Bonita Joyner Shields

B U I L D I N G

On Tuesday, February 24, 2012, the Fort Steuben Bridge, which linked the communities of Steubenville, Ohio, and Weirton, West Virginia (U.S.A.), went down into a sea of flames.

Due to its narrow lanes and deteriorating floors, the 1,584-foot bridge, built in 1928, had become obsolete.[1] Forty-five years earlier, in 1967, the Silver Bridge, a "sister" suspension bridge to the Fort Steuben Bridge, had collapsed, killing 46 people.[2]

Bridges provide a valuable service to the residents of their communities, enabling them to travel efficiently and safely to their destinations. Yet, as bridges become obsolete, they not only lose their relevance to the travel situation of the day, but, as illustrated above, can also become dangerous.

This special issue of the JOURNAL addresses an important topic in church and school life: *discipleship.* Unfortunately, Adventists and other Christians have not always built strong bridges joining these two entities, which have the task of discipling members and young people. But if we fashion a strong bridge between church and school, between pastors and educators (teachers), what a powerful structure will emerge! This type of bridge will help us all travel more efficiently and safely to our destination: "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).[3]

What would such a bridge look like?

In preparing this special issue, pastors and teachers collaborated to answer that question. We begin the issue with a pastor-teacher dialogue on discipleship, as Kathy Beagles and Gavin Anthony discuss why we need to build bridges between these two groups (see page 4). John Wesley Taylor V offers a biblical foundation that will help us to bridge faith and learning, and offers this challenge in the bridge-building process: "pastors must see their role as teachers of their congregations, while teachers are to understand their calling as shepherds of their flock" (see page 8).

The next section offers readers tools that pastors and teachers can use to accomplish the task of discipling and being discipled: the *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples*[4] framework and the *Growing Disciples Inventory*. The framework and inventory do not seek to dictate a common "look" or "method" for discipleship. However, they do provide a common foundation on which to base our understanding and from which to implement discipleship training in the lives of our students and church members, as well as in our own lives.

The last section of this special issue provides some glimpses of what the discipleship landscape looks like on the other side of the bridge. From elementary-age to college-age disciples; from new believers to long-time believers; and from home to school to church, disciplemakers, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are making a difference in the lives of the people to whom the Lord has called them to minister.

Living and walking as disciples of Jesus Christ does not come easily. If it did, Jesus would not have needed to tell His disciples, "'anyone who does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me'" (Matthew 10:38). Of course, we know that it's the power of the Holy Spirit that changes lives and empowers us to live and walk as faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Merely talking about discipleship does not empower people. A framework and a spiritual inventory cannot transform lives. Using the "right" educational method does not change the heart. However, we can cooperate with the Holy Spirit to erect stronger bridges, support and consolidate the efforts of Spirit-filled pastors and teachers, and collaborate if we develop and use shared tools that enable us to not only baptize, but also "[teach] them to obey everything I have commanded you'" (Matthew 28:20). The possibilities are endless. But of one thing we can be certain: As they collaborate to build these bridges, God's people will have a much better chance of safely reaching their eternal destination, bringing with them the people they have discipled.

The Coordinator for this special issue, **Bonita Joyner Shields, M.A.,** *a former local church pastor, is an editor and the Assistant Director for Discipleship in the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. The* JOURNAL's *editorial staff expresses gratitude for her enthusiasm, commitment, and practical assistance in every aspect of planning and implementation of the issue.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/02/fiery-demolition-ohios-fort-steuben-bridge/1315/.

2. http://www.bridgemapper.com/bridge_detail.php?ID=997.

3. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references in this editorial are quoted from the *New International Version* of the Bible.

