

COLLEGE STUDENTS' RELIGION DISCUSSED

INVESTIGATION REPORTED

Questionnaire Sent Out Among Those at Northwestern Is Interesting In Result; Some Discoveries

Religion is not losing its hold on the thought and interest of university students if the results of a recent campus survey at Northwestern university are typical.

In response to a questionnaire given out by Dr. Delton T. Howard, personnel director and Mr. George H. Betts, director of research, 1649 students representing arts, educational, engineering commerce and the graduate school gave detailed information concerning their religious thought, interests and activities.

Here are some of the striking facts:

Seventy-five per cent of Northwestern students are members of churches, as against less than fifty per cent for the general population. Women students outrank men in church membership by about three per cent.

Thirty Denominations
Thirty different denominations are represented among the students, the Methodists leading with 25 per cent of all church members. Presbyterians coming next with 11 per cent and Catholics third with 8 per cent.

Out of 1916 students reporting, 865 go to church "frequently" or every Sunday, 375 go occasionally, while 372 seldom or never go. Girl students beat men as church goes, 57 per cent of them attending church "frequently" or every Sunday while only 46 per cent of the men attend that often.

The most common reasons for students not attending church are pressure of work and acknowledged laziness. Some complain that church services are not interesting and that the minister attacks youth too much. A few profess not to believe in religion or the church, and others doubt whether the church truly represents Christianity. A small minority are offended by lack of cordiality on the part of church people and the inconsistency of their lives.

One in Six

Only about one student in six of those participating in supplemental organizations in their home church, such as Sunday school and young people's societies, continue these relations in any church while in the university. Yet university students are found filling positions as organists, singers, teachers, ushers, club leaders and scout-master.

Campus religious organizations do not appeal to students equally with churches, only 19 per cent of men and 53 per cent of women belonging to the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A. respectively. Reasons offered for failure to give better support to these organizations are: Outside activities, neglect, see no benefits, dues too burdensome.

That the attitude of university students to religion is not one of indifference is shown by the fact that 90 per cent speak of religious discussions carried on with other students or with their instructors or deans.

Six per cent of the student group claim that religious matters seldom or never occupy their thought, while almost 50 per cent say that they very frequently think of religious questions, and 45 per cent that religious problems occasionally occupy their minds.

Not Borne Out

The fear of many persons that higher education tends to make young people cold or hostile toward religion does not seem to be borne out

by the Northwestern survey. Out of 1560 students reporting on this point 315 admit a decrease of religious interest, 294 claim greater interest and 951 can see no change since entering the university.

More than 90 different courses, among which are modern drama, astronomy, Bible, psychology, biology, chemistry, Greek and philosophy, are mentioned as being distinctly helpful and stimulating religiously. That one person's food may be another's poison is shown by the fact that many of the courses mentioned as religiously helpful were designated by other students as being harmful to religion.

Almost 40 per cent of the students speak of the religious helpfulness of personal friendships. Many testify that the discipline of certain fraternities and sororities and their insistence on church going is a stimulating influence. A small number find their fraternity or sorority relations detrimental to religion.

Average Interest

Are university students more religious or less religious than other people? If the Northwestern group are representatives and if they tell the truth (to encourage frankness no names were signed to the questionnaires), the student population is probably neither more religious nor less religious than the social group from which they come.

Three out of four of them are church members when they enter the university; and about the same proportion when they leave. They go to church more or less and often take some part in the church program. They grumble a good deal at the church and the preacher, and put some money in the collection plates. They are more interested in religion than they are in the ecclesiastical organization but they are not really in discord with the church. They do not promise to set the world on fire with their fervor, but most of them will send their children to Sunday school.

SAYS MINISTERS ARE HAMPERED IN BELIEFS

Ministers are hampered in their search for religious truths by their own officials, as well as by their congregations, who exert economic pressure on their pastors, asserts Theodore Wesley Darnell, former Presbyterian minister, in the April Scribner's Magazine.

Mr. Darnell, who resigned his pastorate to become a teacher because he could not support the doctrines of his church, says:

"For example, on one occasion a prominent minister, whose word would go far toward recommending a youth ambitious minister in seeking promotion to a better church, rose in an official gathering to make a report as a delegate to a national convention of the denomination. After vigorously condemning the trend of ministerial thinking, he concluded his report to saying: If I had my way about it, I should not permit any young minister to read any book on theology published within the last fifty years! The writer could not refrain from asking himself what would have happened if these words had been used by a medical doctor in an address to his fellow practitioners. Doubtless, the speaker would have been driven from the platform with laughter. In this case he took his seat amid hearty applause, though a few sly winks were exchanged in his clerical audience."

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ENGLISH CAPTAIN PRAISES CHICAGO

In Interview in London Paper He Comments on City's Fine Features

A press clipping from the London Weekly Dispatch containing a communication sent from Chicago by Capt. Victor Cazalet, M. P., has come to hand. The Captain has this to say about Chicago:

"If you ask anyone in New York what he thinks of Chicago you'll be told it is a large commercial town somewhere out west, where a greater number of murders and robberies take place each year than in any other city in America. It may be stated that the city is of such recent date that the Red Indians are often seen in the street.

As a matter of fact, Chicago, with its 3,000,000 population, is rapidly becoming the largest and most artistic city in the United States. Along the shore of Lake Michigan whole parks and avenues have been proclaimed from this inland sea, which is 360 miles long and 70 miles broad. In a

few years' time there will be the broadest, straightest and most magnificent promenade on the edge of the town along the lake shore which municipal enterprise has ever conceived.

On this great drive stands the Field Museum built entirely of white marble and covering at least twice the area of the National History Museum of London. Half a million pounds of sterling has just been left by a munificent benefactor for the building of an aquarium.

Commodore J. Stuart Blackton of Chicago and Los Angeles announces that the McLennan Construction company has begun building at Vista del Lago, which owns and occupies a strip of land running 500 feet along Lake Michigan, with 353 feet fronting on Sheridan road, just south of the Kenilworth line.

Many boys long for adventure, and there will be no objection if they go on the farms and hunt potato bugs next summer.

The book publishers report a great output of fiction, and some of it seems to be discoverable in the income tax returns.

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