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Andrews University

School of Education

A COMPARISON OF THE *ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE*
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
AND A PROTOTYPE *GUIDE* DESIGNED
TO PROMOTE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

April 2007

UMI Number: 3261209

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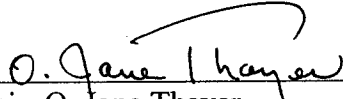
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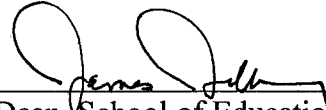
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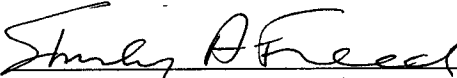
by


Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti


APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:


Chair: O. Jane Thayer


Dean, School of Education
James Jeffery


Member: Shirley A. Freed


Member: Richard O. Stenbakken


External Examiner: Michael L. Ryan

04-10-07
Date approved

ABSTRACT

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Chair: Jane Thayer

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: A COMPARISON OF THE *ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE* OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND A PROTOTYPE *GUIDE* DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Name of researcher: Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

Name and degree of faculty chair: Jane Thayer, Ph.D.

Date completed: April 2007

Problem

Despite the *Adult Bible Study Guide's* potential for promoting Christian spirituality among Seventh-day Adventist Church members, no studies have investigated its impact on the spirituality of its users. Beginning as a way to disseminate the unique biblical doctrines of the fledgling Church, the *Guide* remains largely expository and apologetic in nature, often neglecting the use of methods and spiritual disciplines which promote spirituality.

Method

Based on the same topic as the regular *Guide* for second quarter, 2005, an *Adult Bible Study Guide* using Kolb's learning cycle and learning styles was developed to promote Christian spiritual growth. The effect both *Guides* had on general learning objectives; knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills was measured by pre/post-testing using the Growth in Christ Questionnaire. The two-way ANOVA was used to analyze the influence of gender, age, and educational levels. One hundred subjects completed pre/post-tests for the prototype. Eighty-six subjects completed pre/post-tests for the regular *Guide*.

Results

The prototype had a greater effect on knowledge and beliefs for women. The regular *Guide* had a greater effect on knowledge and beliefs for men. Learners in all age groups except 65+ who studied the prototype spent more time in prayer. This is in contrast to the regular *Guide*, which showed no real improvement in the same area. Learners in all educational levels except high school or less who studied the prototype spent more time in prayer. The regular *Guide* showed no real improvement in the same area. Learners in all age groups except 65+ who studied the prototype spent more time meditating on God's Word. The regular *Guide* showed no real improvement in the same area. Open-ended questions showed that many who studied the prototype considered it to be close to ideal, because it drew them closer to Christ.

Conclusions

The prototype showed the greatest amount of growth in the final step of the learning cycle, suggesting that it did what it was designed to do--shepherd the learners through knowledge and beliefs, on to attitudes, values, and commitments, and finally ending with behavior and skills.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Desire for Spiritual Growth

“ ‘If I can only touch his cloak, I will be healed’ ” (Matt 9:20)¹, aspired a woman who longed to connect with Jesus.

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Ps 42:1), yearned the psalmist.

“Thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee,” Augustine acknowledged to God in his *Confessions* (397, p. 1).

The goal of associating with the Savior that they might grow spiritually is a goal shared by all sincere Christians, including those belonging to the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. The desire of Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) to have this goal fulfilled has been verified by several research studies, which will be discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are from the New International Version.

The Need for Spiritual Growth

What need does spiritual growth fulfill within Christians?

In the beginning, we find the beginning of our answer. God created humankind in His image (Gen 1:26, 27). The first two humans, however, chose to separate themselves from God by committing an act of sin (3:1-7). In doing so, they marred the image in which God had created them. Jesus, however, who as God's Son is the express image of God, came to restore God's image in humankind (Knight, 1985, pp. 49, 50). The apostle Paul echoes these words, when in Rom 8:29 he confirms that for "those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."

What need, then, does spiritual growth fulfill for Christians? The need for individuals to be found and to have God's image restored in them. Paul refers to this need in Gal 4:19 and Col 1:27. In the former, he writes that he is experiencing "the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed" in the Galatian Christians. In the latter, he refers to this need as the glorious riches of a mystery, "which is Christ in you." Of Col 1:27, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (1980) states that

by inaugurating the plan of salvation, God placed before fallen humanity the hope of restoration to the divine presence. . . . The indwelling of Christ in the individual heart gives evidence that the power of grace is working to transform the character. (vol. 7, pp. 196, 197)

White (1903) explains the need this way:

To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in creation might be realized--this was to be the work of redemption. This is the . . . great object of life. (pp. 15, 16)

The Role of the *Adult Bible Study Guide (ABSG)* in Fulfilling the Desire and the Need for Spiritual Growth

In August 1852, SDA Church co-founder James White wrote the first Bible study lessons for the fledgling denomination. They were for the youth of the church, and therefore appeared in the August 1852 edition of the *Youth's Instructor*, now known as *Insight*. He authored the second installment of youth lessons as he toured various church conferences in New England during that same month. While traveling by covered carriage with his wife Ellen and 3-year-old son, Edson, he wrote during their noon break after they had eaten lunch. The "tables" that steadied his pen and paper were the dinner box and the top of his hat, whichever was most convenient at the time. These lessons appeared in the October 1852 issue of the *Youth's Instructor*. The first lessons for adults appeared under separate cover in 1863. This material was written by Uriah Smith (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, 11:513, 514).

The production of the Bible study lessons has since progressed from dinner-box and top-of-the-hat desks to lap-top computers and state-of-the-art printing equipment; and membership in SDA Sabbath Schools has grown from 5,851 members in 177 Sabbath Schools in the United States when the General Sabbath School Association reported its first set of figures in October 1878, to 17,947,009 Sabbath School members and 122,620 Sabbath Schools in approximately 204 countries (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 2006, p. 4). These figures include children's Sabbath Schools. However, the majority of the count applies to adults, most of whom have access to some form of the adult lessons. These are the *Adult Standard Bible Study Guide*, the *Adult Teachers Bible Study Guide*,

the *Easy Reading Adult Bible Study Guide*, and the abridged version of the *Easy Reading*. Thus, the *ABSG* quite possibly has more potential to help meet the desire and need of SDAs for spiritual growth than any other Adventist publication.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the *ABSG*'s potential for promoting Christian spirituality among SDA Church members, no studies have investigated its impact on the spirituality of its users. Furthermore, the *ABSG* is not intentional regarding the spiritual growth of its users. Beginning as a way to disseminate the unique biblical doctrines of the fledgling Church, the *ABSG* remains largely expository and apologetic in nature, often neglecting the use of methods and spiritual disciplines which promote spirituality. And as White (1940) stated, "A theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul" (p. 309), and one might well add, for helping to restore in persons the image of their Creator (p. 309).

Purpose of This Study

Because no studies have been done to investigate the *ABSG*'s impact on the spirituality of its users, and because of its lack of intentional guidance in Christian spirituality, the purpose of this study is twofold:

1. To develop and evaluate a prototype *ABSG* that is specifically formulated not only to deal with biblical information, Christian biblical doctrines in general, and SDA biblical doctrines in particular, but with Christian spirituality as well (This prototype will consist of a conceptual framework based on experiential learning concepts, which when

employed in conjunction with certain teaching/learning methods will assist in cultivating Christian spirituality regardless of the topic of any given *ABSG*.)

2. To examine the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality.

Research Questions

Two main research questions guided this study, along with four sub-questions:

1. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality?

From this question, four areas of interest were defined from which the sub-questions were generated:

- a. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the attainment of general learning outcomes?
- b. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of knowledge and beliefs?
- c. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of attitudes, values, and commitments?
- d. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the practice of behaviors and skills?

2. Does the impact of the type of *ABSG* differ by gender, age group, or educational level?

Significance of This Study

This research project is significant in nine areas:

1. From its inception in 1863, the *ABSG* generally has not changed from its cognitive, catechismal approach to Bible study. This project will show how the *ABSG* can present a well-rounded approach to spiritual growth in which the acquisition of information is just one part of each week's or each day's lesson.

2. Rather than develop new expensive models and programs to promote spiritual growth, this project shows how an existing, high-profile publication of the SDA Church can meet the need and desire its members have for spiritual growth.

3. An *ABSG* specifically formulated to promote spiritual growth will assist the SDA Church in fulfilling its mission statement, which reads as follows:

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return.

. . . .We promote this mission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through: . . .

*Teaching--*Acknowledging that development of mind and character is essential to God's redemptive plan, we promote the growth of a mature understanding of and relationship to God, His Word, and the created universe. . . . (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee, 2002-2003, p. 29)

4. In response to the denomination's mission, the 2001 Spring Council of the Church voted that "General Conference leaders will design and carry out their services to the world field in such a way that the Lordship of Jesus Christ shall find expression in the Seventh-day Adventist Church through" an emphasis on the following strategic issues: quality of life, unity, and growth (Adventist News Network, 2001, p. 1). Each of these issues encompasses certain aspects of spiritual growth:

a. Quality of life is to be demonstrated in part by members whose lives illustrate the joy of salvation and restoration; who engage in weekly group Bible study and worship as well as in personal, family, and group prayer; and whose spiritual lives are exemplified by compassion and service (p. 2).

b. Unity is to be partially demonstrated by a “cohesiveness in doctrine” (p. 2), which is reflected in “Christ-centered fundamental beliefs” (p. 2).

c. Growth is to be partially reflected in the “rich spiritual experience” of church members (p. 3).

An *ABSG* designed to foster spiritual growth will, therefore, be a response to the call to emphasize these issues.

5. Opportunities for spiritual growth have been implicated as a factor in a person’s continued attachment to the Church (Sahlin, 2000, p. 2), thus making the *ABSG*’s commitment to spiritual growth crucial to retaining members.

6. According to Schwarz (1999), “passionate spirituality” is one of eight characteristics of a growing church (pp. 26, 27). However, a survey of SDA churches in North America, done in conjunction with the Faith Communities Today (FACT) study of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research (2003), suggests that Adventist congregations are below normal in spiritual vitality. If the *ABSG* were to adopt teaching methods that promote spiritual growth, it could become a major factor in the revitalization of entire SDA churches.

7. One of the major goals of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is to maintain the unity of the worldwide Church. This goal is met in part by the fact that

most of its adult members have access to some form of the *ABSG*. If the *ABSG* were to be a major factor in aiding the spiritual growth of church members, the goal of unity could be further enhanced.

In addition, the format I propose for the *ABSG* in this study uses teaching methods that are easily adapted by the various cultures presently using the guide. This also will promote the Church's goal of unity.

8. During the March 2001 Sabbath School Curriculum Committee, the editors of the children's Sabbath School quarterlies demonstrated how they incorporated Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and Kolb's natural learning cycle into the GraceLink curriculum to enhance the learning experience of the students. Afterward, several attendees requested that such an approach be applied to the *ABSG*. While the Curriculum Committee never officially voted to do so, this study meets that request. (Even as late as November 24, 2003, the comment was made at a Sabbath School Publications Board that everywhere the GraceLink editor presents workshops, people express a desire for something similar in the *ABSG*.)

9. During the July 2005 General Conference Session, a growth-in-Christ statement was voted to become a part of the SDA Church's fundamental beliefs (see Appendix A). This statement highlights the importance of developing a Christlike character through Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and other spiritual disciplines. An adult Bible study guide with an undergirding structure promoting growth in Christ could be one of the church's major tools in meeting the goals of this belief statement.

Assumptions

1. Spiritual growth is the principal work of Christ's Holy Spirit. As our Helper, Comforter, and Counselor (John 14:16), His Spirit lives in our hearts to ensure that our need and desire for spiritual growth are met (Titus 3:5, 6). Even though it cannot be determined how the Spirit helps us to grow spiritually (John 3:1-8), the results of His work are indicated by certain fruit (Gal 5:22, 23).

2. Spiritual growth is not about learning how to behave in a certain manner. As Willard (2002) states, spiritual growth must involve first and foremost "who we are in our thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and choices--in the inner life" (p. 24). When we are like Christ in these areas, we then will act in ways He would act.

3. Even though spiritual growth is the work of the Holy Spirit, there are certain activities Christians should engage in so they can, as it were, partner with the Spirit in fulfilling their need and desire for such growth. These activities are known as spiritual disciplines, and include such exercises as prayer, Bible study, living simply, Christian meditation, etc. These "means of grace" never are to become ends in themselves. They are only means to an end, that end being "to place ourselves before God so He can transform us" "through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Foster, 1988, p. 7; Titus 3:6).

Definition of Terms

Adult Bible Study Guide: First published as the *Senior Sabbath School Lessons*, this quarterly publication consists of Scripture lessons for study at home and in the adult

Sabbath school classes which meet Saturday mornings in local SDA churches. It is more commonly referred to as “the quarterly.” Currently, it is published by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide located at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Christian spirituality: A life-transforming relationship with God, and “*consistent devotion to serving others*” (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38; emphasis in original).

The general learning objectives of the prototype *ABSG* describe in detail these two facets of Christian spirituality (see chapter 3). Because these objectives form the basis of the Faith Maturity Scale, I will use this scale to operationalize this definition. Also operationalizing this definition are the sub-questions on page 5 of this chapter which pertain to knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills.

General Conference: “The central governing organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, 10:583).

GraceLink curriculum: The name of the curriculum for all of the children’s Bible study guides produced by the Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

North American Division: “A unit of church organization” which includes “the United States, Bermuda, Canada, St.-Pierre and Miquelon, Johnston Island, Midway Islands, and all other islands of the Pacific not attached to other divisions and bonded by the date line on the West, by the equator on the south, and by longitude 120 on the east” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, 11:187).

Sabbath School: “The Seventh-day Adventist equivalent . . . of the Sunday school of other denominations, but designed for people of all ages, rather than for only children and youth” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, 11:508).

Spring Council: “A business meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee held in the spring of the year at a time and place chosen by the committee” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, 11:695).

World Sabbath School Curriculum Committee: A committee comprised of world Sabbath School directors and General Conference Sabbath School directors and editors, which meets every 5 years following General Conference Session to determine the direction of and the topics for the Bible study guides at all the age levels.

Seventh-day Adventist: “The descriptive name adopted as a denominational title in 1860 by one branch of Adventists--those, specifically, who keep the seventh day as the Sabbath” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, 11:574).

Spiritual disciplines: Specific activities that help a person to grow spiritually. Foster (1988) classifies the disciplines as either inward (e.g., prayer and meditation); outward (e.g., simplicity and service); or corporate (e.g., worship and fellowship) (p. v).

The disciplines

are God’s way of getting us into the ground; they put us where he can work within us and transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace. . . . God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us. (Foster, 1988, p. 7)

Youth Instructor: A 24-page paper begun by James White in 1852 for young people ages 16 through 30. In addition to the Sabbath School Bible study lessons, it contained articles, stories, and letters to the editor.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many Christians express the desire for spiritual growth. Despite the *ABSG*'s potential for assisting SDA Christians with their desire and need for spiritual growth, it generally has not been intentional in doing so. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to develop a prototype of the *ABSG* that is specifically formulated to promote the spiritual growth of its users. Before this purpose can be achieved, however, it is necessary to examine the answers to three questions I have chosen to direct the development of such a guide. These questions are:

1. What are spirituality and spiritual growth?
2. How intentional has the SDA Church been regarding spirituality and spiritual growth?
3. How can Christian educators and editors of Bible study material enhance the spiritual growth of adult learners?

The first question has as many different answers as there are people and periods of history. I have chosen to answer it by reviewing the positions of certain theorists, theologians, and educators whose positions involve the concept of transformation and/or

the need Christians have for God's image to be restored in them. I also include a discussion on the biblical view of faith and transformation.

What Are Spirituality and Spiritual Growth?

Fowler

As a practical theologian, Fowler views spiritual growth as faith maturity, and faith as a human universal separate from the contents (i.e., creeds or doctrines) of any religion. Hence, faith and faith maturity "look" the same for a Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu.

Fowler's positions regarding faith often read similar to the way a maze wanders. However, in *Stages of Faith* (1981), he writes that faith

is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose. (p. 4)

Fowler believes that this way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives begins during infancy (birth--2 years), as trust and loyalty toward one's environment increase through continual, supportive interaction with the most influential person in one's life. From that point onward, faith then matures through six sequential, invariant stages. Each stage delineates spirituality for that level. These stages are:

1. *Intuitive-Projective faith* (2--6/7years). During this stage, Fowler believes we begin to develop our own perspectives influenced by adult examples. Also at this stage, faith relies more on emotions than cognition.

2. *Mythical-Literal faith* (elementary school years). Now faith believes that goodness is rewarded while badness is punished. Faith also demands proof for concepts and facts.

3. *Synthetic-Conventional faith* (adolescence). Home, school, work, and media are being synthesized into a person's faith experience, providing a foundation for identity and attitude. However, this identity is still submerged with that of the predominant community, and authority continues to be external.

4. *Individuative-Reflective faith* (not reached by all). Individuals take responsibility for their own life/beliefs, and are no longer defined at length by their context.

5. *Conjunctive faith* (usually not before mid-life). In this stage, individuals come to terms with elements of their life that have subconsciously determined their reactions. This coming to terms is witnessed in their ability to see all sides of an issue and to act despite discordant loyalties.

6. *Universalizing faith* (rarely reached). Now individuals consider themselves to be part of humankind rather than a small group. As such, they experience an emptying of self as they are drawn from circumscribed centers of value and power toward what Fowler refers to as "the Ultimate." As they identify with and participate in this Ultimate, they experience a transformation which enables them "to love and value from a centering located in the Ultimate" (Fowler, 1981, p. 31). This transformation equips them to step out of society's structures to create a better world.

Downs (1994) points out that while Fowler discusses faith as a way of interpreting life and giving it meaning, conservative Christians generally consider faith to be a particular content that orders the mind, will, and emotions. However, Downs believes this distinction does not mean the two views are incompatible. Because Fowler's stages are broad classifications and portrayals, they leave room for the Holy Spirit to transform people's lives (p. 118). Furthermore, because one of God's characteristics involves orderliness (e.g., the Creation story), it is reasonable to think Christians "develop in their patterns of faith in orderly ways" (p. 118). At the same time, the contrast between these views of faith requires the Christian church to develop a model of development that follows the biblical view of faith. It is to this topic which I now turn.

A Biblical View of Faith Development

First, Scripture refers to faith as having a cognitive, rational component, which deals with what the Bible says is true about God (Downs, 1994, p. 18). As such, faith is objective, specific, and doctrinal. Examples of this component include the following: (a) "We believe *that* Jesus died and rose again" (1 Thess 4:14, italics supplied), and (b) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Exod 20:8).

However, James points out that this cognitive aspect of faith is not enough: "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that" (2:19). La Rondelle (1980) states that "to accept Bible doctrines merely as true interpretations of Scripture . . . remains only a matter of conscientious belief and intellectual exercise. Christ is not satisfied if we have merely correct opinions of Him and the truth" (p. 74). What else is

needed are: (a) “a confidence of heart and mind in God” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 1979, p. 360), which in turn (b) produces active obedience. This confidence is the second component of biblical faith; and it is relational in nature. In addition to believing *that* Jesus . . . , we believe *in* Jesus. For example, Christ’s righteousness becomes our righteousness when we have faith *in* Him (Phil 3:9; Rom 3:22; Gal 2:16). This component of faith thus allows God to do miraculous things not only for the Christian, but through the Christian (Downs, 1994, p. 342). Furthermore, because it involves “a confidence of the heart and mind in God,” it requires commitment. We are to believe *in* God with *all* our heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5).

Both an intellectual faith and a relational faith are necessary to have the third component of faith, which Downs (1994) refers to as volitional and capable of producing active obedience (p. 19). “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. . . . I will show you my faith by what I do” (Jas 2:17, 18). This component of faith is, therefore, visible for all to see in the Christian’s lifestyle and in the service she or he renders to others.

Thus, we can see that the Bible beholds faith as consisting of the following three parts: (a) a rational component (What do we believe?), (b) a relational component (Whom do we love?), and (c) a behavioral component (How do we act?). It follows then that spiritual maturity “is a matter of holding to correct beliefs, loving God more deeply, and living in growing obedience to” Him (Downs, 1994, p. 59). Next, I will show how these three components of biblical faith are represented in a stage development model developed for the Christian church.

A Model of Stage Development That Follows the Biblical View of Faith

Based on the work of such theorists as Kohlberg, Erikson, and Fowler, Fortosis (1992) has constructed a model of stage development for the Christian growth process based on the following assumptions (pp. 294-296):

1. Because every convert must begin at the same basic level, the basic traits of each stage are similar for those converted as children, teens, or adults. A person's age, mental abilities, etc., at the time of conversion will determine how long that person stays within the first stage.
2. The process of Christian formation differs only slightly between men and women.
3. The Holy Spirit enables and directs the spiritual growth process (John 16:13, 14).
4. One's motives are the measure of Christian maturity. A Christian might possess a vast wealth of biblical information, yet that person's driving force might be self-seeking.
5. Christian formation is unique in that a Christian's drive for glory is not self-centered and self-seeking, but God-centered and God-seeking.
6. A convert must be allowed to grow at the rate and quality she or he will permit.

7. If a believer permits it to do so, dissonance can stimulate Christian growth by encouraging her or him to respond to “new information and situations that throw us off balance” (p. 289).

8. Especially in the early stages of growth, there is the chance for regression. As a Christian matures, regression becomes less likely.

9. It is possible to exhibit some characteristics of more than one stage at the same time.

Fortosis’s stages exhibit spiritual growth “from the point of conversion to the ideal of full Christian maturity” (p. 284); and they are based on the fact that “true Christian conversion has several basic facets, each of which must rest upon the foundation of the dedication of one’s self to Christ [the relational component of biblical faith]” (p. 285). Table 1 outlines these facets and their characteristics at each stage.

Fortosis has yet to subject his model “to extensive field research” (Fortosis, 2001, p. 50). However, he has provided theological foundations for it in two areas: (a) a case study on the life of the apostle Peter; and (b) analyses of Scriptures that infer stages of spiritual growth (pp. 50-59).

Reasoning. Fortosis observes Peter moving from egocentrism (stage 1) to self-transcendence (stage 3) based on the time Peter refuses to allow Jesus to wash his feet (John 13:4-9), because he would not have his Master perform the duties of a slave, to the incident where Peter answers that he will feed Jesus’ sheep (John 21:15-17).

Table 1

Facets and Characteristics of "True Christian Conversion"

FACETS	STAGE ONE Formative Integration	STAGE TWO Responsible Consistency	STAGE THREE Self-Transcendent Wholeness
Reasoning	Ego-centric (e.g. prays for personal, temporal desires)	Other-centered; develops an interest in service, sharing, caring, loyalty	Responds empathically to others' needs; is more understanding of the needs of others
Biblical Knowledge	Has little biblical knowledge, and often uses what she/he does have ineptly	Begins to understand the importance of applying Scripture to daily life	Displays intensive biblical knowledge, which has fostered wisdom
Morals	Black and white; little room for being flexible	Begins to understand that some issues are open to debate; is learning how to apply biblical principles to moral dilemmas	Has a universal moral frame of reference; is willing and able to fight against public and private injustice
Love	Conditional; believes in an eye-for-an-eye; loves those who are deserving of love	Is learning the meaning of agape love—an unconditional love exhibited in loving acts and toleration despite attack	Is compassionate; responds in redemptive ways to others' weaknesses
Orientation	Convictions based on feeling	Convictions become more faith-based: "For we live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:17); finds it easier to maintain equilibrium during difficult times	Faith holds steady despite tragedy
Motives/Attitudes	Inconsistent; focuses on externals such as appearance, social acceptance, material things, and reputation; the public self and private often contradict each other	Is establishing lifelong morals and commitments; is realizing that some issues are debatable; is learning how to apply biblical principles to moral dilemmas	The public self reflects who the person is in private
Theological Stance	Dogmatic; resists alternative theological interpretations	Is less dogmatic; better able to debate theological difference without being combative/defensive	Has grown to appreciate simplicity while truly appreciating theological paradox
Convictions	Conformist in nature	Is developing own values and commitments; is internalizing faith	Displays a deep, abiding intimacy with God

Note. Summarized from "A Developmental Model for Stages of Growth in Christian Formation," by S. Fortosis, 1992, *Religious Education*, 92(87), pp. 284-294.

Biblical knowledge. Peter exhibits a lack of biblical knowledge (stage 1) when in Matt 15:14 he requires an explanation to a parable Jesus had just told. Later in his life, he exhibits thorough knowledge (stage 3) of faith in his epistles to the early Christians.

Morals. Peter shows his inflexibility and a desire for the concrete (stage 1) when he asks Christ how often he should forgive an offender (Matt 18:21). Fortosis (2001) does not offer an example of how Peter shows evidence of having advanced to a more universal moral frame of reference (stage 3).

Love. That Peter struggled with loving others unconditionally is seen in his need for the vision in Acts 10:9-16. After discerning its meaning, Peter fulfilled it by going to a Gentile's house to preach salvation. Thus he moves from conditional love (stage 1) to compassion for those whom he might deem unworthy (stage 3).

Orientation. In Matt 14:22-31, Peter exhibits that his convictions are based on feeling (stage 1). Yet Peter would later hold firm (stage 3) despite the persecution of fellow Christians, personal imprisonment, and, ultimately, martyrdom.

Motives/Attitudes. That Peter was inconsistent (stage 1) is seen in the following verses: John 6:67-69; 13:8, 9, 37; Matt 14:27-31; and 19:27. However, his words in 2 Pet 3:11, 14 show us that we would not be "presumptuous to believe that, at this point in his life, the spirituality Peter exhibited in public was very similar to his actual, 'private' self" (stage 3) (Fortosis, 2001, p. 54).

Theological Stance. Peter and the other disciples were looking for a Messiah who would conquer their Roman rulers. Even when Jesus explained to them about His impending death, they did not comprehend (Luke 18:31-34). This shows a resistance to

alternative theological stances (stage 1). Yet in such passages as Acts 2:14-40 and 10:34-43, we see that Peter has progressed a great deal in his theological understanding (stage 3) of His Savior's mission.

Convictions. Throughout the early years of his discipleship, Peter was a conformist and lacked firm convictions (stage 1). Twice he declared Jesus was the Son of God, swearing he would never deny Him. Yet pressure from others caused him to do just that (John 6:67-69; Matt 16:15-17; John 18:25-27). As a result, however, of "the burden of leadership after Christ's ascension, and the suffering of his own beatings and imprisonment, his relationship with God undoubtedly matured and became closer" (Fortosis, 2001, p. 56). Thus, he was able to display an abiding intimacy with God (stage 3) when he wrote, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he [God] cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7).

In addition to this case study on the life of Peter, Fortosis analyzes several biblical passages in light of his stage theory of spiritual growth. For example, he points out that Heb 5:11-6:3 "compares spiritual growth to bodily growth" (Fortosis, 2001, p. 57).

The first stage, infancy, is characterized by believers who need milk (elementary teaching) because they are unskilled in understanding and assimilating scripture. They are not able to use bible knowledge to decide the sometimes complex daily questions of life and of right and wrong. Those able to eat solid food (advanced teachings) have reached a stage of spiritual maturity. They can perceptively distinguish right from wrong, they live an exemplary life, and they are in a position to teach others by word or example. (p. 57)

Other texts Fortosis analyzes in light of his stage theory of spiritual growth are Heb 12; Eph 4:12-16; Matt 13; and 1 Cor 3:9-11.

Last of all, it should be noted that Fortosis's stages of Christian maturity relate to the three biblical components of faith as defined by Downs. Stage 1 of his developmental model compares with the cognitive component of biblical faith (What shall I believe?). This component engages believers in the acquisition of biblical knowledge. If, however, believers do not grow beyond this component, their lives will be characterized by the egocentrism, inflexibility, emotionalism, inconsistencies, dogmatism, and conformity of Fortosis's first stage.

As Christians grow in their knowledge of the Savior, they will begin to have confidence *in* Him (Whom should I believe?). This is the relational component of biblical faith in which they will begin to exhibit some of the characteristics of Fortosis's second stage of faith development (e.g., learning the importance of applying Scripture to daily life and learning that Christian love involves loving acts and toleration despite attacks).

Their belief *in* Jesus helps Christians develop a commitment to Him which results in the third, or behavioral, stage of biblical growth (How should I act?). As their commitment to Christ grows, believers will respond empathically to the needs of others, fight against injustice, hold fast despite tragedy, and display a deep, abiding intimacy with God.

Just as Fortosis's theory of Christian faith development suggests a relationship to the three components of biblical faith (What should I believe? Whom should I believe? How should I act?), so does God's plan of salvation--a plan devised to restore in us the image of our Maker. It is this plan I will discuss next, under the headings of justification and sanctification.

Justification

The desire to grow spiritually fulfills the need Christians have to be restored to the image of their Maker in which they were first created. This restoration begins when we are reconciled, or brought back, to God Himself (2 Cor 5:20). Romans 5:10 tells us that restoration to God is based on the atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ: “When we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son.” When a Christian accepts for him- or herself Christ’s atoning sacrifice, justification occurs. This is “the divine act by which God declares a penitent sinner righteous, or regards him as righteous. Justification is the opposite of condemnation (Rom. 5:16)” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 1979, p. 635).

Second Corinthians 5:21 informs us that Christ was made “to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Zechariah 3:1-5 symbolically portrays this transaction, which occurs because of the nature of justification. In vision, Zechariah saw Joshua, the high priest, in “court,” “standing before the angel of the Lord” in filthy clothes. These clothes symbolized Joshua’s and Israel’s sin (LaRondelle, 1980, p. 46), of which Satan accused Joshua in vs. 1. God, however, rebuked Satan for his accusation. Then the angel instructed those standing before Joshua to remove his clothes, after which the angel said, “I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.” Thus, as a result of justification, repentant sinners become “dressed” with the very righteousness of Christ.

While individuals can do nothing themselves to be justified, they must have faith to make justification effectual--faith *that* Jesus died to atone for our sins (1 Thess 4:14; the first component of biblical faith--What do I believe?) and faith *in* Jesus that He credits His own holiness to us rather than our guilt (Rom 3:22; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9; the second component of biblical faith--Whom shall I believe?).

Sanctification

The fundamental meaning of sanctification is “to set apart”; and the Bible teaches that this “setting apart” is both “an accomplished act in the believer’s past” and “a process in the believer’s present experience” (Ministerial Association, 1988, p. 123). As the former, sanctification is relational--the second component of biblical faith (Whom shall I believe?). When an individual is justified, she or he is sanctified “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). That person is sanctified, or “set apart,” based on her or his new relationship with God for the express purpose of “obedience to Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:2)--the third aspect of biblical faith (How shall I act?). This obedience points to sanctification as “a process in the believer’s present experience”--a process of moral growth which is transformational in nature.

La Rondelle (1980, p. 60) points out that the connection between justification (Christ’s “grace of acquittal”) and sanctification (His call to live a totally new and holy life) is depicted in His words to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). Roman law did not permit Jews to carry out death sentences (18:31). Hence, a group of Pharisees

brought this woman to Jesus, hoping He would condemn her to death, thereby giving them a basis upon which to accuse Him.

They, however, were the ones to be accused. After Jesus told the Pharisees that any one of them who had not sinned could throw the first stone, the woman found herself alone with the Savior. “Has anyone condemned you?” He asked her.

“No one,” she replied.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin’ (John 8:11). In His refusal to condemn her, lies her justification--“the divine act by which God” declared her righteous. In Jesus’ imperative to leave her life of sin, lies her sanctification--both relational and transformational.

The apostle Paul highlights the transformational aspect of sanctification in many of his writings. Perhaps some of his most notable texts regarding this subject are Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Thess 5:23; and Eph 4:22-24. “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son” (Rom 8:29). With these words, Paul teaches us the goal of salvation and “the essence” of sanctification (Berkouwer, 1972, p. 135)--that we be restored to God’s original design for us, a design fashioned after His own image.

In Rom 12:2, Paul urges the Christians in Rome not to conform “to the pattern of the world” but to “be transformed by the renewing of” their minds. This transformation,

which begins when the believer is converted and reborn, is a progressive and continuing transformation, for our ‘inward man is renewed day by day’ (2 Cor. 4:16) ‘in knowledge’ [the rational component of biblical faith] (Col. 3:10). And as the inward man is being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit [the relational component of biblical faith], so the outward life is being progressively

changed [the behavioral component of biblical faith]. The sanctification of the mind will reveal itself in a holier way of living, as the character of Christ is more and more perfectly reproduced in the believer. (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1980, vol. 6, p. 617)

Second Corinthians 3:18 teaches us that our transformation into Christ's "likeness" occurs progressively ("with ever increasing glory"), and "takes place only through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who, having access to the heart, renews, hallows, and glorifies the nature and makes it over into the likeness of Christ's perfect life" (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1980, vol. 6, p. 851), while 1 Thess 5:23 informs us that the transformational aspect of sanctification involves the transformation of all facets of a person's life to reflect God's image, "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you *through and through*" (italics supplied).

The putting off of our old selves and the putting on of our new selves in Eph 4:22 and 24 echoes Zech 3:1-5, in which the prophet exchanges his filthy rags (sin) for "richer garments" (Christ's righteousness). Our new selves, Paul says, are "created to be *like God* in true righteousness and holiness" (vs. 24; italics supplied).

What is God like, that we should be like Him? What is it exactly we are to be restored to? White (1940) states that the "law [the Ten Commandments] reveals the attributes of God's character" (p. 762). When a Pharisee asked Jesus which of the commandments was the greatest, He answered "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments'" (Matt 22:37-40). Reflecting upon

the Ten Commandments, it is easy to see that the first four involve the greatest commandment--love for God--while the last six pertain to the second greatest commandment--love for others (White, 1948, vol. 2, p. 43).

In a word then, God is *love*; and because we are created to be like God, Paul urges us to “live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” (Eph 5:2). Everything Paul says to do or not to do from 4:25 to 6:19 is to stem from that basis. Paul describes Christ’s love in 1 Cor 13 (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1980, vol. 6, p. 778); and because such love is worked out in us through the Holy Spirit, he calls us to “live by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16), which he says bears the fruit of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (vs. 22).

Thus we see that a complete biblical faith, which includes the elements of justification and sanctification, restores in us the image of our Maker, and helps to fulfill our need for spiritual growth. How various Christian educators view this process will be discussed next.

How Various Christian Educators View the Process of Spiritual Growth

Dallas Willard

Professor and philosopher Dallas Willard (1991) believes Christianity can succeed only as it takes seriously the need for humans to be transformed into Christ’s image and only as it explains and demonstrates practical methods of doing so (p. ix). “*Genuine* transformation of the whole person into the goodness and power seen in Jesus and his

‘Abba’ Father--the only transformation adequate to the human self--remains the necessary goal of human life” (Willard, 2002, p. 20; emphasis in the original).

However, Willard (1991) asserts we cannot take the need for such transformation seriously as long as we cling to the idea that faith is only “a mental and inward thing” (p. x). Rather, we must recognize faith “as it displays itself on the pages of the New Testament in three major dimensions” (p. 39).

The first of these dimensions involves faith as

a new power *within* the individual, erupting into a break with the past through turning in repentance and the release of forgiveness. The old leaf automatically falls from the branch as the new leaf emerges. Thus we have the biblical representation of repentance, as well as of forgiveness, as something *given* to us by God in Psalms 80:3; 85:4; Acts 5:31; Romans 2:4; and 2 Timothy 2:25. (1991, p. 40; emphasis in the original)

The second dimension in which faith displays itself in the New Testament is in both (a) an immediate transformation and (b) a developing transformation of a person’s character and personality. Thus, we not only can say that (a) “if anyone is in Christ, he [she] is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor 5:17), but that (b) each of us in our own way is adding to our “faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love” (2 Pet 1:5-7) (Willard, 1991, p. 40).

The third dimension of New Testament faith is an “extrahuman power over” evil, given to and exercised by individual Christians and the church (Willard, 1991, p. 40). This is the power Jesus claims in Matt 28:18; and it is on the basis of this power that He

commissions us to go, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey God (28:19, 20).

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.

Romans 8:29 states that “those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.” Paralleling this, Methodist scholar Robert Mulholland (1993) believes Christian spiritual formation is “(1) a process (2) of being conformed (3) to the image of Christ (4) for the sake of others” (p. 15). He defines each of these steps as follows:

1. *Process.* Mulholland (2000) reminds his readers that life automatically consists of spiritual formation. “Every action taken, every response made, every dynamic of relationship, every thought held, every emotion allowed . . . are the minuscule arenas where, bit by bit, infinitesimal piece by infinitesimal piece, we are shaped into some kind of being” (pp. 25, 26). The issue then regarding the process of spiritual growth is not whether it will occur, but what type of spiritual growth a person will engage in. In choosing how to behave, how to relate to others, how to think, and how to feel, will we decide to conform “to the pattern of the world” (Rom 12:2) or to be conformed to the likeness of Christ (8:29) (p. 26)?

2. *Being Conformed.* To want to control and manipulate our world to suit our desires is a common human aspiration. Mulholland (2000) reminds us that people who take what they think is rightfully theirs will balk at being grasped by God, while people who want to control their world to suit their every whim will resist yielding control to

Him (pp. 26, 27). Then there are those people who gather and assimilate information in order to be in control of their life (Mulholland, 1993, p. 27). Mulholland (2000) states that such people “are closed to being addressed by God” (p. 27). Meanwhile, people who are always “on the go” find it extremely difficult to be still and know God as God (Ps 46:10) (Mulholland, 2000, p. 27).

However, spiritual formation that conforms us to the image of Christ “reverses our role as the controllers (who act to bring about the desired results in our lives) to beings who allow the spirit of God to act in our lives to bring about God’s purposes” (Mulholland, 2000, p. 27). Thus, what we become is no longer of our own devising, but that which is of God’s design.

3. *The Image of Christ.* Mulholland (2000) stresses that the goal of spiritual growth is to “find our cleansing, healing, restoration, renewal, and transformation in an increasing likeness of our being and doing to that of Christ’ (p. 28). To that end, he cites 2 Cor 3:17, 18--“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with every-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord.” In this passage, freedom for Mulholland is freedom from anything and everything that prevents us from being like Christ; and it is at the very point of these things where “God confronts us in our brokenness, challenges us to respond to his offer of forgiveness and healing, [and] calls us to consecration of ourselves to him there” (p. 28). If we do so, God “works to conform us to the image of Christ at that point in our being” (p. 28).

4. *For the Sake of Others*. Because Christ gave Himself “totally, completely, absolutely, unconditionally for others,” this is part of His image to which we must be transformed (Mulholland, 2000, p. 41). However, in an area where we are unlike Christ--an area where our sinful tendencies rule--our relationship with others will be controlled by those tendencies.

Our relationship with others at that point will become manipulative as we attempt to impose our agenda on them. If others do not readily succumb to our manipulations, we will tend to become abusive with them or break the relationship entirely. (p. 42)

When Jesus summarized the law as loving God ““with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,”” and ““your neighbor as yourself”” (Mark 12:30, 31), He “inseparably joined loving God with loving others” (Mullholland, 2000, p. 42). Therefore, if we truly love God, we will love others; and our relationships will become more and more “characterized by love and forgiveness,” and our lives, “a healing, liberating, transforming touch of God’s grace upon” our world (Mulholland, 1993, p. 32). Hence, our relationships with others become the proving ground of our spirituality (Mulholland, 2000, p. 42).

Maxie Dunnam

This Methodist theologian and former president of Asbury Theological Seminary asserts that as a result of the Fall, two things happened: (a) “we became *estranged* from God,” and (b) “his image within us was broken, distorted and defaced” (Dunnam, 1982, p. 28). Therefore, he states that two things must happen as a result of salvation: (a) “we are *reconciled* to God” by the justifying grace of God in the cross of Jesus,” and (b)

“there is the re-creation of the image of God in the life of the believer” (pp. 28, 29). This re-creation “is the aim of the Christian life” (p. 30); and it begins when we die with Christ (Col 3:3), are buried with Him in baptism (2:12), then “raised with him through [our] faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” (2:12) (p. 34). Dunnam (1982) conveys that when

Paul talked about the death of Christ and our participation in that death, he was thinking not only of forgiveness for past sins, but of a drastic break with sin, a demolishing of sin’s dominion and control over our lives. (p. 35)

However, Dunnam (1982) continues by stating that our human nature remains sinful, and sin will continue to be a coercive force in our lives (Rom 7:14-24) (p. 35). This fact makes sharing in Christ’s death an ongoing process. “We claim the power of his death over sin daily in order that sin’s power will not prevail in our lives” (p. 36).

In addition to taking part in Christ’s death, we also take part in His resurrection. As Paul says in Rom 6:8, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” This life is a completely new creation (2 Cor 5:17) characterized in part by God’s power in Christ. This power redeems us, energizes our will, heals the sick, drives out demons, renews our spirits, and reconciles our relationships (Dunnam, 1982, pp. 37, 38). It also is the force which motivates

that dynamic process of receiving through faith and appropriating through commitment, discipline, and action, the living Christ into our life to the end that our own life will conform to, and manifest the reality of Christ’s presence in the world. (p. 39)

Christians embody the Savior to the world inasmuch as He dwells in them (Eph 3:17) (Dunnam, 1982, p. 42). Thus, He empowers them to exercise compassion--“the

characteristic element” of being like Christ (p. 153). Thus, Christians bless others and become agents of change. As such, Dunnam believes Christians are called not only to help the poor directly, but to speak against and try to change systems and policies “that take no account of the needs of the poor and oppressed” (p. 158).

