay men) as renters.
2. Lesbians (gay men) should be required to register with the police department where they live.
3. Lesbians (gay men) should not be allowed to hold responsible positions.
- \*4. Job discrimination against lesbians (gay men) is wrong.
5. Lesbians (gay men) are a danger to young people.
6. Lesbians (gay men) are more likely to commit deviant acts such as child molestation, rape, voyeurism (peeping Toms) than are heterosexuals.
7. Lesbians (gay men) dislike members of the opposite sex.
- \*8. Finding out an artist was a gay man (lesbian) would have no effect on my appreciation of her (his) work.
- \*9. Lesbians (gay men) should be allowed to serve in the military.
- \*10. Lesbians (gay men) should not be discriminated against because of their sexual preference.
11. Lesbians (gay men) should not be allowed to work with children.

#### **Gay Male/Lesbian Social Norms/Morality**

1. The increasing acceptance of gay men (lesbians) in our society is aiding in the deterioration of morals.
2. Gay men (lesbians) endanger the institution of the family.

- \*3. Many gay men (lesbians) are very moral and ethical people.
- \*4. Gay male (lesbian) couples should be able to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.
- 5. The idea of marriages between gay men (lesbians) seems ridiculous to me.
- \*6. State laws regulating private, consenting behavior between gay men (lesbians) should be loosened.
- 7. Gay men (lesbians) just can't fit into our society.
- 8. Gay men (lesbians) do need psychological treatment.
- \*9. Gay men (lesbians) are a viable part of our society.
- 10. Homosexual behavior between two men (women) is just plain wrong.

### **Neutral Morality**

- \*1. Homosexuality, as far as I am concerned, is not sinful.
- 2. Homosexuality is a perversion.
- 3. I find the thought of homosexual acts disgusting.

### **Gay Male/Lesbian Contact**

- \*1. I enjoy the company of gay men (lesbians).
- 2. It would be upsetting to me to find out I was alone with a gay man (lesbian).
- 3. I avoid gay men (lesbians) whenever possible.
- 4. I would feel nervous being in a group of gay men (lesbians).
- 5. I think gay men (lesbians) are disgusting.
- \*6. I would enjoy attending social functions at which gay men (lesbians) were present.

7. Bars that cater solely to gay men (lesbians) should be placed in a specific and known part of town.

\*8. I would feel comfortable working closely with a gay man (lesbian).

9. If a gay man (lesbian) approached me in a public restroom, I would be disgusted.

10. I would not want a gay man (lesbian) to live in the house next to mine.

11. Two gay men (lesbians) holding hands or displaying affection in public is revolting.

12. I would be nervous if a gay man (lesbian) sat next to me on a bus.

13. I would decline membership in an organization if I found out it had gay male (lesbian) members.

\*14. If I knew someone was a gay male (lesbian), I would go ahead and form a friendship with that individual.

### **Neutral Contact**

1. If a member of my sex made advances toward me, I would feel angry.

\*2. I would feel comfortable knowing I was attractive to members of my sex.

\*3. I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.

4. I would feel uncomfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.

### **Gay Male/Lesbian Stereotypes**

1. Lesbians (gay men) prefer to take roles (passive or aggressive) in their sexual behavior.

2. The love between two lesbians (gay men) is quite different from the love between two persons of the opposite sex.

3. Lesbians (gay men) have weaker sex drives than heterosexuals.

4. A lesbian's (gay man's) mother is probably very domineering.
5. Most lesbians (gay men) have a life of one night stands.
6. Most lesbians (gay men) like to dress in opposite-sex clothing.
7. Most lesbians (gay men) have identifiable masculine (feminine) characteristics.

## Multidimensional Measure of LDS Religiosity

### Belief

#### Traditional Orthodoxy

- a. There is life after death
- b. Satan actually exists.
- c. The Bible is the word of God.
- d. I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.
- e. I have no doubts that God lives and is real.

#### Particularistic Orthodoxy

- a. The president of the LDS Church is a prophet of God.
- b. The Book of Mormon is the word of God.
- c. The Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-Day Saints is the only true church on earth.
- d. Joseph Smith actually saw God the Father and Jesus Christ.

### Commitment

#### Spiritual Commitment

- a. My relationship with the Lord is an important part of my life.
- b. The Holy Ghost is an important influence in my life.
- c. I love God with all my heart.
- d. I am willing to do whatever the Lord wants me to do.
- e. Without religious faith, the rest of my life would not have much meaning.

### Church Commitment

- a. Some doctrines of the LDS Church are hard for me to accept (-).
- b. I don't really care about the LDS Church (-).
- c. Church programs and activities are an important part of my life.
- d. I do not accept some standards of the LDS Church. (-).
- e. The LDS Church puts too many restrictions on its members (-).

### Behavioral

#### Religious Behavior

- a. I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
- b. I live a Christian life.
- c. I share what I have with the poor.
- d. I encourage others to believe in Jesus.
- e. I seek God's guidance when making important decisions in my life.
- f. I forgive others.
- g. I admit my sins to God and pray for His forgiveness.
- h. Frequency of personal prayer.

