

Update!

Valuegenesis² information you can use

In this File . . .

- Faith Maturity Index update
 - Prosocial behavior concerns
 - VG¹ vs. VG² - God's guidance
- Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry - La Sierra University and the North American Division Office of Education

Number 1

July, 2001

Faith Maturity Index Update . . .

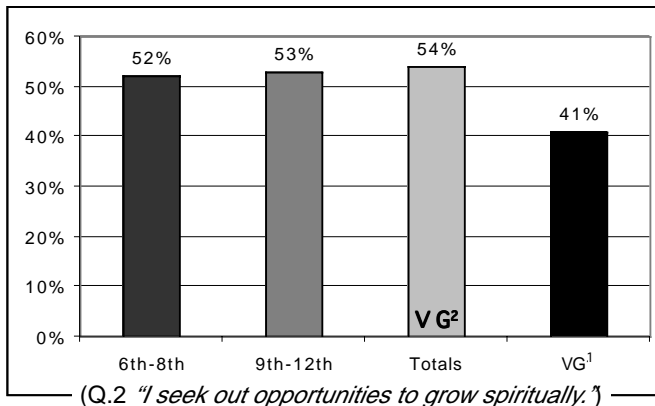
Faith Maturity is a name given for the balance between two scales in the *Valuegenesis²* data. It reflects a blending of a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension—mature faith scores reflects an integration between a rich, close relationship with God (vertical) and care and compassion for others (horizontal).

During the past 10 years since *Valuegenesis¹* was given to students in SDA schools, 6th through 12th grades, there have been a number of significant changes.

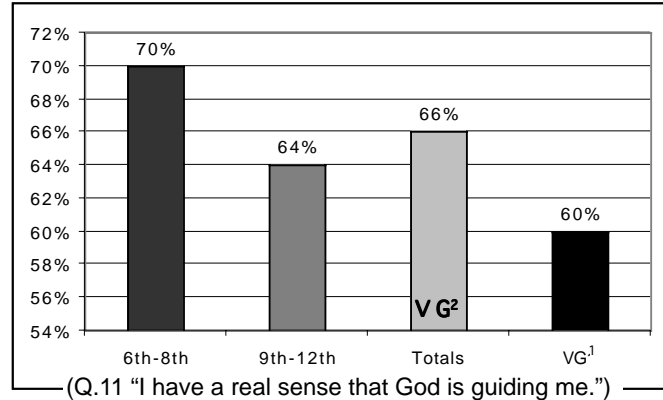
□ Schools are doing a better job exploring the growth of faith as a personal relationship with God. However, at the same time, prosocial behavior (care and compassion for others) continues to be a challenge.

□ The overall numbers haven't changed much, but the configuration of those percentages have. For example:

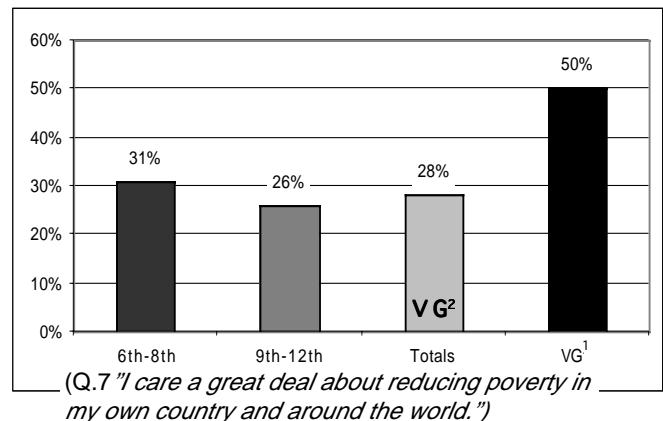
1. Some of the mature faith index scores are higher than they were 10 years ago. Look at the following charts, *Valuegenesis²* totals are in the third column while *Valuegenesis¹* percentages are in the fourth.



2. Here is another good sign. In answering Q.11 in our survey, "I have a real sense that God is guiding me," positive responses increased over the past ten years. The difference on this item is significant. It seems safe to say that more young people in SDA schools feel God's guidance than ever before. Spiritual life is stronger than 10 years ago. There is no question that this generation is a more religious (spiritual) generation!



3. A continuing challenge comes even with more opportunities for involvement in service activities 10 years later, because students' compassionate concerns continue to score low.