4. In this issue, the official name *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* will be shortened to *Growing Fruitful Disciples* or *TGFD.*
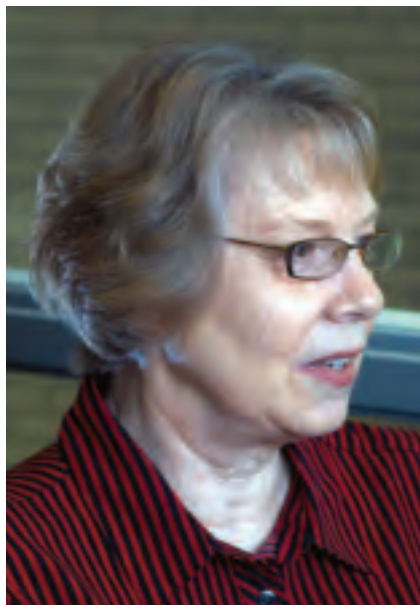
BRIDGES

A Teacher and a Pastor Dialogue About Discipleship

Kathleen Beagles, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Discipleship and Religious Education at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Recently, Dr. Beagles sat down with *Gavin Anthony, Senior Pastor for the Dublin (Ireland) District of Seventh-day Adventist Churches, who is completing a Ph.D. in Religious Education at Andrews University, to discuss the roles of pastors and teachers in the work of discipleship.*

Kathy: *Gavin, what does discipling mean to you as a pastor?*

Gavin: First, let me say that many definitions of discipleship exist. However, one that I think works well in the church and school contexts is by Michael Wilkins: "Discipleship is becoming like Jesus as we walk with him in the real world."[1]

To answer your question, Paul's comments to the Galatians immediately come to mind. He told them that he was "again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Galatians 4:19, NIV). As a pastor, this forming, or perhaps more accurately the *re-forming* of broken people into the image of God, was Paul's chief concern. Of course, this was not Paul's own idea but a reflection of how he described the Father's own purposes for us—that "those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29, NIV). As pastors, we engage in God's purposes of re-forming. When I look at my members, I long to see them reflect Jesus.

I think it is also important to point out that this reflection of Jesus is not merely about personal nurture. There can be a danger that we see reflecting Christ as a self-improvement course. However, being filled with the Spirit of Jesus will always have the consequence of my drawing others along into fellowship with the Trinity—that together, we may experience Their joy and participate in Their purposes.

Kathy: *Well put.*

Gavin: What does discipling mean to you as a teacher?

Kathy: *For me, discipling is taking someone by the hand and sharing my journey with Jesus. That immediately implies that I have a journey of my own, so it requires that I be very intentional about nourishing God's restorative process in my own soul. That's the only way I can be a truly effective tool for the Holy Spirit to use in coming alongside someone else.*

I particularly love this passage in the book Education*: "Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need. Happy will it be for the children of our homes and the students of our schools when parents and teachers shall learn in their own lives the precious experience pictured in these words from the Song of Songs:*

"'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my Beloved among the sons.
I sat down under His shadow with great delight,
And His fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
And His banner over me was love.'
Song of Solomon 2:3, 4."²

Discipling is something I can only do well after I have spent a good bit of time "sitting under the apple tree."

How do you see a pastor going about discipling and teaching his or her congregation?

Gavin: I don't believe discipling can be done with a training course or a curriculum. However, I believe that establishing a knowledge base through curriculum is vital—particularly at the moment. For many years, Adventist pastors have been taught good doctrine and assumed that knowing doctrine was the same as discipleship. However, I don't believe that is the case. Young people today will certainly tell you it is not! Consequently, I believe that curriculum writing needs to be heading into the area of teaching what relationship with God is intended to be, and how to do it.

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or many years, Adventist pastors have been taught good doctrine and assumed that knowing doctrine was the same as discipleship.

Just a few weeks ago, one of my own church leaders was in tears because she did not know how to study the Bible for herself. So we need to teach the "hows" of practical spirituality. Yet at the same time, these "hows" are only tools. Ultimately, the power of a changed life comes through personal contact with God. But at least as local

church educators, we can provide tools to help people create an environment where God can touch their hearts.

