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Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church

Nathaniel E. Elias
Andrews University

ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING SPIRTUAL DISCIPLINES IN YOUTH AND
YOUNG ADULT LEADERS THROUGH MENTORING
AT THE PEACHTREE CITY SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Nathaniel Elias

Adviser: Steve Case

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING SPIRTUAL DISCIPLINES IN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT
LEADERS THROUGH MENTORING AT THE PEACHTREE CITY
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Nathaniel Eric Elias

Name and degree of adviser: Steve Case, PhD

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Problem

The Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church (PTC) leadership and parents
of teenagers expressed concerns regarding the lack of spirituality and church involvement
of their youth and young adults. Church appointed youth and young adult leaders had not
received consistent spiritual equipping to share with the youth and young adults of the
church. Youth ministry primarily focused on recreational fellowship and lacked spiritual
focus. The church approached the associate pastor to provide spiritual equipping for
youth and young adult leaders.

Method

Six church nominated youth and young adult leaders participated in a 10-month

mentorship program that equipped them with spiritual disciplines to grow their

spirituality. The mentorship consisted of eight sessions. Four sessions were group

sessions with the six leaders and four sessions were individual sessions. Each participant

completed Lifeway's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* and an exit review to measure

spiritual growth. The entire church was invited to participate by completing the *Spiritual*

Grow Assessment pre-and post-mentorship training.

Results

All six youth and young adult leaders that participated in the mentorship scored

higher on the second *Spiritual Growth Assessment.* Each mentee spent time practicing

spiritual disciplines and indicated that they had grown in their personal relationship with

God. While this is difficult to scientifically measure, the verbal responses and

assessments suggested that spiritual growth took place in each individual.

Conclusions

Mentoring spiritual disciplines among youth and young adult leaders effectively

equipped them with the knowledge and skills to develop personal habits of practicing

spiritual disciplines. Further equipping leaders in personal mentoring skills can transmit

the spiritual experience to youth and young adults that will lead to greater spirituality and

likely church involvement.

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A Professional Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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APRROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

_____   _____

Adviser,   Director, DMin Program
Steve Case   Kleber D. Gonçalves

_____   _____

Rogelio Paquini   Dean, Seventh-day Adventist
                                         Theological Seminary
                                         Jiří Moskala

_____   _11/7/2019_____

Benjamin Maxson   Date approved

Dedicated to

my amazing supportive wife Holly,

my encouraging daughters Maddy and Abby,

my parents Lance and Patricia,

Georgia-Cumberland Conference Ministerial,

Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church family,

and my advisor Steve Case for going out of his way to help me complete this project

dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church

Developing spiritual disciplines in youth and young adult leaders through

mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church took place as partial

fulfillment of the Doctor of Ministry program for Nathaniel Elias. This document

describes the project completed from January 2017 through November 2018. In addition

to the project narrative, this document contains a theological reflection and a literary

review that defines the need for the development of spiritual disciplines and the value of

using mentoring as avenues to enhance the growth of spirituality in youth and young

adult leaders of the Peachtree City Adventist Church.

Description of Ministry Context

Teen parents attending Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church (PTC)

located in Sharpsburg, Georgia, identified a need for spiritual growth in their youth and

young adults. The church board, in January of 2016, accepted Pastor Nathaniel Elias'

project proposal to strengthen the spiritual health of youth and young adults through the

mentoring of youth and young adult leaders in spiritual disciplines. At the time of the

project, Peachtree City Adventist Church maintained an active membership of 260,

including 50 Hispanic members who were excluded from this project as they maintain a

separate worship service in Spanish.

The English-speaking church has an active membership of 210 and averages 175 in attendance. During the project, January 2017 through November 2018, young adult participation grew from 24 to 39, while youth ministry participants decreased from over thirty to less than twenty as a large number graduated from high school during the span of the project. The number of youth described reflects the inclusion of youth of parents who are members regardless of the youth's membership status.

The church sponsors and shares space with a three-teacher K-8 elementary school, Shoal Creek Adventist School. The church campus hosts one of three primary interactive simultaneous videoconferencing classroom sites of Atlanta Adventist Academy (high school). One of three key points of the church's vision statement points to their focus, "We are known for education" (Appendix A). The church affirms its support for Adventist Education in budget allocations and volunteers.

The church's primary region of mission covers Coweta and portions of Fayette counties in South Atlanta Metropolitan. Demographics in the church largely mirrors the two counties (Appendix B). With diversity and racial tension of the Southern United States, the church faces similar challenges as the counties experience. Since 2010, the Atlanta metropolitan expansion has impacted both counties (United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

Statement of the Problem

Prior to January 2014, the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church recognized the spiritual weakness of youth and young adults attending PTC. Church leadership expressed great concern over the decrease of their teen's involvement in church. While many teens attended church, their involvement in worship service and

various ministries had visibly diminished. Parents and church lay leadership expressed a belief that increasing the spiritual health of their young people would increase willingness to attend and be involved in church. While the church nominated leaders for youth ministry, the primary role focused on events and recreation. A general review of youth ministry showed limited focus on spiritual growth and a consistent lack of spiritual training of youth leadership.

Statement of the Task

The project sought to mentor youth and young adult leaders in spiritual disciplines with two goals. First, youth and young adult leaders of PTC would experience personal spiritual growth by expanding their practice of spiritual disciplines that enhanced their opportunity to be in the presence of God and know God in more intimate ways. Second, as leaders' personal experiences with God grew through being mentored, they would apply their discoveries to lead the of PTC youth and young adults. This secondary goal was expected to come through leaders having been mentored and would then enter into mentoring youth and young adults of the church. Evaluating the success of this project covers the review the youth and young adult leaders' personal spiritual development, the inclusion of spiritual discipline in PTC youth and young adult ministry, and the spiritual development of PTC youth and young adults.

Delimitation of the Project

This project was limited to six to eight elected members of the PTC youth and young adult leadership. Completion of this project was completely voluntary and not a prerequisite of election as leader. If six leaders failed to volunteer for the project, any

junior or senior high school student, subject to parental approval, or young adult could sign up to participate in the project.

Description of the Project

This document consists of the collective process of research and practice of spiritual disciplines by PTC youth and young adult leaders. The research component consisted of two parts: First, the theological basis for mentoring and spiritual disciplines; and second, the current literature on mentoring and spiritual disciplines. The practice of a spiritual disciplines project with the PTC youth and young adult leaders covers in detail both plans and implementation. Outcomes, summaries, conclusions, and recommendations of the project are described in the last chapter.

The theological portion of this project focuses on the experience of Moses with God and his mentoring of Joshua in the various disciplines described in the narrative. Through the mentorship, Joshua experienced being in the presence of God and was equipped to lead. As a teenager, Joshua entered his mentorship. Later, as an adult, God identified Joshua as one prepared to lead because of the spiritual and leadership development provided through Moses' mentoring.

Current literature shows the value of spiritual disciplines for the spiritual growth of youth and young adults. Research suggests that youth and young adult spiritual development is part of an even greater natural human development. A lack of spiritual development creates an imbalance in other developmental processes.

The project described is a 10-month mentorship of PTC youth and young adult leaders. To increase the effectiveness of the evaluation PTC was invited to participate in Life Way's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* prior to and after the project. Each mentee

would complete a 10-month mentorship including four group sessions and four individual sessions. Natural Church Development's *Spiritual Style Test* was provided to each mentee to enhance each participant's personal relationship with God. The conclusions and recommendations identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project as well as suggest several follow up opportunities at the completion of this project.

Definition of Terms

Biblical Spiritual Discipline: Any biblical practice understood to lead a person into God's presence and promote one's spiritual growth such as prayer, devotional reading of Scripture, worship and evangelism.

Generation Z: While the dates continue to be adjusted, Generation Z, Gen Z or iGen represents persons born between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000-2010s.

Mentoring: A person with greater biblical spiritual experience who provides routine, dynamic critique through active listening, individualized equipping and positive reinforcement.

Millennial: Persons born between 1981-1997.

PTC: Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church.

SGA: *Spiritual Growth Assessment*

Spiritual Discipline: Practices that promote spiritual growth such as prayer, worship, and service.

Spiritual Formation: The continuing personal spiritual growth and development through various practices and disciplines transforming one into the likeness of God, intimacy with God and for the benefit of society.

Youth: Individuals ages 13 to 18 years of age primarily the junior high and high school years of schooling.

Young Adult: Individuals who have graduated from high school and have yet to reach the age of 36.

Summary

PTC is a growing, proactive church that recognized its need to change its current culture to help it retain and attract youth and young adults first to Jesus and second to PTC. This project was completed for the purpose of providing PTC the tools needed to help enhance its young people spiritual growth and development.

CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

Mentoring has become a popular term for the 21st century professional community. Within the religious community, this phenomenon has also seen a vast amount of discussion and implementation. Mentoring takes place when an emotionally safe individual not directly associated with one's current setting is willing to listen and provide honest critique. This chapter will explore the interactions between Moses and Joshua with reference back to interactions of Jethro-Moses as a viable example of the mentoring of a spiritually younger individual into the spiritual maturity that prepares one for life and leadership.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination in North America replicates the greater Protestant struggle to retain youth and young adults. In the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist commissioned study, the Barna Group (2014c) found "The percentages of respondents who say their experiences fit these descriptions are higher than the national norms for all six perceptions" (Jenkin & Martin, 2014). This study examined the condition of millennials who still had some affiliation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Barna Group used similar questions as had been used in their research reported in *You Lost Me* (2011). Closer to the local church, it is believed that at least 60% of Georgia-Cumberland Conference church attending children will leave the

church during high school and college (Keele, 2016). From personal interviews and general review of the local Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church (PTC) membership, the numbers reflected similar results. The mentoring dynamics of Moses and Joshua provide an example of an effective way to prepare a young person to be a spiritually mature leader. If the church intends to retain a greater percentage of high school and college-aged students, leaders of ministries focused on these two age groups need to be spiritually mature. The narrative of Moses and Joshua showed biblical spirituality cannot be viewed as secondary for current and future church leaders. While some leadership traits may come from genetics, biblical spirituality develops through the practice of placing one's self before God. Spiritual formation, the collective practice of spiritual disciplines, provides opportunities to personally encounter God and His transformative power (Foster, 1998).

The Focus

The examination of the narrative of Moses and Joshua will primarily focus on three aspects. First, identifying the significance that the age or status of Joshua is defined as a *young man*, *servant* or *aide*. Moses provided Joshua a mentorship in spiritual development, which not only included him in the experience but also prepared him to lead. This will provide a model for the North American Seventh-day Adventist churches as they struggle to keep youth and young adults engaged. Second, Moses' mentorship process with Joshua described common spiritual disciplines that are useful for every spiritually maturing leader. Third, God called Joshua into leadership after the establishment of mentorship with Moses. Often the church asks individuals to lead prior to mentoring. Inverting the process limits the spiritual maturing needed to lead. While

there are several various mentorships (Appendix C) described in scripture (Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy, Jesus and the disciples, to name a few), Moses and Joshua provided direct snippets that pinpoint the importance of mentorship of young leaders in biblical spiritual formation.

The Scriptures

Exodus 33:7-11 is foundational for examining the spiritual disciplines described in the Moses and Joshua mentorship. Moses' interaction with God "face to face," and Joshua's choice to remain in the "tent of meeting," provide a dynamic picture of God's desire for spiritual leaders to practice being in God's real, legitimate presence.

**Importance of Mentorship of
Leaders in Spirituality**

When Moses, a Hebrew-born, primarily Egyptian-raised young man, began to flex his leadership muscles, he quickly realized that there was a difference between being called to rescue Israel and actually rescuing Israel. While, by today's standards, one may consider a person having lived a third of his life ready to conquer the world, Moses, though educated in leadership, lacked any practical aptitude to lead the country (Acts 7:23-25). While fleeing to the wilderness as a murderer, Moses' calling seemed largely a misinterpreted dream. When God reminded him of his call, at the burning bush, the 80-year-old (Exod 7:7; Acts 7:30) Moses, with trepidation returned to Egypt to lead Israel (Exod 4). Even as the God-called leader of Israel, Moses continued to benefit from the mentoring of a seasoned leader like Jethro (Exod 18).

Jethro - Moses

During the 40 years in the wilderness, Moses appeared to be entirely alone with God, yet the biblical narrative provides glimpses of a wise father-in-law providing Moses the spiritual mentorship needed to experience his own spiritual formation. For an individual to provide healthy spiritual mentorship, the Moses narrative suggests, a healthy support system consists of being a mentor and mentee. Modern research shows teenagers and young adults need "lasting mentoring relationships," to become spiritually mature (Bergler, 2014, p. 104). For Moses, Jethro functioned as a spiritual mentor. While there is no way to determine the exact spiritual understanding of God which Jethro possessed, the writers of Exodus clearly saw Jethro as more than just a God-believer (Exod 3:1). Jethro provided Moses a very different and positive view of God that Moses had not previously encountered (Reis, 2013). While the Israelites saw only problems and discontent, Jethro expressed hope and peace (Exod 18).

The book of Exodus does not provide much of an introduction of Jethro. From small glimpses, a few elements of mentorship can be identified. Exodus shares the spiritual role of Jethro in chapter 18 in declaring he was "the priest of Midian" (Exod 18:1). Scholars have mused as to what type of religious institution could have been in existence at this time (Reis, 2005). Clearly, the Israelites lacked any type of formal system of religion. Enns (2000) and Gorringe (2005) pointed to a continued comparison of serving God, the "I Am," to being slaves in Egypt. Moses' personal encounter with God at Mount Horeb (Exod 3:1) suggested that there was some form of worship of the "I Am" God of which Jethro was recognized as its priest. Moses, as an outsider of Midian, was accepted by Jethro and allowed to marry into this Midianite household, crossing

many cultural norms (Reis, 2005). As Israel traveled through the desert, Jethro came to see Moses (Exod 18). The significance of the location–Mount Horeb, the "mount of God" (Exod 18:5)–indicated a value of Jethro to Moses' worship of the "I Am." Moses had struggled with the concept of the "I Am" God (Exod 3:14). Jethro appeared to be one who shaped Moses' understanding of how God wanted worshippers to be in His presence (Exod 18:12). The Moses narrative scripted rejoicing being quickly replaced by disillusion and doubting in the stories of Marah and Elim (Exod 15), manna and quail (Exod 16), and water from the rock (Exod 17). In the midst of this disillusion and doubting, Jethro appeared in the narrative as a voice of hope and peace. One of the powerful perspectives a mentor provides is the ability to see beyond the immediacy of the situation (Exod 18:9, 12). While limited, the interactions of Moses with Jethro suggested that Jethro mentored Moses.

<center>Moses - Joshua</center>

Soon after leaving Egypt, Moses selected Joshua as his *na'ar* (H5288), or servant, of which further examination in a later section of this chapter will be discussed. Moses chose a young man as his assistant (Achtemeier, 1985). As Moses' assistant, Joshua attended the most intimate interactions between God and Moses (Exod 24:13). While the leaders of Israel waited outside the tent or at the base of the mountain, Joshua, as Moses' aide, entered in the inner circle. When God talked to Moses on Mount Sinai, Joshua was present. When Moses spent time in the "tent of meeting," Joshua was present (Exod 33:11). When Moses went to war, Joshua was present (Exod 17:9-14). When Moses, as an old man, asked for spies to check out the "promised land," Joshua was selected (Num

13, 14). When Moses dealt with the dissention in the camp, Joshua was present (Num 11:28). For leaders to be mentored, both mentor and mentee must be present.

In an overview of the interactions between Moses and Joshua, Moses used a similar process as Jethro had used with him. Moses invited Joshua into his personal experience in the presence of God. In one of the most dynamic experiences of being in the presence of God recorded in the Bible, Joshua joined Moses on the "Mount of God" (Exod 24:13). Exodus 24 identified that the seventy elders were not invited up the mountain. Even Aaron and Hur, who had previously been directly involved in the presence of God during the battle against the Amalekites (Exod 17:10), were not invited to join God on the mount. Exodus 33:7-11 expanded the idea of being in God's presence to something that does not just happen on a mountain, but also at the "tent of meeting," which will be examined further in a later section.

It is not until Numbers 27:12-23 that God shared that Joshua would be the next leader of Israel. This did not happen until sometime after the first attempt to enter Canaan. Before this, Numbers 11 depicted God's interaction with Moses concerning God's instruction and the negative spirit of the Israelites that had begun to fill Moses' spirit. As God made his presence seen in the seventy elders, Joshua took exception to it. Moses used the opportunity to spiritually mentor Joshua in the power of God's presence, that it was for all people not just a select few. In considering the significance of mentoring, it is reasonable to deduce that spiritual mentoring is for all people.

The Narrative

Within the Israelite narrative as God's chosen people called to be his witness (Gen 12: 2-3), Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy provide the narrative of Moses and

Joshua. This narrative began at the exodus from Egypt and continued through the death of Moses. In understanding the narrative, one has to assume that, even at some occurrences where Joshua was not directly referenced, his role as Moses' servant provided him an up-close view of the events taking place. The narrative began with an unclear reference that was assumed to be that of Joshua, son of Nun (Exod 17:9). Enns (2000) pointed out that this inclusion of Joshua in the battle was to develop his future calling as a leader.

<div align="center">*Na'ar*</div>

Defining the general age and role of Joshua is valuable in the examination of the spiritual mentorship that occurred between Moses and Joshua. Exodus 24:13 referred to Joshua as *sharath* (H8334). In the Piel verb form, the most common translation is "to minister or to serve." *Sharath* was also used in Joshua 1:1 to describe Joshua's role in reference to Moses. This role of service is often described in the setting of religious activities (Exod 28:35, 43) or in the actual act of worship (Num 3:6). However, Exodus 33:11 went further in describing the relationship between Moses and Joshua. In addition to using *sharath*, a second descriptor, *na'ar* was used. *Na'ar* has a very broad range of definitions (Appendix D). Moses was described as *na'ar* as an infant (Exod 2:6) as a comparable to *ra'ha yeled hinneh na'ar*, "she saw the child and beheld the boy" (Gesenius, Tregellew, & Strong, 1979).

Based on its various possible meanings, in the setting of the Moses-Joshua narrative, the description *na'ar,* as it referred to Joshua, can suggest a couple of age-identifying clues. First, Joshua was not considered an older individual. He was not identified as one of the seventy elders Moses involved in leadership and management of

the Israelite community. Second, the writers of Exodus, used *na'ar* as an antonym of *zaqen*, indicating that a *na'ar* was not older or mature physically or mentally. Third, *na'ar* was used in Exodus to refer to one as young as an infant. Fourth, Joshua was referred to as Moses' *na'ar* in Exodus 33:11, along with *sharath.* An older adult would not function as a religious servant or aide if he or she had reached maturity. While there was no age stated in the text, based on the findings, Joshua was likely a young man at the time Moses chose him to be his assistant. Davidson (2015) suggested that Joshua would be not older than 20 years of age, based on Numbers 14:29-30.

The Shift of Roles

Within the development of the narrative, the Moses-Joshua mentorship transitioned. As Joshua matured, the mentorship shifted focus to more involved equipping for the calling. While Moses spent 40 days and nights in God's presence, Joshua maintained relatively close proximity to Moses and God. As the narrative continued, Joshua's proximity to the personal presence of God drew nearer, followed by a spiritual maturing.

Prior to the sending of the 12 spies into Canaan, Numbers 11:28 expressed the immature Joshua. In a desire to defend Moses, Joshua was angered by the fact that some of the seventy elders, who chose to ignore Moses' request to meet, were prophesying in the camp of Israel. In a dialogue between Moses and Joshua, it became apparent that Joshua had not realized his own calling, nor did he understand Moses' role of leading the Israelites into Canaan and the presence of God (Num 11:28-30).

Moses' first invitation to Joshua into a spiritual maturing experience provided evidence of Joshua's immaturity. While Moses and Joshua spent forty days and nights on

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the mountain in God's presence (Exod 24:13, 18), Aaron led the Israelites in the creation of the golden calf (Exod 32). Joshua, not having Moses' understanding of what was taking place in the camp, believed the noise to be that of war (Exod 32:17). Enns, (2000) suggested that there was a distance between the place where Moses and God had their personal interaction and where Joshua waited for them, based on the fact that, in Exodus 32:15, Moses headed down the mountain, but it was not until verse 17 that Joshua heard the noise. This concept is possible but not necessarily provable. What is apparent is that Joshua was not hearing the same message from God as Moses (Exod 32:7). This showed the different levels of maturity of Moses and Joshua. By the time of Exodus 33:11, Joshua's proximity shifted from a distance away from Moses' interactions with God, to being in the very tent. Joshua was described as "not leav[ing] the tent." Along with proximity comes the invitation to join in the spiritual disciplines that Moses practiced. Joshua now stayed in the presence of God.

A significant transition took place between Numbers 11 and Numbers 27. Not only did Joshua's proximity to Moses and God shift, but Moses also invited Joshua to enter into the disciplines needed to develop his personal experience with God. While textual criticism is not the focus of this chapter, Numbers 10-12 was clearly a complex compilation of texts redacted to current Hebrew text. The redacted text, "suggests that Pentateuchal editors at times structured narratives to follow a logic of theme rather than one concerned with linear plan" (Sommer, 1999). Observing chapters 10-12 within the greater Numbers narrative, Gorringe (2005) provided a big picture theme of Numbers as the "wilderness wanderings." Suggesting that the missing narrative structure explains the need for the wilderness. God desired spiritual leaders to desire to be in His presence.

"God is only known in the journey from bondage to freedom, so that the return to the fleshpot of Egypt is a flight from God." He continued, "Well-fed slavery is destroying us, condemning us to unsustainable lifestyles and to the ecological destruction which follows from that" (Gorringe, 2005, p. 13). Moses mentored Joshua through the day-to-day experiences to desire to be in God's presence.

<div align="center">

Ruwach

</div>

A key word that appeared in Numbers 11, *ruwach* (H7307)*,* also appears in Numbers 27. Cotton (2001) points to "God's active, wind-like, presence, *ruwach,* as the key to Numbers 11 and Numbers 27 (p. 6). The difference was who was filled with *ruwach.* Within textually redacted Numbers 11, it can be argued that at least two independent narratives have been pressed together to tell a very confusing story. In attempting to merge the numerous ideas as to the redaction, Sommer (1999) summarizes the ideas within two primary pictures of Moses as the super star and the other of Moses the struggling, failing leader. Unlike Sommer's (1999) focus, the setting for this chapter is not concerned with textual criticism, but rather piggybacks the thematic features found in the variant texts. Numbers 11:1-3 began with the Israelites, having recently left the Mount of God, complaining about food options, and God's immediate response with fire. It was only the prayer of Moses that stopped God's anger. Gane (2004) pointed out that this complaining against God was nothing new among the Israelites. Moses was seen as the hero and the fire was averted. Verses 4-10 depicted a continuation or a repeat of the experience described in verses 1-3. Sommer (1999) pointed to the textual critics, who describe a very different view of Moses in the second narrative. While exact clarity on sources continues to be disputed, four basic sources continue to be the basic foundation

for the redaction (Wolf, 1991). Following these opposing images of Moses, God

instructed Moses to bring the seventy elders (Num 11:16-17). As Moses followed

through with the instruction, God filled the seventy elders with *ruwach,* and they began to

prophesy. Joshua, in his desire to support Moses, asked Moses to "stop them!" (Num

11:28). Joshua did not realize the spiritual benefits of experiencing God's presence

expanding to a larger group of individuals. At this point in the narrative Joshua had not

been referred to as having received *ruwach*.

<center>Leader</center>

Between the immature experience of Numbers 11 and Numbers 27 is another

development in Joshua's mentorship. Numbers 13:2 described God's instruction to

Moses, "From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." While the name Joshua was

not used, the family name for Joshua was used. It is most commonly translated as

Hoshea, also Hosea and Oshea. Numbers 13:16 explained that this usage of family name

was that "Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua." This was the first time

Joshua was described as a leader, *nasiy'* (H1954). The word was used to describe *a*

prince, one who was exalted (Gesenius et al., 1979). This was a different description of

Joshua than that of a young man or servant, which previously described Joshua's identity.

Through time of interaction between Moses and Joshua, the community of Israelites

recognized Joshua as a leader. To this point, neither Moses nor God indicated that they

had called Joshua to lead the community, yet the community saw Joshua in this light.

This detail can be seen in at least two different ways. First, Israel saw the spiritual

maturing taking place in Joshua. Second, it can be very dangerous when an individual is

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pushed into leadership before God calls them. For Joshua, this event became the preparation for his actual calling by God.

The Calling

From the time of the recognition by the community that Joshua was a leader, to the Numbers 27 official announcement from God, that Joshua would succeed Moses, several major events took place. Ten of the Canaan explorers recommended returning to Egypt, the people attempted a mutiny, Korah, Dathan and Abiram executed a rebellion against Moses, Moses reacted by striking the rock and was forbidden from entering Canaan, Aaron died, and several battles rattled the community that already knew that if they were over the age of forty, they would not enter Canaan. In the midst of these conditions, God announced that Joshua would succeed Moses as leader.