Ellen White

As one of the founders of the SDA Church, and as both a Christian author and religious educator, White believed that God’s objective for humanity is the restoration of His image in each individual. She referred to this goal as “godliness” or “godlikeness” (1903, p. 18); and she believed that the main object of education, of one’s life and of redemption, was the fulfillment of this goal (pp. 15, 16). She equates this objective with the concept of transformation: “When one turns away from human imperfections to behold Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in the character. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image” (1941, p. 250).

White (n.d.) also states that such transformation is the test of discipleship: “There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. . . . The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers” (p. 59). This reformation, this loveliness of Christ, will be seen in His disciples as they develop the fruit of the Spirit listed in Gal 5:22, 23 (p. 58).

While White did not develop a concise explanation regarding how this transformation occurs, one can glean from her writings many aspects of the process. The major aspects follow:

1. In Jesus' words of Mark 4:28, "first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head" (NIV), she recognizes that this transformation involves a process of spiritual growth and stages of development.

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. . . . As its [the plant's] growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. . . .

The plant . . . sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by co-operating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. (1941, pp. 65-67)

2. White (1940) identifies the starting point of this cycle as the new birth, which is the "effectual work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 172).

3. As individuals cooperate with the Holy Spirit through "persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits," they move through the cycle of growth and stages of development. Hence, "[they] are to add grace to grace; and as [they] thus work on the plan of addition, God works for [them] on the plan of multiplication" (White, 1911, p. 532).

4. She refers to this growth and development as sanctification, which she defines as "a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last" (1937, p. 10).

5. Spiritual growth and development occur most notably, when "by beholding [Jesus] we become changed" (White, 1941, p. 355). White uses this phrase often; and

Willsey (1991) believes that quite possibly it is the best summation of her “position on the process of spiritual formation” (p. 109). Willsey further points out that she demonstrates the meaning of this phrase in her following commentary on prayer:

As we make Christ our daily companion we shall feel that the powers of an unseen world are all around us; and by looking unto Jesus we shall become assimilated to His image. By beholding we become changed. The character is softened, refined, and ennobled for the heavenly kingdom. The sure result of our intercourse and fellowship with our Lord will be to increase piety, purity, and fervor. There will be a growing intelligence in prayer. We are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of diligence and zeal. (White, 1956, p. 85)

6. “Intercourse and fellowship with our Lord” depend on other spiritual disciplines besides prayer. To that end, White also wrote often about Bible study and meditation.

Regarding Bible study, she wrote that the “soul . . . will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures” (1941, p. 60). Thus, we see that Bible study for her is as much about transformation as it is about information. In addition, she also recognized that while a knowledge of the truth (the cognitive component of faith) enables one to “defend it by arguments” (1948, vol. 5, p. 264), such knowledge (or faith) “does nothing for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom” (1948, vol. 5, p. 264). People who do not move beyond this component of faith to the relational and behavioral components

are not growing Christians. . . . They have not learned to view men and things as God views them, and in many cases unsanctified sympathy has injured souls and greatly crippled the cause of God. The spiritual stagnation that prevails is terrible. (1948, vol. 5, p. 265)

Regarding meditation, White believed that it too is essential “to a growth in grace” (1948, vol. 2, p. 187). Thus, she advised people to reflect upon the following

themes: the meaning of salvation, Jesus' boundless mercy and love, and His sacrifice and character (1955, p. 109).

By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent.

When the mind is thus filled . . . the believer in Christ will be able to bring forth good things from the treasure of the heart. (p. 109)

Summary of Material Regarding Spirituality and Spiritual Growth

In order to design an *ABSG* which promotes the spiritual growth of its users, it is necessary to ask, What are spirituality and spiritual growth? While diverse in many ways, the theorists, biblical material, and Christian educators discussed in this section all share certain convictions of which assist in answering this question. Each states that a mature faith involves transformation and that this transformation is ongoing. The decidedly Christian viewpoints state that this transformation involves developing a Christlike character--a character distinguished by love for God and humanity and manifested in the fruit of the Spirit.

Thus, for the purpose of developing an adult Bible study guide that promotes spirituality and spiritual growth, it is the intention of this study to define spirituality as (a) a life-transforming relationship with God (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38) and (b) consistent devotion to serving others. Spiritual growth, then, is the *process* of being transformed to Christ's likeness. This process (a) occurs as a result of beholding Christ through the use of spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, prayer, meditation,

worship, fellowship, service, etc.; and (b) manifests itself in one's love for God and other humans, as well as in the fruit of the Spirit.

How intentional, however, has the SDA Church been regarding spirituality and spiritual growth? This is the next question requiring an answer before developing an *ABSG* designed to encourage such growth.

How Intentional Has the SDA Church Been Regarding Spirituality and Spiritual Growth?

God created humankind in His image; but the first two humans chose to separate themselves from God by acting against His will for their lives (Gen 1-3). In doing so, God's image in them was severely damaged. Jesus, however, who as God's Son is the express image of God, came to restore God's image in humankind (Knight, 1985, pp. 49, 50). The apostle Paul echoes these words, when in Rom 8:29 he writes that for "those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."

Ellen White (1903), co-founder of the SDA Church, states that to

restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in creation might be realized--this was to be the work of redemption. This is the . . . great object of life. (pp. 15, 16)

Today, the Church tacitly reflects this "great object of life" in its mission statement:

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return. (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 2006, p. 8)

Methods used to that end are then stated to be the following:

1. Preaching God's message of love to the world as shown in His Son's ministry of reconciliation and atoning death, the second coming of that Son, and the importance of the Ten Commandments, including the fourth commandment, which deals with the seventh-day Sabbath (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 2006, p. 8).

2. Teaching that addresses the truth that the development of an individual's mind and character is a cardinal component to the plan of salvation and that emphasizes "a mature understanding of and relationship to God, His Word, and the created universe" (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 2006, p. 8); and

3. Healing the whole person and ministering to the poor and oppressed in cooperation "with the Creator in His compassionate work of restoration" (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 2006, p. 8).

As an outgrowth of both its mission and methods, the SDA Church envisions the restoration of His entire creation "to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness" (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 2006, p. 8) at the end of the millennium (Rev 20:1, 2; Ministerial Association, 1988, pp. 372, 373).

Based on the exalted goal and noble mission statement set forth both by White and the denomination's administration, it is imperative to ask how intentional the church has been in fulfilling both. The answer will be found by investigating historical and church priorities; various SDA research studies; ministerial training programs; certain General Conference (GC) departments; and specific church publications.

Historical and Current Priorities

After studying the prophecy of Dan 8:14, William Miller, a Baptist preacher, determined Christ would return between 1843 and 1844. This calculation added fuel to the fire of the second great awakening which flamed throughout Christianity between the 1790s and the 1840s. Others within this movement set the date for Christ's return at October 22, 1844. However, when Christ did not come back, adherents to this latter time experienced a great disappointment. From the one large group of expectant Christians, emerged three smaller groups. The largest of these (approximately 30,000 people) believed they had made an error in interpreting the chronology of Dan 8:14. Therefore, they concluded there was no fulfillment of prophecy in 1843-1844. One of the two minority groups maintained that the original views regarding the chronology and Christ's return were correct. Thus, they believed His return occurred as a spiritual event within His saints. The last of the minority groups believed the chronological interpretation of Dan 8:14 had been correct, but that they had been incorrect concerning the event that was to take place. It is from this group of about 50 people in 1846 (White, 1882, pp. viii-xvii) that the SDA Church eventually would emerge (White, 1882, p. xvii). People such as Hiram Edson, Ellen Harmon (Ellen White before her marriage), James White, O. R. L. Crosier, and F. B. Hahn spent long nights in prayer and Bible study, trying to discover the true nature of what occurred in October 1844 (Maxwell, 1977, pp. 40-66).

Evangelistic Priorities

The doctrines and beliefs that began to emerge from these all-night sessions inspired the hearts and minds of those studying them. Eagerly, they began sharing them with others. Soon, however, argumentative, debate-oriented sermons crept almost exclusively into their repertoire. Originally, such techniques swelled their ranks. White (1892), however, spelled out the faults of such methods and the price to be paid for their overuse. They are the “device of Satan,” she wrote, and therefore “stir up combativeness, and thus eclipse the truth as it is in Jesus. Many have thus been repulsed instead of being won to Christ” (p. 81). Furthermore, because of such sermons, the “nature of true piety, [and] experimental godliness,” Jesus’ “self-denial and self-sacrifice, [and] His meekness and forbearance, are not brought before the people as they should be” (p. 81).

A Shift in Priorities

Two factors relating to ministerial training began to lead the church away from the argumentative, debate-oriented sermons. These factors were a shift from an evangelistic approach to ministry to a more pastoral approach, and the emphasis of righteousness by faith at the General Conference session of 1888.

From evangelistic ministers to pastoral ministers

From the beginning of the new group’s evangelistic efforts, through the 1860s, itinerant preachers were the norm. Because there was a scarcity of preachers, the only way to spread the word was to travel from place to place. Furthermore, many believed a stationary preacher or minister “would lead to ‘one man’s mind’ prevailing over the local

congregation” (Haloviak, 1988, p. 1). During this time, the need for a more pastoral style of ministry was seen in the facts that several churches were disbanding, children were rejecting their parents’ religion, and those churches that were “functioning” were infested with disunity. Clearly, the need for spiritual growth was evident (Haloviak, 1988, p. 2).

To alleviate the price the church was now paying for its use of debate-oriented, itinerant evangelism, conferences established districts within their territories so churches could receive systematic visits from ministers. Also, the *Review* initiated a column entitled “Labor Among the Churches” which reported on quarterly-held meetings for ministers to focus on pastoral concerns (Haloviak, 1988, p. 2).

The 1888 General Conference session

The second factor motivating the shift to a more pastoral ministry involved the emphasis of righteousness by faith during the 1888 General Conference session. Knight (1990) points out that even though this “‘new’ emphasis was largely rejected by the leaders attending the session, it was destined for wide acceptance in the early 1890s due to the teaching and preaching of A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and Ellen White” (p. 13). One of the results of this emphasis was the ministerial institutes held during the winters following 1888. Directed by Prescott, the head of the General Conference educational work, Gilbert Valentine reported that these gatherings “were aimed especially at enlightening the denomination’s clergy about the centrality of righteousness by faith to Adventism’s teaching and mission (“Controversy: A Stimulus in Theological Education,” as cited in Knight, 1990, p. 13). In July and August of 1891, Prescott held a similar

institute in Michigan for Adventist educators. W. C. White characterized this meeting as one of spiritual revival, perhaps largely because Ellen White spoke about the twin needs for a personal relationship with Christ and a spiritual revival among church educators (Knight, 1990, p. 14).

Thus, we see that in its early years, the Adventist Church recognized and, for the most part, was built on the need for spirituality and growth toward that end. White continued throughout her life to move church members along the path of spiritual growth. “Where is the spirituality of the church? Where are men and women full of faith and the Holy Spirit? My prayer is: Purify the church, O God” (White, 1948, vol. 1, p. 99). Such a legacy provides the SDA Church with a continual mandate to create goals and objectives that center around spirituality and spiritual growth and to assess whether or not those goals and objectives are being met.

To that end, the most recent General Conference Sabbath School Manual (General Conference Church Ministries Department, 1986) states that one of the Sabbath School’s objectives is to foster “spiritual growth through regular study of the Word of God, and sharing the faith with others” (p. 9). McCormick (1992) conducted research involving Sabbath School objectives in which he identified and ranked six objectives. In order of perceived importance, respondents “chose Bible study as significantly more important than any other objective” (p. 99). Furthermore, two other objectives having to do with spiritual growth were rated as more important than objectives having to do with service for and evangelism of non-Sabbath school members. These were fellowship and support, and nurture and character development.

Yet, how well are these objectives being met today? As White (1948) asked, “Where is the spirituality of the church? Where are the men and women full of faith and the Holy Spirit?” The following section highlighting SDA research regarding the spiritual health of seminary students and church members gives us the answer.

SDA Research Studies

The studies examined fall into two categories: (1) those which investigated the spirituality/spiritual growth of seminary students, and (2) those which examined the spirituality of general church membership. I have chosen these two categories, because it is logical to expect that the spirituality of the former will affect the spirituality of the latter.

The Spirituality/Spiritual Growth of Seminary Students

Pastoral skills and spiritual growth

Jacobsen (1974) canvassed 292 seminary students who graduated between 1969 and 1973 in order to determine to what extent their training had prepared them for their profession. Of the 28 pastoral skills tested, 2 related to spiritual growth: (a) “lead young people in meaningful Christian growth experience,” and (b) “maintain a personal devotional life.” Only 40% of the students believed they had received sufficient instruction to help young people grow spiritually. Sixty-four percent said they received adequate training in the latter. Many of the students also commented that they wanted less theory and more practical application of the theory they did study.

Biblical knowledge and spiritual growth

Maxwell (1975, as cited in Tasker, 2002) solicited over 500 North American lay-leaders to evaluate how SDA church members viewed seminary graduates. Eighty percent felt the graduates were well versed in biblical knowledge and upheld church standards; 56% believed the seminary had helped the alumni to grow spiritually; and 11% indicated they believed it did not help their spirituality at all.

Devotional life crucial to ministers

Seminary graduates, faculty, students, and those who employed seminary graduates participated in a 1980 needs assessment study by Dower (1980) which sought to determine how well the M.Div. program prepared its participants for the ministry. One of the 101 items dealt with the importance to ministers of a sustained effective devotional life. This item was ranked the second highest perceived need by ministers in the field. However, seminary training in this area ranked 71st (p. 141). Dower noted that Bible study quickly becomes just another academic pursuit if such study does not include spiritual nurture (p. 163). This study, along with the two previously discussed, indicates a need for curricula that give equal weight to the cognitive (What shall I believe?), relational (Whom shall I believe?), and behavioral (What shall I do?) components of biblical faith discussed in the first section of this literature review.

A personal testimony

Reflecting the trend of these studies, Willsey (1991) recounts in his dissertation the struggle he personally felt in the area of spiritual growth. As a lifelong SDA, former seminarian, and current pastor, he describes the negative effects of having grown up in a milieu where spirituality “was usually interpreted as obedience, regardless of the motivation” (p. 2). As a result, many SDAs “became guilt-ridden but afraid to admit that they really were not ready [for Christ’s return], nor did they know how to develop a meaningful relationship with their Lord” (p. 2). Like Willsey, they had no assurance of salvation and were fearful of the Second Coming (p. 2). Wanting a relationship with God based on love, rather than denominational priorities, theological debate, or institutionalism, Willsey began to explore, practice, and develop a seminar for the spiritual disciplines, many of which he did not find promoted by the denomination (pp. 2-4).

The Spiritual Health of General Church Membership

Considering that the majority of SDA seminary students have felt that their training has been less than adequate in the area of spiritual growth, it would not be surprising to discover problems in this area regarding general church membership and even with the *ABSG*. Following are four studies suggesting this is the case.

The Adult Sabbath School: A Needs Assessment

In 1989, the North American Division (NAD) Church Ministries Department of the SDA Church conducted a survey which yielded 651 useable questionnaires. In

addition, the Institute of Church Ministry conducted a survey for the North American Church Information System in 1989-1990. Respondents consisted of 1,994 church attenders. The findings of these studies were reported in *The Adult Sabbath School: A Needs Assessment* (NAD Church Ministries Department, 1990). Results that pertain to spiritual growth and the *ABSG* are as follows:

1. Four out of five church members believed that the Sabbath School Bible study class (for which the *ABSG* is written) is important to them (p. 9).

2. While three out of four Sabbath School participants attended in the hope of fulfilling their desire and need for spiritual growth, almost none attended to learn more about denominational teaching (p. 11).

3. Despite their desire for spiritual growth and to have that growth nourished through the Sabbath School class and the *ABSG*, less than one third of regular attenders studied from the *ABSG* on a daily basis. More than one third rarely studied from it or had not studied from it all. Another third reported that they studied from the *ABSG* one to three times a week (p. 23).

4. When asked about their daily devotional practices, 68% reported engaging in personal private prayer and another 35% reported their choice as personal Bible study. However, only 30% said they used the *ABSG* for their daily devotions (p. 24).

5. The report stated that this low percentage regarding the use of the *ABSG* should not be viewed as an overall decline in devotional practices. Why? When the question regarding personal Bible study was compared to the same question asked in a 1980 study

of NAD members, the more recent study indicated an increase in the number of people engaged in personal daily Scripture reading (p. 25).

Based on these observations, one can conclude that while the majority of respondents believed Sabbath School classes were important to them, and while they attended these classes hoping to be spiritually nurtured, they did not view the *ABSG* as useful to that end.

Faith Communities Today

Throughout the year 2000, the Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary engaged in a survey titled Faith Communities Today (FACT) of more than 40 denominations and faith groups in the United States. Roger Dudley, of the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University, was the research director for the SDA portion of the study, whereas Monti Sahlin was the key analyst and spokesperson. Of the eight themes the survey focused upon, one involved the spiritual vitality of congregations. The SDA survey indicated that Adventist congregations were not as likely to be spiritually vital as other local faith groups (Center for Creative Ministries, 2003). Paul Richardson (2003), director of the Center for Creative Ministry, suggests three possibilities for why this is so:

1. Local leaders of SDA congregations might be less interested in the spirituality of their church than leaders of other congregations because of an Adventist perfectionistic view of the world. “Some would say, ‘No matter how good things are, they really should be much better for us to attain our goal’” (p. 1).

2. Many SDA churches have not grown numerically, have experienced little or no visible impact on their community, or are aging due to the high dropout rates of younger members.

3. The SDA Church has not made spiritual growth as high a priority as it has of its message and mission.

A world survey

One last study to be discussed regarding the spiritual health of SDA Church members is a world survey concerning the objectives of the 5-year strategic plan of the denomination. These objectives center around three strategic issues: (a) the quality of personal and church life; (b) the unity of the world church; and (c) the growth of the church. Each of these issues encompasses certain aspects of spiritual growth:

1. Quality of life is to be demonstrated in part by members whose lives illustrate the joy of salvation and restoration; who engage in weekly group Bible study and worship as well as in personal, family, and group prayer; and whose spiritual lives are exemplified by compassion and service (Strategic Planning Commission, 2002, p. 2).

2. Unity is to be partially demonstrated by a “cohesiveness in doctrine” (p. 2), which is reflected in “Christ-centered fundamental beliefs” (p. 2).

3. Growth is not only to be accounted for through increasing accession and retention rates of local churches, but through the “rich spiritual experience” of church members (p. 3).

Administered by the Institute of Church Ministry, the results of the survey were shared with those attending the 2002 Annual Council at the denomination's world headquarters. Dubbed a "wake-up call" to the church, the survey indicated that more than 90% of respondents were committed to Adventist teachings. Furthermore, most respondents specified "that they lived joyful lives, had assurance of salvation, and agreed with the church's organizational structure" (Adventist News Network [ANN], 2002, p. 1).

However, the survey also indicated low participation in daily prayer and Bible study (less than 50%), in active Christian witness to the community (40%), and in participation in community service (less than 30%) (Adventist News Network, 2002, p. 1). Each of these concerns can be linked to how the church rates in the area of spiritual formation.

The four studies dealing with the lack of spiritual growth training in Adventist seminaries and the four studies concerning Sabbath School objectives, which in general remain unmet, cause one to ask when and how the church shifted its priorities from the legacy of spiritual growth bequeathed to it by its founders to a more theory and theological driven course. The next section seeks to provide the answer.

Doing, Rather Than Being

An Annual Council Action of October 14, 1976, concerning evangelism and finishing God's work states that "the singular objective of . . . the SDA Church, is to proclaim to the whole world the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14" (p. 266). Furthermore, it contends that "the

lack of evangelistic purpose” is largely responsible for the lack of “deep spirituality among us” (p. 268).

However, in his 1993 dissertation, Vertallier points out that just as it did in its early years, the SDA view of evangelism could well be responsible for actually obscuring the Christian imperative for personal spiritual growth. He asks if one’s priority as a Seventh-day Adventist is “to work for the Lord or be with the Lord in meditation and prayer” (p. 50). Believing both are necessary, he nevertheless maintains that if we are not with the Lord, our work on His behalf will be far less effective.

In Matt 24:14, Jesus says that the “gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” However, as Vertallier points out, the SDA Church often has interpreted this command as a license to engage in a flurry of activities and programs (e.g., The Caring Church, A Thousand Days of Reaping, Global Mission, and more recently Go One Million and Sow One Billion), forcing pastors and evangelists to become task-oriented rather than Spirit-filled (p. 47). White (1940) attributes the same mind-set to the rabbis of Jesus’ day, who believed “the sum of religion to be always in a bustle of activity” (p. 362). Thus, piety becomes what we do, not Who we know; and our activity becomes our savior. However, this is not to say that we should not work at all. Rather,

we must take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the Word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good. (p. 362)

Hence, Jesus’ call to preach the gospel to the world so the end will come, is a call “to look constantly to” Him (White, 1940, p. 362)--a call to spiritual growth. The only

thing just as important as the Second Coming is the answer to the question, When Jesus does return, will He find His church filled with the Holy Spirit (Vertalliers, 1993, p. 49)?

During his tenure as the ministerial secretary and evangelism coordinator for the Upper Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, USA, Ben Maxson (1993) posed similar questions as Vertallier when he asked if the church was empowered by the Spirit or if it were program-oriented (p. 8). Believing that the Bible's characterization of God's church "reflects primarily an intimate connection and relationship with Him" (p. 8), rather than an organization constantly engaged "in a bustle of activity," Maxson affirms that it "is the time alone with God, corporately and individually, that sharpens the focus of our priorities and opens us to receive God's presence and power" (p. 10). Because the reception of God's power is only obtained through time spent with God, "evangelistic growth can only truly take place in the context of spiritual growth" (p. 11).

Who else within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and what other church entities are endorsing spiritual growth and providing practical instruction regarding the matter? The answer is the focus of the remaining portion of this chapter.

Being in Order to Do

Being connected to God determines the success we will have in the work He gives us to do (Maxson, 1993, pp. 8, 9). Who and what entities within the SDA Church are making it possible for its members to be with God that they might do for Him? The items discussed below are not exhaustive. Rather, they represent the best of what is readily available to people employed by the church and to the church members in general.

Ministerial Training

The education an SDA minister receives is important to the *ABSG*. Generally, tradition advocates that the editor of the *ABSG* be an ordained minister trained in one of the denomination's seminaries. Therefore, the training the editor receives most likely will determine if the guide is viewed as purely informational or informational with an eye toward the transformational. Thus, this section discusses seminary and GC Ministerial Association initiatives that foster spiritual growth in pastors.

Seminary Initiatives

In recent years, many initiatives have occurred that strengthen seminary-degree curricula in the area of spiritual growth, which could impact the *ABSG*. I have chosen to highlight those that have the strongest emphasis on the topic at hand.

Ministerial Training Advisory Committee (MTAC)

Paulien (1990, p. 1, as cited in Tasker, 2002, p. 108) wrote for a sub-committee of MTAC that "spiritual formation is the number one priority at all levels of the process." The same sub-committee also listed personal spirituality as one of the skills deemed vital to ministerial training. Later in the same year, MTAC formulated a document entitled *Ministerial Training in the SDA Church* in which they stated the following regarding the importance of spirituality in both the ministerial profession and the training of ministers:

Since the minister's role is first and foremost a spiritual one, we strongly recommend that spiritual formation assume a prominent place in the entire ten-year training process. Encouragement to spiritual formation should focus on how to

know and experience God through such disciplines as prayer, fasting, meditation, devotional Bible study, and service. (1990, p. 2, as cited in Tasker, 2002, p. 108)

The *Ministerial Education Curriculum* (July 8, 1990, as cited in Tasker, 2002, p. 108) adopted this focus, and therefore included both personal and teaching objectives in each of its four areas of ministerial training. Some of the personal objectives include an “openness to personal spiritual growth and renewal and willingness to accept guidance” and the “ability in the face of alternatives to choose and act upon values.” The teaching objectives include “spiritual growth programs; teaching spirituality” (p. 2, cited in Tasker, 2002, p. 109).

Spiritual formation classes

For more than a decade, the Spiritual Formation class at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University has been a requirement for Master of Divinity (M.Div.) students. In recent years, this course also has been made a requirement for M.A. Youth Ministries and M.A. (Religious Education) students. Tasker (2002) writes that this class evolved from teaching personal spiritual formation “in the context of a class called Pastoral Formation” (p. 14), which also included requisite practical field experience for M.Div. students, to “alternate class meetings and small groups with faculty facilitators” (p. 14). In 1998, a new course (GSEM541 Spiritual Formation) dedicated solely to personal spiritual formation became a requirement of the seminary program. One of the features of this class is an 8-hour retreat. The rest of the course features such topics as biblical and Adventist spirituality, world view, temperament, the practice of various disciplines, and participation in small groups. In a study done on the 1999 fall quarter class

of GSEM541, Tasker determined that the retreat provided the students with an increased “honesty and openness with God, self, and others” and that learning about the spiritual disciplines “brought increased enthusiasm and variety to [the students’] personal devotional times, while cultivating habits of consistency increased appreciation for God’s love and character” (Abstract, p. 2). Furthermore, Tasker discovered that the small-group participation fostered accountability and mutual encouragement.

GC Ministerial Association Initiatives

Pastoral Ministry

This resource book for SDA ministers was introduced in 1995, and consists of Ellen G. White material pertaining “most directly to the life and work of the local pastor” (p. 13). Six of the 52 chapters stress the pastor’s need for his or her spiritual growth. These chapters are: Chapter 1--Personal Devotions; Chapter 3--Characteristics of a Minister; Chapter 5--Ministerial Training; Chapter 6--Development of a Personal Support Group; Chapter 33--Preaching; and Chapter 52--Jesus as Model Pastor. Such spiritual disciplines as Bible study, prayer, meditation are discussed as is developing a Christlike character. The entire book emphasizes the principle that “no work for the church should take precedence” over communion with God (White, 1995, p. 23).

Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Handbook

The latest edition of this book contains an entire chapter on the importance of spirituality. Without it, “ministry will degenerate to implementation of psychological

techniques, organizational methods, and motivational cheerleading. Real power in ministry springs from spirituality that comes from a personal encounter with God” (1997, p. 21). The chapter discusses barriers to spirituality (lack of planning and time) and concludes with a section concerning devotional methods that promote spirituality (reading, meditation, and various types of prayer). This section emphasizes that these methods are not about the number of pages read or the amount of time spent in prayer, but rather developing a friendship with God.

Ministry: International Journal for Pastors

Using the *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index*, it was possible to glean a summary of articles on spiritual growth and spiritual disciplines published by *Ministry* since 1990. (I chose to begin with this year in order to reflect the most current emphasis being given by the journal. Also, while many articles touched briefly on certain aspects of spirituality and the spiritual disciplines, I am reporting only on articles dedicated solely to the two topics.)

The following articles highlight spiritual growth for pastors: “Are You a Day’s Journey From God?” (Maxson, 1991); “Where Are the Spirit-filled Leaders?” (Maxson, 1993); “A Pastor’s Spirituality: Balancing Ministerial Priorities” (Tilstra, 1999); “Laodicea and Holiness” (Newman, 1993); “Spiritual Leadership or Baptized Secularism?” (Edwards, 2002); “Transformed Into a New Person: The Relevance of God” (Drotts, 2003); “Preaching out of the Overflow: The Spiritual Life of a Preacher” (Black, 2004).

The article “Spiritual Growth Through Family Ministries” (Doss, 1999) deals with the spiritual growth of church members through family ministries.

The following spiritual disciplines also were discussed:

1. *Prayer*. “Call to Prayer” (Cress, 2000); “Prayer: A Leader’s Point of View” (Harcomb, 2000); “The Enigma of ‘Unanswered’ Prayer” (Coffen, 2002); “Don’t Hold Your Breath” (O’Ffill, 2003).

2. *Simplicity*. “Try the Simple Life!” (Swan, 1997).

3. *Bible study*. While many articles were written about the various Bible versions, analyzing specific portions of Scripture, and various hermeneutical principles of interpretation, my search revealed only one article devoted to personal Bible study as an aid to spiritual growth: “Reading the Bible” (Chamberlain, 2000).

4. *Fasting*. “Fasting: A Discipline Ministers Need” (Hill, 1990).

5. *Fellowship*. “The Misunderstanding of the Church” (Guy, 1991); “Sabbath Morning Fellowship” (1993); “*Koinonia* Is the Key” (Weber, 1994); “The Nazareth Sermon” (Fowler, 1994); “Fellowship: Our Greatest Witness” (Coffin, 2004).

6. *Service*. “The Church: Born to Serve” (Musvosvi, 1997).

7. *Worship*. “101 Ideas for Better Worship Services (1991); “Authentic Adventist Worship” (Holmes, 1991); “The Cross, the Center of Worship” (Newman, 1991a); “Dancing and Worship” (Newman, 1991b); “Enthusiasm in Early Adventist History” (Graybill, 1991); “Music and Worship” (Heise, 1991); “O Come, Let Us Worship!” (Fowler, 1991); “Worship and Music” (Eva, 1996); “Sing the Song of Gladness” (Strawn de Ojeda, 1996); “Historical Perspectives on Change in Worship Music” (Doukhan, 1996);

“Worship: The Heart of the Church” (Taylor, 1996); “Mission as Worship” (Patterson, 1996); “Growing a Healthy Church” (Grys, 2001); “African-American Worship: Its Heritage, Character, and Quality” (Jones, 2002).

Church Publications for General Church Membership

Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines

While not an officially voted statement, this text (Ministerial Association, 1988) seeks to explicate 27 fundamental beliefs of the denomination. These beliefs are covered in 27 chapters, which are themselves divided into six categories entitled (a) The Doctrine of God; (b) The Doctrine of Man; (c) The Doctrine of Salvation; (d) The Doctrine of the Church; (e) The Doctrine of the Christian Life; and (f) The Doctrine of Last Things. Within each, one can find pieces to a puzzle that, when put together, form a picture of spirituality and spiritual growth as it is defined by this study. Here are four examples:

1. When discussing the relationship of the Holy Spirit to believers in The Doctrine of God, one reads that “the infilling of the Holy Spirit, transforming us into the image of God, continues the work of sanctification begun at the new birth” (p. 65).

2. As the experience of salvation is addressed in the section on The Doctrine of Salvation, one reads that

God hopes to change fallen beings into His image by transforming their wills, minds, desires, and characters. The Holy Spirit brings to believers a decided change of outlook. His fruits (sic), “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness faithfulness, gentleness self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23), now constitute their lifestyle. (pp. 126, 127)

The importance of spiritual disciplines in this transformative process is conveyed in the following: “By prayer and study of the Word we constantly grow in fellowship with God. . . . Character is composed of what the mind ‘eats and drinks.’ When we digest the bread of life, we become transformed into the likeness of God” (p. 126).

3. Under The Doctrine of the Christian Life, one learns that Christians “are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives” (p. 278).

4. In the discourse concerning marriage and family under The Doctrine of the Christian Life, one reads that “the home is a primary setting for the restoration of the image of God in men and women” (p. 295).

In addition to these references regarding spiritual growth, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* . . . also touches upon the following spiritual disciplines to one degree or another: *Bible study*--pp. 14, 213; *meditation*--p. 125; *rest*--pp. 248, 252, 257, 258, 282, 283; *simplicity*--pp. 275, 286, 287; *fellowship*--pp. 134, 140, 198, 256; *guidance*--pp. 63, 64, 140, 213; *submission*--p. 188; *service*--pp. 134, 196, 197, 275; *confession*--pp. 120, 194, 199, 213; *worship*--pp. 73, 74, 134, 304.

Despite these assets, however, there is no clear exposition regarding the concepts of spirituality, spiritual growth, and the use of spiritual disciplines to nurture such growth.

Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology (2000)

This tome was authorized by the GC Executive Committee at the 1988 Annual Council meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. With the first and second chapters covering introductory material and a brief history of the church respectively, the remaining 27 cover the denomination's fundamental beliefs. Each of these chapters discusses a particular doctrine from the viewpoint of Scriptures, history, and the writings of Ellen G. White. The scriptural overview is followed by "remarks regarding practical implications for daily Christian life, except when the topic itself focused already on Christian living" (p. x).

It is in the section dealing with practical applications where one expects to find elements pertaining to spirituality and spiritual growth. Basically, this is the case. However, despite the *Handbook's* being designed "for the general reader" (p. xi), the average Fog Index is approximately 16, putting it out of the range of many church members. (The Fog Index calculates the grade level of a written work. Seven or 8 is generally the ideal, with 12 or above being too difficult for most people. *The New York Times* has a Fog Level of 11-12, while *Time* magazine's level is approximately 11.)

Following is a list of chapters and page numbers in the *Handbook* where one can find overt references to spirituality and spiritual growth as defined by this study:

Chapter 2--"Revelation and Inspiration," pp. 45, 46

Chapter 3--"Biblical Interpretation," pp. 86, 87

Chapter 4--"Doctrine of God," p. 139

Chapter 5--"Christ: His Person and Work," pp. 189, 190

Chapter 8--"Salvation," pp. 296, 297, 298

Chapter 11--“The Sanctuary,” pp. 401, 402

Chapter 13--“The Law of God,” pp. 463, 467, 470

Chapter 14--“The Sabbath,” pp. 512, 514

Chapter 15--“The Church,” p. 549

Chapter 16--“The Ordinances: Baptism, Foot Washing, and Lord’s Supper,” pp.
593, 600

Chapter 17--“Spiritual Gifts,” p. 637

Chapter 18--“Stewardship,” p. 671

Chapter 19--“Christian Lifestyle and Behavior,” pp. 677, 679, 680, 681, 683, 684

Chapter 20--“Marriage and Family,” p. 748

Chapter 21--“Health and Healing,” pp. 768, 772, 773, 774, 781

Chapter 25--“The Second Coming of Jesus,” pp. 910, 912, 913

Chapter 27--“The New Earth and the Eternal Kingdom,” pp. 958, 959

Chapter 28--“The Great Controversy,” p. 966.

While the *Handbook* does not intentionally discuss the disciplines, it does touch upon them as it discusses the various doctrines. In the chapters that did not overtly mention spirituality or spiritual growth, one can find references to certain disciplines. Following is a sampling: *service*--pp. 223, 300, 364, 365, 550, 684, 801; *fellowship*--pp. 266, 511, 561, 562, 593; *Bible study*--p. 46; *rest*--pp. 506, 507, 689; *repentance/confession*--pp. 293, 294, 593; *meditation*--p. 310; *simplicity*--pp. 29, 660, 704, 707; and *worship*--pp. 693, 551.

Church Manual

The 2000 edition of the manual maintains that only persons “giving evidence of having experienced the new birth, and who are enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus, are prepared for acceptance into church membership” (p. 29). The manual also states that because this “is a spiritual experience,” it “can be entered into only by those who are converted. Only in this way can the purity and spiritual caliber of the church be maintained” (p. 29). It is, therefore, every minister’s responsibility to edify “those who accept the principles of truth” so they will become members “on a sound spiritual basis” (p. 29). In this, the manual remains basically unchanged from its first edition in 1932, which declares that church “membership rests on a spiritual basis” (p. 72).

The manual emphasizes the following disciplines: Bible study and prayer--p. 162; worship--pp. 67-69, 71-73, 163; simplicity--p. 167; and fellowship--p. 69.

Adventist Review

In redesigning the *Review* for 1996, the editors worked from a four-fold platform to promote the following: (a) the message and mission of the SDA Church, (b) diversity, (c) reader interaction, and (d) spirituality (Johnsson, August 17, 1995, p. 2). To that end, they “pledged to provide spiritual food--real food--in every issue of the good new *Review*” (Johnsson, August 3, 1995, p. 2). Hence, *Review* readers in 1996 saw articles in the form of true stories which encouraged people to pray, study, be of service, and to grow in Christ.

However, the *Review*'s best efforts in the area of providing spiritual food are perhaps seen in special issues dealing solely with spiritual growth and spiritual disciplines. (These special issues do not preclude spiritual growth and the disciplines from being discussed in the regular weekly issues.) Following in chronological order is a list of these special issues with their titles and topics:

May 29, 1997--"One on One With God"/prayer; Bible study and the study of devotional classics, nature, human needs, and ourselves; journaling; service; worship; silence and solitude; and spiritual retreats

October 30, 1997--"When We All Get Together"/praise and worship; prayer and service; Week of Prayer articles dealt with prayer and service

April 30, 1998--"Class Acts"/service

July 30, 1998--"Time to Seek the Lord"/the Holy Spirit's role in spiritual growth prayer, fasting, meditation, confession, service

October 29, 1998--"Heart of Our Hope"/Week of Prayer articles dealt with the Bible and its transforming power

March (n.d.), 1999--"Time to Go Deeper"/intimacy with God through prayer, study, and service

September 30, 1999--"The Money Issue"/growing spiritually through stewardship; simplicity; Week of Prayer readings concentrated on the church family in fellowship, study, worship, and service

March 31, 2000--"Church Works: Help for a Hurting World"/service to one's community

November 30, 2000--“Keeping in Touch With God”/ prayer

September 27, 2001--“The Day the World Changed”/answered prayer; two Week of Prayer articles featured how the Bible binds church members in fellowship and worship

November 29, 2001--“A Tapestry of Adventism: Joining Hands in Service”/how service to others can help them to understand the nature of Christ’s love

January 31, 2002--“Live Longer, Live Better”/stress reduction through meditation

May 30, 2002--“Where Is God?”/aspects of a daily devotional life

August (n.d.), 2002--“Ministry Outside the Lines”/service

(n.d.), 2002--“The Gospel in Work Boots”/service

January 30, 2003--“The Church: It’s About People”/fellowship, worship, and how the new birth is the “restoration of the image of God in fallen humanity” (Burton, 2003, p. 10)

May 29, 2003--“Stories From Real Life: A Special Issue for Summer Reading”/spiritual growth

January 29, 2004--“My God and I”/prayer, Bible study, solitude, worship, and journaling; how nature and music assist the spiritual growth process.

In addition to these special issues, four other articles published before 1996 dealt specifically with spirituality and spiritual growth. They are: (a) “The Secret of Spirituality” (Johnsson, 1986); (b) “Spirituality” (Johnsson, 1994); (c) “Spirituality” (Wade, 1995a); and (d) “Spirituality--How Do We Achieve It?” (Wade, 1995b). The last article deals with the spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation.

General Conference (GC) Departments

Certain GC departments either have stated their mission in spiritual growth terms or have developed seminars and other materials around spiritual growth themes.

Adventist Family Ministries (AFM)

The mission of this department emphasizes the fact that our Creator God established the family as the main setting in which “the capacity for close relationships with God and with other human beings is developed” (Adventist Family Ministries, 2004, p. 1). Hence, family ministries’ formats are devised to help its members develop God’s ideals, share His love and grace with others, and assist with the type of “spiritual growth possible through the indwelling Spirit.”

Believing that family members are drawn closer to each other only insofar as each individual member draws closer to God, this department’s objectives include proclaiming “the reviving and restorative message of the everlasting gospel within the context of family living” (p. 1).

AFM calls for the use of such spiritual disciplines as repentance and confession to “bring assurance of pardon, healing and new beginnings (1 John 1:9; 2:1)” (p. 2). It also calls for the church to be the vehicle whereby broken relationships with God and with fellow humans can be healed as part of its evangelistic efforts (John 10:10; 20:21; Gal 6:2; Jam 5:15). This call reflects Christ’s mission of restoring relationships based on agape love (p. 3).

Women's Ministries

The resources developed by this GC department are designed to “enable women to deepen their faith and experience spiritual growth and renewal” (*Women's Ministries Mission Statement*, 2005, p. 1). Certain spiritual disciplines are evident in departmental programs designed to expand “avenues of dynamic Christian service for women,” mentoring young women “as they reach for their potential in Christ,” and to build networks “among women in the world church to encourage bonds of friendship and mutual support and the creative exchange of ideas and information” (p. 1).

Stewardship

While he was world stewardship director for the SDA Church, Ben Maxson taught that stewardship is about “integrating God into every area of life,” understanding that the foundation of stewardship rests upon Jesus being Lord of our lives, and being transformed by beholding Him (Maxson, *Stewardship Absolutes*, n.d., p. 1). Getting to that realization is “the movement of the entire life towards God, opening every area of life to intimacy with God and allowing Him to do His will” (Maxson, *Let God Be God*, n.d., p. 24). This then, for him, is spiritual formation.

Maxson wrote that the four main elements of such formation are:

1. *Vision*. This involves encountering God and understanding what He desires to do in us and through us.
2. *Gospel*. This is knowing what Christ has already done for us; what He is doing now for us, and applying this knowledge to all aspects of our lives.

3. *Lordship*. This is submitting, both as individuals and as a church, to all that God wants us to be, have, and do.

4. *Presence*. This involves the integration of God's presence into every facet of our lives, including all that we do.

“When all four areas are integrated we have, with Christ, a complete whole, a oneness that develops and grows. This whole or oneness is always focused around the cross—God's most complete revelation of Himself” (Maxson, *Let God Be God*, n.d., p. 24). In this context, giving grows as we grow spiritually and, as such, it becomes a natural part of our relationship with Him (p. 35).

Summary of Material Regarding the Intentionality of the SDA Church Toward Spirituality and Spiritual Growth

What is spirituality? It is (a) a life-transforming relationship with God (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38) and (b) consistent devotion to serving others. Spiritual growth, then, is the *process* of being conformed to this likeness. This process (a) occurs as a result of beholding Christ through the use of spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, prayer, meditation, worship, fellowship, service, etc.; and (b) manifests itself in one's love for God and other humans, as well as in the fruit of the Spirit.

