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BELIEF AS LIVED RELATIONS

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The results of classic measurements of religious attitude pose difficulties for psychological interpretation. This article describes a research project on the relation to God as it is lived. Based on interviews on belief, seven forms of relations are traced: dependence, autonomy, rebelliousness, guilt, identification, co-humanity, and ethical norm. Along with this, we examine acceptance and rejection of dogmas, importance attached to religion, and fear of uncertainty. The basic hypothesis is that forms of relations better distinguish subgroups than the measurement of acceptance and rejection of the various articles of belief. The hypothesis is confirmed for a number of significant variables such as socio-economic grouping. We tried to validate the instrument by correlating it with a Personality Test (VIR). The relation to God and to the other shows important similarities. In a last part we tried to understand, using Hermans' Confrontation Method, the remarkable structure of the relations to God of a low socio-economic group.

INTRODUCTION

Since long, many researchers have occupied themselves with the measurement of, or with the determination of dimensions in, religious attitude. The best known models are certainly those of Stark and Glock (1968) and of King and Hunt (1972). Generally, the instruments used consist of items on the content of belief (acceptance or rejection of religious dogmas), on religious participation (practice, prayer, interest in religion, monetary contribution), importance of religion (in personal life and for society), and sometimes on the implications of religious attitudes in secular life. These elements appear as more or less independent dimensions or are presented in terms of each other. Exceptions to this, in a sense, are the intrinsic-extrinsic scales (Allport and Ross, 1967) and the religious scale of Allport-Vernon-Lindzey (1960) that is designed to measure more generally – and also more approximately – the religious attitude.

Objections can be raised against such a determination of religiousness. What is the meaning of such scores? Is someone who believes more things more religious than someone who believes less? By what criteria can one speak of being more or less religious? Has someone who believes more things a more positive attitude? And how can it be determined if a particular item is an index of such a positive attitude? What psychological reference point can be used? More important for the possibility of interpretation of the

results, however, is the question of the various contents of belief for the subjects, for it are these contents that they can accept or reject. How are the contents of belief integrated in their lives, and what impact do they have on their individual psychological experience?

Objections might also be made against the kind of items that are sometimes used, items the content of which often seems to many to be of quite marginal significance (hell, heaven, angels, devils). Answers are given in terms of true and false – as though religious data admit of being true or false like any other objective data.

The central object of religion in our culture is God. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, to which the subjects of our study belong, this God is someone who has revealed himself as a person, someone with whom a personal relation is possible. As working hypothesis, it is assumed that, in order to understand something of the psychology of the religious experience of the subject, we must investigate how this relation to God is experienced and structured. Of the many definitions of religion available, the one given by Thouless (1961, p. 3-4) postulates a very important point for our study. He defines religion as "a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings. Consequently, religion is a mode of behavior and a system of beliefs and feelings." Religion is thus taken here to be primarily a relation to a superhuman being, in whom one believes. This superhuman being is called God in our Western tradition.

This study envisages two points in particular: what kinds of relations occur, i.e. what relations are experienced, and how do these relations interact as a function of different variables. To formulate the working hypothesis more concretely, there will be more differentiation of experienced relations than of acceptance or rejection of specific belief contents when we take into account such variables as socio-economic level.

THE INSTRUMENT

CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the instrument was strictly empirical, without any particular presuppositions as to the nature of the kinds of relations, and was based on an examination of how people speak about belief. The basic material from which the items were developed consisted of detailed reports of group discussions, interviews on religious experiences, and also religious texts and other scales.

From this material, a pool of items was developed that, on the basis of their content, were divided into a number of subscales. Three sample tests were administered to adapt and improve the scales. Combining these results with Gulliksen's item analysis method (Verhelst and Vander Steene, 1972) and factor analysis, the final version was developed consisting of seven subscales of eight items each scored from

1 to 5. A group of expert evaluators aided in the description of each subscale. The kinds of relations to God investigated can be described as follows:

- I. Dependence: The person needs God's help, the relation being based on necessity. God is seen as the one who gives the possibility of existence.
- II. Autonomy: Human responsibility is confirmed in opposition to dependence on, and the normative function of, God.
- III. Rebelliousness: God does not fulfill certain expectations, giving rise to rebelliousness on the part of the suppliant.
- IV. Guilt: The person has guilt feelings and feels himself judged by God.
- V. Identification: The person identifies with Jesus Christ as the ideal man and as example.
- VI. Co-humanity (*Mitmenschlichkeit*): This is directedness to God via directedness to other people. God is found in other persons.
- VII. Ethical norm: God is perceived as the norm and even as the absolute norm.

