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"WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?"
PERSONALITY AND GENDER DIMENSIONS IN
MEN AND WOMEN'S IMAGES OF JESUS,
MARY, AND JOSEPH

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ABSTRACT

Two studies investigate the relations between Christian religious images with personality variables and gender. In the first study 115 adults and college students (77 women and 38 men) described themselves on a personality measure (NEO-FFI) and Jesus Christ on the Adjective Checklist (ACL). Differences between men and women in their ratings of Jesus on five-factor-model (FFM) traits emerged. Women's self-ratings overlapped with their ratings of Jesus to a signifi-

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cant degree whereas men's did not. Women's ratings, unlike men's, combined both autonomous (agentic) and communal (relational) qualities in descriptions of Jesus. In the second study 54 female and 39 male undergraduates rated themselves and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, the husband of Mary, on the ACL. Few significant relationships occurred between personality and trait descriptions of Mary or Joseph for either men or women. Taken together these studies support (1) the specific salience of Jesus in the perceptions of Christians; (2) the need to consider the interaction between gender and personality in religious research; and (3) a self-model in contrast to deficiency models in understanding the origins of religious images.

"But who do you say that I am?" (Luke 9:20). The question Jesus asked his followers reverberates through religious history and experience. In the psychology of religion the bulk of conceptual and empirical work on religious imagery focuses on images of God (IOG). Images of God, however, are not the only salient religious images for believers. In traditional Christian theology, for example, the person of Jesus Christ has a unique place in modern religious imagery sharing both human and divine attributes for believers. Other historical persons in Christianity have also influenced both the beliefs and practices of its adherents. Mary, the mother of Jesus, has generated a nearly inexhaustible tradition of theological reflection and popular piety.

To our knowledge little empirical research exists in the broader area of religious images. Even less is known about the relationship of important psychological variables in believers to their perceptions of these religious figures. Most research in this area relates to studies of images of God (IOG). That research can briefly be summarized under three types. The first represents *primary interpersonal* sources for IOG. In this tradition theorists view IOG as developing out of parental figures (e.g., father, [Freud, 1913/1950]). Empirical studies do not support any consistent position on developmental figures as related to IOG (Birky and Ball 1988; Godin and Hallez 1965; Justice and Lambert 1986; Nelson 1971; Rizzuto 1982; Tamayo and Dugas 1977).

The second tradition is represented through studies of *secondary interpersonal* sources. In this view IOG are influenced by the sum of sociological influences on personal belief. Factors such as religious commitment and church attendance are related to positive and nurtur-

ing IOG, respectively (Carroll 1992; Roberts 1989). The third approach to understanding IOG is the *self-source*. In this model IOG represent a projection of the individual's personal characteristics. Research has linked several psychological qualities to IOG, such as self-esteem, mood, and history of trauma (Benson and Spilka 1973; Doehring 1993; Gorsuch, 1969; Kane, Cheston, and Greer 1993). One study (Piedmont, Williams, and Ciarrocchi 1997) that examined the relation between self sources and images of Jesus found that self-ratings of Neuroticism, Openness, and Agreeableness were significantly related to similar ratings of Jesus.

In this paper we describe two separate studies that focus on significant historical religious figures in the Christian faith: Jesus Christ, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Joseph the husband of Mary. Building on the work of Piedmont and associates (1997), we explore further the relations of personality and gender with religious images. Two issues emerge. First, does gender of the individual believer continue to contribute anything to perceptions of religious figures other than God? Second, do individuals have a generic image of the numinous, or are there important differences? Further, does personality's contribution to these images vary? In other words, do certain religious images call forth more personal investment than others? To test this second hypothesis we compare the perceptions of Jesus to those of Mary and Joseph.

STUDY ONE

The relationship between gender and images of Jesus (IOJ) has not been systematically studied, to date. For IOG, however, several findings may have relevance, although the studies are independent and lack a cohesive conceptual framework. Women have an IOG more similar to the preferred parent (Spilka, Addison, and Rosensohn 1975). Women are more likely to view God as nurturing (Roberts 1989). Trauma in women appears to affect IOG. Adult incest survivors perceived God as more distant than matched controls (Kane, Cheston, and Greer 1993) and traumatization (childhood physical and/or sexual abuse) is positively related to wrathful/absent IOG and negatively related to loving IOG (Doehring 1993). When men and women rated God and themselves in

terms of masculine/feminine traits, women's IOG were more similar to their self-perceptions than were men's (Smith, cited in Malony, 1995).