#### Religious Participation

- a. Frequency of attendance at Sacrament meeting.
- b. Frequency of attendance at Relief Society/Priesthood meetings.

- c. Percent of income paid as tithing.
- d. Frequency of family prayer (other than blessing the food).
- e. Frequency of family religious discussions.
- f. Frequency of Bible reading or reading of other scriptures.
- g. Frequency of family discussions about what is right and wrong.

## Demographic Questions

1. Are you Male or Female?  
Male                  Female
2. What is your age?  
  
(Drop down menu with ages 18 – 99)
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
  
Less than high school  
  
High School/G.E.D.  
  
Some College  
  
2-Year College Degree (Associates)  
  
4-Year College Degree (BA, BS)  
  
Master's Degree  
  
Doctoral Degree  
  
Professional Degree (MD, JD)
4. What is your own yearly income?  
  
0-5000\$  
  
5000-10000\$  
  
(Continues in 5000 dollar increments)
5. What is your total household income, including all earners in your household?
  
  
6. What is your current relationship status?  
  
Single, Never Married  
  
Long-Term Cohabitation  
  
Married  
  
Separated

Divorced

Widowed

7. With whom are you currently living?

Family of Origin (Parents, siblings)

Nuclear Family (Spouse/partner, children)

Roommates

Live Alone

Other

8. What is your religious affiliation?

LDS (Mormon)

Protestant Christian

Roman Catholic

Evangelical Christian

Jewish

Muslim

Hindu

Buddhist

Other

9. What is your race (ethnicity)?

White

White, Non-Hispanic

African-American

Hispanic

Asian-American

Native American

10. What is the highest level of education your mother has completed?

Drop down, same as question 3

11. What is the highest level of education your father has completed?

Drop down, same as question 3

If the participant indicates that they are LDS, they will be rerouted to the appropriate questions from the religiosity questionnaire as well as to the following questions:

12. Which statement best describes your relationship with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

I was raised in an LDS household and I still participate.

I was raised in an LDS household and I no longer participate.

My family converted to the LDS religion when I lived at home and I still participate.

My family converted to the LDS religion when I lived at home and I no longer participate.

I converted to the LDS religion on my own and I still participate.

I converted to the LDS participation on my own and I no longer participate.

13. Have you served an LDS mission?

Yes

No

Not yet, but I plan to.

Appendix B:  
Informed Consent and Survey

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Latter-day Saint Religiosity and Attitudes towards Sexual Minorities  
Informed Consent Document

This consent form explains the research study. Please read it carefully.

There have been many studies investigating the relationship between the religious characteristics of a person and their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. To date, however, there have been few studies investigating this relationship within the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS Church). For this reason, it is not known if a person's affiliation with the LDS church or their adherence to the Church's doctrine and teachings has any connection to how they feel about gay men and lesbians. This study is being conducted to rectify the underrepresentation of members of the LDS church in the research and to give an accurate picture of their beliefs and attitudes.

**FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS RESEARCH, INCLUDING INQUIRIES ABOUT THE RESULTS, CONTACT:**

This study is being conducted by Cory Myler (Cory.Myler@usu.edu) under the supervision of Dr. Melanie Domenech-Rodriguez (melanie.domenech@usu.edu). For details on how to reach Mr. Myler or Dr. Domenech-Rodriguez, please see contact information below.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you should contact (anonymously, if you wish) the Institutional Review Board, e-mail true.fox@usu.edu, phone (435) 797-0567.

**Purpose:**

You are invited to participate in a survey research study investigating the relationship between the religiosity of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. The results of this study should help us understand some of the differences between religious behaviors and religious attitudes, the differences between attitudes towards gay men and lesbians and behaviors toward them, and how these behaviors and attitudes are or are not related.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to be a part of this study, you will be directed to a questionnaire about your religious activity and your beliefs about lesbians and gay men. Filling out the questionnaire should take about 15 minutes. Some of the questions may be personal or sensitive. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence or loss of benefits.

**Confidentiality:**

The information you provide by filling out the survey is completely anonymous and therefore no one will be able to identify your responses. The data from your survey may be retained indefinitely for use in future studies of religiosity and attitudes towards sexual minorities.

**Risks:**

The known risks associated with this study include the possibility that you might become upset thinking about some of the questions or topics in this study. If this occurs, you have the option to exit from the survey. If you have any questions or items you would like to discuss after your participation, or if you would like information about the results of the study, Mr. Myler will be available for communication (see contact information below). If you become upset enough that you would like to speak with someone not associated with the study, it is recommended that you contact a clergy member, such as your Bishop, or the therapists at the USU Counseling Center (435-797-1012), or the USU Psychology Community Clinic, (435-797-3401).

**Benefits:**

The study will assist researchers in developing a better understanding of any relationship between LDS religiosity and attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. You may directly benefit from participation if the instructor of your course (e.g., Psychology 1010) offers any incentive as part of the course.

**Contact Information:**

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(435) 797-1460

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melanie.domenech@usu.edu  
(435) 797-3059

YES: I am age 18 years or older. I have read the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

NO: I am under 18 years of age.

NO: I do not wish to participate in this study.