In addition to these relations, three other scales were used (VIII) the content of belief, i.e. which dogmas were accepted as true; (IX) the importance of religion, i.e. the degree to which religious convictions played a role in daily life; and (X) fear about uncertainty, i.e. the search for more objective certainty within belief. The score range for each scale is from 8 to 40 with a theoretical mean of 24. The mean homogeneity coefficient is .83 ($N = 266$).

FURTHER VALIDATION

In the development of the religious relationship questionnaire, we determined that the relationship to God is expressed in a number of important psychological categories. To deal further with the question whether there is a connection between these religious relational forms and interpersonal relationships, the dimensions of the questionnaire were correlated with the dimensions of the VIR questionnaire (*Vragenlijst voor interpersoonlijke relatie* – Interpersonal Relations Questionnaire) (Vertommen and Rochette, 1979; Vertommen, 1980).

DESCRIPTION OF THE VIR

The VIR consists of eight subscales, each with ten very short items. There are two principal forms: the I-Other form and the Other-I form. If desired, the significance of the Other can also be specified. Each item can be scored on the real level (Is this so?) or on the wish level (I wish this were so).

In an initial study, the I-Other form on the real level was used. In the second study, the Other-I form on the real and the wish level was used. We shall discuss only the real level here. In the two studies,

the sample consisted of students and adults ($N = 114$; and $N = 178$). For the convenience of the reader, the following is a short description of the subscales of the VIR. The subjects answered first on the religious questionnaire and then on the VIR. Both were presented in the same session :

Domination : I am a strong, competent person who leads and dominates other people (or the other is ..., or I would like to be ...).

Sociability : I am a friendly, congenial person who mostly sees the good in other people and therefore can get along easily with them.

Altruism : I am someone who is oriented toward other people, who makes an effort for them, and they can count on me for understanding, support, and real help.

Dependence : I cannot do it alone, and I admit that I need support, help, and sympathy from others.

Inferiority : I am a weak, unworthy person who can contribute nothing to others and therefore I am continually a problem for myself and others.

Suspicious Aloofness : I cannot (can no longer) enter into a relationship with another person because I feel cheated and disappointed, which makes me feel bad.

Open Animosity : I am a hard, combative person who won't let anyone take advantage of me and, when it is necessary, will put someone in his place.

Self-confidence : I am an independent, valuable person who can go his own way and can confirm himself with respect to others. I find this necessary in order to enter into a relationship.

Table 1 gives the correlations of the VIR dimensions with our subscales in both the I-Other and the Other-I forms. Asterisks indicate significance on the 1% level.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERRELATIONS

There are more connections between our dimensions and the I-Other form (20) than the Other-I form (11). This seems to be an indication of validity because of the identity of the direction of the relationship in both of the questionnaires. On the basis of the subscales of our questionnaire, we shall briefly describe the correlations treating only those that are significant on the 1% level.

Dependence : Positive relationship with altruism and negative with animosity. One who needs God is also oriented toward helping others and is not aggressive with respect to others.

Autonomy : No real significant relationship with any subscale but a definite negative relationship with dependence and a positive relationship with animosity. The fact that one sees oneself as a

combative person, therefore, goes together with a certain autonomy and lack of a need for God.

Rebelliousness : If one feels rebellious with respect to God, one is less socially oriented in relations with others, one feels weak and unworthy as well as disappointed and cheated because no relationships can be formed with others. Other people seem to be dominant, embittered, hostile, and self-certain. The other person is certainly not someone upon whom I can reckon.

TAB. 1. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE VIR SUBSCALES AND OUR QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE I-OTHER AND THE OTHER-I FORMS ON THE REAL LEVEL

		depen.	auto.	rebell.	guilt	ident.	co-hum.	ethic. norm
domin.	I-O	-19	10	-23	-22	-02	00	-20
	O-I	-06	05	22*	07	01	00	-08
sociab.	I-O	09	04	-30*	-17	21	32*	10
	O-I	01	-02	-16	-18*	10	09	12
altru.	I-O	26*	-17	-23	-08	26*	27*	35*
	O-I	16	-08	-20*	-06	13	17	13
depen.	I-O	23	-21	-03	07	15	30*	10
	O-I	17	-08	-15	-10	13	17	24*
infer.	I-O	07	-06	29*	29*	-26*	-17	-04
	O-I	-11	12	13	16	-11	-10	-12
susp.	I-O	-19	21	26*	26*	-40*	-26*	-26*
	O-I	-15	12	30*	18*	-20*	-19*	-17
aloof.	I-O	-28*	24	12	07	-42*	-26*	-32*
	O-I	-04	05	42*	25*	-10	-10	00
animos.	I-O	-15	19	-07	-21	-25*	-07	-12
	O-I	-13	14	21*	08	-06	-06	-12

Guilt : One feels inferior to, and distrustful of, others. The other is seen as unsociable and also as hostile and distrustful.

Identification : One is altruistically oriented toward others and certainly not inferior, distrustful, hostile, or uncertain. The other is not distrustful.

Co-humanity : One is altruistic, and also companionable and dependent, but not distrustful and certainly not hostile. The other is not distrustful.

Ethical Norm : One is altruistic but not distrustful and not hostile. The other is seen as being dependent.

There are a considerable number of connections that are significant on the 1% level. The correlations are not all very high, but some are striking. There are clear similarities between the ways in which people experience their relationship to God and the ways they structure their interpersonal relationships. This is manifested the most clearly in the I-Other form, which was to be expected.

Let us consider the highest correlations (.30 or more). Someone who is rebellious toward God, i.e., who feels slighted in his expectations,

also situates himself less well in his relationship with others. He is less friendly. The other is seen primarily as someone who is hostile, who is egocentric, who offers battle. The other is also someone with whom it is difficult to have a relationship because he is embittered and disappointed. The individual himself also has more difficulty in entering a relationship.

A person who stresses identification with Jesus also scores very low on distrustful aloofness and open animosity. These two subscales also correlate with each other at .53 in the I-Other form. It is clear that one must be open for the other, that one must want to enter into a relationship, and that the necessary conditions must be present. These relational forms thus match negatively with the stress laid on the following of the figure of Jesus. We are reminded here of the basic conditions for the learning of identification: one must have the possibility for positive contact with the model before learning can take place.

Someone who structures his relationship with God primarily through the relationship with his fellowman sees himself mainly, as far as interpersonal relations are concerned, as a friendly and congenial person. He mainly sees the good in the other and therefore can get along well with him, but at the same time he is dependent on this other person. This connection with the dependence subscale of the *VIR* must be examined more closely, especially because the connection with our dependence subscale is clearly lower. It will be necessary to investigate the specific meaning of dependence in our scale in comparison with the specific meaning it bears in the *VIR*.

Someone who experiences God as a norm, even as an absolute norm, is rather altruistically oriented toward the other. He may be relied upon for help. He is not at all hostile and will submit to the other if it seems necessary. This negative correlation is clear, but the positive correlation with altruism again raises questions.

In conclusion the religious relationship is expressed as a human relationship, but one that is oriented to a transcendent object. In fact, we must assume this in order to be able to perform such a study as psychologists.

STUDY OF A GROUP OF ADULTS

SAMPLE TEST DESCRIPTION

This study (Hutsebaut, 1976) was directed to adult Catholics from the Dutch speaking sector of Belgium. It was not a representative sample of the general population, the percentage of practicing Catholics being significantly higher in the sample than among the general population ($\pm 80\%$ vs. 33%). Representativity, however, was not considered necessary for the study of the dimensions concerned and their relative structures. Three major subgroups were distinguished: priests and

religious (henceforth referred to simply as "religious"), laity, and a group of chronically ill (also laity). With the chronically ill, the concern was the influence of a specifically frustrating situation on religious attitude. With the religious, the concern was how people who are explicitly committed to religion experience religious relations. All groups consisted of people for whom religion had a certain meaning in their lives, thus allowing the presumption that there were religious relations involved.