How intentional has the SDA Church been regarding spirituality and spiritual growth? Its founders sought God through many of the spiritual disciplines. However, argumentative styles of evangelism caused them to lose sight of Christ. Changing to a more pastoral approach to ministry and the emphasis on righteousness by faith at the 1888 GC session helped the church to focus on more spiritual matters rather than on just gaining

biblical knowledge. This focus was dimmed by the manner in which the contemporary church began to emphasize evangelism by engaging its ministers and lay members in a bevy of programs and initiatives. Fortunately, though, many studies suggesting that the denomination lacks spiritual vitality are sounding a “wake-up call,” and many GC departments and publications are finding ways to incorporate spirituality and spiritual growth concepts in their mission statements, resources, and articles.

How can the *ABSG* do likewise? The answer will be explored in the third and final section of this literature review, which deals with how Christian educators and editors can enhance the spiritual growth of adult learners.

How Can Christian Educators and Editors Enhance the Spiritual Growth of Adult Learners?

Roehlkepartain (1993) states that “*the primary goal of congregational life is to nurture in people a vibrant, life-changing faith--the kind of faith that shapes a person’s way of being, thinking, and acting*” (p. 19; emphasis in original), that helps us to have God’s image restored in us. Roehlkepartain also observes that people who experience a transformative faith participate in learning activities that convey insight and knowledge and that use methods that allow learners to engage in self-discovery and experience (pp. 25, 31).

That the *ABSG* is part of the SDA Church’s congregational life has been established in chapter 1 of this study. However, that it generally and intentionally has not provided for its users to partake in activities geared toward self-experience and discovery will be shown at the end of this chapter. What is the best way, then, for SDA educators

and editors who produce Bible study material for adults, to formulate that material in ways that will provide for self-discovery and experience?

To answer this question, I will discuss concepts and methods of teaching which promote the application of knowledge to life-events. I also will discuss how the use of spiritual disciplines can enhance both the learning and spiritual growth processes.

Learning Styles/Learning Cycle

Kolb identifies two dimensions of learning, with each dimension containing opposites from which learners must choose. The first dimension is that of *grasping (perception)*. Learners must choose to perceive knowledge either through concrete, subjective experience or abstract, objective thinking. The second dimension is that of *transformation (processing)*. Here learners must choose to process knowledge they have perceived either through reflective observation or active experimentation. See Figure 1.

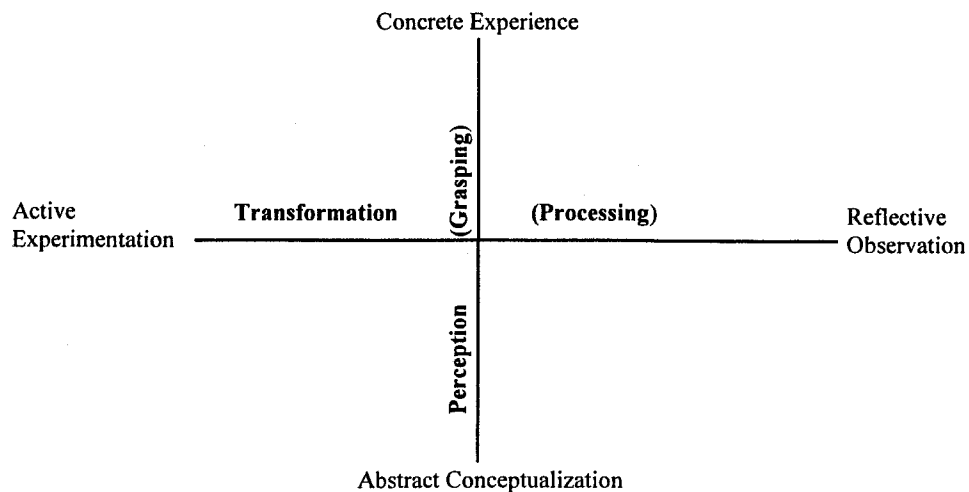


Fig. 1. Kolb's Dimensions of Learning.

Note. Adapted from *Experiential Learning—Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, by David A. Kolb, 1984, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Each learner moves in varying degrees from being subjectively involved, to being analytically detached (perception) and from being an active participant in a concrete experience, to being a reflective observer of that experience (processing). Most likely, individual learners choose on a regular basis one mode over another in either dimension, thus developing a particular learning style and restricting their abilities to perceive and process information. Kolb identifies these learning styles accordingly (Kolb, 1984, pp. 76, 77):

1. The *diverger* perceives through concrete experience and processes through reflective observation. Such a person exhibits a strong imagination; a consciousness of meaning and values; the ability to develop ideas and view things from unconventional perspectives; an interest in people; and high performance in brainstorming activities.
2. The *assimilator* is a person who perceives through abstract conceptualization and processes through reflective observation. She or he is best at creating theoretical models; thinking inductively; and dealing with abstract ideas rather than people.
3. The *converger* perceives best through abstract conceptualization and processes best through active experimentation. Such a person is strong in the practical application of ideas; problem solving; decision making; hypo-deductive reasoning regarding specific problems; control in expressing emotions; and finesse in technical tasks rather than social or interpersonal issues.
4. The *accommodator* perceives best through concrete experience and processes best through active experimentation. He or she takes risks; approaches problems intuitively;

gets things done; seeks opportunities; adapts well to changing circumstances; and is comfortable with people, but can be viewed at times as impatient.

Figure 2 displays where each style of learning occurs within the dimensions of learning.

To help increase a person's potential for learning by taking advantage of each learning style, Kolb envisions a four-stage learning cycle in which (a) an immediate concrete experience provides an opportunity for the learner to (b) generate observations and reflections, which in turn (c) forms the foundation for an abstract concept or an idea which (d) results in active experimentation based on the initial concepts presented in the beginning of the cycle. Figure 3 depicts how this cycle can be used by a teacher for any given subject.

Adult learning "occurs as a direct participation in the events of life" rather than as an outcome of a formal educational setting or institution (Houle, 1980, p 221.) While it is true that the *ABSG* also is studied in the setting of the Sabbath morning Bible study class, it is designed to be studied more hours on an individual basis. If the *ABSG* were to use a conceptual framework that embraced the learning cycle and learning styles, learners by themselves and in conjunction with their classmates would be inspired to move beyond knowledge into "direct participation in the events of life."

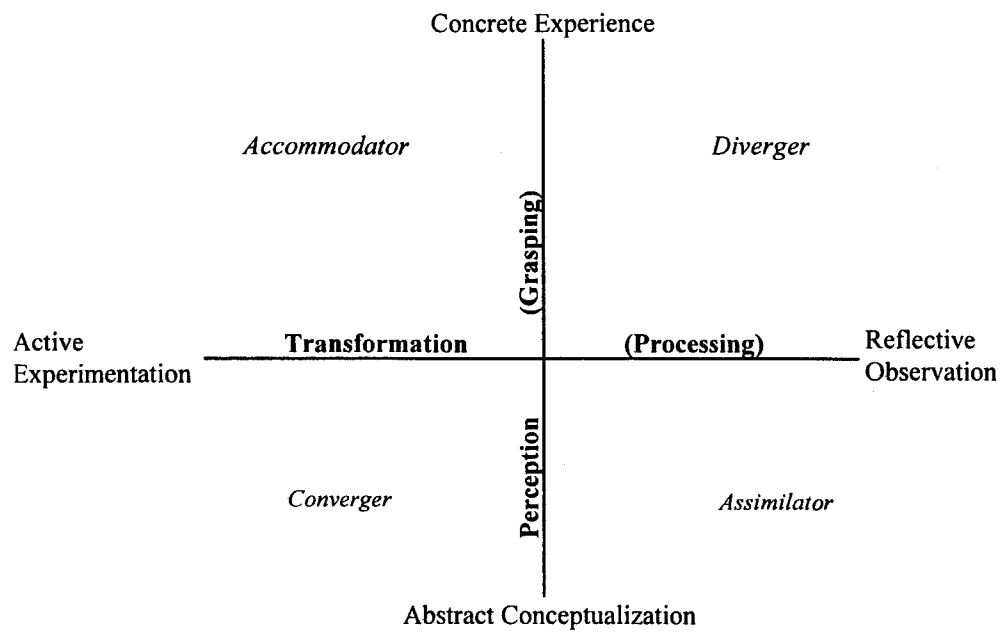


Fig. 2. Kolb's Dimensions and Styles of Learning.

Note. Adapted from *Experiential Learning—Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, by David A. Kolb, 1984, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

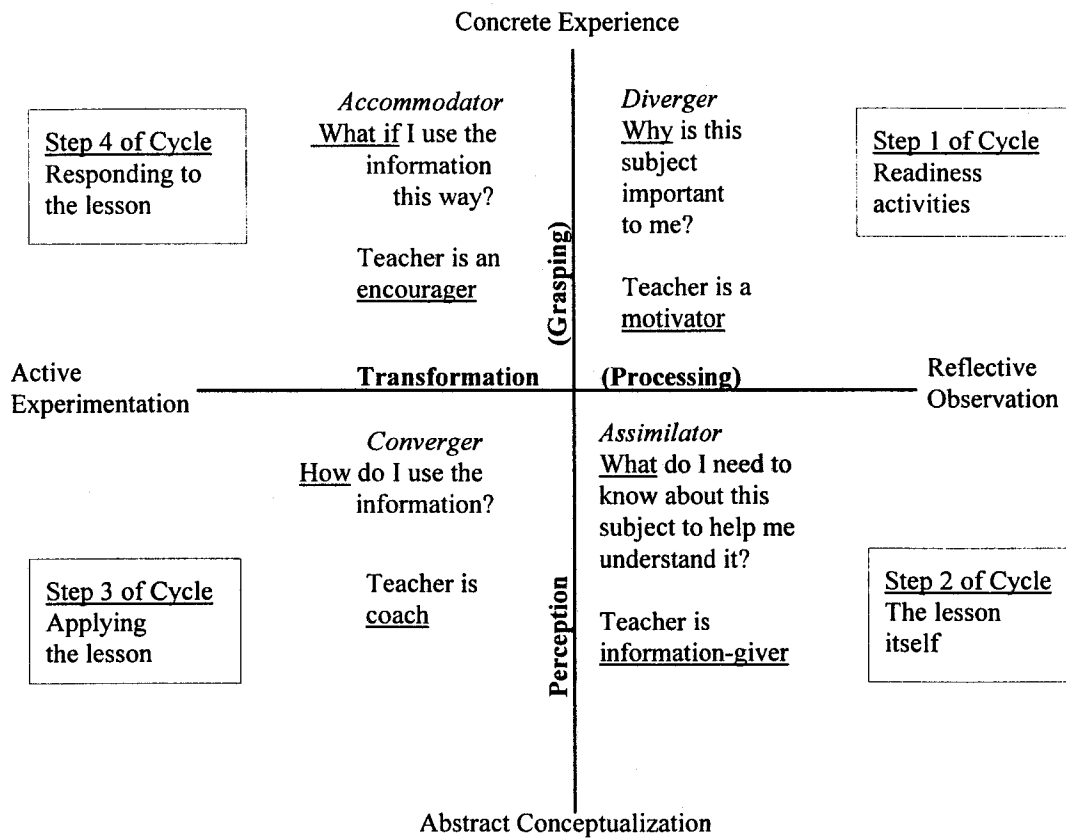


Fig. 3. Kolb's Dimensions of Learning, Learning Styles, and the Learning Cycle.

Note. Adapted from *Learning Styles and the Learning Cycle*, by the General Conference World Sabbath School Curriculum Committee, March 2001, Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The Teaching Methods of Various Christian Educators

So far, I have reviewed how Kolb approaches learning via his theory of perceiving and processing information. Now I will discuss the teaching methods espoused by four Christian educators: Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Lawrence O. Richards, Rick Yount, and Jesus Himself. All of these embrace the concepts that spirituality is the state of being conformed to the likeness of Christ and that spiritual growth is the process of that conformation—both concepts I am using to guide my research. Furthermore, they promote the efficacy of learning styles and the learning cycle or adaptations thereof.

Eugene C. Roehlkepartain

In his book, *The Teaching Church*, Roehlkepartain (1993) presents a case for using Kolb's experiential learning cycle based on findings gleaned from research conducted by Search Institute and reported in *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations* (Benson & Eklun, 1990). This study suggests that churches generally are better at disseminating information than they are at teaching members what to do with that information. Those churches that have effective educational processes for adults is 38% (p. 137). This percentage leads Roehlkepartain (1993) to state that in order to achieve spiritual growth, the most effective Christian educational program

not only teaches in the classical sense of transmitting insight and knowledge, but also allows insight to emerge from the crucible of experience. . . . Both ways of learning are powerful, and the two in combination produce stronger growth in faith than either one alone. (p. 137)

Hence, he advocates the use of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, believing that this cycle helps Bible study material shift the responsibility for learning from the material itself (or from the teacher) to the students (p. 141).

By taking responsibility for their own learning, adults become actively involved in their own growth. This shift in thinking has profound implications for all areas of adult education. Instead of teachers being all-knowing databases of information about the faith upon which they expound, they become facilitators who find responsible ways to draw learning and growth out of the adults themselves. (p. 147)

Lawrence O. Richards

Richards (1970) believes that any pattern of teaching used by Christian educators should transform lives by "bringing individuals to [an] ever deepening personal relationship with God" (p. 97). Such a pattern, therefore, needs to guide learners from content (information), to implication, to response. Richards believes that such a pattern of spiritual growth exists in Paul's prayer to the Colossians:

We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col 1:9-11, NASB)

The pattern, then, is this:

Step 1. "Filled with the knowledge of His will." Here, "God's will" means "that which He has willed," His thoughts, plans, and decisions, which He has made known to us through Scripture. This is the information step of the pattern.

Step 2. "In all spiritual wisdom and understanding." This is the wisdom and understanding that helps a person discern a fitting course of action in any circumstance. This step relates the information learners received in Step 1 to their daily lives.

Step 3. "So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects." Being able to discern how a piece of information can influence our personal lives is not enough. We must *respond* to what we discern from that information by actually *applying* that information to our lives.

Step 4. "Bearing fruit in every good work." Following Steps 1-3 results in the growth of spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22, 23).

Step 5. "And increasing in the knowledge of God." This step is also another result of knowing (Step 1), understanding (Step 2), and responding (Step 3). It brings the learner full circle to Step 1, so the Christian life can be seen as a continuous series of these steps, climbing higher and higher to our objective--being transformed into Christlikeness. The completed pattern these five steps make is illustrated in Figure 4.

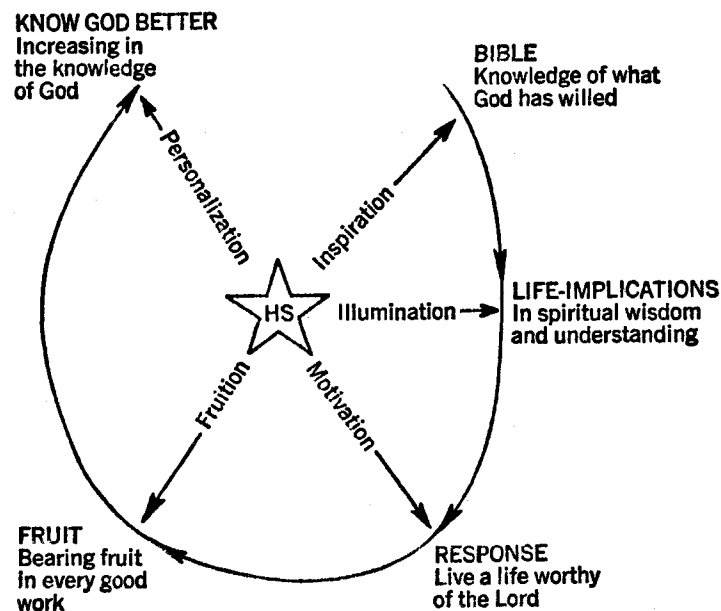


Fig. 4. Richard's pattern of teaching.

Note. From *Creative Bible Teaching* (p. 94), by R. O Richards, 1970, Chicago, Moody Press.

In addition to providing a general pattern for teaching that leads to spiritual growth, Richards believes that Col 1:9-11 suggests a specific way to structure a lesson that enhances spiritual growth (pp. 107-111), a structure similar to the one presented in Figure 3. The first element in this figure (motivation) is not so much evident in Col 1:9-11 as it is suggested by the nature of people themselves. People need to be convinced that the information being presented is necessary for them to have. Therefore, the first part of any lesson plan should answer the learners' query, "Why should I study this lesson?" The answer should lead directly into the Bible study. Thus, Richards refers to this first element as the *hook*.

Once the listeners are "hooked," they enter into the *book* element of a structured lesson, where the material facilitates the learners' understanding of the biblical information being presented. This relates to the first part of the Colossians cycle--growth starts with knowing what God has willed.

Richards calls the third component of a structured lesson the *look* component. Here the material moves the learners from an understanding of the biblical information presented in the second component, to realizing what implications that information has for daily life. *Looking* pertains to the second part of the Colossians cycle--using the information concerning what God has willed with "spiritual wisdom and understanding."

The fourth and final component of a structured lesson Richards refers to as *took*. Spiritual growth requires not only knowledge and spiritual understanding, but a response. Therefore, any good Bible study material must inspire students to act upon what they have learned by offering specific ways of doing so, along with words of encouragement.

Rick Yount

Yount (1995) believes that Christian teachers are to assist learners in becoming more like their Savior and Lord (p. 140). When it comes to Bible study, he states there are three ways to stifle such a transformation. One way is to *focus on the lesson*, which is the biblical passage being studied and any commentary referencing that passage. Focusing on these ignores the needs of the learners--one of which is their need for spiritual growth toward Christlikeness (pp. 142, 143).

A second way to stifle spiritual growth is to *focus on the teacher*. It is right for teachers to consider how they should present the lesson. However, they must give more consideration to the concerns of their learners. What about the lesson Scripture will fulfill their need for spiritual growth? What will inspire them to apply the lesson to their lives (pp. 143, 144)?

The third way Yount believes spiritual growth toward Christlikeness is inhibited is to *focus on opinion*. It is possible to move away from concentrating on the lesson and the teacher by asking learners more of the right questions, using small groups, and sharing personal testimonies and experiences. The dangers here, however, are that the voice of human opinion can mute what the Bible is actually saying, and that "class opinion may influence learning more than God's Word" (p. 144).

To balance these three foci, Yount suggests Christian educators compose material around "the triad of human life" (p. 145). The components of this triad are:

1. *What I think*. This is the rational side of life: knowing, conceptualizing, problem solving, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Unless learners move through each of

these processes, they will own nothing more than a set of doctrines, pat answers, and biblical facts. As an example of how using this component transforms lives, Yount asks of John 3:16 these questions which help learners go through the process from knowing to evaluating: “What did God do when he loved the world? And who is the world that he loved? What does it mean to *believe* in his Son? What kind of life do we obtain through this belief? And what does *eternal* add to this life?” (p. 145).

2. *How I feel*. This is the affective part of life, and includes feelings, attitudes, values, and priorities. If learners are to be transformed into Christlikeness, they must be able to personalize biblical truth and incorporate their doctrines into their lifestyle. They are able to do so when they value biblical truth. The Bible stresses the importance of correct values and priorities with verses such as, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Ps 119:11) (p. 147).

3. *What I do*. This final component of the triad of life is behavioral in nature. We may understand all there is to know about God’s love. But do we love? We might value service to our fellow humans. But do we actually serve them? The importance of *doing* God’s Word is highlighted in the parable of a wise man and a foolish man who built their houses on rock and on sand, respectively. When the storm came, the wise man’s house stood firm; but the foolish man’s house crumpled (Matt 7:24-27) (p. 148).

Yount (1995) theorizes that individuals will prefer one component of the triad over the other two (p. 149). Individuals who prefer the rational component are thinkers who prefer logically arranged lectures composed of factual, conceptual questions. However, it

is one thing to logically understand forgiveness. It is another to experience the results of God's forgiveness and the results of forgiving others (p. 149).

Learners who favor the emotional component of the triad embrace feelings, attitudes, and personal experience. They prefer discussions, and are often bored with explanations and background material. They are eager to move into the personal application of the Bible study, if there ever is one. If they are not careful, Bible study for them is a purely subjective endeavor (pp. 149, 150). "The Bible means what it means *to me*" (Yount, 1995, p. 150). However, what the Bible means to an individual in any given passage may not be what the Bible means at all!

Anyone who defers to the behavioral component of the human triad is eager to be involved in numerous activities. Because their study of the Bible is practical, they are constantly asking themselves, How can I use this information? Therefore, they are often "doing" without understanding why they are "doing." Thus, they do not really own the work in which they are engaged. Soon they become burned out, discouraged, and ready to give up (pp. 150, 151).

Yount's (1995) solution for providing growth in each portion of the triad, thereby assuring spiritual growth, is to keep Christ in the center of the triad, for it is He who "helps us think and feel and do according to his will" (p. 162). Because Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), His life reflects a balanced triad (p. 151). As a thinker, He dispensed information in ways that appealed to His listeners. He explained the kingdom of heaven through parables and illustrations (e.g., Matt 13) (p. 151). As one who feels, He loved people and gave His life that they might be saved (John 3:16). He sustained them

with food (i.e., Matt 14:19-21), acts and words of kindness (e.g., John 8:1-11), and renewed health (p. 151). Finally, as a Man of action, He commissioned His followers to go to all the world, making “disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19, 20). In addition, He calls us to act in ways that make us the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt 5:13, 14) (p. 151).

In addition to focusing on the balanced nature of Christ as a means of maintaining balance in the human triad, Yount (1995) gives specific ways Christian educators can balance their material accordingly. For the *thinking* component of the triad, he suggests focusing on the meaning of biblical concepts and principles by doing three things (pp. 154, 155):

1. *Asking questions rather than giving answers* (p. 154). Asking questions, rather than giving answers, confronts learners with a dilemma, which in turn drives them to Scripture for an answer.

2. *Submitting problems rather than giving reasons*. For example, ask how a particular person’s situation can be solved by forgiving a hurtful person, rather than just listing reasons why it is important to forgive others. Doing so shows how to apply biblical principles to one’s life.

3. *Sharing examples rather than just facts*. For example, the fact is that the fruit of the Spirit include love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc. Illustrating any one of the fruit by telling a story in which one of the characters demonstrates that fruit in her or his behavior is far more effective in helping learners to grow that fruit in their lives.

To help learners *feel, respond, and value*, Yount (1995) suggests sharing the experiences of real people. Learning how others face challenges can inspire Christians to meet their own personal challenges with faith, hope, and courage. Material that uplifts will do more toward encouraging spiritual growth than material that condemns (pp. 155-157). Finally, Yount (1995) believes Bible study material can help learners *do* by suggesting specific assignments which vary in magnitude and scope, and which take them outside of the material itself. Thus, they are given the chance to learn from God on their own, without the help of material that someone else has put together for them. Personal experience is necessary for a personal relationship with Christ (p. 160).

Spiritual Disciplines

It is logical to assume that as Christ is formed in us, we shall, through faith and grace, “practice the types of activities he engaged in, . . . in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of his Father.” Such activities are called spiritual disciplines. They are God’s way of getting us into the ground; they put us where he can work within us and transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace. . . . God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us. (Foster, 1988, p. 7).

Or as Mulholland (1993) states, “Spiritual disciplines are the act of releasing ourselves in a consistent manner to God, opening doors in a regular way to allow God’s transforming work in our lives” (p. 38).

Bible study materials that suggest ways of using the disciplines can enhance the learning process and spiritual growth process; and as I will demonstrate later, the disciplines can be integrated effectively with the learning cycle. Before discussing some

specific spiritual disciplines, it is necessary to put them in their proper perspective regarding salvation and the spiritual growth process:

1. The disciplines “are not a barometer of spirituality.” And engaging in any one of them does not earn favor with God (Ortberg, 1997, pp. 49, 50). The disciplines place us in a position where God can work within us to transform us. This working within us is a function of the Holy Spirit, rather than a result of anything we are able to do.

2. The disciplines are not unpleasant. If they are transforming us into Christ’s likeness, it is reasonable to think we will welcome the practice of activities that promote this process. While it is true that some of the disciplines such as simplicity and sacrifice may cause discomfort, others such as worship “will regularly produce in us rivers of wonder and gratitude” (Ortberg, 1997, p. 50).

3. There are spiritual disciplines to suit each individual’s unique needs. “The particular combination for growth will be different for everyone” (Ortberg, 1997, p. 58).

4. Each season of life (i.e., being “single,” marriage, parenthood, old age, etc.) “offers its own opportunities and challenges for spiritual growth” (Ortberg, 1997, p. 59). Particular disciplines might work well in one season, but not as well in others. Whatever season of life we are in, that season “*is no barrier to having Christ formed in us*” (p. 59).

5. Because spiritual growth can involve times of barrenness, we should understand that a particular routine in practicing certain of the disciplines will be inadequate for all of a person’s life. During times of rapid growth, an individual might spend much time in service or Bible study. However, when it seems as if that person has stalled in a barren desert, she or he might find solitude more profitable (Ortberg, 1997, p. 60).

Now that the disciplines have been placed in perspective regarding their relationship to salvation and spiritual growth, I will discuss the ones I will incorporate into the ABSG prototype by defining each one, describing its relationship to the process of being transformed into Christ's likeness, and showing how it is depicted in Scripture. I have chosen these specific disciplines, because the first three are a triad of methods most often referred to by Ellen G. White (Willsey, 1991, p. 111), and the remaining disciplines, while often spoken of in Adventist literature, are rarely done so in ways that promote them as a means of allowing God to transform our lives.

Prayer

Because prayer is communicating with God, it involves both talking and "listening" to Him (Tasker, 2002, p. 340). Foster (1988) maintains that if we are not interested in having God's image restored in us, "we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives" (p. 33). Individuals who are transformed by prayer will help to transform the society in which they live (Willard, 1991, p. 185). Thus, places of employment, families, marriages, neighborhoods, etc., can be transformed by the prayers of Christians. Scripture contains many notable prayers (e.g., 1 Sam 1:9-12; 2 Chr 6:12-42; Luke 22:39-44) and instructions regarding how one should pray (e.g., Luke 18:1-8).

Study

We learn about God by studying the Bible, other books, and nonverbal "books" such as nature, "institutions and cultures, and the forces that shape them" (Foster, 1988,

p. 75). As we spend time in nature, we can consider what its various aspects teach us about God's love and care (e.g., Matt 6:25-34). When we study "institutions, cultures, and the forces that shape them, we can decipher which of their characteristics are assets or liabilities regarding Christian transformation" (p. 75).

The importance of this discipline to the process of Christian transformation is attested to in Rom 12:2, which says we are transformed by the renewing of the mind. Also see Ps 119:10, 11 and 2 Tim 3:16, 17. The latter text urges us to study not so much for doctrinal purity but for "inner transformation. We come to the Scripture to be changed, not to amass information" (Foster, 1988, p. 69).

Meditation

While Eastern meditation involves emptying one's mind, Christian meditation involves filling the mind with thoughts about God and His character (Tasker, 2002, p. 34). Such meditation "is essential to the formation of Christian character" (White, 1948, vol. 5, p. 113). David exclaimed that he meditated on God's law "all day long" (Ps 119:97). Since God's law is a transcript of His character (White, 1941, p. 315), David was therefore meditating on the likeness which was being restored in Him.

The Bible contains 58 verses which use two Hebrew words to convey the idea of meditation. These two words have varying meanings, including "to listen to God's word," "to reflect on God's works," "to rehearse what God has done," and "to ruminate on God's law" (Foster, 1988, p. 15).

Fasting

This discipline involves “choosing to focus special attention on God, by intentionally relinquishing some activities, food or belongings that could become a distraction or hindrance” (Tasker, 2002, p. 340). There is much in our lives upon which we think we must depend--things which used too often or incorrectly, woo us from God. Fasting from these items helps us to focus on God--to abide in Him. As a result of that abiding, His image will be restored in us. Biblical examples of fasting include Luke 4:1-13; Esth 4:15, 16; Dan 10:3; and Acts 9:9.

Simplicity

When Christians live simply, they choose to keep their lives free from the love of money and to be content with what they have (Heb 13:5). The things upon which people focus determine what they we will become. When they focus on Christ, they will become like Him. Perhaps the most familiar biblical directive to live simply occurs in Matt 6:19-34. Other verses regarding simplicity are Ps 62:10; Prov 11:28; Matt 19:16-22; and Luke 12:15-21.

Service

As we make what we have available to others, we actively promote their best interests and the causes of God (Willard, 1991, p. 182). However, it is not this promotion which constitutes service as a discipline, but the attitude that prompts us to serve. This attitude is found in Phil 2:6-11, where we read that Christ “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” As we seek to follow Christ’s example as set forth in these

verses, we will become combatants in the war between pride and humility. As sinful humans, our pride will seek “religiously acceptable means to call attention” to what we do for others and for God (Foster, 1988, p. 130). However, if we will refuse to give in to this lust of the flesh, we will crucify it; and each “time we crucify the flesh, we crucify our pride and arrogance” (p. 130). Thus, the discipline of service assists in the process of restoring the image of Christ in us.

Biblical examples of service include John 13:14, 15; Titus 3:1, 2; 1 Pet 4:9; and Gal 6:2.

Confession

“At the heart of it,” writes Ortberg (1997), “confession involves taking appropriate responsibility for what we have done” (p. 124); and because such confession “involves an objective change in our relationship with God and a subjective change in us,” it becomes an agent of transformation (Foster, 1988, p. 144).

Scriptures dealing with confession include Ps 62:8; Jer 14:20; Luke 15:17-21; and 1 John 1:9.

Fellowship

Because “personalities united can contain more of God and sustain the force of his greater presence much better than scattered individuals” (Willard, 1991, p. 186), fellowship helps us see more clearly the magnitude of God’s character--the image of which is to be restored in us through salvation. *Koinonia*, the Greek word for fellowship used in 1 John 1:3, 7, suggests “mutual sharing, whether the partnership be equal, as

among brethren, or unequal, as between God and ourselves” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1980, vol. 7, p. 629).

Worship

Worship consists of engaging ourselves with, dwelling upon, and expressing God’s greatness, beauty, and goodness through thought, words, rituals, and symbols (Willard, 1991, p. 177). Foster (1988) states that worship “is an ordered way of acting and living that sets us before God so he can transform us” (p. 186). Biblical injunctions to worship include Ps 95:6; Hab 2:20; and Rev 14:7.

Solitude/Silence

Solitude involves abstaining “from interaction with other human beings, denying ourselves companionship and all that comes from our conscious interaction with others” (Willard, 1988, p. 160). It frees us from the daily round of routine so that we might find “the perspective from which we can see, in the light of eternity, the created things that trap, worry, and oppress us” (p. 161). Silence, closing ourselves off from as much sound as possible (p. 163), is solitude’s necessary partner, for only “silence will allow us life-transforming concentration upon God” (p. 164). Biblical examples of solitude include Matt 26:38-42; Mark 1:35, and 3:13.

Journaling

Insights gained and conclusions arrived at through the use of spiritual disciplines make excellent material for a journal. Muto (1984, p. 107) writes that as we record and reflect upon our responses to the events and people in our lives, we will begin to

comprehend how God has worked through them. Understanding how we relate to God and comprehending how He has guided our lives can be powerful aids in helping us to love Him more and to want be more like Him.

If journaling is “keeping a record of the journey with one’s best friend” (Tasker, 2002, p. 341) then we surely are reminded of the book of Psalms. Here David recorded his journey with God. While registering his joys and sorrows, did he ever think his words would inspire millions of people in the vast reaches of the future?

The Relationship of the Disciplines to the Learning Cycle and Learning Styles

As noted earlier, Ortberg (1997) states that there are spiritual disciplines to suit each individual’s unique personality and abilities (p. 58). Therefore, it is interesting to note how the spiritual disciplines just discussed relate to the learning cycle and learning styles. This is not to say that people should use only those disciplines that suit the style of learning they prefer. When the learning cycle can emphasize various disciplines for each stage of the cycle, a diversity of disciplines can be employed to give the learner a more balanced approach to spiritual growth.

Regarding learning styles and their relationship to the disciplines, the following comparisons can be ascertained:

1. Persons who perceive things best through concrete experience and who process most efficiently through reflective observation are intuitive by nature. As such, they are good at sensing things. In addition to wanting to see the “big picture,” they are good at making connections and are more empathic. Step 1 of the learning cycle (readiness

activities; motivation) is for them; and they would enjoy such disciplines as fasting; meditation; prayer; engaging in service activities that do not require high levels of contact with others; and worshipful moments alone with God.

2. Those who perceive information through abstract conceptualization and processing material through reflective observation prefer facts, lectures, examples, and demonstrations. They enjoy remembering the information presented in Step 2 of the learning cycle (the presentation of the lesson itself). They would enjoy studying institutions and cultures and the forces that influence them in order to determine how they harmonize or clash with the gospel; studying the meaning of important biblical words in their original language; outlining inspiring biblical passages; and budgeting in order to live simply.

3. Learners who process through abstract conceptualization and who perceive through active experimentation desire to comprehend and apply (Step 3 of the learning cycle) the material presented in Step 2. Because they enjoy examining concepts, formulating explanations, structure, and organization, they would enjoy studying the Bible in Bible marking classes; engaging in service programs such as pet therapy and garden therapy; and learning about God's care for us through the study of nature.

4. Learners who perceive through concrete experience and process through active experimentation want to modify what they have learned so they can use the material in ways that fit their style. Step 4 of the learning cycle (sharing the lesson with others) appeals the most to them. With their passion for self-expression, individual and group exploration, and the desire to "do," any application of a spiritual discipline which involves

these activities is appropriate, including participating in study and prayer groups, service activities that include other people, worship with others, and fellowship.

How Jesus Taught

“Jesus is the best example of how teachers can develop the dynamic relationship between truth and life” (LaBar, 1989, p. 101). What methods did Jesus use to ensure His teaching would change lives? Do these methods compare with the methods of learning and teaching discussed so far? I will begin to answer these questions by going back to the topic which began this section of the literature review.

Jesus’ Teaching Methods in Terms of Learning Styles

Did Jesus tailor His teaching methods to accommodate the four learning styles? If so, how?

1. *Divergers* perceive things best through concrete experience and process most efficiently through reflective observation. They are intuitive by nature. In addition to wanting to see the “big picture,” they are good at making connections and are more empathic. They relate best to personal stories, metaphors, and opportunities for sharing and relating the topic to self and others. Throughout His directives, Jesus scattered metaphors and stories based on everyday occurrences and actual events (e.g., Matt 5:13-16; Luke 15:3-10; 30:25-37; John 15:1-8), thus appealing to these types of learners.

2. *Assimilators* perceive information through abstract conceptualization and process material through reflective observation prefer facts, lectures, examples, and demonstrations. They also are concerned with abstract concepts. As a rabbi, Nicodemus

represents these types of learners. That logic and intellect guided his perception and processing of information is evident in his response to Jesus' statement that people cannot enter God's kingdom unless they are born again (John 3:3). "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. 'Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!'" (vs. 4). Jesus' response came in the form of a lecture which provided facts regarding the work of the Holy Spirit (vss. 5-8); the love of God, which forged the plan of salvation; the plan of salvation itself; how one obtains that salvation (vss. 16-21); and a direct appeal to Nicodemus's reasoning abilities and knowledge (vss. 10-15).

3. *Convergers* process through abstract conceptualization and perceive through active experimentation. They enjoy examining concepts, and formulating explanations, structure, and organization. They excel in the practical application of ideas and being involved in the formulation of the same. They are unemotional and have narrow interests. Judas exemplifies these types of learners. Matthew 26:14-16, Luke 22:3-6, John 12:1-7, and 13:29 illustrate his narrow focus on money. White (1940) states that the "love of mammon [money] overbalanced his love for Christ" (p. 716). That Judas had other narrow interests is witnessed in his attempts to advance his desire for Christ to reign as king in Jerusalem (White, 1940, pp. 718-720). To help Judas understand the true scope of Christ's mission and kingdom, Christ dealt with his limited concerns with "divine patience" and often "presented before him the highest incentives for right doing" (White, 1940, p. 295). This is especially seen in John 12:1-7.

4. *Accommodators* perceive information through concrete experience and process it through active experimentation. Their greatest strength is doing things. As such, they are characterized by their willingness to take risks and their eagerness to “jump into the middle of things.” The disciple Peter was this type of learner. For him, Jesus provided an opportunity to walk on water in order to prove His presence with the disciples in a time of peril (Matt 14:22-32). This “active experiment” helped Peter to acknowledge Jesus’ divinity.

Jesus’ Teaching Methods in Terms of the Learning Cycle

In the story of the woman at the well (John 4:7-42), we see the four elements of the learning cycle.

Step 1. An immediate, concrete experience. The immediate concrete event in this instance is Jesus asking the woman for a drink.

Step 2. Reflective observation. His request generates the following observation and reflection from the woman, ““You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)” (vs. 9).

Step 3. The forming of an abstract concept/idea. Jesus then proceeds to lay the foundation for a concept--God’s gift of living water in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ (vs. 10).

After this brief introduction, the woman makes two more observations (Step 2): (a) Jesus’ inability to draw the water of which He speaks, because He has nothing with which to draw it, and (b) whether He was greater than her ancestor Jacob, whose well they

rested by (vss. 11, 12). Jesus helps the woman understand the concept of God's living water by telling her He is aware of her past (vss. 17, 18) (Step 3). Again, this allows her to make two further observations (Step 2)--that He must be a prophet, and that the Jews contend the proper place to worship is in Jerusalem (vss. 19, 20).

Step 4. Active experimentation. This alternating pattern between Steps 2 and 3 of the learning cycle occurs one last time in vss. 21-26, and culminates in Step 4 of the learning cycle during. In vss. 21- 24, Jesus further enlarges upon the concept of God's living water by informing the woman that salvation is of the Jews (i.e., only through the Jewish Messiah will all people find salvation) and that the time has come for true worshipers to worship God in spirit and in truth, for that is what God desires (Step 3). The woman's final observation (Step 2) is that she knows this Messiah is coming, and that when He does, He will explain everything (vs. 25). With this admission, Jesus ends His lesson plan with these words: "I who speak to you am he" (vs. 26).

The implications of understanding this new concept--that the Man before her is the living water--are so profound that she acts (Step 4) by leaving her water jar, returning to town, and inviting the people there to come meet Him (vss. 28, 29). The results of her action are equally profound. The people come; and many of them believe in Jesus because of what she told them (vss. 30, 39).

Throughout these examples, one notices another technique Jesus used to help meet His ultimate goal of changing lives--that of asking questions. Because questions are a dominant feature of the *ABSG*, it is crucial to consider how Jesus used them and what types of questions He asked.

Jesus' Use of Questions

Luke recorded 89 teaching questions asked by Jesus; Matthew recorded 85; and Mark recorded 47 (Jones, 1997, pp. 57, 58). Such numbers tell us that He believed “questions are important to the spiritual life” (p. 61); and the types of questions He asked demonstrate His interest in more than the informational aspect of faith and learning.

Arch (2004) lists the types of questions Jesus used:

1. Many of the questions Jesus asked were in response to questions His listeners posed. Such questions on the Savior’s part urged the questioner toward personal discovery or meaningful activity (Mark 8:5).

2. Jesus’ use of rhetorical questions often emphasized a point in a non-combative tone. “ ‘Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign?’ ” (Mark 8:12) is much less caustic than, “ ‘You stubborn group of unbelieving people!’ ” (Arch, 2004, p. 2) and is much more capable of keeping the listener focused on Jesus.

3. When He linked rhetorical questions without pausing to receive answers, Jesus demonstrated passion--a passion which served to reinforce His point and amaze His listeners (Mark 8:17, 18).

4. While attempting to correct an individual, Jesus often would phrase His admonition as a question. Thus He would allow “the person to change without becoming defensive” (Arch, 2004, p. 2). Rather than exclaim, “You’re so stupid--you never understand!” it is better to say as Jesus did, “ ‘Do you still not understand?’ ” (Mark 8:21). Asking such questions is not only more diplomatic, it also keeps the listener involved.

5. Sometimes Jesus asked questions to get feedback (Mark 8:23; John 6:5), thus revealing levels of comprehension and spiritual understanding, and helping people to stay focused.

6. To encourage personal application, Jesus asked personal questions (Mark 8:27-29).

7. To encourage soul-searching, Jesus asked questions that pierced to the core of an issue and that have no easy replies (Mark 8:36, 37).

8. When Jesus did ask questions that required a factual answer, it was often with the intent of preparing His listeners to answer more personal application questions that required a response of commitment or action (Mark 6:38-41).

In this section, I have shown how Jesus instructed those who came to learn from Him and of Him so their lives might be transformed back to the image in which He originally created them. If, as LaBar (1989) says, He is truly “the best example of how teachers can develop the dynamic relationship between truth and life” (p. 101), and if, as Radcliffe (1996) proposes, a teaching situation is “one that involves some kind of interaction that has the ultimate purpose of changing lives,” then the next and final step this literature review must take is to discern how well the *ABSG* has followed Jesus’ example of how to transform lives.

The Adult Bible Study Guide

In reviewing Jesus’ teaching techniques, it was observed that He made accommodations for people’s learning styles (how people perceive and process information) and the learning cycle (motivation, information, application, response). He

also showed great interest in the spiritual growth of His followers. Such concern is exhibited in His words to Nicodemus (John 3:1-21), in His exposition on abiding in Him (John 15:1-17), and in many of His similes, such as those concerning seeds and yeast (e.g., Matt 13:3-23; 31-33; Mark 4:26-29). Last of all, He provided His followers with examples regarding the importance of practicing various spiritual disciplines (e.g., fasting--Matt 4:1-11; prayer--Mark 14:32-41; worship--Luke 4:16; service--John 13:14, 15; simplicity--Matt 19:16-22).