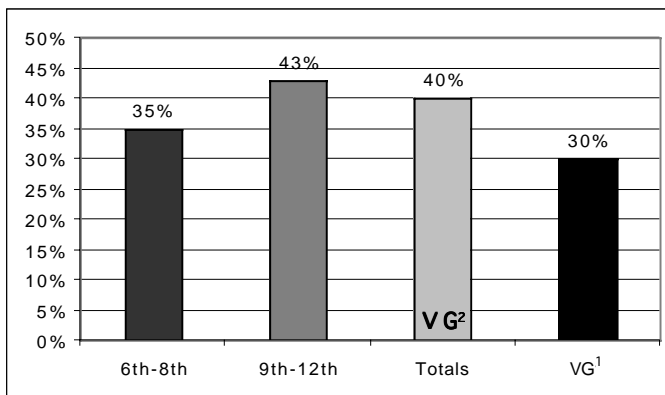


4. The data on commitment argues for a growth over 10 years in the percentage of commitment to Christ. For example, 10 years ago 26% claimed no commitment to Jesus, however now only 11% indicated this now. And it is reflected in the totals for the type of commitment as well. This generation is more committed to Christ.

Commitment Scale	VG ¹	VG ²
Not committed	4	1
Unsure if committed	22	10
At a specific time	13	13
Developed over time	36	44
Committed since youth	25	32

More about Faith Maturity. . .

5. Overall, the faith maturity index scores have increased over the last 10-year period. For example look at the chart below. It compares the change over the past years in those with high faith maturity. And while this reflects the new focus on spirituality of this generation, it is important to recognize that students in the Adventist educational system have an increased percentage of maturity in their faith life. This is a significant increase over the 10 years.



6. Students in general have a strong sense of God's presence. In answering the question "I have often had a strong sense of God's presence" (Q. 316), those that tended to agree and definitely agreed stood at 61%. Only 11% definitely disagreed, or tended to disagree with this question. And while there was a group of 27% that were unsure, clearly the majority felt God's presence in their lives on a regular basis.

7. When asked if they try hard to live their lives according to their religious beliefs (a cognitive concern), again they overwhelmingly shared that they agreed with this. Some 74% definitely and tended to believe in this statement, while only 11% again disagreed.

So?

It is clear from the *Valuegenesis²* research that there has been significant change over the past years regarding faith maturity as well as in areas of personal commitment and experiencing the presence of Christ in their lives. And students feel that they try to live consistently with their beliefs. In the next issue of this *UPDATE* we will be sharing information about Adventist orthodoxy and its impact in students' lives.

In this research a significant group (31%) were unsure if religion impacted their lives on a daily basis, while 49% felt that they disagreed with the statement, "Religion doesn't affect my daily life" (Q.323). So there is still work to do to make clear to youth that the reality of God's message of grace is possible to experience and to trust. Later we will look issues that impact this.

Our Challenge

❑ How do we build a rich, growing faith and at the same time build compassion and love in the hearts of our children for others?

❑ Over all, the faith maturity index percentages remained the same, but still we are encouraged by the growth in personal spirituality and the rise in commitment in the higher grades.

❑ This new research may indicate a sure sign that schools are focusing on their mission to build spiritual faith. But we must keep in mind the need to help students learn to care for those in need.

❑ Understanding the growth in mature faith will be an important insight in this research. We want to find out just how much duration in Adventist schools, and attitudes toward their schools impacts students' faith maturity percentages.

❑ When we look at the configuration of the faith maturity scores we are pleased that there is now clear growth from the 6th to the 12th grades in student's faith maturity scores. In *Valuegenesis¹* the trend was reversed. It is logical to believe that the longer one is in Adventist schools, the richer one's faith might become. In the new research, this seems true. We will continue to look at this scale and as we compare it with the new Intrinsic and Extrinsic faith scale that the *Valuegenesis²* research included, we will learn much more about what impacts this seeming growth in faith commitment.

We will try to send out monthly updates to you via email as we continue to clarify the research and begin to prepare local reports for Unions, conferences, and schools that request their own report.

First Valuegenesis² Resource

Keeping the Faith: A Guidebook for Spiritual Parenting by V. Bailey Gillespie and Judith W. Gillespie with Timothy Gillespie and Cheryl Webster. This guidebook is for family life educators, pastors and parents.

It uses a three-tiered approach. (1) designed as a seminar of six meetings; (2) developed for group study by groups of parents; (3) written for individual reflection.

The guidebook contains an additional 25 *Parent Potentials Guidesheets* containing over 300 age-graded worship activities targeting five areas of spiritual concern. Parents can use this for building a rich, growing faith life in their homes, parent groups can use this resource in a series of home and school meetings, and all parents can benefit from this biblical, spiritual approach.

One aspect of this publication is the chance to continue to meet as a group of concerned parents for over a year of monthly discussions as building spiritual life is targeted. Order from your local Adventist Book Center or directly from the Hancock Center. (800-785-HCYM). This resource is published by *AdventSource*.