So, modeling such an open contact with God is vital, as you alluded to earlier with the apple-tree metaphor. I think when we live out this openness, we begin to change the culture. I regularly face the temptation to start a discipleship department at church. While I think it could be helpful, at the same

time I firmly believe that discipleship should not be stuck in a department. Discipleship is the culture of doing church—it's the air we all should be breathing as we collaborate to live for Jesus.

Kathy: *You use ideas and language from the field of education. In my experience, that is not common among pastors.*

Gavin: Yes, it was only in the second year of my Ph.D. studies that I realized I was getting a degree in religious education! I had only been focusing on the discipleship side. It was quite a startling realization that I had begun a journey into studying education. Yet, it is something I am continually excited about and challenged by.

Kathy: *Even though I believe many pastors disciple others, they usually think of it in the context of ministering or pastoring, not of teaching. Is there a difference?*

Gavin: This concept of being an educator for discipleship raises a critical issue. Only in the past couple of years have I realized that during my six years in the seminary, I was taught how to be a theologian, yet my work in the local church is more about being a Christian educator. I was not taught how to educate. It is, therefore, second nature for me to download religious content on people. Indeed, many of our churches are shaped around this concept of downloading important theological information. We need to do something quite radical to change this paradigm, or else pastors will continue to struggle with teaching practical discipleship in our churches. I think this needs to begin with greater intentional dialogue

between theologians and educators to see what both parties can bring to the discipleship process.

Kathy: *That is a great idea! For example, as an educator, I think of a pastor as needing to be intentional about teaching or discipling a small circle, and giving them the tools to then disciple still other circles. I also like to think of a pastor as a dean of a seminary. He or she is there to train ministers—each member of the congregation has a ministry.*

Gavin: Do you think that classroom teachers can come to see themselves as pastors to their classroom "congregations"?

Kathy: *Teachers learn quite a bit about the integration of faith and learning, but I believe that if they saw themselves as pastors and disciplers of their classrooms, not just integrators of concepts, new dimensions of religious education would open, and the spiritual lives of their students would be richly enhanced. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Moses told the Israelites to first make sure they loved God supremely, and let Him write His laws in their hearts. Then they were to enter into the everyday life of their young people, making spiritual connections in all the teachable moments that arose. Although this passage in Deuteronomy is considered to be a mandate to families, I don't believe it is meant only for the small nuclear families we have today. It is for the* entire *family of God— parents, pastors, and teachers. And this kind of discipling takes time and extracurricular involvement with students—and their families.*

The motto of the School of Education at Andrews University is "To Educate Is to Redeem." That sounds a bit like Galatians 4:19 that you were talking about earlier. Christian teachers in formal education settings would benefit from taking Paul's approach of being in labor until Christ is formed in our students. I imagine the way that would play out would be primarily through modeling, as we talked about earlier, but also through in-

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tercessory prayer and the sharing of one's own faith walk. Theories of learner-based and cooperative education that are already in place in many classrooms are also certainly avenues that can be used for creating a discipling atmosphere in

Christian schools.

Gavin, what teaching and learning principles do you think are good to use in creating a discipling atmosphere in the church as well as the school?

Gavin: I fear I am going to give you better theory than my own practice, as shifting from the traditional role of the pastor to one of discipler is difficult— more difficult for me than I thought it would be. Also more difficult because many of our local churches have been used to doing things the same way for a long time. But let me suggest where I

think changing an atmosphere begins:

The first step is a lot of prayer! God keeps reminding me, as a pastor, that just because I have lots of great ideas doesn't mean they will work. Paul also reminds us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12, NIV). Satan's primary mission is to destroy the work of the disciple-maker, so if I only come to church with some of the latest ideas in discipleship, he doesn't really mind. I know because I have made this mistake. What Satan fears is supernatural power, and so we need to be dependent on God and His power to work in our congregations or our classrooms. So I have to pray, and get others to join in support.

Kathy: *OK. We start with lots of prayer. Then what?*

Gavin: Once an atmosphere of prayer is present, I think one of the greatest beginning teaching tools is that of the pastor modeling transparency in his or her own journey of discipleship, as you alluded to earlier. As Seventh-day Adventists, we have been focused historically on theological correctness and right answers. Not to be correct or right has therefore been seen as a sign of failure, which we are keen to hide. That happens quite often in school settings, too, doesn't it?