TAB. 2. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO SEX AND AGE. In the group of chronically ill, a distinction is made according to the duration of the illness: those ill for a very long time ($N = 16$, 2 men and 14 women) and those who became ill during their professional lives, i.e. between 18 and 55 years old ($N = 52$). The average duration of the illness for the men ($N = 26$) is 14.9 years, and for the women ($N = 26$) is 16.03 years. The average age of onset of the illness period is 41.6 years for the men and 36.9 years for the women. For the long term chronically ill, the age of onset is 6.4 years old and the average duration is 38.6 years.

	chronically ill	mean age	SD	religious	mean age	SD	laity	mean age	SD
men	$N = 26$	56.5	9.04	$N = 82$	45.62	9.77	$N = 163$	41.24	9.82
women	$N = 26$	53.4	10.09	$N = 52$	46.63	9.56	$N = 150$	40.11	10.86
long time	$N = 16$	44.5	9.32						

TAB. 3. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL (socio-economic level). Key to index numbers: 1 = university studies and professional level; 2 = intermediate studies and associated occupations; 3 = primary studies and associated occupations.

	chronically ill		religious		laity	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	4	5.8	117	87.3	111	35.5
2	10	14.6	16	11.9	141	45
3	50	73.5	—	—	59	18.8
n.a.	4	5.8	1	0.7	2	0.6
tot.	68	100	134	100	313	100

TAB. 4. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO AGE

	chronically ill		religious		laity	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-30	1	1.5	8	6.0	50	15.9
31-35	3	4.4	11	8.2	51	16.2
36-40	5	7.3	23	17.0	66	21.0
41-45	8	11.8	20	14.9	67	21.4
46-55	22	32.2	50	37.3	50	15.9
56-80	29	42.5	22	16.4	29	9.2
total	68	100	134	100	313	100

TAB. 5. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO BELIEF RATING. Key to index numbers: 5 = absolute belief in the existence of God; 4 = belief in the existence of God but with questions; 3 = doubt in the existence of God; 2 = difficulties in believing in the existence of God; 1 = no belief in the existence of God.

	chronically ill		religious		laity	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5	41	60.3	78	58.2	123	39.3
4	23	33.8	52	38.8	138	44.1
3	4	5.8	4	2.9	43	13.7
2	—	—	—	—	5	1.6
1	—	—	—	—	4	1.3
total	68	100	134	100	313	100

TAB. 6. DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS PRACTICE (Sunday mass attendance). Key to index numbers: 4 = weekly; 3 = often, but not weekly; 2 = on special occasions (feast days and family occasions such as funerals and weddings); 1 = never. Note: the responses of the chronically ill reflect the physical inability of many to attend mass without special help.

	chronically ill		religious		laity	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
4	47	69.1	128	95.5	250	79.8
3	11	16.2	3	2.2	38	12.1
2	8	11.8	—	—	21	6.7
1	—	—	—	—	4	1.3
n.a.	2	2.9	3	2.2	—	—
total	68	100	134	100	313	100

RESULTS

Some of the results of the study are discussed here: the general comparison between the three major groups and the comparison in function of socio-economic levels. Given for each comparison are the results of multivariate variance analysis and the discriminant analysis (Manova and Discrim program, Cooley-Lohnes, 1971). The Manova gives an understanding of the fundamental differences between the groups and, descriptively, the differences per subscale between the groups. The Discrim analysis gives the various discriminant functions and the place of each group within these functions.

