39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions
as Preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives

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[**Special Note**: The introduction below is an introduction to a document titled "39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions: As Preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives (and a beginning database for "Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities"). That document in its entirety (including the introduction below) can be accessed through an entry at my worldpulse.com journal (see http://worldpulse.com/node/13094)

This post is an effort to share resources with other people who are either working along similar lines, or who might start working along similar lines as a result of access to the potential of these kind of questionnaires.

I have also made a few other pieces of my current work-in-progress accessible through my journal at worldpulse.com

The Introduction….

39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions
as Preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives

(and a beginning database for
"Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities")

[Note: This is a Draft of Section 7 for the larger "work-in-progress" titled "Calling 'the better angels of our nature': Preparing for Ongoing Re-evaluation of Peacebuilding, Education, and Community Revitalization Efforts as Part of Responding to the Challenges of Our Times". It is also an expansion of Section 9 in the IPCR document "1000Communities[2]".]

Introduction

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite "coming through the mist as much as they should be." The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as it encourages and facilitates a "constellation" of initiatives by which the best (*in the*

view of the participants using these processes) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of peoples' time, energy, and money.

One of The Eight IPCR Concepts—and thus part of the "constellation" of initiatives referred to above—is "Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities". The description of that concept offered in the document "Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts" begins as follows: "Organizations and communities of people often use questionnaires and surveys to identify problems and solutions, and to build consensus for collective action. Here are some example questions which are designed to be helpful in building caring communities. Hopefully, providing a few examples here will bring forth many more examples, and thus assist in building a resource base for future questionnaires that help build caring communities….".

The questions listed in this section (of a larger "work-in-progress") are, hopefully, the beginnings of a database of questions that can help build caring communities. In addition, this elemental part of community building can be also understood as one facet of a multi-faceted approach to peacebuilding and community revitalization—which is summed up by the section "Contributions The IPCR Initiatives Hopes to Make" (see subsection D, in "Additional Notes" at the end of this section).

However, the most significant role for these questions, from this writer's point of view, is that they are a starting point for creating preliminary surveys, as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives. The IPCR Initiative document "1000Communities^2" is a 161 page proposal which advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, "Community Teaching and Learning Centers", and "sister community" relationships as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times. Here is an excerpt from the "1000Communities^2" document (from p. 47) which highlights the importance of preliminary surveys:

"This "1000Communities^2" proposal includes a "15 Step Outline for a '1000Communities^2' Version of a Community" (see Section 6). Step 3 of that 15 step outline suggests creating a "Preliminary Survey", and sending such a survey to 150 key leaders who represent a variety of fields of activity in the community. Responses and summarized results from "Preliminary Surveys" will provide:

a) evidence from local leaders of the need for a re-assessment of current priorities
b) examples of local leaders stepping up in support of CVI
c) starting points for public discourse about the importance of the CVI
d) starting points for CTLC workshop content
e) starting points for some participants as they develop "Final Version" decisions ("votes") on challenges, solutions, and action plans
f) an aid to mobilizing a high level of interest in the CVI, and a high level of citizen participation
g) an initial sense of support or non-support for the "sister community" element (an action plan which is advocated by this proposal—see Section 5)"

This writer recognizes that many of the questions offered here as suggestions are not easily answered in one sitting. He also recognizes that although most of the key leaders (referred to above) could contribute something as a response to most of the questions, many residents of a given community may not contribute responses—either because it would take too much time, or because the questions explore complex subjects they are not familiar with. It is very important for communities of people to

become aware that there are very difficult challenges ahead, and these difficult challenges will require some very significant learning experiences before we are able to resolve them. Refined questionnaires, with questions which most of the residents can quickly respond to, can be developed from responses to preliminary surveys like this one; and the refined questionnaires can do much to maximize citizen interest and participation in integrating new knowledge and new skill sets into the community.

People who explore the questions offered here carefully will also discover that there are many questions which touch on the subject of compassion for our fellow human beings. Many questionnaires are noteworthy for what they do not ask. This writer understands that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all religious, spiritual, and moral "world views". A significant number of the questions that follow have been created to assess whether other people see such a critical need, and how such a goal might be accomplished.

One of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness "to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it"—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a "way to earn a living" providing such assistance.

Questionnaires can be created which will accumulate information, suggestions, etc. that can be of critical importance in resolving the above mentioned "irony"—and which can provide the above mentioned assistance to the process of organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives.

[**Additional Note**: The concept of "Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities"—one of The Eight IPCR Concepts—developed from this writer's exploration of "Quaker Queries". It is worth including in this section (in the "Additional Notes" part of this section, see subsection E) a description of the IPCR Concept "Community Queries" (which eventually became "Questionnaires That Can…."), and some commentary on the subject of "Quaker Queries". I highly recommend an exploration of "Quaker Queries", especially for people who are interested in the use of questionnaires as a way of building consensus on difficult issues.]

I encourage readers of this post to access the 35 page document "39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions" in its entirety (at http://worldpulse.com/node/13094)

And I welcome any comments, questions, suggestions, recommendations, etc. related to the questions in that document.

With Kind Regards,

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