

An Exploratory Scale of Christian Privilege: The Development of a Scale to Measure the  
Attitudinal Constituents of Christian Privilege

by

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this work to my wife, Chantelle. Your support of me during this process, and your encouragement for me to follow my graduate education goals is greatly appreciated. I can't thank you enough for all you've sacrificed for me to be where I am today. I love you and thank you for everything you do.

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### Abstract

Research surrounding measures of privilege awareness commonly involve White privilege awareness. However, relatively few (i.e., Privilege and Oppression Inventory) look other forms of privilege (i.e., heterosexual, sexism, religion). As such, this study looked to create a more extensive scale that would assess Christian privilege awareness among Christian participants. Items were adapted from theoretically analogous White privilege scales in addition to literature on Christian privilege. Using a sample of 391 participants recruited from Facebook, Reddit, SONA and Twitter, an exploratory factor analysis was run on a 28-item scale. The analysis suggested that a final 21-item, two-factor solution was the best fit for the data after considering factor cross loadings and variance explained. Convergent and concurrent validity are also established. Finally, future directions and limitations are also discussed.

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### **Literature Review**

What is privilege? Israel (2012) argues that privilege generally consists of “unearned advantages that are conferred to individuals based on membership or assumed membership in a dominant group” (p. 158). Although this may aptly serve as a foundational explication of general privilege, other theorists believe that additional nuance is needed to fully understand the construct. For example, Noam Chomsky defines privilege as a call for those so inculcated to act in a manner that not only indicates an awareness of said privilege, but also questions the implications of such status:

Responsibility I believe accrues through privilege. People like you and me [e.g., White, heterosexual, male] have an unbelievable amount of privilege and therefore we have a huge amount of responsibility. We live in free societies where we are not afraid of the police; we have extraordinary wealth available to us by global standards. If you have those things, then you have the kind of responsibility that a person does not have if he or she is slaving seventy hours a week to put food on the table; a responsibility at the very least to inform yourself about power. (Noam Chomsky as cited by Adams, 2003, p. 1)

The need to explicitly prompt those with privilege to question the source of their advantages illustrates a key facet of privilege. That is, two of the common effects of experiencing privilege are a) obliviousness of its presence (e.g., endorsing “colorblindness” is often framed as a consequence of having racial privilege; Neville et al., 2000), and b) a seemingly irrational tendency to deny its existence, even when confronted with otherwise unambiguous evidence demonstrating its presence and effects. Evidence of these outcomes is replete in the literature (Knowles et al., 2009; Knowles et al., 2014; Solomon et al., 2005; Boatright-Horowitz et al., 2012; Hossain, 2015; Ancis & Szymanski, 2001). A third effect of

experiencing privilege seems to be that individuals have difficulty understanding that privileges granted to them are a consequence of the denial of said privilege among society. Evidence in support of this premise can be gleaned from the work of Knowles and Lowry (2012). These researchers found that those who more strongly endorse the belief that society is a meritocracy (i.e., the idea that an individual's actions alone predict their circumstances) tended to express low acceptance of the validity of White privilege. Further, Knowles and Lowry, in summary of previous work, suggest this link exists because:

the potential existence of White privilege interferes with dominant-group members' efforts to maintain a positive self-view. In this research, Whites who experienced a threat to the self were less likely to acknowledge the existence of White privilege than were those who experienced no such threat. While this finding implies that Whites deny inequity because they regard merit as a personal ideal. (p. 204)

Seminal research on privilege has mostly focused upon its racial dimensions with respect to White privilege (Pinterits et al., 2009); however, other dominant group identities including male (McIntosh, 2008), middle class (Liu et al., 2007), and Christian (Schlosser, 2003) are also beginning to be explored in terms of this construct. Despite this growth, the literature on White privilege is often used as an exemplar when researchers attempt to generalize findings about racial privilege to other relevant domains. In the current study, I shall be adopting this approach in my discussion of Christian privilege. Consequently, it seems important to summarize some of the key findings related to White privilege research so that I might use this research as a foundation from which to hypothesize about the construct of Christian privilege.

**A Prototypical Example of Social Advantage: White Privilege**

What is *White privilege*? White privilege can best be defined as a “set of unearned assets” (McIntosh, 2008, p. 239) given to White individuals as a function of their membership in a White racial group. To fully understand White privilege, however, it is first necessary to understand the broader concept of race, particularly as it has been defined in the United States. Smedley (1998) argues the current conceptualization of race is a new phenomenon when she states the following:

What was absent from these different forms of human identity is what we today would perceive as classifications into “racial” groups, that is, the organization of all peoples into a limited number of unequal or ranked categories theoretically based on differences in their biophysical traits. There are no “racial” designations in the literature of the ancients and few references even to such human features as skin color. (p. 693)

Further, Smedley argues that it was not until the 18th century that different cultural groups were arranged hierarchically in society due to putative biological differences. This view was not successfully challenged in the New World until the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865, which legally emancipated enslaved Africans in the United States (U.S Const. amend. XIII). However, this legal status did not deter the US government from explicitly privileging Whiteness in its laws. Two glaring examples include the Supreme Court cases of *Takao Ozawa v. United States* (1922) and *United States v. Bhagat Singh* (1923).

Takao Ozawa was a Japanese immigrant who believed he should be entitled to US citizenship as a result of his work ethic, his willingness to embrace mainstream US culture (e.g., speaking English, converting to Christianity), and his love for his adopted country (Adelman, 2003). Unfortunately, to become a citizen at that time required that Ozawa be considered either

racially Black or White (Adelman, 2003). Thus, Ozawa sued to be considered White. His case, *Ozawa v. United States* (1922), illuminated how the US judicial system served to reify the boundaries of race to ensure greater social privileges to one race over all others. Despite Ozawa's compelling argument that he had fulfilled the necessary requirements to be granted citizenship, the Court ruled the following:

The appellant, in the case now under consideration, however, is clearly of a race which is not Caucasian and therefore belongs entirely outside the zone on the negative side. A large number of the federal and state courts have so decided, and we find no reported case definitely to the contrary. These decisions are sustained by numerous scientific authorities, which we do not deem it necessary to review. We think these decisions are right and so hold. (*Ozawa v. United States*, 1922, para. 22)

This ruling essentially stated that Ozawa was not eligible for citizenship due to his “scientific” designation as Asian and not White.

A second example occurred only a year later in the case of the *United States v. Thind* (1923). Thind, who was originally born in India, argued that he was eligible for citizenship because the science of the time asserted that Indians were of the Caucasian race (i.e., White). However, the court contradicted its previous stance in the case of Ozawa, and instead wrote that despite the fact that Thind was *scientifically* Caucasian, this was not sufficient to grant him status as a White person. Rather, the court asserted that in the case of *United States v. Thind* (1923), Thind must also match the self-evident physical description that the writers of the law had in mind:

But in this country, during the last half century especially, the word by common usage has acquired a popular meaning, not clearly defined to be sure, but sufficiently so to

enable us to say that its popular as distinguished from its scientific application is of appreciably narrower scope. It is in the popular sense of the word, therefore, that we employ it as an aid to the construction of the statute, for it would be obviously illogical to convert words of common speech used in a statute into words of scientific terminology when neither the latter nor the science for whose purposes they were coined was within the contemplation of the framers of the statute or of the people for whom it was framed. The words of the statute are to be interpreted in accordance with the understanding of the common man from whose vocabulary they were taken. (*United States v. Thind*, 1923, para. 7)

As a consequence of these decisions, the Supreme Court again reinforced the racial hierarchy of the United States. Such institutional affirmations of the supremacy of Whiteness throughout the history of the US is what serves as the foundation for the iterations of White privilege that are still with us today.

While at first glance the legislative hypocrisy shown by the Supreme Court in *Takao Ozawa v. United States* (1922) compared to *United States v. Thind* (1923) might in some regards be difficult to fathom, such dissimulation is understandable through the lens of *critical race theory*. This theory asserts that racism is such a commonplace part of US culture that it is likely “almost unrecognizable” (Taylor, 1998, p. 122) to the average White American, being so “ordinary and natural to such a degree that the oppression [that results from it] no longer seems like oppression to the perpetrators” (p. 122). This theory provides a context to better understand how, in the face of the long and impeccably documented history of racism that exists in the United States, there is still a tendency on the part of many White Americans to deny that being White comes certain privileges.

### **The Denial of Privilege**

Ancis and Szymanski (2001) have demonstrated that denial is one cognitive mechanism used to attempt to obfuscate the existence of White privilege. In their qualitative study of counseling students in a Social and Cultural Issues in Counseling course, students were asked to read Peggy McIntosh's essay on her experiences having White privilege, and then subsequently describe their reactions to the essay. The results indicated that denial of privilege was a theme among the counseling students. However, there are multiple other cognitive strategies that allow those with privilege to ignore, or explain away, the existence of their privileged status (Knowles, et al., 2014). One partial manifestation of this denial occurs when Whites "defend against the threats of privilege by distancing their own self-concepts from the offending social identity" (p. 601). According to Knowles et al., this means that while a White person may accept the idea that White privilege exists, they may simultaneously assert that such privilege does not apply to their personal accomplishments.

This obliviousness to the outcomes that result from privilege may be due to the fact that for those uninitiated into an awareness of the racial hierarchy that exists in the US, the systemic processes of privilege are rendered invisible when contrasted with more individualistic and starkly explicit examples of racism (i.e., these individuals see racism as somehow separate from White privilege). Support for this contention can be gleaned from the work of Lowery et al. (2007). These researchers found that the self-image of White respondents was only significantly threatened when social inequality was framed in terms of White privilege rather than Black disadvantage:

In other words, it is not simply the case that Whites perceive a resource differential (Whites > Blacks) and articulate it, equivalently, as either White advantage or Black

disadvantage. Rather, our findings make clear that Black disadvantage is psychologically separable from White advantage, and thus that individuals do not automatically translate discrimination against competitors into in-group advantage. (p. 1246)

This phenomenon is further illuminated by the work of Pfeifer and Schneider (1974). These researchers conducted a factor analysis of a racial climate survey completed by students at a university. The results of their analyses indicated that Black and White university students evoked different response patterns, yielding distinct factor structures for each group. Specifically, while the responses of White students supported a five-factor model that included one that represented the construct of individual racism, this was not the case for the Black sample. For the latter group, six factors were uncovered, with two of these factors representing both individual and institutional racism, respectively. Taken together, these results suggest that White respondents don't see institutional racism in the same way that Black respondents do. If we generalize from these findings, a real-world example of this dynamic playing out might consist of the following example: While many Black New Yorkers opposed the implementation of the controversial "Stop and Frisk" program in the city, many White New Yorkers supported this action (Goldenberg, 2012). Research indicates that programs like Stop and Frisk are racially biased (Davis et al., 2018; Gelman et al., 2007). Thus, if this program was named more honestly (i.e., policy makers called it "Stop and Frisk Black men in NYC more than White men"), the program would likely have been widely condemned as racist. However, because race was never explicitly mentioned as an essential component of the implementation of the Stop and Frisk program, it allowed the police a veneer of impartiality and legitimacy, despite repeated protests by people of color that the program was racially biased.

Some pundits may argue that such instances of obliviousness concerning how the racial hierarchy works in the US results from simple ignorance on the part of those with privilege. Unfortunately, denial of privilege is not necessarily a product of ignorance. A study by Brooks-Immel and Murray (2008) suggests that even well-educated individuals (e.g., university faculty) are not immune to some of the effects of White privilege. That is, even among this intellectual elite (i.e., people who are often trained to be discerning consumers of information), the prevalence of color-blind attitudes (i.e., the idea that “race should not and does not matter”) in modern US society seems to persist within even this ostensibly well-educated sector of society (Neville, et al., 2000, p. 60). This suggests that even high levels of educational achievement do not necessarily serve as a buffer against seeing White privilege and holding color-blind attitudes

Denial of White privilege has been found to positively correlate with other negative reactions when one learns about White privilege. In fact, researchers have begun to uncover additional reactions that appear to compromise the process of learning about privilege. For example, White people may be prone to experiencing feelings of anger and guilt when the concept of White privilege is presented to them (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001). Part of this reactions is thought to be due to a desire on the part of those with privilege to continue to assert that the advantages and privileges they enjoy in life are somehow earned or deserved (Knowles et al., 2014):

Thus, after confronting a threat to their personal merit, White participants sought to restore self-regard by denying a different source of meritocratic threat—White privilege (cf. Campbell & Sedikides, 1999). In a second study, meritocratic threat triggered the denial of privilege only among individuals scoring high on a measure of White identification, further suggesting that denial serves a self-protective function (Lowery



et al., 2007). The results of these studies remained robust after controlling for levels of anti-Black prejudice, indicating that self-image concerns are sufficient to trigger the denial of White privilege independent of feelings about the outgroup. (p. 599)

Unsurprisingly, the emotionality and defensiveness exhibited by White people confronted by their racial privilege poses a significant impediment to the process by which some White individuals become more aware of the seriousness of racial privilege. As such, researchers concerned with more fully understanding this dynamic in society have worked to empirically measure the construct of White privilege and its effects. Current measures to assess this construct will be discussed in the following section.

