

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions

"Religion in America"

The Gallup Opinion Index (no. 145), prepared by the American Institute of Public Opinion, 53 Bank St., Princeton, N.J. 08540. 118 pp. \$3.25.

Many social commentators have assumed that the age of "permissiveness" and relaxed moral standards has prompted Americans to abandon their churches. But according to a Gallup survey, a strong religious climate still exists in the United States.

Some 38 percent of all persons interviewed felt a "great deal" of confidence that organized religion can perform its role in society. Of seven other major public institutions (including government, law, and education), only medicine received comparably high ratings.

A 58 percent majority considered its religious beliefs "very important" personally, while Americans split almost evenly on the question of whether organized religion is gaining or losing influence.

In 1977, for the first time since 1958,

church attendance increased, with 42 percent of Americans participating in services during an average week. Those responding most affirmatively to questions on religious matters were likely to be women, nonwhites, Southerners, less-educated, lower-level wage earners, or residents of small towns and rural areas.

The survey also documents the rise of newer religious movements. President Carter's public assertion that he is a "born-again" Christian—one who has experienced a turning point and pledged himself to Christ—is echoed by one out of three adult Americans of all denominations. To a lesser degree, experimental religions are attracting followers: faith healing, transcendental meditation, and yoga involved 7, 4, and 3 percent respectively, of the Gallup respondents.

"Urban Transportation and Energy: The Potential Savings of Different Modes"

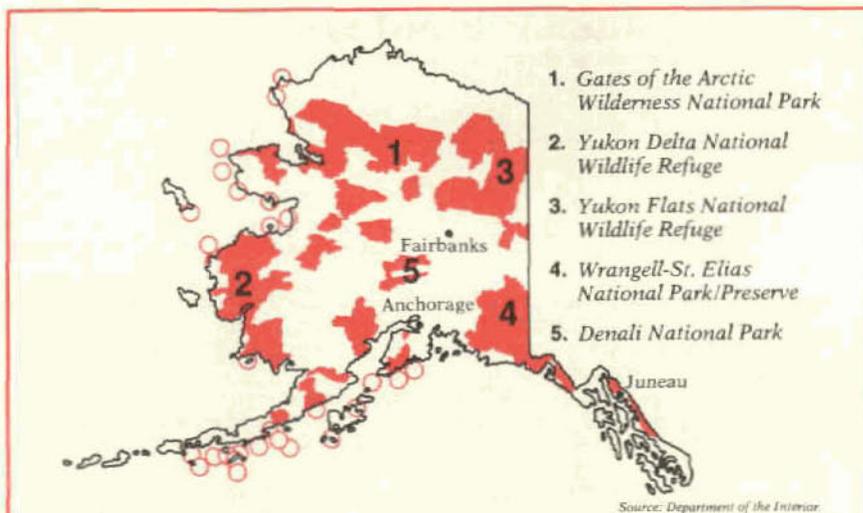
Report by the Congressional Budget Office to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 81 pp. \$2.75 (Stock no.: 052-070-04331-8).

Transportation in large American cities eats up 25 percent of all oil consumed in the United States. But with new, urban rapid rail systems, such as San Francisco's BART and Washington's METRO, it is commonly thought that much of this energy can be saved. And in terms of simple energy use for propulsion, these mass transit systems do in fact rank among the most energy-efficient methods of transport.

But in terms of *overall* energy consumption—including energy used

in construction and maintenance—new rapid rail systems "actually waste energy rather than save it."

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the most fuel-efficient method of urban transportation is the "vanpool," where passengers living in the same general area ride vans or mini-buses to work. Vanpools can promote energy savings (above the norm) of 7,720 British thermal units (Btu) per passenger mile; carpools, 4,890 Btu; express



Source: Department of the Interior.

Under a Carter administration proposal, 92 million acres of Alaskan wilderness (red), along with numerous marine habitats (circles), may soon be placed off limits to development. That figure could jump to 116 million acres.

"Alaska National Interest Lands"

Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. 13 pp. Restricted distribution (Issue brief IB77110).

Author: W. Wendell Fletcher.

