Religious Orientation
of CPU Students*

by

Macario B. Ruiz

This investigation aimed to assess the religious orientation of Central Philippine University students. What is their attitude towards some of the basic religious truths embodied in the Bible as a source of inspiration and guidance in the development of a set of moral and spiritual values? Such basic beliefs as the efficacy of prayer in strengthening family ties, the notion of the good neighbor as exemplified in the parable of the good Samaritan, belief in the presence of a spiritual meaning in every human experience — these are some of the "themes" to which the students were asked to react. It might be mentioned, in this connection that these "themes" are reflected, in one way or another, in the set of objectives[1] of Central Philippine University.

PROCEDURE

The procedure followed in this investigation was similar to the one in a previous report on the study practices of CPU students[2]. As a matter of fact, these two studies were based on the same sample.

The instrument. Part II of the research instrument used in this study contains thirty items of the Likert type, with four foils from which the respondent was asked to select one. These thirty items attempted to assess three broad dimensions: religious orientation, social conscience, and social concern. Only the findings on religious orientation are presented in this report.

Validity and reliability of the religious orientation inventory. Based on 25 respondents chosen at random from each of seven college groups, or a total of 175 respondents, the coefficient of reliability[3] was .935. Except for two items in this inventory, the item/scale correlations range from .35 to .82, the two having only .10. The average item/scale correlation of the ten items is .46.

For all intents and purposes, the inventory is sufficiently reliable and valid as a group measure but probably not as a measure for individuals.

Description of inventory. As mentioned earlier, the format of the inventory is of the Likert type.

The four foils are in "scale" form, one of which indicates a religious "direction" in contrast to the other three. One of the items is this:

"Which of the following do you believe should serve as the *primary* guide for one's conduct or develop his loyalty to?

(a) One's professional organization or associates in the profession

(b) The political ideology which one subscribes to

(c) Family values

(d) One's Christian ideals or religious conviction.

Some of the "themes" tapped by the inventory are efficacy of prayer, inspiration derived from religious music/hymns, acceptance of others irrespective of religious persuasion, neighborliness, the Bible as a source of inspiration, attitude toward religious convocations, discernment of a spiritual meaning in every human experience, concern for excessive materialism at the sacrifice of the spiritual, etc.

A high score in the inventory indicates that the group shows preference for, or is more inclined to the spiritual religious view than to the material or worldly view. A low score probably indicates that the group is indifferent to the

---

[3]The coefficient alpha, as developed by Cronback, L.J., "*Coefficient Alpha and the Internal Consistency of Tests,*" in *Psychometrics*, 1951, was used.

spiritual orientation. It should be noted that the foils show gradations (not as yet statistically determined through the foil validation), so that we can tentatively put up a polarized continuum, as follows:

aversion– indifference– commitment

or

negative – neutral – positive

Scoring. By common agreement of a few religious or spiritually oriented persons, arbitrary weights of 4, 3, 2, and I were assigned to each of the four foils, 4 being given to the spiritually oriented foil, 1 to the least spiritually oriented, and 2 or 3 to the other two depending on what was agreed to be more or less so oriented.

Determination of "high" or "low" scores. Since we had no "norms" against which to compare the obtained measures, we predetermined a cut-off point which would separate "high" from "low" scores.

The cut-off point was 28, which was derived as follows:

(1) The student must have chosen foils in eight of ten items which were assigned a weight of 3. So that, 3 x 8 = 24 - - - - - - - - - - -24

(2) The student must have chosen two foils of the ten items

which were assigned a weight of 2. So that, 2 x 2 = 4 - - - - - - - - - - 4

T o t a l - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 28

The reason for the arbitrary choice of 8 was because in self-reports such as this, students tend to over-rate themselves. We thought eight items of this kind would be a reasonably "stringent" criterion, thereby, enabling us to have a more realistic interpretation of the results. This is, in fact, an attempt to make a "correction" for an over-estimation of one's self-concept.

