



Center for the Study of Information and Religion

2014 Conference on Information and Religion
Paper / Poster Proposal

All proposals must be submitted on this form and emailed as an attachment to csir@kent.edu. Incomplete forms will not be considered.

Form with fields: Last Name of Primary Author (Tkacz), First Name of Primary Author (Sharon), College, University or Other Affiliation (Kent State University), Professional Title (Associate Professor of Psychology), City, State, Country (Burton, OH, U.S.), Phone Number (440-834-3729), Email Address (stkacz@kent.edu), Preferred Format (Paper checked, Poster unchecked). Includes a note about the selection committee.

Note: The "Primary Author" will be main contact for this proposal and will be responsible for sharing information with additional authors. Please use the spaces at the end of this form to indicate additional authors, if appropriate.

Please tell us how you heard about this conference; check as many as apply:

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# Proposal

<b>Title of Presentation</b>
<b>CONGREGATIONS AND ALL GOD'S CREATURES</b>
<b>Presentation Summary (approx. 100 words)</b>
Religiosity, moral foundations, and environmentalism were investigated in two different congregations. Methodists and Catholics differed in regard to several measures. Comparisons showed that Methodists and Catholics report different moral foundations in general. When primed with the idea that the destruction of 'nature' or 'Creation' harms all God's creatures, they express higher levels of environmental concern.  <i>[Note: this summary may be used in the conference program and other materials if your presentation is selected for the conference.]</i>
<b>Research Problem and Research Methods (approx. 250 words)</b>
<p>Immediately after a religious service at both Methodist and Catholic churches, subjects were administered several questionnaires, including the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ, Graham et. al., 2009), the Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS, Mayer &amp; Frantz, 2004), and a measure of Religiosity. The MFQ was designed to measure subject's moral foundations by rating 32 statements concerning their personal views. The MFQ consists of five factors: Care, Fairness, Loyalty, Respect, and Purity; it yields five separate scores. The CNS consists of 14 statements. The Religiosity questionnaire asked about the frequency of church attendance, activities, etc. These three questionnaires asked subjects to rate statements on 1 – 5 Likert scales.</p> <p>Our experimental manipulation was to prime half of the subjects from each church before they completed the CNS. The prime stated that, after thoughtful prayer with others and reading Scripture, Reverend X had a "conversion" on climate change so profound that he likened it to an "altar call." As a result, he urged the "government to encourage fuel efficiency, reduce pollution, encourage sustainable use of natural resources, and provide for the proper care of wildlife and their natural habitats in order to address the issue of global warming."</p>

**Anticipated Results and Significance to Research at the Intersection of Religion and Information (approx. 250 words)**

In a 2 x 2 (Congregation x Gender) ANOVA on the five MFQ scores, significant differences were obtained between Methodists and Catholics on Respect and Purity moral foundations. In both cases, Catholics scored significantly higher. Our priming manipulation was effective, significantly increasing CNS scores ( $p < .032$ ), such that primed subjects scored higher on CNS. In other words, when being made aware of the preacher's "altar call", they expressed more concern about the environment.

Patterns of correlations among scores for moral foundations, CNS, and Religiosity also differed for the two congregations. For Methodists, none of the five MFQ scores were correlated with Religiosity; for Catholics, Religiosity was significantly related to Purity ( $r = + .564$ ). This may suggest that Catholics believe Purity is a more fundamental aspect of their religion, compared to Methodists.

Both Care and Fairness foundations were correlated to CNS scores for both congregations. However, priming with the "altar call" also changed these correlations, in addition to increasing CNS scores. Without priming, only Fairness was correlated with CNS ( $r = + .381$ ). With priming, *both Care and Fairness* were correlated ( $r = + .376$ ,  $r = + .368$ , respectively). Again, the "altar call" changed environmental attitudes. This finding may have occurred because there is a tendency for harm v. care -based moral arguments to dominate environmental rhetoric.

These results show that Methodists and Catholics may use different moral foundations to define what "being religious" means. Further, this study suggests that temporary salience of religiosity may play a significant part in the level of environmental concern people express. This study extends previous research on the relationship of moral judgment to environmentalism.

**Statement of Author's Credentials (approx. 100 words)**

[Explain why the primary author is qualified to address this subject.]

I am a tenured associate professor of psychology at kent state university and have presented over 20 conference papers at both national and international conferences.

**Statement of Intent**

By submitting this proposal, I indicate my intention to deliver my presentation at the 2014 Conference on Information and Religion if selected. *(Primary author should sign and date below.)*

sharon tkacz

october 1, 2013

Signature *(may be typed)*

Date

**Please provide information on additional authors/presenters in the boxes below.**

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