

This survey first appeared in Christian Ministry, January-February 1991. It was written by Dr. C. Jeff Woods (431 W US 52, Rushville, IN 46173) and reproduced with permission from The Alban Institute, Inc. (Suite 433 North, 4550 Montgomery Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814.) Copyright 1995. All rights reserved, however, readers are granted permission to copy it for use in their churches.

APPENDIX A

Church Distinctiveness Survey

A means for constructing a profile of the qualitative distinctiveness of your church

Please rate the following nine dimensions of church distinctiveness according to the importance you believe is currently placed upon each dimension in your church. Each dimension probably exists to some degree within the life of your congregation. However, you are to rate each dimension in terms of its relative importance to the other dimensions.

Please read all nine descriptions first. Then return and rate each description by drawing on your perceptions, experiences, and observations. Rate each dimension according to the following scale:

1 _____ 10

Of least importance

Of greatest importance

ADORATION scale value _____

Praising God for all of God's love, power, care, and presence displayed in the world is a special emphasis in the church. The adoration of God for who God is, for what God has done, and for what God promises to do in the future is talked about and celebrated in both corporate worship and individual lives. Glorifying God extends beyond the sanctuary to the classrooms, the committee meetings, and every aspect of programming.

BENEVOLENT scale value _____

The church has a special commitment to foster a humane environment. It continually strives to create a capacity for caring, compassion, and empathy to all people, especially those outside the church membership. The church readily responds both emotionally and financially to the needs of others, whether they arise in the community or across the world.

COGNITIVE scale value _____

The church has a strong commitment to increase the knowledge and understanding of God. Developing a theology, recognizing the continuing revelation of God, comprehending scripture, and becoming familiar with doctrine, are all emphasized in the church.

CONSECRATION scale value _____

The church has a special commitment to personal involvement with God. It stresses the need for a relationship with God and makes available opportunities for each person to expand a personal relationship with God in a variety of ways. The work of the Holy Spirit, prayer groups, and the need to live without sin in our everyday lives—these are all central to the life of the church.

ECUMENICAL scale value _____

The church displays a major commitment to working with churches of other backgrounds, denominations, and faiths. This commitment is evidenced through work projects, personal contacts, respect of differences, and desires to expand involvement and understanding of other churches. The church sets an example of Christian unity.

EVANGELISTIC scale value _____

Every member of the congregation is committed to reaching the un-churched. The need for sharing the gospel is emphasized in all phases of programming. The members of the church are eager to share the gospel with strangers and friends and to send resources to witness to peoples in all parts of the world.

MINISTRY TO MEMBERS scale value _____

The church has a major commitment to ministering to the members of the congregation. Whether members are in need of counseling, financial help, friendship, visitation in the home or hospital, the need rarely goes unmet. Members emphasize becoming well-acquainted; this allows new needs to be readily recognized.

STEWARDSHIP scale value _____

The church displays a sincere commitment to gather and use resources in an efficient and effective manner. Members are actively involved in committing their finances, spiritual gifts, natural abilities, and time toward the direction of God's leading. The church is also a competent trustee of its building and property.

TRADITION scale value _____

The church has a special commitment to the importance of its heritage in interpreting the issues that arise within the church and society. The church is committed to an understanding of its religious, biblical, denominational, and community roots and to preserving and transmitting this heritage. The church is also committed toward understanding today's issues that will become tomorrow's heritage. To do this it remains informed of current denominational, community, world, and religious issues.