An area of "indifference" or "neutrality" was determined as follows:

(1) Set 28 as the reference value.

(2) Multiply the standard error of the obtained mean total by 3, where, 3 is the z-value representing the 99.87 per cent confidence level.

.3 x .17 = .51 (See Table 3.1-a)

(3) The region of indifference would thus be

28 ± .57 or 27.4 - 28.51

(4) For our purpose, we rounded the values to 27 - 28. This says that all scores between 27.0 - 28.0 would fall in the region of "uncertainty." One is reasonably *sure*, statistically speaking, that he does not commit an error of

"assigning" a score of 27 to the "low" side, or 28 to the "high" side.

The model for classifying the scores is given below:

Range of Scores	Description of Categories
37 – 40	Very, very high
33 – 36	Very high
29 – 32	High
27 – 28	Uncertain
23 – 26	Low
19 – 22	Very low
15 – 18	Very very low
14 – below	Extremely low

The interval of 4 (e.g., 29-32) is a rounded value of the standard deviation (SD_{tot} = 3.8, See Table 3.12). Statistically speaking, there are three standard deviation distances above the zero-point and three below the zero-point. A slight discrepancy is obvious here,

and this is the fact that 29 is not the zero-point, nor is 26. This is the natural consequence of assuming a "region of indifference." The arbitrary use of the standard deviation is an unbiased measure of categorizing the scores.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented in two sub-sections: (1) the scores by colleges and (2) the item responses by the whole group.

Religious orientation. Table 3.1-a, below, presents the findings.

Attention is invited to the last column "total." The odds are 99 to 1 that the mean for the entire group of CPU students, had all been asked to answer the inventory, would fall between 30.57 ± .44 (2.58 x .17 = .438) or between 30.13 - 31.08 rounded 30-31. This is practically two score points from

Table 3.1-a
Means, Standard Deviation, Standard Error
of the Means by Colleges
(Religious Orientation)

	Nursing N = 146	Arts N = 103	Agric. N = 61	Com. N = 61	Eng'g. N = 73	Theol. N = 18	Educ. N = 52	Total N = 514
M	32.08	30.09	30.09	29.49	29.86	34.04	30.85	30.57
SD	3.85	3.54	3.47	4.57	4.07	2.96	3.65	3.81
SF_m	.32	.35	.44	.58	.48	.70	.51	.17

Table 3.1-b
Distribution of Scores According to the Model
(Whole sample, N = 514)

Scores	Categories	No.	%	Sub-tot. No.	Sub-tot. %
37 — 40	Very, very high	34	6.61		
33 — 36	Very high	162	31.52		
29 — 32	High	184	35.80		
Sub-total				380	73.93
27 — 28	Uncertain	65	12.66	65	12.66
23 — 26	Low	55	10.70		
19 — 22	Very low	13	2.53		
15 — 18	Very, very low	1	.19		
14 — below	Extremely low	—	—		
Sub-total				69	13.42
Total		514	100.01	514	100.01

the lower limit 30.13, which is a very significant difference (CR = 9). This says that the whole group is definitely *above* the critical cut-off point of 28.

Table 3.1-b below, presents the number and percentages of respondents falling in the different categories as determined by the model.

Practically 74 per cent of the respondents fall within the "high" to "very, very high" categories, whereas, only 13 per cent fall within the "low to very, very low." This would seem to indicate that, as measured by the inventory, the respondents are religiously oriented. The same observation may be said of the entire population of college students.

Comparative data by colleges. Attention is invited to Table 3.1-a, Column 6, "Theology," tops all the other colleges, the mean being six score points above the upper limit of the score in "uncertainty," which is also the pre-determined cut-off point. The tabulations (not shown here) show that all the respondents, except one, have scores ranging from 33 to 38, the exception having a raw score of 29.

If this means anything at all, one can say with some amount of

Theology	— 34.01)	— Diff.	=	1.96 CR	= 2.55	— 1% (less)
Nursing	— 32.08)	— Diff.	=	1.18 CR	= 2.60	— 1%
Arts	— 30.90)	— Diff.	=	.05 CR	= .08	— (ns)
Education	— 30.85)	— Diff.	=	.76 CR	= 1.13	— (ns)
Agriculture	— 30.09)	— Diff.	=	1.23 CR	= 1.89	— (ns)
Engineering	— 29.86)	— Diff.	=	.37 CR	= .5	— (ns)
Commerce	— 29.49)					

Analysis of the Inter-group Mean Differences.

assurance that the inventory does have some amount of "discriminant validity." Similarly, that the theology students should do better than any other group is to be expected. The basis of these observations is that the mean difference of 1.96 between Theology and the second highest, Nursing (M = 32.08), is significant at the 5 per cent level (CR = 2.55, which practically comes to the 1 per cent level, where CR at 1 per cent should be 2.58).

Analysis of the inter-group mean differences is shown above.

It is evident from the foregoing figures that Theology tops all the six groups; that Nursing tops the other five groups. No significant differences in the means between Arts and Education, Education and Agriculture, Agriculture and Engineering, and Engineering and Commerce have been observed. This is not to say that the difference between the means of Arts and Commerce is not significant. We have not gone into the computation of the critical ratios in all the possible mathematical combinations of the seven groups. This would have meant the computation of 21 pairs — a laborious job indeed! Besides little gain would be accomplished by such over-analysis.

Summary of distribution of scores according to the model. The data were analyzed to show the relative distributions of the scores according to the model. Table 3.2-a presents the findings.

Not a single college group has a percentage less than 50 falling on the "low to very, very low" categories, which confirms the observation previously made to the effect that as a general rule the greater majority falls within the "high to very, very high" categories.

Table 3.12-a
Distribution of Scores and Percentages
according to the Model by Colleges (Religious Orientation)

Scores	CAT	Theo.		Nursing		Arts		Educ.		Agric.		Eng'g.		Com.	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
37 — 40	VVH	6	33.3	18	12.3	3	2.9	0	—	1	1.6	3	4.1	3	4.9
33 — 36	VH	11	61.0	52	35.6	35	33.9	19	36.5	16	26.2	14	19.2	15	24.6
29 — 32	H	1	5.5	49	33.5	39	37.8	21	40.4	25	41.0	34	46.6	15	24.6
27 — 28	Un	0	—	15	10.3	17	16.5	5	9.6	9	14.7	8	10.9	11	18.0
23 — 26	L	0	—	11	7.4	7	6.8	5	9.6	9	14.7	9	12.3	14	22.9
19 — 22	VL	0	—	11	.6	2	1.9	2	3.8	1	1.6	5	6.8	2	3.2
15 — 18	VVL	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	0	0	0	1	1.6
Total		18	99.8	146	100.7	103	99.8	52	99.9	61	99.8	73	99.9	61	99.8

Distribution of responses according to foils. A sample of 100 responses chosen by the systematic sampling method from the total sample was used for purposes of analysis. Table 3.2 presents the findings.

Column "*d*" represents the area of spiritual or religious commitment, whereas column "*a*" represents the "*opposite*" negative pole.[4]

For example:

"Which of the following do you believe should serve as the primary guide for one's conduct or develop loyalty to?

3(a) Political ideology which one subscribes to

6(b) One's professional organization or associates

27(c) Family values

64(d) One's Christian ideals or convictions

Table 3.2
Distribution of Responses by Foils
(Religious Orientation)

Item	"T h e m e"	a	b	c	d	x^2
1	Efficacy of family prayers	1	11	35	53	1%
4	Inspiration from sermons/religious hymns . .	2	11	42	45	1%
7	Friendliness to and/or acceptance of one another	5	18	42	35	1%
10	Concern for one's neighbor (Good Samaritan)	4	8	52	36	1%
13	Loyalty to Christian conviction, ideals	3	6	27	64	1%
16	Perception of the Bible as a source of inspiration	1	7	7	85	1%
19	Attitude, towards religious convocations . . .	2	3	38	57	1%
22	Discerning of spiritual meaning in every human experience	1	6	39	64	1%
25	Desire to attend evening lectures, colloquia on Christian values	1	30	41	28	1%
28	Spiritual vs. materialistic orientation	0	29	39	32	NS

[4]The full text of each item cannot be given here for reasons of possible "*leakage*" which might vitiate its validity for future use.

Analysis of the trends of the responses by chi square tests reveals that such trends are significant at the one per cent level, except the last. It is noted that this last item has to do with the "conflict" between the spiritual and the materialistic points of view.

CONCLUSION

The evidence points out the fact that, as measured by the inventory, CPU students are high in spiritual and moral orientation. There is good reason to believe that to the majority of them, acceptance of is greater than resistance to some of the components of spiritual religious living.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

At the risk of repeating what might just be irritating platitudes, or of indulging in downright *"preaching,"* the researcher ventures to offer two suggestions on how to exploit the potentialities latent in students, hopefully, to develop further their moral and spiritual lives.

It should be mentioned that this study does not start from a scratch. For one thing there is the CPU tradition as a Christian friendly school, which means that the environment is supportive of endeavors along this line. For another, members of the CPU staff know where they are going, having had some part in the formulation, evaluation, and revision of the instructional objectives[5]. All that is needed is more personal, deliberate input by each faculty member, even as each is teaching his particular discipline. For moral spiritual values are not things to be taught; they are, for the greater part, caught — *internalized* and (not *or*) *externalized.*

The suggestions are basically process-oriented, the leverage being victorious living while learning in and through the day-to-day grind of work and study.

1. Moral and spiritual values can be internalized *contagion.* This is old, but not stale. It is nothing but idealization of a value or attitude through example and contact. Whether one likes it or not, in any social system, institutionalization is constantly taking place, where environment and people are the basic and forceful agents. Nothing so stamps idealization as

---

[5]See Research Bulletin Series No. 1, 1973.

parents, professors, or preachers telling students what they should do but actually doing the opposite. "Do what I tell you, never mind what I do." To say the least, that is demoralizing to young people.

2. The second suggestion is externalization through *operant* behavior. This is old, too — a new term for the Watsonian *conditioning*. It simply means a little more concern for and supportiveness of the moral and spiritual needs of the student, in a personalized way, and (not *or*) providing some sort of "conduct assignment" (follow-up) so as to *"transact"* the ideal into the real. It means, further, encouraging and appreciating (reward!) The good things done. But these have to be verbalized, otherwise, their effect is minimal.

Students experience little successes and little failures in their daily lives. Teacher so, too. Perhaps, they need to realize that they can develop victorious living by their failures. The theorists say that when a Christian falls, he falls on his knees, but gets up again.

.Perhaps, students could be encouraged to live victoriously while studying painfully. They can develop spiritually and academically by taking on tasks beyond their normal capacities. They could be challenged.

Teachers can help their students develop spiritually and morally by making them take more *territory*. Spiritual and moral growth has a thousand and one facets; it is a many-splendored thing. Students need to go through the personal, ego-oriented facets of living to the larger dimensions of the social. They need to think and act more in terms of the *kita* and *aton* and less on the *ako* and *akon* syndromes. "A potted plant," said a farmer, "will not grow big, it has to spread its roots into wider areas if it must grow big."

The current emphasis on self, with neighbor at the fringes of collective living, presumably to soften the grim struggle to satisfy one's hunger and greed in a world where there is limited good, polarizes people into *"haves"* and *"have-nots."* Admittedly, to put neighbor in the center of things and self at the fringes is a difficult Christian goal to implement. But this is the crowning glory of victorious living.

Jesus said, *"I thirst."* Did he not? But he asked for water only *after* he had finished his work for others. ■