The following survey of *ABSGs* from their inception in 1863 to 2005 shows how they have done in emulating Jesus' example. The survey begins with a look at how the guides have dealt with the perception and process of information, in addition to how they have accommodated the various learning styles. Following that, the survey will show how the guides dealt with Christian spirituality and Christian growth in addition to spiritual disciplines. The survey will conclude with a discussion of six quarterlies that dealt with these areas in exceptional ways.

The Learning Cycle/Learning Styles/Questions

The first Sabbath School lessons for adults appeared in 1863 in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (currently known as the *Adventist Review*). In 1864, these lessons moved to the *Youth Instructor*, where they remained until 1888, when multiple lessons began to appear in quarterly pamphlets. Expository and apologetic in nature, the first lessons consisted solely of 47 questions asking only for factual information regarding the Sabbath (see Appendix C). Thus, it related solely to the second step of the learning cycle (information) and therefore to learners who perceive information through abstract

conceptualization, then process that information through reflective observation (assimilators).

Sometime between 1872-1879, a few expository notes in the form of quotations from previously printed articles by Ellen White were placed at the end of the lessons or between the questions within the lesson proper. However, there seems to be no coherent strategy regarding when and why these quotes were used. Furthermore, there was no movement toward motivation, application or response (the first, third and fourth steps of the learning cycle), thereby neglecting the divergers (people who perceive information through concrete experience and process it through reflective observation), convergers (people who perceive information through abstract conceptualization, then process it through active experimentation), and accommodators (people who perceive information through concrete experience, then process it through active experimentation).

Thus, the first 30 years of Sabbath School lessons basically existed to disseminate biblical information regarding the unique doctrines of the fledgling SDA Church. As the first quarterly stated, its sole purpose was to “prepare [the student] for recitation, [so that] the student should so thoroughly study the [lesson] . . . as to be able to promptly answer the questions concerning the subjects there introduced” (“Lessons for Bible Students,” 1863, p. 92).

The lessons for first quarter, 1893, broke from the traditional lengthy string of questions designed to inculcate doctrines. At the end of the first six lessons appeared a feature called Suggestive Questions. The answers to these questions were not parroted in the lesson proper, which by now regularly consisted of apologetic and expository notes

interspersed either between questions or at the end of a list of questions. The questions themselves generally asked the students to discern the implications of certain statements within the lesson notes rather than ask for a personal application or a personal response. For some unknown reason, Suggestive Questions disappeared entirely after Lesson 6.

For third and fourth quarters of 1896, each week's lesson ended with Suggestions for Further Study. These suggestions were generally statements or questions suggesting ways the students could further study the information presented in the lesson. Such questions and suggestions for study continued until fourth quarter, 1926, when they were replaced by a section called Personal Application (Step 3 of the learning cycle; the convergent learning style). The following questions from Lesson 5 for October 30, 1926, are representative of the style. The lesson concerned the trial of Peter and John in Acts 4:1-31.

Why should I pray for more of God's power?
 What preparation do I need to enable time to witness for Christ when persecuted?
 Am I ready now to give a reason for my hope with meekness and fear? 1 Peter 3:15.
 What steps must I take to be "ready always"?
 What does this lesson teach me of the power of united prayer? (*ABSG*, 1926, p. 18)

Application and discussion questions have appeared intermittently at the end of weekly lessons under various titles and forms until 1970, when starting with first quarter of that year, each daily lesson contained a Think It Through section at the end. Occasionally, the questions in this section asked the students to apply the lesson to their own lives. Beginning with third quarter, 1984, application questions also were added to each Friday's lesson which was entitled Focus of the Week. Occasionally, some of these

questions also dealt with the fourth step of the learning cycle (response/accommodators) This continued through fourth quarter of the same year.

An application section remained in Friday's lessons during the first quarter of 1985. Rather than all questions, however, there were quotes or summary statements pertinent to the week's material. Some of these sections also included forays into Step 4 of the learning cycle. Beginning with 1989, the application section moved to the end of each Thursday's lesson, leaving Friday's lesson to promote further study and meditation suggestions. This format continued through 1991.

In 1992, application questions began appearing at the end of the daily lessons for Sunday through Thursday. Discussion questions appeared in Friday's lessons. These questions varied in asking primarily for information and application, and the occasional response. This format remains in use today.

So far, I have shown in this survey how the *ABSG* has dealt in an intermittent fashion with Steps 2 through 4 of the learning cycle, the learning styles and the types of questions that correspond to these steps. It was not until 1939, however, that any attempt was made to deal with Step 1 of the learning cycle (motivation; or Why is it important to know this subject?), thereby finally including those people who perceive information through concrete experience and process it through reflective observation (divergers). For third quarter 1939, each weekly lesson began with an introduction which stated the importance of the material presented. These introductions were omitted from the quarterlies for fourth quarter and picked up again for first quarter 1940, under the title "Seed Thought." This section was dropped beginning first quarter 1941 through third

quarter of the same year, but reappeared fourth quarter 1941, under the weekly heading of “Theme Thought.” In first quarter 1942, such introductions were omitted until third quarter 1949, when they reappeared until third quarter 1950. They emerged again in the fourth quarter; and in 1951, the name was changed to Introduction for third and fourth quarters. In second quarter 1952, the Introductions became weekly aims, but were again dropped in the fourth quarter. This intermittent approach to the first step of the learning cycle continued until first quarter 1956, when weekly lesson introductions reappeared to stay, even until today. Sometimes, these introductions state why it is important to cover the topic. At other times, they merely outline or provide an abstract of what the week’s lesson is about.

Christian Spirituality/Christian Growth

Christian spirituality is defined in this dissertation as (a) a life-transforming relationship with God (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38), and (b) consistent devotion to serving others. This section of my survey of the *ABSGs* will discuss the first part of this definition. The second part of the definition is covered below in the spiritual disciplines section of the survey of the *Guides*.

As mentioned earlier, the first Bible study guides of the SDA Church were expository and apologetic in order to ground the new church in its unique doctrines. The *Guides* deviated little from this approach until first quarter 1893. In the introduction to this *Guide*, we read that the

plan of developing the [lessons for this quarter] differs somewhat from that which has heretofore been adopted, and this is done with a purpose. The design is to encourage the study of the scriptures [*sic*] used as the basis of the lesson, and

others related to them, for spiritual benefit, rather than merely to learn the lesson to recite it. (International Sabbath School Association, 1863-1900, p. 4)

Thus, for the first time ever, an SDA Bible study guide intentionally sought to foster the spiritual growth of its users. However, Christian growth was not defined; and looking at a typical lesson in this quarterly, one might be hard-pressed to see what about the design was geared toward the students' spiritual benefit (see Appendix D).

Beyond this 1893 quarterly, there has been no further "official" statement within the quarterlies regarding their intentionality to foster a life-transforming relationship with God as part of the curriculum. Rather, Christian growth is discussed intermittently in a topical manner most often as part of any given quarterly. The following are typical examples of quarterlies that included a discussion of spiritual growth in terms of transformation (General Conference Church Ministries Department, 1985-1994; General Conference Sabbath School Department, 1901-1984; General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, 1995-1997; General Conference Office of the *ABSG*, 1999-2002; International Sabbath School Association, 1863-1900):

1889, fourth quarter, *Tithes and Offerings*, Lesson 6, "The Love of Christ Exemplified"

1920, third quarter, *Christian Education*, Lesson 12, "The School of the Hereafter"

1927, fourth quarter, *Topical Studies*, Lesson 5, "The Fruit of the Spirit"

1932, second quarter, *The Science of Salvation*, Lessons 5 and 6, "Justification and Sanctification"; Lesson 9, "Changed by Beholding"; Lesson 10, "Christian Growth"

1945, second quarter, *Ephesians*, Lesson 8, "Following Christ"; Lesson 9, "Walking in God's Path"; Lesson 10, "Fruit of the Spirit"

- 1945, fourth quarter, *Epistles to the Thessalonians and Philemon*, Lesson 5,
 “Growing Up into Christ”
- 1946, second quarter, *Life and Teachings of Jesus*, Lesson 2, “The New Birth”
- 1948, first quarter, *Bulwarks of Our Faith--Bible Doctrines for Our Day*, Lesson 8,
 “Restoring God’s Image”
- 1952, first quarter, *The Apostle Peter and His Epistles--Part 1*, Lesson 9, “The
 Significance of the New Birth”
- 1953, third quarter, *The Power of the Blood of Jesus*, Lesson 6, “Redemption and
 Reconciliation Through the Blood”/Lesson 7, “Cleansing and Sanctification Through the
 Blood”
- 1955, third quarter, *Redeeming Grace*, Lesson 11, “Regeneration”/Lesson 12,
 “Sanctification”
- 1959, first quarter, *Studies on the Epistles to the Romans*, Lesson 6, “Walking
 With Christ Through the Holy Spirit”
- 1961, second quarter, *Righteousness by Faith in Christ*, Lesson 9, “Righteousness
 Receive Through Faith”
- 1965, fourth quarter, *The Church in the Christian Era*, Lesson 5, “The Spiritual
 Life of Church Members”
- 1966, fourth quarter, *The Spirit-Filled Life*, Lesson 1, “Christlikeness”/ Lesson 14,
 “Becoming Like Him”
- 1970, third quarter, *Christ, the Incomparable*, “Christ, the Answer to Man’s
 Quest”

1970, fourth quarter, *Christ, the Incomparable*, Lesson 1, “The Restoration of Man”

1971, second quarter, *Studies in the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Lesson 3, “From Sinners to Saints”/Lesson 10, “Spiritual Renewal Through Christ”

1973, second quarter, *A Holy Life in Hard Times*, Lesson 4, “Rebirth and Growth”

1974, first quarter, *Christ Our Righteousness*, Lesson 6, “Christ’s Imparted Righteousness”/Lesson 7, “Christ’s Imputed Righteousness”

1977, second quarter, *Jesus the Model Man*, Lesson 13, “The Model Waiting to Be Reproduced”

1977, third quarter, *God’s Chosen People*, Lesson 5, “Becoming a Member”

1978, first quarter, *God the Creator*, Lesson 8, “The Creator and Re-creator”

1978, fourth quarter, *The Holy Spirit*, Lesson 10, “Life Through the Spirit”

1979, second quarter, *The Last Hour*, Lesson 13, “Christ, Our Victory”

1979, third quarter, *Be Ready!* Lesson 5, “Righteousness by Faith”

1979, fourth quarter, *Our Wonderful God*, Lesson 4, “Emmanuel--God With Us”

1987, second quarter, *Christ and His Infant Church*, Lesson 5, “Duties and Privileges of Discipleship”

1988, second quarter, *Love Never Fails*, Lesson 9, “The Gospel in Hosea”/Lesson 12, “The Gospel in Philemon”

1990, second quarter, *Christ the Only Way*, Lesson 12, “Life in the Spirit”

1990, third quarter, *The Letter to the Romans*, Lesson 8, “The New Life in Christ”/Lesson 11, “The Fruit of a New Relationship”

1991, second quarter, *Ezekiel: Rainbow in the Rain*, Lesson 11, “Heaven’s Heart Surgery”

1991, third quarter, *Thessalonians 1 and 2: Living for His Coming*, Lesson 13, “The Sanctified Life”

1992, first quarter, *Joel, Micah, Zephaniah: No Time to Lose*, Lesson 2, “Revival and Reformation”

1993, third quarter, *Timothy and Titus: Letters to Leaders and Laity*, Lesson 11, “Guidelines to Christian Character,” Lesson 12, “Godly Living Here and Hereafter” Lesson 13, “Rebirth Is Renewal”

1994, first quarter, *So Send I You: Biblical Models of Soul Winning*, Lesson 3, “Who Is the Source of Power?”/Lesson 8, “How Does Jesus Want People to Live?”

1994, second quarter, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: A Place in His Plan*, Lesson 7, “A New Start”

1995, third quarter, *Enlightened by the Spirit*, Lesson 5, “Transformed by the Spirit”/ Lesson 6, “Made Holy by the Spirit”

1996, third quarter, *End-time Landmarks: Good News for Our Day*, Lesson 2, “Christ Our Righteousness and Salvation”

1997, second quarter, *God Is Love: 1, 2, and 3 John*, Lesson 3, “Walking Like Jesus”

1999, second quarter, *The Nature of Man*, Lesson 7, “The Nature of Man”

1999, fourth quarter, *The Church in Today’s World*, Lesson 2, “New Persons in Christ”

2002, second quarter, *Great Apocalyptic Prophecies*, Lesson 1, “Interpreting Apocalyptic Prophecies.”

The following quarterlies in their entirety deal with the concept of Christian spirituality (General Conference Church Ministries Department, 1994; General Conference Sabbath School Department, 1975-1978):

1975, second quarter, *In the Image of God*

1976, third quarter, *Nurturing Faith in Jesus*

1978, second quarter, *The Path of Faith*

1994, third quarter, *Philippians and Colossians: His Mind in You.*

Spiritual Disciplines

Mulholland (1993) states that “spiritual disciplines are the act of releasing ourselves in a consistent manner to God, opening doors in a regular way to allow God’s transforming work in our lives” (p. 38).

How well has the *ABSG* done through the years in providing opportunities for Sabbath School members to release themselves “in a consistent manner to God,” thereby “opening doors . . . to allow God’s transforming work” to occur in their lives?

The guides existed for their first 30 years (1863-1893) to promulgate the unique doctrines of the young SDA Church. Therefore, while Sabbath School members were certainly engaged in Bible study, they were doing so only that they might prepare themselves “to be able to promptly answer the questions concerning the subjects there introduced” (“Lessons for Bible Students,” February 17, 1863, p. 92).

It was not until 1893 that mention of the disciplines began to occur occasionally in the expository notes appearing in between the questions or at the end of the lessons. However, seldom did the guides do so in ways that suggested opportunities for the students to release themselves “in a consistent manner to God,” thus allowing Him to transform their lives. Instead, the disciplines most often were presented as information which, depending on any given reader’s tendency, could or could not inspire her or him to engage in the discipline being discussed. This generally is the case even for today. Exceptions to presenting the disciplines in an informational manner were sporadically found in questions which appeared at the end of the weekly lessons. For example, some of the weekly lessons for fourth quarter, 1932, ended with a section of additional thoughts. Thus, the students were invited to think about such questions as the following: “While trying to pray, have I found my cherished bitterness toward another making real prayer impossible? Do I justify myself when sinning occasionally by saying that others sin also? Do I feel at times that my friend’s sin is no responsibility of mine?” (p. 31).

In second quarter 1961 through fourth quarter 1962, a section called Think on These Things appeared at the end of the weekly lessons. Such questions as the following invited the students to consider the nature of their own faith: “When did I last seek to commune with Christ? How often do I commune with Him? Do I seek Him with all my heart? If I commune with Jesus any time, anywhere, what is the purpose and advantage of set hours of personal devotion” (General Conference Sabbath School Department, *Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly: Righteousness by Faith*, April-June 1961, p. 30).

In the current decade, students most often have been encouraged to do such things as the following:

1. “Antonio had committed terrible sins that brought a lot of suffering to himself and his family. . . . What could someone do to help him come to true repentance?”

(General Conference Office of the *ABSG, Adult Bible Study Guide: Bible Biographies: Actors in the Drama Called Planet Earth*, April-June, 2001, p. 18).

2. “Dwell [i.e., meditate] on the idea of Christ’s death as an example of the kind of self-sacrificing love husbands should have for their wives. What great changes could that attitude on the part of husbands bring to homes and marriages?” (General Conference Office of the *ABSG, Adult Bible Study Guide: Isaiah*, July-September, 2004, p. 31).

3. “Put yourself in Daniel’s place. Write out a paragraph justifying why you should eat the king’s food. Is what you wrote convincing? If so, why should that concern you about how easily we can talk ourselves into compromising our faith?” (General Conference Office of the *ABSG, Adult Bible Study Guide: The Christian Home*, October-December, 2004, p. 10).

Spiritual disciplines were studied in depth most often in a topical manner when an entire quarterly would be devoted to a specific discipline, or a weekly or daily lesson would discuss a discipline in relationship to another topic. The following are typical examples of entire quarterlies devoted to a spiritual discipline (General Conference Church Ministries Department, 1989-1994; General Conference Office of the *Adult Bible Study Guide*, 1999-2004; General Conference Sabbath School Department, 1922-1979; International Sabbath School Association, 1887):

1887, third and fourth quarters, *Sanctification and Prayer*

1922, second quarter, *Christian Service*

1932, fourth quarter, *The Lord's Prayer*

1950, first quarter, *Our Lord's Prayer*

1954, first quarter, *Christian Life and Service*

1962, fourth quarter, *Prayer and Victorious Living*

1972, first quarter, *We Worship God*

1976, fourth quarter, *Worship--A Bible Doctrine*

1979, first quarter, *The Christian Life and Work*; Lesson 10, "Facilities for
Worship"

1996, first quarter, *How to Study Your Bible*

1998, third quarter, *2 Corinthians: A Call to Christian Ministry [Service]*

1999, first quarter, *Studies on Revelation and Inspiration* (each chapter in this
quarterly deals with a certain aspect of the Bible, e.g., understanding biblical literature and
languages and translations of the Bible)

2001, first quarter, *Great Prayers and Prayers of the Bible*.

Typical weekly lessons devoted to spiritual disciplines include:

1924, second quarter, *Love to God and Love to Man*, Lesson 10, "Liberal Offerings
a Part of Acceptable Worship"

1924, third quarter, *The Victorious Life*: Lesson 8, "Victory Through
Prayer"/Lesson 9, "Examples of Victory Through Prayer"/Lesson 12, "Repentance and
Confession"

1924, fourth quarter, *The Christian Life*, Lesson 4, “Confession”

1927, fourth quarter, *Topical Studies*, Lesson 1, “Search the Scriptures”; Lesson 2, “Prayer”; Lesson 8, “Reverence in the House of God”

1938, first quarter, *Bible Doctrines*, Lesson 13, “Prayer”

1941, fourth quarter, *Christian Experience and Growth*, Lesson 8, “The Blessedness of Consecrated Service”/Lesson 9, “The Word and Prayer in Victory”

1949, first quarter, *Studies on the Decalogue*, Lesson 4, “True Worship”

1950, third quarter, *The Victorious Life*, Lesson 1, “Bible Study the Basis of Victory”/Lesson 2, “Power of God’s Word in Victorious Living/”Lesson 8, “Victory Through Prayer”/Lesson 9, “Examples of Prayer in Victory”/Lesson 12, “Repentance and Confession Precede Victory”

1953, first quarter, *Three Avenues of Divine Witness*, Lesson 3, “Searching the Scriptures”

1953, third quarter, *The Power of the Blood of Jesus*, Lesson 9, “Victory and Fellowship Through the Blood”/Lesson 10, “Service Through the Blood”

1956, first quarter, *Lessons From the Gospel Prophets--I*, Lesson 11, “Worship of the True God”

1963, first quarter, *Dynamics of Christian Witnessing*, Lesson 7, “The Place of Prayer in Witnessing”

1965, fourth quarter, *The Church in the Christian Era*, Lesson 10, “The Church at Worship”

1966, second quarter, *Christian Virtues*, Lesson 9, “Reverence and Worship”

1966, fourth quarter, *The Spirit-Filled Life*, Lesson 7, “The Spirit of Self-Denial”/Lesson 8, “The Spirit of Zealous Service”/Lesson 9, “The Spirit of Prayer”

1967, third quarter, *The Joys and Obligations of Christian Stewardship*, Lesson 2, “Christian Worship Acknowledges Stewardship”/Lesson 5, “The Stewardship of Prayer”/Lesson 6, “The Stewardship of God’s Word”/Lesson 10, “Stewardship in Service”

1973, first quarter, *The Christian and Communication*, Lesson 7, “Prayer, a Two-way Channel”

1989, first quarter, *Leviticus and Life*, Lesson 12, “Reverence for God”

1991, fourth quarter, *Proverbs: Wisdom to Live By*, Lesson 6, “Live Within Your Means”

1993, first quarter, *First Corinthians: The Gospel on the Street*, Lesson 11, “Worthwhile Worship”

1994, first quarter, *So Send I You: Biblical Models of Soul Winning*, Lesson 10, “What Is the Value of Fellowship?”

2001, second quarter, *Bible Biographies*, Lesson 9, “Powerful Prayers”

2003, second quarter, *The Forgiven*, Lesson 12–“Selfless Service.”

2004, 3rd quarter, *Religion in Relationships*, Lesson 1, “Created for Community.”

Exceptional Guides

Throughout the history of adult quarterlies, some stand out in terms of the learning process, Christian growth, and spiritual disciplines. This survey ends with a brief description of these quarterlies.

Fourth quarter, 1941, *Christian Growth and Experience*

The strength of this quarterly lies in the fact that, for an entire quarter, the topic of Christian growth is discussed. Beginning with a lesson on the problem of sin and ending with the topic of God's purposes fulfilled, the quarterly also considered such topics as life through Christ, choice and obedience, the new birth, justification, companionship with Christ, sanctification, and spiritual growth. The quarterly also dispensed information regarding the role of prayer, Bible study, and service in the process of Christian growth.

Third quarter, 1945, *The Way to Christ*

This quarterly is based on Ellen G. White's (n.d), book *Steps to Christ*. Each of the 13 lessons is consecutively named after each of this book's 13 chapters. While the lessons themselves are generally information only, the students are encouraged at the beginning of each week to study the corresponding *Steps to Christ* chapter. The learners who did so had the opportunity to experience the transformation that taking steps toward Christ can generate.

First quarter, 1970, *The Way to Life Eternal*

When adult Sabbath School members opened their Bible study guide for the first quarter of the new year, they were greeted by a new approach to Bible study. This approach is the quarterly's greatest strength; and for the first time since 1863, there appears to be deliberate regard to a learning process. Following is how the introduction to this quarterly presented the new style:

The great old themes of the New Testament are here presented in a new format to show forth the strait pathway in an easy-reading guide.

This unique lesson presentation, *combining statement, exposition, question, and application*, has been prepared to enable you to gain the most from your time spent in the study of the Word. (General Conference Sabbath School Department, *ABSG: The Way to Life Eternal*, 1970, p, 4)

(See Appendix E for a sample lesson of this format.) This format continued until third quarter, 1972, when the Summary Questions at the end of each week were dropped. The rest of the lesson format remained intact until 1982.

Third quarter, 1997, *Parables of Jesus: Stories of love and grace*

This quarterly deals with Christian growth by discussing the parables of Jesus from the “viewpoint of the Christian journey” (General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, 1997, p. 5). In doing so, it outlines the journey as follows: Lesson 1--“God’s Invitation to Follow Him”; Lessons 2 and 3--“Responses to His Invitation”; Lessons 4 and 5--“His Grace Changes the Direction of Lives”; Lessons 6 and 7--“Aids and Hindrances Along the Way”; Lessons 8-12--“Assistance Along the Way”; and Lesson 13--“Home at Last.” Transformation (developing a character like Christ’s) is also discussed (pp. 30, 38-44).

Each weekly lesson begins with a story which encourages the students to relate the week’s topic to their own lives. Daily lessons Sunday through Thursday end with questions that ask the students to either apply the information presented in the lesson to their own lives, think of ways they can respond to the information, or engage in such disciplines as prayer, meditation, Bible study, and service.

First quarter, 1998, *First Corinthians:
The Gospel on the Street*

The strength of this quarterly lies in its ability to apply the apostle Paul's counsels regarding such obtuse subjects as circumcision, head coverings, and food offered to idols to the lives of Christians living in the late 20th century.

Each weekly lesson begins a discussion of the week's topic and how that topic is still valid for Christians today. Daily lessons Sunday through Thursday end with compound questions that ask the students to apply the information presented in the lesson to their personal lives and to think of ways they can use that information in their dealings with others. Weekly lessons are liberally sprinkled with attempts to engage the learners in such disciplines as prayer, meditation, service, fellowship, simplicity, and worship.

Underlying themes of the entire quarterly are "God's power to transform lives" (General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, 1998, pp. 6, 97), Christ's sanctifying work (p. 9), the indwelling Christ (p. 85), and the role of the Holy Spirit in the transformation process (pp. 85, 93).

Third quarter, 2005, *Experiencing Jesus as Lord:
The Spiritual Life*

This quarterly discusses discipleship through the topic of what it means to experience Jesus as Lord of our priorities, thought, desires, speech, prayers, relationships, resources, bodies, labor, worship, and service. Transformation is spoken of in terms of renewal (General Conference Office of the *ABSG*, 2005, p. 44); and the discussion questions at the end of each weekly lesson offer application questions and suggestions on how the learners can respond in active ways to the information offered throughout the

week. Spiritual disciplines discussed in terms of information, application, and response are fellowship (relationships), worship, prayer, simplicity (stewardship), and service.

Conclusion

This survey of *ABSGs* from their inception to 2005 shows that while there were times when the guides made efforts to acknowledge the process of learning, a process which itself leads to transformation, there was no consistency regarding the matter. The same is true for the guide's approach to instruction regarding Christian spirituality and its efforts to engage learners in the use of spiritual disciplines so there might be spiritual growth.

Therefore, the prototype I propose consists of a conceptual framework based on experiential learning concepts that, when employed in conjunction with certain teaching/learning methods, will assist in cultivating Christian spirituality regardless of the topic of any *ABSG*. This prototype is described in detail in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Purpose

Because of its historical lack of intentional guidance in Christian spirituality, and because no studies have been done to investigate the *ABSG*'s impact on the spirituality of its users, the purpose of this research is twofold:

1. To develop and evaluate a prototype *ABSG* which is specifically formulated not only to deal with biblical information, Christian biblical doctrines in general, and SDA biblical doctrines in particular, but with Christian spirituality as well (This prototype will consist of a conceptual framework based on experiential learning concepts, which when employed in conjunction with certain teaching/learning methods will assist in cultivating Christian spirituality regardless of the topic of any given *ABSG*.)
2. To evaluate the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality.

Research Questions

Two main research questions guided this study, along with four sub-questions:

1. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality?

From this question, four areas of interest were defined from which the sub-questions were generated:

- a. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the attainment of general learning outcomes?
 - b. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of knowledge and beliefs?
 - c. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of attitudes, values, and commitments?
 - d. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the practice of behaviors and skills?
2. Does the impact of the type of *ABSG* differ by gender, age group, or educational level?

The Prototype Framework

In order to determine the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the spiritual growth of its users, a prototype guide was developed and tested against the regular style of quarterly in use at the time this research was conducted. The prototype was on the same topic as the regular *ABSG* and often used the same material that was in the regular *ABSG*. However, the prototype arranged that material around a framework consisting of the following: (a) the definition of Christian spirituality and spiritual growth as set forth in this dissertation; (b) Kolb's learning cycle and learning styles; (c) the use of spiritual disciplines; (d) the use of certain types of questions as they pertain to the learning cycle and learning styles; (e) and a specific set of general learning objectives. Each of these tools will now be discussed.

Spirituality/Spiritual Growth in the Prototype

In order to design an *ABSG* that promotes the spiritual growth of its users, it is necessary to ask, What are spirituality and spiritual growth? While diverse in many ways, the theorists, biblical material, and Christian educators discussed in chapter 2 all share certain convictions that assisted in answering this question. Each states that a mature faith involves transformation and that this transformation is ongoing. The decidedly Christian viewpoints state that this transformation involves developing a Christlike character--a character distinguished by love for God and humanity and manifested in the fruit of the Spirit.

Thus, for the purpose of developing an adult Bible study guide which promotes spirituality and spiritual growth, it is the intention of this research to define spirituality as (a) a life-transforming relationship with God (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38) and (b) consistent devotion to serving others. Spiritual growth, then, is the *process* of being conformed to God's likeness. This process (a) occurs as a result of the Holy Spirit's work as people behold Christ through the use of spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, prayer, meditation, worship, fellowship, service, etc., and (b) manifests itself in one's love for God and other humans, as well as in the fruit of the Spirit.

Following is a list of pages in the prototype where these definitions of spirituality and spiritual growth are dealt with. The letters in parentheses following the page numbers stand for the following sections that comprise a daily lesson, and therefore indicate which of these sections contains the reference to the definitions: (U)nderstanding God's Word; (A)pplying God's Word; and (R)esponding to God's Word. Here then is the

list: p. 7 (A); p. 9 (U); p. 11 (U); p. 12 (Further Study section); p. 25 (U); p. 27 (U); p. 31 (U); p. 33 (U); p. 39 (A); p. 46 (the opening story); p. 51 (U); p. 60 (U); p. 61 (U); p. 63 (Discussion Question 1); p. 66 (U, A, R); p. 69 (U); p. 72 (Key Thought); p. 73 (U); p. 76 (R); p. 96 (Key Thought).

The Learning Cycle and Learning Styles in the Prototype

Each daily lesson for Sunday through Thursday is divided into three sections: (a) Understanding God's Word; (b) Applying God's Word; and (c) Responding to God's Word. Each lesson for Sabbath serves as an introduction to the weekly material. Figure 5 shows how these daily lessons coincide with the learning cycle and learning styles.

Spiritual Disciplines in the Prototype

As stated earlier, spirituality is (a) a life-transforming relationship with God (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38) and (b) consistent devotion to serving others. Spiritual growth is the *process* of being conformed to God's likeness. This growth (a) occurs as a result of the Holy Spirit's work as people behold Christ through the use of spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, prayer, meditation, worship, fellowship, service, etc., and (b) manifests itself in one's love for God and other humans, as well as in the fruit of the Spirit.

To uphold this definition of spiritual growth, the prototype presents the following spiritual disciplines in ways that invite the learner to engage in their use: prayer, study, meditation, worship, fasting, confession, simplicity, fellowship, service,

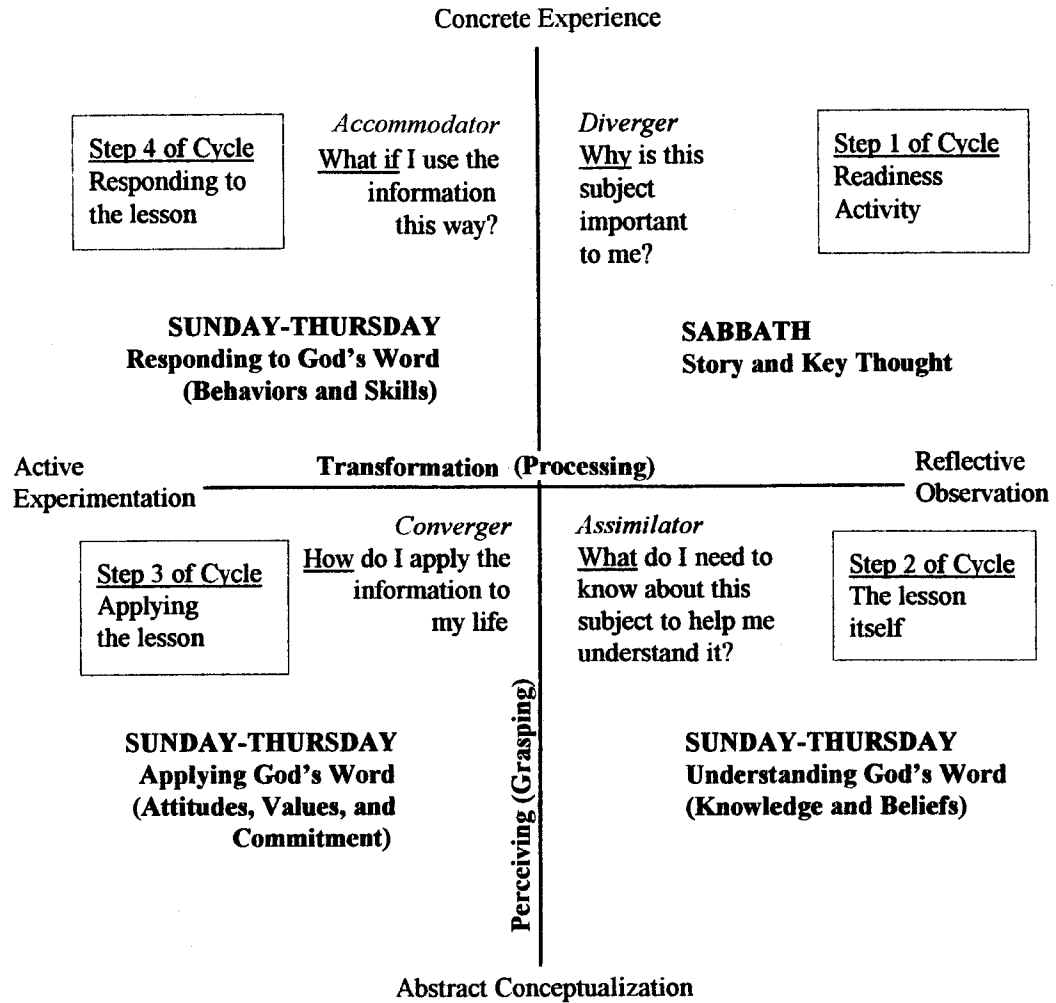


Fig. 5. Kolb's Learning Cycle and Learning Styles in the Prototype ABSG.

Note. Adapted from *Learning Styles and the Learning Cycle*, General Conference World Sabbath School Curriculum Committee, March 2001, Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

solitude/silence, and journaling. I chose the first three because the Bible frequently refers to them and because Christians seem to use them more often than the others. I chose the rest of the disciplines for the following reasons: (a) so that each step of the learning cycle would be represented by the disciplines (see chapter 2); (b) so that each learning style would be represented by the disciplines; (see chapter 2); (c) to show that a variety of disciplines are needed for spiritual growth; and (d) to expand the learner's knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for the various disciplines.

Table 2 gives representative samples of where in the prototype each discipline is emphasized. The letters in parentheses following the page numbers stand for the following sections that comprise a daily lesson: (U)nderstanding God's Word; (A)pplying God's Word; and (R)esponding to God's Word. These letters indicate which of these sections contains the reference to the outcome.

The Use of Questions in the Prototype

Questions always have played an important role in the *ABSG*. In current guides, there are generally three questions each in Sunday's through Thursday's lessons and a numerical variety of questions in Friday's lesson. This research is proposing that various types of questions be used in the *ABSG* to guide students through the learning cycle and to help them develop all three components of biblical faith.

1. The first part of the learning cycle is designed to help the students understand why this lesson is important to them. Any questions here should help the students recognize their need for the lesson, thus motivating them to study and learn. *Why? How?*

Table 2

Spiritual Disciplines in the ABSG Prototype

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	REPRESENTATIVE USAGE IN ABSG PROTOTYPE
Prayer	Pages 25 (U, A, R); 31 (U, R); 48 (R); 57 (A, R); 77 (R); 92 (A); 101 (R); 106 (A, R)
Study	Pages 7 (U); 8 (A); 23 (R); 57 (R); 60 (R); 67 (R); 77 (A, R); 81 (A); 93 (A); 101 (R) Each Friday's lesson provides opportunity for further study of the week's topic. Reading suggestions to study are given from the writings of Ellen G. White. In addition, the discussion questions provide further study ideas. Bible texts pertaining to the week's topic, but not presented in the daily lessons, often are given to study in conjunction with these questions.
Meditation	Pages 9 (A); 25 (A); 57 (R); 73 (R); 78 (question 1); 93 (A); 99 (R); 101 (R)
Fasting	Page 12 (question 4)
Worship	Pages 60 (R); 68 (A, R); 70 (Further Study section and question 4); 84 (R); 93 (A)
Fellowship	Pages 19 (A); 27 (A); 52 (question 2); 58 (A); 62 (question 2); 70 (question 2); 84 (R); 85 (U); 91 (R); 93 (A); 94 (question 5); 101 (R)
Confession	Pages 8 (U, R); 26 (R); 49 (U, R); 60 (U); 90 (A)
Simplicity	Pages 11 (U); 31 (R); 40 (U); 61 (U, A, R); 78 (question 3); 83 (R); 94 (question 1); 109 (R)
Journaling	The summary section of each Friday's lesson (e.g., pp. 12, 62, 70, 78, 110)
Solitude/Silence	Pages 16 (A, R); 32 (R); 51 (R)
Service	10 (R); 23 (U); 24 (A, R); 25 (U); 27 (R); 32 (U); 42 (A, R); 58 (U, R); 65 (A); 82 (R); 85 (U, A, R)

and *What if?* questions do well here. In the prototype and the regular *ABSG*, the lessons for Sabbath afternoons introduce the coming week's topic. In the prototype, each Sabbath afternoon's lesson coincides with the first step of the learning cycle; and any questions designed to help the students recognize their need for the weekly lesson are found in the Key Thought. Examples of such questions can be found in every Sabbath's lesson.

2. Both the second part of the learning cycle and the first component of biblical faith relate to knowledge. (For a discussion on the three components of biblical faith, see chapter 2.) As such, they are concerned with the common terms, specific facts, major ideas and principles, and any methods or procedures evident in the biblical passage being studied. In addition to the usual *Who, What, Where, and When* questions designed to solicit knowledge, the lesson also can ask learners to *define, describe, identify, tell, and examine* (University of Victoria, 2003, p. 1).

Once new information is accrued, however, students must be able to transfer what they have learned to new contexts, interpret the new facts by comparing and contrasting them with facts previously learned, and predict consequences (Learning Skills Program, n.d., p. 1). Acquiring these skills also should be viewed as the part of the second step of the learning cycle and the first component of biblical faith. To that end, questions should be asked that urge students to *describe, interpret, contrast, summarize, and predict*. (University of Victoria, 2003, p. 1).

In the prototype, the Understanding God's Word section of daily lessons Sunday-Thursday relates to this part of the learning cycle, and therefore contains such questions.

3. The third part of the learning cycle involves application, while the second component of biblical faith is relational in nature. Skills students should demonstrate in these areas include using the information, concepts, theories, principles, methods, and procedures they learned in the second part of the learning cycle. They should see themselves in relationship to the Bible verses being studied, therefore helping them to make God's timeless principles timely. In the process, they should ask what God wants them to *do* with the information they have learned (Veerman, 1993, p. 7) and *how* that information can help God's image be restored in them. Questions that ask students to do such things as *apply*, *demonstrate*, *show*, *examine*, and *illustrate* will assist them in moving through this portion of the cycle (University of Victoria, 2003, p. 1) and in developing their relationship with Christ.

In the prototype, the Applying God's Word section of daily lessons Sunday-Thursday relates to this part of the learning cycle, and therefore asks questions which help them to see their personal life in relationship to the biblical texts being studied and how that relationship can help them to have God's image restored in them.

4. The final stage of the learning cycle is the actual use of the knowledge obtained in the first portion of the cycle. This is also the behavioral component of biblical faith. As such, it involves designing a plan of action, obeying God, and putting into practice what He has taught through the particular portion of Scripture being studied (Veerman, 1993, p. 7). In this stage, questions should encourage learners to *involve* themselves in some activity, *establish* goals and *devise* steps to reach those goals, *solve* problems, and *make* decisions (University of Washington, 2002, p. 1).

In the prototype, the Responding to God's Word section of daily lessons Sunday-Thursday relates to this part of the learning cycle, and therefore asks questions which help them to obey God and put into practice what He has taught through the biblical texts studied for that day.

General Learning Outcomes in the Prototype

Any good curriculum and its accompanying material are constructed with general learning outcomes. The curriculum for the *ABSG* and the guides themselves should be no exception. The learning outcomes I chose for my framework are the eight core dimensions of faith in the *Effective Christian Education* study (Benson & Eklin, 1990), "which, *when taken together*, give a well-rounded portrait of a person with faith maturity" (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 36; emphasis in original). These core dimensions are: (a) trusting and believing; (b) experiencing the fruits of faith; (c) integrating faith and life; (d) seeking spiritual growth; (e) nurturing faith in community; (f) holding life-affirming values; (g) advocating social change; (h) acting and serving (Roehlkepartain, 1993, pp. 36, 37).

Taken together, these eight dimensions relate to a person's relationship with God and to one's relationship with his or her neighbors, both of which are elements of the definition of Christian spiritual growth used in this study. Furthermore, the North American Division (North American Division [NAD], 1990) of the SDA Church recommended that these dimensions form the basis of all adult religious education material (p. 35). NAD's explications of these dimensions (pp. 35, 36) are given below.

For purposes of this study, I have separated these explications into the areas of Knowledge and Beliefs; Attitudes, Values, and Commitments; and Behaviors and Skills. As already explained, Figure 5 shows how these areas relate to the learning cycle and learning style.

Knowledge and Beliefs--A person of mature Christian spirituality understands that God is personal and transcendent; believes in the disclosure of God through revelation; acknowledges the divinity and humanity of Jesus; believes the church has a role to play in society.

Attitudes, Values, and Commitments--A person of mature Christian spirituality trusts in God's saving grace; values God's love as unconditional; commits her or his life to Christ; values God's guidance; feels liberated and confident; experiences a deep sense of personal assurance; experiences self-acceptance; feels responsible for promoting human welfare; affirms spiritual diversity; embraces racial and gender equality; affirms people; affirms the sanctity of creation.

Behaviors and Skills--A person of mature Christian spirituality experiences and nurtures faith within a community of believers by sharing his or her faith story; seeks God in interpersonal and social encounters; exhibits compassion for the disadvantaged; supports social changes that harmonize with Christianity; applies faith to political and social issues; promotes peace and justice; shares personal resources with others; engages in the spiritual disciplines in order to grow spiritually; values commitment; employs beliefs to prescribe moral principles and guidelines; employs faith to determine lifestyle

and to inform decisions and action; seeks to increase biblical knowledge and understanding.

