

## ARE MAINLINE CHURCHES ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

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As we begin a series of conversations on this this evening, I need help from you my fellow-participants. In preparation, you've read "From the Center to the Margins" by Wm.McKinney (who'll be with us Oct.22; BOOKS & RELIGION, Winter/89)....If you need more space, carry the number over to the other side....Thanks for your cooperation! The Annual Review committee of the church thanks you, too: they'll be reporting to the church, from our Study Group, as to "what meaning the issues encountered have for us."..... Where "12345," please check which number applies, 5 being "most strongly agree."

1. Increasingly, Americans are on a spiritual search. 12345
2. It's because (a) things seem to be out of control; (b) the spiritual spring of the American civilization ("way of life") has dried up; (c) consumerism can't satisfy the human heart; (d) Americans have become distrustful of institutions, (e) worried about "morality" & "values," (f) cynical about "politics," (g) alienated from their religious roots, (h) religiously illiterate, (i) confused by pluralism's babble of voices. [Circle the two letters that seem to you most germane.]
3. In this spiritual questing, the main thing Americans are looking for is ( ) a center for making sense of their lives & the world, ( ) a loving community to ease the pain & terror of loneliness, ( ) "a charge to keep" (a commitment to put muscle & meaning in daily living), ( ) "a God to glorify" (a Center of adoration transcending all earthly loves), ( ) a spiritual companion. [Number according to importance.]
4. Our UCC Statement of Faith speaks of "aimlessness and sin." Which do the mainline churches do a better job of addressing? Why?
5. Which do churches to the right of mainline churches do a better job of addressing? Why?
6. What would you personally like more help on from our church...  
in #2 (above)?  
  
in #3 (above)?
7. In comparison unfavorable to our church, what do you find attractive (as you think about the Doonesbury cartoon)...  
in fundamentalism?  
in New Age?  
in other mainline churches (name, if you wish)?
8. As in/directly you've experienced non-mainline churches, "whata they got we ain't?" What should we learn from them, adapt from them?
9. Mainline churches, though increasing in per capita giving, are shrinking in members. Why?  
Why isn't the Roman Catholic Church shrinking?  
Why aren't conservative churches shrinking?
10. In getting their message out, how important for mainline churches are communication skills? 12345.  
What's wrong with present communication efforts?
11. In our changing society, has our church...  
...not changed enough? Explain.  
...changed too much? Explain.
12. Do you never, sometimes, often ask people to come to church with you?
13. Do you often, sometimes, never bring your faith into conversations?
14. In religion, people hope to find identity, purpose, & hope. How is our mainline church doing in providing each of the three?
15. How can mainline churches attract children (young families) & youth?
16. What results from a church's being "on the right track"?
17. How can the mainline churches "take advantage" of the periphery possibilities, "where the word of God breaks forth in new and unforeseen ways"?