The Shepherd

A major shift in focus took place from Joshua functioning as a servant to be called to be the next leader. Gane (2004) described, "With utmost gravity, Moses appeals to 'the Lord, the God of the spirits of all mankind,' to appoint a good 'shepherd' in his place" (p. 741). Gane points to the description of Moses' role in Numbers 27:17 as that of a "shepherd." David as a literal shepherd was prepared by God's guidance to be a shepherd of people as king of Israel (1 Sam 17). God spoke warning to Israel's spiritual shepherds through Ezekiel saying, "Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves!" (Ezek 34:2). One of the great leadership tools mentioned in the New Testament is that of being a "shepherd." Paul described the leadership structure given by God as that, which includes shepherds, *poimēn* (Eph 4:11). In the New Testament setting,

Paul suggested that the community of believers needed "shepherds" to "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12). Jesus referred to himself as the "good shepherd" (John 10:14). After Christ' resurrection, he invited his disciple Peter to "feed my sheep" (John 21:17). For further exploration of Jesus' use of mentoring in spiritual disciplines to prepare the disciples for leadership see Appendix C. Moses wanted someone who could shepherd the people.

<center>The Spirit</center>

By Numbers 27, in contrast with Numbers 11, Joshua received the *ruwach*. Unlike the elders, the leaders of the community, who were gathered together to receive "the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders" (Num 11:25), Joshua did not receive of the Spirit from Moses, but received his own portion of the Spirit. Hymes (2010) pointed out, "Joshua was chosen due to the *ruwach* that he already had." He went even further to identify, "Joshua is chosen because of his spirit, an aspect of his person that was present before Moses laid his hands on him" (pp. 270-271). In Numbers 11, God used Moses as the agency to present the Spirit. While God gave the Spirit, the elders recognized the Spirit as the Spirit within Moses. When it came time to find a new leader, there was no need to lay on hands for Joshua to receive the Spirit within Moses. Joshua already possessed *ruwach*. Cotton (2001) identifies *ruwach* as "God's active, wind-like, presence, which gives vitality to all to fulfill their God-given functions" (p. 6). Joshua's personal experience with God, through his own practice of spiritual disciplines (Exod 33:11), had grown to a place where *ruwach* lived within him, "A man in whom is the spirit of leadership" (Num 27:18).

The Authority

Unlike the *ruwach*, which was already present at the time of ordaining or commissioning, Joshua did not have the authority needed to lead. As this mentoring relationship matured, Joshua received nearly everything from Moses needed to lead except the authority to lead. The Hebrew word, *howd* (H1935) was used in Numbers 27:20 (Gesenius et al., 1979). In both God's instructions in Number 27:18-21 and Moses' fulfilling actions in Numbers 27:22-23; the process of ordination was necessary for Joshua to receive the leadership authority. Kislev (2009) adds that *howd* was often used in reference to "a sort of halo of light" (p. 432). Consider the image of Moses described in Exodus 34:35 (H7160) of Moses' *qaran*, or shining, after being in the presence of God. Giving Joshua the glow from God's presence was, in a sense, leadership authority. God had chosen Joshua as the leader. The community and Moses, as current leader, in particular, recognized God's choice. It is not clear that Joshua recognized God's calling to lead Israel until Moses as a mentor spoke into Joshua's life. Spiritual mentors provide the opportunities to unwrap the calling of God. In a sense ordain one for God's call.

Transition

Kislev (2009) identified Numbers 27:18-21 as being intended to state an important interdependency between Eleazar and Joshua provides a valuable image for today's mentor. As will be explored in the last section, Moses used the "tent of meeting" as a place of direct interaction with God (Exod 33:7-11). As the "tent of meeting" administered by the priests became the focal point of interaction with God, a shift must take place in seeking God. Exodus 33:7-11 identified that Joshua was present when God would talk to Moses. Now, Joshua was replacing Moses, and with the interpolation that

may have taken place within the text, Joshua was to seek decisions from God through a joint relationship with Eleazar (Num 27:21). If Joshua and Eleazar were to be mentors to each other, their seeking God would be done jointly. This did not eliminate Joshua's ability to have direct communication with God. Joshua 1:1 says, "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' aide" clearly described an interaction directly with God. When seeking God's decision, it was best to seek answers with fellow seekers rather than individually. The fact that Eleazar the priest was clothed with the Urim was just added confirmation of God's will (Num 27:21).

The Transfer

The transfer of authority from Moses to Joshua described in Deuteronomy provided much of the groundwork. While very similar to Numbers 27, Deuteronomy 31 carries a different viewpoint, along with giving details that Numbers does not contain. While Numbers focused on Moses' death being like Aaron's (Num 27:13), Moses first mentioned his advanced age of 120 years as causing him to "no longer able to lead you" (Deut 31:2). The age factor was a powerful reason to have a mentoring experience that involved leaders. As people in leadership age, they reach the point where they are no longer able to lead. Finding Moses' replacement was clearly enhanced by having a mentorship process preparing the next leader.

Virtual Leader

As Moses clearly described, he was too old to lead, but the Israelite community was ultimately led by God. Block (2012) suggested through "three separate speeches," Deuteronomy 31 focused on God's leading. The loss of Moses's leadership after 40 years

naturally brought disruptions and distrust, yet God was still leading (Deut 31:3-5). Block

pointed to Moses' reminder of "Joshua's role as the representative of Yahweh" (p. 722).

From this perspective, Moses was only the virtual leader, while in actuality God led.

Moses effectively mentored Joshua to recognize God's leading described in Joshua 3:7

and Joshua 5:13-15. As with the Israelite community, the 21st century church describes

itself as being led by God, and if healthy mentorship is taking place, virtual leaders can

be replaced without damaging the church.

<div align="center">Strength and Courage</div>

Moses recognized two key factors needed to make healthy leadership transition.

The instruction was repeatedly given to both the community of Israel and to Joshua: "Be

strong and courageous" (Deut 31:6, 7). *Be strong* presents the idea to hold on to, to repair

something that is broken (Gesenius et al., 1979). *NASB Hebrew Concordance* suggested

courageous was to be alert either physically or mentally and opposite of depressed or

inattentive. God repeated, "Be strong and courageous" in a conversation with Joshua

(Josh 1:6, 7, 9 and 18). Block (2012) suggested that this reminder, to Israel first, and then

to Joshua, was to hold onto God. Over those 40 years, the Israelite and Moses had broken

the connection with God repeatedly. Moses challenged Joshua to remember the

connection he had witnessed between God and Moses. When God reached out to Joshua,

four times He provided the same invitation, stay connected. As a mentor, there is value to

support mentees in staying connected to the source of their spiritual strength.

<div align="center">**The Presence of God**</div>

As a mentor of biblical spiritual disciplines, the foundation is the encounter with

God through the practice of the disciplines. Two practical results are the recognition of

being in God's presence and the conversations with God. From Scripture, Christianity recognized that sin separates humanity from "face to face" presence with God. From Adam and Eve being banished from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3) to the War in Heaven that spilled down to Earth described in the last book of the Bible (Rev 12), sin has separated God and his greatest creation. In developing a mentoring relationship, Moses and Joshua entered into the unique practice of being in the presence of God and communicating with him.

<center>Exodus 33:7-11</center>

The narrative depicted in Exodus 33:7-11 provides the most concise and descriptive practices of Moses and Joshua. Several interactions can provide continued evidence of Moses' mentoring of Joshua in spiritual disciplines, as part of the leadership development. In exploring the five verses, several larger discussions need to be reviewed, as they shape views regarding this narrative. Enns (2000) pointed out that verses 7-11 do not fit with the larger narrative he defined in chapters 32-34. He went so far as to state, "It is a source of bafflement" (p. 579). Durham (1987) found the content and style indicate a change in source of this insertion into the larger narrative. Some scholars, such as Mead (1881), suggested that a defendable position is that verses 7-11 were only a figurative description of God's frustration with Israel, and that the events portrayed never took place. Others defended the concept of these verses as literal (Wessner, 2002).

<center>Confusion</center>

The confusion that has arisen within these five verses developed as an effort has been made to explain several grammatical and timeline discrepancies that seem to be

present. The first of these comes in verse 7. English translations indicate "Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the 'tent of meeting'". This tent created great tension in the overall narrative of the book of Exodus. Grammatical scholars such as Rogland (2012), suggested that this description of the "tent of meeting" was in some way a reference to the tabernacle described in Exodus 25-31 and constructed in Exodus 35-40. Hamilton (2011), Durham (1987), and Wessner (2002) suggested that there was enough evidence that the "tent of meeting" described in Exodus 33:7-11 was arguably not a variation or replacement of the "tabernacle" described in the surrounding passage. Critical to this view was, as Durham pointed out, the purpose of this "tent of meeting" which had "no connections with the Ark, or with any other palpable symbol of Yahweh's Presence, not with any rituals of sacrifice or offering" (p. 440). God's presence mattered more than the symbols of God's presence. Without any irrefutable evidence from Scripture, a literal view of Moses' "tent of meeting" as separate from the "tabernacle" is used throughout the remainder of this section.

Implication

This interpretation of the passage provides several implications. As a summary, first, the tent allowed for persons who were not priests to have an intimate personal relationship with God. Exodus 33:7 described the use of the tent of meeting, "Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp." Second, the "tent of meeting" showed that God desired to communicate on a regular basis with individual human beings. Third, there was value in having an identified place to meet with God. Fourth, age and experience were not required in order to be in God's presence (Exod 33:11).

The tent allowed for persons who were not priests to have a personal relationship with God. The theological implications of having two separate "tents of meeting" is very valuable. Throughout the history of Israel, from organizational beginnings in the wilderness to the time of Christ, the religious institution of the Levitical priesthood largely controlled the spiritual well-being of the community. In the development of the Christian church, a leadership formed that again became the main dispenser of spiritual knowledge. Moses' "tent of meeting" identified a place where a non-Levite could come into the presence of God. The developments of the synagogues throughout Israel were for the same purpose. Van Seters (2015) stated, "The synagogue was always an entirely lay institution, under the control of a lay 'ruler' and his appointed assistants, together with a body of elders" (p. 2). This tent became the place Moses talked with God after leaving Mount Horeb.

The "tent of meeting" showed that God chose to communicate on a regular basis with individual human beings. Seters (2015) identified the purpose of this place was for communication with God. Gurtner (2013) pointed to the importance of the habitual nature of Moses' visits to the "tent of meeting." This interaction between God and Moses was not merely feelings and premonitions. The passage clearly described God coming and speaking "face to face" with Moses (Exod 33:11). If there was any question in the details, not only was the interaction described as "face to face" but also "as a man speaks with his friend." In the Hebrew text, only three individuals–Jacob, Moses and Gideon– were referred to as speaking "face to face" with God. The Israelites disturbed response to God (Exod 20) likely limited their visits to the "tent of meeting" open to "anyone inquiring of the Lord" (Exod 33:7). Wilson (2009) identified four elements present in

each of the encounters. "1) Divine initiation; 2) complete solitude; 3) deep intimacy; and 4) a display of the supernatural" (p. 108). Moses had a later interaction with God that would initially appear to be a contradiction of a "face to face" encounter (Exod 33:18).

A comparison of the two events showed a change of who was in charge. In Exodus 33:11, Moses was passively receiving from God. In Exodus 33:18, Moses demanded a "face to face" conversation. Wessner (2002) pointed to God's desire to have an intimate relationship that still requires a respect of God's sovereignty. Moses forgot the place of respect within the relationship. Wessner (2002) excellently summarized, "a picture of immediate and profound intimacy that reflects God's initiative and Moses' fulfilled desire to seek his Lord within an ongoing relationship" (p. 116). When Moses put up the "tent of meeting," the Israelites were concerned that their God was leaving them because of the worship of the golden calf (Exod 32), but the "tent of meeting" was actually a place of hope and of restoration (Enns, 2000).

There was value in having an identified place to meet with God. Moses set up the tent outside of the camp for one purpose. While this was his special place of interaction with God, Moses invited others to come and talk with God. Barton (2008), examining the leadership development of Moses, described the importance not only for Moses, but also for those he was equipping: "The daily and weekly rhythm was their earliest pattern for their life together in God's presence (p. 117). In describing the "tent of meeting," she wrote, "How it must have shaped the Israelite journey to experience this kind of awe and reverence when Moses entered into solitude to intercede for those he had been given to lead and love, and seek a word from the Lord. And how it must have shaped Moses

himself!" (p. 146). Other than Joshua, the Pentateuch has no record of any other Israelites accepting God's invitation to have personal encounters.

Age and experience were not required in order to be in God's presence. In Joshua's mentoring, this last point brings together the importance of this passage. The last half of Exodus 33:11 states, "Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua, son of Nun, did not leave the tent." Joshua, a young man, an aide or assistant, was given the opportunity to spiritually grow, and he was provided Moses' "tent of meeting" as the place for that experience. Van Seters (2015) emphasized the importance of laity having direct access to God. While Moses was at least from the priestly tribe of Levi, Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim (Num 13:8). This separation from the organized leaders of religious and spiritual practices provided an indication that, while God ordained the Levitical priesthood, this was not to preclude the individual from an intimate personal relationship with God. Israel begged for God to speak to Moses rather than directly to them. In this setting, Moses, pitched a tent outside the camp for "inquiring of the Lord."

Through this experience, Joshua was provided an opportunity to watch Moses develop as a spiritual leader and mentor. Considering where Moses started, Wilson (2009) identified, "Moses' status before Yahweh has thus shifted from nervous shepherd to gifted intercessor, one who encounters the glory of the divine" (p. 111). It would not seem to be too far of a stretch to suggest that, through Moses' routine interactions with God, not only did Moses mature spiritually, but that Joshua also developed a healthy spirituality.

Joshua 5:13-15 described Joshua's personal divine encounter. White (1958) stated, "It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel" (p. 488). In the interaction, Joshua received a similar instruction to that of Moses' over forty years prior, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy" (Josh 5:15). Joshua asked, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" (Josh 5:14). In Exodus 3, Moses' encounter at the burning bush included instructions from God and Moses expressed a lack of trust. It was clear that Moses had provided Joshua not just an inner glimpse of his intimate relationship with God, but Moses had also equipped him with the disciplines needed to have his own personal, intimate relationship with God.

Summary

The biblical narrative of Moses and Joshua within the greater exodus narrative of the Israelite nation provides a valuable theological position for the use of mentoring in spiritual disciplines in the development of leaders. Moses and Joshua were shown to have mentors that helped shape their leadership practices through spiritual mentorship. Moses mentored Joshua before Joshua became a leader. While Joshua may have had leadership qualities, the most important quality identified was being filled with *ruwach.* To be filled, Joshua witnessed the personal experience of Moses' spiritual disciplines, participated with Moses in spiritual disciplines, and developed his own spiritual disciplines. Mentorship provided Joshua a safe place, a "tent of meeting," to mature in his spiritual discipline. Through this process of maturing, Moses provided support to Joshua that eventually led to Joshua being called to lead Israel.

The narrative emphasized that the use of spiritual disciplines was not the end-all, but rather the avenue in which one can become comfortable in the God's presence. It was

the presence of God, which a mentor should be encouraging the mentee to desire. While in the presence of God, direct "face-to-face" conversations with God were restored as were intended when humanity was created.

There is a responsibility of leaders to mentor future leaders. Moses challenged Joshua to "be strong and courageous." This was not just an individualist effort, but rather something that was developed in the *ruwach.* As a leader, one never reaches the point at which he or she is not involved in mentorship relationships. As with so many other instructions God gave Israel, there is no biblical record of Joshua continuing the mentoring of individuals. The closest expression of mentoring is described in Joshua 23 and 24 where Joshua speaks to the "elders, leaders and officials" (Josh 23:2 and 24:1). Judges 1 makes it apparent that no one recognized the calling to lead prior to Joshua's death. This may explain how quickly Israel turned against God.

The Moses-Joshua mentorship provided a foundation for the 21st century church, a practical process of incorporating mentoring spiritual disciplines into the preparation of individuals for potential leadership. Mentoring protects the impact the presence of God, hearing His voice, and being led by the Spirit make upon a person.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In 2014, the leadership of the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church (PTC) identified declining youth and young adult attendance and lack of participation as a serious issue for the long-term viability of the local congregation. Their concern reflected the declining youth and young adult attendance that churches across North America have experienced. The Pew Forum found three quarters of unaffiliated young adults had been raised in church (The Pew Forum; 2012, Kinnaman, 2011; White, 2014). There is an increased need to focus on the connection between dwindling involvement in local churches and the lack of biblical spiritual formation of youth–high school age and young adults–post high school through pre-parenthood (Martin, 2014b).

At the time of this doctoral project, youth and young adults were often referred to by their generational terminologies, millennials and Generation Z. These two generations repeatedly expressed a longing for spirituality (The Barna Group, 2014; Pew Research, 2012). Unlike previous generations, a Lifeway Research (2011) study of Protestant pastors found that 82% of pastors worry that spirituality does not equate with embracing Christian faith among millennials. In an era of declining attendance, especially within millennials, Kageler (2010) pointed to the weekly youth group meeting as the place for developing spiritual growth. Kageler (2010) emphasized pastors and churches need to

"recognize the importance of youth ministry in the church" (p. 63). In a 250-member church like the PTC, the age groups youth and young adults are often blended together due to the number of both leaders and participants.

Identifying the Issue of Programming

For leaders of the youth ministry at PTC, event programming defined youth ministry. Powell, Mulder and Griffin (2016) decried the idea of a programmable fix as the answer to the declining participation of youth and young adults. Joiner (2009) expanded the idea, "The church is losing its influence" (p. 23). Another program will not solve the gluttony of church events that fails to grow the spirituality of youth and young adults. Lack of spiritual formation of leaders and youth cannot be solely fixed through event-based programming (Joiner, 2009). "At present there seem to be few, if any, attempts within local churches to intentionally disciple/equip adolescents within a relational and not programmatic structure" (Beagles, 2009). Murphy (2010) questioned, "Churches expect regular events that are created exclusively to minister to young people. . . I wonder now if we're ministering them right out of the church?" (para. 4). Intergenerational relationships (Jenkins & Martin, 2014) or warm relationships (Powell, Mulder & Griffin, 2016) with older church members was found to be more important a factor to the young adult than even peers.

Suggested Solution

This chapter seeks to show that when local church youth and young adult leaders develop spiritual formation through the practice of spiritual disciplines, they are better equipped to educate young people in spiritual formation. Spiritual formation describes the

development of personal spirituality, or formation of character (Willard, 2012). Mulholland (1993) stated, "Everyone is in a process of spiritual formation. We are being shaped into either the wholeness of the image of Christ or a horribly destructive caricature of that image" (p. 23). Willard (2006) clearly described spiritual formation as "a matter of reforming the broken soul of man in a recovery from its alienation from God" (p. 156). Barton (2008), in examining the struggle for the soul shared, "The only way to begin facing these challenges is to keep seeking tenaciously after God through spiritual disciplines that keep us grounded in the presence of God at the center of our being" (p. 28). Wilson and Johnson (2001) used the phrasing spiritual direction, "In which a newer Christian is aided in his or her development as a Christian by a more experienced believer" (p. 123). When transitioning from youth to young adults, one's view of church was more determined by one's intergenerational relationships with older church members than by peer's opinions (Jenkins & Martin, 2014).

Any inclusion of spiritual disciplines and the terminology "spiritual formation" needs a clear definition that protects participants from misinterpretation. In July of 2010 newly elected General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church President Ted Wilson stated, "Stay away from non-biblical spiritual disciplines or methods of spiritual formation that are rooted in mysticism such as contemplative prayer, centering prayer and the emerging church movement in which they are promoted" (2010). In conversation with church members it is critical to clearly point out that Biblical spiritual formation is not the same as Eastern Mysticism.

Anandarjah and Hight (2001) almost a decade prior suggested a healthier response than that of Wilson to the concepts of spirituality as

A complex and multidimensional part of the human experience. It has cognitive, experiential and behavior aspects. The cognitive or philosophic aspects include the search for meaning, purpose and truth in life and the beliefs and values by which an individual lives. The experiential and emotional aspects involve feelings of hope, love, connection, inner peace, comfort and support. These are reflected in the quality of an individual's inner resources, the ability to give and receive spiritual love, and the types of relationships and connections that exist with self, the community, the environment and nature, and the transcendent (e.g., power greater than self, a value system, God, cosmic consciousness), and religion as "attempts to help answer mankind's spiritual questions and that each has developed a specific set of beliefs, teachings and practices." (p. 83)

Approach to Literature Review

This chapter seeks to review current literature that explores the serious lack of spiritual formation within Seventh-day Adventist youth and young adults. The lack of knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines provides a possible explanation of the disinterest in church by youth and young adults. This need for spiritual formation is challenged by the terminologies. "Few topics in Adventism have aroused more interest-and-passion during the past 12 months than that of 'spiritual formation'" (Knott, 2011). Human development theories–Piaget, Vygostsky, Pavlov, Bandura, Skinner, Kohlberg, Erikson, Kolb (Huffman, 2003; Eggen & Kauchak, 2010) suggested a convergent of developmental transitions occur during this same time frame in life as youth and young adults choose to leave the church. In a study of nearly 4,000 youth and young adults, Barton and Miller (2015) found healthy spirituality or spiritual formation equated to positive psychology. "Research has consistently demonstrated that adolescence and emerging adulthood are spiritually formative life periods" (p. 830). An overview of Fowler's "faith development" (1981), and Gillespie's "faith experiences" (2004) provided insights within the setting of psychological and cognitive development of youth and young adults. The mentoring method of sharing spiritual discipline practices will be

reviewed. Finally, this chapter will examine the type of leader most likely to replicate the mentorship among youth and young adults.

Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines

Clear definitions for spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines show one's responsibility to the study of this subject. Guldhammer (2012, para.1) stated that spiritual formation is, "The process of maturing in Christ," or that which Adventists call the process of sanctification. Foster (2014, para. 2), considered one of Christianity's modern leaders in spiritual formation and the practice of spiritual disciplines, defined spiritual formation as, "A process, but it is also a journey through which we open our hearts to a deeper connection with God." The *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (2009*)* includes a chapter entitled "Spiritual Formation." Within this chapter, pastors are encouraged to have: daily Bible study, private devotions, meditation, praise, penitential prayer, intercessory prayer, journaling and friendship with God. St. John's (2013) survey of biblical spiritual disciplines identified that there is strong biblical support for the primary spiritual disciplines described by spiritual formation and spiritual discipline proponents such as Richard Foster, Dallas Willard and Robert Mulholland, Jr.

The Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines, according to Willard (2006), were "an activity within our power–something we can do–which brings us to a point where we can do what we at present cannot do by direct effort" (p. 150). Foster (1978) explained, "disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us" (p. 7). "The path does not produce the change; it only places us where change can occur" (p. 8). Mulholland (1993) described disciplines as shaping people into the image of Christ through grace. Foster's

classic disciplines and *Seventh-day Adventist Church Minister's Handbook* provide

similar lists of practices.

Foster (1978, 1988, 1998 & 2003) discussed the three primary types of

disciplines: inward, outward and corporate. Descriptive words define the disciplines:

meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession,

worship, guidance, and celebration. While there may be variations of purposed

disciplines and definitions, the goal of placing oneself in the presence of God does not

vary between Foster and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Mulholland (1993) and

Willard (2006) made edits to Foster's list of disciplines, yet the foundational purpose of

spiritual disciplines has not wavered.

Misunderstandings of Spiritual Formation
and Spiritual Disciplines

The struggle within the Seventh-day Adventist Church over the term spiritual

formation exists due to the inclusivity of the term "spiritual formation." Guldhammer

(2012) identified three reasons that some segments of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church's resist the idea of spiritual formation. Among spiritual formation supporters, a

limited few promote a pantheistic or panentheistic belief about God, the growth of

pluralism in the larger Christian movement within the United States, and some practices

of Eastern mysticism. Secular society defines the latter as spiritual formation, which is

not compatible with biblical Christianity. Pew Research Center (2009) found that 24% of

American adults believed in some form of Eastern religion. For some within the Seventh-

day Adventist denomination, the combination of the words "spiritual" and "formation" is

just too dangerous (Bohr, 2012). During his first sermon after his election as president of

the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ted Wilson warned the

denomination of "Spiritual Formation." Due to the potential confusion, denominational leadership chose to use terms like spiritual practices (Guldhammer, 2012), or biblical spirituality (Andrews University, 2011). Foster's response to the confusion over certain words such as meditation stated, "Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind; Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind. The two ideas are quite different" (Foster, 2003, p. 20).

While full of value in drawing one closer to God, spiritual formations should not be seen as salvific but rather enhancement to one's desire to know the Savior Jesus Christ (Bryant, 2012). Foster (2003) clarified that the practical use of biblical spiritual disciplines grows one's connection to God and does not include the mixing of pantheistic views of reverence of the universe along with a purposeful positive attitude. Kulikovsky (2009) pointed to God as being the ultimate preserver of the universe. He added that because of the value God places on the universe, humanity was drawn and encouraged to preserve and value the earth. Christians view that sin separated the universe from God (Isa 59:2, Gal 5:4 and Eph 2:12). There is a need to redeem the earth, and maintain good stewardship of it as God's creation. While humanity struggles to see hope, pantheism (World Pantheism Movement) called for "a totally positive attitude" (pantheism.net). Pantheism has fundamentally rejected that a devil, sin or an afterlife even exist.