### **Initial Attempts to Assess White Privilege and Color-Blind Racial Ideology.**

It appears that much of the work in this area has utilized self-report instruments to assess color-blind racial ideology and, by extension, White privilege. Many of these measures attempt to look at either *color evasion* or *power evasion* broadly speaking with respect to color-blind racial ideology (Awad & Jackson, 2016). Color evasion is “the strategy of ignoring race as a means to emphasize similarity and reject racial superiority” (Awad & Jackson, 2016, p. 142). Meanwhile power evasion is “willful denial of power relationships designed to ignore racism and discrimination.” (Awad & Jackson, 2016, p. 142). For example, one of the most cited measures to assess the power evasion aspect of color-blind racial ideology, as well as attitudes about and denial of White privilege, is the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Awad & Jackson, 2016; Neville et al., 2000; McDonald et al., 2019; Davis, 2019). The CoBRAS is a measure of the “cognitive dimensions of color-blind racial attitudes” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 61). CoBRAS scores have been found to be positively associated with endorsing sentiments that indicate a fear of non-Whites (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004), and negatively correlated with both pro-diversity

values (Spanierman et al, 2008), and support for affirmative action (Awad et al., 2005). This scale has been helpful in bringing people's perceptions of color-blind racial ideology and White privilege awareness to the forefront of the social sciences. Taken together, this research indicates that low levels of privilege awareness appear to be associated with both endorsing more negative evaluations of marginalized out-groups, as well as displaying indifference to ensuring that out-group members are treated equally within society.

Another more recently developed scale is the White Privilege Attitudes Scale by Pinterits et al. (2009). This scale attempts to measure "the multidimensional nature of White privilege attitudes, reflecting affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions" (p. 417). More generally, this scale assesses the degree to which White individuals acknowledge that their race grants them advantages over other racial groups. Research has shown that the WPAS subscale of White Privilege Remorse, in which higher scores indicate greater remorse for having White privilege, appears to be negatively correlated with political conservatism and anti-Black bias (Roussos & Dovidio, 2018) while also suggesting that more exposure to non-White peoples improves White respondents' desire to confront White privilege (Mindrup et al., 2011). The use of this scale has yielded a body of research that has furthered our understanding of White privilege by including elements about how individuals think about the potential fear and consequences they may encounter should they speak out about privilege.

Taken together, the CoBRAS and WPAS give researchers a better understanding of the elements that make up White privilege awareness in addition to the attitudes and behaviors associated with various levels of such awareness. From here, researchers can proactively approach the multiple facets uncovered using these scales to better investigate ways to combat the denial and skepticism that frequently surrounds the existence of White privilege. Due to the

wide usage of these scales, the WPAS and CoBRAS will be used as templates from which I shall derive the preliminary structure and items of a scale to assess Christian privilege.

### **White Privilege: A Blueprint for Understanding Christian Privilege**

The research on White privilege reveals that privileged groups get their privilege from being able to structure society in a way that most benefits them (Liu, 2017). Additionally, we see that there are cognitive strategies that members of privileged groups engage in to provide plausible deniability concerning any benefits that either White people generally, or individually, derive from this system in society (Knowles et al., 2014). With the preceding evidence as my foundation, I extrapolate the following assumptions: a) Christian privilege exists in the US, and b) how Christian privilege manifests amongst Christians will be analogous to the dynamics that have been observed with the study of White privilege. Consequently, just as scales have been developed to measure the facets of White privilege, I believe that such scales can serve as an apt template for the creation of a scale to measure Christian privilege. This is especially true given the link some scholars believe exists between Christianity and its ability to uphold White privilege and, by extension, White supremacy.

### **Christianity: What Can We Say About the Faithful?**

Christianity is defined as “the religion derived from Jesus Christ, based on the Bible as sacred scripture, and professed by Eastern, Roman Catholic, and Protestant bodies” according to *Merriam Webster’s Online* (2018) dictionary. However, the expression of that belief system, both behaviorally and attitudinally, among Christians differs as a function of how individual denominations and people interpret the Bible. As a result, having any monolithic notion of what a Christian does and thinks outside of the somewhat general definition given by Merriam

Webster is difficult. Despite this variability, however, some generalizations can be made about these groups.

### ***Common Christian Group Characteristics and Social Views***

While Christianity includes a broad range of groups who may differ significantly in their practice of this religion, research by the Pew Research Center (n.d.) has uncovered some general trends and characteristics that seem to apply broadly across many denominations of self-identified Christians in the United States. For example,

- Females are more likely to be Christian compared to males,
- Christians in the US are predominately White,
- A large majority do not have a college degree,
- Most say their faith is of very high importance to them,
- A majority say morality is situational vs absolute,
- Christians are roughly equally affiliated with both American political parties.

Thus, some commonalities and generalizations can be made about Christians, even if we must simultaneously acknowledge that differences are also present.

### ***Can One's Christian Identity/Attitudes be Measured?***

Scholars have attempted to create scales to assess religiosity in a multidimensional fashion (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991; Gorsuch & MacPherson, 1989). Two of the most widely used options for assessing religiosity broadly are a) the Quest scale (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991) and b) the Intrinsic/Extrinsic (I/E) Religiosity scale (Gorsuch & MacPherson, 1989). While the QUEST scale was designed to measure how willing one is to question one's religious beliefs, the

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiosity Scale was designed to measure what motivates people to be religious.

Apropos of the current study, earlier research utilizing these constructs has shown that extrinsic religiosity is positively correlated with racism, anti-Semitism, and dogmatism (Donahue, 1985). Additionally, the QUEST religious orientation scale, in which higher scores indicate more willingness to question one's beliefs, appears to negatively correlate with right wing authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, prejudice, and anti LGBT attitudes (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992).

However, when it comes to a scale to look at Christian privilege, my review of the literature yielded only one measure that attempts to assess this construct---i.e., there is an 8-item subscale developed by Hays et al. (2007) in their Privilege and Oppression Inventory (POI). Unfortunately, this scale has limitations. For instance, the scale for validation was given only to counseling graduate students. This suggests that the overall generalizability and utility of the scale outside of a counseling setting is unknown. To address this, Hays et al., (2007) suggest administering the scale to a more diverse sample in addition to potentially adding more items to various scales in order to fully capture the constructs being measured (i.e., White, Christian, Straight and Male privilege). To my knowledge, no such scale utilizing a more diverse sample or using additional items with respect to Christian privilege exists.

### **Christianity as a Proxy for White Privilege/Racial Prejudice**

What does the history of Christianity in the US tell us about the phenomenon of White privilege in this country? As a rule, most people see these two categories of identities as separate and distinct from one another. However, recently, some scholars have suggested that adopting this view is a mistake. Sutton (2010), for example, has suggested that these two constructs are

fundamentally imbued with systematic inequalities that “mutually constitute and reinforce each other” (p. 10). This dovetails with Ferber’s (2012) view that both Christian and White privileges “intertwine” (p. 63) and contain the same fundamental processes that allow the beneficiaries of said privileges to deny its existence.

How do we unpack the interrelations between these privileged identities? We can start by looking at their commonalities. If we accept that a core tenet of most Christian faiths is the idea that those who follow God’s plan will be rewarded, and those who do not shall receive punishment, the analogous characteristics of Christian privilege and White privilege begins to more explicitly coalesce.

We start to see this picture emerge when we look at what research tells us about how Whites evangelicals (i.e., White Christians who believe that it is their duty to spread the message of Jesus and salvation to non-Christians) perceive Black vs. White racial inequality in society. White evangelical respondents tended to blame Black disadvantage on individual and characterological variables rather than external institutional ones (Edgell & Tranby, 2007). Within White evangelical circles, some scholars have posited that the cultural values surrounding “free will individualism ....[and] anti-structuralism” (Emerson et al., 1999, p. 400) may make it more difficult for many White evangelicals to understand racial differences as a function of systemic inequality.

Why might this be so? One of the justifications for chattel slavery in the colonies was the idea that Black Africans were a cursed people because they were the descendants of Ham (Lee, 2003). The core cultural values of free will and anti-structuralism, in addition to historical Christian justifications for various forms of oppression, may help to explain why Todd (2010) suggests that the United States history of oppression is tightly linked to Christianity. Edgell and

Tranby offer additional support for Todd (2010) when they consider the following conditional statement including a summarized quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: “If it is true that 11 o’clock on Sunday morning is ‘the most segregated hour in America,’ then racial isolation characterizes the religious experience of most churchgoers” (Edgell & Tranby, p. 267). To further quote Edgell and Tranby (2007), “religion and race interact to form a strong White sub-culture that fosters attitudes about social and political issues” (p. 267) that tend to reinforce the status quo at the expense of societal changes that might allow for a more truly egalitarian society.

But evidence for a link between Christianity and racial bias is not just anecdotal. When we consider what empirical research has revealed about this association, we know that there are numerous studies that have revealed a consistent link between aspects of Christianity and anti-Black bias. For example, a study by Johnson et al. (2010) found that participants primed with Christian words showed stronger anti-Black attitudes than those who were primed with more neutral words. This effect was found even after accounting for participants’ religiosity. Further, a study by Howard and Sommers (2017a) revealed that even after controlling for participants’ pre-manipulation self-ratings of religiosity, White respondents endorsed more negative attitudes concerning Black people after being subliminally primed with a White Jesus compared to a Black Jesus, or some non-race/religion based images (e.g., oranges). Ironically, we see an inverse reaction when the same manipulation was used on a sample of African American respondents (Howard & Sommers, 2017b). Specifically, Howard and Sommers found that when Black participants were exposed to an image of a White Jesus, they subsequently evinced more positive feelings toward White people compared to such ratings given when Black participants were exposed to non-religious White men, objects, or non-human religious objects. Taken

together, these studies suggest that there is something about Christianity that appears to elicit pro-White or anti-Black feelings and attitudes

Given the numerous links in the literature concerning the association of Christianity with racial bias (i.e., anti-Black or pro-White sentiments), these findings lend support to the contention that there seems to be something in the construct of Christianity that is intertwined with feelings of racial bias. That is, if both White privilege and certain aspects of Christianity are associated with anti-Black/pro-White sentiments in a similar fashion, then maybe this commonality offers additional justification for using White privilege as a rough analog to arrive at a better understanding of the construct of Christian privilege. Perhaps this finding helps to explain why both Christianity and White privilege predict anti-Black sentiments.

### **Christian Identity and Religious Privilege: A Sacred Taboo**

#### ***Christian Intolerance of Non-Christians***

Research by Cook et al. (2015) has shown that Christians perceive atheists to be a greater threat to their values than a general population of college students while also suggesting that Christians are more likely to openly discriminate against an atheist compared to a control group. College students were used as a baseline because it was thought that in-group preference would lead to participants feeling less threatened by an in group of other college students. Additionally, research further shows that Christians favor their in-group with higher levels of Christian religiosity being associated with more negative views of atheists (Johnson et al., 2012).

However, these types of negative beliefs do not exist solely between Christians and non-Christians per se. Christians have a long history of holding negative opinion towards women as well. Many of the early Christian scholars and their writings depict a worldview that embraces the notion that God made women to be subordinate to men (Martos & Hegy, 1998). This



hierarchical worldview is still present to this day with respect to marriage and ministry. Men (especially Christian men) are still generally expected to be the heads of their households and the Church (Martos & Hegy, 1998). This historical bias is supported by research that has shown a positive association between how literally someone interprets the Bible and their endorsement of benevolent sexism (Burn & Busso, 2005)---i.e., the “subjectively favorable, chivalrous ideology that offers protection and affection to women who embrace conventional roles” (Glick & Fiske, 2001, p. 109).

In addition to negative attitudes about women, Christianity is also commonly associated with bias toward LGBT individuals. A study by Trevino et al. (2012), suggests that messages containing anti LGB attitudes are fairly widespread and that exposure to these messages is associated with greater LGB prejudice. Other research has suggested that there is a link between religious fundamentalism and anti LGBTQ prejudice (Sanabria, 2012).

### ***Mechanisms of Christian Privilege***

For social privilege to exist, specific institutional mechanisms must also be present to propagate and maintain this privilege (Liu, 2017). Liu posits that it is our government, particularly our legislative branch (i.e., the branch that writes the laws of the society), that serves this purpose in the US. While Liu was primarily referencing White privilege in his discussion of this dynamic, I hope to generalize from this work in order to apply these suppositions to better understand how the construct of Christian privilege works in the United States.

