

# **A PERSON WITH MATURE CHRISTIAN FAITH...**

**(Based on The Search Institute's interviews with theologians, denominational executives, reviews of theological and psychological literature and open-ended surveys of hundred of Christians from participating denominations)...**

**1. TRUSTS AND BELIEVES: Trusts in God's saving grace and believes firmly in the humanity and divinity of Jesus.**

- a. Sees God as both transcendent and immanent**
- b. Accepts both the divinity and humanity of Jesus**
- c. Reconciles God's love and human suffering**
- d. Accepts God's love as unconditional**
- e. Experiences God's guidance in daily life**

**2. EXPERIENCES THE FRUITS OF FAITH: Experiences a sense of personal well-being, security and peace as the fruits of their faith.**

- a. Feels liberated, set free**
- b. Experiences meaning and purpose in life**
- c. Experiences a sense of peace**
- d. Has a deep sense of personal security**
- e. Experiences self-acceptance**

**3. INTEGRATES FAITH AND LIFE: Integrates faith and life, seeking work, family, social relationships and political choices as part of one's religious life.**

- a. Faith informs daily decisions and actions**
- b. Faith dictates moral principles and guidelines**
- c. Feels obligation to share personal resources with others**
- d. Commits life to Jesus**
- e. Applies faith to political and social issues**

**4. SEEKS SPIRITUAL GROWTH: Seeks spiritual growth through study, reflection, prayer and discussion with others.**

- a. Affirms that faith is a journey that necessitates continuing change in belief and meaning**
- b. Seeks to increase biblical knowledge and understanding**
- c. Frequently engages in private prayer or meditation**
- d. Seeks opportunities for spiritual growth**

**5. EXPERIENCES AND NURTURES FAITH IN COMMUNITY:** Seeks to be a part of a community of believers in which people give witness to their faith, and support and nourish one another.

- a. Seeks to nurture the faith of others
- b. Shares his/her own faith story
- c. experiences God in interpersonal and social encounters
- d. Seeks opportunities for communal prayer and reflection

**6. HOLDS LIFE-AFFIRMING VALUES:** Holds life-affirming values, including commitment to racial and gender equality, affirming cultural and religious diversity, and a personal sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.

- a. Pursues a healthy life-style
- b. Feels responsible for promoting human welfare
- c. Affirms religious diversity
- d. Embraces gender and racial equality
- e. Is accepting of other people
- f. Affirms the sanctity of creation

**7. ADVOCATES SOCIAL CHANGE:** Advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice.

- a. Is committed to reducing poverty
- b. Advocates social and political change to improve human welfare
- c. Believes faith demands global concern
- d. Believes the church belongs in the public sphere

**8. ACTS AND SERVES:** Serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice.

- a. Responds to others with compassion and sensitivity
- b. Engages in actions to protect the ecology
- c. Devotes time and energy to acts of social service
- d. Devotes time and energy to promoting social justice
- e. Devotes time and energy to promoting world peace

These dimensions can be collapsed into two general themes: the *vertical*, referring to a life-transforming relationship to a loving God; and the *horizontal*, a consistent devotion to serving others. H.R.Niebuhr summarized the historic and biblical purpose of the church to be to increase among people the love of God and the love of neighbor.