There remains a need for spiritual formation through the practice of spiritual disciplines at PTC. Mulholland (2016) emphasized formation as spiritual wholeness that takes time, "These classical disciplines of the Christian tradition are the support structure within which we offer the very personalized disciplines through which God will work to bring our brokenness into wholeness" (p. 137) As stated in chapter 1, spiritual formation

is defined as, the continuing personal spirituality through various practices and disciplines transforming the person through relationship into the likeness of God for the benefit of society.

Lack of Spiritual Disciplines
and Spiritual Development

In the PTC, there has been a visible decrease in the attendance and participation of younger members of the church. In the greater Christian community, Fleming and Cannister (2010), and Jenkin and Martin (2014) showed that millennials and Generation Z were not engaging in spiritual disciplines and were not developing spiritually within their local faith community. There has become a spiritual stagnation similar to what Fleming and Cannister (2010) found in high school students' hesitancy to study the Bible. This hesitancy reflected research from the American Bible Society (2014) that found that 88% possessed a Bible, with the average household owning 4.3 Bibles. Considering those numbers, Barna Group (2014) found only 37% of American adults were reading the Bible on a weekly basis. The Bible was not seen as that important to one's personal life or society. The Barna Group's research found 50% of all adults believed the Bible had too little influence in society as compared to only 30% of millennials. The suggestion is that millennials are responding to the older adult's attitude regarding the Bible. If the Bible just sits on the shelf, then it lacks relevance to life. Based on the lack of biblical reading, Mulholland (1993) stated, "Without our performance of the disciplines, God is, for all practical purposes, left without any means of grace through which to effect transformation in our lives" (p.136).

In one of the most recent studies of Seventh-day Adventist young adults, the Barna Group (2013) identified a recurring theme, "While Adventists seem to place great

importance on outward behavior, such behavior is a poor predictor of their relationship with Christ" (p. 8). Youth and young adults appear to be disconnected from the inward experiences that flow into outward behavior. Mulholland (2016) summarized, "The only pure motive for our spiritual disciplines is the motive of loving obedience to God" (p. 121).

<div align="center">Search for Pertinence</div>

When interacting with youth of the PTC, the youth's personal struggle to recognize the value in spiritual formation through spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer repeatedly appeared during Sabbath School discussions. This reality is not isolated to PTC. When Fleming and Cannistern (2010) asked about the spiritual disciplines with fasting and journaling, most high school students responded "not applicable," "a little bit," or "not at all." The concept of fasting was not something that millennials opposed, rather, for most it was something of which they were not familiar. A surprising Barna Group (2014) finding was that 20% of millennials surveyed planned to engage in some sort of fast for Lent celebrations. The only generation to see percentages higher was the Elders' generation.

Roxanne Stone (Barna Group, 2014) suggested these types of findings debunk the "anti-tradition and anti-ritual," but rather showed a curiosity toward such disciplines. If the status quo youth ministry (Powell, Griffin, & Crawford, 2011), based on a weekly recreational time and watered-down Bible study before the worship hour created a loss rate of 40 to 70% in church attendance and participation, we need to find a way to show "concrete ways to opening to God's transforming work" (Mulholland, 2016, p. 12). "I'm not satisfied with a 50% rate of 'Sticky Faith'" (Powell, Griffin, & Crawford, 2011,

p.15). It appears from Pavlovitz (2014) that millennials were requesting pertinence and a framework of implementation.

<center>Multiple Faith Perspectives</center>

PTC faced another reality of multiple faith positions providing spiritual perspectives to its youth and young adults. In Adventist young adults, the Barna Group (2013) found that the option to explore such concepts has been repressed and created alienation. Jacqueline Watson (2008) found atheism's spiritual perspective "of equivalent validity and strength to a theist spiritual perspective" (p. 51) among young adults. While the church and young person's home may not receive direct influence from atheistic spiritual perspectives, many public and non-Christian school students encounter teachers who hold atheistic beliefs. Understanding various spiritual perspectives allows for healthy dialogue with youth and young adults who have easy access to multiple perspectives and do not hold to a singular perspective (Barna Group, 2013).

Millennials embraced pluralistic views to create the belief system, including spirituality, which did not necessarily reflect their Christian background. In research conducted by the Center for American Progress, Halpin and Agne (2009) found millennials raised in the Christian community polarized about "changes in families" yet considered "homosexuality as natural." The Barna Group (2014) pointed out that there was skepticism over the church's role, yet a desire of, "Renewed urgency for spiritual substance–not the worship style, the dress code, or the programs" (para. 5). The lack of clarity in the church's role has opened the door to seeking God elsewhere. Dybdahl (2008) suggested this universal "hunger" to know God continues to grow, begging the church to discover its role in spiritual formation.

Spiritual Stagnation

There are dangers that arise when youth and young adults fail to be introduced to or become stagnated in personal spiritual formation. Lerner, Albeets, Anderson and Dowling (2006) found moral and societal thriving was linked to adolescent spirituality. Barton and Miller (2015) found psychological health correlated to spiritual health. As Alexander and Carr (2006) pointed out, spirituality was resistant to definition. Huerd (2011) called spirituality "multidimensional" and "does not cleanly fit into one domain of science but requires a multidisciplinary approach necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding" (p. 10). Barton and Miller (2015) defined personal spirituality as, "a two-way relationship with a high power and sense of a sacred world" (p. 840). Hardin (2012) explained spirituality as practical and meshed together with daily life. A confusion of defining who, and what, created a discomfort within society. With the many forms of spirituality, the lack of spiritual clarity within society produced both a fascination and fear in youth and young adults (Barna, 2014).

The Balance

In trying to help a generation discover personal spiritual formation, Alexander and Carr (2006) brought out how challenging spiritual education can be. They identified six "agendas" that the Christian community and youth and young adults will potentially respond to differently: (a) confessional or non-confessional; (b) religiously tethered or untethered; (c) theologically objectivist, collectivist, or subjectivist; (d) independent of or reducible to morality; (e) culturally thick or thin; and (f) pedagogically cognitive or affective (pp. 73-91). Youth and young adults seek spiritual formation—a means of

God's grace to shape us in the image of Christ—and recognize spiritual disciplines as a possible method of discovery. All the while the fields of science, academia and religion debate what is really happening developmentally within the young person (Nagy, 2014). As long as the Christian church continues to try to use academia and science to prove spirituality, there is a natural conflict when "Spirituality entails membership in and/or substantial engagement with some sort of normative community" (Alexander & Carr, p. 86). Phyllis Tickle (2008), proposed that this response from millennials was similar to 500-year cycles of re-calibration that have taken place during the Jewish nation from Abraham to Christ and the Christian church from Christ up to today. She suggested the most recent 500-year era ends now and it is her supposition that there is a restructuring and rediscovering of the core meaning of God.

Youth and Young Adult Development

As the parents of youth at PTC worried about the spirituality of their children, they also expressed that teenagers will be teenagers, suggesting a predetermined expectation for unwise choices from their children. This belief clearly conflicts with, "In adolescence, spirituality is significant for the healthy, positive development of a person's sense of self–his or her identity–and for enabling identity to frame the individual's pursuit of a life path eventuating in idealized adulthood" (Lerner, Albeets, Anderson & Dowling, 2006, p. 61). Beagles (2009) left it open, "maturity in Christ; it happens only over time, and it relates to spiritual development, which may or may not coincide with physical development" (p. 90). Basic human development of physical, cognitive, intellectual, sociocultural, moral and spiritual-faith progressed along a similar path with a transition taking place during a person's teen and or young adulthood (Papalia, Olds, &

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Feldman, 2006). Human development theories provide transition markers. The classic developmental theories open windows into the spiritual mindsets of youth and young adults (Appendix E).

Spirituality as Part of Human Development

While some debate the various developmental theories, there would appear to be general agreement that significant transitions occur during adolescence (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2006; Huffman, 2003; Feist & Feist, 2006). Alexander and Carr (2006) proposed that spirituality is normative and as such "We should be particularly skeptical of any and all attempts to link spiritual development to neurophysiological or brain function" (p. 79). They continued, "It seems sensible to suppose that spirituality is no less inherently normative than morality, and that there can be no progress in either sphere failing some measure of intellectual and practical freedom" (p. 80). While accepting that there is opposition, a comparison of the developmental theories and average age of transitions provide key insights into critical changes faced by youth and young adults (Appendix F).

Serious life changes in cognitive, psychosocial, moral, learning formation and identity formation development directly influence faith formation. Fowler (2004), a recognized theorist in faith development, described a valid concern for the Christian community when using his Stages of Faith Development: "They rightly expressed caution that human rationality is 'fallen' and prone to self-deception and moral complacency" (p. 411). Fowler argued that the need of repentance and power of the Holy Spirit are the antidote to self-deception and moral complacency. Faith development theory connects what faith does with what faith is. For Fowler (2004), this "orients one to

life and its purpose, and to creation, with its origin, its ordering, its enormity, its

hospitality to life in its myriad forms and expressions, and its mystery" (p. 412). Faith

development theory connects to the greater discussion already taking place in the theories

of Piaget, Kolhberg and Erickson, Bandura, Marcia, Kolb and numerous other theories.

Faith development theory provides lenses for the maturation of faith to be examined by a

greater sector of society prone to reject faith.

Fowler (2004) stated implications for religious education: First, "The need for a

relational nurture that receives the child as God's blessed creation, and as worthy of our

love, care and formative support." Second there is a "need for ways of engaging children

and youth that enable the sacred practices and texts of a community of faith to become

meaningful and sustaining resources in their imaginations, will, knowledge and moral

development" (p. 413). Lanker's (2012) research suggested this will require a natural

mentoring. Belsterling (2006) pointed to Jesus' use of mentoring to educate and train

leaders.

<div align="center">

Fowler and Gillespie's Theories of
Spiritual Development

</div>

Comparing Fowler's (1981) development of faith stages and Gillespie's (1988)

experiences of faith, one can see the importance of a continuing effort to nurture faith

development (Appendix G). Sharp (2006) pointed out in his research, "Fowler's theory is

scrutinized by some for being too general in his definition of faith" (p. 28). "It is the third

stage that has important implications on the literature for adolescent faith development"

(p. 29).

Fowler's third stage and Gillespie's personalized faith pertain to teenagers. At this

point in the formation both recognized the personal reflection and individualized

judgment take place. Yet, Folwer (1981) and Gillespie (1988) indicated that personal

beliefs still lacked complete independence. Over the past fifteen years of my personal

interaction with teenagers, mentored teenagers discover their own personal faith and

transition matched what Gillespie defined as established faith. Fowler's description of

reflection also identified that some individuals never develop beyond reflecting on one's

thinking. Sharp (2006) stated, "Adult youth ministry leaders are an important factor in the

development of an adolescent's faith" (p. 5). Based on the significance of their role,

adults leading teenagers need more refined faith development than personalized faith.

Church and Parents

The church struggles to relate to youth or young adults' development cognitively,

psychosocially, morally and in faith. The commitment to church and faith enters a time of

evaluation, which adults in the church tend to forget. M. Scott Peck (1987) described the

stage as skeptic. Sharp (2006) saw John Westerhoff's Faith Styles as helpful in

recognizing progression into and through skepticism. Quoting from Westerhoff, Sharp

stated, "A person's faith is a way of behaving which involves knowing, being and

willing" (p. 31). Sharp argued this takes place within the religious experience. Karlman

and Marquez (2011) suggested that today's young person asks the church community for

meaning. If the church does not have a living experience that transforms lives in the adult

community, the messages preached during sermons, taught during youth group meetings,

and even promoted at home lack validity. Roberto (2010) identified that young adults

searched for more than just cognitive proof.

The church says God transforms lives. Because young adults ask for personal and

communal proof, Roberto and Hayes (2007) pointed out that the church responds by

labeling many young adults unreachable. The lack of practical Christianity within the church includes the minimal practice of spiritual disciplines resulting in little internal or external transformation of life. As a result, the church and Christianity appear to be a farce (Roberto, 2010).

Christian parents and ministry leaders who desire teenagers and young adults to continue to follow in the family and community faith tradition need to examine their own personal faith development. Parents and leaders must encourage their youth and young adult's personal faith development in a safe environment that is open to skepticism. "One of the most important factors in a child's development is the support of a parent or caregiver who gives consistent love and support" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017, p. 12). "Right before puberty, the adolescent brain experiences a growth spurt in the areas that affect planning, reasoning, impulse control, and emotions" (p. 14). Trying to stunt or prevent faith development may prevent a young person from ever experiencing a life transforming relationship with God.

Effective Ways of Providing Education
in Spiritual Disciplines

With the major developmental transitions in youth and young adults, Lanker (2010) emphasized families, peers, and intergenerational mentors within a church community provide the most effective educational environment for the development of spiritual disciplines. Reggie Joiner (2009) identified the church and the family as the two entities that need to be discussing growing spiritually and recognize the moral dilemmas faced by teenagers during their mental development. From Smith's (2009) own personal journey to know God and his development of a spiritual formation curriculum, "Some of the finest teachers have poured their lives and their teaching into me" (p. 12). He

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continued, "I can honestly say that it has been the one-on-one time spent with each of them that has influenced me the most" (p. 13). Seventh-day Adventist young adults described the challenge with the church, "A common thread appears to run through all of these elements: there is a spiritual dearth among Adventist church members" (Allred, 2011, p. 252).

A youth or young adult should not be expected to discover spiritual disciplines from nothing. They benefit from being educated and equipped by experienced individuals in the practices of spiritual discipline (Wilson & Johnson, 2001). Maloof (2012) referred to training in, "an experience or expression of the sacred" (para. 1). This is not suggesting that spirituality can be prescribed. Foster (2003) stated, "We simply do not know how to go about exploring the inward life" (p. 3). The family and church must be educated and educate on spirituality. Apostolides (2017) defended this, "When allowed to live out and express their own form of spirituality with the support of the adults who care for them, adolescents grow into happy and well-balanced adults" (p. 1).

<p align="center">Parent and Church Education</p>

Any discussion of how to teach spiritual disciplines begins with developing parents, peers, non-parental adults and mentors in a church community's interrelated system (Snailum, 2013; Emmanuel & Delaney, 2013). Snailum felt an intentional spiritual environment to be key in youth ministry. Emmanuel and Delaney (2013) identified that youth with higher levels of spiritual identity and greater practice of spiritual disciplines have support from peers, parents, church community and mentors. Spiritual identity and personal connectedness to God grew through mentorship. Adults, modeling spiritual disciplines, provided guidance and support. Wilson and Johnson

(2001) stated, "The internal composition of one's character. . . are nurtured habits that mature in the context of a formative community that includes family and church" (p. 123).

For Snailum (2013), peer and intergenerational youth ministry enhanced the spiritual formation of youth. As Emmanuel and Delaney (2013) suggested, intergenerational youth ministry needs to be established prior to going to college. Fundamental to spiritual formation, the church offers a social setting that Caldwell (2013) identified as allowing all ages to learn through socialization. This community gives the space, Lottes (2005) suggested, that brings together friendship network and openness for mentoring. As previously shown, youth and young adult development includes a crisis of faith that the intergenerational family and church can positively impact. Beagles' (2009) research of the evidence found parents and church communities need an even greater training as fragility of postmodern family strains both family and church.

In a study of Seventh-day Adventist millennials, Jenkins (2013) recommended mentoring, apprenticeships and openness. Csinos and Beckwith (2014) identified for this to take place parents and non-parental adults may need to "do away with points and lesson applications in our explorations of the Bible with young people and encourage them to ask questions that arise on the journey of faith" (p. 90). This could consist of introducing spiritual disciplines and their value to one's faith development. Simons (2006) challenged the church to provide "Creative biblical solutions which will impact our culture for Christ" (p. 39). Considering the extreme caution and reluctance some in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination have toward embracing spiritual discipline practices, the local church is left to develop an environment of spiritual discovery without

developmental support. While the denominational leadership debates the supposed

dangers of the practice of spiritual disciplines, Gillespie (2014) shared that the

postmodern millennial mind is not interested in the politics of government and church.

Simon (2006) countered the discomfort the church has with spiritual disciplines and

postmodern thinking with, "in postmodern apologetic there is tremendous hope looming

on the horizon" (p. 40).

Seven Points to Connection

While Simon (2006) used the term "postmodern," James Emery White (2014)

used the term "post-Christian" to define millennials and Generation Z. Combining the

significance of the post-Christian terminology with Simon's seven effective points of

connecting with millennials and Generation Z offers useful tools to equip parents and

non-parental adults (Appendix H). Through collective building of the points, mentoring

offers the platform to educate and equip a post-Christian generation.

The mentoring environment allows for stories of personal experience, questions

are encouraged, and authentic leadership develops organically. Scott Ward (2012) viewed

the youth's mind as having potential to create one's personal story by combining the four

gospels' commission, spiritually mature adult mentors, and an intentional development of

a devotional life that includes multisensory experiences. In the process of authentic

relationships, youth and young adults receive education in spiritual disciplines through

telling the story of personal experiences of growing with God. In a third iteration of the

30-year study, Valuegenesis 3 (2011) measured the development of faith maturity of

sixth through 12th grade students within Seventh-day Adventist schools in North

America. Of the 10 questions used to measure faith maturity, three directly related to

spiritual development and the other seven emphasized spiritual discipline tangents. While

only 8% scored low in faith maturity and 30% scored high, the majority (62%) landed in

the middle.

The Mentor

 The willing youth and young adult leader already possess many of the necessary

skills to educate young people. When leaders develop through an organic process (Jenkin,

2013), they present themselves to the position as ones with a passion for the calling.

Mentoring offers a great relational design giving the needed space for authentic spiritual

discipline experiences. Simon (2006) stated, "Mentoring cannot be overlooked because of

its vital importance in the Body of Christ" (p. 69). Krieder (2014) described mentoring

leaders as he would a spiritual parent. This project recognizes the reality that parents

remain the greatest influence including spiritually upon youth and young adults. Joiner

(2009) saw parents and church parents together as the most effective model to encourage

spiritual formation.

During the development of this project, the weakness of the local church's youth

and young adult leadership created an urgency to equip the leaders in spiritual disciplines.

Joiner (2009) along with Powell and Clark (2011) suggested that the best option includes

a partnership between biological parents and spiritual parents to spiritually mentor youth

and young adults. The parental partnership with the church and spiritual parents goes

beyond the scope of this project yet needs further study and implementation.

Jenkins (2013) concluded that small groups and worship experiences are effective

ways to assist in the educational process. While small groups and worship services are

great, neither necessarily counteracts the claim of shallowness of the church. Sand (2013)

pointed to mentorship as a valuable method of transmitting information. Eighty-nine

percent of college students who left church did not have an adult church member mentor

(Barna Group, 2013).

The Barna Group (2013) identified meaningful relationships as one of the five key

ways to keep millennials connected to the church. Powell, Mulder and Griffin (2016)

supported relationships within the church as being one of their six core commitments in

growing young churches. Within youth and young adult ministry, having authentic

relationships, holistic life approaches, multi-sensory involvement, and understanding the

postmodern thought process are critical to seeing spiritual disciplines as an active part of

the spiritual formation of youth and young adults. In their groundbreaking work, Powell,

Griffin and Crawford (2011) believed that youth with at least five Christian mentors are

more likely to stay in the church. Kinnaman, in a 2013 The Barna Group report shared,

"The most positive church experiences among millennials are relational." While 89% of

millennial age church dropouts could not identify having an adult member mentor nearly

that many stated, "Seven out of ten millennials who dropped out of church did not have a

close friendship with an adult" (Barna Group, 2013).

Being the Youth and Young Adult Leader

The ideal church contains adult members teaming together with biological parents

and church leadership to organically mentor youth and young adults. The question to be

asked is, where does the education start? This project identifies youth and young adult

leadership as a point of entry. That does not exclude the need of biological parents and

spiritual parents being equipped in spiritual disciplines. In 2001, Wilson and Johnson

wrote, "Relatively little attention has been given to the requisite qualities and

characteristics of effective mentors" (p. 121). The selection process of youth and young

adult leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist church more often than not revolves around

finding someone with a heartbeat and who has not committed a reported crime to sit in

the Sabbath School classroom. To begin an atmosphere of transformation, a greater

emphasis of equipping youth and young adult leaders needs to be fostered in the local

church (Beagles, 2009). To be a youth and young adult leader calls for playing a vital role

in living spiritual disciplines, having mature theology, dreaming of the future, being a

willing mentor, and understanding basic emotional intelligence (Apostolides, 2017;

Barton & Miller, 2015).

<center>Living Spiritual Disciplines</center>

Church planting and developing youth and young adult leaders hold similarities.

Roennfeldt's (2007) church planting manual provided six spiritual qualifications for

leaders: a person of prayer, called to ministry, exhibiting fruits of the Spirit, reliance upon

the Holy Spirit, mature theology, and counting the cost. Three of the qualifications linked

directly to the spiritual formation that happens through the practice of spiritual

disciplines, (a) person of prayer; (b) fruits of the spirit; and (c) reliance upon the Holy

Spirit. When preparing an individual to lead, or retooling a veteran leader, the exploration

and practice of spiritual disciplines provided a setting for encountering God. Hardin

(2012) pointed to how Jesus mentored the disciples and valued cohesive collection of

biblical practices that invite the individual into an encounter with God. Youth and young

adult leaders willing to live practicing spiritual disciplines offer youth and young adults

the benefits from witnessing what Huerd (2011) called a "VIP living in the presence of

God." Roberts (2006) stated, "An intentional process of leadership development of

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volunteer youth leaders based on spiritual formation is a major step toward a healthy youth ministry" (p. 85).

Mature Theology

A mature theology described the understanding of a person who knows God, yet recognized that theology continues to grow, develop, refine and adapt. Blackaby, Blackaby, and King (2008) described knowing God as personal, practical and progressive. To approach the questioning mindset of youth and young adults, a leader needs a mature theology to answer the ever-growing list of theological questions. Leading youth and young adult ministry is more about being willing to enter the discussion than to provide answers. Graff and Birkenstein (2010) based their entire book *They Say I Say* on the concept of entering a conversion. For Rainer (2013), a leader's temptation is to be in charge and in control. He pointed to the 75 times the word *servant* and 58 times *serve* are used in the New Testament as clear indications that the church community should be entering conversations rather than pushing answers.

Dreaming of the Future

The overwhelming evidence (Barna, 2015) showed the church in America is in decline. Millennials appear to be escaping a sinking ship. This is why it is critical for leaders to be experiencing regular encounters with God (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011) Along with the above-mentioned spiritual qualifications, Mark Beck (2005) saw being able to dream as a spiritual component. Without the ability to cast a vision for the future, Beck suggested that mentoring success lacked completeness. Without a dream, the goal of inviting youth and young adults into an active experience with God lacks purpose.

Wilson and Johnson's (2001) and Krieder (2008) included the spiritual virtues of integrity and courage to the skills being a dream casting spiritual mentor.

Willing Mentors

As shown already in this chapter (Sharp, 2006), college students leaving the church most often lack adult church member mentors. In a June 2011 report, the Barna Group discussed the challenge that faced the local church, which was seen as anti-science and anti-creative, yet, whose young adult population works in science and creative arts. Multigenerational mentoring relationships provided survival for the church. Kinnaman (2007) identified the millennials' desire for relationships as something that can connect them to older generations.

In follow up research, Kinneman (2011) pointed to a changing focus in millennials from that of baby boomers and Generation X. Boomers and Generation X have celebrated their differences from previous generations. This created tensions in worship styles and fundamental beliefs resulting in members spiritual suffering. Hirsch (2010) pointed out, millennials continue being different as they have a fascination with experiencing ancient Christian practices in an effort to discover God. This new era calls leaders to mentor conversations of interest to youth and young adults. Sharp (2006) stated the problem, "There are too few leaders, adults who influence teenagers" (pp. 4-5).

Summary

Spiritual formation shaped by spiritual disciplines in today's youth and young adult leaders who are willing mentors will empower young people into a personal encounter with God (Roberts, 2006; Huerd, 2011; Nagy, 2014). Ultimately the goal of partnership between biological parents and spiritual parents is to connect youth and

young adults to a personal encounter with God. Education in biblical spiritual disciplines by local churches and families offers individuals the opportunity to enter God's presence. Understanding the developmental thought processes of youth and young adults provides a space to invite a discovery of biblical spiritual disciplines that can transform lives.

Finding individuals to lead, who are willing to engage in learning, and accepting of the concept of joining the conversation rather than providing the answers allows the development of leaders and young people. Selecting these individuals to lead in youth and young adult ministry is vital to the successful transmission of spiritual disciplines to youth and young adults (Roberts, 2006). The ability to authentically model spiritual disciplines through mentoring provides a very effective method of introducing youth and young adults to God (Lanker, 2010). From the research described in this chapter, equipping youth and young adult leaders with spiritual disciplines will provide effective skills to naturally mentor youth and young adults to experience healthy spiritual formation.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOY OF DEVELOPING
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

This project will be a 10-month mentoring period comprised of six youth and

young adult leaders of the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church (PTC) in order

to promote spiritual formation through healthy practices of spiritual disciplines. To

identify the collective spiritual health of the youth and young adult ministries of the PTC,

an assessment will be used to measure the initial spiritual health of the youth and young

adults as compared to the PTC as a whole. The church, including the youth and young

adults, will repeat the assessment at the conclusion of the 10-month mentoring period to

measure any overall change in the spiritual formation of the church. In addition to the

general assessments provided the youth and young adults, the six to nine youth and

young adult leaders will complete the assessment to explore their growth in personal

spiritual health. During the 10-month mentorship, each participant will be challenged to

explore strengths and weaknesses within one's spiritual formation. Various "classical"

spiritual disciplines selected by the participant provide the foundation for this

exploration.