How are these constructs similar? Well, to answer this question, we need only consider who is most likely to be elected to a public office in the US. To this end, Christian privilege is most evident in the United States by the fact that it appears that there is an association between a political candidate’s religious beliefs and their ability to garner public support. In other words,

candidates with atheist religious views would likely struggle to gain as much voter support as a Christian candidate (Lipka, 2014). Additional evidence in support of this can be gleaned from the fact that while only 70% of the US population identifies as Christian, 85% of the US Congress identifies as Christian (Pew Research Center, 2015; *Washington Times*, 2017). Additionally, 43 of the 45 Presidents in United States history have been Christian (Masci, 2017). Of the two who were not religiously affiliated, Thomas Jefferson “lost his faith in orthodox Christianity at an early age but continued to believe in an impersonal God as the creator of the universe” (Masci, 2017, para. 8). Additionally, the second religiously unaffiliated president, Abraham Lincoln, “was raised in a religious household and spoke frequently about God (particularly as president), but never joined a church” (Masci, 2017, para. 9). Masci (2017) asserts that the historical accuracy of Lincoln being a Christian is still hotly debated among history scholars. This trend to appoint Christian candidates to high positions in the US government is also evident in Supreme Court appointees---i.e., only nine Justices have ever endorsed a religious view that was something other than some denomination of Christianity (PBS NewsHour, 2018). Of those nine Justices, eight of them identified as Jewish, and one was not a member of a church. Despite the high number of Christian candidates available for such government positions, this rate of representation in the higher echelons of government is out of proportion to the number of Christians represented in the general population.

### ***Legislative Examples of Privilege***

Christian privilege manifests in the US not just in terms of the proportion of its leaders who are Christian, but also in the laws and policies that this country adopts. For example, Balingit (2018) found that several states have begun to allow the phrase, “In God We Trust,” to be displayed on taxpayer funded property. In Florida and Louisiana, such legislation has

mandated that public schools display this motto (Solochek, 2018; Mahoney, 2018; Associated Press, 2018). While some might argue that the use of this national maxim is not an example of our government's endorsement of Christianity over other religions, others have challenged this interpretation by pointing out that no one is thinking of Allah, Vishnu, or Thor when such dictums are evoked (CBS News, 2018). Additionally, we could rebut those who argue in support of the use of this aphorism by reminding pundits that some religions do not have a deity to worship, and some people do not believe in God(s) at all (Pew Research Center, 2015).

The privileged status for Christianity is not merely instantiated both by the adoption of pro-Christian laws in many states; it is also demonstrated by the fact that many legal challenges to such pro-Christian laws have been upheld by the courts. For example, in Illinois, a lawsuit that alleged that the use of the maxim, "In God We Trust," by government agencies is a violation of the First Amendment was denied on the basis that the motto was not an "endorsement," but rather a "historical reminder of the nation's heritage" (CBS News, 2018, p. 1). This conflation of national heritage with Christianity is a form of Christian privilege.

Despite the First Amendment's explicit prohibition against the State supporting any single religious group over others, the longstanding deference given to Christian priorities through the continued usage of slogans referencing a Christian God or patently Christian imperatives in government documents, monuments, and ceremonies reveals the degree to which Christianity is privileged above other religions by the US government. No other religious belief system is given this same degree of respect and societal influence within our government. The best examples of this bias can be gleaned from the passage of "religious freedom" bills in some states (Johnson & Steinmetz, 2015). Broadly speaking, these bills "[prohibit] laws from burdening religious freedom unless the government had a compelling interest and had used the

least restrictive means” (Miller, 2018, p. 1). This means that if a person can cite a deeply held religious objection to a particular law that they believe unnecessarily hinders their ability to practice their religion, they can ignore the law and not be prosecuted for violating it. This reasoning has been used by both individuals and various business and healthcare institutions to claim religious or moral objection to providing wedding and adoption services to members of LGBTQA communities (even in localities that have explicit laws preventing discrimination against these groups; Allison, 2020; Edelman, 2018; LeBlanc, 2019) as well as medical prescriptions for birth control and abortion access (Guttmacher Institute, 2019; National Women’s Law Center, 2017) in communities where utilizing such items and procedures are legal. However, this privilege does not just extend to allowing individuals to legally ignore state and federal laws.

Research by Van Camp et al. (2016) reveals another example of Christian privilege with respect to job application assessments. Their research had participants read and evaluate job applications for prospective job fit and personality. The hypothetical applications varied with respect to religious beliefs (i.e., Christian, Muslim or atheist) and race (i.e. White or Black). Their results indicated that Christian job applications were rated more favorably than non-Christian applicants. Interestingly, these authors found that some participants were willing to explicitly state that the job applicant’s religious views were a factor in their assessment of the applicant. Further, research by Swan et al. (2014) also supported this trend. When they investigated how hypothetical individuals of varying religious affiliations were evaluated, their results indicated that Christian participants indicated more positive feelings for individuals described as Christian compared to individuals described as atheistic.

Finally, as has been found with research on White privilege, Blumenfeld and Jaekel (2012) found that the tendency for those with privilege to deny this status appears to also occur for some Christians. Specifically, these researchers found that Christian preschool teachers in their sample denied the fact that Christians enjoy a privileged status in the United States.

### **How Might We Measure Christian Privilege?**

Efforts to articulate the constituent sentiments of Christian privilege have begun in the work of Schlosser (2003). Schlosser describes a set of core attitudes that represent this privilege, as illustrated by the following statements (pp. 48-49):

- “I do not need to educate my children to be aware of religious persecution for their daily physical and emotional protection.”
- “I can be sure if I need legal or medical help, my religion will not work against me.”
- “I do not need to worry about the ramifications of disclosing my religious identity to others.”
- “I can, if I wish to identify myself, safely identify as Christian without fear of repercussions or prejudice because of my religious identity.”
- “I can be fairly sure that some hate group does not exist whose goal is to eradicate my religious group from the planet.”

These sentiments merely give voice to the reality that Christians in the US do not face systemic discrimination at the hands of the government or as a consequence of historical disenfranchisement.

Members of other, non-Christian religions do not enjoy the aforementioned privilege in the US. A quick glance at the Southern Poverty Law Center’s (SPLC) Hate Map shows over

1,000 hate groups currently active in the United States (SPLC, 2018). Many of these groups show animus towards people of Muslim and Jewish faiths. This suggests that the United States is, by default, more friendly to Christian perspectives than other religious orientations.

### **Present Study**

With the present study, I hope to create a scale that will assess individuals' attitudes about the idea that Christians experience a privileged status in comparison to non-Christians in the United States. This measure will be based upon the previous scale development and theoretical work of various scholars who have explored the construct of White privilege (Neville et al., 2000; Pinterits et al., 2009; McIntosh, 2015). However, I shall apply their findings in the service of the development of an analogous scale to assess the construct of Christian privilege. To operationalize the items of my scale, I shall draw upon the list of privileges developed by Schlosser (2003) while also including adapted, analogous items found in the White privilege literature.

Further, this scale will be different from the Christian privilege subscale seen in the Privilege and Oppression Inventory (POI) in both content and volume. While the POI contains a relatively short number of items (i.e., 8), the proposed scale will consist of 29 items. Additionally, while the broad content of the POI Christian privilege subscale is solid (i.e., "Christians hold a lot of power because this country is based on their views," "Society is biased positively towards Christians," and "To be Christian is to have religious advantage in this country"; Hays et al., 2007, p. 73), it is not enough just to understand broadly that Christian privilege exists. It is also necessary to be able to situationally identify the manifestations of said privilege. In this area, the proposed scale content wise will attempt to address this by containing items that look at specific situational manifestations of Christian privilege.

Finally, the development of such a scale is important and the reason for this importance is best understood if we first consider the consequences of White privilege. It is documented that instances of police violence (Edwards et al., 2019), legal inequality (United States Sentencing Committee, 2017), and medical negligence (Hoffman et al., 2016) disproportionately negatively affect people of color compared to their White counterparts. As such, programs must be implemented to bridge this gap. In this pursuit, scales looking to measure the degree of White privilege awareness within the law enforcement, legal and medical communities can be a useful measurement tool to assess the efficacy of such diversity programs meant to mitigate the negative consequences brought on by a lack of privilege awareness. Moving to Christian privilege therefore, it is not a stretch to infer that such discrimination occurs as a result of Christian privilege as well. We already see such privilege-based assumptions exist in job application searches where Christians are seen as better candidates based on their religious beliefs (Van Camp et al., 2016). Further, it is unlikely such discrimination as a result of privilege stops there. Therefore, scales will need to be created and developed that can appropriately assess the efficacy of diversity programs geared towards bridging the differential outcomes and treatment that exists between Christians and non-Christians across and within multiple institutions and situations. This proposed scale can be a first step toward the creation of such a scale.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Participants consisted of self-identified Christian adults recruited from psychology courses at Eastern Michigan University (via SONA, an online research participant management program) and through the use of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Amazon Mechanical Turk. Christians were sufficient for this study because we were specifically interested in understanding how aware self-identified Christians are of their Christian privilege. Given that the hypothesized Christian privilege scale contained an initial 29 items, a minimum of 300 high quality participants were recruited for this study given the general guidelines to have a minimum of 10 responses per scale item.

### **General Procedure**

Upon signing up for the present study, participants were asked to read a consent form and provide electronic consent before moving into the actual study materials. Participants completed a series of demographic questions before completing the main instruments of this study (see Appendix A through F). These measures consisted of the proposed scale items as well as various measures that will be used to determine discriminate and convergent validity. Following completion of the various scale items, participants were given a debriefing form. Lastly, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they wished to receive research credit for participation in the study that they may use for course credit pending their individual instructor's approval (i.e., SONA recruited participants), or entered into a drawing to win one of four \$25.00 Amazon gift cards (i.e., social media recruited participants).



## Measures

### *Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)*

The CoBRAS is a 20-item scale that looks to measure the “cognitive dimension of color-blind racial attitudes” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 61). The consists of three factors: Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues (Neville et al., 2000). The Racial Privilege factor consists of seven items and assesses “blindness of the existence of White privilege (e.g., ‘White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin’).” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 63). The Racial Privilege factor has a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .83$  (Neville, et al, 2000). The Institutional Discrimination factor consists of seven items and assesses “awareness of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination and exclusion (e.g., ‘Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people’).” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 63). The Institutional Discrimination factor has a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .81$  (Neville, et al, 2000). The last factor, Blatant Racial Issues, consists of six items and assesses “unawareness to general, pervasive racial discrimination (e.g., ‘Social problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations’).” (Neville et al., 2000, p. 63). The Blatant Racial Issues factor has a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .76$  (Neville et al., 2000).

Individual items within each factor are rated on a 6-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating higher levels of awareness of racial privilege, institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues. The scale can be assessed either by looking at individual subscales or through a total score composite. The overall scale has been found to have a relatively high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ; Neville et al., 2000). For a complete list of questions please refer to Appendix A, and for a more in-depth analysis of the CoBRAS, see Neville et al. (2000).

***Social Dominance Orientation***

The Social Dominance Orientation scale is a 14-item scale that assesses “the extent to which one desires that one's in-group dominate and be superior to outgroups” (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 742). Initial work on the scale conceptualized the scale to include one singular factor measuring the extent people felt that “some people are inherently superior or inferior to others and [their] approval of unequal group relationships” (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 745). However, other scholars, based on their own factor analysis, have suggested that the SDO scale actually consists of two factors looking at “support for group-based dominance” and “opposition to equality” (Jost & Thompson, 2000, p. 217). Examples of individual items include the following: “Some groups of people are simply not the equals of others” and “If people were treated more equally, we would have fewer problems in this country” (p. 760).

Individual items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating more positive feelings towards each item and lower scores indicating more negative feelings towards each item. The overall scale has been found to have an adequate internal consistency score ( $\alpha = .83$ ; Pratto et al., 1994). Test-retest reliability has also been shown to be high ( $r = .81, p < .01$ ; Pratto et al., 1994). For a full list of items please refer to Appendix B, and for a more in-depth analysis of the Social Dominance Orientation scale, please refer to Pratto et al. (1994) as well as Jost and Thompson (2000).

***Religious Fundamentalism Scale***

The Religious Fundamentalism scale is a 12-item scale that looks to measure:

the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the  
fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity;  
that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be

vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity.

(Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, p. 118)

The scale consists of one singular factor measuring the extent people either agreed or disagree with various statements related to the above conceptualization of religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Examples of individual items include the following: “God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed” and “When you get right down to it, there are basically only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not” (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, p. 52).

Individual items are rated on a 9-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating higher and levels of agreement with each individual item and lower scores indicating higher levels of disagreement with each individual item. The overall scale has been found to have a high degree of internal consistency  $\alpha = .91$  (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). For a full list of items, please refer to Appendix C and for a more in-depth analysis of the Religious Fundamentalism scale, please refer to Altemeyer and Hunsberger (2004).

### ***Global Just World Belief Scale***

The Global Just World Belief scale is a 7-item scale that looks to measure “the general belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get” (Lipkus, 1991, p. 1172). The scale consists of one singular factor that looks to measure the extent to which people either agree or disagree with statements related to the conceptualization of a just world. Examples of

individual items include the following: “I feel that people get what they are entitled to have” and “I basically feel that the world is a fair place” (p. 1173).