Kathy: *Definitely. Life tends to be measured by grade-point averages.*

Gavin: But discipleship doesn't focus primarily on correctness, but on

relationship. Indeed, the closer I come to Jesus, the greater I become aware of my profound flaws and weaknesses. The problem in my life is not about the specific sins I might or might not commit, but that by nature my sinful self continually tries to rise up and take control. So I face a continual battle with dying to self so that the nature of Christ may live in me.

This is a battle pastors and teachers are not supposed to fight alone. Reflecting Jesus is designed by Him to be done in the context of the body—the church, and by extension, the church school. As Paul again writes, the different spiritual gifts are given "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12, 13, NIV). So in this context of the body, where the fullness of Christ is matured, we are on a journey together. What one part of the body does or doesn't do will affect the entire body. I believe that is how Christ's character becomes fully reproduced in His people. Jesus said they will know you are My disciples when you love one another.

We are broken, bruised, and battered inside, so let's not try to fake it to one another that we are all doing just fine.

Kathy: *Well, this openness can have its drawbacks, too, can't it? I imagine some readers of this dialogue bristling, declaring that the blind can't lead the blind. Perhaps we should stop here and define what we mean by "openness."*

Gavin: I am not suggesting that pastors and teachers should continually share all their problems. However, when we are honest about our own challenges, it gives our congregations and our students permission to be real as well. And when we are real together, we begin to build genuine community. On the other hand, some church members and students think their pastor or

teacher walks on water! How can a pastor or teacher exhibit openness without sacrificing his or her role as a leader?

Kathy: *It seems to me that the openness toward God that we are talking about is described in Psalm 32:5. David acknowledges his sin and no longer tries to cover it up. James describes openness toward our fellow humans as follows: "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (James 5:16, NRSV).*

Gavin: Well, perhaps that is the glory of the body of Christ: that in our weakness, God's power is made clear—to paraphrase Paul (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we learn to be open to each other, we also grow our openness to God. A couple of years ago, I first began to think

intentionally about openness. As a pastor or teacher, how do I teach openness to God, since openness is first and foremost an attitude of the heart? When I first thought about this question, I wasn't sure of the answer—which rather disturbed me. Yet an open heart is the only heart the Holy Spirit can touch.

When we look at the world around us, let alone those within our own church and school walls, how will their hearts become open? If they don't, all our efforts at reaching out with the gospel will not travel far. So how do we teach openness? I think that is a question we as discipling pastors and teachers must wrestle with because this is the beginning of the whole process of reflecting Jesus.

Kathy: *Thank you, Gavin. You've given us teachers plenty to think, pray, and talk about, as well as opened our minds to how pastors and teachers have much in common in their calling. I believe pastors and teachers could certainly benefit from more open dialogue about our joint mission to educate and redeem others for the kingdom. Those of us involved with the new Department of Discipleship and Religious Education at Andrews University will have to initiate some avenues for this dialogue.* ✎

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1. Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991), p. 123.

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Christian teachers in formal education settings would benefit from taking Paul's approach of being in labor until Christ is formed in our students.

A BIBLICAL

FOUNDATION

for Integrating Faith and Learning

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Bible is inspired, trustworthy, and authoritative.[1] Historically, the Adventist Church has viewed Christian education as a core ingredient in fulfilling its mission. This is evidenced by the prolific writings on the subject of education by Ellen G. White,[2] a co-founder of the denomination, as well as by the extent of Adventist education, one of the largest denominational systems worldwide, with nearly 8,000 schools, colleges, and universities, and more than 1.6 million students.

A core concept in the Adventist philosophy of education is the integration of faith and learning. Many Adventist educators, in fact, see this construct as a distinctive and essential ingredient of Seventh-day Adventist education.[3] Given the centrality of Scripture in Adventist theology, it stands to reason that the integration of faith and learning has strong biblical support.