This methodology chapter explores the rationale behind using the assessment,

selection of the six individuals, and mentorship process. Detailed review of the survey

includes a designed follow-up. The chapter contains details covering the invitation and

selection process of the six individuals chosen for mentorship. The progression of each mentoring session describes the building blocks of spiritual formation for each mentee. Appendix I contains all the assessments presented to the participants. The last section of the chapter focuses on general predictions of possible outcomes and the reporting process of the findings.

Rationale of Overall Project

When I began working with the youth and young adult leaders of the PTC in 2010, church member parents of participating youth brought to my attention that the youth did not seem to be receiving a spiritual focus within the activities of the youth ministry. I observed that many of the activities were recreationally based but without a spiritual component. When more religious activities such as youth-focused worship services did happen, they were often spiritually shallow or did not directly include the youth's input. My role was to develop spirituality rich youth and young adult ministries at the PTC. At the time of creating the concepts for this project, I functioned as a youth ministry advisor for the church while I pastored another church. My role consisted of only limited interactions with youth or young adults. From my vantage point, I observed that other than a Sabbath school class attended primarily by college-aged students which was labeled "youth Sabbath school class," there was not a consistent gathering for these young people. While youth ministry had identified leadership, the young adult ministry did not exist on paper or in reality, even though on the church membership roster there were more young adults than youth. After spending some time with the leaders of the youth ministry, I realized that in general the leaders indicated significant gaps in their

current spiritual health. Two of the youth leaders described relying on church for spiritual survival because they failed to have personal practices between weekend services.

In 2014, I transitioned from advisor to the pastor of the church. While being just an advisor included fewer church responsibilities than being the pastor, the pastoral role provided greater inclusion in which I gained a pulse of the youth and young adult ministries.

Since 2014, clarity has formed for me in realizing that if the youth and young adult leaders are not spiritually healthy, they cannot be expected to help develop spiritually healthy youth and young adults. More programs and events will not replace the need for spiritually healthy youth and young adult leaders. Because of my years of interaction with the leaders, I have become aware of the fact that many of those involved in the leadership of the youth and young adult ministry want to be healthier, but lack the tools to grow. This has largely resulted from a division of expectations within the church structure. Elders and senior adult leaders receive spiritual growth training, while youth, young adult and children's leaders receive entertainment and event training. For example, youth leaders can schedule a safe outing to the beach but struggle to have a conversation about the spiritual effects of having premarital sex.

The goal of this project is to provide youth and young adult leaders tools through the various spiritual disciplines that can aid each leader in spiritual formation. With the extensive options within the spiritual disciplines and with a non-defined curriculum, each mentee will be able to self-structure his or her mentorship in order to strengthen his or her personal spiritual formation. As shown in chapter 3, in addition to parents, youth and young adult leaders make a significant impact on young people's spirituality. I believe

spiritually healthy youth and young adult leaders will have a greater likelihood of reproducing healthy spirituality in the youth and young adults they serve.

Review of Survey

LifeWay's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* (SGA) has been chosen to measure overall youth and young adult spiritual health. The assessment's detail yet ease of completion and scoring offers an inviting less intimidating experience. In previous uses I have found individuals are more likely to complete it and choose to take growth steps from their discoveries about themselves. For the general assessment of both youth and young adults, the *SGA* will include a customized introduction I developed for the PTC (Appendix I). The customized introduction, "General Demographic and Involvement Assessment," will allow for more accurate evaluation of the results of the assessment. To provide a baseline of the church's spiritual health the survey will be provided to all ages within the congregation, not just the youth and young adults. This assessment will be offered over a two-week period. The assessment will be placed in the church foyer, an electronic version of the assessment will be sent to the church's email list, youth Sabbath school leaders will provide assessments to Sabbath school attendees, and the Pathfinder director will have the assessment given to students at the regular Saturday afternoon club meeting. Based on previous surveys given to the local church a realistic goal is to have 50% of current youth and young adults connected to the PTC complete the assessment, and 30% of the average church attendance within all age groups combined.

General Demographic of Individual Assessment

The "General Demographic and Involvement Assessment" page added to *SGA* provides basic details regarding the type of youth or young adults completing the

assessment. By comparing *SGA* results with the basic demographic questions such as those in attendance at PTC, those attending Sabbath school and who are church members, a more accurate measure of spiritual health can be expressed.

<center>*Spiritual Growth Assessment*</center>

LifeWay's *SGA* is a 60-question tool that examines six areas of spiritual disciplines. Each of the six discipline divisions has 10 questions focused on the basic belief and practices within the discipline. SGA offers detailed exploration of spiritual disciplines, while remaining simple enough for a person unfamiliar with spiritual formation concepts to benefit from its completion. Youth and young adults are not likely to participate in an extensive complex assessment covering topics with which they are not familiar. In a couple of test runs with church elders, the assessment took less than twenty minutes to complete. Over the last two years, youth and young adults have expressed a desire to get actively involved in a process of becoming spiritually healthy. While unfamiliar with concepts of spiritual formation or the practice of spiritual disciplines, SGA offers opportunities for further exploration. A second part of SGA offers a yearlong spiritual growth plan to any individual who would like to continue exploring spiritual disciplines. These follow up materials will be available to anyone who would like to use them to strengthen one's personal spiritual health.

<center>Assessment Component</center>

Spiritual Growth Assessment consists of six divisions of spiritual discipline: "abide in Christ," "live in the word," "pray in faith," "fellowship with believers," "witness to the world," and "minister to others." Understanding that there is a negative

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perspective on spiritual disciplines being expressed within some segments of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, *SGA* uses six divisions that are easily acceptable as practices, which any Seventh-day Adventist can support. I recognize the plethora of disciplines yet felt six commonly accepted disciplines provided a healthy entrance into spiritual formation and the practice of spiritual disciplines. Each question is based on a 5-point scale with 1 being "never," through 5 being "always." The greatest danger in making major implications from the results will be that it assumes honesty from assessment participants. Knowing the "right" answer creates the potential for exaggerated scores. This is an accepted risk.

Abide in Christ

"Abide in Christ" is the first section. This 10-question section focuses on the personal spiritual experience. The questions examine commitment, surrender, worship, and relationship with God.

Living in the Word

"Live in the Word" explores the inclusion of the Bible in personal spiritual experience. As the number of professed Christians reading the Bible continues to decrease, the ten questions explore the reasons people read the Bible. This series of questions can create an increased focus on the value of the Bible in the Christian life.

Pray in Faith

"Pray in Faith" covers the topic of prayer. As I have watched the youth and young adults at the PTC shy away from prayer in small group and other public settings, asking questions about prayer is a valuable measurement of spiritual health. This section

of spiritual disciplines dynamically challenges the participant to rethink personal prayer behaviors. The very first question, "My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs," challenges the common prayer practices of providing God a grocery list of needs, as if He is a magician waiting to wow humanity with His tricks.

Fellowship With Believers

"Fellowship with Believers" transitions from the personal experience of the Christian faith into the community of believers. This theological concept has been largely excluded in the current Christian growth concepts which emphasize the personal experience often to the exclusion of a church community. In Ephesians, Paul used the plural descriptions of receiving grace and salvation within the community to show the theological importance of the church community in the spiritual growth of Christians (Eph 2:11-22).

"Fellowship with Believers" asks the participant to evaluate the personal commitment to the church community. The PTC has been so focused on personal salvation and personal experiences with God, that the idea of corporate community as being a part of a relationship with God has created discontent among some leadership since it seems to demand an increased value to be placed on the church as integral in one's personal salvation.

Witness to the World

"Witness to the World," describes the calling of Matthew 28:19-20. As I have examined the recent history of the PTC, it is clear that while the church has grown, it has not necessarily grown by witnessing to the world. The church has grown through transfer

growth due to Seventh-day Adventists moving to a rapidly growing Atlanta metropolitan area. Youth and young adults have taken notice of the fact that the church does not seem to be focused on a mission of sharing the Gospel in the local community. This division of spiritual disciplines is something that has received very little examination within the local congregation.

Minister to Others

Starting in 2015, "minister to others" has become a growing focus with the PTC. There has always been a focus on serving others, but there has not been a clear process of connecting serving others to a life-giving relationship with Jesus. The church has given serious effort to expand serving others. The 10 questions of "Minister to Others" focuses on being willing to be used by God and using individual gifts and talents to serve.

These six divisions will provide a broad picture review of one's practice of spiritual disciplines as a measure of spiritual maturity. By collecting youth and young adult assessments, I will be able to discover the overall spiritual health of the youth and young adult ministry as well as the spiritual growth in the mentees.

<div align="center">

Invitation and Selection Process of Mentees

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The invitation and application process to become one of the six individuals involved in the 10-month mentorship will take place through the PTC communication system which includes: church bulletin, church bulletin board, church email newsletter, church announcements, youth Sabbath school class and Pathfinder club (Appendix J). Clearly defined expectations and requirements will be included in the invitation. From

those who respond to the invitation, the selection process will use the criteria of being a current or potential youth or young adult leader at the PTC.

Mentee Invitation

The local church uses various methods to communicate with the congregation. The traditional method of communication is the weekly printed bulletin. The announcement will include an invitation for youth and young adult leaders, along with those interested in exploring youth and young adult leadership, to email me as the project director. The church provides members a weekly email newsletter that will be used to invite leaders to become mentees. If youth or young adult leaders do not fill all of the six mentorship spaces, the invitation will be opened to junior and senior high school students who are interested in leadership.

Criteria of Selection

From the individuals who express interest in mentorship, I will use three levels of interest to select the six to nine individuals to include in the mentoring project. The first criterion is that the PTC personnel committee has selected the individual as a youth or young adult leader. If each of the current leaders chooses to join the mentorship, five of the mentee positions will be filled. The second criterion is that of PTC juniors or seniors in high school who have expressed interest in leadership training. The third criterion is any PTC young adult who desires to explore spiritual disciplines. These three criteria will be used to screen those interested in the mentorship project.

Mentorship Experience

The 10-month mentorship will consist of eight sessions. Four sessions will be group sessions, and four will be individual mentoring sessions. Each session will focus on a series of progressing experiences built around the *SGA*. As the sessions continue, the participants will be introduced to the book, *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality* by C. Schwarz (2009). I will provide each participant with a copy of the book and during one of the group sessions, the participants will complete "The Spiritual Style Test." The final session will consist of a debriefing of the 10-month experience including exploration of next steps each participant wants for continued spiritual growth. To enhance the success of the sessions each participant will be expected to maintain confidentiality regarding information shared by other participants during group mentoring sessions (Appendix K).

Session One

At the beginning of the mentoring portion of this project, a review of spiritual disciplines as a means of spiritual formation will take place. From interaction with potential participants it is very clear that the majority do not hold much, if any, understanding of spiritual formation or the impact the practice of these disciplines will have upon one's spirituality. Due to the potentially explosive nature of the term "spiritual formation" and "spiritual discipline," clear meanings of these two terms and their basic function will introduce the mentoring experience.

Each of the six participants will complete the "Spiritual Growth Assessment" questionnaire (Appendix I). After completing the questionnaire, each participant will use "Your Discipleship Wheel" to score the questionnaire. The scoring process helps each participant see the strengths and weaknesses in one's spiritual development. During the

session, each participant will complete the first four steps in "Your Discipleship Wheel." Steps one through three are the scoring process, which includes a visual aide that helps clarify strengths and weaknesses in an easy to recognize manner. Step four asks two key questions that help each participant set up his or her personal spiritual discipline exploration plan. Question one is, "Which areas have the most shading? At this point in your spiritual journey, you see these as the strongest elements of your spiritual growth. List one benefit these strengths bring to you personally, your family, your church and your community." Question two is, "Which areas have the least shading? At this point in your spiritual journey you see these as the elements needing the most improvement. List below one reward that growth in these disciplines would bring to you personally, your family, your church and your community."

Each participant will select a strength and a weakness from the discipline wheel. Included in the *SGA* is the "Recommended Actions for Spiritual Growth Guide." This list of actions provides each participant various ideas and opportunities to explore and expand on both the strengths and weaknesses of spiritual life.

The six participants will be divided into two groups of three to discuss their individual strengths and weaknesses. By having each participant function within a smaller group of three it provides more time for discussion. A take home assignment to be completed before the first individual session will be to explore the "Recommended Actions of Spiritual Growth Guide." Because the mentorship is ten months in duration and I will also be introducing additional materials, each participant is asked to explore only two spiritual disciplines during the eight mentoring sessions.

Session Two

Session two will be the first individual session, which takes place about a month after the first group session. The emphasis of this first personal session will be for the participant to work individually with me on a personalized spiritual growth plan. During the one-hour session, the following questions create the framework of the session:

What is your strongest Spiritual Discipline?
What is your weakest Spiritual Discipline?
Which discipline have you chosen to focus on?
Do you have ideas about your chosen discipline?
What does your 10-month plan look like?
How can the mentor and the participant group help you strengthen your chosen discipline?

This session will help each participant to begin to actively engage the personally selected discipline. As this process begins, it will be expected that each participant develops an individualized plan. I will only provide general outlines to map the process of spiritual exploration. Each participant will largely control the process and growth. To protect the participant and researcher, all individual sessions will take place in public places, and when a minor is involved the parents have the option of being nearby but not necessarily within audible range. All my handwritten notes will be protected in locked file-cabinet, or type and saved on my password protected laptop.

Session Three

Session three is the second individual session. This session occurs roughly two months into the mentorship. This session will focus on the practice and experience of exploring the first spiritual discipline of choice. The key questions for this session will be, "What has been your experience?" and "Do you feel like you are growing closer to God?" As the sessions continue, mentees will be invited to describe their formation

process from their practice of disciplines. The hope will be to have each participant start to notice the benefits of practicing the spiritual disciplines. In each session, the participant will be asked if there are any variations to the yearlong plan, which need to be made.

Session Four

Session four takes place roughly four months after beginning the 10-month mentorship. This group session will include participants sharing their spiritual formation experiences of the first four months from practicing their chosen spiritual disciplines. Follow up conversation starters will be used to encourage discussion about the challenges each participant faced since starting the mentorship. With anything that involves growing and developing spiritual health, negative experiences are to be expected. Participants are likely to feel encouraged to keep experimenting, knowing that others also experienced challenges. During the second half of the session each participant will select a second spiritual discipline to begin practicing. As a take-home project, each person will use the "Recommended Actions for Spiritual Growth Guide" to find options with which to explore their second discipline. By this point in the process, each participant should be gaining an increased level of trust in the group of six participants, allowing for greater encouragement to follow through with the practice of spiritual disciplines. I understand that leaders participating in this project will likely discuss their experiences with each other outside of sessions. These extra conversations can create the moment needed to further personal spiritual formation.

Session Five

One month following session four, and five months after starting the project, each participant will engage in the third individual mentoring session. As each session progresses, more and more time will be spent reviewing personal experiences in practicing the chosen spiritual discipline. With the addition of a second spiritual discipline, the challenge faced by each individual will be following through with the practice. Time will be built into the session for encouraging the participants to continue to explore the second discipline just as has been done with the first discipline. Lastly, time will be provided for the participant to describe what was attractive about the newly selected discipline. A connection between the choices of spiritual disciplines likely corresponds to the results from the "Spiritual Styles Test" each participant will complete during session six.

Session Six

This session will likely be one of the harder sessions. Up to this point each session has provided general spiritual disciplines and personal exploration. The sixth session will be the third group session. During this session after participants cover basic updates, participants will be introduced to the book *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality*. Each participant will be provided a printed copy of the book. Natural Church Development gave permission to use its resource as part of this project as long as reproduction of its materials for use outside of the participant's use during this session will be prohibited. "Tools used in Mentorship" later in this chapter, will go into detail as to the purpose of using this book and, in particular, "The Spiritual Style Test." In session six, participants will be invited to complete and score "The Spiritual Style Test." This test creates the third

variation on the personal exploration of the development of spiritual growth. The take home assignment from the session will be to read at least the sections covering the top three spiritual styles each participant personally discovered from the test results.

Session Seven

This session will be the last individual session of the ten-month mentorship. It will take place roughly a month after the previous session. After a preliminary review of both spiritual disciplines, the participant and I will use the remaining time to discuss the results of "The Spiritual Style Test," and reflect on the readings from *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality.* The goal is to help the participants see how one's spiritual style impacts how one grows spiritually. In wrapping up the session, each participant will be challenged to develop a plan for continued spiritual growth after the mentorship is finished.

Session Eight

The final session will include all participants in the final group session who complete the mentoring portion of the project. A time of sharing as a group will give the participants a chance to hear from each other. Each person will share from his or her personal experiences in growing through the practice of spiritual disciplines. Participants will be given time to talk about the positives and the challenges faced. Each person will share about discoveries made from the "Spiritual Style Test" and how this affected continued spiritual growth. Finally, each participant will be invited to present future goals for spiritual growth. A timeline of the eight sessions is located in Appendix L.

Tools Used in Mentorship

Two primary tools will be used during the two formats of mentoring. *Spiritual Growth Assessment* developed by LifeWay is available online at lifeway.com/discipleship. The second tool will be *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality,* produced as part of a much larger Natural Church Development program. A third less measurable tool will be the mentor who provides insights, encouragement, instruction and general direction to each participant. Because this project consists of volunteer youth and young adult leaders as well as potentially some future leaders that are junior and senior high school students, the materials and assignments are limited in number to respect busy schedules. A second determination of tools used came from the limited knowledge of spiritual disciplines that the majority of potential participants had prior to this project. Keeping the reading and academic process limited will be important. While I would have liked to include some basic Emotional Intelligence training in the mentoring, I recognize that participants already have a major learning curve in the area of spiritual disciplines. One of the goals is for the 10-month experience to be positive and not a burden.

Spiritual Growth Assessment

The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* is a 12-page assessment that is designed to function for a complete year. The entire assessment will be provided to each participant, but the mentorship will only use "Spiritual Growth Assessment," "Discipleship Wheel," and "Recommended Actions for Spiritual Growth Guide." The other sections are useful and each participant will be encouraged to use the "Spiritual Growth Observations

Instructions and Response Sheet" along with the "Annual Spiritual Growth Plan," as a great follow-up to their mentorship.

The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality

Christian Schwarz developed *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality* resource for discovering spiritual personalities and educating about personality impacts. For this mentorship the goal of this book and the "Spirituality Style Test" in particular is to present each participant a broader exploration of one's individual spiritual foundation. From personal experience, an exploration of one's spiritual foundation was freeing and enlightening. If each participant gains a greater appreciation of who he or she is as a spiritual being, the "Spirituality Style Test" has provided a valuable tool in developing spiritual disciplines in youth and young adult leaders at Peachtree City Adventist Church.

Mentoring

The two methods of mentoring are planned so that they bring together the best of two worlds. Group session discussions provide a cooperative learning environment. These group sessions offer a support system and encouragement for each participant. The group sessions are augmented with individualized mentoring times. The individualized sessions provide safe places for collective reasoning and individualized realization. Through both methods, the goal will be to have the six participants create individualized outlines and drive the personal experience. As pastor of the church, project director and mentor my role is to keep the focus on the goal of teaching about spiritual formation and developing the practice of spiritual disciplines. Each participant will be given the freedom to shape his or her personal journey throughout this process.

Exploration of Outcomes

The outcomes of this project will come in two forms. The first form will be the responses of the six participants of the 10-month mentorship. The second form comes from the results of the second LifeWay *Spiritual Growth Assessment*.

Mentorship

When reviewing the responses of the 10-month mentorship participants, four key factors will be considered. First, did the participant explore spiritual disciplines? Second, did the participant express greater appreciation for the disciplines explored? Third, did the participant sense and possibly describe how they had grown spiritually through the practice of spiritual disciplines. Finally, did I witness evidence of spiritual growth attributed to the mentorship? These four factors provide anecdotal evidence that cannot necessarily be measured. These four factors still can suggest whether or not spiritual growth took place among the youth and young adult leaders of the PTC.

Spiritual Growth Assessment

To determine if there has been some carryover to the youth and young adult ministries, the collection of the second *SGA* will show any significant changes in spiritual growth. The *SGA* will provide measurements in two ways. The church wide assessments will describe overall spiritual health of the church and any general shifts, while not expected, that might have taken place during the ten-month mentorship. The fact that both the first and second assessments are completely anonymous makes for less accuracy. There is no guarantee that the same individuals will complete both surveys. There will be no way to know how many individuals will complete both assessments.

The second measurement shapes the evaluation of the success of the mentorship. *SGA* completed a second time by each of the six mentees will empirically support or oppose the personal felt reactions to the mentorship. The same assessment is used for both the beginning and the end, and someone may inflate the second assessment. This is a risk that is accepted as an accuracy risk. The comparison of results will be used as insight into the potential for further expansion of practicing spiritual disciplines and for identifying potential relationship to the mentorship project.

Reporting of Findings

The collecting and any reporting of results of this project will be done with an effort to keep each participant anonymous. It is recognized that in a church the size of the PTC, it is likely that the local congregation knows the participants in the project. In all publication of findings, the name, age and gender of any individual participants will remain undisclosed. Generalizations such as, that "there were three males and three females included in the project," may be expressed if needed in the description of the mentorship participants.

All assessments will be completely anonymous with the exception of the six assessments completed by the participants. The assessments from the church including youth and young adults will be collected in various manners. A box will be located in the foyer of the church for the collection of completed assessments. For each of the two weeks that it is offered, the teacher of the youth Sabbath school will collect the completed assessments, which will then be added to the box in the foyer. For the Pathfinder club, the Pathfinder director will distribute and collect assessments during the club meeting. These are also to be added to the box in the church foyer. Each week following the church

service, completed assessments returned to the box in the church foyer will be collected and securely stored for research. Each assessment will include an assessment number in the top right-hand corner. This number is used to verify that no duplicates of the same assessment have been returned. All electronic assessments will go through a generalized collection on the church website within a secured file system. I will have access to this file at the conclusion of the two-week time allotted for submission of assessment. These assessments will be printed and included with the assessments, which were completed and turned in to the box in the church foyer. The collection of assessments will be stored at my home in my locking file cabinet.

The notes and reports from each of the eight sessions will be stored electronically or in printed form. For all electronically stored information from the eight sessions, the files will be password protected for the confidentiality of the participants. All printed notes and reports will be saved in the locking file cabinet located at my home. As part of the completion of my project, all printed and handwritten documents will be transferred to password protected electronic files that will be stored on my password protected personal laptop. Every effort will be made to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of each participant in this mentorship project.

At the conclusion of my Doctorate of Ministry, I will be deleting all confidential computer files, and shredding all notes describing individual participant responses from the mentorship. The results from the church-wide SGAs will be saved for potential future use at the PTC.

Summary

This project aims to help youth and young adult leaders experience spiritual formation through the learning and practice of spiritual disciplines. While it is my personal opinion that when one is regularly practicing spiritual disciplines, one's spiritual formation matures, this DMin intervention will reveal the effectiveness of this method of spiritual formation in the PTC. Only a spiritually growing individual can effectively lead others to grow spiritually.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter reports the narrative of implementing the development of spiritual formation through practicing spiritual disciplines in youth and young adult leaders through mentoring at the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church. The theory stated that increasing the practice of spiritual disciplines would increase the spiritual formation of the youth and young adult leaders of the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church. A church-wide spiritual growth assessment tool created a baseline for spiritual health. In addition to the survey, six youth and young adult leaders participated in eight mentoring sessions over ten months. The mentorship narratives provide a review of the mentoring selection process, the overview of group and individual sessions, and a summary of mentees' experiences. The church repeated the survey one year after the conclusion of the mentoring project. Results, conclusions and recommendations to this project will be done in chapter 6.

General Survey

The first phase of the mentorship project consisted of providing LifeWay's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* (SGA) church-wide. Church attendees received the assessment through two formats, digital and paper (Appendix J). Inclement weather prevented the presentation of the assessment as intended on January 7 at the worship service, in hard copy form, which was to be followed by an email the next week.

Members and guests voluntarily completed the assessment using their preferred method. The weather from a cold, winter storm delayed the invitation to complete the assessment, and the digital invitation came first. The assessment remained available for a two-week period of time. Through emails and during the worship service, announcements provided multiple reminders to complete the assessment during the two-week period as described in the previous chapter.

Digital Assessments

The church's Media Relations Director created a digital version of the assessment using Google forms. All those within the church's email contact list received a link to this form via email. The Peachtree City Adventist Church email service reached over two-thirds of its current members and regular attending guests with weekly emails. On Monday, January 9, 2017, church attendees received the email invitation to complete the assessment. While the plan expected that the email invitation to follow the verbal announcement during the January 7 worship service, inclement weather caused the cancellation of the worship service.

The email included information about the purpose of the assessment and a link to the assessment.

> As part of Pastor Nate's doctoral project, members and guests are invited to complete a Spiritual Growth Assessment. A hard copy or online version can be completed. Hard copies will be available in the church lobby, but if you would like to complete the online version, please click here. All surveys need to be completed by January 21.

As researcher, I decided to extend the time for the completion of assessments due to the cancellation of the January 7 worship service. The church members and guests

received multiple email reminder invitations to complete the assessment over the next three weeks on January 13, 17, 20 and 27.