Individual items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating higher levels of agreement with each individual item and lower scores indicating higher levels of disagreement with each individual item. The internal reliability of the items has been shown to be adequate ( $\alpha = .827$ ; Lipkus, 1991). For a full list of items please refer to Appendix D and for a more in-depth analysis of the Global Just World Belief scale, please refer to Lipkus (1991).

### ***Sanctification of Social Justice Scale***

The Sanctification of Social Justice Scale is a five-item scale that looks to “assesses how strongly individuals connect working for social justice to an expression of God’s will and what it means to be Christian” (Todd et al., 2014, p. 253). The scale consists of one singular factor that looks to measure the extent to which people agree or disagree with statements related to the conceptualization of the scale. Examples of individual items include the following: “My Christian beliefs encourage me to work for social justice” and “God wants Christians to work for social justice” (Todd et al., 2014, p. 249). Individual items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating higher levels of agreement with each individual item and lower scores indicating higher levels of disagreement with each individual item. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis by Todd et al. (2014) were  $\alpha = .79$  and  $\alpha = .82$ , respectively. For a full list of items, please refer to Appendix E for a more in-depth analysis of the Sanctification of Social Justice scale, please refer to Todd et al. (2014).

### ***Privilege and Oppression Inventory***

The Privilege and Oppression Inventory is a 39-item scale that looks to measure “counselors’ awareness of privilege and oppression along dimensions of race, sexual orientation,

religion, and gender” (Hays et al., 2007, p. 66). The scale consists of four factors that measure the extent of an individual’s awareness of Christian privilege, White privilege, Heterosexual privilege, and sexism awareness. Examples of individual items include the following: “Christian holidays are given more prominence in society than non-Christian holidays”, “Being White and having advantage go hand in hand”, “Many gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals fear for their safety,” and “I am aware that men typically make more money than women do” (Hays et. al., 2007, p. 72-74). Individual items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating higher levels of agreement with each individual item and lower scores indicating higher levels of disagreement with each individual item. Confirmatory factor analysis by Hays et al. (2007) suggested an overall scale Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .95$ . The individual subscale Cronbach alphas for White privilege awareness, Christian privilege awareness, heterosexism privilege awareness, and sexism awareness were  $\alpha = .92$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ , and  $\alpha = .79$ , respectively. For a full list of items please refer to Appendix F for a more in-depth analysis of the Privilege and Oppression Inventory, please refer to Hays, et al. (2007).

### ***Proposed Scale (Christian Privilege Awareness Scale)***

The Christian Privilege Awareness scale is a 29-item scale measuring an individual’s awareness of Christian privilege. Questions were based on or adapted from conceptually similar scale items contained in the WPAS (Pinterits et al., 2009), CoBRAS (Neville et al., 2000), and the work of Schlosser (2003). Fifteen of the items are forward scored, and 14 items were reverse scored. The scale is scored on a 11-point Likert scale, based on the recommendation of Wu and Leung (2017), from 0 (*very strongly disagree*) to 10 (*very strongly agree*) with higher scores indicating greater Christian privilege awareness and lower scores indicating lower Christian privilege awareness. For a full list of scale items, please refer to Appendix G.

## **Data Analysis Plan**

### ***Initial Case Retention***

From the raw data file, participants who took less than 10 minutes to complete the entire survey, failed to correctly answer at least five (of eight) attentions checks, or did not correctly identify the picture at the end as an eggplant were excluded. Additionally, in the event any data were submitted from the same IP address, only the earliest responses were retained. This left 389 total responses for analysis. Using pairwise deletion, the number of participants who completed the following scales were as follows: Christian Privilege Awareness Scale ( $n = 386$ ), Sanctification of Social Justice ( $n = 387$ ), Social Dominance Orientation ( $n = 384$ ), Privilege and Oppression Inventory ( $n = 369$ ), Global Just World Beliefs ( $n = 387$ ), Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale ( $n = 385$ ), and Religious Fundamentalism Scale ( $n = 385$ )

### ***Statistical Analyses***

Data were analyzed using R with the aid of RStudio. The following packages were used for general descriptive statistics and statistical analysis: “pastecs” (Grosjean & Ibanez, 2018), “GPArotation” (Bernards & Robert, 2005), “psych” (Revelle, 2000), “apaTables” (Stanley, 2021), “readxl” (Wickham & Bryan, 2019), and “foreign” (R Core Team, 2020). Data were analyzed using an exploratory factor analysis using the function “fa” from the psych package and the GPArotation package. Concurrent (i.e., “the amount of agreement between two different assessments;” Adams et al., 2014, p. 506) and convergent (i.e., “how closely the new scale is related to other variables and other measures of the same construct; Krabbe, 2017, p. 118) was also assessed.

## Results

### Participants

Participants ( $N = 389$ ) were recruited from SONA ( $n = 10$ ), Facebook ( $n = 59$ ), Twitter ( $n = 1$ ), and Reddit ( $n = 319$ ), and consisted of Christian participants between the ages of 18 and 77 ( $M = 26.16$ ,  $SD = 8.60$ ). Reddit participants were recruited from the r/SampleSize, r/dankchristianmemes, r/OpenChristian, r/Christianity, r/AskReddit, r/CasualConversation, r/Religion, and r/Reformed sub reddits. All participants were adults and from the United States. Of those 389 participants, 248 identified as male, 122 identified as female, four identified as trans-males, two identified as trans-females, six identified as non-binary/trans/queer, three indicated they preferred to not answer, three selected Other, and one participant did not respond to the question. The religious ideology of the sample consisted of Evangelical Christians ( $n = 71$ ), Protestant Christians ( $n = 166$ ), Catholics ( $n = 62$ ), and "Other" Christians ( $n = 90$ ). The educational attainment of the sample consisted of participants who did not complete high school ( $n = 6$ ), completed high school ( $n = 43$ ), had some college ( $n = 106$ ), or attained one of the following degrees: associate's ( $n = 29$ ), bachelor's ( $n = 133$ ), master's ( $n = 49$ ), doctoral ( $n = 9$ ), or either a J.D. or M.D. ( $n = 14$ ). The racial makeup of the sample consisted of White individuals ( $n = 287$ ), Blacks/African American individuals ( $n = 14$ ), Hispanics/Latino individuals ( $n = 28$ ), Other individuals ( $n = 17$ ), and many who were of various multi-racial identities ( $n = 43$ ).

### Exploratory Factor Analysis Assumptions

The bivariate correlation, homogeneity, multicollinearity, adequate sample size, and normality assumptions were analyzed. The bivariate correlation, homogeneity (Bartlett test  $p < .001$ ), sample size ( $KMO = .94$ ), and multicollinearity assumptions were met. However, the normality assumption was violated as evidenced by the Shapiro Wilk test,  $p < .001$ , meaning that

the model residuals were not normally distributed. Additionally, the mean total score was not normally distributed (*skew* = -.42, *kurtosis* = -.22).

### **Initial Item Omission Process**

Per the suggestions of Fields, Mills and Field (2012) to consider removing initial items with multiple inter item correlations above  $r = .80$  and below  $r = .30$ , a correlation matrix of the original proposed a 28-item (one item was removed due to a typo error discovered midway through data collection) Christian Privilege Awareness Scale was analyzed to look for individual items with multiple correlations either above  $r = .80$  or below  $r = .30$ . Given these criteria, one item (i.e., “Religious minorities are treated better than Christians in the United States?”) was removed due to several item correlations above  $r = .80$ . An additional three items (i.e., “I can reasonably expect my Christian beliefs to be respected by the people around me,” “I can easily find Christian music on a local radio station,” and “A declaration of my Christian faith does not come with personal consequences”) were removed due to being correlated less than  $r = .30$  with at least half of the total items. This brought the proposed scale down to 24 total items.

### **Factor Solution**

A factor analysis was performed on the shortened (now only 24-items) preliminary Christian privilege awareness scale. A parallel analysis suggested a four-factor solution, solutions of three, four and five factors were analyzed with both varimax orthogonal and oblimin oblique rotations to assess potential factor loading error and subsequent fit. Additional preliminary analyses indicated that two items consistently cross loaded in both the orthogonal and oblique rotations. These items were removed, and the analysis was re-calculated.

A second parallel analysis suggested a four-factor solution for the 22 remaining items. Thus, solutions of three, four, and five factors were analyzed with both varimax orthogonal and



oblmin oblique rotations. The results of these analyses suggested that a three-factor oblique solution was the best solution due to the relative variance explained in addition to the lack of cross loadings. However, the third factor contained only one item. At the suggestion of Costello et al. (2005), this free-standing item was removed leaving a potential two factor solution.

A final parallel analysis suggested a three-factor solution for the remaining 21 items, so solutions of two, three and four factors were analyzed with both varimax orthogonal and oblmin oblique rotations. After taking into account total variance explained (40%) and cross loadings (zero), a two-factor oblique solution was selected as being the best solution for the reduced 21-item scale.

The first factor appeared to get at the theme of Christian exceptionalism related to Christian privilege with items such as the following:

- a. "If someone's Christian values dictate that they not hire a gay/lesbian person for a job, then that choice should be respected by the rest of society."
- b. "Religious minorities do not have the same benefits as Christians."
- c. "It is acceptable to only have Christian faith symbols on government property (i.e., courthouses)."

The second factor appeared to get at the theme of an awareness of freedom from discrimination, related to Christian privilege with items such as the following:

- a. "I do not have to worry about losing relationships because of my Christian faith"
- b. "I do not have to worry about losing my job because of my Christian faith".
- c. "It is easy to find places of worship to practice my Christian faith."
- d. "I do not have to worry about being denied services because of my Christian faith."
- e. "I can be certain that my Christian views will be accepted by in-laws"

For a full list of items, please refer to Table 1.

### **Reliability**

The 21-item overall scale Christian Privilege Awareness Scale showed a high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ; CI: .90-.92) with the 16-item Christian Exceptionalism and 5-item Freedom From Discrimination subscales having high ( $\alpha = .92$ ; CI: .90-.93) and acceptable ( $\alpha = .74$ ; CI: .69-.78) internal consistencies, respectively.

### **Total Item Validity Assessment**

To assess the concurrent and convergent validity of the Christian Privilege Awareness Scale, the total score was correlated with the following scales: Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale (Hays et al., 2007) , Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale (Hays et al., 2007), Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994), Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al., 2000), Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), Global Just World Beliefs Scale (Lipkus, 1991), and the Sanctification for Social Justice Scale (Todd et al., 2014). For correlations, see Table 2 and Table 3.

### ***Total Item Concurrent Validity***

The Christian Privilege Awareness Scale showed positive correlations with the Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale ( $r = .78$ ) and the Sanctification for Social Justice scale ( $r = .59$ ) while showing negative correlations with the Social Dominance Orientation ( $r = -.70$ ), Religious Fundamentalism scale ( $r = -.62$ ), Global Just World Belief scale ( $r = -.43$ ) and CoBRAS scale ( $r = -.83$ ). These correlations suggest that individuals who score highly on the proposed scale (i.e., more Christian privilege awareness), also show higher level of White privilege awareness (i.e., Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale), a

greater endorsement of the idea that working for social justice is a core part of being a Christian (i.e., the Sanctification for Social Justice scale), a relative lack of colorblind attitudes (i.e., CoBRAS), a relative lack of belief in the idea of natural social hierarchies (i.e., Social Dominance Orientation), low religious fundamentalism (i.e., Religious Fundamentalism Scale), and a lack of belief that the world is a just place (i.e., Global Just World Belief). The initial scale appears to have appropriate degree of concurrent validity.

### ***Total Item Convergent Validity***

Additionally, the proposed scale's positive correlations with the Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale ( $r = .84$ ) suggest that the initial scale also shows an appropriate degree of convergent validity.

### **Christian Exceptionalism Validity Assessment**

To assess the concurrent and convergent validity of the Christian Exceptionalism subscale, the subscale was correlated with the following scales: Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale (Hays et al., 2007), Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale (Hays et al., 2007), Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994), Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al., 2000), Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), Global Just World Beliefs Scale (Lipkus, 1991), and the Sanctification for Social Justice Scale (Todd et al., 2014). For correlations, see Table 2 and Table 3.

### ***Christian Exceptionalism Subscale Concurrent Validity***

The Christian Exceptionalism subscale showed positive correlations with the Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale ( $r = .79$ ) and the Sanctification for Social Justice scale ( $r = .61$ ) while also showing negative correlations with the Social Dominance

Orientation ( $r = -.71$ ), Religious Fundamentalism scale ( $r = -.64$ ), Global Just World Belief scale ( $r = -.47$ ), and CoBRAS scale ( $r = -.83$ ). These correlations suggest that individuals who score highly on the Christian exceptionalism subscale (i.e., more Christian privilege awareness), also show higher level of White privilege awareness (i.e., Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale), a greater endorsement of the idea that working for social justice is a core part of being a Christian (i.e., the Sanctification for Social Justice scale), a relative lack of colorblind attitudes (i.e., CoBRAS), a relative lack of belief in the idea of natural social hierarchies (i.e., Social Dominance Orientation), low religious fundamentalism (i.e., Religious Fundamentalism Scale), and a lack of belief that the world is a just place (i.e., Global Just World Belief). The initial subscale appears to have appropriate degree of concurrent validity.