CHRONICALLY ILL - RELIGIOUS-LAITY

The religious emphasize, more than the others do, identification and co-humanity, two forms of relations that are strongly involved in the present. They also attach more importance to the content of belief and to the impact religion has on daily life. This is quite what

one would expect among people who have, in some way, chosen religion explicitly, which choice is clearly expressed in the concrete concerns of the religious. The religious score lower on rebelliousness, guilt, and fear about uncertainty. These more ambivalent relations appear especially among the chronically ill, who also score higher on dependence and ethical norm and lower on autonomy. There is a connection here between appealing to God in need and rebelliousness when the demand is not met. There is also more guilt and emphasis on ethical norm, two psychological dimensions that often go together. Because of the emphasis on dependence, the not appealing to God in need – expressed on the autonomy subscale – is more strongly rejected by the chronically ill than the other groups. The laity has less specific characteristics. The inclusion of the chronically ill and the religious in the project was done in order to examine the particular properties of these groups with respect to a more neutral group of laity.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL (LAITY AND CHRONICALLY ILL COMBINED)

Only occupation level 3 shows a specific pattern that is similar to that of the chronically ill. (Subscale-subscale comparison by means of t-tests between the chronically ill and the lowest socio-economic group of the laity shows that the chronically ill scored only slightly higher on VIII (content of belief).) From detailed analysis of the items of the dependence subscale, it appears that the people of occupation group 3 score particularly high on the items that emphasize the need aspect. God's help, apparently is seen to be needed in their life circumstances. It can be said that their relation to God is characterized by such perspectives as functionality and necessity. Frustration and rebelliousness are understandable when the needs are not fulfilled. And in such circumstances, guilt, too, becomes comprehensible.

Rebelliousness is felt as illicit, as God is described as all-good and all-powerful. But not receiving what was asked for can also be experienced as punishment. Law and guilt can be related: observing the law can decrease guilt and, because of its compelling character, not following the law can increase guilt.

It is observed that belief, as acceptance or rejection of specific dogmas, plays a subordinate role in differentiating the groups.

FURTHER TESTING

We have also examined the noteworthy answer structure of the low socio-economic group, which consists of a combined stress on dependence, rebelliousness, guilt, and ethical norm. Therefore, we used Hermans' confrontation method, since we are of the opinion that the way in which the various dimensions are experienced through the feelings that are involved can provide an insight into the meaning of this concurrence.

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TAB. 7. MANOVA AND DISCRIM DATA FOR THE CHRONICALLY ILL, RELIGIOUS, AND LAITY. *Manova*: Especially discriminative for rebelliousness, guilt, belief, dependence, and identification. *Discrim*: First function (identification, co-humanity, dependence, belief, and importance of religion as opposed to rebelliousness, guilt, and fear about uncertainty) distinguishes clearly the religious from the chronically ill and the laity. Second function (dependence, guilt, rebelliousness, norm, and belief as opposed to autonomy) distinguishes the chronically ill from the religious and laity.

	$\bar{X}_{CI}(68)$	$\bar{X}_R(134)$	$\bar{X}_L(313)$	pooled sd	F_{512}^2	eta square
I	34.16	33.61	30.07	6.07	23.38	.0837
II	20.43	20.51	22.90	5.10	13.80	.0512
III	17.90	11.31	15.39	5.21	44.01	.1467
IV	19.59	12.34	15.42	5.64	38.05	.1294
V	33.50	36.36	32.98	4.40	28.05	.0987
VI	31.71	34.91	31.99	5.38	15.20	.0560
VII	33.25	32.28	29.93	6.29	11.65	.0435
VIII	33.93	34.97	30.05	5.74	39.62	.1340
IX	34.04	35.99	33.47	3.97	18.87	.0686
X	23.32	20.89	23.01	5.09	9.18	.0346

For equality of dispersions Manova $F_{127.006}^{110} = 2.682$

For equality of centroids Manova $F_{1012}^{20} = 10.83$

Discriminant Functions	I	II	commun.
canonical correlation	.477	.349	
I	.362	.663	.570
II	-.309	-.490	.336
III	-.768	.317	.690
IV	-.628	.568	.717
V	.642	.195	.451
VI	.495	.019	.246
VII	.215	.519	.316
VIII	.585	.677	.800
IX	.528	.204	.320
X	-.390	.004	.152

The chi square value is 197 with 20 degrees of freedom for the first canonical correlation and 66 with 9 degrees of freedom for the second.

Discriminant Functions and Centroids

group	Df I	Df II
chronically ill	-.400	.845
religious	.799	.059
laity	-.255	-.209

TAB. 8. MANOVA AND DISCRIM DATA FOR THE THREE OCCUPATION LEVELS. *Manova*: Especially discriminative for dependence, rebelliousness, guilt, and ethical norm. *Discrim*: First function (dependence, rebelliousness, guilt, and ethical norm as opposed to autonomy) distinguishes group 3 from groups 1 and 2. Second function (ethical norm and fear about uncertainty) distinguishes group 2 from groups 1 and 3, but is below the level of significance.

	$\bar{X}1(115)$	$\bar{X}2(151)$	$\bar{X}3(109)$	pooled SD	F_{372}^2	eta square
I	28.77	30.27	33.68	6.21	18.37	.0899
II	23.32	22.68	21.38	5.18	4.11	.0216
III	14.81	15.12	17.64	5.53	9.02	.0463
IV	14.51	15.19	19.12	5.94	19.97	.0970
V	32.54	33.21	33.36	4.69	1.01	.0054
VI	31.58	32.11	32.32	5.74	0.50	.0027
VII	29.64	29.52	32.78	6.32	9.98	.0509
VIII	29.93	30.07	32.24	6.10	5.17	.0271
IX	33.72	33.40	33.61	4.24	0.20	.0011
X	23.80	22.44	23.40	5.11	2.54	.0134

For equality of dispersions Manova $F_{328,336}^{110} = 1.870$

For equality of centroids Manova $F_{732}^{20} = 4.68$

Discriminant Functions	I	II	commun.
canonical correlation	.427	.195	
I	.700	.010	.490
II	-.343	-.026	.118
III	.491	-.233	.295
IV	.716	-.278	.590
V	.138	.223	.069
VI	.106	.129	.028
VII	.494	-.403	.406
VIII	.371	-.218	.185
IX	-.005	-.168	.028
X	-.008	-.592	.350

The chi square is 88 with 20 degrees of freedom for the first canonical correlation and 14 with 9 degrees of freedom for the second, which is somewhat below the criterion value.

Discriminant Functions and Centroids

group	I	II
1	-.442	-.212
2	-.120	.231
3	.632	-.096

Of course, it is impossible in this brief report to describe the method fully or even to give more than a slight brief treatment of the theoretical background. We can only indicate a few of its elements. In general, the intention is to investigate important value domains via the confrontation of these value domains with 24 sentiments (12 positive and 12 negative). The value domains can be one's work, one's spouse, one's father, and so on. With the scores, a number of indices can be calculated. The following three indices will be used later on:

1. **Relatedness**: With what intensity are the feelings ascribed to the value domain, irrespective of whether the feeling is positive or negative? Thus, to what degree does the value arouse a particular feeling.
2. **Quality**: This concerns the balance between positive and negative feelings and is generally expressed in a percent of positive feelings with respect to the total relatedness.
3. **Modality**: This index gives the degree in which the value domains match each other as far as the experience via the feelings is concerned. This is expressed by a correlation between the two domains. The higher the correlation, the more the domains are experienced in the same way.

THE USE OF HERMANS' METHOD IN OUR STUDY

The seven forms of relationship were presented to the subjects along with a brief description of each one, which constituted a kind of definition of the subscale. Possible difficulties and obscurities were dealt with in an introductory explanation. The subjects were also asked to describe their relation to God (actual relation) and how they saw their ideal relation to God (ideal relation). Then the subjects confronted the seven relational types and the actual and ideal relations with the 24 feelings on a 6 point scale. The sample consisted of 50 people, of which 29 were from Professional Group 1 and 21 from Professional Group 3. There were 27 men and 23 women. The average age of the group was 39 years old.

RESULTS

In the discussion of the results, we shall concentrate on the three indices mentioned above and also limit ourselves to the data concerning the comparison as a function of the socio-economic level.

RELATEDNESS

Group 1 is the one that is the most strongly concerned with the ideal relation, the actual relation, and with co-humanity and identification.

For Group 3, the relatedness is the greatest with respect to dependence, the actual and ideal relations, and co-humanity.

Both groups are the least related to rebelliousness and guilt. Group 3 scores significantly higher on dependence and norm; they are thus more concerned with them, and more and stronger feelings are aroused in their regard. There is also a higher degree of relatedness to autonomy and a tendency to score higher on rebelliousness and guilt.

Anticipating somewhat the analysis of the quality of the experience, we can say that the differences in relatedness are the largest for the negative feelings. Taking the ten feelings for which this difference is the largest, the difference is always in favor of Group 3 and it always concerns negative feelings. There is one exception: the feeling of self-worth, a positive feeling, is scored higher by Group 1. Group 3 experiences more worries and guilt feelings, more anxiety, internal tensions, not being oneself and inferiority, more loneliness, despondency, and inner emptiness in relation to God. That is, these negative feelings are more strongly associated with the various relational types.

QUALITY

For Group 1, the ideal and the actual relations are experienced as the most positive. Co-humanity, identification, and dependence also have a positive color. Guilt and rebelliousness are experienced negatively. For Group 3, only the ideal relation and co-humanity are experienced in a clearly positive way. The actual relation is experienced ambivalently, i.e. there is no clear predominance of positive or negative feelings. Here, too, guilt and rebellion are experienced negatively. Group 1 is significantly more positive with respect to dependence and with respect to the actual relation than in Group 3. This group experiences the actual relation as being more problematic.

MODALITY

We shall indicate here only the degree in which the actual relation displays concurrence, through the experience via the feelings, with the other relational types and with the ideal relation.

For Group 1, all relational types correlate very highly (more than .90) with the actual relation except for norm, rebelliousness, and guilt. These are thus experienced somewhat differently than is the actual relation. For Group 3, there is a very high degree of relatedness with ideal relation, co-humanity, and identification, and a high degree of relatedness with norm and dependence. Autonomy, rebelliousness, and guilt concur the least with the actual relation. Dependence and autonomy significantly conform more with the actual relation for Group 1 along with co-humanity and ideal relation. The members of Group 3 have more difficulty in integrating dependence and autonomy in the actual relation: there are more conflict feelings in these relational forms. Ethical norm is stressed more by them and

experienced in the same manner, perhaps to be able to resolve their conflicts.

SYNTHESIS

We noted in the first study that people in a socio-economically dependent position have more need of God's help. When this help is not forthcoming, feelings of rebelliousness arise that, in turn, can arouse guilt feelings. To escape or suppress such feelings, more stress is laid on the obligations one has toward God. From further investigative data derived from Hermans' method, we have the impression that dependence occupies a very central position in the experience of these subjects. The degree of involvement is very high, and this dimension is experienced ambivalently. The negative feelings also come strongly to the fore with Group 3.

We conclude now with a description of the actual relation as given by a subject from Group 3 that reflects significantly how these various forms of relation to God can stand in relation to each other in concrete experience: "I experience God mostly when I need him. If he doesn't help me then, I am rebellious. Still, I don't dare neglect him completely, since I would blame myself for having neglected him the next time something goes wrong. Because then I would say, 'If only I had asked him.' My fear of dying is for me a stimulus to continue to acknowledge him. The keeping of his commandments and laws is my accomplishment. I expect that he, when I need him, will do something for me in return." (This subject is a man of 30 who is a minor clerk in a warehouse and who believes absolutely that God exists.)

CONCLUSION

We have noted that the measurement of religious attitude is generally done by studying acceptance or rejection of articles of faith and by examining the importance given to religion. There are difficulties with the psychological interpretation of such scores and thus it has been proposed that the lived relation to God, which is central to the Judeo-Christian tradition, must be studied.

From the processing of the different variables, it seems clear that believing as the acceptance of articles of faith differentiates less than believing as the experiencing of a structured relation. This new approach offers hopeful perspectives for the acquisition of psychological insight into the act of believing. This approach is seen to be complementary to aspects of involvement with organized religion, participation in church life, functioning of religion in society, and impact of belief on secular areas of life – complementary in the sense that the relational approach can teach us something about the individual experiential aspect of religion.

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Received October 1979