Alaska is the scene of the biggest battle over conservation in recent decades. At issue is how much of the state's vast federal landholdings (228 million acres) should be placed off limits to intensive development, such as mining and timbercutting.

Under the 1971 Native Claims Settlement Act, Alaskan Eskimos and Indians were ceded 44 million of the state's 375 million acres, and the state government was entitled to choose 103 million acres for itself.

Congress, under a 1978 deadline, was authorized to add more of the federal land to the 50 million acres that have already been placed under the stringent protection of the "four systems": the National Park System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, the National Forest System, and the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The question of "how much?" has generated heated debate among timber, mining, oil, and gas interests, conservationists, commercial fishermen, native Alaskans who live off the land, and many others.

A half dozen proposals are currently before Congress. The bill favored by the state government and most Alaskans would add about 25 million acres to parklands already under strict federal control. But a bill favored by environmentalists would place 116 million acres—roughly the size of California—under "four-systems" management.

Combined with the 50 million federal acres already set aside, this plan would make almost half the state virtually untouchable (compared to 24 percent of California and 23 percent of Washington State).

buses, 3,590 Btu. New rail transit, however, brings a net loss of 980 Btu; dial-a-ride (a service similar to calling a cab) is by far the least efficient, resulting in a loss of 12,350 Btu.

The principal cause of the ultimately poor energy performance of rapid rail systems is the customers' supplementary use of private cars,

typically carrying only one or two passengers, to get to and from the train station. Of all conventional urban transit systems (bus, trolley, subway), contends the CBO, buses offer the greatest fuel savings—especially since express bus service draws heavily from commuters who would otherwise drive automobiles.

“Selective Admissions in Higher Education”

Report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 615 Montgomery St., San Francisco, Calif. 94111. 256 pp. \$12.95.

Authors: Winton H. Manning, Warren W. Willingham, and Hunter M. Breland and Associates.

Bakke v. Regents of the University of California, now before the U.S. Supreme Court, is widely viewed as a test of whether an applicant's racial origin may be considered by colleges and universities in their admission procedures. At stake are the divergent interests of public and academic policy: Academic priorities could obstruct affirmative action; public priorities could lower standards.

The authors of this Carnegie Council report seek a golden mean between both positions, while asserting that the race of an “academically admissible” applicant is among the relevant criteria for admission.

They recommend a two-stage admissions policy, distinguishing “admissibility” from “selection.” In the

first stage, schools should eliminate all applicants who are clearly unqualified by applying academic standards uniformly without regard to race, sex, or other categories.

But at the next stage, when the school selects its student body from the applicant pool that remains, “race should be considered”—if it reflects a disadvantaged background. Both white and black students with such backgrounds should receive special consideration.

According to the authors, the two-stage model allows sufficient latitude for schools to exercise their professional judgment. Courts, legislatures, and governments should not intervene “except when clearly required by the public interest.”

“Redefining National Security”

Worldwatch Paper #14, Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 46 pp. \$2.00.
Author: Lester R. Brown

Since World War II, most nations have viewed their security almost exclusively in military terms, leading to worldwide military expenditures of \$350 billion in 1976. Some 30 million men and women are under arms; a quarter of the world's scientific talent

is devoted to weapons development.

But as the world becomes increasingly interdependent—politically and economically—new and extraordinarily complex threats to all nations have emerged, ranging from dwindling oil reserves to mounting pressures on the

earth's biological systems. The result, says Brown, president of Worldwatch Institute, is that purely military concepts of security "may be diverting attention from more serious problems."

For example, unless the world's oil-dependent economies shift rapidly to alternative energy sources, the downturn in world oil production—which may occur within 15 years—is "almost certain to shake the foundations of the global economic system." Moreover, says Brown, the major biological systems on which the world depends for food and industrial raw materials show serious signs of stress.

Overfishing has reduced productivity in ocean fishing grounds, the world's primary source of high-quality protein. Grasslands suffer unprecedented overgrazing by a global livestock population of nearly 3 billion. Scarce resources have already contributed to global "food insecurity";

the world's grain stockpile vanished in 1974, a bad crop year in the United States, Canada, India, and the Soviet Union, and is less than ample now. India's poor 1972 harvest resulted in an estimated 829,000 hunger-related deaths.

What's more, inflation has assumed global dimensions in the 1970s. With it, has come rising unemployment. These problems strike poor nations most severely; they are ultimately translated into social unrest and political instability.

"The purpose of national security deliberations," Brown concludes, "should not be to maximize military strength but to maximize national security." The current emphasis on military strength by both large and small nations siphons off money, management skills, and scientific know-how that should be devoted to emerging nonmilitary threats.

"Youth Unemployment"

Rockefeller Foundation, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036. 80 pp. Free on request.

Author: Lester Thurow.

The problem of widespread (40 percent) unemployment among inner city blacks is well known. But according to M.I.T. economist Thurow, their plight is only part of a larger phenomenon.

In this Rockefeller Foundation report, he notes that in 1976 3.4 million black and white youths aged 16 to 24 were looking for work and unable to find it—nearly 15 percent of this age group. (The jobless rate for the population as a whole is 7.7 percent and 4.2 percent for married men.) These figures do not include an additional 1 million youths who are unemployed and *not* looking for work.

Thurow examines two widely suggested remedies. The simplest method would be to lower the minimum wage, which, some analysts feel, has priced young, inexperienced labor out of the market. However, Thurow warns, while a lowered minimum would

probably put more young people onto private payrolls, the young might displace the old. This kind of "reshuffling" would create as many problems as it would solve.

A second proposal is direct federal job creation. But again, Thurow warns against a "quick fix." Any new federal jobs will have to be of high quality, with rigid work standards, under which workers could be fired for poor performance. Without such safeguards, private employers in the future would avoid hiring veterans of the federal "make-work" programs.

Finally, Thurow notes, the old reliance on more education and more training is not an answer to the problem of youth unemployment. On the average, the jobless young today are better educated than their employed elders; labor surpluses among youths exist at all education levels.

“Violent Schools—Safe Schools”

The Safe School Study Report to the Congress, prepared by the National Institute of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1200 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 357 pp.

In recent years, increasing public attention has been focused on crime and violence in the nation's public schools—despite a lack of hard data on how bad the problem really is.

Now, a three-year study by the National Institute of Education (NIE) concludes that the situation is serious indeed—but it is not getting worse.

According to NIE, the incidence of vandalism, robbery, theft, and assault, which rose steadily throughout the 1960s, has leveled off.

However, the risk of violence to teen-agers remains greater in school than anywhere else. Some 40 percent

of the robberies and 36 percent of the assaults on urban teen-agers occur in school—where city youths spend no more than 25 percent of their time. But the crime problem, the study emphasizes, “cannot be seen as essentially urban”: Of the 6,700 American schools with a “serious” problem of crime (defined as at least five “incidents” per month), more than 4,000 were located in suburbs or rural areas.

The most widespread offense is theft, which strikes 2.4 million junior high school students each month; another 282,000 students are assaulted and 112,000 are forcibly robbed.

“Current Demographic Change in Regions of the United States”

Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif. 90406. 37 pp. \$3.00.

Author: Peter A. Morrison.

During the last decade, the U.S. birth-rate has declined. At the same time, regional migration patterns have changed. These circumstances have turned migration—and efforts to control it—into a powerful influence in determining which areas of the United States grow and which do not.

Urban population growth is shifting away from “mature” industrial cities particularly in the Northeast and Great Lakes, or “Frostbelt” region, toward the cities of the South and West, or “Sunbelt” region. At the same time, strong increases were registered in nonmetropolitan areas—such as Northern New England and the Upper Great Lakes (popular as

recreation areas) and the Ozark-Ouachita Uplands (popular among retirees)—as part of the so-called rural renaissance.

The new trends spur protests both from the localities that are population “gainers” (hard-pressed to provide services such as welfare and schools) and from the “losers” (whose tax base is declining). The report identifies three federal responses: (1) controlling or redirecting migration flows, a politically impossible undertaking; (2) assisting cities and counties in coping with the problems of growth or decline; and (3) transforming migration-related burdens, such as welfare, into national responsibilities.