#### ***Christian Exceptionalism Subscale Convergent Validity***

Additionally, the proposed subscale's positive correlations with the Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale ( $r = .81$ ) suggests that the initial scale also shows an appropriate degree of convergent validity.

When comparing the Christian Exceptionalism subscale correlation to the Privilege and Oppression Christian Privilege subscale, the scales are strongly positively correlated ( $r = .81$ ). When comparing the Christian Exceptionalism subscale correlations to the Privilege and Oppression Christian Privilege subscale correlations, both scales are not statistically different in their predictive ability for the Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale, Global Just World Beliefs scale, and Sanctification for Social Justice scale. The Christian Exceptionalism subscale statistically differs from the Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale in the Christian Exceptionalism subscale's greater predictive ability

for the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, Social Dominance Orientation, and Religious Fundamentalism scale.

### **Freedom from Discrimination Validity Assessment**

To assess the concurrent and convergent validity of the Freedom From Discrimination subscale, the subscale was correlated with the following scales: Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale (Hays et al., 2007) , Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale (Hays et al., 2007), Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994), Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al., 2000), Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), Global Just World Beliefs Scale (Lipkus, 1991), and the Sanctification for Social Justice Scale (Todd et al., 2014). For correlations, see Table 2 and Table 3.

### ***Freedom From Discrimination Subscale Concurrent Validity***

The Freedom From Discrimination subscale showed positive correlations with the Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale ( $r = .37$ ) and the Sanctification for Social Justice scale ( $r = .27$ ) while also showing negative correlations with the Social Dominance Orientation ( $r = -.30$ ), Religious Fundamentalism scale ( $r = -.24$ ), and CoBRAS scale ( $r = -.36$ ). These correlations suggest that individuals who score highly on the Christian exceptionalism subscale (i.e., more Christian privilege awareness), also show higher level of White privilege awareness (i.e., Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale), a greater endorsement of the idea that working for social justice is a core part of being a Christian (i.e., the Sanctification for Social Justice scale), a relative lack of colorblind attitudes (i.e., CoBRAS), a relative lack of belief in the idea of natural social hierarchies (i.e., Social

Dominance Orientation), and low religious fundamentalism (i.e., Religious Fundamentalism Scale).

### ***Freedom from Discrimination Subscale Convergent Validity***

Additionally, when comparing the Freedom From Discrimination subscale correlation to the Privilege and Oppression Christian privilege subscale the scales are moderately positively correlated ( $r = .54$ ).

When comparing the Freedom From Discrimination subscale and the Privilege and Oppression Christian Privilege subscale, both scales are associated in the same direction (albeit the Privilege and Oppression Christian subscale being stronger) for the Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale, Color-Blind Racial Attitudes scale, Social Dominance Orientation, Religious Fundamentalism scales, and Sanctification for Social Justice scale.

When comparing the Freedom From Discrimination subscale correlations with those of the Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale correlations, they are statistically different on their ability to predict Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale, Color-Blind Racial Attitudes scale, Global Just World Beliefs, Social Dominance Orientation, Religious Fundamentalism scale, and Sanctification for Social Justice scale.

### **Subscale Correlational Relationships**

When comparing the Christian Exceptionalism subscale correlations to the Freedom From Discrimination subscale correlations as they relate to the Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale, Privilege and Oppression Inventory White Privilege subscale, Color-Blind Racial Attitudes scale, Social Dominance Orientation, Religious Fundamentalism scale, and Sanctification for Social Justice scale, the correlations are

statistically significant and in the same direction. The only difference is in the effect size between the scales (with the Christian Exceptionalism subscale being a stronger predictor compared to the Freedom From Discrimination subscale across all the above scales). The lone correlational difference (outside of effect size) exception concerns the Global Just World Beliefs scale, which is non-significantly related to the Freedom from Discrimination subscale, but negatively correlated (at a statically significant level) with the Christian Exceptionalism subscale.

## **Discussion**

While there are many scales that look at a variety of privilege related constructs (e.g., racism, sexism, and White privilege), there is still much to be understood broadly speaking about how these various constructs influence and shape human thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. This is not only particularly true within the realm of Christian privilege but also an imperative gap to fill. Christianity within the United States is pervasive in its influence. Christianity influences public policy regarding women's reproductive rights (i.e., abortion rights) and LGBTQA+ rights (i.e., marriage equality and anti-discrimination laws). It has found its way into schools in the form of teaching creationism or intelligent design in science classrooms. Christianity has even been used to justify the accessibility of medication (i.e., birth control) and medical care. In light of this religious influence, it is important to explicitly be able to understand the values and attitudes that result in these societal outcomes. Two explicit elements of that understanding include understanding not only those attitudes and beliefs but also the awareness of the influence that Christianity has in the United States.

The initial results of this study suggest the existence of two subscales which both show preliminary evidence of measuring two facets of the construct of Christian privilege among Christians. While both subscales are positively correlated with each other and, broadly speaking, appear to assess the construct of Christian privilege awareness, these constructs are distinct enough to warrant separate descriptions.

### **Christian Exceptionalism Subscale**

The first factor consists of 16-items and appears to measure a construct labeled Christian Exceptionalism. It taps themes associated with the idea that Christians enjoy implicit and explicit advantages in society (e.g., "Christian doctors should not lose their jobs due to an unwillingness



to provide services that violate their religious beliefs” and “It is acceptable to only have Christian faith symbols on government property [e.g., courthouses]”). Higher scores on this subscale indicate greater awareness of Christian exceptionalism. Because the nature of a privilege is predicated upon the denial of the same to others, it is not surprising that the current analyses revealed that items whose face validity appears to tap themes that highlight the advantages (i.e., exceptionalism) that come with being Christian tended to group together.

### **Freedom From Discrimination Subscale**

The second factor included 5-items that appear to measure a theme related to the idea that one of the privileges that comes with being a Christian in the US is that one is generally *free from experiencing discrimination* as a function of endorsing this faith. This construct was named the Freedom From Discrimination subscale. Constituent items in this subscale included statements that explicitly expressed this sentiment (e.g., “I do not have to worry about losing relationships because of my Christian faith” and “I do not have to worry about losing my job because of my Christian faith”). Higher scores indicate a greater awareness that participants are not discriminated against because of their Christian faith.

### **Concurrent Validity**

The proposed Christian Exceptionalism and Freedom From Discrimination subscales both demonstrate concurrent validity with the White privilege measure (i.e., the Privilege and Oppression Inventory’s White Privilege Awareness subscale) and Sanctification of Social Justice measure (i.e., a greater endorsement of the idea that working for social justice is a core part of being a Christian) while showing negative correlations with color-blind racial attitudes (i.e., how much people want to see the world as racially neutral), social dominance orientation (i.e., how willing one is to endorse social hierarchies), and religious fundamentalism (i.e., the degree to

which someone interprets their faith literally). This means that higher levels of awareness of Christian exceptionalism corresponded with lower levels of color-blind racial attitudes, lower levels of social dominance orientation, and lower levels of religious fundamentalism.

Conceptually the fact that the Christian Exceptionalism subscale correlates strongly with the Privilege and Oppression Christian Privilege subscale suggests that these are measuring a similar construct. However, the Christian Exceptionalism subscale is distinct from the Privilege and Oppression Christian privilege subscale in that the Christian Exceptionalism subscale more strongly predicts the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes scale, Social Dominance Orientation, and the Religious Fundamentalism scale. Further, the fact that the Freedom From Discrimination subscale correlates in the same direction as the Christian Exceptionalism subscale and the Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale (with the exception of the Global Just World Beliefs measure) also suggests the Freedom from Discrimination subscale also is tapping the same construct. However, given the Freedom from Discrimination subscales significantly lower effect sizes across all measures compared to both the Christian Exceptionalism subscale and Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale, further research might wish to investigate whether the subscale is worth dropping.

Additionally, the strong positive relationship between the proposed scale and measures of White privilege also makes sense. While it is true that Christian and White privilege are distinct (and separate) manifestations of privilege broadly speaking, it is also reasonable to suggest that they share overlapping mechanistic underpinnings (i.e., societal and legal support). As such, we might speculate that those who are able to see one manifestations of social privilege (e.g., White privilege) should also be able to recognize other forms of privilege such as Christian privilege. Research supports this contention. Specifically, studies suggest those who are aware of White

privilege are also more likely to be aware of other forms of privilege---e.g., heterosexual privilege (Garrett-Walker et al., 2018; Hays et al., 2007). A corollary of this finding would be that those who are aware of various forms of social privilege ought to be more able to perceive various forms of discrimination compared to those who do not see privilege.

The fact that both the Christian Exceptionalism subscale and the Freedom From Discrimination subscale both share moderate to strong negative relationships with measures of color-blind racial attitudes, social dominance orientation, and religious fundamentalism suggests that these two subscales are both likely tapping a similar construct (i.e., Christian privilege). With regards to the relationship between the subscales and color-blind racial attitudes, research on various forms of privilege have suggested that higher levels of color-blind racial attitudes are associated with lower levels of privilege awareness across multiple domains (i.e., White privilege, class privilege, Christian privilege, heterosexual privilege, and male privilege; Garrett-Walker et al., 2018). Additionally, with respect to the relationship between the two Christian privilege subscales and social dominance orientation, research has suggested a general negative relationship between social dominance orientation and measures of privilege awareness (Lantz et al., 2018). This suggests that similar to other measures of societal privilege, high degrees of Christian privilege awareness also coincide with lower belief in the idea that society should be structured in a hierarchical manner (i.e., the idea that some groups are more deserving of societal privilege than others). A central tenant of Social Dominance Orientation is the tendency for those who believe in it to partake in legitimizing myths (i.e., how individuals rationalize the societal distribution of social privilege; Levin, et al., 1998). Therefore, privilege denial could be considered one type of legitimizing myth.

With regard to the relationship between the subscale and religious fundamentalism, research has suggested that religious fundamentalism has a generally negative relationship with other forms of privilege awareness (e.g., White privilege; Todd et al., 2015).

Lastly, the Christian Exceptionalism (but not the Freedom From Discrimination subscale) is negatively correlated with the Global Just World Beliefs scale (i.e., “the general belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get”; Lipkus, 1991, p. 1172). This suggests that higher awareness of Christian exceptionalism corresponds with less willingness to believe that people generally get what they deserve. The Freedom From Discrimination subscale shows no correlation with global just world beliefs. The relationship between the Christian Exceptionalism subscale and the Global Just World Beliefs scale conceptually makes sense. It could be argued that the idea of seeing some group as being exceptional (i.e., more privileged) means that one could have a more difficult time endorsing the idea that people get what they deserve given the disadvantage that comes with privileged identities.

### **Convergent Validity**

With respect to convergent validity, the Christian Exceptionalism subscale was shown to be positively associated with previous attempts at measuring Christian privilege (i.e., Privilege and Oppression Inventory Christian Privilege subscale), meaning as awareness of Christian exceptionalism increased, so too did awareness of White privilege. This suggests that the proposed scale does appear to be measuring a similar construct to the one proposed by Hays et al. (2007).

The Freedom From Discrimination subscale was also shown to be positively associated with the Privilege and Oppression Inventory’s Christian Privilege subscale meaning that the more aware Christians were that they were not discriminated against because of their Christian

faith, the more aware they also were of Christian privilege. This suggests that the subscale does appear to be measuring a similar construct to the one proposed by Hays, et al. (2007) despite the additional items having been added.

### **Interpretations**

The high degree of correlation between the Christian Exceptionalism subscale and the White Privilege Awareness subscale of the Privilege and Oppression Inventory suggests at least the possibility that Christian privilege and White privilege are so interconnected that they are, in a sense, the same construct. This would be consistent with the theories of Ferber (2012), who posits that the constructs of Christian and White privilege are connected. However, it is also possible that this high intercorrelation is at least partially the result of an unaccounted byproduct of the sample. Specifically, a majority of participants indicated possessing at least three privileged identities (i.e., White, Christian, and Male). It is possible, therefore, that this sample is overrepresented by participants who may be the least aware of the manifestations of privilege because of their experiences of having privilege across those identities. One might speculate that responses from such a sample on various privilege-oriented scales might be highly correlated due to a tendency for individuals with privilege to lack an awareness of this privilege. As such, this suggests that more work is necessary to fully differentiate measures of White privilege awareness from those of Christian privilege awareness. One potential way of doing this could be to compare how Black versus White Christians answer measures of Christian and White privilege. One would expect that if Christian privilege and White privilege are the same construct, there should be no difference between how Black and White Christians answer measures looking at both White and Christian privilege. If a difference did exist, I would expect Black and White Christians to score similarly on measures of Christian privilege while scoring

similarly on measures of White privilege. Further, even if White and Christian privilege are the same construct, this is interesting because it would provide quantitative evidence of previous historical and qualitative research (i.e., the interconnected nature of White supremacy and Christianity). Further, this could suggest, albeit controversially, that some forms of Christianity within the United States are inextricably linked to the country's history of systemic racism. Societally, this would suggest that so long as the United States grants privilege to the Christian faith, such policies likely also uphold White supremacy in the process. This has far reaching implications beyond the scope and intentions of this paper and includes the possibility that additional differences in responses could be seen across gender lines and other identities.