Feminist theology critiques traditional religious images, particularly those related to God, as conditioned products of patriarchal cultures. In this view such images posit both that man (not woman) is made in the image of God, and that humans are made in the image of God (He). These images, therefore, foster woman's alienation since, in Mary Daly's striking words, "She cannot assent to *this* without assenting to her own lobotomy" (1973, p. 20 emphasis in original). Furthermore, ". . . exclusive male God images and patriarchal religious beliefs hamper the esteem and well-being of women" (Stucky-Abbot 1993, p. 240).

In this first study we explore whether IOJ will be salient for the same dimensions previous research discovered for IOG. Specifically, (1) how will men and women view Jesus' personality? (2) Does personality contribute in a meaningful way to these perceptions? (3) If personality matters, is the relationship synchronous or not? That is, do positive self-images correspond to positive IOJ and negative ones with negative IOJ? (4) Are masculine perceptions of Jesus by women related to greater negative affect and decreased positive affect? (5) If differences exist between men and women in their IOJ, do they reflect findings that traditionally relate agentic qualities to men and communal-relational qualities to women (Bakan 1966).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 77 women and 38 men, ages 17 to 75 years ($M = 33.8$, $SD = 13.7$). Individuals were selected from traditional undergraduate courses and adult education courses from institutions in the mid-west and east coast. A general sample of convenience was also included. On average, participants had 15 years of education and were mostly Catholic (68%; Protestant 25%; no religious affiliation 7%). Only those who indicated a current or previous Christian background were included.

Measures

Adjective Checklist (ACL): The ACL (Gough and Heilbrun 1983) consists of 300 adjectives from which the person selects the most self-descriptive. The ACL provides information on 33 scales from diverse theoretical orientations, including Murray's needs (1938), Berne's (1961) Transactional Analysis, Welsh's (1975) Intellectance and Origineance scales and several scales developed by Gough and Heilbrun (1965, 1983) to measure salient interpersonal qualities. John (1990) created adjective marker scales for each dimension of the five-factor model (FFM) which demonstrate convergence with other measures of the FFM and the ACL (Piedmont, McCrae, and Costa 1991). Piedmont (1989) obtained normative values for these scales. Piedmont and associates (1997) have shown the utility of this method for surfacing images of Jesus.

NEO-FFI: This 60-item questionnaire contains statements on a Likert-type scale that assess the major dimensions of the FFM: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Costa and McCrae 1992). The Inventory dimensions converge well with domain scores from the NEO Personality Inventory (from .77 for Agreeableness to .92 for Neuroticism). It also has strong cross-time stability and cross-observer reliability (Costa and McCrae 1992).

Procedure: Participants completed both the ACL and NEO-FFI. The NEO-FFI was completed as a self-evaluation and participants completed the ACL to reflect their perceptions of Jesus Christ's personality.

RESULTS

The ACL was scored for its 33 content scales and for five-factor model markers. Comparison of *T*-scores by gender revealed similar descriptions of Jesus by both men and women. The distinct personality that emerges (*T*-scores of 55 or greater and 45 or less) can be seen in Table 1.

In summary, he is perceived as having a complex and differentiated inner world, as sympathetic and supportive of others yet autonomous with a detached presence. Further he is portrayed as well-adjusted, self-confident, uninhibited person who is compassionate, warm and tender.

Table 1. Mean *T*-score Ratings of Jesus on ACL

Scale	Men	Women
Achievement	53.7	53.4
Dominance	53.8	54.7
Self-Confidence	54.9	54.6
Self-Control	49.6	50.4
Personal Adjustment	54.9	54.2
Ideal Self	60.2	59.4
Masculinity	49.8	48.7
Femininity	43.7	44.1
Endurance	53.7	54.0
Aggression	47.9	46.6
Heterosexuality	55.3	54.4
Affiliation	54.2	53.9
Military Leadership	50.4	52.3
Order	50.5	51.1
Intracception	54.0	56.1
Nurturance	58.5	58.9
Exhibition	51.1	48.9
Autonomy	49.3	49.2
Change	46.9	48.3
Succorance	49.6	47.9
Abasement	48.4	48.3
Deference	46.6	49.7
Counseling Ready	44.3	45.6
Creative Personality	52.0	51.8
Critical Parent	44.9	44.8
Nurturing Parent	55.0	55.7
Adult	52.0	52.4
Free Child	54.6	52.4
Favorable items	53.1	54.2
Unfavorable items	44.7	44.6
Adapted Child	46.6	45.5
Neuroticism	43.2	43.0
Extraversion	52.0	49.7
Openness	48.6	48.9
Agreeableness	56.9	57.5
Conscientiousness	50.6	52.1

