

UPDATE

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Number 2 — *Valuegenesis*² information you can use

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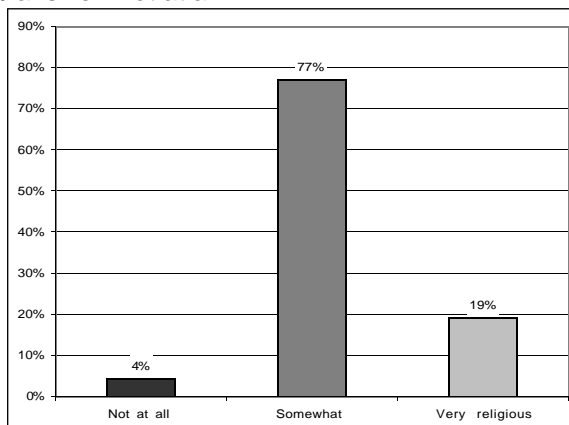
Personal Relationship with God. . .

One of the most interesting insights of the *Valuegenesis*² research is about personal faith and one's relationship with God. And like most research, there is both very good news and some that brings concern. This issue of the *VG*² update targets the vertical relationship with God. We want to explore how the students in Adventist schools understand God, as well as their devotional practices.

Recent research about this millennial generation argues that:

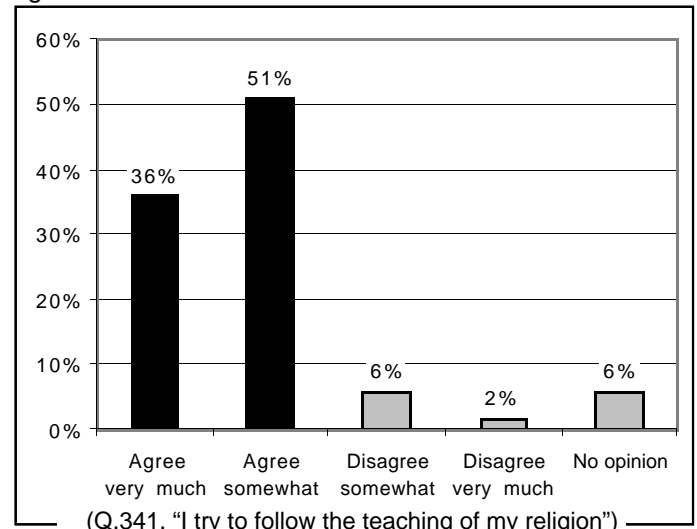
- Teens are less sanguine about their future now
- Youth are more self-confident than those of the prior generations
- This generation of youth and young adults tends to listen to mostly alternative rock music, both religious and secular types
- They are more cynical than their GenX counterparts and often feel abandoned by most of the culture they experience around them
- The older they are, the more likely they are to be searching for meaning and some purpose in life
- The older they are, the more likely they are to call themselves religious¹

Certainly these suppositions are true in the *Valuegenesis*² research. The graph below summarizes the responses on Q.339 of the survey form. Note that 96% see themselves as very or somewhat religious while only 4% answer "not at all!"

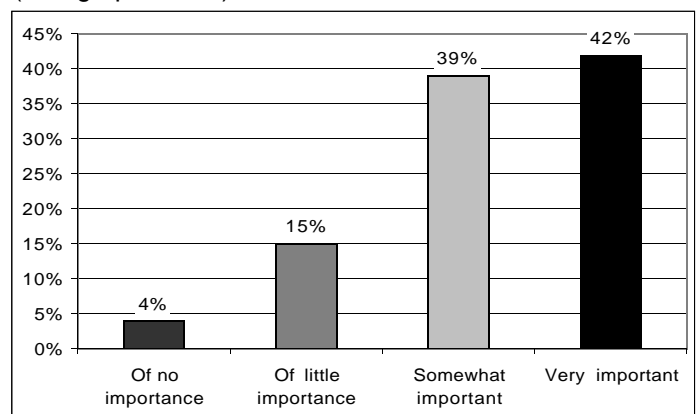


(Q.339. "How religious do you consider yourself to be?")

When we asked Seventh-day Adventist students in *Valuegenesis*² about how committed they were to the teaching of the church, they responded positively again.



When asked about the comfort level they have in talking about their own religious life, 78% answered positively. ("Comfortable"—49% and "very comfortable"—29%.) In addition, Adventist youth in this survey want their friends to be interested in religion too. Young people believe it is important to have friends that feel the very same way about God as they do themselves. In our research, 81% feel it is important to have religious friends. (See graph below).