As Roehlkepartain (1993) points out, these outcomes can be placed under one or the other of the two dimensions of Christian faith: the Christian's relationship with God and the Christian's relationship with her or his neighbors. The former dimension is the "vertical dimension of faith which symbolizes God reaching 'down' to humanity" (p. 38; emphasis in original), and is viewed "as a *life-transforming relationship to a loving God*. Some ways in which Christians express this part of faith include worshiping God, praying, and studying their Bibles" (p. 38, emphasis in original). This dimension, therefore, involves the second step of the learning cycle (What do I need to know?), and the cognitive and relational components of biblical faith (What do I believe? Whom should I know [Jesus]?). The second dimension is "the *horizontal dimension of faith*," which is "defined as *a consistent devotion to serving others*." Some ways Christians express this part of faith include helping people in need, becoming involved in social issues, and taking care of the environment (p. 38, emphasis in original). This dimension includes the behavioral component of biblical faith (What should I do?), and the third and fourth steps of the learning cycle (How do I use what I know? What if I use what I know this way?).

Any one *ABSG* should address as many of these outcomes as possible so that during the course a year, all the outcomes have been covered. Tables 3, 4, and 5 give representative samples of where in the prototype learners come into contact with a particular outcome. The letters in parentheses following the page numbers stand for the

Table 3

General Learning Outcomes Supported by the Prototype ABSG Knowledge and Beliefs

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS	REPRESENTATIVE USAGE IN <i>ABSG</i> PROTOTYPE
Understands that God is personal and transcendent	The theme for Lesson 1
Believes in the disclosure of God through revelation	Page 20 (Further Study section)
Acknowledges the divinity and humanity of Jesus	Lesson 1/Sabbath's lesson
Believes the church has a role to play in society	Pages 17 (R); 19 (R)

Table 4

General Learning Outcomes Supported by the Prototype ABSG Attitudes, Values, and Commitments

ATTITUDES, VALUES, AND COMMITMENTS	REPRESENTATIVE USAGE IN ABSG PROTOTYPE
Trusts in God's saving grace	Page 15 (R)
Values God's love as unconditional	Page 91 (R)
Commits life to Christ	Page 91 (R)
Values God's guidance	
Feels liberated and confident	Page 20 (question 1)
Experiences self-acceptance	
Avoids life-threatening behavior	
Feels responsible for promoting human welfare	Pages 17 (R); 102 (question 3)
Affirms spiritual diversity	
Affirms the sanctity of creation	
Affirms people	Page 17 (R); 52 (question 2); 102 (question 2); 106 (U, A, R)
Embraces racial and gender equality	Pages 102 (question 2); 106 (A, R)
Experiences a deep sense of personal assurance	

Table 5

General Learning Outcomes Supported by the Prototype ABSG Behaviors and Skills

BEHAVIORS AND SKILLS	REPRESENTATIVE USAGE IN ABSG PROTOTYPE
Nurtures the faith of others	Pages 19 (A); 27 (A); 58 (A); 62 (question 2); 70 (question 2); 84 (R); 85 (U); 91 (R); 101 (R)
Shares one's faith story	Pages 35 (A, R); 85 (U); 106 (R)
Seeks God in interpersonal and social encounters	Pages 19 (A); 27 (A); 52 (question 2); 85 (U); 101(R)
Participates in corporate prayer and worship	Pages 68 (A, R); 70; 84 (R); 93 (A); 106 (R)
Exhibits compassion for the disadvantaged	Pages 10 (R); 23 (U); 24 (A, R); 27 (R); 32 (U); 58 (R); 82 (R); 85 (U, A, R)
Supports social changes that harmonize with Christianity	Page 85 (U, A, R)
Applies faith to political and social issues	Pages 32 (U); 85 (U, A, R)
Promotes peace and justice	Pages 32 (U); 85 (U, A, R)
Shares personal resources with others	Pages 24 (R); 58 (U, R); 27 (R); 42 (R); 58 (R); 82 (R); 85 (U, A, R)
Engages in the spiritual disciplines in order to grow spiritually	See the Spiritual Discipline Table 2, presented earlier in this chapter
Employs beliefs to prescribe moral principles and guidelines	Page 59 (A)
Employs faith to determine lifestyle and to inform decisions and action	Pages 23 (R); 24 (A)
Seeks to increase biblical knowledge and understanding	Pages 7 (U); 8 (A); 23 (R); 57 (R); 60 (R); 67 (R); 77 (A, R); 81 (A); 93 (A); 101 (R) Each Friday's lesson provides opportunity for further study of the week's topic. Reading suggestions to study are given from the writings of Ellen G. White. In addition, the discussion questions provide further study ideas. Bible texts pertaining to the week's topic, but not presented in the daily lessons, often are given to study in conjunction with these questions.

following sections which comprise a daily lesson: (U)nderstanding God's Word; (A)pplying God's Word; and (R)esponding to God's Word. These letters indicate which of these sections contain the reference to the outcome.

In an attempt to have the prototype look as much like the regular *ABSG* as possible, almost everything about it was the same as the regular *ABSG*. The font type size, the ads, the mission stories at the end of each weekly lesson, the cover, the Table of Contents, the inside art work, and the front and back covers were the same as the regular *ABSG*. In addition, the prototype covered the same topic as the regular *ABSG* for the quarter during which the research took place (second quarter, 2005), and used much of the same information-based material as the regular *ABSG*.

The difference involved the use of the learning cycle just described. This difference slightly affected the appearance of daily lessons Sunday through Thursday. Each of these daily lessons was divided by three headings to coincide with the steps 2, 3, and 4 of the learning cycle. These page divisions were: (a) Understanding God's Word; (b) Applying God's Word; and (c) Responding to God's Word. As stated earlier in this chapter, the prototype also featured the use of certain spiritual disciplines. This most greatly affected the Summary which appears at the end of Friday's lesson. Rather than provide a "ready-made" summary for learners to read, the prototype asked them to "journal" their own summary at the end of each week's lesson. (See Appendix F for a sample of a weekly lesson of both the prototype and regular guide. The prototype sample is on the left side of each page, while the sample of the regular guide appears on the right side. Complete copies of both guides can be found in the Department of Archives and

Statistics of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and in the Center for Adventist Research in the James White Library at Andrews University.)

Research Design

This research explored patterns and ideas concerning which type of *ABSG* has more of an effect on the learners' Christian spiritual growth. No pre-conceived ideas or assumptions were held regarding the degree of relationship between the variables, other than that they were dependent upon each other. Therefore, because the research was not attempting to confirm a hypothesis, Vogt (1999, p. 105) would label it as exploratory. Also, because convenience sampling was used and because there was a pre-test and post-test, Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990, pp. 336-338) would classify it as nonrandomized control group, pre-test/post-test.

A questionnaire was developed to gather data to compare the effectiveness of the regular quarterly and the prototype on the spiritual growth of the learners. This questionnaire examined the following four areas: (a) learning objectives; (b) knowledge and beliefs; (c) attitudes and commitments; and (d) behaviors and skills. The same questionnaire served as the pre-test and the post-test and is described later in this chapter.

Population and Sample

Data were collected from members of adult Sabbath School classes within churches belonging to the Chesapeake and Michigan conferences of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States. Seventeen classes participated from 12 churches. Ten of the churches were from the Chesapeake Conference. Two of the churches were from the

Michigan Conference. Ten classes studied from the prototype, while 7 studied from the regular quarterly.

Expediency and accessibility necessitated the use of convenience sampling (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The churches and adult classes involved in the study were chosen because of (a) their willingness to participate in the study, and (b) their desire to study from either the regular *ABSG* or the prototype. In addition, it is difficult for conference offices to maintain accurate lists of Sabbath School classes. Such classes come and go for a number of reasons (e.g., the availability of both teachers and students, vacations, etc.). The combination of these factors made it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain an accurate random sample.

At first, an attempt was made by the researcher to randomly assign classes to study either from the prototype or the *ABSG*. However, some classes would not participate if they couldn't study the regular *ABSG*.

Instrumentation

The purpose of this study was to develop and evaluate the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the learners' Christian spirituality. In order to accomplish the latter, a pre-test/post-test questionnaire was developed to evaluate growth regarding the general learning outcomes; knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values and commitments; and behavior and skills. Questions regarding demographics and open-ended questions regarding the nature of the quarterlies themselves also were included. The name of this questionnaire is the Adult Bible Study Guide Growth in Christ Questionnaire (GICQ).

The Faith Maturity Scale (Benson & Eklin, 1990) comprised the first part of the GICQ and was used to test the general learning outcomes and the overall spirituality of the respondents. This scale consists of 38 questions based on the eight core dimensions of mature faith delineated by the *Effective Christian Education* study. Interviews with theological scholars and a variety of denominational executives, open-ended surveys taken by hundreds of adults from six major Protestant denominations, and literature reviews in psychology and religion assisted in the formation of these dimensions (Roehlkepartain, 1993). They are as follows:

A person with mature faith will:

1. Trust in God's saving grace, believe in Jesus' humanity and divinity, and experience God's guidance in life
2. Experience personal well-being, security, and peace
3. Allow her or his faith to shape every aspect of life
4. Seek to grow in faith through study, prayer, reflection, and discussion
5. Desire to fellowship with a community of believers in order to witness to his or her faith, share his or her faith story, encourage others, and experience God through the relationships that such activities engender
6. Espouse life-affirming values (e.g., believing in racial/gender equality; endeavor to live healthfully; affirm the sanctity of God's creation; act from a sense of responsibility for other people's welfare)
7. Support changes that foster social justice in such areas of concerns as poverty, human trafficking, and domestic violence

8. Become personally involved in acts of service (Roehlkepartain, 1993, pp. 36-38).

Scale reliability was computed by the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The reliability estimate of the total Mature Faith Scale based on responses of adults in the study was .88 (Benson & Eklin, 1990, p. 2).

To measure specific knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills, which pertained to both the regular and the prototype study guides, the pre- and post-tests used the Beliefs, Behaviors, Attitudes, and Skills instrument (BBAS) that I developed. The BBAS consisted of six open-ended questions for knowledge and beliefs; a 5-point Likert scale containing four items to test for attitudes, values, and commitments; and a 5-point Likert scale containing six items to test for behavior and skills.

Demographic questions asked for gender, age, ethnic identity, highest level of education completed, and how often the respondent studied from the *ABSG*. The purpose of these questions was to extend the ways of interpreting the data from the questionnaire.

The pre-test questionnaire ended with two open-ended questions which allowed the respondents to register their opinions, thoughts, and feelings regarding the *ABSG* in general. In addition, the first of these questions related to the definition of spirituality and spiritual growth put forth in this research.

The post-test used the same questionnaire as the pre-test. However, for those who studied from the prototype *ABSG*, the post-test ended with two additional questions asking the respondents to share their likes and dislikes regarding the prototype.

Questionnaire Format

For the pre-test and post-test to be physically and psychologically friendly, all parts of the test were presented on one 11 x 17-inch sheet of paper that was folded in half to create a booklet format.

Validity

The following steps assisted in determining the validity of the instrument:

1. As associate editor of the *ABSG*, I have assisted in the editing of the guides, and am therefore very familiar with their contents.

2. I developed the prototype, so I am very well acquainted with its content and desired outcomes.

3. Another way to ensure content validity is to have

competent colleagues who are familiar with the purpose of the survey examine the items to judge whether they are adequate for measuring what they are supposed to measure and whether they are a representative sample of the behavior domain under investigation. (Ary et al., 1990, p. 434)

In this case, the colleagues were members of my dissertation committee. After careful examination of each draft of the GICG, the committee determined that the items in the questionnaire were adequate for measuring spiritual growth as defined by this research and were “a representative sample of the behavior domain under investigation” (Ary et al., 1990, p. 434).

Two more variables that can influence the validity of questionnaires and that pertained to this research are (a) how important the topic is to the respondents (the higher

the level of interest in the topic assures increased validity); and (b) the degree to which respondent anonymity is ensured (i.e., respondents will be more truthful with their answers if they are assured anonymity, especially when a questionnaire asks for personal information or deals with a sensitive topic) (Ary et al., 1990, p. 434). The topic of Christian spiritual growth would be generally of interest to people studying from the *ABSG*; and, as will be seen in the section describing the procedures used in testing, anonymity was ensured.

Reliability

Certain items pertaining to the same topic were repeated by having them rephrased. Another step in determining reliability can be taken by repeating a questionnaire after a period of time. This was done by using the pre-test/post-test method of testing (Ary et al., 1990, p. 434).

Procedure

On Monday, February 7, 2005, I contacted Frank Bondurant, Sabbath School Director of the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to explain the research I was doing and to solicit his advice concerning which churches within the conference he thought might be interested in participating. On February 8 and 14, he e-mailed me lists of 15 churches and their adult Sabbath School superintendents along with his permission to contact them. In some cases, he already had done this for me. Of these 15 churches, 5 declined to participate for one of the following reasons: (a) one superintendent was too busy to take on another project; (b) the superintendents canvassed

their Sabbath School classes to discover they were not interested in participating; (c) the person who wrote the regular Bible study guide for the quarter the study was to take place was a member of one church; and (d) another church was breaking from tradition in the middle of the quarter to conduct a one-month study on another topic.

To obtain the two churches in the Michigan Conference, I dialogued with a person I knew who, as a respected member of the conference's educational staff, was well acquainted with the area, and was willing to canvas some churches for me. She presented me with the names of two churches whose Sabbath Schools were interested in participating.

Attempts were made to contact churches in two other conferences whose geographical locations would provide the study with a greater degree of economic and ethnic diversity. However, repeated phone calls and e-mails to pastors and Sabbath School superintendents went unheeded.

My initial contacts with each church were through the Sabbath School superintendents. They solicited the Sabbath School class teachers, who in turn discussed the project with their classes. Once a class agreed to participate, I communicated solely with the teacher of that class. In the larger churches, it was impossible to get all the classes involved. In those cases, the classes that did take part were allowed to study from only one of the types of quarterly, either the regular quarterly or the prototype.

Pre-testing took place on the first two Sabbaths of second quarter, March 26 and April 2, 2005. These tests were administered by the class teachers. To ensure anonymity, the following steps were taken:

1. Each pre-test was marked with a code that each participant was to write on the upper right corner of the contents page of their quarterly.
2. When they took the post-test, they wrote this code on the upper right corner of that test in order to match it with the pre-test.
3. A master list of codes was maintained by someone in each class in case some members misplaced their code or forgot to bring their quarterly with them the day of the post-testing.
4. This list was filled out during the Sabbath School class and given to the person who agreed to keep the list until the end of the quarter. Each teacher was given two items to be read to the class: a cover letter and a set of instructions (see Appendix H).

Post-testing began the last 2 weeks of June and continued to the end of August. See Appendix H for the instructions given to the teachers regarding the post-tests.

Obtaining post-tests proved difficult for the following reasons: (a) conference camp-meetings were scheduled the end of June, the first of July; (b) General Conference Session was held from July 29-July 9; (c) people began taking their summer vacations during June and continued to do so until late August; (d) many of the churches involved had scheduled mission trips; and (e) the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) convention was held early that August. When the post-tests were collected, they were sealed in a self-addressed Federal Express package to be returned to me.

The goal was to have 100 people study from the standard *ABSG* and 100 people study from the prototype *ABSG*. One hundred thirty-two people studied from the regular *ABSG* and took the pre-test. Eighty six of those took the post-test.

One hundred fifty-five people studied from the prototype and took the pre-test. One hundred of those took the post-test.

Teachers of those classes using the prototype were instructed not to use the teacher's edition of the *ABSG* because it contains the whole of the regular *ABSG*.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the purpose of my research and the research questions. I also explained the prototype framework, which included its following aspects: spirituality and spiritual growth; the learning cycle and learning styles; spiritual disciplines; the use of questions; and the framework's general learning outcomes.

In addition, I discussed the research design, population and sample, the development of the survey instrument, and the procedures I used in administering the research.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to develop and evaluate a prototype *ABSG* which is specifically formulated to deal not only with biblical information, Christian biblical doctrines in general, and SDA biblical doctrines in particular, but with Christian spirituality as well (This prototype consisted of a conceptual framework based on experiential learning concepts, which when employed in conjunction with certain teaching/learning methods assisted in cultivating Christian spirituality regardless of the topic of any given *ABSG*); and (b) to examine the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the Christian spirituality of its users.

This chapter describes the sample, presents an analysis of the data, and states the findings. The data analysis is organized according to the sub-questions of the Research Question.

Research Questions

Two main research questions guided this study, along with four sub-questions:

1. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality?

From this question, four areas of interest were defined from which the sub-questions were generated:

- a. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the attainment of general learning outcomes?
 - b. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of knowledge and beliefs?
 - c. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of attitudes, values, and commitments?
 - d. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the practice of behaviors and skills?
2. Does the impact of the type of *ABSG* differ by gender, age group, or educational level?

Description of the Sample

Data were collected from members of adult Sabbath School classes within churches belonging to the Chesapeake and Michigan Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States. Seventeen classes participated from 12 churches. Ten of the churches were in the Chesapeake Conference; 2 were in the Michigan Conference. Ten classes studied from the prototype, while 7 studied from the regular *ABSG*.

Rate of Return

The goal was to have 100 people study from the standard *ABSG* and 100 people study from the prototype *ABSG*. One hundred and thirty-two people studied from the regular *ABSG* and took the pre-test. Eighty-six (65%) of those took the post-test.

One hundred and fifty-five people studied from the prototype and took the pre-test. One hundred (66%) of those took the post-test.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

A summary of the demographic data by gender, age groups, and educational levels is presented in Table 6.

Analysis of the Data

Descriptive Statistics

Pre- and post-test numbers, means, and standard deviations are shown in Table 7.

Testing the Research Questions

The main effect of the *ABSG* type on each of the four sub-questions was tested three times when examining interaction between *ABSG* type and the following variables: gender, age, and education. Due to missing data (some people did not answer all of the demographic questions), there were slight differences in sample size for each variable. The size and significance of the main effect differed slightly with each of these variables because of differences in sample size and control for different variables.

Table 6

Demographic Composition of the Sample--Gender, Age Groups, Educational Levels

Variables	Regular <i>ABSG</i>		Prototype <i>ABSG</i>		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Gender						
Male	33	38.4	43	43.0	76	40.9
Female	53	61.6	57	57.0	110	59.1
Total	86	100.0	100	100.0	186	100.0
Age Groups						
35-44	13	15.1	20	20.0	33	17.7
45-54	20	23.3	25	25.0	45	24.2
55-64	22	25.6	16	16.0	38	20.4
65+	31	36.0	39	39.0	70	27.6
Total	86	100.0	100	100.0	186	100.0
Educational Levels						
High school or less	17	20.0	36	36.4	53	28.9
Some college	22	25.9	23	23.2	45	24.5
College	22	25.9	20	20.2	42	22.8
Graduate work	24	28.2	20	20.2	44	23.9
Total	85	100.0	99	100.0	184	100.0

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post -Tests--Regular and Prototype Quarterly Combined

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<u>Pre-Test</u>		<u>Post-Test</u>	
		Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
General Learning Outcomes (Horizontal Faith)	133	4.28	.87	4.28	.85
General Learning Outcomes (Vertical Faith)	142	5.63	.75	5.65	.77
Knowledge and Beliefs	168	3.05	.85	3.08	.84
Attitudes, Values, and Commitments	182	4.27	.57	4.26	.57
Behaviors and Skills	178	3.64	.82	3.78	.67
Living Simply	178	3.47	.95	3.60	.93
Spending More Time in Prayer	179	3.60	1.08	3.77	.84
Spending More Time Worshipping	181	3.67	1.07	3.78	.86
Serving Others	179	3.31	1.01	3.55	.91
Meditating More on God's Word	175	4.00	.93	4.10	.80
Studying More About Spiritual Things on My Own	177	3.80	1.02	3.84	.90

Sub-question A: What Is the Impact of the Type of *ABSG* on Attaining the General Learning Outcomes?

The *Adult Bible Study Guide* Growth in Christ Questionnaire (GICQ) consisted of two global measures: (a) the FMS (Faith Maturity Scale), which involves the general learning outcomes and spirituality; and (b) the Beliefs, Behaviors, and Attitudes Scale (BBAS), which measures spirituality specific to the content of both the regular and the prototype quarterlies. The first research sub-question involves the FMS.

The general learning outcomes of this research project were divided into the two dimensions of Christian faith: (a) the Christian's relationship with God, and (b) the Christian's relationship with her or his neighbors. The former dimension is the "vertical dimension of faith which symbolizes God reaching 'down' to humanity" (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38; emphasis in original), and is viewed "as a *life-transforming relationship to a loving God*" (p. 38; emphasis in original). The latter dimension is "the horizontal dimension of faith," which is "defined as *a consistent devotion to serving others*" (p. 38; emphasis in original). The next three tables deal with the vertical items of the FMS.

Table 8 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* or the prototype on general learning outcomes for vertical faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on these general learning outcomes. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for both men and women on these outcomes.

Table 8

The Effect of ABSG Type on General Learning Outcomes (FM--Vertical Faith) by Gender

		Gender					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	5.73	5.70	-0.03	1.68	1,138	0.20
	Regular	5.46	5.53	0.07			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	5.54	5.54	0.00	2.01	1, 138	0.16
	Regular	5.36	5.35	-0.01			
Female	Prototype	5.93	5.86	-0.07			
	Regular	5.57	5.71	0.15			

* $p. \leq .05$.

Table 9 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on general learning outcomes for vertical faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age regarding their effect on these general learning outcomes. The regular and prototype *ABSG* performed the same for all age levels on these outcomes.

Table 10 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on general learning outcomes for vertical faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational level regarding their effect on these general learning outcomes. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for all educational levels on these outcomes.

Table 9

The Effect of ABSG Type on General Learning Outcomes (FMS--Vertical Faith) by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	5.72	5.71	-0.01	0.79	1, 134	0.18
	Regular	5.46	5.56	0.10			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	5.45	5.34	-0.11	2.38	3, 134	0.07
	Regular	5.25	5.45	0.20			
45-54	Prototype	5.67	5.63	-0.03			
	Regular	5.41	5.65	0.23			
55-64	Prototype	5.74	5.97	0.23			
	Regular	5.65	5.60	-0.05			
65+	Prototype	6.02	5.89	-0.12			
	Regular	5.53	5.58	0.04			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 10

The Effect of ABSG Type on General Learning Outcomes (FMS--Vertical Faith) by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	5.73	5.72	0.00	1.82	1, 133	0.18
	Regular	5.49	5.59	0.10			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	5.78	5.62	-0.16	1.21	3, 133	0.31
	Regular	5.67	5.87	0.20			
Some college	Prototype	5.49	5.60	0.01			
	Regular	5.62	5.69	0.07			
College	Prototype	5.68	5.78	0.09			
	Regular	5.22	5.31	0.09			
Graduate work	Prototype	5.98	5.90	-0.08			
	Regular	5.45	5.48	0.03			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 11 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on general learning outcomes for horizontal faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on these horizontal faith general learning outcomes. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for both men and women on these outcomes.

Table 11

The Effect of ABSG Type on General Learning Outcomes (FMS--Horizontal Faith) by Gender

		Gender					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	4.33	4.29	-0.04	0.26	1, 129	0.61
	Regular	4.21	4.24	0.02			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	4.25	4.15	-0.10	0.07	1, 129	0.79
	Regular	4.16	4.09	-0.07			
Female	Prototype	4.41	4.44	0.03			
	Regular	4.26	4.38	0.12			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 12 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on general learning outcomes for horizontal faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age groups regarding their effect on these horizontal faith general learning outcomes. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for all age groups on these outcomes.

Table 13 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on general learning outcomes for horizontal faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and level of education regarding their effect on these horizontal faith learning outcomes. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for all levels of education on these outcomes.

Table 12

The Effect of ABSG Type on General Learning Outcomes (FMS--Horizontal Faith) by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	4.28	4.28	-0.00	0.03	1, 125	0.87
	Regular	4.17	4.19	0.02			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.75	3.87	0.12	0.50	3, 125	0.69
	Regular	3.76	3.73	-0.02			
45-54	Prototype	4.40	4.20	-0.20			
	Regular	4.30	4.09	-0.21			
55-64	Prototype	4.37	4.54	0.17			
	Regular	4.27	4.43	0.16			
65+	Prototype	4.61	4.50	-0.11			
	Regular	4.36	4.50	0.14			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 13

The Effect of ABSG Type on General Learning Outcomes (FMS--Horizontal Faith) by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	4.32	4.29	-0.02	0.36	1, 123	0.55
	Regular	4.25	4.30	0.05			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	4.15	4.12	-0.04	0.15	3, 123	0.93
	Regular	4.52	4.57	0.04			
Some college	Prototype	4.20	4.15	-0.04			
	Regular	4.37	4.47	0.10			
College	Prototype	4.23	4.35	0.12			
	Regular	4.13	4.19	0.06			
Graduate work	Prototype	4.69	4.55	-0.14			
	Regular	3.97	3.97	-0.00			

p ≤ .05.

Sub-question B: What Is the Impact of the Type of ABSG on the Acquisition of Knowledge and Beliefs?

Both the prototype *ABSG* and the regular *ABSG* used in this study dealt with the same knowledge regarding the following topics: the nature of discipleship; the sin against the Holy Spirit; the true nature of the Sabbath; what happened at the Cross; the nature of the Christian life; and the role of tradition in a person's faith. In order to see which *ABSG* had the greater effect on the acquisition of knowledge regarding these topics, the BBAS

portion of the questionnaire asked the same open-ended topic-related questions on the pre- and post-tests for both the experimental and control groups.

Like any type of question, open-ended questions have disadvantages and advantages. Some of the disadvantages pertinent to written open-ended questions are as follows:

1. Open-ended questions can “suppress responses from the less literate segments of a population” (Humboldt State University, 2006, p. 1).

2. They also can be demanding for older people to answer if they no longer have the physical ability to write well.

3. In addition, respondents may not answer open-ended questions for a variety of reasons: They feel like they do not have time to answer all the questions; they may not know the answer; they are not interested in the topic; or they just simply do not want to take the time to respond.

Despite these disadvantages, it seemed more appropriate to use open-ended questions in the Beliefs portion of the BBAS for the following reasons:

1. Both the regular *ABSG* and the prototype presented more than one specific answer for each topic, thereby making it difficult to write good multiple-choice questions (Humboldt State University, 2006, p. 2).

2. Closed questions in this case could have presented cues to the respondents, making it impossible to tell if they learned the information from their study of the *ABSG* or from the question itself (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, & Vehovar, 2006, p. 1).

As stated earlier, each open-ended question had more than one valid answer which consisted of material presented in both the regular *ABSG* and the prototype *ABSG*.

However, none of the answers for any one question was more important than another answer. Following are the questions and their acceptable answers as they appeared in both *ABSGs*. The number preceding each question is the item number for the question on both the pre-test and post-test.

39. *What do you think it means to be a disciple of Christ?*
 To accept Christ's authority and calling
 To imitate His example
 To share His passion to seek and to save the lost
 Obedience (take up your cross and follow Him)
40. *How would you explain the sin against the Holy Spirit?*
 Persistently refusing to respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation to repent
 Never asking to be forgiven
 Denying Jesus' power
 Rejecting the Holy Spirit's work by attributing it to Satan
41. *Describe your understanding of the true nature of the Sabbath.*
 A delight, not a burden
 A day of worship
 A day of restoration
 A day that contributes to the happiness of others (service)
42. *Explain what you believe happened on the Cross.*
 Jesus became our sin bearer, so we might be righteous in Him
 Jesus became our substitute (took the place of every sinner)
 He Reconciled the world to Himself
 He was regarded as a sinner
 His death opened a way for sinners to reach God, eliminating separation from Him
43. *How would you describe the Christian life?*
 The Christian life is not complete in just one day. We grow in grace.
 A battle/a march
 Acknowledging Him
 Maintaining a union with Him
 The reproduction of Christ's character in the believer
44. *What role should traditions play in a person's faith?*
 They should draw us closer to God
 They should help us understand Him better.

In tabulating the knowledge/belief data for both quarterlies the following categories were used:

1. People who responded incorrectly on the pre-test and post-test
2. People who responded correctly on the pre-test and post-test
3. People who responded correctly on the pre-test but incorrectly on the post-test
4. People who responded incorrectly on the pre-test, but correctly on the post-test.

Any question that had no answer was omitted from the data analysis.

In addition, each question was converted to a 5-point scale to coincide with the questions for Attitudes, Values, and Commitments; and Behaviors and Skills, which were presented as 5-point Likert scales.

Table 14 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on knowledge and beliefs.

There was significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on knowledge and beliefs. For men, the regular *ABSG* performed better. For the regular *ABSG*, the standardized effect size was 0.34σ ; for the prototype, the standardized effect size was -0.05σ . For women, the prototype performed better. For the prototype, the standardized effect size was 0.20σ ; for the regular *ABSG*, the standardized effect size was -0.23σ . The standardized effect sizes were determined by subtracting the pre- and post-test means, then dividing the difference by the total pre-test standard deviation.

As a measure of practical significance, the standardized effect size can be used to determine the extent to which a research finding warrants a change in practice (Vogt, 1999, pp. 94, 219). Three levels of effect size are generally considered to be: (a)

small– 0.20σ ; (b) medium– 0.50σ ; and (c) large– 0.80σ . The standardized effect size for the regular *ABSG* on knowledge and beliefs for men shows that the regular *ABSG* had a small practical benefit in contrast to the prototype *ABSG*. The standardized effect size for the prototype *ABSG* on knowledge and beliefs for women shows that the prototype had a small positive benefit in contrast to the regular *ABSG*.

Table 14

The Effect of ABSG Type on Knowledge and Beliefs by Gender

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.02	3.09	0.06	0.01	1, 164	0.92
	Regular	3.04	3.09	0.05			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	2.93	2.89	-0.05	5.35	1, 164	0.02*
	Regular	2.95	3.25	0.30			
Female	Prototype	3.11	3.29	0.18			
	Regular	3.13	2.93	-0.20			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 15 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on knowledge and beliefs.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age groups regarding their effect on knowledge and beliefs. The regular and prototype quarterlies basically performed the same for all age groups on knowledge and beliefs.

Table 15

The Effect of ABSG Type on Knowledge and Beliefs by Age

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		F	df	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.07	3.16	0.10	1.17	1, 160	0.28
	Regular	3.12	3.05	-0.07			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.07	3.07	0.00	0.53	3, 160	0.66
	Regular	3.48	2.94	-0.55			
45-54	Prototype	3.25	3.33	0.08			
	Regular	3.12	3.20	0.08			
55-64	Prototype	3.12	3.42	0.29			
	Regular	2.97	3.13	0.17			
65+	Prototype	2.82	2.84	0.02			
	Regular	2.92	2.92	0.00			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 16 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on knowledge and beliefs.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational levels regarding their effect on knowledge and beliefs. The regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same for all educational levels on knowledge and beliefs.

Table 16

The Effect of ABSG Type on Knowledge and Beliefs by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.07	3.17	0.10	0.73	1, 159	0.39
	Regular	3.08	3.04	-0.04			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	2.94	2.96	0.02	0.62	3,159	0.62
	Regular	3.18	3.00	-0.18			
Some college	Prototype	3.06	3.16	0.10			
	Regular	3.29	3.00	-0.29			
College	Prototype	3.03	3.35	0.32			
	Regular	2.93	3.10	0.17			
Graduate work	Prototype	3.23	3.20	-0.00			
	Regular	2.91	3.06	0.15			

* $p \leq .05$.

Sub-question C: What Is the Impact of the Type of ABSG on the Acquisition of Attitudes, Values, and Commitments?

Questions 45 through 48 of the BBAS portion of the questionnaire in the pre- and post-tests for both the regular *ABSG* and the prototype dealt with whether or not the type of *ABSG* studied had an effect on the development of the following attitudes, values, and commitments: (a) trusting in God through difficult times; (b) depending on God when making important decisions; (c) enjoying the sharing of one's faith; and (d) feeling

responsible for helping people in need. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from *Never* to *Almost Always*. Items not answered were omitted from the data analysis.

Table 17 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on attitudes, values, and commitments of the respondents.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on attitudes, values, and commitments. For both men and women, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

Table 17

The Effect of ABSG Type on Attitudes, Values, and Commitments by Gender

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	4.29	4.28	-0.02	0.02	1, 178	0.89
	Regular	4.19	4.18	-0.01			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	4.18	4.15	-0.02	0.01	1, 178	0.94
	Regular	4.06	4.05	-0.01			
Female	Prototype	4.41	4.40	-0.01			
	Regular	4.32	4.32	-0.00			

p ≤ .05.

Table 18 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on attitudes, values, and commitments.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age groups regarding their effect on attitudes, values, and commitments. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for all age groups on attitudes, values, and commitments.

Table 18

The Effect of ABSG Type on Attitudes, Values, and Commitments by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Total	Prototype	4.30	4.28	-0.02	0.04	1, 174	0.84
	Regular	4.18	4.18	-0.00			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	4.09	4.05	-0.04	0.28	3, 174	0.84
	Regular	3.88	3.86	-0.03			
45-54	Prototype	4.35	4.35	0.00			
	Regular	4.25	4.37	0.12			
55-64	Prototype	4.41	4.39	-0.01			
	Regular	4.33	4.24	-0.09			
65+	Prototype	4.36	4.35	-0.01			
	Regular	4.27	4.26	-0.02			

$p \leq .05$.

Table 19 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on attitudes, values, and commitments.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational levels regarding their effect on attitudes, values, and commitments. The regular and prototype

ABSGs performed the same for all educational levels on attitudes, values, and commitments.

Table 19

The Effect of ABSG Type on Attitudes, Values, and Commitments by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	4.30	4.29	-0.01	0.00	1, 173	0.99
	Regular	4.24	4.24	-0.00			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	4.40	4.31	-0.09	0.53	3, 173	0.66
	Regular	4.47	4.48	0.01			
Some college	Prototype	4.15	4.22	0.06			
	Regular	4.15	4.24	0.09			
College	Prototype	4.30	4.27	-0.02			
	Regular	4.12	4.12	0.00			
Graduate work	Prototype	4.35	4.37	0.02			
	Regular	4.23	4.10	-0.12			

p ≤ .05.

Sub-question D: What Is the Impact of the Type of ABSG on the Practice of Behavior and Skills?

Questions 49 through 54 of the BBAS portion of the questionnaire in the pre- and post-tests for both the regular *ABSG* and the prototype dealt with whether or not the type of *ABSG* studied had an effect on the practice of the following behaviors and skills

(spiritual disciplines): (a) living simply; (b) prayer; (c) serving others; (d) meditating on God's Word; and (e) studying spiritual topics. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. Items not answered were omitted from the data analysis.

In reporting the analysis for this sub-question, I will present separately the data for each of the six behaviors and skills listed in the previous paragraph. My reasons for doing so are as follows:

1. Each behavior/skill is too dissimilar to be analyzed under the one category of behavior and skills.

2. While subscribing to certain beliefs and being committed to having a relationship with Christ are the first two components of biblical faith, it is behavior (the third component of biblical faith) that provides evidence for the existence of one's faith (for a discussion of these components, see *A Biblical View of Faith* in chapter 2).

Therefore, analyzing each behavior/skill individually can yield more useful information regarding the spiritual growth of the study's participants.

3. The ANOVA analyses showed significant differences in the areas of prayer, meditation, and service.

Living simply in order to focus on Christ

Table 20 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on living simply.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on living simply. For both men and women, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

Table 20

The Effect of ABSG Type on Living Simply by Gender

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.49	3.62	0.13	0.00	1, 174	0.98
	Regular	3.42	3.55	0.13			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	3.32	3.54	0.22	1.78	1, 174	0.18
	Regular	3.42	3.45	0.03			
Female	Prototype	3.66	3.70	0.04			
	Regular	3.41	3.65	0.23			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 21 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on living simply.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age regarding their effect on living simply. For all ages, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 22 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on living simply.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational level regarding their effect on living simply. For all educational levels, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 21

The Effect of ABSG Type on Living Simply by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.44	3.60	0.15	0.10	1, 170	0.76
	Regular	3.36	3.56	0.20			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.32	3.16	-0.16	2.24	3, 170	0.08
	Regular	3.00	3.46	0.46			
45-54	Prototype	3.37	3.58	0.21			
	Regular	3.45	3.75	0.30			
55-64	Prototype	3.25	3.81	0.56			
	Regular	3.45	3.45	0.00			
65+	Prototype	3.83	3.83	0.00			
	Regular	3.55	3.59	0.03			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 22

The Effect of ABSG Type on Living Simply by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.52	3.59	0.08	0.32	1, 169	0.57
	Regular	3.45	3.61	0.13			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	3.51	3.82	0.30	0.62	3, 169	0.60
	Regular	3.94	4.12	0.19			
Some college	Prototype	3.30	3.56	0.26			
	Regular	3.52	3.67	0.14			
College	Prototype	3.50	3.39	-0.11			
	Regular	2.91	3.09	0.18			
Graduate work	Prototype	3.75	3.60	-0.15			
	Regular	3.42	3.54	0.12			

p ≤ .05.

Spending more time in prayer

Table 23 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in prayer.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on time spent in prayer. For both men and women, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 23

The Effect of ABSG Type on Time Spent in Prayer by Gender

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.58	3.86	0.27	1.91	1, 175	0.17
	Regular	3.57	3.65	0.08			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	3.45	3.86	0.40	0.62	1, 175	0.43
	Regular	3.50	3.59	0.09			
Female	Prototype	3.71	3.85	0.15			
	Regular	3.64	3.70	0.06			

p ≤ .05.

In contrast to Table 23, Table 24 indicates that there was a significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in prayer. The difference in significance is a result of a difference in sample size and in controlling for variables. The prototype increased time spent in prayer; the regular *ABSG* did not. The standardized effect size for time spent in prayer was 0.30σ . The standardized effect size for time spent in prayer shows that the prototype *ABSG* made a small positive difference in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no difference in the same area.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age. However, the prototype showed a trend of performing better than the regular *ABSG* for increasing time spent in prayer for learners in all age groups except the 65+ group.

Table 24

The Effect of ABSG Type on Time Spent in Prayer by Age

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.48	3.82	0.34	4.08	1, 171	0.04*
	Regular	3.59	3.64	0.05			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.30	3.80	0.50	2.25	3, 171	0.08
	Regular	3.69	3.46	-0.23			
45-54	Prototype	3.24	3.76	0.52			
	Regular	3.47	3.74	0.26			
55-64	Prototype	3.19	3.69	0.50			
	Regular	3.54	3.64	0.09			
65+	Prototype	4.19	4.03	-0.17			
	Regular	3.64	3.71	0.71			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 25 shows that there was significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in prayer. The prototype increased time spent in prayer; the regular *ABSG* did not. The standardized effect size for time spent in prayer was 0.28σ . The standardized effect size for time spent in prayer shows that the prototype *ABSG* had a small positive benefit in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no positive benefit in the same area.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational level. However, the prototype showed a trend of performing better than the regular *ABSG* for

increasing time spent in prayer for learners in all educational levels except those with a high-school education or less.

Table 25

The Effect of ABSG Type on Time Spent in Prayer by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.56	3.86	0.30	4.13	1, 170	0.04*
	Regular	3.63	3.64	0.01			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	3.85	3.82	-0.03	0.46	3, 170	0.71
	Regular	4.00	3.57	-0.43			
Some college	Prototype	3.52	3.91	0.39			
	Regular	3.82	3.73	-0.09			
College	Prototype	3.30	3.80	0.50			
	Regular	3.14	3.43	0.29			
Graduate work	Prototype	3.55	3.90	0.35			
	Regular	3.54	3.83	0.29			

* $p \leq .05$.

Spending more time in worship

Table 26 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in worship.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on time spent in worship. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for both men and women

Table 26

The Effect of ABSG Type on Time Spent in Worship by Gender

		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.67	3.86	0.19	2.10	1, 177	0.15
	Regular	3.67	3.65	-0.01			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	3.59	3.86	0.26	1.54	1, 177	0.22
	Regular	3.67	3.54	-0.12			
Female	Prototype	3.74	3.87	0.13			
	Regular	3.67	3.76	0.10			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 27 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in worship.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age regarding their effect on time spent in worship. For all age groups, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 27

The Effect of ABSG Type on Time Spent in Worship by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Total	Prototype	3.60	3.84	0.24	1.52	1, 173	0.22
	Regular	3.62	3.69	0.06			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.50	3.85	0.35	1.08	3, 173	0.36
	Regular	3.38	3.77	0.41			
45-54	Prototype	3.32	3.84	0.52			
	Regular	3.63	3.58	-0.05			
55-64	Prototype	3.44	3.69	0.25			
	Regular	3.68	3.73	0.04			
65+	Prototype	4.14	3.97	-0.17			
	Regular	3.80	3.67	-0.13			

$p \leq .05$.

Table 28 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in worship.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational level on time spent in worship. For all educational levels, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 28

*The Effect of ABSG Type on Time Spent
in Worship by Education*

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.63	3.88	0.24	3.30	1, 172	0.07
	Regular	3.71	3.70	-0.01			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	3.97	3.79	-0.18	0.51	3, 172	0.67
	Regular	4.06	3.81	-0.25			
Some college	Prototype	3.61	3.91	0.30			
	Regular	4.00	3.90	-0.09			
College	Prototype	3.30	3.85	0.55			
	Regular	3.27	3.36	0.09			
Graduate work	Prototype	3.65	3.95	0.30			
	Regular	3.50	3.71	0.21			

* $p \leq .05$.