Note: *N* = 77 women, 38 men.

He is viewed as tolerant of the weaknesses of others, wanting to bring people together and to reduce conflicts among them. He is also seen as wanting to maintain a continuity in values and to foster increased feelings of respect among people, and to empower them. No significant gender differences emerged in these rankings.

Table 2. Correlations Between Men's Self-ratings on the NEO-FFI and Adjective Check List Five-Factor Ratings of Jesus

Ratings of Jesus Adjective Check List	NEO Five Factor Self-Ratings					Multiple <i>R</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>C</i>	
Neuroticism (<i>N</i>)	.02	-.29	.01	-.02	-.13	.36
Extraversion (<i>E</i>)	.27	-.21*	.10	-.02	-.17	.34
Openness (<i>O</i>)	.19	.33*	.02	-.01	-.25	.53*
Agreeableness (<i>A</i>)	-.16	.33*	-.08	.02	.10	.37
Conscientious (<i>C</i>)	.02	.32*	-.14	-.09	.04	.47
Multiple <i>R</i>	.37	.49	.25	.25	.45	

Notes: **p* < .05 two-tailed.
N = 38.

To determine if these ratings of Jesus have any relationship to one's self-perceptions, self-reported scores on the NEO-FFI were correlated with the ACL rating markers of the five factors. The results for men are presented in Table 2 and for women in Table 3.

Table 2 shows that self-ratings of Extraversion for male subjects are associated with perceptions of Jesus. Men with an outgoing personality style saw Jesus as tolerant, empathic, and conscientious. No other significant associations emerged between men's self-perceptions and ratings of Jesus.

Table 3 indicates numerous associations between women's self-rated perceptions of personality and perceptions of Jesus. Self-rated Neuroticism was associated with seeing Jesus as high in this dimension as well. Women who rated themselves as outgoing (Extraversion Factor) view Jesus as emotionally stable and conscientious. Women with an openness to experience and tolerance of many viewpoints perceive Jesus as emotionally stable, outgoing and similarly open as themselves. Women who rate themselves as empathic and compassionate (Agreeableness Factor) view Jesus as emotionally stable, low on Extraversion, and conscientious.

To determine the degree of overlap between self-reports and the ACL ratings of Jesus multiple regression analyses were undertaken. Averaging adjusted *R*-squares indicates that women's self-ratings overlap at a

Table 3. Correlations Between Women's Self-ratings on the NEO-FFI and Adjective Check List Five-Factor Ratings of Jesus

Ratings of Jesus	NEO Five Factor Self-Ratings					Multiple R
	N	E	O	A	C	
Adjective Check List						
Neuroticism (N)	.29**	-.29*	-.27*	-.32**	.02	.46**
Extraversion (E)	.02	.18	.23*	-.27*	.05	.44**
Openness (O)	-.21	.18	.31**	.14	-.02	.37 ^a
Agreeableness (A)	-.04	.13	.05	.10	-.04	.18
Conscientious (C)	-.21	.27*	-.00	-.33**	.06	.41**
Multiple R	.31	.36 ^a	.41*	.46**	.12	

Notes: ^a $p < .06$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ two-tailed.
N = 77.

statistically significant level with their perceptions of Jesus (R square, = .15, $F [5,71] = 2.51$, $p < .05$), whereas men's did not (R square, = .18, $F [5,32] = 1.40$, $p = n.s.$).

To explore further the specific aspects of men and women's perceptions of Jesus as related to their self-perceptions, five-factor self-ratings were correlated with the 33 topical scales for Jesus on the ACL. Tables 4 and 5 present these descriptions for men and women respectively. Again, the strong relationship between personality dimensions of self and those of Jesus hold for women but less for men. For men, significant correlations were found on 18 of 165 comparisons, but 48 of 165 comparisons for women, a result six times greater than chance.