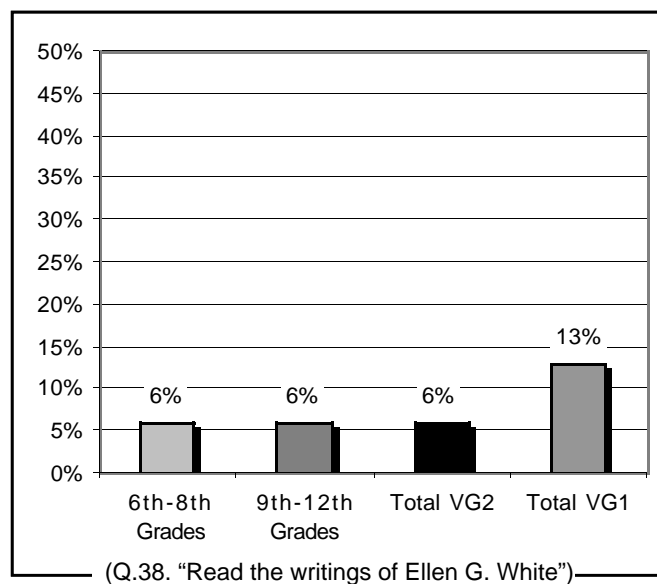
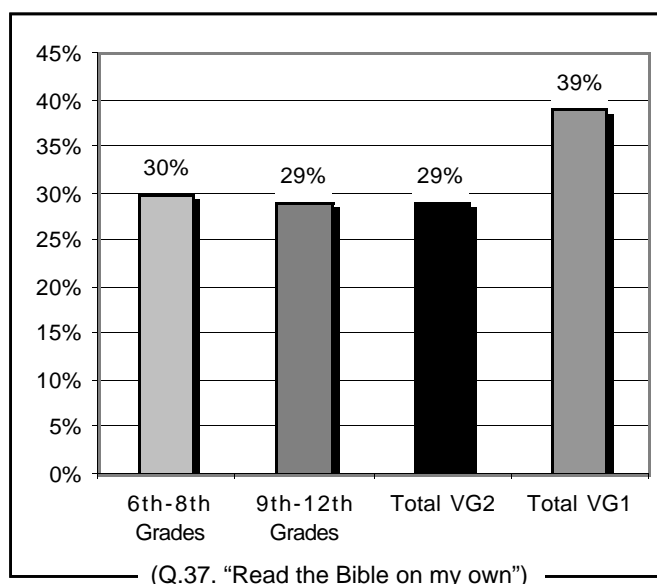
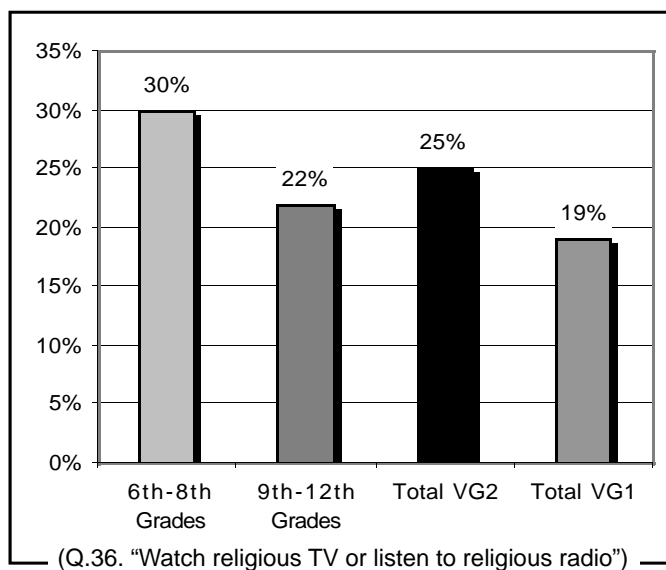
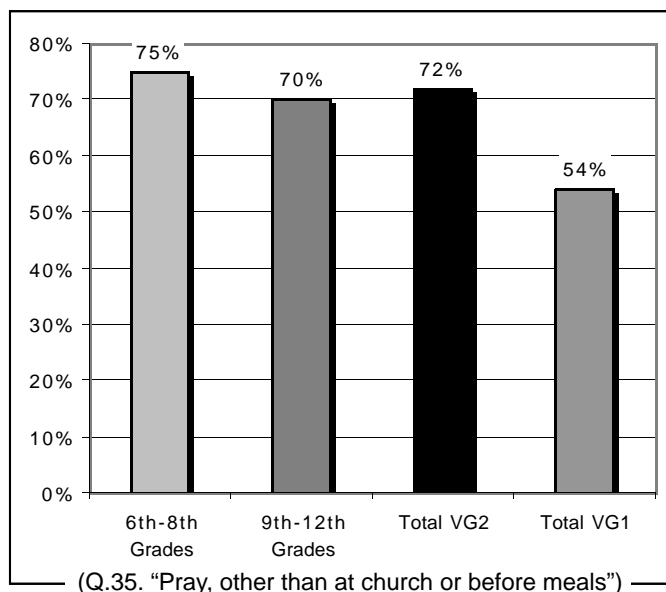
(Q.25. "How important is it to have friends who I can talk to about spiritual things?")

More about Personal Piety. . .

In *Valuegenesis¹* we discovered that the second most important predictor of a growing, rich, and mature faith was that of personal piety. As students involve themselves in religious practices, it seems as if their faith is strengthened and their mature faith scores increase. Encouraging personal religious practice seems, then, like a mandate for Christian educators and pastoral leaders.

The frequency in which Adventist youth engage in the following five devotional practices gave us our “piety” scales in our research: (1) Prayer, (2) Watching or listening to religious programming, (3) Reading the Bible, (4) Reading Ellen G. White’s writings, (5) Reading other religious literature.

In contrasting *Valuegenesis¹* with *Valuegenesis²* findings, we discover that there are some significant changes. Look at the graphs below and see if you can draw some conclusions about the type of change in this generation over the GenerationX students of 10 years ago.



So what should we do?

- If personal devotional life is so important to mature faith, then encouraging private devotionals for each student seems crucial.
- If reading has dropped off as much as it seems in the past years, what could we do that would remedy this situation? Should a significant reading program, quiz times, and media-related biblical material be developed and tried in home, church, and school? Maybe we should try to initiate one or more creative ideas.
- Since students have such a high regard for religion and the church, we could capitalize on this fact and stress personal relationship with God through individual involvement with God’s word and the writings of the church in a new and significant ways?

References...

¹Barna Research on the millennial generation, Pasadena, CA, 2001.