Serving others

Table 29 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype regarding service to others.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding service to others. For both men and women, the regular and prototype quarterly *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 29

The Effect of ABSG Type on Serving Others by Gender

		Gender					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.30	3.62	0.32	1.28	1, 175	0.26
	Regular	3.30	3.46	0.16			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	3.29	3.62	0.33	0.11	1, 175	0.74
	Regular	3.19	3.41	0.22			
Female	Prototype	3.31	3.62	0.31			
	Regular	3.42	3.52	0.10			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 30 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype regarding service to others.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age regarding service to others. However, the prototype showed a trend of performing better in all age groups except 65+ in this area.

Table 31 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype regarding service to others.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and educational level regarding service to others. For all levels of education, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same.

Table 30

The Effect of ABSG Type on Serving Others by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.19	3.57	0.38	2.76	1, 171	0.10
	Regular	3.27	3.41	0.13			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	2.90	3.35	0.45	1.44	3, 171	0.23
	Regular	2.92	2.92	0.00			
45-54	Prototype	3.04	3.48	0.44			
	Regular	3.22	3.56	0.33			
55-64	Prototype	3.00	3.56	0.56			
	Regular	3.45	3.45	0.00			
65+	Prototype	3.83	3.89	0.06			
	Regular	3.48	3.69	0.21			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 31

The Effect of ABSG Type Serving Others by Education

		Education					
		Means			Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-	Effect	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.27	3.63	0.36	2.71	1, 170	0.10
	Regular	3.38	3.51	0.12			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	3.53	3.59	0.06	0.53	3, 170	0.66
	Regular	3.80	3.80	0.00			
Some college	Prototype	3.04	3.56	0.52			
	Regular	3.62	3.71	0.09			
College	Prototype	3.20	3.50	0.30			
	Regular	3.24	3.14	-0.09			
Graduate work	Prototype	3.30	3.85	0.55			
	Regular	2.87	3.37	0.50			

* $p \leq .05$.

Meditating more on God's Word

Table 32 indicates that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on meditating more on God's Word.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on meditating more on God's Word. The regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same for both women and men.

Table 32

The Effect of ABSG Type on Meditating More on God's Word by Gender

		Gender					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	4.00	4.23	0.22	3.59	1, 171	0.06
	Regular	3.97	3.96	0.01			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	4.10	4.32	0.22	0.18	1, 171	0.67
	Regular	4.00	3.94	-0.06			
Female	Prototype	3.91	4.13	0.22			
	Regular	3.94	3.98	0.04			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 33 shows that there was significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on meditating more on God's Word. The prototype increased meditating more on Scripture; the regular *ABSG* did not. The standardized effect size for meditating more on Scripture was 0.28σ . The standardized effect size for meditating on God's Word shows that the prototype *ABSG* had a small positive benefit in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no positive benefit in the same area.

In the interaction section of Table 33, the actual level of significance was .053. (To make the tables easier to read, all numbers are rounded off to two digits.) This shows that the interaction between *ABSG* type and age regarding their effect on meditating more on God's Word was close to being significant. For age levels 35-44, 45-54, and 55-64, the prototype performed better.

Table 33

The Effect of ABSG Type on Meditating More on God's Word by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.94	4.21	0.26	4.31	1, 167	0.04*
	Regular	3.94	3.95	0.01			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.95	4.20	0.25	2.61	3, 167	0.05
	Regular	3.77	3.92	0.15			
45-54	Prototype	3.48	4.04	0.56			
	Regular	3.94	3.83	-0.10			
55-64	Prototype	3.93	4.26	0.33			
	Regular	4.09	4.00	-0.09			
65+	Prototype	4.41	4.32	-0.09			
	Regular	3.96	4.04	0.40			

* $p \leq .05$.

In the main effect section of Table 34, the actual level of significance was .053. (For ease of reading, all numbers in the tables are rounded off to two digits.) Therefore, Table 34 shows that the difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on meditating more on God's Word was close to being significant.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and education regarding their effect on meditating more on God's Word. However, the prototype showed a trend of performing better than the regular *ABSG* for learners in all educational levels regarding meditating more on God's Word.

Table 34

The Effect of ABSG Type on Meditating More on God's Word by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.98	4.22	0.25	3.79	1, 166	0.05
	Regular	3.97	3.97	-0.00			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	4.12	4.22	0.09	0.10	3, 166	0.96
	Regular	4.07	4.00	-0.07			
Some college	Prototype	3.70	4.00	0.30			
	Regular	4.14	4.24	0.09			
College	Prototype	3.90	4.20	0.30			
	Regular	3.77	3.82	0.04			
Graduate work	Prototype	4.21	4.47	0.26			
	Regular	3.91	3.83	-0.09			

* $p \leq .05$.

Studying more about spiritual things on one's own

Table 35 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on studying more about spiritual things on one's own.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on studying more about spiritual things on one's own. For both men and women, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same on studying more about spiritual things on one's own.

Table 35

The Effect of ABSG Type on Studying More About Spiritual Things on One's Own by Gender

		Gender					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.84	3.92	0.08	0.22	1, 173	0.63
	Regular	3.75	3.76	0.01			
Gender							
Male	Prototype	3.74	3.93	0.02	1.67	1, 173	0.20
	Regular	3.87	3.81	-0.06			
Female	Prototype	3.94	3.91	-0.04			
	Regular	3.63	3.71	0.08			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 36 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on studying more about spiritual things on one's own.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and age regarding their effect on studying more about spiritual things on one's own. For all age groups, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same on studying more about spiritual things on one's own.

Table 37 shows that there was no significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on studying more about spiritual things on one's own.

There was no significant interaction between *ABSG* type and education regarding their effect on studying more about spiritual things on one's own. For all educational

levels, the regular and prototype *ABSGs* performed the same on studying more about spiritual things on one's own.

Table 36

The Effect of ABSG Type on Studying More About Spiritual Things on One's Own by Age

		Age					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.79	3.87	0.08	0.09	1, 169	0.76
	Regular	3.69	3.73	0.04			
Age							
35-44	Prototype	3.80	3.75	-0.05	0.97	3, 169	0.41
	Regular	3.54	3.61	0.08			
45-54	Prototype	3.36	3.88	0.52			
	Regular	3.65	3.71	0.06			
55-64	Prototype	3.69	3.75	0.06			
	Regular	3.67	3.76	0.09			
65+	Prototype	4.31	4.11	-0.19			
	Regular	3.90	3.83	-0.07			

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 37

The Effect of ABSG Type on Studying More About Spiritual Things on One's Own by Education

		Education					
		Means		Effect	Test of Significance		
		Pre-	Post-		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.*
Total	Prototype	3.83	3.91	0.08	0.09	1, 168	0.76
	Regular	3.74	3.78	0.04			
Education							
High school or less	Prototype	4.00	3.94	-0.06	0.49	3, 168	0.69
	Regular	3.86	4.00	0.14			
Some college	Prototype	3.78	3.87	0.09			
	Regular	3.95	3.85	-0.10			
College	Prototype	3.60	3.70	0.10			
	Regular	3.67	3.52	-0.14			
Graduate work	Prototype	3.95	4.15	0.20			
	Regular	3.50	3.75	0.25			

p ≤ .05.

GICQ Open-ended Questions

The GICQ pre-test taken by both the experimental and control groups concluded with the same two open-ended questions. These questions are:

60. Ellen White states that the purpose of redemption is to restore God's image in us (*Education*, pp. 15, 16). What parts of the *ABSG* help to meet this goal?

61. Describe what you would consider to be the ideal *ABSG*.

The GICQ post-test taken by both the experimental and control groups again ended with questions 60 and 61, and also included the following two questions for the experimental group:

62. If you studied the prototype *ABSG*, what did you like about it and why?

63. If you studied the prototype *ABSG*, what did you not like about it and why?

My rationale for using open-ended questions to deal with the topics is as follows:

1. Open-ended questions can elicit more information than multiple choice questions--information that includes feelings and attitudes (Colorado State University, 1993-2006).

2. I did not want to influence or limit the thoughts of the respondents by suggesting certain items/answers in multiple choice questions. I wanted *their* honest opinions.

3. I wanted to give the respondents an opportunity to address issues about the *ABSG* that personally concerned them.

Their answers were examined for any emerging themes and ranked according to which themes were mentioned the most.

Which parts of the *ABSG* assisted learners in restoring God's image in them?

White states in her book *Education* that the purpose of redemption is to restore God's image in us (1903, pp. 15, 16). Because the *ABSG* is about educating it users regarding redemption, it is important to know which parts of both the regular and the

prototype *ABSG* assisted learners in this great endeavor. First, data for the regular *ABSG* are presented. Then data for the prototype are submitted.

The regular *ABSG*. Eighty-six people studied from the regular *ABSG* and took both the pre- and post-tests. Eighty percent of those people answered this question on the pre-test. Sixty percent answered the question on the post-test.

From these answers, the following themes emerged. Now and throughout, after each theme the number of responses each theme received is presented:

1. all parts of the *ABSG*--20
2. Bible texts--16
3. parts that made the Bible practical/application--9
4. the mission stories at the end of each weekly lesson--9
5. the questions--9 (questions and their answers--4; discussion questions--3; reflection-style questions--2)
6. daily lesson format--8
7. the lesson comments--7
8. the writings of Ellen G. White--7
9. extra reading/study suggestions--2
10. those parts of the *ABSG* which focus on Christ--2.

Sample answers regarding which parts of the *ABSG* assisted learners in restoring God's image in them that appeared only once, but which might be of interest to those who write and edit the *ABSG*, are:

1. Friday's summary
2. studying the connection between the Old and the New Testaments in regards to God's love
3. the knowledge sections
4. inductive methods of presentation
5. the unity the regular *ABSG* creates among believers.

Post-test answers were nearly identical to pre-test answers.

The prototype *ABSG*. One hundred people studied the prototype *ABSG* and took both the pre- and post-tests. Seventy-two percent answered the question, "Which parts of the *ABSG* assist learners in restoring God's image in them?" on the pre-test, and 78% answered the question on the post-test.

From these answers, the following themes emerged:

1. Bible texts--22
2. all parts of the *ABSG*--18
3. the questions--10 (thought questions--7; when the Bible texts actually answer the questions--1; questions that are not immediately answered in the *ABSG*--1; the discussion questions in Friday's lesson--1)
4. the writings of Ellen G. White--8
5. the lesson comments--7
6. those parts of the *ABSG* which focus on Christ--6
7. parts that made the Bible practical/application--6

8. the mission stories at the end of each weekly lesson--5
9. daily lesson format--3
10. Friday's summary--3.

Three other areas of interest to the *ABSG* authors and editors included the following:

1. Two people mentioned that the commentary, inductive, witnessing, and life-application methods of presentation in the teacher's *ABSG* helped restore God's image in them. (In addition to the regular *ABSG*, a teacher's *ABSG* also is published each quarter. For this study, those classes and teachers who used the prototype were instructed not to use the teacher's *ABSG*, because the teacher's *ABSG* also contains the regular *ABSG*, which is the student's material.)

2. Two people stated that class discussion and how the class was taught made a positive difference in having God's image restored in them.

3. Two people mentioned on the pre-test that if the *ABSG* were easier to understand it might help them to have God's image restored in them.

Post-test answers that applied specifically to the prototype regarding which parts of the *ABSG* assisted learners in having God's image restored in them included the following:

1. the Applying God's Word section--17
2. the Responding to God's Word section--9
3. the Understanding God's Word section--1.

Data for the next open-ended research question which deals with the *ABSG* in general will now be presented.

What did people consider to be an ideal *ABSG*?

The regular *ABSG*. Seventy-nine percent of the 86 people who studied from the regular *ABSG* answered this question on the pre-test, while 72% answered it on the post-test. Between the two tests, the following themes emerged as to what they believed would help to create, or actually comprise, the ideal *ABSG*.

1. questions--20 (those questions that lead to deeper thinking--10; discussion questions--2; questions that are not immediately answered by the *ABSG*--4; an *ABSG* with more questions--1; an *ABSG* that answers the questions it asks--1; Scripture texts following the questions should have a clear relationship to the questions--1; questions that do not contain the answers within the questions themselves--1)
2. application ideas (more practical than theoretical)--17
3. the current *ABSG*--14
4. one that would be easier to understand--10
5. one that is more Christ-centered--9
6. one that lists other resources for further study--8
7. *ABSGs* that include the Bible and Ellen G. White quotes--8
9. those that are Bible-based--7
10. *ABSGs* that study books of the Bible--6
11. *ABSGs* that have more room in which to write notes--4

12. *ABSGs* that deal with the issues of modern life (i.e., divorce, stress, where is God when I need Him most)--3

13. more mission stories--2

14. *ABSGs* that study themes--2

15. *ABSGs* that use Scripture in context--2

16. one that alerts readers to end time events, the coming conflict, the Second Coming, and the third angel's message--2

17. *ABSGs* that give background historical and cultural information to help readers better understand the Bible--2.

Once again, Sabbath School classes emerged as a theme. Three people felt that an ideal *ABSG* fostered better class discussion. A fourth respondent mentioned that more class time was needed to study the *ABSG*.

Sample answers appearing only once, but which might be of interest to those who write and edit the *ABSG*, are:

1. an *ABSG* format that follows a knowledge, application, service cycle

2. one that facilitates inductive study

3. one that actually answers the questions posed in Sunday's The Week at a Glance

4. one that minimizes secular quotes

5. one that does not reflect the authors' or editors' bias

6. being able to have a variety of *ABSGs* which reflect the levels of education and various interests within the church

7. having access to the *ABSG* on DVD or other digital format; have more information on the *ABSG*'s topics on the web site.

Post-test answers were nearly identical to those of the pre-test.

The prototype *ABSG*. Seventy-seven percent of the 100 people who comprised the experimental group answered the pre-test question, What makes an ideal *ABSG*? Seventy-nine percent answered the question on the post-test. The themes that emerged from their answers are as follows.

An ideal *ABSG* is one that:

1. helps the reader understand how to apply biblical principles to every-day life--25
2. is easy to understand--14
3. is Christ-centered--13
4. more challenging than the regular *ABSG*--10
5. is Bible-based--9
6. has good questions--7 (thought provoking--2; questions that don't ask the obvious--1; structure questions that connect with ideas in new ways--1; questions that encourage a person to study on her/his own--1; break the subject down with questions--1; *ABSG* should not always give the answers to the questions--1)
7. is like the regular *ABSG*--6
8. has more space to write in--6

9. has historical and cultural information that helps the reader to better understand the Bible writer's messages--5

10. has a list of further study suggestions--4

11. has suggestions for outreach--4

12. has good commentary notes between the questions--2

13. has more Bible texts--2

14. has the Bible texts written out--2

15. is not biased--2.

Samples of single answers which might be of importance to the editors and authors are:

1. Put the *ABSG* on the internet or in a digital format.
2. The ideal *ABSG* should prepare us for the Second Coming.
3. The *ABSG* needs to be in large print.

Once again, the teacher's edition of the *ABSG* was mentioned as the ideal *ABSG* for its extra material, and for its Inductive and Witnessing sections.

The Sabbath School classes also were mentioned in relationship to the ideal *ABSG*. In this regard, the ideal *ABSG* should have enough material for the 40-minute class. On the other hand, one person wanted more class time so there could be more discussion.

The post-tests for the prototype *ABSG* yielded the following themes regarding the ideal *ABSG*.

1. Fourteen people felt that the prototype was indicative of the ideal *ABSG*.

2. Five people said that the Applying God's Word and Responding to God's Word sections of the prototype should be aspects of the ideal *ABSG*.

Data for the open-ended research questions which deal with the prototype *ABSG* will now be presented.

What did people like about the prototype and why?

In an attempt to have the prototype look as much like the regular *ABSG* as possible, almost everything about it was the same as the regular *ABSG*. The font type and size, the ads, the mission stories at the end of each weekly lesson, the cover, the Table of Contents, the inside art work, and the front and back covers were the same as the regular *ABSG*. In addition, the prototype covered the same topic as the regular *ABSG* for the quarter during which the research took place (second quarter, 2005), and used much of the same information-based material as the regular *ABSG*.

The difference involved the use of the learning cycle as depicted by Figure 5 in chapter 3. This difference slightly affected the appearance of daily lessons Sunday through Thursday. Each of these daily lessons was divided by three headings to coincide with steps 2, 3, and 4 of the learning cycle. These page divisions were: (a) Understanding God's Word; (b) Applying God's Word; and (c) Responding to God's Word. The prototype also featured the use of certain spiritual disciplines (see Table 2 in chapter 3). This use of spiritual disciplines most greatly affected the Summary, which appears at the end of Friday's lesson. Rather than provide a "ready-made" summary for learners to read,

the prototype asked them to “journal” their own summary at the end of each week’s lesson.

Eighty-eight percent of the 100 people who studied the prototype shared on the post-test what they liked about it. The themes that emerged according to rank are:

1. the Applying God’s Word section--30
2. its questions--16 (thought questions--10; discussion questions--3; application questions--1; liked the questions--1; questions more pointed--1)
3. the Responding to God’s Word section--15
4. easier to understand--12
5. the format--7
6. made me think more--4
7. quicker to the point and why it mattered--4
8. its Christ-centeredness--2.

Samples of single answers that might be of interest to *ABSG* editors and authors included the following.

1. One person liked the fact that the prototype was more inductive.
2. Another person felt that the biblical material was explained more clearly.

Once again, the respondents spoke up about the *ABSG*’s relationship to their Sabbath School classes. Regarding the prototype:

1. Three people mentioned that the prototype generated great discussions. They wondered if it was because it was something different or if it was due to how the prototype presented the material. None of the three stated a conclusion on the matter. (It

should be noted here that the teachers who taught the classes which were studying from the prototype agreed not to use the regular teacher's *ABSG*, because that *ABSG* always includes the regular student's *ABSG*.)

2. Another person thought that the prototype presented short concepts the class could discuss rather than large concepts class members had to attempt to grasp. This meant they were able to cover more of the lesson in the allotted time.

3. Two teachers who taught prototype classes mentioned that they missed the teacher's *ABSG*, while one teacher thought that the prototype was more teacher-friendly than the regular *ABSG*.

In addition to asking what the people liked about the prototype, it also asked them to state why they liked what they did. Following are the themes which emerged from their responses.

1. Respondents who liked the format did so because (a) "it was practical and seemed to apply the lessons to our lives today"; (b) "it draws you in and doesn't let you 'skirt' the direct questions which challenge you to find ways to apply each day's study to your life"; (c) "it really got me thinking"; and (d) "it made the point of the lesson very well."

2. Those who liked the Applying God's Word section did so because: (a) it "made me think of practical ways to use God's words"; (b) it "caused me to focus inward more effectively"; (c) "it really made me examine my own spiritual state"; (d) it "brought into clearer focus the daily lesson"; (e) it "came across as more personable"; (f) it "seemed more action oriented"; (g) it "got me thinking how I can today use these truths";

and (h) it made the lessons personal and caused me to take a deeper look at my own spiritual walk with Jesus.”

3. Those who liked the Responding to God’s Word section did so because (a) it “caused me to focus inward more effectively”; (b) “it’s where everything came together and challenged me”; (c) “it really made me examine my own spiritual state and it really got me thinking”; (d) “it made the point of the lesson very well”; (e) it “seemed more action oriented”; (f) it “got me thinking how I can today uses these truths”; and (g) it “made the lessons personal and caused me to take a deeper look at my own spiritual walk with Jesus.”

4. One respondent stated that he liked the practical questions because they made him think about his personal life.

5. Another person mentioned that she liked the summaries in Friday’s lessons because they really helped her to focus on what she could take away from the week’s study. (Remember that in the prototype, the summaries were journal exercises asking the learner to summarize insights and conclusions that he/she personally drew from the week’s lesson. By doing so, the learners were engaged in journaling as a spiritual discipline.)

6. Those who stated a general liking for the prototype *ABSG* did so because: (a) it “applied to me personally”; (b) it was “more simplified and to the point”; (c) it drew “me closer to Christ and gave me a desire to study more. It also made me realize I need to do more for others than I currently do. Somehow it put more love in my heart”; (d) it

“made me think about what I need to change or do differently”; and (e) “ it seemed to be written on my level.”

7. One person liked the thought questions because they challenged her way of thinking.

While this section deals with what the learners liked about the prototype and why, the last open-ended question regarding the *ABSGs* asked the respondents to share what they did not like. It is to those answers which we now turn.

What did people not like about the prototype and why?

Seventy-seven percent of the 100 people who studied the prototype answered this question. They did not mention specific parts of the *ABSG* as many of them did in the previous question.

1. Eighteen said there was nothing to dislike.
2. Eleven people felt that the prototype had focus issues (not enough time spent on each topic--5; the prototype wasn't deep enough--3; the prototype needed to focus more--1; the same topics were discussed several times--1).
3. Seven people felt that the prototype was no different from the standard *ABSG*.
4. Five people wanted daily lessons Sunday through Thursday to begin with titles rather than the heading “Understanding God’s Word.”
5. Three liked the prototype, but saw no difference between it and the standard *ABSG*.
6. Three disliked it because they thought it had a socio-political slant.

The issue of questions arose here as it did in the other three open-ended questions.

1. One person did not like the fact that the prototype did not always provide the answers.
2. Another wanted more discussion and thought questions.
3. A third person thought there were too many questions.

Regarding the teacher's *ABSG*, one person expressed that she preferred it for its various teaching styles and the Ellen G. White quotes it often included. Three other people who were teachers stated that they missed not being able to study from the teacher's *ABSG*.

Two reasons were given why people did not like something in the prototype. The five who wanted titles rather than the heading "Understanding God's Word" felt that titles summarized what the lesson was going to be about and therefore helped them to focus their thinking at the very beginning of the day's lesson. Another person simply did not like the prototype because it was too "touchy-feely."

Twelve of the themes that appeared in the answers to questions 60-63 did so not in just one of the questions but in several of them. These recurring themes are: more application; the style and amount of questions; more Bible texts; an easier to understand *ABSG*; Christ-centered quarterlies; the amount of Ellen G. White material (some respondents wanted more, while some wanted less); good class discussion; the inclusion of the Inside mission stories; the inclusion of lesson comments; the desire for suggestions for extra reading; the teacher's *ABSG*; and the daily lesson study format. See Appendix I

for a chart displaying the specific questions in which these themes appeared and the total number of times the themes were given as answers.

Major Findings

The main research question of this study was: What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on spirituality? To answer that question, I developed a prototype adult Bible study *ABSG* for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and tested it, along with the denomination's regular adult Bible study *ABSG*, to investigate the effect each type of *ABSG* had on the following areas: (a) general learning outcomes; (b) knowledge and beliefs; (c) attitudes, values, and commitments; and (d) behavior and skills. The second research question asked: Does the impact of the type of *ABSG* differ by gender, age group, or educational level? The significant findings are as follows.

1. There was significant interaction between *ABSG* type and gender regarding their effect on knowledge and beliefs. For men, the regular *ABSG* had a small positive benefit in contrast to the prototype. For women, the prototype *ABSG* had a small positive benefit in contrast to the regular *ABSG*.

2. The prototype *ABSG* made a small positive difference in time spent in prayer for all ages except 65+. This is in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no real improvement in the same area.

3. The prototype *ABSG* made a small positive difference in time spent in prayer for all educational levels except high school or less. This is in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no real improvement in the same area.

4. The prototype *ABSG* made a small positive difference in time spent meditating on God's Word for all age levels except 65+ . This is in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no real improvement in the same area.

Open-ended Questions

The pre-test for both the experimental and control groups contained two open-ended questions: What parts of the *ABSG* help to restore God's image in you? and Describe what you would consider to be the ideal *ABSG*. The post-test for both groups contained these same two questions again. The post-test for the experimental group asked two additional questions pertaining to the prototype: What did you like about the prototype? and What did you not like about the prototype?

Based on the answers to all of these questions, the following themes emerged from responses given by both the experimental and the control groups. They are in order from the highest number of responses to the lowest number of responses: application; style and amount of questions; amount and type of Bible texts; the need for *ABSGs* that are easier to understand; the need for *ABSGs* to be Christ-centered; the amount of Ellen G. White material (either too much or not enough).

In an attempt to have the prototype look as much like the regular *ABSG* as possible, almost everything about it was the same as the regular *ABSG*. The difference involved the use of the learning cycle as depicted by Figure 5 in chapter 3. This difference slightly affected the appearance of daily lessons Sunday through Thursday. Each of these daily lessons was divided by three headings to coincide with the steps 2, 3, and 4 of the

learning cycle. These page divisions were: (a) Understanding God's Word; (b) Applying God's Word; and (c) Responding to God's Word (see Appendix F). Based on the answers to all of these questions, the following themes emerged.

Those people who liked the prototype did so for the following reasons. They are in order from the highest number of responses to the lowest number of responses: the Applying God's Word section; the types of questions asked; the Responding to God's Word section; easier to understand.

After studying the prototype, some people believed it to be the ideal *ABSG*, while a lesser number said that the Applying God's Word and Responding to God's Word sections of the prototype should be aspects of the ideal *ABSG*.

Regarding the question, What did you not like about the prototype? the following themes emerged. They are ordered from the highest number of responses to the lowest: nothing to dislike; focus issues; felt the prototype was no different from the regular study *ABSG*; titles wanted at the beginning of daily lessons rather than the phrase Understanding God's Word.

Discussion of these major findings is presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

Statement of the Problem

Despite the *Adult Bible Study Guide's* (*ABSG's*) potential for promoting Christian spirituality among Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church members, no studies have investigated its impact on the spirituality of its users. Furthermore, the *ABSG* is not intentional regarding the spiritual growth of its users. Beginning as a way to disseminate the unique biblical doctrines of the fledgling Church, the *ABSG* has remained largely expository and apologetic in nature. And as White (1940) stated, "A theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for" helping to restore in persons the image of their Creator (p. 309).

The Purpose of the Study

Because of its historical lack of intentional guidance in Christian spirituality, and because no studies have been done to investigate the *ABSG's* impact on the spirituality of its users, the purpose of this research was twofold:

1. To develop and evaluate a prototype *ABSG* which is specifically formulated not only to deal with biblical information, Christian biblical doctrines in general, and SDA

biblical doctrines in particular, but with Christian spirituality as well (This prototype will consist of a conceptual framework based on experiential learning concepts, which when employed in conjunction with certain teaching/learning methods will assist in cultivating Christian spirituality regardless of the topic of any given *ABSG*.)

2. To evaluate the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality.

The Research Questions

Two main research questions guided this study, along with four sub-questions:

1. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality?

From this question, four areas of interest were defined from which the sub-questions were generated:

- a. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the attainment of general learning outcomes?
 - b. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of knowledge and beliefs?
 - c. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the acquisition of attitudes, values, and commitments?
 - d. What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on the practice of behaviors and skills?
2. Does the impact of the type of *ABSG* differ by gender, age group, or educational level?

Review of the Literature

Three questions guided the survey of literature and the development of the prototype ABSG:

1. What are Christian spirituality and Christian spiritual growth?
2. How intentional has the SDA Church been regarding spirituality and spiritual growth?
3. How can Christian educators and editors of Bible study material enhance the spiritual growth of adult learners?

Following is a summary of how each question was answered.

What Are Spirituality and Spiritual Growth?

The areas discussed to arrive at definitions for these two terms included Fowler's stages of faith; a biblical model of faith development; Fortosis's model of stage development for the Christian growth process; and the biblical concepts of justification and sanctification. Also discussed were how various Christian educators viewed spirituality and spiritual growth. These educators included Dallas Willard; M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.; Maxie Dunnam; and Ellen White.

The theorists, biblical material, and Christian educators discussed in this section of the literature review all share certain convictions which assisted in defining spirituality and spiritual growth. Each states that a mature faith involves transformation and that this transformation is ongoing. The decidedly Christian viewpoints state that this

transformation involves developing a Christlike character--a character distinguished by love for God and humanity and manifested in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22, 23).

Thus, for the purpose of developing an adult Bible study guide that promotes spirituality and spiritual growth, this study defined spirituality as a life-transforming relationship with God (Roehlkepartain, 1993, p. 38) and consistent devotion to serving others. Spiritual growth, then, is the *process* of being conformed to this likeness. This process occurs as a result of beholding Christ through the use of such spiritual disciplines as Bible study, prayer, meditation, worship, fellowship, service, etc.; and manifests itself in one's love for God and other humans, as well as in the fruit of the Spirit.

How Intentional Has the SDA Church Been Regarding Spirituality and Spiritual Growth?

God created humankind in His image; but the first two humans chose to separate themselves from God by acting against His will for their lives (Gen 1-3). In doing so, God's image in them was severely damaged. Jesus, however, who as God's Son is the express image of God, came to restore God's image in humankind (Knight, 1985, pp. 49, 50). The apostle Paul echoes these words, when in Rom 8:29 he writes that for "those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."

Ellen White (1903), co-founder of the SDA Church, states that to

restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in creation might be realized--this was to be the work of redemption. This is the . . . great object of life. (pp. 15, 16)

Today, the official web site of the Church tacitly reflects this “great object of life” in its mission statement:

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return. (SDA Yearbook, 2006, p. 8)

One of the methods used to that end is teaching that addresses the truth that the development of an individual’s mind and character is a cardinal component to the plan of salvation and that emphasizes “a mature understanding of and relationship to God, His Word, and the created universe” (SDA Yearbook, 2006, p. 8).

Based on the exalted goal and noble mission statement set forth both by White and the denomination’s administration, it was imperative for this study to ask how intentional the Church has been in fulfilling both. To find the answer, historical and current church priorities were investigated, along with various SDA research studies; ministerial training programs; certain General Conference departments; and specific church publications.

It was discovered that the founders of the Church sought God through many of the spiritual disciplines. However, argumentative styles of evangelism stirred “up combativeness, and thus eclipsed the truth as it is in Jesus” (White, 1892, p. 81). Such evangelism also kept them from focusing on the “nature of true piety, [and] experimental godliness,” Jesus’ “self-denial and self-sacrifice, [and] His meekness and forbearance” (White, 1892, p. 81). Changing to a more pastoral approach to ministry and the emphasis on righteousness by faith at the 1888 GC session helped the Church to focus on more

spiritual matters rather than on just gaining biblical knowledge. This focus later was dimmed by the manner in which the contemporary Church began to emphasize evangelism by engaging its ministers and lay members in a bevy of programs and initiatives. Fortunately, though, many recent studies suggesting that the denomination lacks spiritual vitality are sounding a “wake-up call.” As a result, many GC departments and publications are finding ways to incorporate spirituality and spiritual growth concepts into their mission statements, curricula, and resources.

How can the *ABSG* do likewise? The answer to this question was explored in the third and final section of the literature review dealing with how Christian educators and editors can enhance the spiritual growth of adult learners.

How Can Christian Educators and Editors of Bible Study Material Enhance the Spiritual Growth of Adult Learners?

Roehlkepartain (1993) states that “*the primary goal of congregational life is to nurture in people a vibrant, life-changing faith--the kind of faith that shapes a person's way of being, thinking, and acting*” (p. 19; emphasis in original), that helps us to have God's image restored in us. Thus, the literature review discussed concepts and methods of teaching that promote such nurturing. These concepts and methods included David A. Kolb's learning styles and cycle (1984); Lawrence O. Richards's cycle of learning based on Col 1:9-11 (1970) ; and Rick Yount's “triad of human life” (Yount, 1995, p. 145), all of which included the concept of transformation.

Also discussed were Jesus' methods of teaching and how the use of spiritual disciplines can enhance both the learning and spiritual growth processes. Regarding the former, it was observed that Jesus made accommodations for people's learning styles and the learning cycle and that He provided His followers with examples regarding the importance of practicing various spiritual disciplines.

The literature review ended with a survey of how well the *ABSG* has followed Jesus' example of teaching. This investigation began with the first guide published in 1863 and ended with the guides of 2005. It was discovered that while there were times when the guides made efforts to acknowledge the process of learning, a process which itself leads to transformation, there was no consistency regarding the matter. The same is true for the guide's approach to instruction regarding Christian spirituality and its efforts to engage learners in the use of spiritual disciplines.

Research Methodology

The methodology of this research included (a) the development of a prototype *ABSG* designed specifically to promote Christian spirituality regardless of the topic of a guide; and (b) the development of a questionnaire to evaluate the impact of the type of *ABSG* on Christian spirituality. The former will be discussed first.

The Prototype *ABSG*

The undergirding structure of the prototype consisted of Kolb's learning cycle and learning styles (see chapter 3, Figure 5) and the intentional use of various types of questions appropriate for each step of the cycle and for each learning style.

Various activities in the daily lessons for each Sunday through Thursday promoted the use of spiritual disciplines (see chapter 3, Table 2). The lesson for each of these days was divided into three parts. The first part was Understanding God's Word, which presented information for the topic being studied. The second part was Applying God's Word, which consisted of questions and ideas to help learners apply the information to their personal lives. The third section, Responding to God's Word, consisted of questions and ideas to help learners use the information in practical ways as they dealt with others and specific life situations.

Last of all, any good curriculum and its accompanying resources are constructed with general learning outcomes. The curriculum for the *ABSG* and the guides themselves should be no exception. The learning outcomes I chose for the framework are explications of the eight core dimensions of faith in the *Effective Christian Education* study (Benson & Eklin, 1990), "which, *when taken together*, give a well-rounded portrait of a person with faith maturity" (Roehlkepartain, 1993, pp. 36, 37; emphasis in original). The North American Division (1990) of the SDA Church recommended these outcomes for the basis of all adult religious education material (pp. 35, 36).

The outcomes were divided into three categories: (a) knowledge and beliefs; (b) attitudes, values, and commitments; and (c) behaviors and skills. As Roehlkepartain (1993) points out, these outcomes can be placed under one or the other of the two dimensions of Christian faith: the Christian's relationship with God and the Christian's relationship with her or his neighbors. The former dimension is the "*vertical* dimension of faith which symbolizes God reaching 'down' to humanity" (p. 38; emphasis in

original), and is viewed “as a *life-transforming relationship to a loving God*. Some ways in which Christians express this part of faith include worshiping God, praying, and studying their Bibles” (p. 38; emphasis in original). This dimension, therefore, involves the second step of the learning cycle (What do I need to know?), and the cognitive and relational components of biblical faith (What do I believe? Whom should I know [Jesus]?). The latter dimension is “the *horizontal* dimension of faith,” which is “defined as a *consistent devotion to serving others*. Some ways Christians express this part of faith include helping people in need, becoming involved in social issues, and taking care of the environment” (p. 38; emphasis in original). This dimension includes the behavioral component of biblical faith (What should I do?), and the third and fourth steps of the learning cycle (How do I use what I know? What if I use what I know this way?).

Any one *ABSG* should address as many of these outcomes as possible so that during the course of a year, all the outcomes have been covered. (Tables 4, 5, and 6 in chapter 3 give representative samples of where in the prototype learners come into contact with a particular outcome.)

The second area concerning the methodology of this study will now be summarized.

The Method Used to Evaluate the Impact of the Type of *ABSG* on Christian Spirituality

A pre-test/post-test questionnaire called the Adult Bible Study Guide Growth in Christ Questionnaire (GICQ) was administered to a convenience sample of 186 Seventh-day Adventists in 17 Sabbath School classes from 12 churches. Ten of the churches were

in the Chesapeake Conference of the SDA Church; 2 were in the Michigan Conference. Ten classes studied from the prototype. Seven studied from the regular quarterly. The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS; Benson & Eklin, 1990) comprised the first part of the GICQ and was used to test the general learning outcomes.

To measure specific knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills which pertained to both the regular and the prototype study guides, the pre- and post-tests used the Beliefs, Behaviors, Attitudes, and Skills instrument (BBAS) that I developed. The BBAS consisted of six open-ended questions for knowledge and beliefs; a 5-point Likert scale containing four items to test for attitudes, values, and commitments; and a 5-point Likert scale containing six items to test for behavior and skills.

Demographic questions asked for gender, age, ethnic identity, highest level of education completed, and how often the respondents studied from the *ABSG*.

The pre-test questionnaire ended with two open-ended questions which allowed the respondents to register their opinions, thoughts, and feelings regarding the *ABSG* in general. In addition, the first of these questions related to the definition of spirituality and spiritual growth put forth in this research.

The post-test used the same questionnaire as the pre-test. However, for those who studied from the prototype *ABSG*, the post-test ended with two additional questions asking the respondents to share their likes and dislikes regarding the prototype.

The main research question and its four sub-questions were answered by first listing the *N*, means, and standard deviations of each questionnaire item. ANOVA was

used to indicate whether there were significant differences between pre- and post-test means for the regular and prototype quarterlies regarding learning outcomes; knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills. ANOVA also was used to indicate whether there was significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and educational levels in the areas of knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; behavior and skills; and general learning outcomes. Effect sizes were used to determine the magnitude of significant differences.

The responses to the four open-ended questions at the end of the GICQ were analyzed for general themes within each question and across all of the questions. Sample responses were given for each category

Analysis of the Data

The basic research question guiding this study was: What is the impact of the type of *ABSG* on spirituality? A review of the major findings provided by each of the five sub-questions now follows. Also included is a synopsis of the data provided by the four open-ended questions at the end of survey instrument.

Sub-question A: What Is the Impact of the Type of *ABSG* on the Attainment of General Learning Outcomes?

There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on general learning outcomes (the FMS). Neither the regular quarterly nor the prototype had any effect on the general learning outcomes for either the vertical or horizontal faith items on the FMS.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and educational level on the attainment of general learning outcomes. The regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same for all of these demographic groups on all of the general learning outcomes.

Sub-question B: What Is the Impact of the Type of *ABSG* on the Acquisition of Knowledge and Beliefs?

There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on knowledge and beliefs. Neither the regular quarterly nor the prototype had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and age and educational level on knowledge and beliefs. However, there was significant interaction between quarterly type and gender. For men, the regular quarterly performed better. For the regular quarterly, the standardized effect size was 0.30σ ; for the prototype, the standardized effect size was -0.05σ . This shows that for men the regular quarterly had a small positive benefit in contrast to the prototype. For women, the prototype performed better. For the prototype, the standardized effect size was 0.20σ ; for the regular quarterly, the standardized effect size was -0.23σ . This shows that for women the prototype quarterly had a small positive benefit in contrast to the regular quarterly.

Sub-question C: What Is the Impact of the Type of *ABSG* on the Acquisition of Attitudes, Values, and Commitments?

There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on attitudes, values, and commitments. Neither the regular nor the prototype quarterly had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and education regarding their effect on attitudes, values, and commitments. In all of these demographic areas, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

Sub-question D: What Is the Impact of the Type of *ABSG* on the Practice of Behaviors and Skills

Living Simply by Gender, Age, and Education. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on living simply. Neither the regular nor the prototype quarterly had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and education regarding their effect on living simply. In all of these demographic areas, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

Time Spent in Prayer by Gender. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on time spent in prayer. Neither the regular quarterly nor the prototype had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender regarding their effect on time spent in prayer. Both the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same for men and women.

Time Spent in Prayer by Age. As a result of sample size and controlling for variables, there was a significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in prayer. The prototype increased time spent in prayer. The regular *ABSG* did not. The standardized effect size for time spent in prayer was 30σ . This shows that the prototype made a small positive difference in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no difference in the same area.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and age regarding their effect on time spent in prayer. However, the prototype showed a trend of performing better than the regular *ABSG* for increasing time spent in prayer for learners in all age groups except 65+.

Time Spent in Prayer by Education. Again, as a result of sample size and controlling for variables, there was a significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent in prayer. The prototype increased time spent in prayer. The regular *ABSG* did not. The standardized effect size for time spent in prayer was 28σ . This shows that the prototype made a small positive difference in contrast to the regular *ABSG*, which showed no difference in the same area.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and education regarding their effect on time spent in prayer. However, the prototype showed a trend of performing better than the regular *ABSG* for increasing time spent in prayer for all educational levels except high school or less.

Time Spent in Worship by Gender, Age, and Education. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on time spent in worship. Neither the regular nor the prototype quarterly had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and education regarding their effect on time spent in worship. In all of these demographic areas, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

Serving Others by Gender, Age, and Education. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on motivation to serve others. Neither the regular nor the prototype quarterly had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and education regarding their effect on motivation to serve others. In all of these demographic areas, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

Time Spent Meditating on God's Word by Gender. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on time spent meditating on God's Word. Neither the regular nor the prototype quarterly had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender regarding time spent meditating on God's Word. Both the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same for men and women.

Time Spent Meditating On God's Word by Age. As a result of sample size and controlling for variables, there was a significant difference between the effect of the regular *ABSG* and the prototype on time spent meditating on God's Word by age. The total standardized effect size was 0.28σ . The effect size for time spent meditating more

on God's Word shows that the prototype quarterly had a small positive benefit in contrast to the regular quarterly, which showed no positive benefit.

Although there was no significant interaction between quarterly type and age, the people in all age groups except 65+ who used the prototype spent more time meditating on God's Word.

Time Spent Meditating on God's Word by Education. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on time spent meditating on God's Word.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and education regarding their effect on time spent meditating on God's Word.

Studying More About Spiritual Things on My Own by Age, Gender, and Education. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on motivation to study more about spiritual things on one's own. Neither the regular nor the prototype quarterly had any effect.

There was no significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, and education regarding their effect on motivation to study more about spiritual things on one's own. In all three demographic areas, the regular and prototype quarterlies performed the same.

GICQ Open-ended Questions at the End of the Survey

Here I have listed only the top five answers for each question. For the complete lists, see Chapter 4.