Inspection of the personality descriptors of Jesus reveal interesting patterns with five-factor self-ratings. For men only, Extraversion relates to multiple dimensions of Jesus. The picture of Jesus here is a deferring, subservient, dependent, and unassertive person who nurtures and values interpersonal relationships. This represents an extreme relational or communal interpersonal style with few autonomous or agentic qualities.

For women, personal ratings of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, and Agreeableness each related to multi-faceted profiles of Jesus. Women who experience increased emotional dysphoria see Jesus as weak, immature, uncreative, unstable, and lacking nurturance. Women with an outgoing personality style (Extraversion Factor) perceive Jesus

Table 4. Correlations Between Men's Self-Ratings on the NEO-FFI and Adjective Check List Topical Scales' Ratings of Jesus

Ratings of Jesus	NEO-FFI Self-Ratings				
	N	E	O	A	C
Achievement	.35*	-.16	.07	-.19	-.36*
Dominance	.18	-.18	.18	-.17	-.31
Self-Confidence	.11	.01	-.04	-.27	-.26
Self-Control	-.21	.29	-.16	.01	.24
Personal Adjustment	-.12	.41*	-.04	-.02	.18
Ideal Self	.04	.22	-.13	-.18	-.07
Masculinity	.18	-.38*	-.23	-.38*	-.16
Femininity	.01	-.16	-.35*	.04	.08
Endurance	-.02	.22	-.06	-.15	.05
Aggression	.23	-.31	.21	-.06	.05
Heterosexuality	.13	.18	-.09	.02	-.11
Affiliation	-.19	.40*	-.08	.01	.06
Military Leadership	.02	.26	.15	.06	-.16
Order	.01	.12	-.24	-.14	.03
Intracception	.07	.31	.09	-.11	-.12
Nurturance	-.12	.37*	.01	-.00	.10
Exhibition	.13	-.23	.08	-.11	-.27
Autonomy	.14	-.47**	.18	-.10	-.29
Change	.13	.12	.39*	.29	-.24
Succorance	-.18	.11	-.02	.33*	.01
Abasement	-.30	.53**	-.04	.23	.18
Deference	-.11	.31	-.25	.04	.19
Counseling Readiness	-.11	-.11	.14	.08	.24
Creative Personality	.10	.28	.31	.06	-.35*
Critical Parent	.24	-.48**	.06	.03	-.16
Nurturing Parent	-.04	.36*	-.11	-.04	-.04
Adult Parent	.04	.29	.02	-.09	-.04
Free Child	.08	.22	.22	.27	-.19
Adapted Child	.05	-.34*	.02	.09	.10
Welsh 1	.03	.11	-.25	-.06	.10
Welsh 2	.22	-.31	.32*	.03	.18
Welsh 3	-.14	.38*	-.33*	.03	.18
Welsh 4	.05	.08	.10	-.01	.08

Notes: N = Neuroticism
E = Extraversion
O = Openness
A = Agreeableness
C = Conscientiousness
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

as a leader, nurturing, emotionally stable, self-confident, achieving, open to relationships, interested in women, and conscientious. This profile combines both communal-relational with agentic-autonomous qualities.

Table 5. Correlations Between Women's Self-Ratings on the NEO-FFI and Adjective Check List Topical Scales' Ratings of Jesus