In this article, we will examine the contours of a biblical foundation for the integration of faith and learning. Specifically, we will highlight passages from Scripture that provide the keystones of this foundation, namely (1) the formation of the Christian mind, (2) the comprehensiveness of life and learning, and (3) the interconnectedness of faith, learning, and life. These core concepts serve, in turn, as the bedrock for (4) a comprehensive, whole-person educational program, mediated through (5) divinely appointed instrumentalities and resulting in (6) a faith-nurturing perspective for content and method.

While clearly not an exhaustive study of the biblical support for integrating faith and learning, it is intended that the biblical elements presented may serve as points of departure for further research and reflection.

Formation of the Christian Mind

Although the integration of faith and learning can be approached from various perspectives, a key concept is embedded in Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (NKJV).[4] Set in the context of the incarnation, this passage asserts that human beings can choose to acquire a Christian mind, a radically different way of approaching life and learning. Furthermore, it maintains that, to achieve this goal, believers must undergo a personal, transformational process—receiving the mind of Christ. Finally, the passage affirms that Christians must think *Christianly*, endeavoring to view all things from God's perspective, guided by His Spirit.

According to 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, there are two types of individuals: the natural person, who lacks discernment of spiritual things, and the spiritual man or woman, who discerns all things from a spiritual frame of reference. The difference, Paul points out, is the renewal of the human mind.

Romans 8:6 and 7 validates this view: "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The mind with a carnal orientation runs counter to God and

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His truth. It is a secular mind—disconnected from God and exemplifying a temporal, world-oriented, and often fractured perspective. By contrast, the spiritual mind incorporates an eternal, supernatural, and integrated view. It is Christlike, in harmony with God's plan for the universe (see Figure 1).

The secular worldview is transformed by adopting a consistently spiritual frame of reference. Sometimes we assume that a worldview is like a set of clothes—something we put on and change at will, based on the circumstances. While we may indeed "change our minds" and modify aspects of our worldview as we gain new information and clearer insight, what remains constant is our faith commitment:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:5-8).

Notice that the condition to receiving wisdom is a whole-person faith commitment. By contrast, a "double-minded" person, oscillating between secular and spiritual perspectives in an endeavor to embrace both, cannot receive anything from God, much less the mind of Christ and divine wisdom.

This unwavering faith commitment, evidenced in singleness of mind (Philippians 3:13, 14), lies at the heart of the Christian experience. Explaining the nature of this commitment, Christ warned, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. . . . Whoever is not with me is against me, and he whoever does not gather with me scatters" (Matthew 12:25, 30, NIV). In summary, the Christian mind is either completely Christian or it is not Christian at all.

Comprehensiveness of Life and Learning

Singleness of mind brings about a comprehensive, Christ-centered view of life and learning. It is altogether too easy to lapse into dualistic forms of thinking, setting up false dichotomies, such as mercy versus justice, liberty versus responsibility, love versus authority, theory versus practice, student versus subject, and faith versus learning.[5] This produces fragmented thinking and a compartmentalized, polarized life.

Perhaps the most dangerous dualism, however, is to define certain aspects of life as spiritual and others as secular. This may cause us to apply secular thinking even to sacred things[6]—such as baptisms, offerings, and Christian education. We emphasize facts and figures more than human needs; budgets and policies more than our spiritual mission. The Word of God, however, emphasizes that we must "put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew . . . , slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Colossians 3:10, 11). Such a comprehensive view of life eliminates any spiritual/secular dichotomy.