Which Parts of the Quarterly Assisted Learners in Restoring God's Image in them? This question appeared on the pre- and post-tests for the experimental group (prototype) and the control group (regular quarterly). Eighty percent of the control group answered this question as follows (now and throughout, the number after each theme signifies the number of responses each theme received):

1. all parts of the quarterly--20
2. Bible texts--16
3. parts that made the Bible practical/application--9
4. the mission stories at the end of each weekly lesson--9
5. the questions--9 (questions and their answers--4; discussion questions--3; reflection-style questions--2)

Post-test answers were not significantly different.

Seventy-two percent of the experimental group answered as listed below:

1. Bible texts--22
2. all parts of the quarterly--18
3. the questions--10 (thought questions--7; when the Bible texts actually answer the questions--1; questions that are not immediately answered in the *ABSG*--1; the discussion questions in Friday's lesson--1)
4. the writings of Ellen G. White--8
5. the lesson comments--7

Post-test answers which applied specifically to the prototype included:

1. The Applying God's Word section--17

2. The Responding to God's Word section--9
3. The Understanding God's Word section--1.

What Did People Consider to Be an Ideal Quarterly? This question also appeared on the pre- and post-test for the control and experimental groups. For the control group, 79% answered as follows:

1. questions--20 (those questions that lead to deeper thinking--10; discussion questions--2; questions that are not immediately answered by the *ABSG*--4; an *ABSG* with more questions--1; a quarterly that answers the questions it asks--1; Scripture texts following the questions should have a clear relationship to the questions--1; questions that do not contain the answers within the questions themselves--1)

2. application ideas (more practical than theoretical)--17
3. the current quarterly--14
4. one that would be easier to understand--10
5. one that is more Christ-centered--9

Post-test answers were not significantly different.

Seventy percent of the experimental group answered as listed below:

1. helps the reader understand how to apply biblical principles to everyday life--25
2. is easy to understand--14
3. is Christ-centered--13
4. is more challenging than the regular *ABSG*--10
5. is Bible-based--9

Post-test answers which specifically related to the prototype were:

1. the prototype--14
2. the Applying God's Word and Responding to God's Word sections of the prototype--5

What Did People Like About the Prototype and Why? Eighty-eight percent of those in the experimental group shared the following responses:

1. the Applying God's Word section--30
2. its questions--16 (thought questions--10; discussion questions--3; application questions--1; liked the questions--1; questions more pointed--1)
3. the Responding to God's Word section--15
4. easier to understand--12
5. the format--7

The most common answers regarding what they liked about the prototype involved its practicality and application to every-day life, its ability to challenge people's thinking, the way it always made the point of the lessons, and how it helped learners examine their relationship with God. One woman said she liked it because it helped her realize she needed to do more for others and it "somehow" put more love in her heart.

What Did People Not Like About the Prototype and Why? Seventy-seven percent of the people in the experimental group answered this question as listed below:

1. there was nothing to dislike--18
2. the prototype had focus issues--11
3. the prototype was no different from the standard quarterly--7

4. the prototype needed to spend more time on each topic--5

5. daily lessons Sunday through Thursday needed to begin with a title rather than the heading "Understanding God's Word"--5

Two reasons were given why people did not like something in the prototype. Those who wanted titles rather than the heading "Understanding God's Word" felt that titles summarized what the lesson was going to be about and therefore helped them to focus their thinking at the very beginning of the day's lesson. One man simply did not like the prototype because it was too "touchy-feely." It is interesting to note that the preferences expressed by these learners reflect the view that being a Christian involves knowledge more than it involves applying the information to one's personal life and responding to the information via behaviors that express loving service to others.

For recurring themes that appeared in all of the open-ended questions, see the table in Appendix I.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to develop and evaluate a prototype *ABSG* specifically formulated to deal not only with biblical information, Christian biblical doctrines in general, and SDA biblical doctrines in particular, but with Christian spirituality as well, and to examine the impact of the type of Bible study guide on the Christian spirituality of its users.

Based on Kolb's (1984) learning cycle and styles, the weekly and daily lessons of this prototype revolved around the following framework: Step 1--Why is the subject

being presented important to learners? Step 2--What do learners need to know about the subject to help them understand it? Step 3--How will learners apply the information to their life? and Step 4--How will learners actively respond to the information? Step 2 involved knowledge and beliefs. Step 3 involved attitudes, values, and commitments; while Step 4 involved behavior and skills (see Figure 5, chapter 3). Such a framework, I believe, provides interest for all learning styles. Furthermore, it walks learners through the various steps of biblical faith which are critical to Christian spiritual growth. These steps involve: (a) a knowledge and beliefs component dealing with what the Bible says is true about God (Downs, 1994, p. 18); (b) an attitudes, values, and commitment component dealing with “a confidence of heart and mind in God” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 1979, p. 342), which in turn allows learners to commit their lives in a relational way to what they believe; and (c) a behavior and skills component visible for all to see in the Christian lifestyle and in the service Christians render to others.

The prototype was studied and tested second quarter, 2005, in conjunction with the regular *ABSG* for that same quarter. How do the results of this research relate to the framework?

Regarding knowledge and beliefs (step 2 of the learning cycle and the first component of biblical faith), the prototype worked better for women, while the regular *ABSG* worked better for men. This is in keeping with the outcome of other studies which have shown rather uniformly that religious tendencies are stronger in women than they are in men--that women are more likely than men to express a greater interest in religion

(Davis & Smith, 1991; Lenski, 1953; Yinger, 1970;), and that they have a greater religious commitment than men (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Astin & Astin, 2003).

Many answers to the open-ended questions also verified this finding. More women responded favorably to the open-ended questions about liking the prototype than did men. Some of the comments made by women in this regard were: “The prototype put more love in my heart for Christ and for others”; “The prototype put more love in my heart and made me realize I need to do more for others”; “The prototype emphasized not just learning, but also what we could do with what we learned”; “The prototype motivated me to change some of my ways and ideas.” The following negative responses are indicative of the way some of the men felt: “The prototype was too touchy-feely”; “It wasn’t deep enough [was this a complaint that there wasn’t enough information presented?]; “All the questions were worded in a way that attempted to make me feel guilty about the poor of the world and guilty about people in jail who are getting what they deserve.”

People who used the prototype showed no growth regarding attitudes, values, and commitments--step 3 of the learning cycle and the second component of biblical faith. Neither was there any relationship between the prototype and growth in the areas of gender, age, and educational level regarding this step. Perhaps if the study had occurred over a longer period of time, the results in this area would have shown an increase. Also, one can speculate based on experience that Adventists, especially those who faithfully use the Bible study guides, are by nature seriously committed to Christian values and attitudes, in general, and to singular Adventist values and attitudes, in particular. Astin &

Astin (2003) has shown this to be the case, with approximately 71% of SDA college students surveyed in his landmark *The Spiritual Life of College Students* receiving high scores in religious commitment.

The greatest growth appeared in the area of behavior and skills--step 4 of the learning cycle and the third component of biblical faith. The prototype motivated learners in all age groups except 65+ to spend more time in prayer. This is in keeping with other research that shows there is an increase in prayer activity between the ages of 30 and 64 (Baesler, 2002; Thayer, 1996) (The age groups for this study were 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65+.) However, research also shows that there is a large increase in private prayer in those people who are 60+ (Gorer, 1955; Stark, 1968). This suggests one of two things: (a) perhaps the variation in format presented by the prototype appealed more to the younger respondents than to the older ones, thus motivating the younger ones to pray more (the regular quarterly did slightly increase time spent in prayer for respondents over 65); and (b) perhaps the growth in people who represent the 65+ group had already reached the point where they feel their time spent in prayer is sufficient for their needs.

The prototype also increased time spent in prayer for all educational levels except high school or less. This is in keeping with research that suggests that educational attainment does affect religious commitment (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993; Warren, n.d.).

Yet another behavior/skill that was improved by the prototype was meditating more on God's Word. The prototype increased motivation to meditate more on God's Word in all age groups except 65+. The open-ended questions concerning the likes and

dislikes of the prototype verify this outcome. The majority of the people who commented that they liked the prototype because it helped them to think more about the (biblical) information that was presented or that the prototype helped them to internalize the information were from the first four age groups (ages 35-64). Again, this suggests that perhaps the variation in format presented by the prototype appealed more to the younger respondents than to the older ones, thus motivating the younger ones to meditate more. (The regular *ABSG* did slightly increase time spent in prayer for those using the regular *ABSG*.) Also, perhaps the growth in people who represented the 65+ group already had reached the point where they feel their time spent in meditation is sufficient for their needs.

To this point, results of the data analysis have been discussed in light of the prototype framework. However, there is one other aspect of the study that needs to be discussed in light of the data analysis--the general learning objectives. These consisted of the FMS and included vertical elements (toward God) and horizontal elements (toward fellow humans). They also included items concerning knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills. There was no significant difference between the effect of the regular quarterly and the prototype on any of these outcomes. Neither was there any significant interaction between quarterly type and gender, age, or education regarding these outcomes.

These results bring to mind the debate between Search Institute--the developer of the FMS--and SDA scholars regarding the validity of the FMS for denominations other than the six mainline Protestant entities that worked with Search to develop the scale.

This debate is highlighted in a study that evaluated the FMS and two related shorter scales used by mainline Protestant churches for validity within the SDA Church. Jerome Thayer also developed long- and short-form scales. Research using these scales suggests “that denomination-specific scale construction and validation are needed” (Thayer, 1993, p. 93). Perhaps if such a scale had been used in this research, the prototype and regular *ABSG* might have had an effect on the learning outcomes, and there might have been significant interaction between quarterly type and the demographic groups studied.

Summary of Conclusions

The significant differences and interactions that occurred in this study showed positive direction in favor of the prototype. While it did not show growth in each step of the learning cycle or in each component of biblical faith, the prototype did show the greatest amount of growth in the final step of the learning cycle and in the final phase of biblical growth--behavior and skills. This suggests that it did in part what it was designed to do--shepherd the learners through knowledge and beliefs, on to attitudes, values, and commitments, and finally ending with behavior and skills. As James called it centuries ago, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that” (2:19), and “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. . . . I will show you my faith by what I do” (2:17, 18).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Study

Because no research can ever be the final say in any matter, the following suggestions are offered for further study:

1. Test the prototype concept for at least 1 year. This gives the opportunity to test it with three other topics and writing styles, both of which could possibly affect the outcome of the research. (In fact, one respondent stated that she liked the writing style of the person who authored the prototype, while three others pointed out that they disliked what they perceived to be a politically correct bias. I must point out here that I made sure the comments in the prototype about women and the poor were the same as those that appeared in the regular *ABSG* studied by the control group.

2. Conduct a similar study using the Thayer Long-Form Faith-Maturity Scale.

3. Have groups of new church members, members of long standing, and former members study a prototype *ABSG* and compare/contrast results with this study.

4. Investigate why men and women, the various age groups, and the various levels of educational achievement liked or disliked the prototype.

5. Investigate why the groups mentioned above liked one quarterly more or less than the other.

6. Use the prototype approach in a non-SDA church and compare/contrast reaction to it with this study or another study done with the prototype concept in another SDA Church.

7. Test the prototype concept in each division and field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in order to study cultural differences in response to it.

8. Later in this chapter, I recommend two procedures for implementing the prototype. In part, the second recommendation calls for establishing learning objectives in the areas of knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behavior and skills. If this recommendation were employed, it would be interesting to conduct world-wide studies concerning the impact of these objectives. (Currently, the *ABSG* has no learning objectives.) In fact, the regular *ABSG* could be studied for its effect on spiritual growth for at least two quarters prior to the introduction of the new one, then for the same amount of time the new *ABSG* could be studied to determine its effect on spiritual growth.

9. If another study regarding the prototype were to be done, I recommend that the following questions be added to the testing instrument: (a) How long have you been an SDA? (At least one person I know of who studied the prototype was a new member.) (b) Do you, or have you, worked for the denomination? (In this study, some of the people did, but I do not know how many.) (c) I also recommend a larger sample, and one that is more diverse in race and age. (The majority of people in this study were Caucasian, and none were under 35 years of age.)

10. Two years ago, I developed and oversaw the production of the newly formatted *Adult Bible Study Teachers Guide*, which will debut first quarter, 2007. It also is based on Kolb's learning cycle and learning styles. How this quarterly affects the spiritual growth of teachers and class members would be another interesting topic for

study. In addition, one could study how the teachers used it and how they liked it, and how class members responded to it (e.g., Does the new teachers' quarterly generate more class discussion? Does it assist in making class time more appealing to a greater variety of people? Do teachers find that it has more material that is easier to use?, etc.).

Recommendations for Adopting the Prototype

The following factors can be cited for implementing the prototype *ABSG*:

1. The prototype framework was moderately successful in shepherding learners through the learning cycle and the components of biblical faith.
2. Thirty of the 100 respondents who studied from the prototype said they liked the Applying God's Word section of daily lessons Monday through Thursday, while another 15 stated that they appreciated the Responding to God's Word section of these daily lessons. Seven people stated that they liked the way these daily lessons were divided into these sections. (These sections were part of the conceptual framework of the prototype and were, therefore, not part of the regular *ABSG*.)
3. Sixteen people commented that they liked the questions in the prototype. This could be due to the fact that the questions in each section of the learning cycle targeted that part of the cycle. This differs from the regular *ABSG* in that the presentation of material is not guided by the learning cycle and any type of question can be asked at any time during the course of a daily lesson.
4. Fourteen respondents stated they believed the prototype was indicative of an ideal quarterly.

5. Twelve said the prototype was easier to understand. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the lessons actually followed a cycle that organized the material.

6. Five respondents stated that the Applying God's Word and Responding to God's Word sections of the prototype should be aspects of the ideal quarterly.

7. Four respondents believed the prototype arrived at the point of the lesson quicker. Again, perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the lessons followed a cycle that enabled this to happen.

8. On March 27, 2006, the prototype was presented in its printed format along with preliminary data analysis to the *ABSG* World Sabbath School Curriculum Committee (WSSCC; this committee is composed of Sabbath School directors from the 13 world divisions of the SDA Church). Many of those in attendance expressed approval of the prototype and asked how soon it could be implemented. Thus, I now offer the following procedures for implementing the prototype Bible study guide.

Procedure One for Implementing the Prototype

The current "method" of Bible study in the *ABSG* has been in use since first quarter, 1992. If the prototype were to be implemented for the near future, it would cost little in the way of time, effort, and money.

The main project would involve redoing the writers' guidelines for the *ABSG*. These guidelines should contain the following:

1. Information concerning the learning cycle, learning styles, and how the two can actually help writers organize their material

2. Guidelines concerning the effective use of questions for each part of the learning cycle and for each learning style

3. Suggestions on how to incorporate the use of spiritual disciplines into the quarterly.

As the former associate editor of the *ABSG*, I developed for the adult teachers' quarterly a similar framework as the prototype for this research. Also for the teachers' quarterly, I developed writing guidelines equivalent to the ones described above. Hence, the basics of reformatting the standard *ABSG* and its current writers' guidelines are in place and easily transferrable. (The new teacher's *Guides* made its debut first quarter, 2007.)

The only other item needing attention would be deciding when to implement the change and notifying the writers accordingly.

Procedure Two for Implementing the Prototype

To at least one meeting of the WSSCC, I suggest inviting experts from our denomination in the following fields: curriculum development, religious education/faith development, and systematic theology (i.e., people who are responsible for the development and explication of our 28 fundamental beliefs). Together, their goal would be to compile a set of specific learning objectives in the areas of knowledge and beliefs; attitudes, values, and commitments; and behaviors and skills. (Currently, the *ABSG* has no learning objectives.) In doing so, however, I offer the following caution: that those involved not be like people who go from doctor to doctor until they finally hear the

diagnosis they want. In other words, the WSSCC and invitees should not allow non-biblical biases to influence their choice of learning objectives. The following illustrates my concern. On the FMS, there is this item: "I give significant portions of time and money to help other people." One respondent did not circle a number on the scale for this item. Instead, he wrote above the item that after all the taxes he pays to the government, he wasn't about to help others. Many texts from the Bible immediately came to my mind when I read his complaint. Among them were Isa 58:6-12, Mic 6:8, and Matt 25:34-46. Thus, I urge a fair and impartial look at how any suggested outcome reflects or does not reflect the Bible's stand regarding certain topics.

When authors are chosen to write a particular guide, they will receive the items mentioned in Procedure One along with a copy of the general learning objectives with instructions to incorporate as many of them as possible into the *ABSG*, so that throughout any given year each objective has been dealt with at least once. Another possibility is for either the WSSCC, the *ABSG* staff, or the *ABSG* in-house reading committee to decide which topics should deal with certain objectives.

This second procedure is more involved and could not be implemented as quickly as the first one, because the WSSCC meets at the beginning of each quinquennium following General Conference Session. The first one can be implemented any time during a quinquennium. However, the second procedure should not preclude the implementation of the first procedure as soon as possible, if the desire existed to do so. If the WSSCC does follow through with the second procedure, its work can be incorporated into the new *ABSG* at a later date.

The second procedure truly would be a first for the *ABSG*. With specific learning objectives directing it, the *ABSG* could in turn direct those who use it down a well-marked path toward the Kingdom of God.

One Last Word

As a child, I used to take my mother's Bible study guide and pretend I was teaching a Sabbath School class. Therefore, that I should have the opportunity to be associate editor of the guides from 1991 to 2006 and to conduct this research on its behalf has completed a circle.

That I shall continue to have a great interest in Bible study and education should be no surprise. Perhaps one of the founders of the SDA Church said it best when she wrote

The great work of life is character building, and a knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education. To impart this knowledge and to mold the character in harmony with it should be the object of the teacher's [*the ABSG's*] work. . . .

As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. . . . In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His word the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. . . .

Studied and obeyed, the word of God would give to the world men of stronger and more active intellect than will the closest application to all the subjects that human philosophy embraces. It would give men of strength and solidity of character, of keen perception and sound judgment--men who would be an honor to God and a blessing to the world. (White, 1958, pp. 596, 599)

Because the call has thus been sounded, I must ask one final question: How will it be answered?

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Andrews University

March 9, 2005

Lyndelle Chiomenti
 General Conference of SDA's
 12501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Lyndelle,

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #: 05-022 Application Type: Original Dept: Religious Education
Review Category: Exempt Action Taken: Approved Advisor: Jane Thayer
Protocol Title: The Adult Bible Study Guide: A Prototype For Fulfilling The Desire and Need For Christian Spirituality In Seventh-day Adventist Church Members.

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University physician, Dr. Loren Hamel, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,



Wendy H. Acevedo-Lopez,
 Graduate Assistant
 Institutional Review Board
 Cc: Jane Thayer

APPROVED
 Office of Scholarly Research

Office of Scholarly Research
 (269) 471-6360 Fax: (269) 471-6246 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu
 Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104

APPENDIX B
GROWTH IN CHRIST STATEMENT

Growing in Christ

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Phil. 3:7-14; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Matt. 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal. 5:22-25; Rom. 8:38, 39; 1 John 4:4; Heb. 10:25). (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An exposition of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, pp. 149, 150)

APPENDIX C

FIRST ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON

THE REVIEW AND HERALD.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., THIRD-DAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1888.

JAMES WHITE, EDITOR.

The Cause in the East.

The prospect brightens. The old friends of the cause in the East are taking hold of organization, and there seems to be an interest awaking which we hope will be permanent. Without order and organization, nothing lasting can be done in the East. We have the highest regard for our eastern brethren. Their love for the cause has been constant and ardent. They first embraced the truth, and sent their preachers West with it, and supported them for a while in western fields. They have done more than their share in every enterprise connected with the cause.

But there have been influences at work in the East which have stood directly in the way of the cause. Men have been encouraged to travel who should have been at home, or should have been more limited in their labors, and moved with greater caution. In the absence of order and organization, these men have moved out guided by their own impulses, looking to no ones for counsel and instruction, and in many cases their influence has been to run the cause into the ground. This is the great reason for the low state of the cause in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

God has been raising up men in the East, of sound judgment, fine feelings, piety, and caution, who have received too little encouragement. We might here mention E. Bourdeaus and C. O. Taylor. It is because their influence has been felt, that there is a better state of things in Vermont than in other eastern States. The time is coming when their gifts and labors will be more highly prized than those of the more noisy and rash.

When order can be fully established, the eastern States will be by far the richest fields of labor, for in those States second advent principles have taken a firm hold of many minds, and thousands are ready to embrace the third message, when fully and properly set before them.

We have no doubt but there are brethren in the East, who have not been ordained to the work, whose duty it may be to preach the message; but we do believe it wrong for them to start off to preach without consulting with their brethren, and without the watch-care of those of sound experience in the work. We are aware there has been a spirit in the East with many that would denounce the position here taken as oppressive, and this very thing has been the ruin of the cause in some portions of the East.

But our faithful brethren in some portions of New England where our efficient preachers seldom labor, who are anxious to spread the truth, may encourage inexperienced men to teach the truth for want of no better. They may think this is better than to do nothing. How this may be we will not here attempt to decide, but will propose a plan which we regard far better than either.

The few brethren in the East nobly acted their part in sending the truth into the West. One brother in Connecticut gave Bro. Bates fifty dollars to bear his expenses to Indiana and Michigan as early as 1849, at which time the brethren in Jackson received the Sabbath, and these brethren in Jackson have been the center of the great work in Michigan. New England has been ready to help in every enterprise to advance the cause.

We propose that Western brethren now return the compliment in a Christian and liberal manner. Michigan can send two efficient ministers East, and meet their home expenses in their absence. Iowa can send one of her tents East, as she cannot run both, and the Association can donate publications to the enterprise. With the blessing of God much good can be done. In connection with tent labor something could be done in setting things in order that the labor be not finally lost. Should this plan meet the minds of the brethren

in the East, in Michigan and Iowa, and should the enterprise be undertaken, it might be our duty to labor with the churches in New England a part of the time next summer.

Lessons for Bible Students.

Lessons for the use of Bible-Classes and Sabbath-Schools is a want that has long been felt by churches which have seen fit to make use of these necessary and efficient means of religious instruction. To supply this want, so far as it concerns Bible-Classes, and the higher classes of Sabbath-Schools, it is proposed to give through the Review a series of questions on the different points of present truth, taking the standard publications of the Review Office, as text books, and furnishing enough for one lesson in each paper. It is expected that the Instructor will furnish lessons sufficient for each Sabbath, for the lower classes, and thus the whole ground be covered. We commence in this number with the History of the Sabbath. This is a work which should have more attention than a mere random perusal. A careful study of it will thoroughly instruct any one on the important subject of the Sabbath, in all its branches. Answers to the following questions will be found in this work from pages 9 to 24. To prepare himself, for recitation, the student should so thoroughly study the matter embraced within the pages referred to, as to be able to promptly answer the questions proposed concerning the subjects there introduced.

QUESTIONS.

What is time, as distinguished from eternity?
From the earliest date in Genesis to the resurrection of the unjust, at the end of the millennium, what period of time is measured off?
What marks the commencement of the first week of time?
What was accomplished by the Creator's work on the first day?
What was done on the second day?
What is the firmament and what is its use?
What was the third day's work?
What was accomplished on the fourth day?
What on the fifth day?
What on the sixth day?
How was the seventh day distinguished from the rest?
Gen. ii, 2, Reads, And on the seventh day, God ended his work. Did God perform any labor on the seventh day?
What is the genuine reading of this passage? See page 18, note.
As God rested upon the seventh day of the week, what did that day thus become?
But the Creator fainteth not, neither is weary, Isa. xl, 28, why then did he rest on the seventh day?
Having rested upon the seventh day, what was the second act of God concerning it?
Why did he bless and sanctify that day?
What third great act completed the sacred institution?
What is the meaning of the word sanctify?
When was the first of these three great acts performed?
On what day were the second and third acts performed?
To what then did the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day relate?
How are the days of the week measured off?
To whom were they given to use?
In order to set apart one of these days to a holy use, what must be done?
What is Gesenius' definition of the Hebrew verb *kadaah*, rendered in our version to sanctify?
Give some instances of its use.
Where is found the most striking illustration of the use of this word?
What, then, was it to sanctify the Sabbath in Eden?
In the light of these facts is it correct to say that there was no command given for the observance of the Sabbath prior to the giving of the law on Sinai?
What does the term Sabbath signify?
To what time and event does the fourth commandment point back for the origin of its obligation?
Where is the next mention of the Sabbath after the book of Genesis?
Did Moses do anything to the seventh day in the wilderness to make it the rest-day of Jehovah?

Had anything been done, up to this time, since the acts recorded in Gen. ii, 2, 8, to make the seventh day the Sabbath?

What conclusion follows from these facts?

What is the testimony of our Lord relative to the origin and design of the Sabbath?

What renders the original of his language peculiarly emphatic? and why?

God first made the Sabbath his, by solemn appropriation; why did he do this?

What reasons can be given to show that Gen. ii, 2, 8, is a record of what took place at the close of the creation week, not something spoken by anticipation?

Did God sanctify the Sabbath in the wilderness of Sin?
How is the Sabbath there mentioned?

Why does the Sabbath commandment commence with the word, Remember?

What gives especial importance to this memorial?

What is the observance of the Sabbath on our part?
What would have saved the world from atheism and idolatry?

Strange Things.

How can men be blind to the signs of the times? When the prophetic chart is so full and clear in regard to the great way-marks to the kingdom, and the last of these waymarks appearing so clear in the history of our own times, how can the great mass of men, ministers and members of churches as well as open infidels, close their eyes to these things, so that the great day of the Lord shall overtake them as a thief? But so it is; and Jesus knew and foretold that it would be even as it was in the days of Noah—they "knew not till the flood came and took them all away." Notwithstanding the threatening of our Saviour against the evil servant, that he would "come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and out him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites;" yet we hear men say, "It makes no difference whether we know anything about the period of his coming, if we are only prepared for it." As if a person could neglect his word, not heeding the signs he has left on record, and consequently not watching according to his command—not obeying his injunction—"when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

These are strange things, but true. But still stranger than this it is, that so many that see the signs of the times, in some respects, that are satisfied that the great day of the Lord is at hand, that we are even now entering the time of trouble such as never was, are yet blind to the fact, out of their prejudices against the law of God, that the warning voice of the third angel alone can prepare any one to stand in that awful day; that those that profess faith in prophetic fulfillment should ignore and virtually expunge this most important and thrilling message of the prophetic word, and expect that great day of wrath is immediately coming, and this message, given on purpose to warn men of that day, so that they may prepare for it, not be fulfilled; and though pointed to the fact that the message is actually being given in perfect harmony with the word, that it is developing a people that are keeping more commandments of God than they are, yet will not admit that God is doing this work, so perfectly in harmony with his word.

Nothing could more forcibly remind one of Paul's caution to the Jews, "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 'Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.'"

Jesus said to the Jews, "If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me, for he wrote of me." On the same principle of reasoning, those that believe the apostle John, will believe the third angel's message, for he wrote of it.

B. F. COZZELL.

THE Lord can prevent troubles, or remove troubles; but what is best of all, he can sanctify troubles, making them real blessings; and this is what he generally chooses to do.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE LESSON FROM 1893, FIRST QUARTER, *ABSG*

Lessons on the Word and Spirit.

FOR SENIOR CLASSES.

December 31, 1892, to March 25, 1893.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE object of this series of lessons is that we may learn what the word of God is, and what blessings may come to us through it. They are not prepared in order to prove that the Bible is true, but are intended for those who believe that it is the word of God, and they are designed to bring out and illustrate what it says about itself. It is hoped, therefore, that they will enlarge the understanding, and strengthen the faith of those who do believe. We should have the same confidence in what the word of God says about itself as in what it teaches upon any other subject, and we should always remember that the Scripture is given to instruct our reason, and not to be judged by it. We are to believe what God says to us, not because we can understand it and see the reason for it, but because God says so. When we demand a full understanding of every statement before accepting it, we exalt ourselves to an equality with God, bring him down to our level, and make him such as ourselves. When the matter is viewed properly, the mysteries of the Bible are among the strong proofs that it is the word of God. Our attitude should always be, "Speak, Lord,

(3)

4

LESSONS ON THE WORD AND SPIRIT.

for thy servant heareth;" but our hearing should be with the purpose of yielding to it. God says that he looks to him who trembleth at his word. Reverence and humility should characterize us while we wait in the audience chamber of the great Creator, to hear his word.

The plan of developing the lesson differs somewhat from that which has heretofore been adopted, and this is done with a purpose. The design is to encourage the study of the scriptures used as the basis of the lesson, and others related to them, for spiritual benefit, rather than merely to learn the lesson to recite it. One who gets the *subject* in mind will have no difficulty in answering any question properly connected with it. Each teacher can make such use of the notes as he wishes. Questions can be framed covering the thoughts presented if that is deemed to be desirable. The "suggestive questions" will open the way for further work when it may be thought profitable.

LESSON I.—December 31, 1892.

THE WORD OF GOD.

NOTE.—Before attempting to answer the questions asked upon any text, read the text carefully several times, noticing the connection.

I. Questions on 1 Thess. 2:13.

1. With what is the word of God contrasted?
2. How much difference is there between the two?
3. What does the word of God do?
4. Upon what condition does it work?
5. Does it make any difference how we receive the word? How much?

II. Questions on Isa. 55:8-11.

1. What are words intended to convey?
2. How much difference is there between God's thoughts and man's thoughts?

Not so with God's word. His words contain a depth of meaning which only his Spirit can reveal to us (1 Cor. 2: 11, 12), and for this purpose was the Spirit promised (John 16: 13; 1 Cor. 2: 10). As rain and snow are sent upon the earth to accomplish definite results, so God sends his word (Ps 107: 20; Matt. 8: 8). It is sent to bring salvation (Acts 13: 26; James 1: 21), and it will accomplish this for all who receive it. As the land is made fruitful by receiving the rain (Heb. 6: 7), so God will cause righteousness to spring forth (Isa. 61: 11). When spoken faithfully the word will have a powerful effect (Jer. 23: 28, 29), and it is able to build up (Acts 20: 32) those who receive it.

3. THE Revised Version of Heb. 4: 12 is as follows: "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." The words of God are not only living words, but they are spirit and life (John 6: 63) to those who believe them. Life seems to belong to everything that is associated with God. He not only has life in himself (John 5: 26) but his throne is a living throne (Ezekiel 1). Besides this we have the word of life (Phil. 2: 16), the breath of life (Gen. 2: 7), the bread of life (John 6: 48), the river of life, and the tree of life (Rev. 22: 1, 2). The word is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6: 17), for the Spirit dwells in the word (compare James 1: 18 and 1 Peter 1: 23 with John 3: 5), and so it is said of Christ, who spoke for God (John 3: 34), that a sharp two-edged sword went out of his mouth (Rev. 1: 16).

4. CHRIST is called the Word of God (Rev. 19: 11-13), not only because he spake the words of God (Deut. 18: 18; John 17: 8), but also because he was a living proclamation to the world of the character of God (2 Cor. 5:

3. How much difference, then, will there be between God's word and man's word?
4. What definite results are produced by rain and snow?
5. What comparison is made between these agencies and God's word?
6. How must the word be received in order that it may accomplish such results?

III. Questions on Heb. 4: 12, Revised Version.

1. What characteristics of God's word are here mentioned?
2. Are these true of man's word? Show the difference quite fully.

IV. Questions on John 1: 1-4.

1. Who is meant by the Word?
2. Why is He called the Word?
3. What is found in Him?

NOTES.

1. PAUL knew whom he had believed (2 Tim. 1: 12), and was aware that it made a great difference how the word was received (1 Cor. 2: 4, 5). The difference between God's word and man's word is just as great as the difference between God and man, which is simply infinite. See Ps. 146: 3; Isa. 26: 4; 1 Cor. 1: 25. God's word works in those who believe it as God's word. The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1: 16), and the word of the Lord is preached by the gospel (1 Peter 1: 25), but it must be believed in order to be of profit (Heb. 4: 2).

2. MAN puts his own thoughts into words (Luke 6: 45), and what one man has thus clothed with language, another man can study out, and so exhaust his meaning.

19; John 14:9, 10). The mystery of the incarnation, God with us (Matt. 1:23), divinity veiled in humanity, is repeated in the word in which the divine Spirit dwells in human language. "The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God;' yet they are expressed in the words of men, and are adapted to human needs. Thus it may be said of the Book of God, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' And this fact, so far from being an argument against the Bible, should strengthen faith in it as the word of God. Those who pronounce upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, accepting some portions as divine, while they reject other parts as human, overlook the fact that Christ, the divine, partook of our human nature, that he might reach humanity. In the work of God for man's redemption, divinity and humanity are combined." As Christ is a personal Saviour (Gal. 2:20), so God's word is given to each one as an individual. "The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul for whom he gave his beloved Son." His word is to be regarded by each one as though he were the only one to whom God had thus spoken.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

1. How should the Bible be studied?
2. Should the Bible be studied daily? Why?
3. Can the unlearned receive help from God's word? Why?
4. Can the educated exhaust it? Why?
5. Who will receive the greatest benefit from the word of God?

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE LESSON FROM 1970, FIRST QUARTER, *ABSG*

LESSON 2

January 10

**CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR 2**

'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' 1 Tim. 3:16.

The purpose of this study is to give a deeper understanding of Christ's supernatural birth, His exemplary life, vicarious death, resurrection, and ascension, and how these affect the life of every individual. Realizing that there are insoluble mysteries concerning the nature of Christ, we should enter into our study with a positive emphasis on things that have been revealed, and a reverent reserve when we pass into unknown realms.

KEY THOUGHTS

Each of the five major phases of the earthly life of the Saviour represents an essential aspect of the plan of salvation. These five are:

1. **The Incarnation.** Sin estranged man from his Creator, thus severing his connection with the source of life. The reunion of divinity with humanity at Christ's birth makes it possible for our humanity to be called with divinity by the new birth.
2. **A Perfect Life.** The Saviour's life on earth was a perfect example of submission to the Father. Through the Holy Spirit He imparts power to us to follow that example. The process of learning to do so we call sanctification.

3. **A Vicarious Death.** On Calvary Christ died in our stead, and by virtue of His death we have access through faith to His saving grace. Accepting this gift, we experience justification.

4. **A Triumphant Resurrection.** Christ's triumph over death is our assurance of the resurrection and of life everlasting.

5. **A Glorious Ascension.** Christ ascended to heaven to complete the work of salvation, thereby enabling us to prepare for translation.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The God-man**
John 1:1-3, 14
2. **His Mission to Earth**
John 10:9, 10
3. **Victorious Life**
1 Peter 2:21-23
4. **Vicarious Death**
Rom. 5:8-11
5. **From Grave to Glory**
1 Cor. 15:19-22
6. **His Priestly Work**
Heb. 4:14-16

Christ Our Saviour LESSON 2

☐ Sunday

Part 1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
THE "The same was in the beginning with God.
GOD-MAN "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

John 1:1-3, 14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

This portion of Scripture describes the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. With strong, majestic lines John portrays the supreme event of all ages, the invasion of this planet by God Himself wrapped in the outward form of a child. See Luke 2:7-14. This event fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14. Matthew quotes this prophecy and defines the name Immanuel: "Which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:23.

"God with us." What beautiful, mysterious, unexplainable words! In Christ two natures, the divine and the human, were mysteriously blended into one person. He became one of a kind, a God-man, the only being that ever has or ever will be such. Surely, "the limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery—the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 904.

How full and complete was the deity of the incarnate Christ? John 1:1. See also Col. 1:13-19; 2:9; Heb. 1:1-3, 8.

How full and complete was the humanity of the incarnate Christ? John 1:14. See also Heb. 2:14, 17; Phil. 2:5-8.

Sin alienated man from his Creator, severing his connection with the source of life; but the reunion of divinity with humanity at Christ's birth made it possible for humanity to be united again with divinity. Thus the incarnation was essential to salvation, for it bridged the gap between the sinner and God.

THINK IT THROUGH Why is the incarnation of Christ called a mystery?

"Christ is the pre-existent Son of God. . . . There never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. . . . He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent."—*"Evangelism,"* page 615.

"Had He not been fully human, Christ

could not have been our substitute. He could not have worked out in humanity that perfection of character which it is the privilege of all to reach."—Ellen G. White in *"The Signs of the Times,"* June 17, 1897.

Christ Our Saviour LESSON 2

☐ Monday

Part 2
HIS MISSION
TO EARTH
John 10:9, 10

"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The purpose of Christ's mission to earth is described in several ways in the Bible. Paul says that Christ gave Himself as "an offering and a sacrifice to God." Eph. 5:2. And again, that He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people." Titus 2:14. He came "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:6) and to "bear witness unto the truth." John 18:37.

How did our Lord Himself describe the purpose of His mission to earth? John 10:10.

When Adam and Eve were created, they were candidates for eternal life; but they sinned and lost this privilege. Christ came to restore this life to any who choose to accept it. Like a criminal who is pardoned, or a sick man who is cured, so the sinner can have life and can have it even more abundantly than did Adam and Eve, without sin, and without fear of death.

Read again John 10:9, 10 and note how the phrases used to describe the safety of God's children are drawn from the Old Testament. Compare verse 9, on entering in and going out, with Num. 27:17 and Deut. 28:6. We may feel like Solomon, "I know not how to go out or come in" (1 Kings 3:7), but we hear a Greater than Solomon saying, "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Whom did Jesus name as the objects of His mission to earth? Luke 19:10.

THINK IT THROUGH Why was it a sacrifice for Jesus to become incarnate?

"By sin man was shut out from God. Except for the plan of redemption, eternal separation from God, the darkness of unending night, would have been his. Through the Saviour's sacrifice, communion with God is again made pos-

sible. We may not in person approach into His presence; in our sin we may not look upon His face; but we can behold Him and commune with Him in Jesus, the Saviour."—"Education," page 28.

Christ Our Saviour LESSON 2

☐ Tuesday

Part 3**VICTORIOUS
LIFE****1 Peter 2:21-23**

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

Jesus took man's nature but not man's sinfulness. There was nothing in Him that responded to sin. This has raised endless discussion, some of it good, some of it unprofitable. A few questions may be helpful here:

Was Jesus subject to the laws of heredity that affect every human being?

"Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 49.

Was Jesus a normal child, or was He supernaturally gifted above all others?

"He gained knowledge as we may do. . . . Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did."—*Ibid.*, p. 70.

Was He perfect throughout His whole life?

"At each stage of His development He was perfect, with the simple, natural grace of a sinless life."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 83. Compare 2 Cor. 5:21—"knew no sin."

Was Jesus tempted to sin?

He was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. Though tempted, He had no bias or propensity toward sin.

"He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1128.

How did Christ react to persecution? 1 Peter 2:23.

What does Christ's victory over sin mean to us? Heb. 2:18.

THINK IT THROUGH

What would have been the result had Jesus sinned while on earth?

"If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was 'in all points tempted like as we are.' Heb. 4:15. He endured every

trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 24.

Christ Our Saviour **LESSON 2**☐ **Wednesday**

Part 4 "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
VICARIOUS DEATH "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
 "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."
Rom. 5:8-11

In verse 7 of this chapter Paul states that a righteous man might give his life for another good man. But Christ gave His life for us "while we were yet sinners," enemies, traitors, rebels. What greater demonstration of love could be given?

Notice this sequence: we are justified by His blood (verse 9); reconciled by His death (verse 10); saved by His life (verse 10). By His death we are justified and reconciled to God. Then God can work in us to perfect the character that is needed if we are to be saved in His kingdom.

Is God reconciled to man, or is man reconciled to God? Verse 10.

In another text Paul says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. See also Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20. Nowhere in the Bible is it said that God has to be reconciled to man. God hates sin, but His love for sinners is so great that He spared nothing to bring about a reconciliation. Christ died, not to win God over to man, but to win man back to God.

How fully did Christ accept the responsibility for our sins and reconcile us to God? 2 Cor. 5:21.

THINK IT THROUGH Should the Christian attempt to be reconciled to his enemies? Why?

"In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. 'Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Phil. 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and

offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. . . .

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'"—
 "The Desire of Ages," page 25.

Christ Our Saviour LESSON 2

☐ Thursday

**Part 5
FROM GRAVE
TO GLORY****1 Cor. 15:19-22****"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.****"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.****"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.****"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."**

About twenty-five years after Christ's ascension Paul wrote to the Corinthians and recounted the arguments for the resurrection of Jesus. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." 1 Cor. 15:17. This would make the Christian the most miserable of all men. Verse 19. His point is this: If Christ had not risen from the dead, all our religion is in vain; for He cannot save us from our sins. And this is the one thing for which we need a savior. Without His resurrection, there can be no redemption. Without the resurrection, there is no reconciliation. Without the resurrection, there is no life eternal.

What triumphant declaration did Paul make concerning Christ's resurrection? Verse 20.

This term "firstfruits" is in reference to the ancient custom of waving the first sheaf of the barley harvest before the Lord. As the wave sheaf was a pledge of the bountiful harvest to follow, likewise Christ's death and resurrection is our guarantee that we shall be made alive in Him.

At His ascension what comforting assurance was given to His disciples? Acts 1:9-11.

THINK IT THROUGH Does 1 Cor. 15:22 mean that everyone will be saved?

"Christ is the firstfruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God."—"The Great Controversy," page 399.

"The voice that cried from the cross, 'It is finished,' was heard among the dead. It pierced the walls of sepulchers, and summoned the sleepers to arise. Thus will it be when the voice of Christ shall be heard from heaven. That voice will penetrate the graves, and unbar the tombs, and the dead in Christ shall

arise. At the Saviour's resurrection a few graves were opened, but at His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come."—"The Desire of Ages," page 787.

Christ Our Saviour LESSON 2

□ Friday

Part 6 "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

HIS PRIESTLY WORK "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Heb. 4:14-16

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3) and entered into His priestly work. The work of Christ on earth was completed, but it was still necessary for Him to apply to each individual the benefits of the atonement.

Why is Christ worthy to be our High Priest? Verse 15. What is His priestly work? Heb. 2:17; 7:25; 9:24.