Ratings of Jesus	NEO-FFI Self-Ratings				
	N	E	O	A	C
Achievement	-.25*	.30**	.32**	.14	.02
Dominance	-.10	.18	.30**	-.13	.03
Self-Confidence	-.08	.26*	.29*	-.02	.05
Self-Control	-.11	-.02	-.18	.25*	.05
Personal Adjustment	-.10	.32**	.08	.17	.11
Ideal Self	-.31**	.30**	.21	.38**	.11
Masculinity	-.13	.08	.22	.24*	.14
Femininity	-.02	-.03	-.08	.02	.02
Endurance	-.21	.34**	.18	.23**	.04
Aggression	.07	-.06	.21	-.28*	.01
Heterosexuality	-.10	.26*	.12	.06	-.01
Affiliation	-.13	.34**	.18	.16	.05
Military Leadership	-.30**	.36**	.28*	.21	-.03
Order	-.21	.24*	.10	.33**	.07
Intraception	-.32**	.28*	.31**	.22	.15
Nurturance	-.09	.22*	.11	.16	-.02
Exhibition	.14	-.04	-.04	-.29**	-.04
Autonomy	.09	-.09	.21	-.20	-.04
Change	.07	.10	.25*	-.08	.09
Succorance	.08	-.11	-.34**	-.20	-.03
Abasement	.03	-.02	-.27*	.00	-.01
Deference	-.02	.06	-.22	.22	.07
Counseling Readiness	.27*	-.36**	-.28**	-.02	-.22*
Creative Personality	-.28*	.25*	.30**	.21	-.01
Critical Parent	.07	-.14	.11	-.23*	-.04
Nurturing Parent	-.26*	.35**	.13	.21	.09
Adult Parent	-.33**	.40**	.20	.35	.12
Free Child	-.16	.33**	.27*	-.01	-.03
Adapted Child	.28*	-.23*	-.22	-.43**	-.10
Welsh 1	.30*	-.11	-.11	-.14	-.01
Welsh 2	.04	-.16	.11	-.11	-.16
Welsh 3	-.09	.18	-.07	.10	.18
Welsh 4	-.12	.05	.21	.29*	-.05

Notes: N = Neuroticism
 E = Extraversion
 O = Openness
 A = Agreeableness
 C = Conscientiousness
 * $p < .05$,
 ** $p < .01$.

Table 6. Correlations Between Men's Five-Factor Self-Ratings and Ratings of Mary on the Adjective Check List

Ratings of Mary	Men Self-ratings on NEO-FFI				
	N	E	O	A	C
Neuroticism (N)	.03	-.22	-.17	-.11	-.12
Extraversion (E)	-.29	.22	.18	.12	-.17
Openness (O)	-.15	.30	.02	-.01	-.14
Agreeableness (A)	.03	.09	.09	.01	.35*
Conscientiousness (C)	-.11	.00	-.24	.07	.11

Notes: * $p < .05$ two-tailed.
 N = 39.

Women who value ideas and are accepting of other viewpoints (Openness Factor) picture Jesus as assertive, masculine, a leader, self-confident, achieving, creative and emotionally mature. Further he is low on deferring to others, self-denigration, and help-seeking. In this pattern agentic qualities emerge.

Women who are highly relational themselves (Agreeableness Factor) view Jesus as masculine, able to compromise in relationships, self-controlled, having a strong sense of self-worth, persistent, and one who plans. Conversely they view him as considerate of others, not attention-seeking, and non-judgmental of others. This pattern, overall, represents a person one could count on, who is strong in his sense of himself, not self-centered, and withholds criticism of others.

DISCUSSION

First, men and women, as a group, describe Jesus' personality similarly. They view him as a compassionate individual balanced by a need for privacy, a pattern resembling Maslow's self-actualized person (1970). This portrait affirms the biblical Jesus indicating harmony with written descriptions in the Christian tradition. Gender, as such, does not shift Jesus' historiograph.

Second, personality variables contribute significantly to one's IOJ. Five-factor dimensions of one's personality are predictive of one's IOJ. Furthermore, the influence of self-personality interacts with gender. Women's self-descriptions are more strongly associated with their IOJ

Table 7. Correlations Between Women's Five-Factor Self-Ratings and Ratings of Mary on the Adjective Check List

Ratings of Mary	Women Self-ratings on NEO-FFI				
	N	E	O	A	C
Neuroticism (N)	.21	.22	.04	.10	-.09
Extraversion (E)	-.08	.21	.17	-.09	.02
Openness (O)	-.12	.14	.35**	-.11	.02
Agreeableness (A)	.08	-.09	-.21	-.07	-.05
Conscientiousness (C)	-.08	-.17	-.00	-.09	.15

Notes: ** $p < .01$ two-tailed.
N = 54.

than are men's. Their Jesus images, as it were, have more of their personal selves in them.

Third, although personality counts in how one images Jesus, the relationship of personality to IOJ varies considerably for men versus women. Examining the correlations between self-perceptions and the 33 topical scales of the ACL reveals a synchronous pattern for women and a dysynchronous one for men. For example, male Extraversion was *not* related to seeing Jesus similarly. Indeed, in this instance he is viewed as unassertive, low energy, and lacking autonomy. These are features linked to the opposite pole of the Extraversion dimension.

Inspection of women's patterns suggests a concordant relationship. Neuroticism in women is associated with perceived deficiencies in Jesus' leadership, self-worth, maturity, creativity, and emotional availability to others. By contrast, Extraversion in women is related to IOJ as leader, someone who is close to women, self-confident, and achieving—qualities synchronous with the Extraversion Factor. The Openness Factor in women is related to seeing Jesus as similarly independent, unconventional, creative and ready to experience new situations. Finally, the Agreeableness Factor in women is related to an IOJ that emphasizes one who creates harmony in relationships, avoids hurting or criticizing others, yet is mature, goal-directed, self-controlled with a strong sense of self-worth.

Fourth, a masculine IOJ, when constructed by women, is not associated with greater negative affect or low positive affect. Rating Jesus as masculine is significantly associated with women's self-rated Openness

and Agreeableness. Neither dimension alone relates to propensity for dysphoria.

Fifth, women appear to integrate agency and communion in their IOJ to a significantly greater degree than men. The one significant relationship between personality and IOJ for men (Extraversion Factor) suggests an un-integrated view of Jesus on these dimensions. Specifically, these men describe Jesus as high on communal-relational qualities and low on agentic ones. Women, on the other hand, tend to blend both agentic and communal qualities in IOJ, except those women who rate themselves high on emotional dysphoria.

STUDY TWO

Although interesting, the first study does not answer the broader question as to whether the correlations of gender and personality with IOJ relates to the salience of Jesus in one's religious belief system, or whether personality and gender would similarly influence a person's conception of *any* religious or historical figure. To study this question, we repeated the methodology with a different sample, but this time asked the new group of subjects to describe the historical religious figures of (1) Mary, the mother of Jesus, and (2) Joseph, her husband. As in the previous study, participants also described themselves. We selected Mary for the potential contribution her image might provide for differentiating men and women's responses. We hypothesized that women will view themselves as more similar to Mary than will men. We included Joseph as a control both for salience and gender identification. Since Joseph is mentioned only in passing in the Christian scriptures we posit that descriptions of him will correlate only weakly with self-descriptors. Furthermore, we suggest that perceptions of Joseph will have a stronger resemblance to men's self-descriptions than they will for women.

METHOD

Participants: A separate group of 54 females and 39 males were recruited from general education courses from a midwest state university. Ages ranged from 19-36 years ($M = 21.7$, $SD = 3.1$).

Procedure: Participants filled out the ACL under three instructions: once as a rating of self, a second as a rating of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, and a third of Joseph, Mary's husband.

RESULTS

Tables 6 and 7 report correlations between self-ratings and ratings for Mary by men and women respectively. For women only the dimension of Openness is related to ratings of self and Mary. For men the only significant association is between self-ratings of Conscientiousness with ratings of Mary as Agreeable. Correlations between the ACL's 33 topical scales for Mary and five-factor aspects of self-ratings show few associations. Only 11 of 165 comparisons were significant for men and a mere three of 165 for women. In summary, the relationship between self-ratings of personality and the person's description of the religious figure of Mary is negligible for both men and women.

Tables 8 and 9 report correlations between self-ratings and ratings of Joseph for men and women respectively. For men seeing Joseph as Agreeable was related to men's self-ratings on the Neuroticism, Openness and Conscientiousness Factors. For women personal ratings of Agreeableness were negatively related to Neuroticism. Conscientiousness for women was associated negatively with Neuroticism and positively with Conscientiousness in Joseph.

Correlations between the 33 topical scale ratings for Joseph with self-ratings further demonstrates the minimal connection between perceptions of Joseph and self for both men and women. Only 10 of 165 correlations were significant for men and 12 of 165 for women, about what would be expected by chance (9).

In summary, the specific hypothesis regarding a relationship between women's self-ratings and those of Mary was not supported. Indeed, the relationship between self-ratings and those of Mary and Joseph is weak for both men and women, whether those ratings include comparisons with broad five-factor personality dimensions or with more specific attributes for these religious figures.

Table 8. Correlations Between Men's Five-Factor Self-Ratings and Ratings of Joseph on the Adjective Check List

Ratings of Joseph	Men's Self-Ratings on NEO-FFI				
	N	E	O	A	C
Neuroticism (N)	.25	.09	.02	.03	-.24
Extraversion (E)	.04	.16	-.08	.04	-.12
Openness (O)	-.00	.11	-.24	-.10	-.14
Agreeableness (A)	-.36*	.08	.39*	-.10	.41**
Conscientiousness (C)	.01	-.03	-.12	.02	.11

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.
N = 39.

Table 9. Correlations Between Women's Five-Factor Self-Ratings and Ratings of Joseph on the Adjective Check List

Ratings of Joseph	Women's Self-Ratings				
	N	E	O	A	C
Neuroticism (N)	.24	.19	.04	-.16	-.26*
Extraversion (E)	.09	.05	-.18	-.34*	-.20
Openness (O)	.08	-.12	-.16	-.12	-.13
Agreeableness (A)	-.01	.01	.06	.04	.14
Conscientiousness (C)	-.06	-.12	.05	.18	.32*

Notes: * $p < .05$, two-tailed.
N = 54.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

These studies, taken together, suggest a number of relationships between personality and self-ratings that have interesting implications for the psychology of religion. First, both men and women have similar overall profiles of Jesus' personality. This "self-actualized" portrait parallels both the biblical Jesus and the image in Christian belief. This supports previous findings about IOJ (Piedmont et al. 1997).

Second, men and women appear to create this image differently. Women have considerable overlap with their own personality in their images of Jesus; men do not. This finding introduces an interesting pattern that requires developmental studies to ascertain the origin of these divergent methods for men and women. Men and women end up at the

same place regarding their portraits of Jesus, but may have rather different starting paths. Similar gender differences have already been found with regard to image of God in a study that used general adjective descriptors for God (Smith 1982), and in one that also used the FFM (Ciarrocchi 1997).

Third, contrary to some speculations, having a masculine image of Jesus was not related to emotional dysphoria in women.

Fourth, Jesus is a more salient image in reference to personality for both men and women. Women's image of Mary, unlike their IOJ, does not overlap with their own personality. This sample of women views Jesus as more similar to themselves than they do Mary. The influence of one's personality ratings on religious imagery is not a generalized effect, therefore, but is salient only with IOJ. This finding supports the discriminant validity of IOJ, suggesting its potential in future research.

Fifth, the present study parallels some previous findings regarding IOG. The broad concept of synchrony affirmed here replicates studies that have linked self-esteem, depression, and traumatization experiences to IOG (Carroll 1992; Doehring 1993; Kane et al. 1993; Spilka et al., 1975). Synchrony, if replicated in the future, provides an alternate epigenetic model to the development of IOG. The earliest attempts to analyze IOG psychologically employed deficiency models (Freud 1913/1950). That is, IOG is a projection, whether of an exalted self or an exalted father-figure whose function is to make-up for personal inadequacies in coping with the universe. Synchrony suggests alternatively that deficiency models do not predict IOG for people who describe themselves positively. They attribute to Jesus positive qualities they also see in themselves. Indeed, this study and the above mentioned ones call into question whether deficiency models are predictive even for persons self-rated as dysphoric. On IOJ, at least, "exalted" does not accurately reflect the descriptors for Jesus used by those admitting emotional pain.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly from a theoretical perspective, this study extends the utility of the FFM for the psychology of religion. This model has the advantage of measuring a broad band of individual differences. Previous work on traumatization and women, for example, has focused on mostly negative characteristics (Kane et al. 1993). Such findings may only generalize to dysphoric dimensions. The FFM, on the other hand, allows for the multidimensional nature of religious images

to be better evaluated. Using a well-established empirical personality model also permits researchers with divergent viewpoints and data sources to integrate their findings through a common language. Furthermore, this study suggests that the Five Factor Model is differentially sensitive to different religious figures. Salient religious figures emerge with distinct profiles. Finally, people do not seem to have a generalized image of the numinous, but one that has links to various sources within the self.

The current study is limited by the relatively small size of the men's sample and by being a sample of convenience. Future research should look to how IOJ relates to IOG for Christian believers, in order to disentangle the historical descriptions of Jesus from the more generic and diffuse descriptions of the Deity. Such research could then more directly examine the relationship between such characteristics as emotional well-being and one's image of God.

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