A total of thirty-two or 16% of church attendees completed digital assessments. The church's Google service collected and stored completed assessments. In setting up the survey, as the researcher, I requested that digital assessments avoid the collection of personal data such as names or email addresses. This protected the confidentiality of the participants.

Paper Assessments

At church services, attendees received the opportunity to complete paper assessments. Blank assessments and a bin for completed assessments were placed on the information table in the foyer of the church. The high school Sabbath school and Pathfinder ministry provided the assessment to the students as part of their ministries on January 14 and January 21. Leaders from these ministries placed completed assessments in the collection bin located in the foyer of the church. As the researcher, I did not attend the high school Sabbath school class, Pathfinder meetings, or personally hand anyone an assessment.

Review of Assessments

Providing online and hard copy forms of the assessment allowed for ease of completion. Thirty-two individuals completed digital assessments. The hard copy assessment was made available in the church lobby and was handed out to youth in Sabbath School and Pathfinders. Thirty-three additional individuals or 17% of average attendance completed and returned paper versions of the assessment to the collection bin

located in the foyer of the church. The 65 assessments equate to about one-third of the

weekly attendance at the church in January, 2017.

An overview of the 65 assessments found that the highest number, 28 (42%),

were completed by those over the age of fifty-one (Appendix M). Twelve youth and only

three young adults filled out assessments. A third group for future interest are the seven

pre-teen young people who completed the assessment. Based on the most recent review

of active church attendees in October of 2017, at least 45 young adults and 25 high

school students attend church on an at least an occasional (once a quarter) basis. While

the results of this assessment provide a general level of spiritual growth, the 15 youth and

young adult assessments do not necessarily reflect the views of the 70 church attendees

they represent. Any evaluation of the youth and young adult results in chapter 6 may not

reflect the larger youth and young adult community of the Peachtree City Seventh-day

Adventist Church.

Mentorship

Six individuals completed the 10-month mentorship in the practice of spiritual

disciplines to grow one's spirituality. Within the experience each participant actively

engaged in two disciplines and explored their spiritual style preference.

Selection Process

Youth and young adult leaders, as well as any youth or young adult interested in

exploring leadership, received an open invitation to join the 10-month mentorship. All

youth leadership and volunteers received a background screening per denominational

policy. An announcement in the bulletin over a three-week period starting January 14,

2017, and which continued each Saturday through the end of the month, invited

interested leaders to contact me. As part of the church's weekly e-newsletter, readers also

received the invitation.

> Spiritual Discipline Mentorship Opportunity: Are you a youth or young adult leader?
> Pastor Nate Elias is providing a special 10-month mentorship opportunity that will
> explore spiritual disciplines as a valuable tool in personal spiritual growth as well as
> equipping for leading youth and young adults. If you are interested in more details
> contact Pastor Nate.

The intent was to choose at least six, and no more than nine, individuals for this

mentorship. From the invitation, only six individuals expressed a desire to join the 10-

month mentorship. All six received acceptance into the mentorship. The group consisted

of three youth leaders, two young adult leaders and one high school youth.

Mentoring Sessions

The mentoring session format facilitated spiritual growth in each mentee through

the practice of spiritual disciplines. Through exploring the outcome of taking Lifeway's

SGA, each mentee selected a spiritual discipline from the various disciplines described in

the assessment. Over the 10-month process each mentee practiced two spiritual

disciplines, explored spiritual styles, and discovered mutual searching for a stronger

relationship with God.

Group Mentoring Sessions

Due to numerous calendar challenges, primarily caused by pastoral and my

doctoral responsibilities, the group sessions met at various intervals within the project.

The first session occurred on February 11. Group sessions two and three followed on

June 10 and September 30. The final group session happened on November 18. With the

exception of September 30, each session took place at the church in one of the classrooms following the Saturday worship service. Each group session included a meal to allow for a more dynamic experience. Sessions lasted no more than 90 minutes. Sessions opened and closed with prayer. The participants received reminders of the importance of maintaining confidentiality concerning conversations during group sessions.

Five of the six participants attended the first session. Each of the participants completed the SGA and scored it to identify strengths and weaknesses within the six categories described by the assessment. The participant who missed the first session completed the SGA prior to the second session. From these outcomes, each of the participants accepted the assignment of choosing a spiritual discipline to practice. The SGA tool contains an array of practical activities useful to strengthen one's spiritual discipline experience. During the first individual session participants further explored their discipline of choice. An addition to the first session consisted of answering questions defining the terms spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines (Chapter 1).

The second group session took place on June 10. All six of the participants attended the second session. The focus of session two explored the various chosen disciplines of each participant. This session transpired following two individual sessions, discussed in the next section. During the second session each individual shared personal successes and struggles in practicing their chosen spiritual discipline. As the participants listened to each other during the group session, they offered positive feedback. Based on supportive group emails describing personal experiences that the participant set up, it became clear in this session that the group teamed together for the greater growth of all

involved. As a takeaway assignment from group session two, each individual identified a second discipline to practice.

For the third group session, participants met at my house for a meal. All attended and shared the strengths and weaknesses of their experiences. During the third individual session, exploration of Natural Church Development's *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality* took place. Each participant completed the Spiritual Style Test prior to the third group session. This assessment comprised the majority of the discussion time. Additional time could have been designated for further exploration into the impact of their spirituality style upon their recognition of the importance of spiritual disciplines.

During the fourth group session on November 18, the participants shared from their experience, cast a vision of what they would explore next, and agreed to complete the SGA as an exit comparison. Each participant verbally expressed a personal maturing in spiritual formation. The most common response described a new awareness of relationship growth with God. Actual measurement of growth may be harder to identify and will be explored in the next chapter.

Individual Mentoring Sessions

To keep six individuals progressing together at a similar rate within a volunteer-based mentorship created unexpected challenges. Scheduling individual sessions for working adults with already busy schedules delayed, and at times prevented, individual sessions from taking place. Two participants were unable to attend half of their individual sessions. Missing two individual sessions limited the time available to help the two participants to follow through with the effective equipping for their practice of their

chosen discipline. The remaining four participants attended at least three of the four individual sessions.

As part of the agreed upon effort to maintain the confidentiality of the six individuals, I do not refer to any particular individual sessions; rather, I describe the general overview of content as well as various highlights from the sessions. The personal sessions took place either at the church in one of the classrooms or in the individual's home depending on their choice of location. Sessions, times of day, and days of the week varied depending on individual schedules.

Personal sessions one and two took place between the group sessions on February 11 and June 10. During session one, examination of the mentee's selected spiritual discipline filled the hour-long sessions. Three individuals chose *Abiding in Christ*; two chose *Praying in Faith,* and one chose *Living in the Word.* Each of these selections came from the SGA. Each individual desired additional suggestions and basic coaching on their chosen discipline. An unexpected part of the first individual session centered on educating each of the participants about spiritual disciplines. I used basic information found in the early chapters of Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* to teach the foundations of spiritual disciplines. In the remainder of the first sessions I limited my asking questions and provided simple suggestions such as slowly reading a passage of scripture multiple times asking various questions of the passage. Participants self-directed the majority of the mentorship experience.

The second session dwelt on the successes and struggles experienced by the individuals. Since the majority of the mentees worked fulltime, they repeatedly stated that time was the greatest challenge. Four of the mentees expressed that they noticed the

difference in their personal lives when they took the time to practice their spiritual

discipline. Three of the mentees confessed that they had never explored spirituality in this

form and already felt closer to God by the third month of being involved. The mentees

received the assignment to continue practicing their chosen discipline.

Session three took place during the summer, which created scheduling challenges.

Only three participants met for their third session. The combination of summer and

introducing a second discipline hampered the success of implementation. While the three

participants talked about how they desired to explore a second discipline, they had not

practiced it enough to truly provide useful feedback. The mentees selected similar second

disciplines to their first disciplines, with the most common addition being either *Abide in*

Christ or *Pray in Faith*. The next chapter will discuss ways of improving the results of

exploring the second discipline. As a takeaway assignment, each of the participants

received the book, *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality,* and were asked to complete the

"Spiritual Styles Test" located in the book. The mentees completed the test and brought

the results to the third group session held on September 30. Only three of the six actually

met for individual session three, limiting the ability to facilitate the completion of the test

prior to the group session. Distribution of books to the other three mentees occurred by

personally handing the mentee the books at church.

Session four took place prior to the final group session on November 18. Four out

of the six mentees actually came to their session. The final individual session reviewed

the positive and negative outcomes of the experience. As this mentorship provided the

first exploration of spiritual disciplines for five of the six mentees, four responded that a

second mentorship would be beneficial to their continued spiritual growth since so much

of the time had focused on learning about spiritual disciplines. Education regarding spiritual disciplines needed to take place prior to entering the mentorship. Chapter 6 will explore a stronger education in spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines. The participants identified sustainable growth that they planned to continue through practice of disciplines and envisioned replication in others. Two expressed interest in beginning a mentoring experience for others. A healthy critique of some lapses in communication on my part identified a need for better communication outside of the sessions. If I had sent friendly encouragement between sessions, I would have been able to remind and keep the participants focused on the practice of the spiritual disciplines.

Exit Review by Mentees

As part of the final individual and group sessions, each mentee provided two forms of exit review. First, each mentee provided verbal feedback about the overall 10-month mentorship. Verbal feedback offered the participants time to express their impressions of spiritual growth. These responses only expressed perceptions of growth. Second, each mentee completed the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* for the second time. The completion of the assessment a second time provided a tangible growth comparison between February and November of 2017. The findings will be reviewed in chapter 6.

Verbal Reviews

At the final individual mentoring sessions, each of the participants identified the strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring experience. Participants answered questions about the success of the mentorship in helping the participants' spiritual growth through the practice of spiritual disciplines. The four participants who completed the verbal

review expressed that they developed an awareness of their spirituality of which they had previously not been cognitive. The four responded to the experience as something they desired to continue to build upon yet realized it would require their personal intentionality once the regular mentoring sessions no longer reminded them to practice the disciplines. They expressed uncertainty when they answered questions about their next steps. Due to time constrains, I did not follow up with the two participants as they did attend the last group session. During the final session, I offered these two participants time to share. The collective verbal reviews from the six participants expressed a lack of confidence to continue without the mentor's guidance. Their responses suggested that they failed to gain enough independence in their practice of spiritual disciplines.

Written Reviews

When the 10-month mentorship began, each of the participants completed the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* tool. At the conclusion of the eighth session, each participant retook the assessment. Each of the completed assessments showed growth in the area of the first spiritual discipline chosen by each mentee. Participants experienced overall growth in nearly all six disciplines, even among disciplines that they did not practice. As a subjective survey, any outcomes represented only the perceived view of the assessment taker. Details will be presented in the results portion of chapter 6.

<center>**Second Assessment**</center>

As part of the project plan described in chapter 4, a second completion of the SGA was completed in November of 2018. This survey occurred a year after the completion of the 10-month mentorship concluded. In the original plan this survey had

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been scheduled to occur immediately after the conclusion of the mentorship. While the intended delivery of the second assessment had been scheduled for December of 2017, various factors prevented its completion. The completion of this assignment required the submission of a draft of this chapter in January of 2018. Due to inclement weather, the cancelation of church on the first Saturday in December and the rescheduled church events caused by the weather, I chose to delay the distribution of the second survey. The survey was conducted the first two Saturdays in November 2018 and followed the same delivery process as the first survey.

To have better returns of the second assessment and possibly measure growth within the high school students, the delay to November of 2018 allowed for a similar number of responses as had been received in the first assessment (Appendix H). Church member and regular attendees completed 67 surveys. More teenagers completed the survey, 16 compared with 12. The young adult age group also returned a significantly higher number of surveys, nine as compared to three. The largest decrease within an age group came from those under the age of 13. A significant number of those children who were within this age group during the first assessment shifted to the teenage age group between January 2017 and November 2018. While there have been changes in the specific people in attendance between January 2017 and November 2018, there has not been a significant change in overall attendance. Analysis of the assessment results will be reported in chapter six.

Summary

The 10-month project started in February, 2017, and ended November, 2017. Through the mentoring experience six volunteer participants practiced two spiritual

disciplines and discovered their spiritual style. Over the 10 months, I gained a greater

appreciation for the value of investing in volunteer leaders willing to wrestle with their

personal spiritual growth in vulnerable ways. Each of the six participants scored higher in

SGA and gained respect for spiritual disciplines through this project. The project

concluded with the congregation completing the second survey in November, 2018.

CHAPTER 6

METHODS, OUTCOMES, SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS

AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church (PTC) participated in developing spiritual disciplines in youth and young adult leaders through mentoring. A secondary goal of the project as a result of the spiritual growth in the leaders was to inspire youth and young adults to discover and practice spiritual disciplines. To build a baseline of measurement, the church attendees and members were invited to complete spiritual assessments. A group of six youth and young adult leaders accepted the invitation and completed a ten-month mentoring in the practice of spiritual disciplines. Due to various factors described in chapter five, the growth of the spirituality within the youth and young adults was not achieved during the timeline of the project. This chapter evaluates the methods used and the outcomes obtained from LifeWay's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* and Natural Church Development's *Spiritual Styles Test* along with the mentorship experience of the six participants. The second portion of this chapter provides summaries, conclusions and recommendations.

Spiritual Growth Assessment

Using the method of digital and printed assessments, the church received the opportunity to complete LifeWay's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* beginning on Saturday,

January 14, 2017. Church attendees completed 65 assessments. In their follow-up

assessment in November of 2018, attendees returned 67 surveys. Appendix H provides a

sample of the "Demographic and Involvement" portion of the assessments taken in 2017

and in 2018.

For the interpretation of the assessments, three numbers provide indicators as to

the overall spiritual health. The 2017 survey returns included 52 Peachtree City Adventist

Church members and 56 members in 2018. The remaining 14 (2017) and 11 (2018)

consisted of regular attending guests and persons planning on joining the church. The

returned surveys accounted for 25% of the active membership, which was short of the

30% goal. Of the 26 young adult church members in 2017, only three completed the 2017

assessment. Nine young adults completed the 2018 assessment, representing the 39

young adult church members and roughly 20 non-member attendees. Due to this low

return rate compared to total young adult church attendees, significantly below the goal

of 50%, the young adult age group was combined with youth in result evaluation. The 12

teen 2017 assessments completed and the 16 teen assessments in 2018 represented nearly

50% of active teen membership. By merging the youth and young adult assessments 15

(2017) and 25 (2018) some general spiritual behaviors were identified.

<center>Outcome</center>

General outcomes showed overall scores above 3.5. When evaluating the scoring

of the assessment, scores below three suggest the participants seldom (2) or occasionally

(3) practice said discipline. Scores above 3.5 would indicate a healthy self-perception of

spiritual growth. Throughout this project it became evident that there was a general lack

of knowledge about spiritual disciplines as practices that can enhance one's spiritual

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formation. Members agreed on the importance of salvation through Jesus Christ alone, but "a transformational life" remained theory in some areas of assessment. A review of the lower scores in group prayer, regular Bible reading and consistent witnessing supports this perception.

The five of the six divisions of disciplines each scored lower in 2018 than the score in 2017 (Table 1). From the discussions held with the six mentees, church elders, and church board members, the lack of education on the topic of spiritual disciplines prior to the completion of the 2017 assessment likely inflated the scores. Five of the 10 church elders identified having a greater critique of their personal spiritual growth when taking the second assessment. One indicated this came from a greater awareness of the significance in practice of spiritual disciplines. During the 20 months between the two assessments the Peachtree City Adventist Church received sermons on the topic of spirituality, the teen Sabbath school class covered classical spiritual disciplines, and several small groups began Richard and Henry Blackaby's book *Experiencing God*. The education in spiritual formation and increased awareness to spiritual disciplines helped members to measure themselves from a more realistic view of personal practices. These factors likely explain the lowered scores on the second assessment.

Looking at the assessment results at a deeper level described the health of the youth and young adults at PTC (Table 1). Analysis of results does not include any statistical analysis, rather just general mathematical evaluations. Lifeway's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* was developed to help church membership as an introduction to the practice of spiritual disciplines and not necessarily intended for statistical research.

Table 1

Spiritual Growth Assessment Comparison Church and Youth/Young Adult

Spiritual Discipline	Church Score Max score of 5 in 2017 (65 assessments)	13-35 Score Max score of 5 in 2017 (15 assessments)	Church Score Max score of 5 in 2018 (67 assessment)	13-35 Score Max score of 5 in 2018 (25 assessments)
Abide in Christ	4.17	3.69	3.96	3.62
Live in the Word	4.02	3.75	3.88	3.43
Pray in Faith	3.86	3.56	3.73	3.48
Fellowship with Believers	3.87	3.50	3.90	3.75
Witness to the World	3.29	3.23	3.19	2.92
Minister to Others	3.76	3.43	3.59	3.27

In "Abide in Christ" the strength of this discipline continued from 2017 in the 2018 discipline assessment (Appendix N). A score of 3.62 suggested that a majority of these persons frequently connected with God and identified a relationship with God. This was considered a healthy score since it was will over the 3.5 thresh hold. "Fellowship with Believers" grew by 0.25 to 3.75 among teens and young adults. As the only discipline to grow, as well as the highest scoring of the six disciplines, "Fellowship with Believers" represented a place of strength for PTC. The vast majority of participants felt that they interacted with other Christians at healthy levels. The second lowest scoring discipline, "Minister to Others," reflected the development of one's spirituality and a need for more practice of this discipline. While 3.27 is a lower score, it suggests that in some ways focus has shifted toward others even if it is only "Occasionally." If this assessment was to be given a third time in 18 to 24 months the results would show if growth had taken place.

The lower scores in three of the disciplines suggests that awareness of spiritual disciplines likely lowers scores as individuals gave more honest evaluation. Secondly, the

variance is who completed the *SGA* the second time may account for the difference in the scores. Education and mentoring of disciplines practice then results in the desired spiritual growth. "Living in the Word" experienced the greatest drop of any discipline between 2017 and 2018 of 0.32. Based on the terminology of the scoring, the majority shifted from "Frequently" to "Occasionally" having the Bible as part of one's life experience. The first question within the discipline expresses this shift. *I regularly read and study my Bible* shifted from 2.8 to 2.64. As stated earlier a score of 3.0 means one only occasionally reads the Bible. A 2.0 means that one seldom reads the Bible. Again, this shift in scoring likely represents a more critical measurement due to greater awareness of the topic. Within "Pray in Faith" the responses to two questions showed both honest reflection as well as a place for growth in the youth and young adults. When answering, *My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs*, youth and young adults scored 3.2 suggesting that this only took place occasionally. The second question, *I engage in a daily prayer time* 3.48, when combined with the above question indicated that while belief in prayer is strong, individuals did not put belief into practice.

The struggle to turn beliefs into practices reflected most in the discipline "Witness to the World." From 2017 to 2018 the score dropped from 3.23 to 2.92 for youth and young adults. The church as a whole also scored lowest in this discipline with a decrease from 3.29 to 3.19. For one to grow outward focused disciplines such as "Witness to the World" and "Ministering to Others" one needs a general level of competency in the practice of inward disciplines such as "Abide in Christ." The struggle to define spiritual formation through the practice of spiritual disciplines in the local context of PTC is an

ongoing effort beyond the current project. Scores from outward disciplines may suggest issues of isolation and separation from the general society that need to be discussed for significant change to take place. Based on initial findings, strengthening the practices of the first four disciplines could serve as building blocks for "Witnessing to the World." The blocks will help give a foundational experience with God for one to witness to others.

As the assessment-completing process intentionally protected against identification of individual participants, the second assessment does not necessarily represent the same participants. Since the participants likely varied, to do any type of evaluation of an isolated question could lead to inaccuracies. That being said, one question scored low among all participants on both assessments. *Regular participation in group prayer characterizes my prayer life* scored 2.91 to 2.81 within the church at large. A small growth 2.67 to 2.8 among the youth and young adults still scores below the occasional 3.0. This score supports the fact that the PTC does not participate in a mid-week prayer meeting, and only a handful of small groups meet regularly. Over the past five years, church leadership was not able to sustain on three occasions mid-week prayer meeting. On each occasion church members did not attend and the prayer meeting was canceled.

Results from youth and young adult assessments showed slightly lower scores throughout the assessment as compared to church-wide scores. Based on cognitive and faith development, one would expect teenagers to be in the process of identifying personal beliefs and practices. Relational development with parents, friends, as well as fitting into society describes the adolescent process of cognitive, physical, and spiritual

development. The whole church, including the teenagers, identified lower scores in "group prayer" and "involving others" in ministry. Group prayer is a known weakness of PTC but has not translated into a commitment to supporting a weekly prayer meeting. The questions that referenced leadership roles trended lower, reflecting leadership development deficiency within the PTC.

Young adult participation jumped in the 2018 assessment to nine from the three in 2017, but still fell short of the 50% goal. Between assessments, Peachtree City Adventist Church designated a young adult leader, and leaders collaboratively with active young adults, focused on connecting with inactive and newly arrived young adults. This produced efforts to offer monthly activities, a young adult Facebook page, and regular conversations at church services. This has strengthened young adult buy-in but still represents a place for greater effort for the PTC community.

<center>Weakness of Using an Assessment</center>

The assessment process provided valuable information regarding the general mindset of the church and 13 to 35-year-olds in particular. The 10-month mentoring of six willing individuals shed additional insights into the church assessments. The assessments showed general status quo satisfaction with mediocrity of the occasional to frequent practice for the six disciplines. Based on discussions held prior to the beginning of the 10-month mentorship and church-wide assessment, none of the six mentorship participants, youth and young adult leaders, or church elders indicated weakness in any particular spiritual disciplines. However, as the mentorship continued, it became very clear that the majority of the six participants were not as experienced in spiritual discipline as I had naively expected. Three verbally recognized in the first two months of

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mentoring, weaknesses within their practice of spiritual disciplines. In various

conversation prior to this project leaders equated church attendance to healthy spiritually.

The church assessment, as a self-evaluation, provided space for misrepresented reality.

Differences in the scoring of the two assessments indicates that self-examination can

create false scores. Mentorship of youth and young adult leaders provided a more

accurate individualized measurement of spiritual growth, due to the open-ended questions

and self-discovery built into the mentorship in collaboration with the assessments.

A second unexpected weakness of using an assessment resulted from the

logistical challenges faced in providing the assessment. Inclement weather hindered the

delivery of the 2017 assessment to the church during a worship service and forced an

extension from two weeks to over three weeks to complete and return the assessment.

Even with the extension of the time, fewer people attended church during the three-week

period. Sixty-five responses represented roughly 30% of regular attendance but only 25%

of the church members.

The focus of this project remained on the mentorship as the primary way to

develop spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines. The assessment simply created a

comparison from which to work. Continuing to use this assessment and increasing the

mentoring of leadership prioritizes the spiritual health of the members of PTC and

demonstrates the significance of spiritual disciplines in one's spiritual health. Since the

completion of the youth and young adult leadership mentorship in spiritual disciplines,

the elders and church board formalized a mentorship experience similar to this doctoral

project.

Mentorship

The mentorship design planned for at least six participants. Only one of the youth and young adult leaders entered the mentorship with any previous known practice of spiritual disciplines. Most had heard about the controversy within Adventism concerning spiritual formation, but they had not educated themselves about spiritual disciplines as a means of spiritual formation prior to joining the mentorship. Over the first couple of sessions, I spent a significant amount of time educating about the importance of spiritual disciplines. The use of the *Spiritual Growth Assessment*, *Spiritual Style Test* and practical discipline applications within mentorship allowed for meaningful feedback. Participants' unanimous positive responses to the experience showed a clear path for future expansion of the mentorship.

The Team

Each of the six participants showed an energetic enthusiasm for the mentorship process through generally good attendance at sessions as well as their personal practice of disciplines between sessions. This group consisted primarily of leaders with multiple years of experience leading youth and young adult ministries in various roles. Participants engaged the process throughout the 10-month mentorship, although they were not always able to attend sessions. In their enthusiasm for the mentorship, a couple of them held themselves to higher expectations in commitment than they were actually able to maintain. Outcome

Each participant had the opportunity to attend four group sessions and four individual sessions during the ten-month mentorship. Attendance at group sessions and individual sessions required a time commitment, which varied between participants.

Being able to attend eight sessions over the 10 months was harder than expected. Working with participants to schedule and keep scheduled sessions was difficult due to the busyness of participants. Each participant, including those who missed a session or two, still practiced spiritual disciplines and expressed that they identified personal spiritual growth. All participants attended at least six of the eight sessions.

During exit reviews (Appendix O) each of the participants expressed being very satisfied with the experience of being part of the mentorship and appreciated their selected disciplines (Table 2). A review of the *Spiritual Growth Assessments* showed a numerical growth. Exit interviews by the participants described personal spiritual growth and a transformation experience. The most common participant responses expressed confidence, enthusiasm, and interest in continuing the discipline practices started during the mentorship. One participant stated, "I've known what I believe, I just never experienced God's words in my everyday life. Now I feel like God's words are more than just doctrines and beliefs." Another participant shared, "I struggled to pray and felt like I wasn't doing it right. Through the encouragement of group sessions and invitation during individual sessions to practice various ways to pray, I am beginning to feel like prayer is faith in action."

<center>Weaknesses of Mentorship</center>

The mentorship experienced scheduling challenges. Busy individuals with families, work, school and church were asked to take ownership of their mentorship experience and carve out a couple hours each week to immerse themselves in the practice of spiritual disciplines. Each of the participants, as a volunteer ministry leader, admitted to struggling to find the time they felt was needed to follow through with the practice of

disciplines. I realized some of this came from unrealistic goals both on their part and mine. I did not plan for the steep spiritual discipline learning curve that all except one of the participants experienced. Some of the participants, while having been informed of the time commitment prior to agreeing to be part of the mentorship, failed to dedicate time to meet for all eight sessions. Several of them expressed difficulty maintaining their focus on practicing their selected spiritual disciplines within their already overfilled schedules. From the mentor's perspective, two or three of the participants would have had more success by dedicating more regular time to the mentorship. As each mentee described personal spiritual growth the time put into the practice of spiritual disciplines matched the described growth from each participant. Two of the participants created expectations that were unlikely to be met in a 10-month mentorship. During the exit debriefing of the mentorship experience, two participants expressed a wish that they had received regular reminders to encourage them between the eight mentoring sessions. A regular reminder did not take place and will be an improvement added in future mentorship. Through the encouragement of group sessions and invitation during individual sessions to practice various ways to pray, I am beginning to feel like prayer is faith in action."

Table 2

Participant Discipline Selection

Discipline #1	Discipline #2
Abiding in Christ - 3 participants	Living in the Word - 3 participants
Praying in Faith - 2 participants	Abiding in Christ - 2 participants
Living in the Word - 1 participant	Praying in Faith - 1 participant

Measuring the Results

Four basic areas of the mentorship project allowed for measurable evaluation of spiritual growth. At the beginning and ending of the mentorship the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* showed growth from the overall mentorship (Tables 3 & 4). The Natural Church Development *Spiritual Style Test* showed the connection between personal spiritual personality and comfort level with practicing spiritual disciplines. Lastly, group and individual sessions provided useful discussion, which further enhanced the mentor and participant's understanding of each participant's spiritual growth.

Spiritual Growth Assessment

As the raw results show, each participant grew through participating in the mentorship (Table 3). Each participant completed the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* during the first and last group sessions. The higher second assessment scores on each of the disciplines suggested awareness and general education on spiritual disciplines resulted in spiritual growth. "Abiding in Christ" scored the largest cumulative growth of nearly 7 points as compared to the average change of 3.6 (Table 3). This change in scores appears to reflect the selection of "Abiding in Christ" by five of the six participants as

one of the spiritual disciplines practiced during the mentorship (Table 2). While "Abiding in Christ" showed the largest growth, the other two disciplines chosen by participants during the mentorship failed to match spiritual growth. "Living in the Word" witnessed a very small average growth of 1.6, and "Prayer in Faith" only grew by a 2.8 average. In addition to cumulative scores, individual participant scores (Table 4), showed a general spiritual growth even among disciplines not directly practiced during the mentoring. These scores showed the importance and value of practicing spiritual disciplines to enhance spiritual growth.

Table 3

Net Change of Spiritual Growth Assessments of Participants

Discipline	Average Growth by Discipline
Abide in Christ	+ 6.8
Live in the Word	+1.6
Pray in Faith	+2.8
Fellowship with Believers	+2.4
Witness to the World	+3.8
Minister to Others	+4.0
Average Change	+3.6

Table 4

Spiritual Growth Assessment Change by Participant

Discipline	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Abide in Christ	37/49	25/39	39/39	39/44	34/37	N/A
Live in the Word	41/47	40/38	36/39	41/46	36/32	N/A
Pray in Faith	33/44	33/29	35/34	41/47	31/33	N/A
Fellowship with Believers	37/47	38/39	36/41	40/43	36/39	N/A
Witness to the World	33/44	35/29	29/36	34/40	27/28	N/A
Minister to Others	36/48	36/36	39/40	37/45	38/37	N/A

Spiritual Style Test

At some point during mentoring sessions five through eight, each participant completed the Natural Church Development's *Spiritual Style Test* and received a copy of the book, *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality,* by Christian A. Schwarz. Unlike the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* where participants practiced various disciplines, the *Spiritual Style Test* simply showed each participant his or her preferred way of connecting with God (Table 5).

Table 5

Spiritual Style Test Results

Participant	Native Style	Wing Style	Style Family	Opposite Style
#1	Sharing	Scripture Driven	Red	Sacramental
#2	Sensory	Sacramental	Green	Sharing
#3	Sensory	Rational	Green	Ascetic
#4	Enthusiastic	Ascetic	Blue	Rational
#5	Mystical	Enthusiastic	Blue	Rational
#6	Rational	Doctrinal	Green	Enthusiastic

Two key elements of the *Spiritual Style Test* provided the most helpful growth

were the identification of one's "native style" and "opposite style." Through the

discovery of one's "native style" each participant discovered reasons for personal

successes and struggles with various spiritual disciplines. The "opposite style" opened up

discussions about church members with whom the participants struggled to relate. Of the

nine possible styles, only two of the participants shared a common style. To protect

participants' identities, the table does not reflect matching participant numbers as

identification as the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* (Table 6).

As the participants reacted to their findings, the conversations centered on how

differently each one related to God. Even the two participants who identified a similar

native style discovered a variation between their personal experiences due to differing

wing styles. Each style is a descriptive word, representing a way that a person best relates

to God. As an example, an individual with a "mystical" "native style" can best describe

his or her search for God as, "Discovering 'Christ in us'" (Schwarz, 2009, p. 137). If someone's "wing" leans toward "sacramental," the person may desire to place icons or images in key places to maintain a focus and reminder of searching for God.

During the group session following the completion of the *Spiritual Style Test*, the participants discussed how the "native style" showed them why prayer was more difficult for the "rational." The participant who embraced sharing thrived on prayer and serving others but struggled to connect with their search of the soul within the "Living in the Word." The discussion also focused on three overarching themes of the *Spiritual Style Test*, the beautiful, the true, and the good.

The weakness of the *Spiritual Style Test* comes from its complexity. The use of the *Spiritual Style Test* focused on introducing the participants to the concept of spiritual styles. By being introduced to the theory, participants were invited to take a greater personal examination of their personal spiritual condition. If this mentorship had lasted longer than ten months, more time could have been spent expanding on this impact of Spiritual Styles upon one's spiritual growth. The Spiritual Style Theory contains several levels within itself as well as representing only a small piece in the larger Natural Church Development process. The complexity of the Natural Church Development process weakened the effectiveness of the test as some of the participants were distracted by the greater Natural Church Development training. Having time to extend discussion and reading the book in entirety as part of the mentorship would have improved the process. The greater Natural Church Development resource went beyond the purview of this doctoral project. Since the completion of the project two of the mentees have continued to further explore the impact of spiritual styles upon spiritual growth. In addition, the

elders of the Peachtree City Adventist Church have begun learning about spiritual styles as a continuation of the mentoring efforts of the church.

Group Sessions

In a collective setting, the four group sessions allowed participants to use their collective experiences to expand their ideas about the various spiritual disciplines and individual spiritual styles. The group sessions provided participants time to share how their personal experiences grew their spirituality. The participant discussions encouraged and supported their fellow participants to continue spiritual discipline exploration. The participants reinforced the belief that group sessions enhance mentoring. The majority of participants expressed that the group sessions small group environment strengthened their spiritual growth.

In project development, beyond including a couple of general questions, group mentoring sessions and individual mentoring sessions were not measured as separate segments of the project. The only way to determine an outcome of group sessions came from the participants' feedback. Based on the mostly positive responses, future mentorships will continue to include group sessions. While not included as part of the project, the inclusion of completing a personality test may have provided additional information that could enhance the group sessions. In the last group session, two of the participants shared that their personality type expressed itself in their hesitancy to fully share in the group sessions. Schwarz's *Spiritual Style Test* opened mentees to a realm of their being that they had never before considered. A personality test could link the newly discovered spiritual style to their more familiar personality.

Individual Sessions

Having four individual sessions spread out between the group sessions provided valuable time for the mentorship to go deeper into the purpose of spiritual disciplines. With the exception of one participant, this mentoring experience introduced the participant to spiritual disciplines as a form of spiritual growth. In designing this project, I inaccurately assumed that participants already had a general understanding of how to use spiritual disciplines to more deeply experience God's presence. I was surprised by the disparity of spiritual disciplines education between the laity and minister. I have learned from this project and further discussions with church elders that the laity at PTC have not been educated in the practice of spiritual disciplines. The lack of basic understanding of spiritual disciplines eliminated the opportunity to experiment with mentoring youth within the time allotted. For the participants, the focus began at spiritual discipline education and extended into the inward focused nature of disciplines. In the ten-months they did not have the time to explore outward focused disciplines or mentee becoming mentor.

Six individual sessions in a month created a greater scheduling difficulty than expected. As pastor of the 250-member church, the project and mentorship created a significant increase of hours of work. The scheduling conflict challenged each participant. None of the participants discontinued his or her commitments to the church to complete this mentorship. Due to the type of mentorship, the amount of time involved exceeded the eight hours of mentorship sessions. Between each session, to experience the full impact, participants were to spend several hours practicing their chosen disciplines.

While difficult to find the time, participants expressed that the time spent benefited their spiritual experience, and each participant received praise for the time commitment given.

Exit Reviews

Participants referenced their completed *Spiritual Growth Assessment* throughout the 10 months of mentoring. At the completion of their mentorship each participant retook the *Spiritual Growth Assessment*. In addition to the assessment, each participant provided insights witnessed over the 10 months. The exit reviews (Appendix O) provided the most useful evaluation of the current project, and offered insights to improve and adapt the project for further use.

Observations

When planned in 2014, the project focused on growing the spirituality of the PTC youth and young adults by encouraging daily use of spiritual disciplines and developing spiritually healthy mentors. During the time allotted, the spirituality of the youth and young adult leaders saw measurable growth. The larger goal of growing the spirituality of the youth and young adults did not occur during the period of time dedicated to this project. Collectively, the six participants entered the mentorship with less knowledge about the practice of spiritual disciplines than expected. The measurable growth and participants recognized growth supports the theory that the practice of spiritual disciplines grows one's spirituality. The primary goal to develop spiritually growing leaders through the practices of spiritual disciplines succeeded. The secondary goal was the transmission of these skills of spiritual growth to the youth and young adults. This

goal is still in process through the continued growth and beginning mentorships of youth and young adults.

Project Goals

The intent in developing this 10-month mentoring project was to create spiritually growing youth and young adult leaders. This project reinforced the importance of willing volunteers. However, willingness only provided the entry point. Spiritual discipline education created the bridge from willing volunteers to spiritually growing leaders. The participant's original understanding of the use of spiritual disciplines as tools for growth represented the greater PTC population. This supported the uncertainty of church leaders in participating in another spiritual discipline mentorship project that started in 2018. As this project continues to evolve, greater education on the importance of spiritual disciplines needs to be taught to the church leadership and members. In January of 2019, a sermon series was started to help educate the church members on the value and practice of spiritual disciplines.

The secondary goal of spiritual growth spreading to the youth and young adults still waits to be seen. This goal was not realized in the timeframe of this project. In not accurately interpreting the knowledge level of spiritual disciplines of the participants, I refocused the beginning of the ten months to educate the participants in the practices of spiritual disciplines. The learning curve hampered current leaders from naturally starting active spiritual disciplines education and mentoring of youth and young adults, so I set aside the process to incorporate mentorship training with the project. As mentoring provided a spiritual disciplines education, additional training through mentoring can provide skills to transmit spiritual disciplines practice to PTC youth and young adults. To

facilitate training for the six participants, each received a copy of the mentoring session questions and *Spiritual Growth Assessment*. They have also been given the opportunity to participate in a follow up group session to discuss further implementation of mentoring as an active part of youth and young adult ministry.

Youth Ministry Changes

The project designed in 2014 focused on attending and actively participating but spiritually lacking high school students. The group of high school students graduated just before project implementation and the graduates transitioned to non-local college campuses preventing their participation. The time from the development of the project in 2014 to implementation of the project in 2017 saw a significant change in the youth group. The youth group during the project participated less in church and youth programming. The layout of the doctoral project developed in 2014 resulted in a less effective project in 2017. On top of the doctoral program issues, the doctoral Institutional Research Board process pushed back the implementation of the project by an additional six months.

Parent Impact

The church's youth ministry lacked significant parental support. Parents continue to be one of the greatest impacts, if not the greatest impact, on youth ministry in the PTC. For more effective results, educating parents of youth in spiritual disciplines, in combination with youth and young adult leaders, could provide greater impact upon the spirituality of the youth.

The project feels incomplete in that there needs to be continued implementation that will likely extend over the next several years. The project showed, even if in a small,

limited setting of six participants, that practicing spiritual disciplines grows one's spirituality.

Structure of Chapters

The following section reviews the highlights of each chapter in this project. The problem is defined and the project is described. The theological reflection looks at the interaction between Jethro, Moses and Joshua. Literary review explores current views of mentoring youth and young adults by older generations during the transitional time of adolescents. The project description describes in detail the process of the 10-month mentorship. This is followed by the reporting of the project implementation. Lastly, the final chapter describes the results.

Chapter 1 – Statement of Problem and Project

Since its birth in 1975, the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to experience steady transfer grow in membership. During the span of this doctoral experience, the church has increased in church attendance and participation. The church campus includes a Hispanic congregation whose membership is included in the membership of the English-speaking church even though worship services are conducted separately. Adventist Christian education receives emphasis in the church's mission and vision statements and through significant continued financial support of its K-8 school. The financial position of the church remains steadily strong with budgets met, reserves maintained and intentional efforts continue toward the building of a new church facility. While the church continues to grow numerically and continues to have families with small children joining, the spiritual development of leadership lacks focus. One of the most obvious insufficiencies in spiritual development appeared in the leadership of the

youth and young adult ministry. The development and implementation of this doctoral project is the response to the weakness of spiritual growth within the youth and young adult leadership of the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through mentoring of youth and young adult leaders in the practice of spiritual disciplines, the leadership of youth and young adult ministries will receive tools to grow spiritually.

Chapter 2 - Theological Reflection

The story of Moses' mentorship of Joshua as described in the Pentateuch shows the importance of equipping individuals at a young age with the tools necessary for personal spiritual growth. Joshua grew spiritually by witnessing the personal encounters Moses had with God. By witnessing the personal encounters Moses had with God, God prepared Joshua to lead. First spiritually, then in other forms of governance Joshua learned by being mentored. All ages, especially youth and young adults, thrive in spiritual growth when they experience an encounter with God by the invitation of a spiritual mentor.

The practice of spiritual disciplines leads the individual into placing one's self before God and allowing him to transform the human self. While some worry about the terminology of spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation, the biblical practices that such terminology defines are rich treasures full of value for anyone's spiritual growth.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

Youth and young adults need mentoring adults in their lives. Research from multiple Christian sources, Reggie Joiner, Kara Powell, and Brad Griffin to name some, described the need for more than just parents to participate in young people's lives.

During these spiritually formative years, the church provides an avenue of continuity for parents to show God in meaningful ways to their children. The cognitive, physical, and spiritual development of a teenager presents a certain amount of doubt in the teenager's life. Spiritual mentoring through the practice of spiritual disciplines offers a place for youth and young adults to grow and express their doubts in a safe, loving, and supportive environment.

Chapter 4 – Project Plan

The developing of spiritual disciplines in youth and young adult leaders through mentoring at the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church followed a basic assessment, education in disciplines, mentorship in the practice of disciplines, and follow-up assessment designs. Lifeway's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* assessed the church and youth ministry's current spiritual health. Youth and young adult leaders of the local church received invitations to join the ten-month mentorship. This mentorship consisted of eight sessions alternating between group and individual education-mentoring sessions. A second assessment, Natural Church Development's *Spiritual Style Test*, brought awareness to the mentorship participants of one's own spiritual personality. Exit reviews provided measurements of growth for mentorship participants. A church-wide follow-up spiritual growth assessment concluded the project.

Chapter 5 – Project Implementation

The development of the regular practice of spiritual disciplines through the mentoring for youth and young adult leaders took place starting in February of 2017 and concluded with the final assessment in November of 2018. This project included the completion of Lifeway's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* by 65 individuals in 2017 and 67

2018 who attend the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church. This assessment provided a baseline to evaluate the youth and young adults who completed the assessment. Six mentoring project participants accomplished the 10-month mentorship. During the mentorship, each participant also completed Natural Church Development's *Spiritual Style Test*. The participants provided feedback on their experiences during exit interviews of their mentorship.

Chapter 6 – Outcomes

The mentorship project successfully assisted six youth and young adult leaders in developing healthy practices of spiritual disciplines. While the secondary goal of spiritual growth extending to the youth and young adults did not reach completion during the time period of the project, the mentorship participants expressed a desire to continue the expansion of the disciplines mentoring to youth and young adults after the conclusion of the project. The six mentees chose to focus on inward-based disciplines during the 10-month project. Each participant showed measurable growth in not only the practiced discipline but in nearly all six categories of the disciplines. Based on the lack of knowledge concerning spiritual disciplines and the absence of healthy spirituality in youth and young adult ministries, this project successfully provided participants spiritual growth through skills provided by education and practice of spiritual disciplines in the mentorship setting.

Conclusions

The most impactful discovery while conducting this project was the need to educate on the value found in the practice of spiritual disciplines by church leadership including youth and young adult ministries. As novices, the voluntary participants needed

education on the practice of spiritual disciplines. In the limits of the 10-month mentorship, training for future mentorship was not a realistic inclusion. The six youth and young adult leaders developed practices of spiritual disciplines that enhanced their spiritual formation.

As this project concluded many of the ideas and practices explored by the six participants leaked into the greater leadership of PTC. When this project was designed, I was the associate pastor of PTC to enhance the youth and young adult ministries of the church. I never imagined taking this project outside the walls of youth and young adult ministry. By the time of the implementation of the project and now in its conclusion, I as the pastor have witnessed leadership at various levels of the church begin intentional efforts to explore and expand their understanding of spiritual disciplines. The sermon series begun in January of 2019 has been an outflow of this ever-expanding interest in growing one's personal spirituality through the practice of spiritual disciplines. The church has through small groups, adult and youth Sabbath School classes and fellowship discussions taken upon themselves a new interest in spiritual formation.

In future mentorships, two considerations need to be made. First, what is the knowledge level and current spiritual discipline practices of participants? Knowing current level of practice of spiritual disciplines provides for the adaptation of the project needed to meet participants at one's present understanding. Future mentorships could reflect a great teacher student focus where education in spiritual disciplines becomes the primary focus. If a more advanced group, participants experienced in the practice of spiritual disciplines would be mentored in the process of mentoring others in the practice of spiritual disciplines. Ultimately, my role becomes that of the coach of various mentors.

Either focus will continue the efforts to increase participant understanding and practice of spiritual disciplines.

Second, participants need to recognize the level of commitment to the process will dictate the success of the outcome. For nearly all of the participants either being unable to find time to follow through or unrealistic goals affected the outcome. Recognizing that only six individuals participated, only generalization can be suggested. Those who did not protect the time suggested for participation saw less progress through the sessions. Two over achievers anticipated completing all six types of spiritual disciplines during the 10-month project. There was not time allotted for that and as such they were unable to complete their personally set goals. Even with the struggles faced, all six youth and young adult leaders developed stronger practice of spiritual disciplines and expressed spiritual growth from the 10-month mentorship. Since the conclusion of the project, there has been some initial indications that at least three of those who had been mentored are now beginning to mentor others.

Lifeway's *Spiritual Growth Assessment* and Natural Church Development's *Spiritual Style Test* provided the foundation of assessments for this project. While neither of the assessments were necessarily designed for research, the expanded resources contained with both assessments offered participants further tools to continue growing spiritually beyond the timespan of the project.

This project was developed around the idea of mentoring. More teaching took place than was expected. In time if continued focus on spiritual disciplines continues at PTC more mentoring will take place and coaching will likely begin. These three types of education can be seen on a continuum with teaching and coaching sandwiching

mentoring. This project has shown that at various times all three methods offer the best form of learning for the participant.

Professional Transformation

This experience of leading a group through the explorative practice of biblical spiritual disciplines inspired me to continue my personal growth through the practice of spiritual disciplines and to develop local leaders of all ages through mentorship. My personal search continues through my commitment to continued use of the Ministry Development Plan as a life map of my personal, professional, and spiritual goals. Through this annual review of my life, I seek growth as well as to identify any weaknesses that develop. The use of a local and conference peer group enhanced my accountability to grow and led to an honest review of my practices. As I watched the growth in the six participants, I determined to read a minimum of two spiritual formation-related books each year to continue to refine my personal practices and to help my parishioners grow spiritually.

As I personally continue to seek to strengthen my skills in mentoring and coaching, I am attending Blackaby Ministry International's Spiritual Leadership Coaching Workshop. This will be my second year of attending. In additional to my personal attendance, I have invited my elders to also attend this training.

Professionally, my passion for training, equipping, and developing leaders grew. In my local setting, the absence of healthy growing spirituality continues to push me to first, educate leaders about spiritual disciplines and second, invite them into the intentional practice of spiritual disciplines as an effective way of placing one's self in the presence of God. Lastly, I vision for PTC leadership to mentor members into healthier

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experiences with God. I sense that without an even greater focus on educating local leadership and providing mentoring practice of disciplines, my local church and many other churches will continue to see decreased involvement from younger generations.

Recommendations

The mentoring of current and future leaders in the practice of spiritual disciplines showed great promise for youth and young adult leaders as well as all leadership roles within the Peachtree City Adventist Church. The 10-month mentorship provided a framework, which the local church and conference should implement to help develop stronger, spiritually healthy leaders at all levels.

Personal Recommendations

After the conclusion of this project with its successes and challenges three basic enhancements would strengthen future versions mentoring leaders. These deal with the structure and processes used throughout the project. In making these suggestions, a similar project would offer more stability in broader settings outside of PTC.

The development of a simple tool to measure the knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines provides for a better understanding of the flow of the project. If the group has little to no spiritual discipline knowledge or experience, the project can focus on teaching. Other more experienced groups could enter into more of a mentoring or perhaps even a coaching model that would be more effective in long-term growth.

A stronger emphasis on the time requirements is needed to help ensure the participants commitment will match the needs of such a project. This should include a policy of dropping if there is a second absence. Having participants miss more than one

of the eight sessions hampers the growth of the other participants. In addition to the absence policy, having participants sign a commitment to one hour of practice per week of the disciplines would increase accountability. Lastly, as project leader, every two weeks a reminder email needs to be sent to encourage participants to continue in their efforts.

The last personal recommendation is to be prepared to share this project in various levels of totality. This would include having promotional presentations prepared in both two-minute announcements and 15-minute explanations. Along with promotion, this project should be adapted to be a weekend workshop that leads to further follow-up. These alternate versions would be used to promote more of the education on spiritual disciplines so that entry level participants would be more prepared for a mentoring project These resources could be offered when requested by area pastors or conference leadership.

Local Church Mentoring

Based on the success of the spiritual discipline mentorship, a three-phased recommendation came from my experience. Each of these suggestions focuses on the continued expansion of the spiritual disciplines as a practical way to grow spiritually.

PTC continues to be under-educated on what spiritual disciplines are and the significant, positive impact upon one's spirituality that takes place when disciplines are regularly practiced. Any expectation of expanded spiritual growth within youth and young adults requires additional education of three groups in the church beyond the youth and young adults. First, church leaders desperately need to become practioners of spiritual disciplines as a major conduit to spiritual growth. This process can be done by

inviting elders, deacons, deaconesses, Sabbath School teachers and others of influence to enter the spiritual disciplines mentorship. As each group graduates from the mentorship, training can continue through quarterly check-ins with each graduate. As part of this continuing education, at the conclusion of this project the six participants receive an adapted copy of chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this document as well as the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* to help facilitate expansion of mentoring within the youth and young adults. For those in youth and young adult ministry an annual invitation to continue spiritual growth will take place through providing a book that continues growth in the personal practice of spiritual disciplines.

PTC members make up the second group. They continue to need further education in spiritual disciplines to increase familiarity and increase awareness of potential growth. A church wide education in the value and purpose of spiritual disciplines would provide a healthier foundation for future mentorships. Creating a stronger foundation includes regular inclusion of the disciplines in sermons, practical small groups about the practice of spiritual disciplines, and continued mentorships advancing the practice of spiritual disciplines. This process began in 2019 with a series of sermons on classical spiritual disciplines.

The third group of people are the parents of youth and young adults. Without parental understanding of spiritual disciplines, a youth's spiritual growth is jeopardized. This project did not focus on the parental role, but the significant influence parents have upon their children will impact the success of a youth leader's mentoring. While conceptually a result of this project, transition from mentee to mentor was not included in the project.

A second phase of continued expansion of the spiritual discipline mentorship comes by involving other ministry leadership within the church. At the conclusion of this project, I started a 10-month mentorship in the practice of spiritual disciplines among the elders of the Peachtree City Adventist Church. An annual invitation to the Peachtree City Adventist Church leadership will develop spiritual growth through the mentorship experience. The long-range concept sees church leaders becoming spiritual discipline practitioners, themselves mentoring church members of the Peachtree City Adventist Church.

The third phase shifts the spiritual development from taking place after selection as a leader, and introduces the healthy practice of spiritual disciplines growing spirituality prior to invitation into leadership. Based on God's calling of Joshua, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit took place prior to God announcing to Moses of Joshua's calling to leadership. This same concept can take place when current spiritually equipped leaders mentor church members.

Conference Mentoring

The conference utilization of this mentorship through the various training events throughout the year offers lay leaders throughout the conference the opportunity to learn about spiritual disciplines and spiritual growth. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference currently hosts annual training opportunities for elders, youth leaders, and young adult leaders. These three leadership trainings provide the key venue for instruction, which could reach nearly any leadership team in a local church and conference.

As a member of the Young Adult Leadership Committee of the conference, I intend to begin by offering my service to begin mentoring six to eight young adult leaders

throughout the conference. As young adult leaders are equipped in the practice of spiritual disciplines, they in turn can continue to exponentially equip other young adult leaders.

Over my years of ministry in Georgia-Cumberland Conference, I have spent a significant amount of time involved directly with youth ministry at the local church and conference level. Once the equipping of young adult leaders has developed, I see the natural next step to be expansion to youth ministry leaders within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

In time, I see the conference's Georgia-Cumberland Adventist Elders Consortium as an effective connection to begin equipping elders throughout Georgia-Cumberland. Georgia-Cumberland Adventist Elders Consortium is a lay led initiative within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference focused on the equipping and spiritual growth of local church elders. As mentoring leaders becomes more developed, equipping elders with spiritual disciplines expands spiritual growth in Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Final Statement

This project has provided great personal insights into the importance of spiritual disciplines in the process of spiritual formation. As youth and young adult leaders learned and practiced the disciplines, they discovered being in the presence of God. The realization that greater education of lay church members was needed on what disciplines are and their importance to the Christian life has changed my approach to sermon topics, Bible studies and mentoring. Assisting the spiritual growth of leaders is possible, as seen in youth and young adult leaders of the PTC, through mentoring in the practice of spiritual disciplines.

APPENDIX A

PEACHTREE CITY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision

We are a thriving faith community bound together by a desire to be like Christ, genuinely demonstrating GOD'S extravagant love and compassion for humanity. We are known for education, whole person wellness and serving others. We accept people where they are as children of God and desire for them the vibrant life that Christ provides, now and forever.

Mission

Our Mission is to invite our community into a redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ, welcoming people from all walks of life to experience unconditional acceptance within a loving church family.

APPENDIX B

COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1 – Basic Demographics of Coweta County, Fayette County, State of Georgia and United States Est. 2017

Location	Est. Population Increase 2010-2017	Bachelor Degree or Greater (age 25+) 2012-2016	Median Owner-Occupied House 2012-2016	Median Household Income 2012-2016	Poverty Est. 2016
Coweta County	12.4%	28.1%	$182,300	$65,244	9.9%
Fayette County	5.6%	45.8%	$240,200	$81,689	6.0%
Georgia State	7.6%	30.3%	$184,700	$51,037	16.0%
United States	5.5%	29.4%	$152,400	$53,322	12.7%

Table 2 – Racial Diversity of Coweta and Fayette Counties 2017 Est.

Location	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino
Coweta County	71.1%	18.3%	7.1%
Fayette County	62.4%	23.6%	7.4%
Georgia State	52.8%	32.2%	9.6%
United States	60.7%	13.4%	18.1%

APPENDIX C

JESUS MENTORING DISCIPLES

Jesus' three-year mentorship of the disciples provides the most complex and descriptive mentoring of spiritual disciplines mentioned in the New Testament. Due to the extensiveness of the Gospels' description of the mentoring, this section examines only a few key generalities. Jesus began by inviting individuals to "follow me" (Matt. 4:19, Mark 1:17, Luke 5:11 and John 1:43). He did not start by asking them to lead but rather follow. While following Jesus, the disciples witnessed Christ's prayer life (Mark1:35-37 and Luke 9:18). They heard Jesus preach about the meaning of following (Matt. 5-7). Mark 6:7 described, "Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits." Luke 9:1-2 described the power Jesus gave the disciples, "He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." The disciples saw supernatural miracles like feeding thousands of hungry people (Matt. 14:13-21 and 15:29-38). Jesus did not just ask the disciples to follow; He introduced them to the Spirit that empowered Him to work such miracles. He invited them to enter into His practice of spiritual disciplines that prepared each of them to experience a personal relationship with God. This experience of developing a personal relationship with the Father through the Spirit continued even after His ascension (Acts 1-2). After his resurrection Jesus invited the disciples, as Moses invited Joshua, to enter into leadership, having been prepared through the mentoring in spiritual disciplines. The

disciples had far from the smoothest experience. Peter disowned Him, Judas committed

suicide after betraying Him, all the disciples fled the garden in self-preservation. Yet,

even in the disciples' failures, Jesus equipped them with a personal experience, as well as

a personal experience with the Father. Spiritual disciplines are the collective practices

that place humanity in a place to experience Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Father.

The Invitation

The Gospels do not provide any indication that the disciples, chosen by Jesus held

any previous experience that would have given them any advantage in the selection

process. Matthew and Mark both suggested that as Jesus "walked" he "saw" and "called"

(Matt. 4:18 and Mark 1:16). Over the time of Christ's ministry on earth many disciples

chose to quit following, yet twelve continued to follow Christ up to his arrest.

The Practice

As the disciples followed Jesus, they witnessed the spiritual disciplines Jesus

practiced. The disciples would find Jesus away from the crowds spending time in prayer.

These times of prayer offered Jesus opportunities to direct and mentor the disciples. On

one occasion Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?" (Luke 9:18). On another occasion

having witnessed Jesus praying alone, the disciples approached Jesus asking, "Lord,

teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

Another discipline that the disciples routinely saw Jesus practice was that of

preaching. The longest sermon in the scripture Matthew 5-7 Christ preached to the

disciples (Matt 5:1). After having witnessed numerous sermons, Jesus invited the

disciples to begin preaching "the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:2).

In addition to preaching, Jesus shared other outward focused disciplines with the disciples, "power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1). While in sending out the twelve disciples, there was no direct mention of the spirit being given to the disciples, the description of "power and authority" suggested the giving of the Holy Spirit's power. While the disciples received power to heal, Luke 9:37-43 showed the disciples could not cast out all demons with their current level of spirituality. Mark wrote an additional detail that explained the reason, Jesus said, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29). The disciples had witnessed nine thousand people being fed from next to nothing (Matt. 14:13-21 and 15:29-38). Even with entering into Jesus' personal spiritual disciplines, the disciples showed they needed their own personal continuous connection to God. In the garden as Jesus prayed, the disciples slept even though Jesus directly asked them to pray at that moment (Luke 22:39-45). No amount of prayer from Jesus could replace the disciples' personal prayers. Clearly as the disciples fled (Matt. 26:56) and Peter disowned Jesus (Luke 22:54-62), they were not ready to be the leaders. They had not accepted the responsibility to be connected to God.

The Lead

Following Christ's death and resurrection, the disciples who had already been called to be apostles finally recognized the meaning of being fill with the spirit. The disciples, Jesus "designated apostles" (Luke 6:13) before his death, accepted God's calling following his ascension (Acts 2:5-12). What changed? "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). Until the disciples entered a clear mindset for God to speak, they did not recognize the fullness of God's calling to be apostles.

The invitation to be apostles continued beyond the first eleven by following Jesus' instructions, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you and surely I am will you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus invited the disciples to "follow me," become apostles, and to stay connected by following Christ' example. The Holy Spirit never left. Through mentoring spiritual disciplines, disciples were given tools to place themselves before God. Once the experience the presence of God, they naturally will develop the next disciples.

APPENDIX D

Na'ar

Within the book of Exodus, *na'ar* was used four times. Exodus 10:9 used the word as the opposite of *zaqen* (H2205), old men, and, in Exodus 24:5, "*na'ar ben*" described "young sons" (Gesenius et al., 1979)**.** A broader examination of *na'ar* lends a larger set of meanings. In identification of age or development of a person, the etymology of *n'rn,* root of *na'ar,* suggests the reaching of puberty and the voice change, the roar or growl of the vocal changes. Egyptian writings borrowed the Canaanite *n'rn* to refer to a specialized military force raised in Pharaoh's court. Of the 239 times *na'ar* is used in the Old Testament, 100 of them refer to the parent-child relationship (Botterwick, Ringren, & Fabry, 1998).

While an exact age grouping cannot be assigned to *na'ar*, it "always stands in contrast to *zaqen"* (Betterwick, Ringren, & Fabry, 1998**,** p. 480**)**. Genesis 21:8-21 identified Ishmael as being *na'ar*, depending upon his mother, Hagar, for survival. Multiple occurrences of *na'ar*, 1 Samuel 1:22, 1 Kings 14:3,17, Isaiah 8:4 & Isaiah 65:16-25, identified the youthfulness of the described. Within the Biblical wisdom texts, Proverbs 7:7, 22; 22:6,15; 23:13, *na'ar* described the "immaturity and dependence" (p. 482**)**. While *na'ar* in other Biblical locations (1 Samuel 21:2-10, 22:2; 25:13, 2 Samuel 18:15) referenced a person training in the art of war, there does not seem to be a suggestive reference of this type of meaning in the Moses-Joshua narrative. A collective image of servant–assistant was seen in multiple settings: 1 Samuel 9:1, 3; Numbers

22:22; & Judges 17:11. Botterwick, Ringren and Fabry suggested the servant in a "cultic function" or an assistant to a political religious leader was the most likely description of Exodus 33:11 (p. 843).

APPENDIX E

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Summary of Developmental Theories

"When examining developmental theories through the lens of scripture, one discovers that all have, to some degree, neglected the power, presence and work of the Holy Spirit" (Sharp, 2006, p. 36). A comparison of the classic human development theories, cognition, intellectual, sociocultural, psychosocial, moral, conditioning and learning, show that during teenage and young adult years great transitions take place in the mind and body. According to Tirri and Quinn (2010), only 20% of youth 12 to 22 years of age are purposeful, meaning they have a goal to make the world a better place.

Both Piaget's *Cognitive Development* and Erikson's *Psychosocial Development* of teenagers correspond to the spirituality exploration described by Gillespie and Fowler (Appendix G). Piaget's theory placed teenagers' cognitive development at the *formal operational* stage. McLeod described Piaget's theory *inferential reasoning* that allows a young person to reason something out without manipulation (McLeod, 2009). In Erikson's psychosocial development of a teenager's *identity vs. role confusion,* a teenager begins to consider future aspirations, beliefs and occupations through lenses of peers and role models. Pavlon and Skinner both saw conditioning impacted the development of adolescence (Huffman, 2003) Parents and youth leaders can play a critical role by either encouraging exploration or suppressing it and creating role confusion (University of Iowa, 2007).

As they transition to young adults, the most important transition is in their relationships (Sharkey, 1997; Huitt, 2008). As local churches explore the ever-shrinking youth and young adult involvement, realization that openness and developing trust is important to youth and young adults. Openness and trust enhance community and prevents isolation (Barna, September 2013).

Kohlberg identified that teenage moral development was built on right behavior, keeping rules, and maintaining social order. Young adults transition into a stage of *social contracts*. Bandura's Social and Cognitive theory (Huffman, 2003) identified observational learning and social learning as impacting the moral transition. Individual rights and standards become more important than an imposed idea. Changing the laws is a reactionary response to having varying standards blended together from the surrounding society (Crain, 2014). Vygostky's Sociocultural theory "Emphasizes the influence of social interactions and language" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010, p. 45). Friendships and social norms become as critical in decision-making as moral views of right and wrong.

APPENDIX F

DEVELOPMENTAL COMPARISON

Table

Developmental Comparison

Developmental Comparison					
Age	Piaget's Cognitive	Erikson's Psychosocial	Kohlberg's Moral	Fowler's Faith	Gillespie's Faith
Infant	Sensorimotor Stage	Trust vs Mis-trust	Punishment Obedience		
Toddler	Sensorimotor Stage	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Punishment Obedience		
Pre-School	Pre-operational Stage	Initiative vs Guilt	Instrumental Relativist	Intuitive Projective	Borrowed Faith
Grade-School	Concrete Operational Stage	Industry vs Inferiority	Good Boy/ Nice Girl	Mythic-Literal	Borrowed Faith
Middle-School	Formal Operational Stage	Identity vs Role Confusion	Law & Order	Mythic-Literal	Reflected Faith
Teenager	Formal Operational Stage	Identity vs Role Confusion	Social Contract Orientation	Synthetic – Conventional	Personalized Faith
Young Adult	Formal Operational Stage	Intimacy vs Isolation	Universal Ethical	Individuative – Reflective	Established Faith
Mid-Life	Formal Operational Stage	Generativity vs Stagnation	Universal Ethical	Conjunctive	Reordered Faith/ Reflective Faith
Elders	Formal Operational Stage	Integrity vs Despair	Universal Ethical	Universalizing	Resolute Faith

APPENDIX G

FOWLER AND GILLESPIE'S COMPARISON

Johnston (2009) identified Fowler's (1981) first two stages pre-stage and pre-school as foundation setting in Fowler's theory. Johnston defined these two stages as egocentric/lawless. As a child enters school, his faith enters the mythic-literal faith stage. At this time, one's known world expands, as does the imaginative process. The child begins putting a story together that is his very literal story. In Christian terms, the Divine is understood to form a child's character. Sharp (2006) suggested that developmental theories fail to accept the influence of the divine upon the character. Caldwell (2013) identified, "A reality of the life of many parents today is that many are not comfortable or at home with finding their way into the Bible" (p. 250). At this point, a child's faith is very literal or concrete. Johnston (2009) pointed out that in this stage others are wrong if they do not have similar faith. Not until the end of this stage is there an awareness of other faith options.

Fowler's third stage, synthetic-conventional faith, corresponds to Gillespie's personalized faith. Fowler (1981) described the individual as having the "ability to reflect upon one's thinking" (p. 152). As the most common stage for teenagers and potential stagnation point for adults, Fowler described stage three participants as "not having a sure enough grasp on its own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective" (p. 173). An individual within this stage of development can consider one's beliefs but repeatedly needs direction from someone who has a greater understanding. Smith and Denton (2005) found 61% of teens depend on non-parental

adult relationships for spiritual formation support. Sharp (2006) stated, "Adult youth ministry leaders are an important factor in the development of an adolescent's faith" (p. 5). Based on the significance of their role, adults leading teenagers need more refined faith development than personalized faith.

The establishment of identity and faith in young adults Fowler termed individuative-reflective faith. Fowler (1981) would suggest individuative-reflective faith translates their meaning into conceptual prose, which can bring a sense of loss, dislocation, grief and even guilt (p. 180). Without disillusion they are unable to, as Kelliher (2011) described, "Make room for a consciously chosen, personalized belief system of explicit meaning" (para. 17). Pew Research (2012) identified that nearly twenty percent of adults claimed no religious association. Gillespie (1988) defined this stage as established faith. It is in this stage that a young person will seek out a faith they can accept.

The last two faith stages for both Fowler and Gillespie develop in older individuals. Those who attain these stages offer youth and young adult spiritually wise mentor-leaders who can manage the internal and exterior diversity and spirituality of millennials and Generation Z. Individuals reaching conjunctive faith synthesize personal belief from various influences without having one's faith destroyed. Gillespie used the term *reordered* to express a concept of a faith that can re-prioritize beliefs as one is introduced to other faith-based systems. Universalizing faith is the final stage and is rarely reached. It is where faith can be seen as lived out in the actions on the individual (Johnston, 2009). Individuals at this level reach a state of living faith. Gillespie used the term resolute, which describes the comfort level of faith that does not demand others to

comply with individual faith experience.

APPENDIX H

SEVEN POINTS

Simon's first point that youth and young adults value authentic relationships was supported in a *USA Today* article (Sand, 2013). Sand pointed out that college students who maintain their religion in college are twice as likely to have an adult friend in the church. Authentic relationships function as a type of spiritual mentoring.

Simon's (2006) second point identified millennials and Generation Z's love of storytelling. Martin (2014) found through qualitative research that millennials valued sharing personal experiences. In a millennial's life, adults have the opportunity to mentor spiritual disciplines through sharing personal narratives. Lanker (2010) saw this taking place most effectively with millennials and Generation Z through natural occurrences that can take place within the church.

In Simon's (2006) third point, he reminded readers of millennials' dislike of religious entities such as denominations that look phony. Pew Research Center (2012) reported 32% of adults under thirty have no religious affiliation. Evans (2013) colorfully stated it for CNN, "Having been advertised to our whole lives, we millennials have highly sensitive BS meters, and we're not easily impressed with consumerism or performances" (para. 11). White (2014) referenced a 2008 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) that showed 15% of Americans claim no religious identity. There no longer seems to be a separation between the local congregation and the greater

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denomination. The action of both the local congregation and the denomination produce a serious challenge to the credibility of the spirituality of the church. Parents and non-parental adults have a great challenge to now restore the validity of spirituality within Christianity. Belsterling (2006) pointed to Jesus' way of personal relationships with each disciple as a practical application to overcome the division between the organized church and youth and young adults.

The fourth point for Simon (2006) said that youth and young adults appreciate the primary experience of life. Martin (2009) described it, "Leaders who are willing to be authentic offer young adults a price-less opportunity for rich relationships" (p. 52). Lanker (2010) shared, "non-parental adults that can be infused into their lives the more formation into the image of Christ is possible" (p. 274-275). Mentoring that takes a form of real-life experiences reflects the desire to see Christianity lived in the day-to-day realities.

Simon's (2006) fifth point brought out that millennials dislike hierarchal authority structures. Kinnaman (2011) in his landmark book *You Lost Me*, pointed to the shift in how millennials determine authority. They no longer assume a position or a ranking gives one authority. The church structure and previous generations expected parishioners to give respect to pastors and elders because of positions held. Without earned respect the positions of leadership become tyrannical in the minds of millennials and Generation Z. Youth and young adults desire to recognize and accept the authority of leaders but refuse to follow blindly without regard for a leader's day-to-day practices. Belsterling (2006) pointed out how Jesus lived out in the lives of the disciples by being "readily available."

The sixth point for Simon (2006) showed that millennials and Generation Z

question everything. Going (2009) described, "We see development as given by God for the purpose of drawing us nearer to God, each stage providing us with unique learning about the nature of God to be absorbed and integrated into our very selves and faith providing momentum for psychological growth" (p. 52). This goes against the traditional Christian church's declaration of absolutes that do not need explanation, let alone questioning. Kinnaman (2011) believed that for millennials the current educational process, to ask questions, has been engrained in them as the process of learning, even at church. Considering the extensive acceptance of absolutes within the theological development of Christianity, generations asking questions became an adversary to the Christian tradition. The very Christians who embraced and encouraged the educational process of asking questions now see the questioning as a threat to Christianity. Fowler's (1981) faith development recognized skepticism as a natural development.

Simon's (2006) final point brings out that millennials prefer chaordic mental processing. This process provides for chaos and order to be allowed, not only to co-exist, but to also blend together. In the reviewed developmental theories (Appendix E), individuals reached a place of realizing that all of life cannot be explained in absolutes. In an era of asking questions Csinos and Beckwith (2014) challenged Christianity's struggles to embrace the role of open questioning, yet its desperate need to entertain questions. Lottes (2005) suggested mentoring individuals in the practice of spiritual discipline prepares and places one in a setting to mature in spirituality (Fowler, 1981 & Gillespie, 1998). Even though youth may not be spiritually developed to fully experience the fullness of the practice of spiritual disciplines, the routine and repetition prepares them for maturing that takes place.

ASSESSMENT

Peachtree City Spiritual Growth Assessment

This survey is a partial completion of Nathaniel Elias' doctorate of ministry project through Andrews University.

Page one of this survey asks general questions about the general demographics and involvement within the local Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist church.

Page two and three of this survey will examine the spiritual growth of the Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church. The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* is a product of LifeWay.

General Demographic and Involvement Assessment
Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church

Please circle the corresponding answer the best describes you.

1. My age is: (Under 13)   (19-35)   (35-50)   (50 >)
2. My gender is: (male)   (female)
3. I attend Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church   (4 or > times/month)   (2-3 times/month)   (1 time/month)   (> 1 time/month)
4. I attend Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church 10am Sabbath School Class: (4 or > times/month)   (2-3 times/month)   (1 time/month)   (> 1 time/month)
5. I am a: (member of PTC SDA) (regular attending guest) (planning to join PTC SDA)

Spiritual Growth Assessment Process

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Spiritual Growth Assessment

As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing. Listen for God's voice to encourage and challenge you. Consider this experience as one-on-one time with Him. Be intentional in your growth towards Christlikeness. Use the scale below to respond to each statement.

Never - 1   Seldom - 2   Occasionally - 3   Frequent - 4   Always - 5

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	RESPONSE
ABIDE IN CHRIST	
1. I practice a regular quiet time and look forward to that time with Christ.	
2. When making choices, I seek Christ's guidance first.	
3. My relationship with Christ is motivated more by love than duty or fear.	
4. I experience life change as a result of my worship experiences.	
5. When God makes me aware of His specific will in an area of my life, I follow His leading.	
6. I believe Christ provides the only way for a relationship with God.	
7. My actions demonstrate a desire to build God's kingdom rather than my own.	
8. Peace, contentment, and joy characterize my life rather than worry and anxiety.	
9. I trust Christ to help me through any problem or crisis I face.	
10. I remain confident of God's love and provision during difficult times.	
Abide in Christ Total	
LIVE IN THE WORD	
1. I regularly read and study my Bible.	
2. I believe the Bible is God's Word and provides His instructions for life.	
3. I evaluate cultural ideas and lifestyles by biblical standards.	
4. I can answer questions about life and faith from a biblical perspective.	
5. I replace impure or inappropriate thoughts with God's truth.	
6. I demonstrate honesty in my actions and conversation.	
7. When the Bible exposes an area of my life needing change, I respond to make things right.	
8. Generally, my public and private self are the same	
9. I use the Bible as the guide for the way I think and act.	
10. I study the Bible for the purpose of discovering truth for daily living.	
Live By God's Word Total	
PRAY IN FAITH	
1. My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs.	
2. I trust God to answer when I pray and wait patiently on His timing.	
3. My prayers include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and requests.	
4. I expect to grow in my prayer life and intentionally seek help to improve.	
5. I spend as much time listening to God as talking to Him.	
6. I pray because I am aware of my complete dependence on God for everything in my life.	
7. Regular participation in group prayer characterizes my prayer life.	
8. I maintain an attitude of prayer throughout each day.	
9. I believe my prayers impact my life and the lives of others.	
10. I engage in a daily prayer time.	
Pray In Faith Total	

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FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS	
1. I forgive others when their actions harm me.	
2. I admit my errors in relationships and humbly seek forgiveness from the one I've hurt.	
3. I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for spiritual growth.	
4. I seek to live in harmony with other members of my family.	
5. I place the interest of others above my self-interest.	
6. I am gentle and kind in my interactions with others.	
7. I encourage and listen to feedback from others to help me discover areas for relationship growth.	
8. I show patience in my relationships with family and friends.	
9. I encourage others by pointing out their strengths rather than criticizing their weaknesses.	
10. My time commitments demonstrate that I value relationships over work/career/hobbies.	
Build Godly Relationships Total	

WITNESS TO THE WORLD	
1. I share my faith in Christ with non-believers.	
2. I regularly pray for non-believers I know.	
3. I make my faith known to my neighbors and/or fellow employees.	
4. I intentionally maintain relationships with non-believers in order to share my testimony.	
5. When confronted about my faith, I remain consistent and firm in my testimony.	
6. I help others understand how to effectively share a personal testimony.	
7. I make sure the people I witness to get the follow-up and support needed to grow in Christ.	
8. I encourage my church and friends to support mission efforts.	
9. I am prepared to share my testimony at any time.	
10. My actions demonstrate a belief in and commitment to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).	
Witness To The World Total	

MINISTER TO OTHERS	
1. I understand my spiritual gifts and use those gifts to serve others.	
2. I serve others expecting nothing in return.	
3. I sacrificially contribute my finances to help others in my church and community.	
4. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.	
5. Meeting the needs of others provides a sense of purpose in my life.	
6. I share biblical truth with those I serve as God gives opportunity.	
7. I act as if other's needs are as important as my own.	
8. I expect God to use me every day in His kingdom work.	
9. I regularly contribute time to a ministry at my church.	
10. I help others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry.	
Minister To Others Total	

Your Discipleship Wheel

For a visual representation of your spiritual assessment complete the following steps:

Step One: On the dotted line in each discipline section of the circle plot a point corresponding to your total score for that discipline. Place similar points on the solid lines to the immediate right and left of each dotted line.

Step Two: Connect the plotted points with curved lines similar to the lines of the circle.

Step Three: Using a pencil or marker shade the areas in each section between the lines you drew and the center of the circle. The shaded areas reveal your personal discipleship wheel at this point in your spiritual journey.

