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THE OUTLOOK OF A RURAL SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

Submitted in Fulfillment  
of Requirements for  
H 490  
Honors Program Special Studies

Roger Schoeniger  
Spring 1969  
Ouachita Baptist University  
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

## THE OUTLOOK OF A RURAL SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

- I. Subject: Gravel Hill Baptist Church, Route 2, Benton Arkansas. A small country church with a total active membership of about eighty. The membership's average age is about forty. The active membership is about one-fourth retired people. None of the working membership is engaged in full-time farming. The portion of the membership which are employed work in industrial complexes between Benton and Little Rock.
- II. Scope of Research: To determine how this church, as a body, is responding to the problems of our society. The only variant used in this evaluation was church membership. No attempt was made to distinguish age or other factors.
- III. Sampling: This report is based upon the response of forty people of the active membership, most of which have no more than a high school education.
- IV. Means of evaluation: A questionnaire designed by the Philosophy and Religion Division's Honors Program was used. This questionnaire has four basic areas of questioning: (1) High Education; (2) Religion; (3) Family Living; and (4) Politics.

V. Results: See attached questionnaire.

VI. Evaluation:

1. Higher Education: A slight majority (62.5% yes, 12.5% no, and 25% did not answer) felt that higher education was valuable beyond the demands of society and employers. A clear majority sees a need for standards to remain high and not lower standards of admission or teacher hiring in favor of any group.  
As far as dissention is concerned on college campuses, it was agreed unanimously that this type of confrontation is bad. The general trend is toward the "law and order" theme.
2. Religion: 87.5% of all who answered the questionnaire felt that the church was serving their community. They all (100%) said that they enjoyed going to church, while 75% felt like they were not doing their part in making the church what it ought to be. 75% also felt that the church's programs were inadequate. They generally see the church as vital but not quite fulfilling its teaching roles.
3. Family Living: Family structure breakdown is picked as the basic cause of rebellion in our society. But there is no clear-cut majority answer in why or how this has happened. The closest to any type of majority agreement is over the issue of a lacking sense of roles (question #32). Here 62.5% said that a lacking

sense of roles in parents leads to a child misunderstanding his role in society and family, while 25% said that it made him frustrated and 12.5% did not answer.

4. Politics: One noticeable element in this part of the questionnaire was a lack of response. This may be due in part to the fact that the language used in the questionnaire was beyond their vocabulary and/or it tended to be confusing. The trend is toward a stable Government, with a majority of the power resting in the hands of the people and enacting change through legislation. Again, one sees the "law and order" pattern, which dominated the last elections.

1. What size town do you live in?

- 40
- A. Less than 1,000
  - B. 1,000 to 2,500
  - C. 2,500 to 10,000
  - D. 10,000 to 25,000
  - E. 25,000 to 100,000
  - F. 100,000 to a million
  - G. Over a million

2. How old are you?

- A. 15-18
- B. 18-21
- C. 22-30
- D. 31-45
- E. 45-60
- F. Over 60

3. How do you rank yourself politically?

- A. Conservative
- B. Moderate
- C. Liberal

4. Do you have children? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you consider your social standing?

- A. Lower class
- B. Lower middle class
- C. Middle - middle class
- D. Upper middle class
- E. Upper class

6. What section of the country have you lived in most of your life?

- A. South
- B. North
- C. Northeast
- D. Mid-west
- E. Northwest
- F. Southwest

7. What do you think is the duty of a citizen to his country?  
A. Abide by the rules and laws even though he thinks these rules are wrong.  
B. Abide by laws that he thinks wrong but desent.  
C. Rebel against the laws he thinks are wrong by breaking these rules.  
D. Vocally disagree with the rules that he does not like.  
40 E. Abide by the laws while trying to change them through legislation.
8. The student revolt at Columbia University was:  
A. Necessary  
B. Good but unnecessary  
40 C. Bad  
D. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
9. In determining school policy, students should:  
5 A. Have a large say  
35 B. Be referred to occasionally  
C. Have little or no say  
D. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Professed student agitators should be:  
A. Backed in their efforts  
B. Discouraged but tolerated  
25 C. Opposed definitely  
15 D. Ignored completely
11. Forced integration in the school system is:  
A. Desirable but unnecessary  
25 B. Undesirable but necessary  
C. Desirable and necessary  
15 D. Undesirable and unnecessary
12. College curriculum is:  
5 A. Mostly irrelevant  
5 B. About fifty percent relevant and fifty percent irrelevant  
15 C. Mostly relevant
13. Should minority ethnic groups have a large say in rejecting certain faculty members or administrative policies? Briefly explain your answer. No - 30
14. Should admission standards be lowered to admit those who are inadequately prepared? Why or why not?  
No - 25      Yes - 5
15. If a college degree were not demanded by society and employers, would it be worthwhile? Why or why not?  
No - 5      Yes - 25

