### The Millennial Inventory: A New Instrument to Identify
### Pre- Versus Post-Millennialist Orientation

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## Abstract

Millennialism is an influential topic in peace studies and religious literature, and is generally divided into the following two subcategories: Premillennialism and Postmillennialism. Premillennialists subscribe to the belief that Christ will initiate the beginning of the millennial age. Postmillennialists believe that Christ will come after the millennium has already been prepared by his followers. Pre- and Postmillennialists tend to share different perspectives on peacebuilding practices. A nine-item Millennial Inventory (MI) was developed to detect a religious individual's Millennnialist orientation within four theoretical subcategories (poverty, righteousness, unity, and kingdom of God). A confirmatory factor analysis suggests that this model is appropriate for use. The MI showed convergent validity with the Social Justice Scale. Participants who scored high on the Postmillennialist items of the MI scored high on intentions to participate in social justice activities. Participants who scored high on the Premillennialist items of the MI perceived that individuals around them were more likely to engage in social justice practices. It is expected that this instrument will allow further research into this influential but relatively unexplored arena of religious thought.

Keywords: *Peacebuilding, Christianity, Millennialism, Social Justice*

## Introduction

The Millennium is defined as "the thousand years of peace" that comes either directly before or after Jesus Christ's "visible kingdom" is established on Earth (Brown, 1989, pp. 33), and is an influential topic in peace studies and religious literature. Millennialism, the general belief in the second coming of Jesus Christ and the thousand years of peace, is generally divided into the following two subcategories: Premillennialism and Postmillennialism (Galtung, 1964, 1985; Kay, 1999; Mason, 2004).

Premillennialists tend to subscribe to the belief, that if one keeps the commandments, they are not "entangled in the sins of a fallen world and particularly in the seemingly distant problem of violence" (Mason, 2004, pp. 29). Due to this perspective they have a potential abdication of moral responsibility, a certain "passivity", or "quiescence" towards building Zion, and related peacebuilding exercises (Mason, 2004, pp. 29). People with this perspective tend to practice a social quietism due to the belief that only Christ at his Second Coming can fix the world and its social ailments. Therefore these people may believe that the only real impact and responsibility we have is to preach and share the Gospel message. Additionally people that subscribe to this perspective have a "negative peace" point of view in which they conceive of peace in a negative light such as the absence of war or conflict (Galtung, 1964).

Postmillennialists tend to subscribe to a belief that building Kingdom of God and creating a Christian society is the complimentary commandment to conducting missionary work. (Mason, 2004, pp. 31). In this sense they feel that it is their responsibility and duty to individually work towards conditions of peace and social prosperity. Postmillennialists tend to have a "positive peace" perspective where they define peace based around the ideas of harmony, cooperation, and integration rather than define peace by the absence of conflict or war (Galtung, 1964). A Postmillennialist would believe that peace is not only the absence of conflict, but the building of healthy relationships and a social body capable of resisting conflict and war, relying on its own peace forces or peace sources (Galtung, 1985).

Weigert theorized that eschatology "has a strong impact on identity, motivation, and behavior" (1988, pp. 176). Measuring pre- and Postmillennialist tendencies in individuals who believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ might allow for the prediction of differences in views, thoughts, and behavior toward peacebuilding and activities related to social justice among such individuals. As there was no existing instrument in the literature to measure religious individuals' Millennialist orientation, we developed the Millennial Inventory (MI).

## Method

### Participants

One hundred and thirty five participants from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) were recruited from Brigham Young University–Hawaii. Professors recruited their students and the survey was administered online. Participant's majors were reported as: Peacebuilding (10%), Psychology (22%), and

Political Science (15%), and other (52%). Analysis only included individuals who claimed a belief in Jesus Christ and his second coming.

**Materials**

The Behavioral Interest (SJBI) and Subjective Norms (SJSN) subscales of the Social Justice Scale (SJS) were used to determine convergent and divergent validity with the MI. (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2012).

**Procedure**

The MI was derived from a pool of 44 items we created within four theoretical subcategories (poverty, righteousness, unity, and kingdom of God). An example item from the survey is, "we need to create unity for Christ to come." Participants answered each item on a 6 point Likert scale, 1 being *strongly disagree*, and 6 being *strongly agree*. Interviews with experts and people from different cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds were conducted to ensure item effect. Factor analyses were used to determine the strongest statistically significant items. The least significant items were removed and the process was repeated until a statistically sound model was found. The strongest model resulted in a 9 item survey (see appendix A). A confirmatory factor analysis was then used to determine the MI's validity, and a Cronbach's Alpha test was used to determine internal reliability. Last, we ran two multiple linear regressions using individuals' Pre- and Postmillennialist scores on the MI to determine convergent validity with the SJBI and SJSN.