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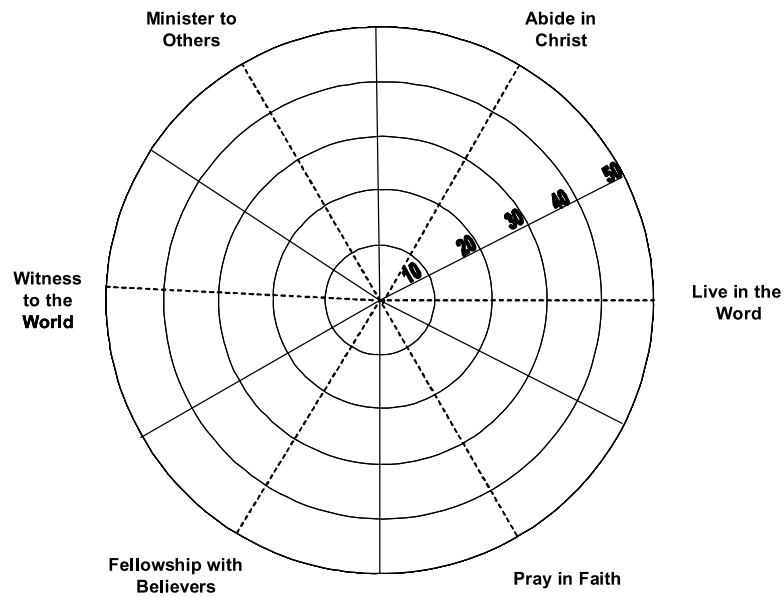
Practice these things; be committed to them,
so that your progress may be evident to all.
1 Timothy 4:15 HCSB

Step Four: Ask yourself these questions:

1. Which areas have the most shading? At this point in your spiritual journey, you see these as the strongest elements of your spiritual growth. List below one benefit these strengths bring to

    a. You personally: _____

    b. Your family: _____

    c. Your church: _____

    d. Your community: _____

2. Which areas have the least shading? At this point in your spiritual journey you see these as the elements needing the most improvement. List below one reward growth in these disciplines would bring to:

    a. You personally: _____

    b. Your family: _____

    c. Your church: _____

    d. Your community: _____

Step Five: Make specific plans to grow spiritually this next year. Complete the **Annual Spiritual Growth Plan.**

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Recommended Actions for Spiritual Growth Guide

The following actions can help you complete your annual intentional plan for your spiritual growth. See these as suggestions to get you started rather than as a list of the only possibilities. Trust God to guide you in your choices. The key to growth will be His work in you as you intentionally seek His kingdom first. The administrative guide *Discipleship: God's Life Changing Work* provides recommendations for small group studies related to each discipline. Download this guide at www.lifeway.com/discipleship.

Abide in Christ

1. Attend a corporate worship experience weekly.
2. Set aside a specific time and location for a regular quiet time.
3. Establish a practice of worship preparation through prayer and confession.
4. Learn about biblical fasting.
5. Practice fasting as the Lord directs.
6. Learn about your identity in Christ.
7. Regularly thank God and give Him praise in all situations.
8. Make a list of things that hinder your spiritual growth and seek God's help to remove those hindrances.

Live in the Word

1. Memorize one Scripture verses each week.
2. Memorize passages of Scripture.
3. Take notes from the pastor's sermon and other Bible study experiences each week. Evaluate how the study applies to your life.
4. Establish a regular time for personal Bible study. Take notes from the study and evaluate how the biblical truth applies to your life.
5. Use commentaries and other study resources to enrich Bible study.
6. Read one chapter from the Bible each day. Discover one action required and do it.
7. Read one chapter from the Bible each day. Meditate on the character of God described in the chapter.
8. Participate in an ongoing small group Bible study.
9. Accept a Bible teaching position in your church.
10. Lead a small group study related to living by God's Word.

Pray in Faith

1. Participate in the prayer ministry of your church.
2. Enlist a prayer partner and meet regularly for prayer.
3. Journal your prayers and record God's answers.
4. Organize a prayer ministry for your church or small group.
5. Lead a small group study related to praying in faith.
6. Pray each day.

Fellowship with Believers

1. Ask family members to identify ways you can improve your relationships with each one.
2. Ask friends to identify ways you can improve your relationships with each one.
3. Make a list of people who have hurt you and ask God for help to forgive them.

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4. Participate in an ongoing small group to build relationships with other believers.
5. Complete an individual study related to building godly relationships in your marriage. Attend a retreat or workshop on parenting.
6. Attend a retreat or workshop on marriage.
7. Lead a small group study related to building godly relationships in marriage.
8. Lead a small group study related to building godly relationships as a parent.
9. Lead a small group study related to building godly relationships with others.

Witness to the World

1. Write your testimony and practice sharing it with another believer.
2. Secure several gospel tracts and distribute them as the Lord leads.
3. Learn to share your testimony without using printed support.
4. Make a list of non-believers you know and begin praying regularly for their salvation.
5. Begin building relationships with the non-believers on your street.
6. Begin building relationships with non-believers at work.
7. Invite an unchurched friend to worship or Bible study.
8. Include a specific missions focus in your prayers.
9. Share your testimony as God provides the opportunity.
10. Participate in an evangelistic missions experience.
11. Lead a small group study related to witnessing to the world.
12. With your accountability partner list places you visit in a normal week. Brainstorm creative ways of witnessing to the people you regularly see at these places.

Minister to Others

1. Complete a spiritual gifts inventory. Download a spiritual gifts inventory at www.lifeway.com/downloads.
2. Volunteer for a ministry in your church where you can use your spiritual gifts, interests, and natural abilities.
3. Send encouragement notes to your church staff.
4. Visit one homebound person each week.
5. Look for new baby bows on mailboxes in your neighborhood. Send a note of congratulations and drop off a gift or meal.
6. Volunteer to baby sit for a single parent in your church to give them a night out each month.
7. Volunteer to serve meals at a local shelter.
8. Volunteer to tutor students or help in a classroom at a local school.
9. Ask a member of your church staff to help you discover ways to minister to people on your street. For example, hold a small group meeting in your home quarterly to discuss topics such as marriage and parenting.
10. Lead a small group study related to ministering to others.

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APPENDIX J

PROMOTION OF MENTORING

Bulletin and Church Newsletter Announcement:
Spiritual Discipline Mentorship Opportunity: Are you a youth or young adult leader?
Pastor Nate Elias is providing a special 10–month mentorship opportunity that will
explore spiritual disciplines as a valuable tool in personal spiritual growth as well as
equipping for leading youth and young adults. If you are interested in more details
contact Pastor Nate.

Church Announcement (verbal):

Pastor Nate as part of his doctoral studies is providing an opportunity for 6-8 youth and
(or) young adult leaders to participate in a 10-month mentorship. This mentorship will
focus on the valuable growth that can be experienced through the guided practice of
Spiritual Disciplines. If you are interested in participating in this mentorship please
contact Pastor Nate.

Personal Invitation:

I would like to have you as part of the group of youth and young adult leaders for my
doctoral mentorship study. It is a 10-month experience that will include four 1-hour
group sessions and four 1-hour individualized sessions over the next ten months. The
focus of these sessions will be to explore and practice spiritual disciplines as a way to
personal spiritual growth. Would you be interested in being part of the 10-month
mentorship? The emphasis is on self-discovery of the usefulness of spiritual disciplines as
practices that growth one's growth.

CONSENT FORMS

Andrews University
Peachtree City SDA Church Leadership Mentoring
General Informed Consent Form

I am conducting a research study as part of Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church project, in partial fulfillment of my Doctorate in Ministry at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to identify spiritual growth by providing a spiritual discipline mentoring opportunity to the youth and young adult leaders of Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Please read the following details concerning this research study. By signing this document, you are agreeing to participate in Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church research study.

1. I understand that I will be expected to meet eight times over the next ten months January 2017 – October 2017. Four of these sessions will be with the six participants and the project researcher Nathaniel Elias. Four of the sessions will be individualized mentoring sessions with project researcher Nathaniel Elias.

2. I understand that I will have the opportunity to strengthen my personal spirituality through regular intentional exploration of my spiritual health and spiritual growth through the experimentation and practice of various spiritual disciplines.

3. I will be involved in group sessions and individual sessions that may explore topics that bring up discussions that are personal in nature. Each participant and researcher, Nathaniel Elias, expects a code of confidentiality.

4. I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am aware that there is no penalty or loss of benefit I'm entitled to if I decide to discontinue my participation in this study.

5. I understand that the confidentiality of each participant is important to the successfulness of this research study. To help with confidentiality there will be no audio recordings or filing of any sessions. Researcher, Nathaniel Elias will be keeping written notes of each session, which will be transferred to his computer following each session. I understand that my identity in this study will not be disclosed in any published document.

6. I understand that I can contact research Advisor Marc Woodson marc.woodson@nccsda.com or Nathaniel Elias pastornateelias@gmail.com for answers to questions related to this study. I can also contact the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University at 269-471-6361.

I have read this Informed Consent Form in its entirety. My questions concerning this study have been answered. I hereby give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____

Signature (Participant)   Date

_____   _____

Researcher Signature   Date

Andrews University
Peachtree City SDA Church Leadership Mentoring
Parent Informed Consent Form

Nathaniel (Nate) Elias is conducting a research study as part of Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church project, in partial fulfillment of his Doctorate in Ministry at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to identify spiritual growth by providing a spiritual discipline mentoring opportunity to the youth and young adult leaders of Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Please read the following details concerning this research study. By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your child to participate in Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church research study.

1. I understand that my child will be expected to meet eight times over the next ten months January 2017 – October 2017. Four of these sessions will be with the six participants and the project researcher Nathaniel Elias. Four of the sessions will be individualized mentoring sessions with project researcher Nathaniel Elias.

2. I understand that my child will have the opportunity to strengthen his/her personal spirituality through regular intentional exploration of his/her spiritual health and spiritual growth through the experimentation and practice of various spiritual disciplines.

3. My child will be involved in group sessions and individual sessions that may explore topics that bring up discussions that are personal in nature. Each participant and researcher, Nathaniel Elias, expects a code of confidentiality.

4. I understand that my child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am aware that there is no penalty or loss of benefit he/she is entitled to if he/she decides to discontinue participation in this study.

5. I understand that the confidentiality of each participant is important to the successfulness of this research study. To help with confidentiality there will be no audio recordings of any sessions. Researcher, Nathaniel Elias will be keeping written notes of each session, which will be transferred to his computer following each session. I understand that my child's identity in this study will not be disclosed in any published document.

6. I understand that I can contact research Advisor Marc Woodson marc.woodson@nccsda.com or Nathaniel Elias pastornateelias@gmail.com for answers to questions related to this study. I can also contact the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University at 269-471-6361.

I have read this Informed Consent Form in its entirety. My questions concerning this study have been answered. I hereby give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

I am the parent/ legal guardian of (_____). I give permission to my child to participate in this research study.

_____   _____

Signature (Parent)   Date

_____   _____

Researcher Signature   Date

Andrews University

Peachtree City SDA Church Leadership Mentoring
Student Informed Consent Form

Nathaniel (Nate) Elias is conducting a research study as part of Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church project, in partial fulfillment of my Doctorate in Ministry at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to identify spiritual growth by providing a spiritual discipline mentoring opportunity to the youth and young adult leaders of Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Please read the following details concerning this research study. By signing this document, you are agreeing to participate in Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church research study.

1. I understand that I will be expected to meet eight times over the next ten months January 2017 – October 2017. Four of these sessions will be with the six participants and the project researcher Nathaniel Elias. Four of the sessions will be individualized mentoring sessions with project researcher Nathaniel Elias.

2. I understand that I will have the opportunity to strengthen my personal spirituality through regular intentional exploration of my spiritual health and spiritual growth through the experimentation and practice of various spiritual disciplines.

3. I will be involved in group sessions and individual sessions that may explore topics that bring up discussions that are personal in nature. Each participant and researcher, Nathaniel Elias, expects a code of confidentiality.

4. I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am aware that there is no penalty or loss of benefit I'm entitled to if I decide to discontinue my participation in this study.

5. I understand that the confidentiality of each participant is important to the successfulness of this research study. To help with confidentiality there will be no audio recordings or filing of any sessions. Researcher, Nathaniel Elias will be keeping written notes of each session, which will be transferred to his computer following each session. I understand that my identity in this study will not be disclosed in any published document.

6. I understand that I can contact research Advisor Marc Woodson marc.woodson@nccsda.com or Nathaniel Elias pastornateelias@gmail.com for answers to questions related to this study. I can also contact the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University at 269-471-6361.

I have read this Informed Consent Form in its entirety. My questions concerning this study have been answered. I hereby give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____
Student Signature (Participant)   Date

_____   _____
Researcher Signature   Date

**Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church
Spiritual Growth Assessment Survey
Cover Letter**

I am conducting a research study as part of Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth and

Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist

Church project, in partial fulfillment of my Doctorate in Ministry at Andrews University,

Berrien Springs, Michigan. Participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to identify spiritual growth by providing a spiritual discipline

mentoring opportunity to the youth and young adult leaders of Peachtree City Seventh-

day Adventist Church. The purpose of this survey is to measure the general spiritual

health of each age group within the church. Your participation in this survey will assist in

creating a benchmark for future research.

By reading this letter and completing the accompanying survey you are consenting

to participating in my research project Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Youth

and Young Adult Leaders through Mentoring at Peachtree City Seventh-day

Adventist Church.

1. I understand that this survey is a one-time anonyms survey. It will take
   approximately twenty minutes to complete.

2. I understand that my participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

3. I understand that my identity in this study will not be disclosed in any published
   documents.

4. I understand that I can contact the research advisor Marc Woodson
   marc.woodson@nccsda.com or Nathaniel Elias pastornateelias@gmail.com with
   any questions regarding this survey or study.

Thank you for your participation,
Nathaniel Elias

APPENDIX L

TIMELINE

Session 1: Group Session 1 - January 2017

Session 2: Individual Session 1 – February and March 2017

Session 3: Individual Session 2 – April 2017

Session 4: Group Session 2 – May 2017

Session 5: Individual Session 3 – June and July 2017

Session 6: Group Session 3 – August 2017

Session 7: Individual Session 4 – September 2017

Session 8: Group Session 4 – October 2017

APPENDIX M

DEMOGRAPHIC AND INVOLVEMENT ASSESSMENT

Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church members and attendees completed

sixty-five surveys (Table 1). The survey looked at the age of each respondent (Table 1),

gender (Table 2), and attendance practices for church (Table 3) and Sabbath school

(Table 4). With the exception of the young adults (ages 19-35), each group returned

assessments based closely to the breakdown of church membership. Based on a detailed

membership analysis conducted in the Spring of 2018, these same age groups were

comprised of twenty-four (13-18), thirty-nine (19-35), forty (35-49), forty-eight (50-64)

and forty-nine (65+). While this analysis took place one year after the project started, the

results do not vary more than two or three members in any one age group.

Table: 1 Complete Surveys by age:

Year of Survey	Age: Under 13	Age: 13-18	Age: 19-35	Age: 36-50	Age: 51+
2017	(7)	(12)	(3)	(14)	(29)
2018	(2)	(16)	(9)	(16)	(24)

Table: 2 Completed Surveys by gender:

Year of Survey	Females	Males
2017	39	26
2018	41	26

Table 3: Group and Collective attendance at church:

Age:	Attendance 4+ times per month 2017/2018	Attendance 2-3 times per month 2017/2018	Attendance 1 time/month 2017/2018	Attendance less than 1 time per month 2017/2018
Less than 13	4/1	3/1	0/0	0/0
13-18	10/12	1/3	0/1	1/0
19-35	3/4	0/2	0/2	0/1
36-50	9/7	4/7	1/2	0/0
51+	19/12	10/9	0/0	0/3
Total (65)/(67)	(45/65) – (35/67)	(18/65) – (22/67)	(1/65) – (5/67)	(1/65) – (4/67)

Table 4: Group and Collective attendance at Sabbath school:

Age:	Attendance 4+ times per month 2017/2018	Attendance 2-3 times per month 2017/2018	Attendance 1 time per month 2017/2018	Attendance less than 1 time per month 2017/2018
Less than 13	2/1	4/1	0/0	1/0
13-18	4/5	3/6	0/1	5/4
19-35	0/0	1/4	1/1	1/4
36-50	8/4	2/4	1/1	3/7
51+	11/6	7/4	2/1	9/13
Total (65)	(25/65) – (16/67)	(17/65) – (19/67)	(4/65) – (4/67)	(19/65) – (28/67)

APPENDIX N

SPIRITUAL GROWTH ASSESSMENT RESULTS

No.	Question	2017 Church Average	2017 13-35 Average	2018 Church Average	2018 13-35 Average
Spiritual Growth Assessment Results					
	Abide in Christ				
1	I practice a regular quiet time and look forward to that time with Christ.	3.64	2.87	3.49	2.92
2	When making choices, I seek Chris's guidance first.	3.94	3.67	3.84	3.28
3	My relationship with Christ is motivated more by love than duty or fear.	4.3	4.0	4.27	3.92
4	I experience life change as a result of my worship experiences.	3.67	3.33	3.79	3.4
5	When God makes me aware of His specific will in an area of my life, I follow His leading.	4.08	3.87	3.96	3.6
6	I believe Christ provides the only way for a relationship with God.	4.77	4.6	4.64	4.48
7	My actions demonstrate a desire to build God's kingdom rather than my own.	4.73	3.6	3.67	3.44
8	Peace, contentment, and joy characterize my life rather than worry and anxiety.	3.62	3.13	4.42	3.0
9	I trust Christ to help me through any problem or crisis I face.	4.52	4.0	4.28	4.08
10	I remain confident of God's love and provision during difficult times.	4.45	3.87	4.24	4.12
Total		**4.17**	**3.69**	**3.96**	**3.62**
	Live in the Word				
1	I regularly read and study my Bible.	3.5	2.8	3.39	2.64
2	I believe the Bible is God's Word and provides His instructions for life.	4.86	4.8	4.73	4.52
3	I evaluate cultural ideas and lifestyles by biblical standards.	3.94	3.67	3.79	3.4
4	I can answer questions about life and faith from a biblical perspective.	3.85	3.8	3.7	3.28
5	I replace impure or inappropriate thoughts with God's truth.	3.89	3.93	3.75	3.52
6	I demonstrate honesty in my actions and conversation.	4.29	4.27	4.15	3.76
7	When the Bible exposes an area of my life needing change, I respond to make things right.	3.89	3.8	3.73	3.48
8	Generally, my public and private self are the same.	3.95	3.53	3.93	3.44
9	I use the Bible as the guide for the way I think and act.	4.02	3.53	3.82	3.16
10	I study the Bible for the purpose of discovering truth for daily living.	3.98	3.4	3.81	3.12
Total		**4.02**	**3.75**	**3.88**	**3.43**
	Pray in Faith				
1	My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs.	3.73	3.53	3.42	3.2

2	I trust God to answer when I pray and wait patiently on His timing.	3.98	3.87	3.73	3.48
3	My prayers include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and requests.	4.52	4.67	4.4	4.16
4	I expect to grow in my prayer life and intentionally seek help to improve.	4.03	3.6	4.1	3.92
5	I spend as much time listening to God as talking to Him.	3.23	3.0	3.25	3.32
6	I pray because I am aware of my complete dependence on God for everything in my life.	4.29	3.87	4.18	3.8
7	Regular participation in group prayer characterizes my prayer life.	2.91	2.67	2.81	2.8
8	I maintain an attitude of prayer throughout each day.	3.58	2.93	3.4	3.12
9	I believe my prayers impact my life and the lives of others.	4.29	4.0	4.15	3.68
10	I engage in a daily prayer time.	4.03	3.67	3.9	3.36
Total		**3.86**	**3.56**	**3.73**	**3.48**
	Fellowship with Believers				
1	I forgive others when their actions harm me.	3.94	3.47	4.03	3.88
2	I admit my errors in relationships and humbly seek forgiveness from the one I've hurt.	3.92	3.73	4.12	4.16
3	I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for spiritual growth.	3.5	3.07	3.52	3.4
4	I seek to live in harmony with other members of my family.	4.55	4.07	4.43	4.2
5	I place the interest of others above my self-interest.	3.86	3.67	3.8	3.72
6	I am gentle and kind in my interactions with others.	3.94	3.6	4.0	3.68
7	I encourage and listen to feedback from others to help me discover areas for relationship growth.	3.82	3.4	3.95	3.92
8	I show patience in my relationships with family and friends.	3.71	3.0	3.8	3.48
9	I encourage others by pointing out their strengths rather than criticizing their weaknesses.	3.73	3.47	3.72	3.48
10	My time commitments demonstrate that I value relationship over work/career/hobbies.	3.71	3.53	3.65	3.56
Total		**3.87**	**3.5**	**3.9**	**3.75**
	Witness to the World				
1	I share my faith in Christ with non-believers.	3.21	3.13	3.14	2.72
2	I regularly pray for non-believers I know.	3.44	3.0	3.52	3.16
3	I make my faith known to my neighbors and/or fellow employees.	3.56	3.33	3.46	3.2
4	I intentionally maintain relationships with non-believers in order to share my testimony.	3.24	3.47	2.8	2.56
5	When confronted about my faith, I remain consistent and firm in my testimony.	4.14	4.07	4.03	3.72
6	I help others understand how to effectively share a personal testimony.	2.67	2.53	2.68	2.48
7	I make sure the people I witness to get the follow-up and support needed to grow in Christ.	2.67	2.87	2.62	2.52
8	I encourage my church and friends to support mission efforts.	3.14	3.27	3.0	2.72
9	I am prepared to share my testimony at any time.	3.53	3.53	3.29	2.88
10	My actions demonstrate a belief in and commitment to the Great Commission.	3.32	3.07	3.35	3.24
Total		**3.29**	**3.23**	**3.19**	**2.92**
	Minister to Others				
1	I understand my spiritual gifts and use those gifts to serve other.	3.73	3.2	3.66	3.52

2	I serve others expecting nothing in return.	4.26	4.13	4.14	3.88
3	I sacrificially contribute my finances to help others in my church and community.	3.62	3.27	3.35	2.76
4	I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.	3.58	3.07	3.58	3.24
5	Meeting the needs of others provides a sense of purpose in my life.	4.8	3.73	3.89	3.6
6	I share biblical truth with those I serve as God gives opportunity.	3.85	3.6	3.49	3.16
7	I act as if other's needs are as important as my own.	4.02	3.8	3.69	3.48
8	I expect God to use me every day in His kingdom work.	4.03	3.67	3.97	3.56
9	I regularly contribute time to a ministry at my church.	3.65	3.33	3.43	3.04
10	I help others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry.	2.82	2.47	2.7	2.44
Total		**3.76**	**3.43**	**3.59**	**3.27**
	Never - 1, Seldom - 2, Occasionally - 3, Frequent - 4, Always - 5				

APPENDIX O

SUMMARY OF EXIT REVIEWS

As part of the final group session, the six participants shared about their experiences during the ten-month mentorship. The review came out of the conversations and did not have any particular structure or defined questions. As I realized that the comments being share during the last session may be valuable to the project, I wrote down some non-specific notes about what was communicated. The following are general thoughts that were expressed during the conversation that concluded the mentoring portion of the project.

All six participants were present at my family's personal residence to conclude the session. During the session each participant shared about the positives and negatives they had experienced while involved in the mentorship. All six of the participants shared how they had grown through their practice of spiritual disciplines. Three of the participants felt that the practice had changed their lives in ways they would not have known about without participating in the mentorship. Two participants discussed how they had never approached reading the Bible devotionally, only in a manner to study. The difference can between devotional reading and study is the largely found in who controls the experience. For Bible study, the person intentionally directs the search while in devotional reading God can provide direction to the words of scripture. The two participants described growing in their encounters and hearing from God because of their new learned practice of devotional reading of the Bible.

One of the frustrations expressed by nearly every participant focused on the struggle to keep consistent in the practice of their chosen disciplines. For two of them, their busy professional careers limited the time they had to add to their spiritual activities. Two others failed to create consistent times of practice of the disciplines. Two of the participants wished for some type of encouraging reminder between the sessions. They felt a month or more between sessions was long enough that they would get out of practice before the next session.

Three of the participants spoke about wanting to continue the discipline mentoring following the conclusion of the project. Of those three, two have taken the personal initiative to continue exploring spiritual disciplines. All six expressed an appreciation for having the opportunity to be part of the project.

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VITA

NAME: Nathaniel (Nate) Eric Elias

BACKGROUND: I was born on June, 1, 1979 in Salt Lake City, Utah and was raised in Montana. My parents home schooled my sister and I in a Seventh-day Adventist home. I became a Seventh-day Adventist church member through baptism at age 15.

Family: I was married July 29, 2001 to Holly Larsen who is from White Bear Lake, MN. We have two daughters, Madalynn (born July 2004) and Abigail (born July 2005).

Education:

2014-Present   D. Min. in Youth & Young Adult Ministry
                   Andrews Theological Seminary

2002-2006   MDiv Emphasis in Youth Ministry
                   Andrews Theological Seminary

1998-2002   B. A. in Theology, Minor in Biblical Languages
                   Union College

Ordination:
April 12, 2008   Ordained by and currently hold ministerial credentials from Georgia Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist.

Experience:

2015-Present   Pastor Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church

2014-2015   Lead Pastor LaGrange & Carrollton Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Youth & Young Adult Pastor Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church

2013-2014   District Pastor LaGrange Seventh-day Adventist Church & Carrollton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2010-2013   District Pastor LaGrange & Pine Mountain Valley Seventh-day Adventist Churches

2007-2009   Associate Pastor Augusta First Seventh-day Adventist Church

2004-2007   Chaplain/Bible Teacher Atlanta Adventist Academy