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Baptist VIEWpoll Report

Nixon Wins Approval In Baptist VIEWpoll

by Martin B. Bradley

NASHVILLE (BP)--A recent Southern Baptist VIEWpoll showed 83.3 per cent of Baptist pastors and 81.1 per cent of Sunday School teachers approving the way Richard Nixon is handling his job as President.

The poll gave Nixon 15 per cent more approval than the Gallup Poll of the same period. The Gallup Poll showed 65 per cent of the general public expressing approval of the way Nixon is handling his job.

When asked, "Just your first impressions--do you approve or disapprove of the way Nixon is handling his job as President?" only 7.7 per cent of the pastors and 9.1 per cent of the Sunday School teachers disapproved. "No opinion" was the response of 9.0 per cent of the pastors and 9.8 per cent of the Sunday School teachers. In the Gallup poll, 26 per cent voted "no opinion."

Concerning the future of integration, VIEWpoll asked, "Now thinking of the new administration--of course it is too early to have a definite opinion, but just your best guess--do you think integration will now be pushed faster, or not so fast?"

"Faster" was the opinion of 5.6 per cent of pastors and 6.8 per cent of the Sunday School teachers.

"Not so fast" was the opinion of 44.2 per cent of the pastors and 34.5 per cent of the Sunday School teachers.

"About the same" was expressed by the majority, 49.4 per cent of the pastors and 54 per cent of the Sunday School teachers.

Only 0.8 per cent of the pastors and 4.7 per cent of the Sunday School teachers voted "do not know."

There are indications that the reflection of Nixon's strength among Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers is associated statistically with what these groups think he will do concerning civil rights.

Among pastors disapproving of the way Nixon is handling his job, 27.8 per cent believe he will push integration "faster." Only 2.0 per cent of pastors approving the way Nixon handles his job believe he will push integration faster.

Among Sunday School teachers disapproving of the way Nixon is handling his job, 14.8 per cent believe he will push integration "faster." Of those approving of the way Nixon is handling his job, 5.0 per cent voted "faster" as their concept of how Nixon will handle integration.

In the Gallup Poll's recent survey of the same item, general public responses indicated 16 per cent believed the new administration would push integration "faster," while 48 per cent answered "not so fast."

A larger percentage of the Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers indicated the push for integration will be "about the same" compared with the general public as revealed in the Gallup Poll (49 per cent and 54 per cent for pastors and Sunday School teachers to 28 per cent for the general public).

The strong showing of Nixon in the VIEWpoll indicates some basis for a continuing approval among Southern Baptists.

However, as pointed out in a recent publication of Roper Research Associates, a President's popularity level is subject to decided fluctuations. Events beyond control of a President are frequently decisive influences on this level.

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The VIEWpoll panel is composed of approximately 600 Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers. Selected to represent all Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers according to geographical locations, the panel is from Southern Baptist churches of all sizes membership.

Current VIEWpoll findings are based on 92 per cent response of the panel members.

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