16. Should teachers of various races or ethnic groups be hired proportionally to the number of students of the same group or race? Why or why not?  
No - 25      Yes - 5
17. Is the church serving your community? Yes 35 No 5 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
18. Is the church standing for moral issues the way you think it should? Yes 25 No 15 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_ The church should not become involved \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Is the church too formal? Yes 10 No 30 Not formal enough \_\_\_\_\_
20. Is the church too concerned with being institutionalized? Yes 15 No 20 Should be more concerned 5
21. Do you think that the church will have a place in the next century?  
 A. As it now stands? Yes 20 No 15 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. If it considerably changes? Yes 15 No 10 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
22. Is Science a threat to the church? Yes 10 No 30 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
23. Are the programs meeting the needs of the people today? Yes 10 No 30 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
24. Should the church become active in politics? Yes 5 No 35
25. Do you enjoy going to church? Yes 40 No \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_
26. Do you think you have done your part in making the church what it should be? Yes 10 No 30 Make any additional comment about the church here:
27. What do you think is the role of the family?  
10 A. Develop members who will fit into the society without desention  
15 B. Develop individuals who will critically analyze the strong and weak points of society  
15 C. Develop a child who will do what he thinks is right, regardless of society  
 D. Other (Specify)
28. Do you think there has been a breakdown in the family structure since the Second World War? Yes 40 No \_\_\_\_\_
29. If you think the family has broken down, do you think the breakdown is a direct or indirect cause of rebellion in our society today? Yes 40 No \_\_\_\_\_



30. Many mothers have worked outside the home since the Second World War. This absence from the home has:
- 5 A. Deprived the child of necessary instruction during his years.
  - B. Had no effect on the young child
  - C. Deprived the child of security.
  - 20 D. Directly or indirectly led to rebellious tendencies.
  - 15 E. Had very little effect on the child.
31. In the average family, the children have a say in the family decisions. Such a say:
- 15 A. Develops the child into a thinking individual.
  - B. Creates a lacking sense of authority within the child.
  - 15 C. Helps the child to learn to be democratic.
  - 5 D. Makes the child have a false sense of importance.
32. A lacking sense of the distinction between the father and mother role:
- 25 A. Causes the child to misunderstand his role in society and family
  - B. Helps the child develop himself because of the lack of preconceived ideas concerning his role.
  - 10 C. Makes the child frustrated over this weakness in the family
  - D. Causes rebellion against social institutions.
33. Some of the duties of the family have been taken over by other social institutions. How does this effect individuals in the home?
- 10 A. Creates disgust with the family because the family is not doing anything
  - 15 B. Makes social institutions in general and the family in particular seem unimportant
  - C. Makes the roles of the social institutions seem relative and thus unnecessary.
  - D. Has no effect at all
  - 5 E. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
34. The fact that the family is together very little of the time:
- 10 A. Allows the child to discover things for himself and thus become a better member of society.
  - B. Puts persons in places of decision making without the necessary information to make decisions.
  - 15 C. Does not allow the individual to learn to live in a group
  - 10 D. Lets the child learn group living in more areas than just the family
35. Since some children have been raised "psychologically" or "by the book", they:
- 10 A. Have no respect for authority
  - 10 B. See themselves as all important
  - 15 C. Think their opinion is just as important as anybody else's.

36. What do you consider to be the political structure of the United States/  
 10 A. Pure Democracy, direct rule by the people  
 25 B. Representative Democracy, indirect rule by the people  
 5 C. Bureaucracy, government by bureaus and their chairmen  
 5 D. Socialism, government ownership and democratic management  
 E. Republicanism, power resides in the electorate and is responsible to the public  
 F. Comments if needed
37. What do your parents consider to be the political structure of the United States?  
 10 A. Pure Democracy  
 15 B. Representative Democracy  
 C. Bureaucracy  
 5 D. Socialism  
 E. Republicanism  
 F. Comments if needed
38. To what extent do you think the present structure is situated in comparison to the basic political structure?  
 5 A. To the left of the structure  
 B. To the right of the structure  
 20 C. In agreement with the structure  
 5 D. Fluctuating between the right and the left  
 E. Comments if needed
39. To what extent do your parents think the present structure is situated in comparison to the basic political structure?  
 A. To the left of the structure  
 5 B. To the right of the structure  
 5 C. In agreement with the structure  
 5 D. Fluctuating between the right and the left  
 E. Comments if needed
40. What do you consider to be the areas of change needed in the political structure, if any?  
 A. No change needed  
 20 B. Electoral College System  
 10 C. The Draft System  
 5 D. Political Party System  
 5 E. Social Security System  
 25 F. Taxation System  
 5 G. Educational System  
 5 H. Military System  
 I. Comments if needed including other areas of change not mentioned

41. What do your parents consider to be the areas of change needed in the political structure, if any?

- A. No change needed
- 10 B. Electoral College System
- C. The Draft System
- D. Political Party System
- 5 E. Social Security System
- 5 F. Taxation System
- G. Educational System
- H. Military System
- I. Comments if needed including other areas of change not mentioned.

42. If you feel change is needed, what is your program of change?

- 40 A. Change through legislation
- B. Change through overthrow of the structure
- C. Change through leaving the structure, or establishment of citizenship in another country
- D. Change through complacency
- E. Comments if needed

43. If your parents feel that change is needed, what is their program of change?

- 35 A. Change through legislation
- B. Change through overthrow of the structure
- C. Change through leaving the structure, of establishment of citizenship in another country
- D. Change through complacency
- E. Comments if needed

44. How do you think you agree with the heads of our political structure concerning the above questions?

- A. Full agreement
- 40 B. Partial agreement
- C. Disagreement
- D. Comments if needed

45. How do you think you agree with your contemporaries concerning the above questions?

- A. Full agreement
- 35 B. Partial agreement
- C. Disagreement
- D. Comments if needed