

That new-time religion

What is the best predictor of a person's attitudes and behavior — race, sex, age, income, education, occupation or political persuasion? The answer, according to a study conducted for the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co., is none of the above. Religious commitment or the lack of it reveals more than any other social category.

The study was performed by a private firm, Research & Forecasts, Inc., of New York City. More than 2,000 telephone interviews with the general public and 1,700 questionnaires completed by a cross-section of U. S. leaders were used.

Results indicate that 74 percent of all Americans consider themselves religious and about one in four are highly religious. Although older persons tend to be more religious, persons below the age of 50 often reported that religion would become much more important to them if they had only six months to live. The most religious are likely to participate in community activities and vote more often than the least religious. This religious "current" is described as a gradual cultural shift that is far more than a reaction to visible, politically active groups such as the "Moral Majority."

Among the leaders, only the clergy and businessmen held values and attitudes similar to those of the average citizen. Not only the public, but the leaders themselves showed a lack of confidence in leaders. Other leadership groups in the study included teachers, scientists, military brass, lawyers, politicians and journalists. The study found that people want moral qualities such as honesty in their leaders, while leaders place both intelligence and leadership ability ahead of honesty.

The report concludes that moral issues have become the leading political issues in the 1980s. The public may be moving toward throwing its support behind leaders who assume the correct moral stances. "This new trend is both heartening and potentially frightening," says the study. "[It] suggests the opportunity for a truly visionary leader, or a dangerous demagogue, who, by striking the appropriate religious-moral notes, could be swept into a position of awesome power."

Reach out, reach out and help someone

The desire to help others, according to many current theories of psychology, stems from the helper's desire to increase his or her own welfare and reduce personal guilt or shame. "Egoistic motivation," as it is called by researchers, is more powerful than altruism, the desire to help in order to increase the other's welfare.

C. Daniel Batson and colleagues of the University of Kansas, however, report in the February *JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY* that altruism is alive and well. In two experiments they presented female undergraduates with a female confederate who was ostensibly receiving moderate electric shocks. Subjects who felt a high degree of empathy and wanted to help the confederate by taking the shock for her were as ready to help when they could leave the experiment easily (after only a few "shocks" were administered) as when escape was difficult (all "shocks" had to be observed). These were altruistic responses, say the researchers, because subjects did not leave the experiment when they could have done so early on. Their concern lay with the confederate, not themselves. Subjects with a low desire to help were willing to take shocks only when escape from the experiment was difficult. The investigators conclude that more research needs to be done on altruistic and egoistic motivation. Future studies, they add, should look at both males and females, although "we know of no evidence nor any a priori reason why empathy... would elicit different kinds of motivation in males than in females."

Oil could imperil Washington shore

It has been assumed that the surface waters of Washington State's Puget Sound and of the Strait of Juan de Fuca flow out to the Pacific Ocean. But recent studies of the currents along the proposed routes of two crude oil pipelines show that most material released in those waters would head toward the beaches of Washington and Canada's Vancouver Island.

In the winter issue of *COASTAL OCEANOGRAPHY AND CLIMATOLOGY NEWS*, Ronald P. Kopenski of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Marine Pollution Assessment in Seattle, Wash., describes two studies of the waters that were conducted for the Environmental Protection Agency. In the first study, 700 "drift cards" — orange-colored cards designed to float like most crude oils and marked with a number and message to the finder — were released near Port Angeles, Wash., on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. During July 1980, a total of 4,557 drift cards were released, both at Port Angeles and at 23 other sites along the routes of two proposed crude oil pipelines. The Northern Tier pipeline is proposed to run from Port Angeles east across the entrance to Puget Sound to Skagit Bay, while the Trans-Mountain pipeline is to run south of the Northern Tier from one side of the Sound to the other.

Thirty-nine percent of the 1978 cards and 44 percent of the 1980 batch were recovered. In both cases, the distribution of the recoveries was similar: Most (86 percent in 1978, 78 percent in 1980) were found along the beaches within the inner Strait, while only 2 percent in 1978 and 20 percent in 1980 were found seaward of Port Angeles. (Tidal phases apparently caused the 1980 increase.) "The two studies strongly suggest that should oil be discharged into the marine surface waters along the proposed... routes, the majority of it would be beached rather than transported out... to the Pacific Ocean," says Kopenski.

Objectives for ocean use

There are seven major ways in which the government can help the private sector make the best use of the oceans during the 1980s, according to a task group of the National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere (NACOA). Ironically, however, at least two of these proposed goals, outlined in a recent report to the President, have already felt the budgetary ax.

In May 1979, with congressional backing, NACOA set out to define a national program for ocean use and management in the 1980s. Task groups were to determine goals in six areas; this report is from the task group for services to ocean operations.

To decide what services would be most useful to civilian programs, the task group first picked those factors that most influence how the oceans will be used. These included energy, fisheries, shifting population growth to coastal areas, science and technology and new uses. The group then determined what services are required by these uses. These services include:

- Ocean observation and prediction — to implement by 1990 a new system to observe ocean conditions. The keystone of this goal, the National Oceanic Satellite System, has been cut from the proposed 1982 budget.
- Navigation and positioning — a world-wide, all-weather navigation system for resource exploration and traffic control.
- Mapping and charting — to improve the "productivity, coverage and responsiveness" of ocean mapping and charting.
- Ocean data and information dissemination — two programs, Coastal Zone Management and Sea Grant, that would be used for this have been cut from the proposed budget.
- Monitoring the ocean — to assess ocean water quality.
- A new national ocean measurement capability — including modernizing of the research fleet and developing subsurface.
- Improved Arctic and Antarctic ocean information.