Christ our High Priest is able to love and sympathize with us in the most perfect, complete, godlike way possible. He suffers with the struggling Christian. Verse 15. This is why we can "come boldly unto the throne" (verse 16), fully expecting all the graces that are available to us there. As the sinner approaches the throne of grace, he sees the lovely, sinless character of Jesus. He becomes aware of how Jesus dealt with temptation and recognizes this as the godlike way to act. In contrast, he sees his own utter sinfulness; and, casting himself before the throne, he pleads for the forgiveness of sin. Then our "merciful and faithful high priest" makes "reconciliation for the sins," and the sinner is made right with God.

THINK IT THROUGH What steps can I take today to become more like Jesus Christ?

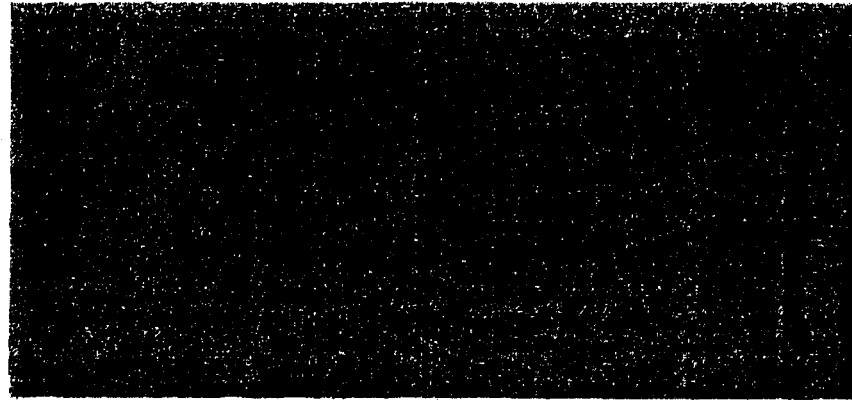
"The blood of Jesus is pleading with power and efficacy for those who are backslidden, for those who are rebellious, for those who sin against great light and love. Satan stands at our right hand to accuse us, and our Advocate stands at God's right hand to plead for us. He has never lost a case that has been committed to Him. We may trust in our Advocate; for He pleads His own merits in our behalf. Hear His prayer before His betrayal and

trial. Listen to His prayer for us; for He had us in remembrance. . . .

"He is making intercession for the most lowly, the most oppressed and suffering, for the most tried and tempted ones. With upraised hands He pleads, 'I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.' God loves to hear, and responds to the pleadings of His Son."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 7, p. 948.

Christ Our Saviour LESSON 2**Part 7 ◊ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◊ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER**

1. Which Old Testament prophet predicted that a virgin would give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel? _____
2. True or False: Jesus had both a divine nature and a human nature when He was on earth.
3. Complete: "I am come that they might have _____, and that they might have it _____."
4. True or False: Jesus was born sinless, but He was capable of being tempted and could have fallen.
5. Complete: "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him [Christ] to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a _____ and _____ High Priest."
6. Immanuel means "_____."



Answers: (1) Isaiah; (2) True; (3) life, more abundantly; (4) True; (5) merciful, faithful; (6) God with us.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE WEEKLY LESSON FROM THE
PROTOTYPE AND REGULAR *ABSGs*

The prototype sample is on the left side of each page, while the sample from the regular guide is on the right side.

Lesson 10

May 28– June 3

Are You A Diligent Servant?



Sabbath Afternoon

OR ARE YOU A CLOCK WATCHER? It was the 1987 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball finals. Louisiana State University (LSU) was leading Indiana by eight points. With only a few minutes left to play, Indiana began to close the gap. Why? One of the sports announcers noticed that the LSU players had begun to watch the clock rather than stay focused on how they were playing the game. They lost by one point, and Indiana ended the season by becoming NCAA champs (Larson, *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*, p. 209).

KEY THOUGHT: This week, we will study Mark 13. In this chapter, Jesus calls us to be aware of the signs of His second coming. More important than that, however, is His clear call to faithful service as we await His return. Read this call in Mark 13:34-37. As you study throughout the week, ask yourself if you are focused on the clock (signs of the Second Coming) at the expense of being focused on God's call.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Mark 13:1-37.

MEMORY TEXT: "Take heed, watch, and pray; for you do not know when the time is." (Mark 13:33, NKJV).

LESSON 10 *May 28–June 3

Predictions of the End



SABBATH AFTERNOON

A PEOPLE OF APOCALYPTIC. Seventh-day Adventists are a people of apocalyptic; that is, we believe that this world will not get steadily better but instead will come to a sudden, dramatic end. But it will not be destroyed in atomic warfare, a meteor from outer space, or some other human-made or natural calamity. It will be Jesus who brings about the end of all things. He will return to this earth in power and glory and will bring down the curtain on the present world order. Out of it all and in due time (after the 1,000 years of desolation foretold in Revelation 20), God will make a new heaven and earth for the eternal home of His people.

Our very name, Adventists, proclaims to the world that we believe Jesus is coming again. Indeed, we are Adventists because Jesus was an Adventist. The scripture passage we study this week, along with its parallels in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, gives a sketch, a broad outline of the future, from Jesus' own day until He comes again. And the speaker is Jesus Himself.

The Week at a Glance: What was the context of Christ's discourse on the end of the world? What hope did He offer amid all these troubling words? How well does the world match Christ's predictions about what it would be like prior to His return?

Scripture Passage for the Week: *Mark 13:1-36.*

Memory Text: "And the gospel must first be preached to all nations" (*Mark 13:10, NIV*).

*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 4.

Sunday

May 29

Understanding God's Word—Mark 13:1-4

Last week's lesson dealt with the teachings Jesus gave on the last Tuesday before His crucifixion. The Temple was their classroom, and as they left it, the disciples marveled at its beauty. Covering approximately one-sixth of Jerusalem, it consisted of porches, archways, and courts which surrounded the Temple proper. The stones the disciples gazed upon were white and glistened in the sun. Some of them were twenty-five by eight by twelve feet and weighed more than one hundred tons. Yet again, Jesus seized the moment to teach them. This time the subject involved future events and the attitude His followers should have regarding these events.

Review Jesus' opening statement in Mark 13:2. How did four of His disciples respond? Mark 13:3, 4.

The disciples thought they were asking about the Temple. Jesus, however, was also talking about His Second Coming. To the disciples, it seemed that the events leading to the Temple's destruction would be so calamitous, that it would be the end of the world. They were mistaken. Jerusalem would fall. The Temple would be destroyed. But many more years would pass before Jesus would return.

Jesus' reply dealt with the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple, as well as His second coming. Which parts of His answer referred to Jerusalem, which to the end of the world, and which to both events?

Applying God's Word

The Temple was the most glorious structure in the disciples' world. It also was the center of their faith. Imagine, then, how they must have felt when Jesus told them it would be destroyed. We, who live in a very materialistic world, are reading Mark 13 thousands of years later. Yet what spiritual principle can we learn from this chapter? The following texts will help you answer: Job 8:9; Jeremiah 7:3-7; John 2:16, 17; James 4:13, 14; 2 Peter 3:10-12.

Responding to God's Word

Describe how Christians can resemble the Temple—impressive on the outside yet headed for destruction. Think of times when you have felt like such a building. Then describe how Jesus can build us to last. Sign Him on as your Architect and General Contractor.

SUNDAY May 29

The Disciples' Questions (Mark 13:1-4).

What was the setting for Jesus' predictions of the end? (Mark 13:1-3).

Matthew records that, as Jesus ended His teaching in the temple, He wept over the beloved city, prophesying: " 'Look, your house is left to you desolate' " (*Matt. 23:38, NIV*). This remark probably prompted the disciples' comment about the massive foundations and magnificent buildings of the temple as they walked away from it. Even today, when you visit Jerusalem and walk the site of the old temple square, you cannot but be impressed by the size and grandeur of what it had been. Some of the stones of the foundation have been excavated, and they are huge. No wonder the disciples marveled at Jesus' prediction that everything would be thrown down.

Comparing Mark's account with Matthew's (Matt. 24:1-3), note carefully the questions of the disciples. The disciples thought they were asking a single question, but Jesus talked not only about the destruction of Jerusalem but about His second coming. Why do you think He linked both events?

To the disciples, it seemed that the events that would lead to the destruction of the temple and city could be so calamitous that they must be those of the end of the world. For them, the fall of Jerusalem would coincide with the return of Jesus to earth. But they were mistaken: Jerusalem indeed would fall and the temple be cast down, but many more years would elapse before Jesus would come back. It is like people traveling across India who see the Himalayas. They think they see the top, but they see only the first ridges. As they climb, they see another ridge beyond and another and another, each rising higher. Far inside the mountain fastnesses, much farther than they imagined, lies the peak, Mount Everest.

The setting of Jesus' words is critical for interpreting His prophecies of the end. His reply encompassed both aspects of the disciples' question—the fall of Jerusalem and His second coming. His answer is comprehensive: Some predictions are specific to the fall of Jerusalem, some to the end of the world, and some apply to both events.

Having pointed with pride to the most glorious structure in their world, as well as the center of their faith, the disciples are then told by Christ that it will become nothing but rubble. What's the spiritual principle here that we need to keep constantly before us in our own lives, as well? See also Job 8:9; Jer. 7:3, 4; James 4:14; 2 Pet. 3:10-12; 1 John 2:16-17.

Monday

May 30

Understanding God's Word—Mark 13:11-18

Mark 13:5-23 can be a rather depressing list of signs leading up to the end of the world. However, what words of hope and encouragement do they contain? Vs. 7, 10, 11, 13, 20, 23.

In Mark 13:10, Jesus says that the end will not come until the gospel will be preached to all nations. The gospel itself is good news. Explain why it is good news that it will be preached around the world.

What has changed in recent times that makes the fulfillment of this prediction seem more likely?

As Christians, we always are saddened by the traumas Jesus said would come. Yet the fact that He told us about them should help us maintain faith despite the terrible state of the world. We see this principle throughout the Old Testament also. Though warning about destruction, judgment, and calamity, prophet after prophet gave words of hope to people who would otherwise have been severely tempted to give up. See 2 Chronicles 7:13, 14; Jeremiah 29:10; 36:1-3; Amos 5:4.

Now review Mark 13:11. The promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance goes deeper than just being given the right words to say just when we need them. If our faith in God motivates all we do and say, then out of that faith will come what we need to say. Paul testifying before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, is an excellent example of this principle (Acts 24-26). Mark 13:11 therefore teaches us to concentrate on growing in Christ, seeking His kingdom above all else. Then "all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33, NKJV).

Applying God's Word

What special role does the Seventh-day Adventist Church play in sharing Christ with others? What role do you, as an individual Adventist, have in spreading the good news of salvation?

Responding to God's Word

Jim is an auto mechanic who occasionally repairs cars for low-income people. Beth home-schools her two children. She and the children prepare a meal once a week for an elderly couple. Beth, her children, and Mark are Seventh-day Adventist Christians. How are their acts of generosity helping to spread the gospel?

What skills do you have? What things do you enjoy doing? How can you use these skills and interests to share Christ with others?

MONDAY May 30

Signs of the End (Mark 13:5-13).

Study Christ's words about the signs leading up to the end of the world. Amid all the violence, persecution, and bloodshed, He nevertheless gives His followers words of encouragement. What are those words, scattered through this discourse, and what kind of hope do they offer to us amid the terrible events that Jesus predicted would take place in the world?

Jesus makes clear that the time of the end will be one of bad news and good news. On one hand, His followers can expect upheavals in the social, political, and natural worlds, with everything out of course and stability a thing of the past. Yet, there will be good news—the gospel, the message of God's love manifested in Jesus, who died for our sins—will be proclaimed to all nations.

Even a hundred years ago the prospect of the gospel going to all nations would have seemed an implausible, if not exactly an impossible, occurrence. What's changed in recent times that now makes the fulfillment of this prediction seem much more likely? What do we have now that previous generations didn't?

As Christians, we, of course, are always pained and dismayed, as are others, over the wars, the natural disasters, and traumas that Jesus said would come. And yet, the fact that He told us about them, and the fact that even amid all this He gives His followers words of encouragement, should help us maintain faith despite the terrible state of the world. This principle is seen through the Old Testament, as well. Prophet after prophet, though warning about destruction, judgment, calamity, and so forth, almost always, amid the warnings, gave words of hope to those who would otherwise have been sorely tempted to give up on God (2 Chron. 7:13, 14; Jer. 29:10; 36:1-3; Amos 5:4). In other words, as you read this discourse, however depressing in one sense it might be, we still have so many reasons to hope.

Amid whatever struggles, traumas, and trials you are now facing, what God-given hope, and promises, are you clinging to that, even amid your suffering, keeps you going? Write out a paragraph focusing only on the hope you have in Christ.

Tuesday

May 31

Understanding God's Word—Mark 13:11-18

While several verses in today's passage apply to Christ's followers in every age, some point especially to the fall of Jerusalem.

What specifically would show that the end of Jerusalem was near? Mark 13:14.

Jesus was referring to Daniel 9:27. Based on Jesus' own words, we know Daniel's vision points to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Christians took Jesus' words seriously. When the Roman army invaded Jerusalem in A.D. 67-70, they were ready. Jesus' warning indicated that when the time came to leave, they should do so without delay, and that is what they did. But how could they escape from the city when it was surrounded by foreign soldiers? The Jewish historian Josephus lived through the fall of Jerusalem. He wrote that "more than one million people perished during and after the siege of the city and 97,000 more were taken captive. However, during a temporary respite, when the Romans unexpectedly raised their siege of Jerusalem, all the Christians fled, and it is said that not one of them lost his life. Their place of retreat was Pella, a city in the foothills east of the Jordan River, about 17 miles south of the Lake of Galilee"—*War* vi.9.3 (420).

"According to Josephus, Titus, commander of the Roman armies, confessed that neither his armies nor his siege engines could have been successful in breaching the walls of Jerusalem unless God Himself had so willed it. The stubborn defense of the city so infuriated the Roman soldiers, that when they finally entered, their desire for revenge knew no bounds."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 499.

Applying God's Word

When the time came to leave Jerusalem, Christians did so without hesitation. Review Jesus' instructions to leave in Mark 13:14-16. Then contrast the Christians' obedience in leaving Jerusalem with Lot and his family fleeing Sodom in Genesis 19:15-26. What could account for Lot's reluctance and his wife's attachment to their home? What can Mark 13:14-16 and Genesis 19:15-26 teach us about the importance of lifestyle and what we focus on when it comes to being ready for the Second Coming?

Responding to God's Word

What behaviors, attitudes, or possessions might God be asking you to walk away from so you can have a closer relationship with Him? If you cannot step away from these things now, will you be like Lot's wife when Christ returns?

TUESDAY May 31

The Fall of Jerusalem (Mark 13:11-19).

While several verses in today's passage could apply to followers of Christ in every age, some are specific to the fall of Jerusalem.

What was the specific sign of the imminent end of Jerusalem that Christ's followers were to watch for? (Mark 13:14; See also Matt. 24:15, Luke 21:20).

Jesus talked about the "abomination of desolation." This is a reference to Daniel 9:27, where the prophet is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans many centuries after Daniel was first given the vision. We know this because Jesus Himself, by His words here, shows that this is what it means.

And the Christians took Jesus' words seriously too. As the storm clouds gathered and at last the Roman armies besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 67-70, they were ready. Jesus' warning indicated that when the time came to leave they should do so without delay, and that is what they did. But how could they escape from the city when it was surrounded by foreign soldiers? The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived through the fall of Jerusalem, provides the explanation: "Josephus says (*War* vi. 9.3 [420]) more than one million people perished during and after the siege of the city and 97,000 more were taken captive. However, during a temporary respite, when the Romans unexpectedly raised their siege of Jerusalem, all the Christians fled, and it is said that not one of them lost his life. Their place of retreat was Pella, a city in the foothills east of the Jordan River, about 17 mi. . . south of the Lake of Galilee.

"According to Josephus, Titus, commander of the Roman armies, confessed that neither his armies nor his siege engines could have been successful in breaching the walls of Jerusalem unless God Himself had so willed it. The stubborn defense of the city so infuriated the Roman soldiers, that when they finally entered, their desire for revenge knew no bounds."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 499.

The siege of Jerusalem was one of the most brutal devastations in all history. Women, children, and babies starved to death. Families murdered each other over every morsel of food, including pigeon droppings. And yet, God knew it all in advance, as shown by both Daniel's and Jesus' prophecy. How would you, as a Christian, explain to a non-Christian how a loving God, knowing what would happen, would let it happen? How do you, in your own mind, reconcile these kind of tragedies with an all-loving, all-powerful God?

Wednesday

June 1

Understanding God's Word—Mark 13:19-27

It can be difficult to pinpoint every statement in Jesus' predictions as referring to the fall of Jerusalem or the Second Coming. However, the direction of Mark 13 is clear. After the general "signs," Jesus gives specific evidence indicating the capture of Jerusalem (Mark 13:14-18). Then He talks about the end of the world and the Second Coming (Mark 13:26, 27).

Summarize what Jesus said would happen before He returns. Focus on the general state of the world. Mark 13:19-24; review Mark 13:7, 8.

How does your answer compare with the state of the world today?

Explain how Jesus' words in Mark 13:23 offer hope and encouragement.

The words *take heed* in some Bible versions mean "to be on guard" or "to be aware." Basically, Jesus is saying, "Look! These terrible things will happen. But don't be discouraged or afraid. I am telling you what will happen before I come so you will not be fooled, and so you will be ready to meet Me." Jesus' warnings also encourage us for another reason. Because what He said would happen is indeed happening, we know He speaks the truth. "Now I [Jesus] tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He" (John 13:19, NKJV).

Applying God's Word

In Mark 13:22, Jesus warns against heretics and false beliefs. But even when we think we have the truth and are living by it, it can be easy to get side tracked. For example, there are the tendencies to mold what Scripture says to suit ourselves, or to over-emphasize one aspect of the truth. Then there is the idea that we must completely understand everything about the truth. But how is it possible to understand an all-knowing God who is present everywhere all the time (1 Cor. 15:51; Eph. 1:9)? Which one of these three tendencies might you lean toward?

Responding to God's Word

Do you study your Bible more than you pray? Do you pray more than you study your Bible? Do you study and pray more than you spend time worshiping God? Do you do any of these things more by yourself than with others? How can a balance between Bible study, prayer, worship, and fellowship keep us on guard? How might you need to reorganize your life to balance the time you spend in these activities?

WEDNESDAY June 1

The Second Coming (Mark 13:19-27)

While we cannot pinpoint every statement in Jesus' predictions in Mark 13 as referring either to the fall of Jerusalem or to the Second Coming, the overall direction of the chapter is clear. After "signs" of a more general nature, He gives specific evidence to indicate the capture of Jerusalem (vs. 14-18). Then He moves toward the end of the world in which He gives direct, unambiguous statements concerning the Second Coming (vs. 26, 27).

Study Mark 13:14-27, bearing in mind that Jesus here has left behind discussion of the fall of Jerusalem. Below, summarize the essence of what Jesus said would take place in the future but prior to His return. Don't focus on the details as much as on the general state of the world.

Compare what you wrote to the state of the world since Christ's words. How well do they match?

Read carefully and prayerfully verse 23. Look what came before it: a depiction of a terrible time, affliction, violence, false christs and false signs, and wonders so deceptive that even the elect were in danger of being deceived. And yet, after this, Jesus basically says, *Look, these terrible things are happening, but don't be discouraged or lose faith, because I am telling you beforehand that it will happen.* Again, even amid such a dire warning, the Lord is giving His people reasons to hope. If anything, because He said these things would happen, they in their own terrible way help prove the truth of what Jesus said (see also John 13:19). And we must remember not to focus only on these events but on the event they are all leading up to: the second coming of Christ.

Russian poetess Anna Akhmatova was a Christian. Writing during a terrible crisis in her homeland ("Everything is plundered, betrayed, sold"), she asked, "Why then do we not despair?" Her answer was: "By day, from the surrounding woods, / cherries blow summer into town; / at night the deep transparent skies / glitter with new galaxies."—*Poems of Akhmatova* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), p. 73. From what did she derive hope?

Thursday

June 2

Understanding God's Word—Mark 13:28-37

Jesus ended His lesson on the Second Coming with two parables. What lesson does each parable teach us? Mark 13:28-37.

What two things does Jesus tell us to do while we wait for Him to return? Mark 13:34-37.

When Christ returns, He will put an end to sin and suffering. From that point of view, His return matters a great deal. We all long for a total end to sin and everything it has caused. Yet in another sense, it does not matter when He returns. If we are living as Christ desires us to live, we always will be in a state of readiness regardless of when He returns. Such living involves sharing the good news of God's salvation with others in whatever way each of us is able. It involves easing the discomfort and pain of our fellow human beings. And it involves encouraging one another as we travel toward heaven.

Ellen White offers this counsel about being faithful servants and watching: "Again and again I have been warned in regard to time setting. . . We are not to know the definite time either of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ. . . ."

"We are not to live upon time excitement. We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told His disciples to 'watch,' but not for a definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord. . . ."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 189.

Applying God's Word

In writing about Mark 13:37, Ellen White urges us to watch the following areas of our life: (1) "old habits and natural inclinations lest they assert themselves;" (2) our thoughts and plans "lest they become self-centered;" and (3) opportunities to do good (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 410).

Responding to God's Word

List your old habits and inclinations that have been reasserting themselves lately. Then list your thoughts and plans. Which are God centered? Which ones are self-centered? Finally, list the opportunities to do good that you have participated in recently. End today's lesson by reading 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8.

THURSDAY June 2

Awaiting the Advent (Mark 13:28-37).

What lesson does the fig tree teach us? Why can't we know the exact date of Jesus' coming? (vss. 28, 29, 32, 33). Why might it not be good to know the exact time of Christ's return?

Nature itself alerts us to the Second Coming, if we but open our eyes. Every year as the earth puts forth new growth, we know that summer is coming. We don't know just when the hot days will hit, but we can be 100 percent sure that they will come. Even so, the signs of the return of Jesus have been accumulating over the centuries, and we can know that His coming will follow as surely as spring follows winter.

During Ellen White's long ministry, she encountered various attempts to set dates for the Second Coming. She refused to be caught up in any of these speculations, instead instructing Adventists to beware of them. In a sermon preached at Lansing, Michigan, in 1891, she counseled us to give more attention to how we *live* day by day. The sermon, titled "It Is Not for You to Know the Times or the Seasons," was based on Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 and included the following counsel: "We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ. . . ."

"We are not to live upon time excitement. We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. . . . His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for 'of that day and hour knoweth no man.' You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 188, 189.

What key word does Jesus use to describe the attitude we need to have as we wait for His return? (Mark 13:34-37).

Jesus' parable of the householder who goes away and leaves servants in charge teaches the lesson as His illustration of the fig tree. The Master's return is absolutely certain, but we cannot know just when. Each day that goes by brings the Second Coming one day closer.

In Jesus' parable, "watching" meant being ready to open the door when the Master returned. What does "watching" mean to us today? What things can cause us to fall "asleep," and how can we avoid them?

Friday

June 3

FURTHER STUDY: From *The Desire of Ages*, read “On the Mount of Olives.”

“The Bible declares that in the last days men will be absorb in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities [Matt. 24:37-39 quoted].

“So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah’s day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ’s soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord’s table [see Luke 14:1, 12-24].”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 228.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mark 13 list troublesome things that will occur before Jesus’ returns. What biblical promises do you rely on now to get you through problems? Memorize one or two of the following promises. Ps. 23:4, 5; Prov. 29:25; Isa. 43:2; 2 Cor. 4:8, 9; Phil. 4:6, 7.
2. How can we maintain the belief that Jesus is returning soon without getting caught up in end-time hysteria?
3. Review Wednesday’s lesson. It is human nature to concentrate on the bad at the expense of all that is good. Think for a few minutes about the fact that God is love and that He wants what is best for us. Then list at least 10 good things God has blessed you with (read Phil. 4:8). Meditate on these things throughout the next week. As you do, praise God for them.
4. Review Mark 13:28-37. What things can cause us to fall “asleep”? How can prayer, Bible study, and fellowship help us avoid these things? Think of other ways we can “stay awake.” Why do these activities promote “wakefulness”?

SUMMARIZE what you learned this week about why it is more important to be a faithful servant than to concentrate on the signs pointing to Jesus’ second coming. In your summary, explain the purpose of the signs and what is involved in being a faithful servant.

FRIDAY June 3

FURTHER STUDY: Compare Mark’s account of Jesus’ Olivet discourse with the parallels in Matthew 24:1-51 and Luke 21:5-36. Read Ellen G. White’s “On the Mount of Olives,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 627–636.

In the discourse on the signs leading up to the Second Coming, it’s important not to get so caught up in all the gloom and doom that we forget the great hope awaiting us—eternal life in Christ: “No wonder, then, that the New Testament comes laced with promises of eternal life (John 3:16, John 6:54, John 10:28, Luke 18:30, Rom. 6:22, 1 Tim. 1:16, Titus 3:7, 1 John 5:13), for only the eternal guarantees restitution. A million years, even a billion years, might not possess enough good moments to make up for the bad suffered here. Eternity alone can balance all things out, and then some, because the infinite is more than the finite, and always infinitely so.”—*Adventist Review*, Feb. 28, 2002, p. 22.

Discussion Questions:

- Ⓞ Read the above quote from the *Adventist Review*. What is the author saying? As a class, discuss the hope it is talking about.
- Ⓞ Of all the signs of the Advent given in this week’s lesson, which one is clearly yet to be fulfilled? What is our role in that fulfillment? What can we as a church or as individuals do to help see it fulfilled? Are we helping, or are we part of the reason we’re still here? Justify your answer.
- Ⓞ How can we maintain a sense of the imminence of the Second Coming without getting caught up in end-time hysteria?

Summary: Adventists’ emphasis on the Second Coming is not misguided. It originates in Jesus, our Savior and Lord, for whom it was a vital part of truth. Just before the close of His life He gave a long discourse to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, giving them and His followers in all ages a glimpse into the future. That future would bring, first of all, the fall of Jerusalem, but Christians could know when that was near and flee for their lives. After that climactic event, a long period of distress would take place, but the end would come in God’s good time.

APPENDIX G

ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE
GROWTH IN CHRIST QUESTIONNAIRE

(Because the pre- and post-tests were the same except for the last two questions for the experimental group, only the post-test is included here.)

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE
GROWTH IN CHRIST QUESTIONNAIRE
(Post-test)**

Thank you, Sabbath School Member, for participating in this study to determine which type of adult quarterly best promotes growth in Christ. Your assistance will help to identify ways to improve the adult quarterly, and is greatly appreciated. Returning this anonymous questionnaire serves as implied consent. By filling out this questionnaire, you are consenting and admitting that you have received oral instructions and are satisfactorily informed regarding this research. **When the test refers to the quarterly, it is referring to the quarterly you studied for 2nd quarter, 2005.**

DIRECTIONS: Mark one answer for each. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it really is and not how true you would like it to be. Choose from these responses:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never True	Rarely True	True once in a while	Sometimes True	Often True	Almost always True	Always True
					Never True	Always True

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am concerned that our country is not doing enough to help the poor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on a cross and rose again . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. I help others with their religious questions and struggles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. I tend to be critical of other people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. In my free time, I help people who have problems or needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. My faith helps me know right from wrong | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. I do things to help protect the environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. I have a hard time accepting myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11. Every day I see evidence that God is active in the world | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12. I take excellent care of my physical health | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13. I am active in efforts to promote social justice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. I seek out opportunities to grow spiritually | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15. I take time for periods of prayer or meditation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16. I am active in efforts to promote world peace | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17. I accept people whose religious beliefs are different from mine | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19. As I grow older, my understanding of God changes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20. I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities and obligations I have | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 21. I give significant portions of my time and money to help people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 22. I speak out for equality for women and minorities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 23. I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24. My life is filled with meaning and purpose | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Please turn page

	Never <u>True</u>						Always <u>True</u>
25. I do not understand how a loving God can allow so much pain and suffering in the world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I believe that I must obey God's rules and commandments in order to be saved ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I am confident that I can overcome any problem or crisis no matter how serious ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States and throughout the world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I try to apply my faith to political and social issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. My life is committed to Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. I talk with other people about my faith	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. My life is filled with stress and anxiety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. I have a real sense that God is guiding me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. I do not want the churches of this nation getting involved in politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I like to worship and pray with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. I think Christians must be about the business of creating international understanding and harmony	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's creation enough to help the poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

DIRECTIONS: Answer questions 39-44 in two or three brief sentences.

39. What do you think it means to be a disciple of Christ?

40. How would you explain the sin against the Holy Spirit?

41. Describe your understanding of the true nature of the Sabbath.

42. Explain what you believe happened on the Cross.

43. How would you describe the Christian life?

44. What role should traditions play in a person's faith?

DIRECTIONS: Mark one answer for each. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it really is and not how true you would like to be. Choose from these responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost always
				<u>Never</u>	<u>Almost Always</u>
45. I trust Christ to help me through difficult times	1	2	3	4	5
46. I depend on my relationship with Christ to help me make important decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
47. I enjoy sharing my faith with others	1	2	3	4	5
48. I feel responsible for helping people in need	1	2	3	4	5

DIRECTIONS: Mark one answer for each. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it really is and not how true you would like it to be. Choose from these responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
				<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
49. I live simply so I can focus more on Christ	1	2	3	4	5
50. Studying the quarterly motivates me to spend more time in prayer	1	2	3	4	5
51. Studying the quarterly motivates me to spend more time in worship	1	2	3	4	5
52. Studying the quarterly motivates me to serve others	1	2	3	4	5
53. Studying the quarterly motivates me to meditate more on God's Word	1	2	3	4	5
54. Studying the quarterly motivates me to study more about spiritual things on my own	1	2	3	4	5

Please turn page

DIRECTIONS: For questions 55-58, check the correct response.

55. Generally, how often do you study from the quarterly?

- Never Five to six times a week
 Once or twice a week Every day
 Three to four times a week

56. Gender:

- Male Female

57. Ethnic identity:

- African-American Hispanic
 Asian Other _____
 Caucasian

58. Age:

- 18-24 years of age 45-54 years of age
 25-34 years of age 55-64 years of age
 35-44 years of age 65+ years of age

59. What is the highest level of education you have completed? _____

60. Ellen White states that the purpose of redemption is to restore God's image in us (*Education*, pp. 15, 16).
What parts of the quarterly help to meet this goal?

61. Describe what you would consider to be the ideal quarterly.

62. If you studied the prototype quarterly, what did you like about it and why?

63. If you studied the prototype quarterly, what did you not like about it and why?

APPENDIX H

ITEMS RELATED TO THE PRE- AND POST-TESTING PROCESSES

This appendix contains items distributed to the Sabbath School teachers who conducted the pre- and post-testing:

1. a cover letter which was read to each class before the pre-testing;
2. pre-test instructions for classes who studied from the regular quarterly;
3. pre-test instructions for classes who studied from the prototype quarterly;
4. the Master Code List;
5. a thank-you note read to classes before post-testing;
6. post-test instructions;
7. Dr. Jane Thayer's letter to promote completion of the post-testing.

**COVER LETTER
TO BE READ TO THE SABBATH SCHOOL CLASSES**

Dear Sabbath School Class Members:

Ellen G. White wrote in 1903 that the purpose of redemption is to “restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, [and] to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in creation might be realized. . . . (*Education*, pp. 15, 16).

I always have been inspired by this quote, particularly as it affects my work as associate editor of the adult Sabbath School quarterly. Therefore, to fulfill the research requirement for a degree in Religious Education from Andrews University, I decided to develop and test a prototype quarterly designed to promote the restoration of Christ’s image, regardless of the topic, in the people who study from it.

Thus, some Sabbath School classes during second quarter, 2005, are studying from and testing the regular adult quarterly, while others are studying from and testing the prototype quarterly, to see which of the two types of quarterlies has the greater impact on a person’s growth in Christ.

Through this research, I hope to learn ways of improving the adult quarterly. By participating, each of you will benefit by having the satisfaction of knowing that your test responses were instrumental in bettering a denominational publication that has a word-wide circulation. In addition, you will ultimately benefit from any improvements that can be made to the quarterly as a result of this research.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality will be ensured through the following procedure: The pre-test you are about to receive will have a code on it which you are to write in the top right-hand corner of your quarterly. When you take the post-test, you will write this code on the right-hand corner of the first page of the test. In addition, each of you will write your name and code on a master list during class time after the pre-test has been taken. This list will be a backup in case some of you misplace your code or forget to bring your quarterly with you on the day of the post-test. The list will be filled out during the Sabbath School class after the pre-tests have been taken, collected by your teacher, and sealed in the presence of your class in a self-addressed stamped envelope which will be mailed to me. This list will then be kept by a class member appointed by the class itself. This process will ensure that neither the teachers nor myself will have access to the list.

The return of these tests to me signifies your consent to be part of this study. If you have any questions, you may reach me at my office in the General Conference (301.680.6162) or my adviser, Dr. Jane Thayer (260.471.6703).

Thank you for taking part in this research.

Sincerely,

Lyndelle Chiomenti
Associate Editor, Adult Sabbath School Quarterlies

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSES WHO ARE TESTING
THE REGULAR QUARTERLY**

1. If the quarterlies have been passed out before the pre-test is to be taken, remind class members to bring it with them the Sabbath of the pre-test.
2. Pass out the pre-test and direct their attention to the code in the upper right corner of the test.
3. Instruct them to write this code on the upper right corner of the contents page of their quarterly. If some people do not have their new quarterly with them, give them a Post-It note to write their test code on. They can then put this note somewhere visible until they can put their code in the upper right corner of the contents page of the quarterly.

TELL THEM:

**“IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR EACH OF YOU TO REMEMBER YOUR CODE.
WHEN YOU TAKE THE POST-TEST AT THE END OF THE QUARTER,
YOU WILL NEED TO WRITE YOUR CODE ON THE POST-TEST.”**

I am providing a master code list to pass around for each person to sign and put their code on. Please assign someone in your class who regularly attends to be in charge of this list. After everyone has signed the list, give it to this person.

4. Collect tests, put them in the mailing envelope provided, and seal in front of the class.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSES WHO ARE TESTING
THE PROTOTYPE QUARTERLY**

1. Pass out the prototype quarterly.
2. Pass out the pre-test and direct their attention to the code in the upper right corner of the test.
3. Instruct them to write this code on the upper right corner of the contents page of their quarterly.

TELL THEM:

“IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR EACH OF YOU TO REMEMBER YOUR CODE. WHEN YOU TAKE THE POST-TEST AT THE END OF THE QUARTER, YOU WILL NEED TO WRITE YOUR CODE ON THE POST-TEST.”

I am providing a master code list to pass around for each person to sign and put their code on. Please assign someone in your class who regularly attends to be in charge of this list. After everyone has signed the list, give it to this person.

4. Collect tests, put them in the mailing envelope provided, and seal in front of the class.

TO THOSE ADMINISTERING THE POST-TEST: Please read the following thank-you to your class.

During this quarter, 300 Sabbath School members have been testing two types of quarterly formats to see which one might have the greater impact on the spiritual growth of its users.

Christian spiritual growth involves knowledge of the Bible, how a person applies that knowledge to his or her life, and how a person shares that knowledge with others.

As part of this study, you took a pre-test at the beginning of the quarter. Now it's time to take the post-test. The post-test is the same as the pre-test. How your answers on the post-test differ from the pre-test will help to determine the effect of the quarterly you studied from.

Thank you for being willing to participate in this research. It has been an honor for me to have you on board.

Sincerely,

Lyndelle Chiomenti

INSTRUCTIONS FOR POST-TEST

Remind the person who has the master code list for your class to bring the list on the Sabbaths you will be testing.

1. Consider waiting to give the test at the end of the class. Attendance will be higher then, hopefully.

Take the test in class, as a class. Many people who leave before taking the test, never return the test.

2. After you have passed out the test, have class members write their code in the upper right hand corner of their test. This is the code they wrote on the contents page of their quarterly (upper right hand corner).

They also wrote the code on the master code list that someone in your class has been assigned to keep for the post-test.

This code is important. It will allow me to match each person's post-test with their pre-test in order to determine which type of quarterly format being studied from this quarter has the greatest impact on a person's spiritual growth.

Also remind them that when the post-test refers to the quarterly, it is referring to the quarterly you studied for 2nd quarter, 2005. This is also in the instructions at the beginning of the test.

3. Collect tests, put them in the mailing envelope provided, seal in front of the class, and return to me.

Andrews University

August 17, 2005

Dear Sabbath School Member,

In March, 2005, you began participating in a research study conducted by Lyndelle Chiomenti. The purpose of this study is to determine which type of adult Sabbath School quarterly better assists Seventh-day Adventist Church members in their Christian growth.

This research has special significance for Lyndelle's work as associate editor of the adult quarterly. More importantly, however, it has special significance to our church and to you personally. During GC session this summer, delegates voted a Christian growth statement affirming the importance of such growth. This statement is now the church's 28th fundamental belief. The results of Lyndelle's research, *and your participation in it*, could help move the church forward in this regard by making the quarterly a vehicle whereby the church grows ever closer to Christ.

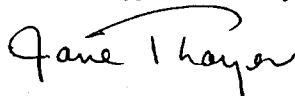
At the beginning of 2nd quarter of this year, you filled out a questionnaire, which was a "pre-test." These pre-tests need to be matched with a follow-up questionnaire, a "post-test." As Lyndelle's advisor, I am asking you to please *make your pre-test count* by taking the post-test now and returning it to her in this pre-addressed stamped envelope. Or if you wish to return it to the person in your church who is assisting Lyndelle, she/he will send it for you. Either way, your anonymity is assured.

Remember to write your test code in the upper right hand corner of the test. This is the code that was on your pre-test and which you wrote on the contents page of your quarterly. If you do not have your quarterly, check with the person who maintained the code list for your class. If the code is not available to you at all, then be sure to fill out questions 56-59, so we can match that information with the post-test.

One other word: You will notice that the post-test is the same as the pre-test. This is so the answers on both tests can be compared.

Lyndelle's research is important for our church. *And your participation* is important to complete that research. A few minutes of your time has the potential of having eternal consequences in the lives of many people.

With sincere appreciation for your help,



Jane Thayer, Ph.D., Director
Religious Education Programs
Chair of Lyndelle Chiomenti's Doctoral Committee

Religious Education Programs - SDA Theological Seminary

Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-0105 Tel 269.471.8618 Fax 269.471.6202 reled@andrews.edu www.andrews.edu/sem/reled

APPENDIX I

RECURRING THEMES IN OPEN-ENDED ITEMS 60-63
OF *ADULT BIBLE STUDY GUIDE* GROWTH
IN CHRIST QUESTIONNAIRE

Recurring Themes in Open-ended Items 60-63 of Growth in Christ Questionnaire†

THEMES	REGULAR ABSG PRE-TEST	PROTOTYPE ABSG PRE-TEST	PROTOTYPE ABSG POST-TEST	TOTAL
Application	Item 60*-9 Item 61**-17	Item 60--6 Item 61-25	Item 62***-30	87
Style and Number of Questions	Item 60-9 Item 61-20	Item 60-10 Item 61-7	Item 62-16 Item 63****-3	65
Amount and Type of Bible Texts	Item 60-6	Item 60-22 Item 61-2	-----	40
An Easier to Understand Quarterly	Item 6-10	Item 61-14	Item 62-12	36
A Christ-centered Quarterly	Item 60-2 Item 61-9	Item 60-6 Item 61-13	Item 62-2	32
Amount of Ellen G. White Material	Item 60-7 Item 61-8	Item 60-8	-----	23
Good Class Discussion	Item 61-4	Item 60-4 Item 61-3	Item 62--7	18
Inside Mission Stories	Item 60-9 Item 61-2	Item 60-5	-----	16
Lesson Comments	Item 60-7	Item 60-7 Item 61-2	-----	16
Suggestions for Extra Reading	Item 60-2 Item 61-8	Item 61-4	-----	14
Teacher's Quarterly	-----	Item 60-6 Item 61-1	Item 62-3 Item 63-4	14
Daily Lesson Study Format	Item 60-8		Item 60-3	11

†Post-test answers for questions 61 and 62 were not significantly different for either ABSG and are therefore not presented here. Questions 62 and 63 appeared only on the post-test for the prototype. Hence, there is a post-test column only for that ABSG.

*The purpose of redemption is to restore God's image in us (*Education*, pp. 15, 16). What parts of the quarterly help to meet this goal?

**Describe what you would consider to be the ideal quarterly.

***What did you like about the prototype quarterly, and why?

****What did you not like about the prototype quarterly, and why?

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VITAE

NAME: Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti
DATE OF BIRTH: March 30, 1950
PLACE OF BIRTH: Holland, Michigan, USA
HUSBAND: Peter Joseph Chiomenti

EDUCATION:

2007 EdD in Religious Education
Andrews University

1978 MA in Religion/Theology
Andrews University

1972 BS in Special Education for the Deaf; Elementary Education; English
Eastern Michigan University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2005-Present Editor, *CQ Bible Study Guide*
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC)

1985-2005 Editor, *Easy Reading Adult Bible Study Guide*
GC

1990-2005 Associate Editor, *Adult Standard and Adult Teachers Bible Study Guides*
GC

1983-1990 Assistant Director, Sabbath School Department
GC

1979-1983 Editorial Secretary, Sabbath School Department
GC

1978-1979 Teacher of English and Bible
Dakota Adventist Academy
Bismarck, North Dakota, USA

1972-1975 Teacher for the Deaf
Berrien County Day Program for the Hearing Impaired
Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA