

RELIGIOUS OPINION POLL IN PHOENIX

This is a review of the Religious Opinion Poll as made in the first part of August, 1954 in Phoenix. One hundred sixty-one addresses were contacted; sixty of these were not at home, or did not answer; thirty-one wouldn't answer at all, or got started and then stopped the interview; which leaves us with about seventy people actually answering the questions of the poll. The exact figures are available; this is a summary.

A majority said they had received the Golden Dawn and half of those who had received it read it. The total of people reading the mailing piece was 15%. The majority of these believed that it told them what Scientology was. They believed that every person should have the right to speak freely his views and opinions of religion. They believed overwhelmingly that religion is directly connected with everyday livingness. They were emphatic in believing that religion and superstition are not the same. They believed overwhelmingly that Man has a soul, and, oddly enough, a considerable majority believed that Man is his soul. Almost all believed that Man's soul can be saved. A considerable majority had studied religion and religious doctrines. Only six of the fifty believed there was no use in continuing a search for the soul. The majority believed a person had a right to his own life. A larger majority believed each person had a right to his own sanity, and an overwhelming majority believed that men had a right to their own ideas and their own goals. A vast majority believed that the Creed of the Church of Scientology, as given in the Golden Dawn, Issue 1-OA was acceptable. A very small majority believed that religion should not be used to control people, which means that something less than half did believe that religion should be used to control people. A very heavy majority believed that religion should be used to set Man free. An overwhelming majority believed that people should be open minded about religion. Almost as large a majority believed that a religious organization should make public its findings concerning Man's soul. A considerable minority believed that all one had to do was have faith in order to solve his problems, while the majority believed that one had to have more than faith. An overwhelming majority believed in "a higher goal for Man." A slight but distinct majority believed that Man only lives one life which means that almost as great a number believed that Man lived more than one life. In other words, almost, but not quite, fifty percent of those answering the poll believed that an individual lived several lives.

Fifty believed that God was all-powerful. None would say that He was not, and only one said that he didn't know. A majority believed that a child should have the right to select his own religion. An overwhelming majority believed that Man had to suffer for his misdeeds. The people were equally divided as to whether or not Man was basically sinful. A larger majority believed that a person could be truly religious without attending church. Thirty-six believed that there was going to be a Judgement Day. Five believed there was going to be no Judgement Day, and ten said they didn't know. A startling majority said they believed the world was going to end. An overwhelming majority believed that a person had the right to leave his church and join another which offered more for his soul, and on the subject of what a minister should do professionally, an overwhelming majority believed that he should teach his Doctrines, that he should heal the suffering, that he should convert others to his Doctrines, and that he should follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Remembering that thirty-one people out of this hundred and sixty-one, when talked to, would not answer questions or stopped the interview, which is to say about one-third, and that these included all the Catholics contacted, who said they would not be able to read the Golden Dawn unless told they could do so by their priest; and remembering that this is a relatively small poll conducted in a country which has lots of space, and therefore greater freedom, we still find some very interesting data in this poll.

We find immediately that the Doctrines of Scientology are far from unacceptable to the general public. We find the majority believing that Man is his soul, and everyone believing that Man has a soul, except two lonely people who didn't know, and we find these people easily separating the idea of going to church from the idea of being religious. We find them overwhelmingly in favor of religious freedom and we find that they believe that men should have a right to their own lives, their own sanity, their own goals, and in other words believe completely in self-determinism. They believe completely that a religious organization should make public its findings about the soul, and their general attitude toward religion is a sane and acceptable one which finds nothing wrong with religion or religious practices.

The most important thing about this poll is that the public concept of a minister, as to what his duties should be, do not fit the activities of the current Protestant and Catholic ministry. These people were of one accord in believing that a minister should teach his Doctrines, that he should heal the suffering, that he should follow in the footsteps of Christ. In other words, these people do look to the ministry to heal the suffering, even more than they look to other fields. And then when we examine the New Testament we discover that Christ, to make a generalized statement, simply went out and healed and taught people to heal, and told people that they could be immortal, and it is this aspect of Christ, simply as described here, which has evidently brought him forward over two thousand years of rather definite misbehaviour on the part of religious organizations.

After a very careful examination of this poll, one would say very bluntly: Scientology fills the need of the people for a religion, which need is not, at this time being filled, since the general popular description of what a religion should be fits Scientology, and does not fit the existing churches, or the existing ministry, and that the public at large expects the minister to do exactly what a Scientologist would do, and therefore must be somewhat surprised when the ministry does not do---as it does not do---what a Scientologist can do.

Pending further polls on results in Operation Phoenix, one would tend to draw an early conclusion that people are sitting there waiting for a religion, and don't, at the moment, have one, and will not have one unless we get busy.

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