**Results**

The confirmatory factor analysis on the 9 item MI suggests that this model is appropriate for use, $X^2$ (20, N = 135) = 23.85, $p$ = .25, Population Gamma index = .990 (adj.982), Steiger-Lind RMSEA Index = .045, Akaike Information Criterion = .417, Joreskog GFI = .955 (adj.919). The MI also showed high internal reliability, $\alpha$ = 0.65.

Multiple linear regressions were run using individuals' Pre- and Postmillennialist scores on the MI to determine convergent validity with two subscales of the the SJS. Postmillennialist scores showed a positive correlation with SJBI, $\beta$ = 0.19, $t$(132) = 2.28, $p$ = .02 (See Figure 1). Pre- and Postmillennialist scores also explained a significant proportion of variance in SJBI scores, $R^2$ = .05, $F$(2,132) = 3.33, $p$ = .04. Premillennialist scores were positively correlated with SJSN scores, $\beta$ = .19, $t$(132) = 2.23, $p$ =.03 (See Figure 2). Pre- and Postmillennialist scores explained a significant proportion of variance of SJSN scores, $R^2$ = .05, $F$(2,132) = 3.36, $p$ = .04.
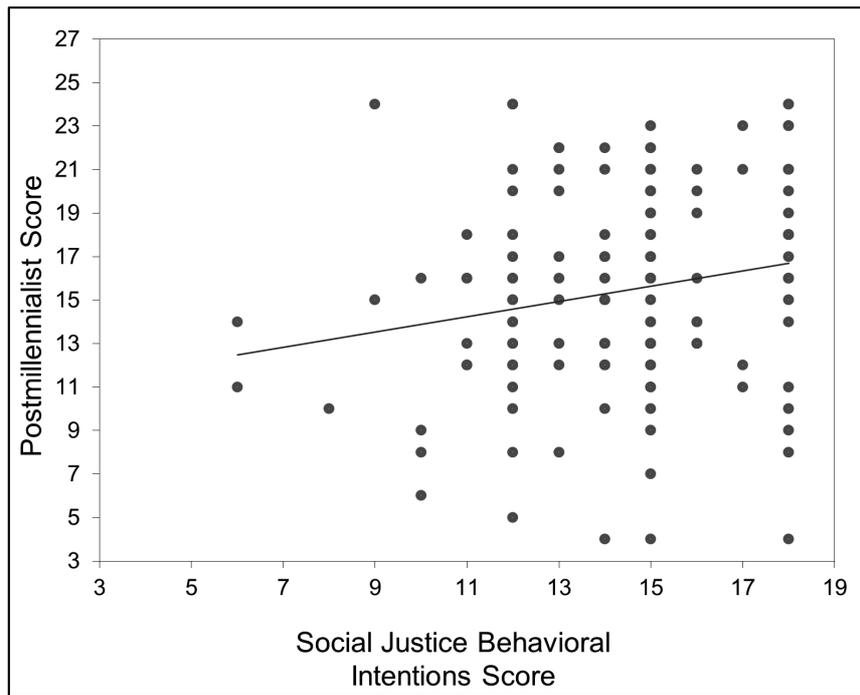
*Figure 1*. Scatterplot displaying social justice behavioral intention scores as a function of Postmillennialist scores with a regression line.
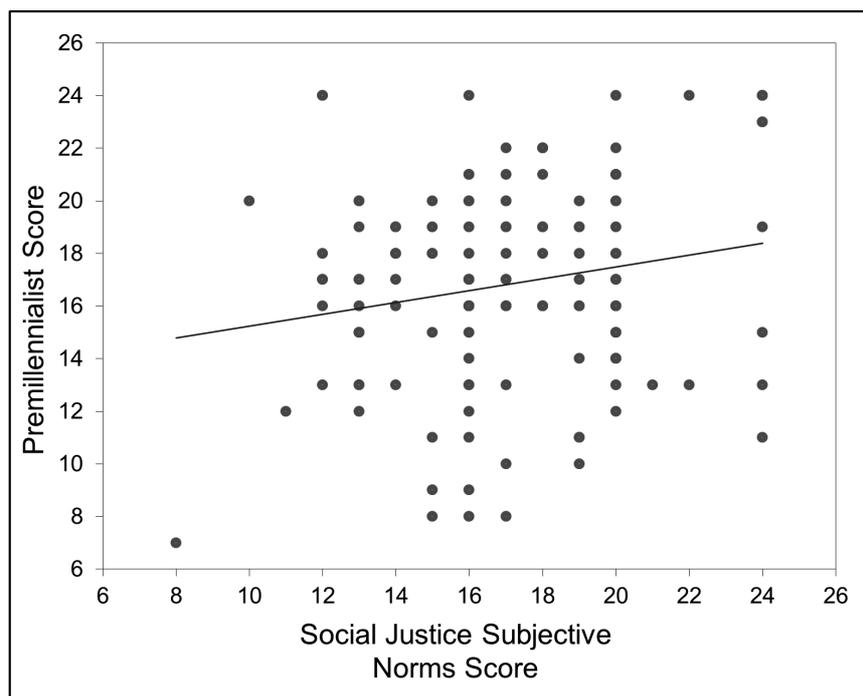