While participants scores on the Freedom From Discrimination subscale appear to be moderately positively correlated with the scores on the Christian Exceptionalism subscale, the Freedom From Discrimination subscale tended to show weaker associations with the other scales that what was observed with between the other scales and the Christian Exceptionalism subscale. This suggests that both subscales are tapping a similar construct, but the Christian Exceptionalism subscale is measuring the construct in a more robust manner. The one exception to this trend is the relationship between both subscales and the Global Just World Beliefs scale. The fact that the Global Just World Beliefs scale is negatively correlated with the Christian Exceptionalism subscale but not correlated with the Freedom From Discrimination subscale suggests that the Freedom From Discrimination subscale is tapping an additional construct with respect Christian privilege awareness that is not being tapped by the Christian Exceptionalism subscale. While this finding deserves further study, one could argue the apparent absence of a relationship between participants awareness that Christians don't experience discrimination because of their religious affiliation and their belief that the world is fair suggests that

understanding this fact is not related to one's ability to see societal privilege and inequality. It seems logical to suggest that if someone does not perceive themselves to be discriminated against, they may be less likely to see the world as unfair. It could also be the case that someone can understand that they are not discriminated against because of their religion while also not realizing they may be enjoying unearned benefits that come with a lack of discrimination. To this end, future iterations of this scale could add items such as "It should be okay for a Christian organization to deny employment to someone because they aren't Christian," or "It should not be legal in this country for Muslims to choose **not** to hire someone just because they are Christian" to attempt to flesh out the distinction between understanding that one is discriminated against and understanding that while one may not be discriminated against personally, this does not mean others are not.

### **Practical Uses**

This scale and the associated findings, while encouraging, are just a first step. Conceptually, the primary objective and purpose of this scale is for training and research purposes. It is my hope that this scale will be able to be used to help individuals better understand and recognize the under-researched area of societal privilege that is Christian privilege. The findings detailed in this paper highlight the reality that societal privilege is complex and should not be looked at merely in isolation. Multicultural training can help to elucidate this by looking at how participant scores on this proposed scale correlate with other measures of racism, social dominance belief, etc. Further, continuing research to explore how scores on this proposed scale predict other relevant behaviors would greatly enhance this process.

One must consider how privilege (and its essential foil, oppression) interact with other identities to result in systemically different outcomes in society. In this regard, outcomes of privilege and oppression are multifaceted interactions between identities. One approach to helping to conceptualize these complex interactions that lead to differential treatment across sundry disciplines (e.g., counseling, medicine) is the idea of intersectionality (Chan et al., 2018; Wilson et al., 2019). Simply put, this is a framework that attempts to assess how holding different identities can result in varying social and political outcomes for people resulting from the interaction between multiple identities (both marginalized and privileged; Chan et al., 2018).

For example, the experiences of a Black atheist man may be different than those of a Black Christian man. While both hold marginalized racial identities, the Christian Black man holds a privileged religious identity that his atheist counterpart lacks. An intersectional approach allows for people to hold both privileged and oppressed identities simultaneously. The competing consequences of such privileged and marginalized identities functions to produce differing outcomes on a daily basis for each individual as a result of holding these interlaced and contradictory identities.

Why is helping others to understand privilege important? To understand this, an example from counseling psychology is particularly useful. Specifically, research has found that there is a positive relationship between a client's perceptions of the multicultural competence of their counselor and the client's satisfaction (Tao et al., 2015). Further, Mindrup et al. (2011) has found that among White social workers and clinical psychology therapists, higher levels of White privilege awareness is associated with higher levels of multicultural competency. Finally, research exploring the effects of taking psychology diversity courses has revealed that courses geared toward helping others to better understand the differential treatment groups receive as a



function of race help students to better become aware of their own privileged status while also raising their degree of support for affirmative action programs (Case, 2007). These findings suggest that not only is privilege awareness important from a therapeutic competency perspective, but it is also impactful on client outcomes. However, the benefits to understanding privilege go beyond just mental health contexts.

One could potentially look to use this scale in a multicultural training context as well. For example, one might imagine that understanding one's Christian privilege can not only help individuals to understand how privilege works in the everyday, but also how these everyday instances compound in ways that are indistinguishable to those who benefit, but obvious to those who do not. This might even inspire individuals who hold privileged identities to recognize real world examples of Christian privilege more readily as they unfold. For example, understanding Christian privilege may allow previously oblivious Christians to see how phrases such as "In God We Trust" encapsulate the privileged status that Christianity (and by extension Christians) have in the United States. Further, Christians may also be able to see religious freedom laws for what they truly are (i.e., a license to discriminate) versus a false narrative of Christian persecution. However, this does not mean that such a Christian privilege scale is only useful to those who directly have privilege. One might imagine that this scale could help those who are not Christian, to better understand not only Christian privilege, but also Christians more broadly speaking.

Research has suggested that not only is awareness of White privilege among Christians positively correlated with a willingness to partake in social justice (Todd et al., 2015), it is also in White individuals' best interests to eliminate racial privilege because those most aware of racial privilege are more likely to have poorer mental health (Fujishiro, 2009). Fujishiro speculates

many factors that may explain this finding (for more detail see Fujishiro, 2009). For example, Fujishiro hypothesizes that poor mental health could be a consequence of the guilt White participants have in reaction to their awareness of their racial privilege. It is possible that for those who value fairness in the world, the realization that they unfairly benefit at the expense of others, is an uncomfortable and potentially distressing realization. This suggests that even systems of oppression that benefit one race over another can have negative health outcomes for those for whom the system is designed to benefit. While one could argue that for White individuals, the mentally healthy cognitive strategy upon learning of White privilege would be to remain ignorant, I argue that this is unrealistic. Upon learning of one's unfair privilege and experiencing the potential guilt that comes from that knowledge, it may be difficult for people to simply remain ignorant. Rather another, more pragmatic, strategy would be to join the cause for racial equality by committing to tearing down the racial hierarchies that are the source of racial inequality. In doing this, individuals by extension would be ridding themselves of guilt as a consequence.

Based on the above, one could reasonably speculate that similar relationships may also exist with Christian privilege that exist with White privilege. Thus, it is not only possible for people at the individual and systematic levels to recognize actions and policies that discriminate against those who are not in the majority, but also that such insight may mitigate the deleterious consequences of privilege for both oppressed and non-oppressed religious groups (e.g., greater awareness of privilege ought to predict better general mental and emotional health for Christians).

While tools exist to help aid medical doctors, mental health professionals, and the general scientific community to better understand privilege and oppression with respect to identities involving race and gender, relatively few tools exist to aid these professionals in understanding

how these constructs can influence the treatment of Christians and non-Christians. The two subscales identified within this Christian privilege awareness scale add tools that will allow educators to foster greater awareness of this aspect of the how Christians understand their religious identity and the privileges that come with that identity.

## **Limitations and Future Directions**

### **Limitations**

While this research provides initial promising results for measuring Christian privilege awareness, it is not without its limitations. For instance, the sample used for this study was obtained using a combination of SONA, Reddit, and Facebook with an incentive to win one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards in a raffle. As such, the sample is largely a convenience sample. While there may be bias from participants ability to self-select into the study, and therefore limit the generalizability of these findings, this criticism could be levied at all ethical research because all research requires voluntary self-selection.

Because this scale was developed to be used with only Christian respondents, more research will need to be conducted to explore whether or not some modification of this measure might also be valid for other religious groups. Further, it may be useful to look at how age, gender, race, and religious denomination influence this measure to better establish the generalizability and utility of this measure among a more diverse sample.

### **Future Directions and Conclusion**

Given the preliminary nature of the study, future research should include additional confirmatory studies to further support the identified factor structure of this nascent measure, as well as exploring how more well-established theories of Christian identification (e.g., the Quest religious orientation scale by Batson and Schoenrade [1991] that measures “the degree to which an individual’s religion involves an open-ended, responsive dialogue with existential questions raised by the contradictions and tragedies of life” [pp. 430-431]) may be associated with these attitudes. For example, future research may wish to investigate the degree to which high quest oriented Christian individuals recognize their Christian privileges compared to Christians with

lower QUEST orientations. Further, investigating relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity as they relate to scores on the Christian privilege awareness scale may also be useful. Additionally, further research will need to examine the discriminate validity of the proposed measure given the initially high correlations between it and the White privilege scales included in this study.

Researchers would be wise to see to what extent, if any, Black compared to White Christians respond differentially to measures of both White and Christian privilege, respectively. These studies should explore whether Christian privilege awareness can be appropriately detected by the proposed measure. Such studies are necessary to explore deeper level questions such as the degree to which Christian privilege awareness is associated with empathy similar to Pinterits, et al. (2009) investigated the relationship between racial privilege and empathy, among White participants, where they found that White participants with higher levels of racial privilege awareness had higher levels of empathy. Such a finding could partially explain why some Christians, who do not believe they are privileged, support legislation to deny some groups rights (i.e., marriage equality) that they themselves enjoy.

Further, a future study could look to assess how Black individuals of various religious identities respond to the Christian Privilege Awareness items. For example, Black Christians may score differently compared to Black Muslims due to different experiences. One might expect both to be aware of the dynamics of White privilege within the United States. However, the paths that lead one to embrace the tenets of Christianity and Islam are different for Black individuals. As mentioned previously, Christianity was used as a legitimizing tool for the enslavement of Africans in the colonies and the United States (i.e., the Bible was interpreted by many slave holders as supporting the enslavement of the children of Ham, and it was

simultaneously used to encourage enslaved people of African descent to accept the pain of their current lives because it was merely the cost of getting into Heaven after their deaths). However, this embracing of Christianity is not universal by Black individuals. Some have refused to follow Christianity due to their view that Christianity is “the religion of the oppressor” (Zauzmer, 2019, para. 22). This divergence in religious experiences among Black people in the US may be useful in assessing the validity of the proposed measure because while one would expect Black Christians and Muslims to view White privilege similarly, this would not be expected for Christian privilege (i.e., Muslims and Christians should vary in their Christian privilege awareness). This would further support the validity of the proposed measure. However, should either of these hypotheses not be supported, it would further lend credibility to the idea that White privilege and Christian privilege are the same construct.

It is also important to ensure that the measure is appropriate and sensitive enough to detect changes in an individual’s awareness of their own Christian privilege as well as to test the degree to which White vs. Christian privilege can be distinguished. This research is necessary before this scale should be used in applied setting (e.g., medical, legal, law enforcement, etc.).

Taken together, this research is preliminary in nature. However, this research does provide an initial promising start for developing an instrument that assesses Christian privilege awareness within Christian populations. This work builds on the work of Schlosser (2003) and Hays, et al. (2007) by providing a second instrument to evaluate the awareness of Christian privilege generally, while also focusing such assessment upon Christian participants more specifically. Additionally, this work assesses the construct of Christian privilege in much the same manner that White privilege awareness and attitudes are measured by various instruments (e.g., Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, White Privilege Attitudes Scale).

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Table 1

*Factor Loadings of Christian Privilege Awareness Scale*

Items	Factors		U <sub>2</sub>	M	SD
	Exceptionalism ( $\alpha = .92$ )	Freedom from Discrimination ( $\alpha = .74$ )			
1. If someone's Christian values dictate that they not hire a gay/lesbian person for a job, then that choice should be respected by the rest of society.	.79	-.08	.43	7.42	3.53
2. Religious minorities do not have the same benefits as Christians?	.76	.01	.41	6.95	3.01
3. Christian doctors should not lose their jobs due to an unwillingness to provide services that violate their religious beliefs.	.73	-.06	.51	5.11	3.60
4. It is acceptable to only have Christian faith symbols on government property (i.e. courthouses).	.72	-.01	.48	7.73	3.01
5. Discrimination towards religious minorities does not happen frequently?	.71	-.08	.54	8.20	2.58
6. Christians have certain advantages in the US due to their religious affiliation?	.69	.13	.42	6.96	2.85
7. Religious minorities should adapt to the Christian culture of the United States?	.68	.03	.53	8.20	2.79
8. It is important for political leaders to be inclusive towards minority faiths?	.67	.05	.51	8.65	2.51
9. The separation of religion from politics unfairly discriminates against Christians?	.65	.07	.54	8.72	2.60
10. Discrimination towards Christians happens frequently in the United States?	.62	.12	.53	6.82	2.86
11. It is easier to be a Christian in the United States compared to a member of other faiths?	.60	.25	.43	8.35	2.52

*Table 1 continued*

12. Doctors should be able to refuse service to patients if the doctor's Christian values conflict with a patient's lifestyle.	.60	-.01	.65	8.18	3.42
13. Everyone who works hard, regardless of religious affiliation can obtain wealth?	.57	-.22	.75	4.87	3.58
14. Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion.	.50	-.07	.78	5.87	3.19
15. Our society promotes a Christian culture?	.46	.19	.67	5.78	3.11
16. Only Christian teachers should be allowed to share their Christian values with their students.	.40	-.04	.85	8.72	2.45
17. I do not have to worry about losing relationships because of my Christian faith.	-.05	.70	.54	6.94	2.98
18. I do not have to worry about losing my job because of my Christian faith.	.10	.69	.45	9.13	2.50
19. I do not have to worry about being denied services because of my Christian faith.	.16	.61	.51	9.05	2.25
20. I can be certain that my Christian views will be accepted by in-laws?	-.08	.54	.74	7.99	2.82
21. It is easy to find places of worship to practice my Christian faith.	-.03	.43	.82	9.52	2.16
Percent of Variance Explained	.32	.10			
Total Scale Reliability				$\alpha = .91$	

Table 2

*Concurrent Validity*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. CPAS: Christian Exceptionalism	7.29	1.99								
2. CPAS: Freedom from Discrimination	8.52	1.79	.42** [.33, .49]							
3. CPAS: Total Score	7.59	1.74	.98** [.97, .98]	.61** [.54, .67]						
4. POI: White	4.01	1.38	.79** [.75, .83]	.37** [.28, .45]	.78** [.74, .82]					
5. COBRAS	4.20	1.17	.83** [.79, .86]	.36** [.27, .45]	.81** [.77, .84]	.91** [.89, .92]				
6. GJWB	2.81	0.94	-.47** [-.55, -.39]	-.07 [-.17, .03]	-.43** [-.51, -.35]	-.44** [-.51, -.35]	-.52** [-.59, -.45]			
7. SDO	2.34	1.11	-.71** [-.76, -.66]	-.30** [-.39, -.21]	-.70** [-.74, -.64]	-.69** [-.74, -.63]	-.78** [-.81, -.73]	.51** [.44, .58]		
8. RF	5.51	1.98	-.64** [-.70, -.58]	-.24** [-.33, -.14]	-.62** [-.68, -.56]	-.43** [-.51, -.34]	-.44** [-.52, -.35]	.23** [.13, .32]	.30** [.20, .39]	
9. Sanctification for Social Justice	5.05	1.63	.61** [.54, .67]	.27** [.18, .36]	.59** [.53, .66]	.62** [.55, .67]	.64** [.57, .69]	-.35** [-.44, -.26]	-.60** [-.66, -.53]	-.34** [-.42, -.25]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. The POI: Christian refers to the Christian privilege subscale within the Privilege and Oppression Inventory. COBRAS refers to the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale. SDO refers to Social Dominance Orientation. RF refers to the Religious Fundamentalism Scale. GJWB refers to the Global Just World Beliefs Scale. SSJ refers to the Sanctification for Social Justice Scale. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 3

*Convergent Validity*

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. CPAS: Christian Exceptionalism	7.29	1.99			
2. CPAS: Freedom from Discrimination	8.52	1.79	.42** [.33, .49]		
3. CPAS: Total Score	7.59	1.74	.98** [.97, .98]	.61** [.54, .67]	
4. POI: Christian	4.18	1.09	.81** [.78, .84]	.54** [.46, .60]	.84** [.81, .87]

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. The POI: Christian label refers to the Christian privilege subscale within the Privilege and Oppression Inventory. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. \*\*  $p < .01$

## APPENDICES



Appendix A: Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) Items

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1. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.
  2. Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S. (R)
  3. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.
  4. Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality. (R)
  5. Racism is a major problem in the U.S. (R)
  6. Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not. (R)
  7. Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today.
  8. Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S.(R)
  9. White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.
  11. It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems. (R)
  12. White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin. (R)
  13. Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.
  14. English should be the only official language in the U.S.
  15. White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.(R)
-

## Appendix A: Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) Items (continued)

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16. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people.
17. It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities. (R)
18. Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
19. Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.
20. Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison. (R)
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Appendix B: Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) Items

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1. Some groups of people are simply not the equals of others.
  2. Some people are just more worthy than others.
  3. This country would be better off if we cared less about how equal all people were.
  4. Some people are just more deserving than others.
  5. It is not a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others
  6. Some people are just inferior to others.
  7. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on others.
  8. Increased economic equality. (R)
  9. Increased social equality. (R)
  10. Equality. (R)
  11. If people were treated more equally, we would have fewer problems in this country. (R)
  12. In an ideal world, all nations would be equal. (R)
  13. We should try to treat one another as equals as much as possible. All humans should be treated equally. (R)
  14. It is important that we treat other countries as equals. (R)
-

Appendix C: Religious Fundamentalism Scale Items

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1. God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.
  2. No single book of religious teachings contains all the intrinsic, fundamental truths about life.
  3. The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.
  4. It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion.
  5. There is a particular set of religious teachings in this world that are so true, you can't go any "deeper" because they are the basic, bedrock message that God has given humanity.
  6. When you get right down to it, there are basically only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not.
  7. Scriptures may contain general truths, but they should NOT be considered completely, literally true from beginning to end.
  8. To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion.
  9. "Satan" is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is no such thing as a diabolical "Prince of Darkness" who tempts us.
  10. Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, science is probably right.
  11. The fundamentals of God's religion should never be tampered with or compromised with others' beliefs.
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## Appendix C: Religious Fundamentalism Scale (continued)

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12. All of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings. There is no perfectly true, right religion.

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Appendix D: Global Just World Beliefs (GJWB) Scale Items

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1. I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.
  2. I feel that a person's efforts are noticed and rewarded.
  3. I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get.
  4. I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.
  5. I feel that people get what they deserve.
  6. I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.
  7. I basically feel that the world is a fair place.
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Appendix E: Sanctification of Social Justice Scale Items

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1. Social justice is at the heart of the Christian Gospel.
  2. One is not truly Christian unless one works for social justice.
  3. My Christian beliefs encourage me to work for social justice.
  4. God wants Christians to work for social justice.
  5. God wants Christians to confront discrimination so that everyone can be successful.
-

Appendix F: Privilege and Oppression Inventory Items

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1. Being White and having an advantage go hand in hand.
  2. I believe that being white is an advantage in society.
  3. Whites generally have more resources and opportunities
  4. Whites have the power to exclude other groups.
  5. Government policies favor Whites.
  6. There are benefits to being White in this society.
  7. Individuals do not receive advantages just because they are White.
  8. White culture characteristics are more valued than those of people of color.
  9. Most White high-level executives are promoted based on their race.
  10. The lighter your skin color, the less prejudice and discrimination you experience.
  11. The media (e.g., television, radio) favors Whites.
  12. Many movies negatively stereotype people of color.
  13. The majority of positive role models in movie are White.
  14. Gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals lack power in the legal system.
  15. Heterosexuals have access to more resources than gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals.
  16. Openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals lack power in today's society
  17. Gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals do not have the same advantages as heterosexuals.
  18. May gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals fear for their safety.
  19. The media negatively stereotypes gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals.
  20. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals experience discrimination.
  21. Some individuals are devalued in society because of their sexual orientation.
-



## Appendix F: Privilege and Oppression Inventory Items (continued)

- 
22. I think gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals exaggerate their hardships.
  23. Heterosexuals are treated better in society than those who are not heterosexual.
  24. Christians hold a lot of power because this country is based on their views.
  25. Christianity is valued more in this society than other religions.
  26. Christians are represented positively in history books.
  27. Society is biased positively toward Christians.
  28. To be Christian is to have religious advantage in this country.
  29. Christians have the opportunity of being around other Christians most of the time.
  30. Christian holidays are given more prominence in society than non-Christian holidays.
  31. Christianity is the norm in this society.
  32. I am aware that men typically make more money than women do.
  33. I am aware that women are not recognized in their careers as often as men.
  34. Women are disadvantaged compared to men.
  35. Women lack power in today's society compared to men.
  36. Women experience discrimination.
  37. Femininity is less valued in this society.
  38. There are different standards and expectations for men and women in this society.
  39. Advertisers set standards for how women should appear.
-

Appendix G: Christian Privilege Awareness Scale (CPAS) Items

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1. Christians have certain advantages in the US due to their religious affiliation?
  2. Religious minorities do not have the same benefits as Christians?
  3. Everyone who works hard, regardless of religious affiliation can obtain wealth?
  4. It is easier to be a Christian in the United States compared to a member of other faiths? \*\*
  5. I can be certain that my Christian views will be accepted by in-laws?
  6. Most Christians are generally seen as more trustworthy and honest than non-Christians.
  7. The separation of religion from politics unfairly discriminates against Christians? \*
  8. The separation of religion from politics is required to promote equality among differing faiths? \*
  9. Religious minorities are treated better than Christians in the United States? \*
  10. Religious minorities should adapt to the Christian culture of the United States? \*
  11. Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion.
  12. It is acceptable to only have Christian faith symbols on government property (i.e. courthouses)
  13. Christian doctors should not lose their jobs due to an unwillingness to provide services that violate their religious beliefs.
  14. Only Christian teachers should be allowed to share their Christian values with their students
  15. Discrimination towards religious minorities does not happen frequently? \*
  16. Discrimination towards Christians happens frequently in the United States? \*
  17. It is important for political leaders to be inclusive towards minority faiths? \*
-

## Appendix G: Christian Privilege Awareness Scale (CPAS) Items (continued)

- 
18. I do not have to worry about losing my job because of my Christian faith \*\*\*
19. I do not have to worry about losing relationships because of my Christian faith \*\*\*
20. I do not have to worry about being denied services because of my Christian faith \*\*\*
21. If someone's Christian values dictate that they not hire a gay/lesbian person for a job, then that choice should be respected by the rest of society.
22. Doctors should be able to refuse service to patients if the doctor's Christian values conflict with a patient's lifestyle.
23. Think that ministers who want to posthumously baptize Jewish victims of the Holocaust so that these victims can be allowed into Heaven should be allowed to do this.
24. I can easily find Christian music on a local radio station \*\*\*
25. I can expect to have major holidays of my Christian faith off from work \*\*\*
26. A declaration of my Christian faith does not come with personal consequences \*\*\*
27. It is easy to find places of worship to practice my Christian faith \*\*\*
28. I can reasonably expect my Christian beliefs to be respected by the people around me \*\*\*
- 

**Note:** Questions labeled with a \* were adapted from the CoBRAS scale (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee & Browne, 1999). Questions labeled with a \*\* were adapted from the WPAS (Pinterits, Poteat & Spanierman, 2009). Lastly, items with a \*\*\* were taken and or inspired by Schlosser (2003).

Appendix H. Recruitment Script (Twitter)

[Academic Study] Racial and Religious Ideology: An Examination of Attitudes and Thoughts (+18, US, Fluent English, Christian) Chance for \$25 Amazon Gift Card. Retweets Welcome! [emichpsych.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0O...](https://emichpsych.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0O...)

## Appendix I: Recruitment Script (Reddit and Facebook)

Hello,

My name is Brier Gallihugh, and I am a graduate student in psychology at Eastern Michigan University. I am in the process of recruiting participants for my Master's thesis, and I am hoping you might consider participating in my study.

In order to participate, you must be 18 years old or older, and you must identify as a Christian. Participants will also need to be fluent in English (i.e., you will need to be able to read the survey questions and type your responses into my survey in English) and be from the United States.

The purpose of this study is to broadly examine your thoughts about a wide range of societal themes and ideas (i.e., racial, religious, etc.). The study is entirely online and will take about 25-30 minutes to complete. Anyone who participates will be given the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win 1 of 4 Amazon gift cards worth \$25 each. The drawing will take place at the end of data collection. If you meet the above participation criteria and wish to participate, please follow the link below to get started!

[https://emichpsych.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0OgGLRnHJxpNqAt](https://emichpsych.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0OgGLRnHJxpNqAt)

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me at [bgallihu@emich.edu](mailto:bgallihu@emich.edu)

Finally, please feel free to share this post if you don't mind. It would be greatly appreciated

Appendix J: IRB Approval Letter

Apr 29, 2020 3:12 PM EDT

Brier Gallihugh

Eastern Michigan University, Psychology

Re: Modification - UHSRC-FY19-20-131 An Exploratory Model of Christian Privilege: The Development of a Scale to Measure the Attitudinal Constituents of Christian Privilege

Dear Brier Gallihugh:

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Board has rendered the decision below for An Exploratory Model of Christian Privilege: The Development of a Scale to Measure the Attitudinal Constituents of Christian Privilege.

Decision: Approved

Please contact [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu) with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee

## Appendix K: SONA Informed Consent

Project Title: Racial and Religious Ideology: An Examination of Attitudes and Thoughts  
Principal Investigator: Brier Gallihugh, B.A. Eastern Michigan University  
Faculty Advisor: Stephen Jefferson, Ph.D., Eastern Michigan University

Thank you for your interest in this study! Your participation is greatly appreciated. To participate you be able to read and respond to prompts fluently in English, be over the age of 18, personally self-identify as a Christian, and be from the United States. Participation in research is voluntary and you may pull out of this study at any time (**including after starting the study**). Please feel free to ask any questions you have about participation in this study.

### Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to broadly examine your thoughts about a wide range of societal themes and ideas (i.e., racial, religious, etc.).

### Basic Study Procedure

You will be recruited to take place in this online study through the SONA program at Eastern Michigan University. Upon reading this consent form, you will be redirected to the Qualtrics program which will contain the primary study materials and questionnaires. You will be asked to first complete a demographic survey that asks you to report aspects of your identity such as your gender, age, racial group, religious affiliation, etc. as well as your current mental anxiety and depression levels. You will also be asked a series of questions concerning your life situation in light of the COVID-19 (a.k.a., the coronavirus). After completion of the demographic survey, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions measuring your thoughts about various racial and religious themed topics. Lastly, the study will conclude with one final question regarding whether or not you wish to receive credit for your participation. The study will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.

### Type of Data Collected

You may be asked to provide data that you find to be sensitive. All data will be collected anonymously (i.e., we have no way of linking your actual responses with your name). You will be asked your opinion about a number of racial and religious themed questions. You will also be asked some common questions about your identity and current mental status (e.g., age, gender, race, anxiety and depression levels, etc.).

### Risk of Study Participation

There is no expected risk for participating in this study outside of what a student may face while taking a college examination or listening to a college lecture. However, you may at times potentially experience stress while reading or answering any of the study materials especially any related directly to you. As such, should you feel stress you cannot handle, you are free to withdraw from the study and are encouraged to do so immediately. Should you feel you need

professional help, the following is the contact for the Eastern Michigan University Counseling and Psychological Service and if needed, national hotlines:

Eastern Michigan Counseling and Psychological Services  
734.487.1118  
counseling.services@emich.edu

### **National Hotlines**

- 1) SAMHSA's National Helpline: (1-800-662-HELP (4357))
- 2) Veteran's Crisis Helpline: (TEXT 838-255)
- 3) LifeWays 24-Hour Crisis Line: (800-284-8288)
- 4) Trevor Project (LGBTQ): (866-488-7386)

### **Benefits of Study Participation**

There are no anticipated benefits to you for taking part in this study. Study results may have general benefit to society by increasing our understanding of how people perceive others. Thus, findings from this study will be used as a basis for potential publications, posters, and/or presentations at conferences or symposiums.

### **Data Storage Procedures**

Data for this study will be kept on the Qualtrics server. Qualtrics is an account-based program where only researchers will have access your individual responses and data. Qualtrics is GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant. Upon completion of the data collection, the data set will be downloaded from Qualtrics to a laptop computer that is password protected.

### **Alternative Task**

You will receive no compensation for your participation. However, some instructors in psychology do offer course credit for research participation. Researchers have no control over this. If you are unsure if your instructor allows such credit, please ask your instructor. All psychology instructors who offer research credits in their courses are required by University policy to provide a non-research alternative to students in their classes who do not wish to directly participate in research. In order to be granted research credit, at the end of your participation in this anonymous survey, you will need to follow the link provided to a completely separate survey where you will be asked to give your name. This second survey will not in any way be linked to your earlier survey responses and is only collected so that we can give participants research credits by name. If you do not complete this survey, we cannot award you SONA credit.

### **Personal Information Confidentiality**

We plan to publish the results of this study. We will not publish any information that can identify



you individually. All data for this study will be collected anonymously. The only identifying information you will provide the researcher is separate from the main questionnaires of this study and is only collected to award research credit.

You do not need to provide any identifying information to participate in this study. However, if you wish to receive research credit, once you have anonymously completed the main questionnaires of the study, you will then be asked if you wish to receive course credit for participating in this research. If you answer "Yes" to this question, you will be automatically linked to a completely separate survey that will ask for your name. Because the data from these two surveys are never linked, the only way a researcher will know that you have completed the relevant questionnaires of the anonymous portion of this study is to ask for your name with this completely separate, new survey. Completing this second survey will allow the researchers to know to whom they should grant credit in SONA (i.e., if you do not complete this "exit" survey, you will not receive SONA credit). Your instructors will not know which study you have participated in unless you tell them. Also, the researcher will not know what your specific responses were to any items of the surveys you completed (i.e., they will only know that you participated, but not what you reported in your responses)."

### **Data Storage For Future Use**

We will not store any personally identifying information about you. We will store the anonymous data collected for this study on the Qualtrics survey website, as well on a password protected laptop computer. Finally, we will also password protect the data file.

### **Cost to Participant**

Participation will not cost you anything.

### **Participation Compensation**

You will not be paid to participate in this research study.

You will receive .5 hours of SONA credit if you complete this study. If you do not complete this study, you will not earn research credit for your participation.

### **Study Contact Information**

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Brier Gallihugh, at bgallihu@emich.edu or by phone at (989)-423-6118.

You can also contact Brier Gallihugh's faculty adviser, Dr. Stephen Jefferson, at sjeffer2@emich.edu or by phone at 734.487.0097.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-

3090.

**Voluntary participation**

Participation in this research study is your *choice*. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, without repercussion.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this consent form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received.

- ☐ I give my consent to participate in this research study.
- ☐ I do not give my consent to participate in this study.

## Appendix L: Social Media Informed Consent

Project Title: Racial and Religious Ideology: An Examination of Attitudes and Thoughts  
Principal Investigator: Brier Gallihugh, B.A. Eastern Michigan University  
Faculty Advisor: Stephen Jefferson, Ph.D., Eastern Michigan University

Thank you for your interest in this study! Your participation is greatly appreciated. To participate you be able to read and respond to prompts fluently in English, be over the age of 18, personally self-identify as a Christian and be from the United States. Participation in research is voluntary and you may pull out of this study at any time (**including after starting the study**). Please feel free to ask any questions you have about participation in this study.

### Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to broadly examine your thoughts about a wide range of societal themes and ideas (i.e., racial, religious, etc.).

### Basic Study Procedure

You have been recruited to take part in this online study through the one of potentially various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Amazon Mechanical Turk, etc.). Upon reading this consent form, you will be redirected to the Qualtrics program which will contain the primary study materials and questionnaires. You will be asked to first complete a demographic survey that asks you to report aspects of your identity such as your gender, age, racial group, religious affiliation, etc. as well as your current mental anxiety and depression levels. You will also be asked a series of questions concerning your life situation in light of the COVID-19 (a.k.a., the coronavirus). After completion of the demographic survey, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions measuring your thoughts about various racial and religious themed topics. Lastly, the study will conclude with one final question regarding whether or not you wish to receive credit for your participation. The study will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.

### Type of Data Collected

You may be asked to provide data that you find to be sensitive. All data will be collected anonymously (i.e., we have no way of linking your actual responses with your name). You will be asked your opinion about a number of racial and religious themed questions. You will also be asked some common questions about your identity and current mental status (e.g., age, gender, race, anxiety and depression levels, etc.).

### Risk of Study Participation

There is no expected risk for participating in this study outside of what a student may face while taking a college examination or listening to a college lecture. However, you may at times potentially experience stress while reading or answering any of the study materials especially any related directly to you. As such, should you feel stress you cannot handle, you are free to

withdraw from the study and are encouraged to do so immediately. Should you feel you need professional help, the following are contacts for various mental health service hotlines.

- 1) SAMHSA's National Helpline: (1-800-662-HELP (4357))
- 2) Veteran's Crisis Helpline: (TEXT 838-255)
- 3) LifeWays 24-Hour Crisis Line: (800-284-8288)
- 4) Trevor Project (LGBTQ): (866-488-7386)

### **Benefits of Study Participation**

There are no anticipated benefits to you for taking part in this study. Study results may have general benefit to society by increasing our understanding of how people perceive others. Thus, findings from this study will be used as a basis for potential publications, posters, and/or presentations at conferences or symposiums.

### **Data Storage Procedures**

Data for this study will be kept on the Qualtrics server. Qualtrics is an account-based program where only researchers will have access your individual responses and data. Qualtrics is GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant. Upon completion of the data collection, the data set will be downloaded from Qualtrics to a laptop computer that is password protected.

### **Alternative Task**

You will receive no guaranteed compensation for your participation. However, participation in this study will enter you into a chance to win *one of four* \$25.00 Amazon gift cards. At the conclusion of the data collection, four participants will be chosen at random to receive one of the gift cards via email. In order to be entered into the drawing, at the end of your participation in this anonymous survey, you will need to follow the link provided to a completely separate survey where you will be asked to give an email. This second survey will not in any way be linked to your earlier survey responses and is only collected so that we can contact winners. If you do not complete this survey, we cannot enter you into the drawing.

### **Personal Information Confidentiality**

We plan to publish the results of this study. We will not publish any information that can identify you individually. All data for this study will be collected anonymously. The only identifying information you will provide the researcher is separate from the main questionnaires of this study and is only collected to award research credit.

You do not need to provide any identifying information to participate in this study. However, if you wish to be entered into the drawing for one of the \$25.00 Amazon gift cards, once you have anonymously completed the main questionnaires of the study, you will then be asked if you wish to be entered into the drawing for participating in this research. If you answer "Yes" to this question, you will be automatically linked to a completely separate survey that will ask for a contact email. Because the data from these two surveys are never linked, the only way a

researcher will know where to potentially send you an Amazon gift card is if you have completed this completely separate, new survey. Completing this second survey will allow the researchers to randomly choose which four participants will receive one of the \$25 Amazon gift cards. Therefore, if you do not complete this "exit" survey, you will not be entered into the drawing. Your instructors will not know which study you have participated in unless you tell them. The researcher will not know what your specific responses were to any items of the surveys you completed (i.e., they will only know that you participated, but not what you reported in your responses)."

### **Data Storage For Future Use**

We will not store any personally identifying information about you. We will store the anonymous data collected for this study on the Qualtrics survey website, as well on a password protected laptop computer. Finally, we will also password protect the data file.

### **Cost to Participant**

Participation will not cost you anything.

### **Participation Compensation**

You will not be paid to participate in this research study. However, completion of this survey (including the second survey at the end), will enter you in a drawing with a chance to win one of four \$25.00 Amazon gift cards. If you do not complete this study, you will not be entered into the drawing.

### **Study Contact Information**

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Brier Gallihugh, at [bgallihu@emich.edu](mailto:bgallihu@emich.edu) or by phone at (989)-423-6118.

You can also contact Brier Gallihugh's faculty adviser, Dr. Stephen Jefferson, at [sjeffer2@emich.edu](mailto:sjeffer2@emich.edu) or by phone at 734.487.0097.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu) or by phone at 734-487-3090.

### **Voluntary participation**

Participation in this research study is your *choice*. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, without repercussion.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this consent form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received.

- ☐ I give my consent to participate in this research study.
- ☐ I do not give my consent to participate in this study.

## Appendix M: Debrief Form

Thank you for participating in this study! This form provides background about our research to help you learn more about why this study was done. Please feel free direct any questions or concerns you may have to the investigators.

Some studies use deception in situations where there is no other way to conduct the experiment without potentially biasing the results. The current study is one that did involve mild deception. The actual purpose of this study was to serve as a preliminary exploration into the development of a scale to assess Christian privilege awareness among a Christian population. As such, telling you the actual purpose of the study may have biased your responses. However, know that all your responses are confidential, and every participant received the same items to answer. Thank you for your participation as your responses will provide valuable information into the development of this scale as well as determine various levels of validity measures to assess the accuracy of the scale under development.

The data from this study will be presented to groups and potentially in research journals. However, all data will be kept secure and personally identifiable information left out. Data will only be analyzed by trained researchers. However, should you feel uncomfortable, know that your participation is still voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Lastly, we ask that you please refrain from communication with others about the contents or purpose of this study to others as doing so may also bias our results. Thank you for your time!

<u>Investigator</u>	<u>Contact Number</u>	<u>Email</u>
Brier Gallihugh, B.A.	989.423.6118	bgallihu@emich.edu
Stephen Jefferson, Ph.D.	734.487.0097	sjeffer2@emich.edu

If you want more information about your rights as a participant or want to report any research-related concerns, please feel free to contact the current researchers (if your concerns relate to this study) or you may contact the Institutional Review Board at (734) 487-3090.