*Figure 2*. Scatterplot displaying social justice subjective norms scores as a function of Premillennialist scores with a regression line.

## Discussion

The confirmatory factor analysis confirms that the 9 item Millennial Inventory is a viable measure of Pre- or Postmillennialist attitudes. The convergent validity demonstrated by the multiple regression analyses of the MI with the SJBI and SJSN

also indicates viability, in that the MI measures similarly to other scales that reveal self-reported attitudes of a comparable nature.

The first multiple regression analysis between the Postmillennialist scores and the SJBI scores revealed a positive correlation, suggesting that Postmillennialist are more likely to engage in peacebuilding activities than those that are not of a Postmillennialist perspective (see Figure 1). In addition, the positive correlation resulting from the second multiple regression analysis between Premillennialist scores and SJSN scores show that Premillennialists have an increased awareness of other people engaging in social justice activities as opposed to those not of a Premillennialist perspective (see Figure 2).

The MI has the potential to be used in various applications, for example measuring Pre and Postmillennialist attitudes amongst differing populations. This may assist in further understanding individuals' motivations behind, and tendencies toward, peace building practices. Although the participants in the study were ethnically diverse, the MI was developed from an LDS sample. In future research it would be beneficial to include participants from other religious backgrounds. It is expected that this instrument will allow further research into this influential but relatively unexplored arena of religious thought.

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**Appendix A**

**Millennial Inventory**

**Instructions:** These are questions about your thoughts and feelings concerning the millennium. Please read each question carefully and rate how much you agree with each of the following statements. Please be as honest and accurate as possible in your response.

|  | Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

1. I believe there will be a second coming of Jesus Christ.

2. Christ will not come until the unrighteous create the conditions for the second coming.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

3. Christ will not come until the righteous create the conditions for the second coming.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

4. When Christ comes he will make his followers of one heart and one mind.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

5. Christ will not come until his followers are of one heart and one mind.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

6. We need to create unity for Christ to come.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

7. Christ will come when the people of the earth are the least unified.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

8. Christ will come at the height of poverty in the world.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

9. Christ will not come until his followers care for the poor and needy to the point that they eliminate poverty among themselves.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

10. When Christ comes He will create the conditions for God's Kingdom on earth to be established.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

11. We cannot wait until Christ comes to create God's Kingdom on earth - it will come only as we create it.
    1    2    3    4    5    6

    1    2    3    4    5    6

**Scoring:**
Question 1 determines Millennialism or Amillennialism. A high score indicates Millennialism and a low score indicates Amillennialism. Questions 3-10 differentiate between Pre-Millennialism and Post-Millennialism. They can be calculated as follows:
Pre-Millennialism: Sum of questions 4, 7, 8, 10
Post-Millennialism: Sum of questions 3, 5, 6, 9
Sum of all scores 3-10 indicate total millennialism score.

Scores for subcategories can be calculated using the raw or sum score:
Righteousness: 3
Unity: 4-7
Poor: 8-9
Kingdom of God: 10

Items 2, and 11 are filler items.

**Definitions:**
Kingdom of God: Generally speaking, the Kingdom of God on earth is created by people in preparation for the greater kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven.
Millennium: A period of 1,000 years either directly preceding or following Jesus Christ's second coming.

**Millennialist Profiles**

**Premillennialists** tend to subscribe to the belief, that if one keeps the commandments, they are not "entangled in the sins of a fallen world and particularly in the seemingly distant problem of violence" (Mason, 2004, p.29). Due to this perspective they have a potential abdication of moral responsibility, a certain "passivity", or "quiescence" towards building Zion, and related peacebuilding exercises (Mason, 2004, p. 29). People with this perspective tend to practice a social quietism due to the belief that Christ at his Second Coming can only fix the world and its social ailments. Therefore these people may believe that the only real impact and responsibility we have is to preach the Gospel. Additionally people that subscribe to this perspective have a "negative peace" point of view in which they conceive of peace in a negative light such as the absence of war or conflict (Galtung, 1964).

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