This totality of Christ, which permeates every aspect of life, is echoed in other passages. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). What are the implications? All aspects of life—even such common activities as eating and drinking, teaching, and learning—must glorify God and reflect the attributes of His character.[7] Teaching, furthermore, incorporates both words and deeds. To teach "in the name of Jesus" means to serve as His official representative—to say what He would say, to do as He would do (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Paul highlights this comprehensive view in yet another way: "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself

Figure 1	
Two Worldviews (Romans 8:6, 7)	
The Secular Mind	**The Christian Mind**
Living for the present Reasons: "Just do it! Enjoy it while it lasts! Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" (see 1 Corinthians 15:32).	**An eternal orientation** Every decision, every action in this life has eternal consequences (1 Timothy 6:12).
Assuming that this world is all there is Decisions and behaviors conform to the criteria of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).	**A supernatural focus** Sees life from God's point of view and makes value judgments based on God's character (Micah 6:8).
Segmenting existence It reduces one's life to a fragmented mix of ideas and activities (James 1:8) and may produce a spiritual/secular dichotomy.	**A holistic perspective** Not dichotomized or compartmentalized. Rather, sees Christianity as embracing all of life (1 Corinthians 10:31).

up against the knowledge of God, and we *take captive every thought* to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV, italics supplied). Educational programs are comprised of courses, courses are made up of topics, topics of concepts, and concepts of ideas. Consequently, if every thought is in submission to Christ, this means that every class period, every subject area, and indeed the entire educational experience recognizes and embraces the Lordship of Jesus.

A comprehensive view of life and learning, in which all things are viewed within a spiritual framework, yields significant implications for Christian education.[8] As Paul aptly summarized, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Interconnectedness of Faith, Learning, and Life

Scripture tells us that faith, learning, and life are closely intertwined. Paul states, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).[9] Faith and learning are thus linked through the power of the Word.

It is not sufficient, however, to merely know the truth, or even to believe it. There must be a life response. James declares, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20, 26).[10] Christians must translate faith into practice and grapple with the real-life implications of learning (see Figure 2).

Let us consider each of these elements more closely (see Figure 3).

Faith. Christ asked His disciples, "'When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?'" (Luke 18:8). Faith is not blind devotion or unfounded belief. Rather, faith is a reasonable commitment, based upon evidences of God's trustworthiness.[11] Christianity, then, is based on significant acts and facts,[12] not merely vague theories or interesting speculations.

Faith, furthermore, does not exist in isolation. One must have faith *in* something or someone. What type of faith is needed? The overarching tier in the faith paradigm is faith in God, based on an understanding of God that includes both the theological—knowing *about* God, and the relational—knowing God *personally*.[13] This faith is complemented by confidence in God's revelation of His truth, His character, and His plan.[14] The third type of faith, sometimes the most difficult to attain, is faith in persons—in the potential of others and of oneself, through the grace of God.[15]

Learning. Learning yields a transformation in knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and/or lifestyle. This can bring about a renovation of heart, mind, and being.

From a Christian perspective, this transformation is brought about through a personal encounter with Jesus. Christ invited His listeners, "'Come unto Me . . . and learn from Me'" (Matthew 11:28, 29). What type of learning does this require? First of all, a change of mind—that is, learning to think Christianly.[16] This is followed by a change of life—learning to live by faith.[17]

Life. Life means more than mere existence. Christ declared, "'I have come that they may have life, and that they may have

it more abundantly'" (John 10:10). In its fullest sense, life is God-centered, for God is the Source and Sustainer of life (John 1:4). He is also the ultimate nucleus of life and learning. "'And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent'" (John 17:3). What type of life do we desire? A productive life, one that transforms knowledge into practice; a meaningful life, filled with love toward God and our fellow human beings; an eternal life, which extends relationships and learning into eternity.

How then does the integration of faith, learning, and life happen? It occurs when Christian beliefs and values provide the focus and core of the academic endeavor; when educators

Figure 2

Linking Faith, Learning, and Life
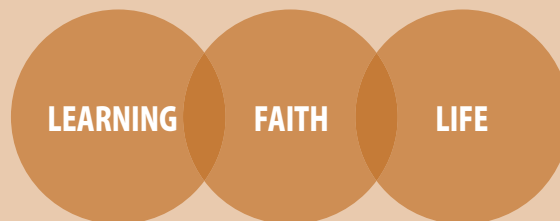(Romans 10:17; James 2:17)

LEARNING   FAITH   LIFE

Figure 3

Integrating Faith, Learning, and Life

Faith
- *In God—both theological and relational*
- *In divine revelation—in His truth, His character, and His plan*
- *In persons—the potential of others and of self, by the grace of God*

Learning
- *To think Christianly—a change of mind*
- *To live by faith—a change of life*

Life
- *Productive—transforming knowledge into practice*
- *Meaningful—filled with love toward God and humankind*
- *Eternal—a gift of God through Christ*

Integration
- *Faith and learning fuse within the context of a Christian life*

seek to relate Christianity to the full range of human existence and culture. This integration of faith and learning in life is more than a random mingling or chance encounter. Rather, it is a dynamic union, an intentional bringing together of many fragments to form a living and coordinated whole.[18]

A Comprehensive Educational Program

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, we find one of the most significant descriptions of an integrated educational program. It begins by declaring, "'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!'" The "SHEMA ISRAEL!" injunction, considered by many Jews to be one of the most sacred passages in the Torah, identifies God

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Figure 4

The Integrated Curriculum (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

- **Focus:** God (vs. 4)
- **Context:** Love (vs. 5a)
- **Scope:** Comprehensive (vs. 5b)
- **Source:** The Word—written, illustrated, and living (vs. 6a)
- **Instrument:** Committed teacher (vs. 6b)
- **Process:** Diligent and excellent, receptive and active (vs. 7a)
- **Setting:** Prime moments for learning, linking theory and practice (vs. 7b)
- **Dimensions:** Physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social development (vss. 8, 9)

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as the focus of the educational program (see Figure 4). This emphasis is reiterated throughout Scripture: "For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6). Similarly, Paul admonished Christian believers to "know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2, 3, NIV). God, in essence, is the core curriculum.

The following verse describes the *context* and *scope* of the curriculum. "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength'" (Deuteronomy 6:5).[19] In Christian education, love creates a vibrant, nurturing environment and becomes the prime motivator. Truth, indeed, must always be spoken in the context of love (Ephesians 4:15). Furthermore, the scope of the program must be comprehensive, engaging the student's attitudes and emotions, priorities and commitments, actions and being.

The *source* of the educational program and its *instruments* are next identified. "'These words which I command you today shall be in your heart'" (Deuteronomy 6:6). These words of God in-

clude His written word, the Holy Scriptures (Revelation 1:1, 2); the illustrated word, as seen in God's created works (Psalm 19:1); and the living Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:14). These divine words constitute the great unifying power in Christian education. They transform learning and life. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Notice, however, that Deuteronomy stipulates a condition. The words of God must first be internalized in the teacher's life. One simply cannot share something he or she does not have.

Deuteronomy 6:7 specifies the *process* and *setting* of biblically based education. "'You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.'" To teach diligently requires effort, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence. It calls for model and method. Such instruction incorporates both receptivity and activity— "sitting" and "walking." It takes place in the teacher's house, the classroom, and along the road, through real-life learning encounters that link theory and practice throughout the spiritual learning experience.

Furthermore, certain key moments for learning are identified—"'when you rise up'" and "'when you lie down.'" Given that the most important aspect of life is one's relationship with God, this may suggest setting aside prime segments of time, within the school day as well as the class period, for personal and corporate worship experiences.

Finally, in verses 8 and 9, the passage addresses the curricular *dimensions* of the educational program. "'You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.'" Although some Jews interpreted this command in a literal manner, attaching to their foreheads and wrists phylacteries containing God's Word,[20] it seems that each of these four components has a broader application—to a specific dimension of life. God's words are to be on our hands, guiding our actions and physical development. They are to be before our eyes, directing our thoughts and intellectual growth.

What about the doorposts and the gates? These words were originally spoken to the Israelites who had recently left Egypt for the Promised Land. The reference to "doorposts" would bring to mind their Passover experience (Exodus 12). On that last night in Egypt, those who believed God's word sprinkled the blood of a lamb on their doorposts as evidence of their faith commitment. The courtyard gates were considered the avenue of contact with the larger world. Messages were posted on the gates to announce important events—in essence, a form of communication, of interaction and witness. Consequently, references to "doorposts" and "gates" could suggest that God's words are to guide both the student's spiritual and social development.

These four dimensions of the educational program seem to be of particular significance. Luke 2:52, for example, states that Jesus

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developed in four areas—"in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man"—illustrating a whole-person development (see Figure 5). Even more important, perhaps, is the understanding that God's Word is to serve as the foundation for each dimension. Indeed, every aspect of an Adventist educational program is to integrate a biblical worldview—a worldview that is Christ-centered, Bible-based, student-related, and socially applied.[21]

Divinely Appointed Instrumentalities

The Bible identifies the Holy Spirit, parents, priests and prophets, and pastor-teachers as principal instrumentalities in the teaching/learning process. Of these, the Holy Spirit is paramount. "'But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you'" (John 14:26, NIV).

Although the Holy Spirit can, and does, speak directly to the mind of the student, He also mediates through the other divinely appointed instrumentalities. Paul, for example, noted that people's changed lives were the result of the Spirit of God operating through human channels. "You are an epistle of Christ," he wrote, "*ministered by us*, written not with ink but *by the Spirit* of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3, italics supplied).[22]

In the biblical model, the first educational agency is the home. Consequently, parents are to assume a significant, ongoing role in the education of their children. Psalm 78:4-7, for example, describes these intergenerational relationships.

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God" (NIV).

This sentiment is echoed in other passages.[23] Ephesians 6:4, for example, enjoins fathers to bring up their children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (NIV).

In the Old Testament, the role of parents was supplemented by that of priests and prophets. "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth" (Malachi 2:7, NIV). Prophets, such as Samuel and Elijah, established training programs to prepare spiritual leaders and stem the tide of moral corruption.[24] In the New Testament period, every leader of the faith community was considered a teacher. These leaders included apostles, bishops, elders, and deacons.[25] Bishops, for example, were to be chosen, among other criteria, based on their ability to teach.

There were, however, individuals especially commissioned for the work of teaching. "And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well" (2 Timothy 2:2, NRSV). Paul further observes that God "gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4:11-13, NIV). It is important to note, based on the Greek text, that the passage refers to four groups of people, with the function of pastor and teacher considered to be given to the same individuals.[26] Consequently, pastors must see their role as teachers of their congregations, while teachers are to understand their calling as shepherds of their flock. Notice also that the ministry of these pastor-teachers results in the development of faith, knowledge, and service; in essence, an integration of faith, learning, and life.

In the biblical paradigm, teachers are but representatives of the Master Teacher. "If anyone speaks, he should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised" (1 Peter 4:11, NIV).[27] In the ultimate sense, God is the teacher. Isaiah points out, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13, KJV). The passage denotes something more than learning *about* God. Rather, students are to be taught *by* God, through His human instrumentalities.

Figure 5

Dimensions of the Christian Curriculum (Deuteronomy 6:8, 9; Luke 2:52)			
	Spiritual	**Intellectual**	**Physical**	**Social**
God's People	Writing upon the doorposts	Frontlets between the eyes	Sign upon the hand	Writing upon the gates
Jesus Christ	Favor with God	Wisdom	Stature	Favor with humanity
Metaphor	Heart	Head	Hand	Humanity

> "**F**inally, . . . whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice" (Philippians 4:8, 9, NIV).

Faith Perspectives for Content and Method

Divine truth and values form the bedrock of the educational experience. An understanding of God's truth is mediated through His Word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and illustrated most clearly in the life and teachings of Jesus (John 14:6; 16:13; 17:17). Because all truth in every subject area is ultimately God's truth (James 1:17),[28] students must connect each topic they study to the Source of Truth.[29]

The biblical model of education also emphasizes the role of moral values in character formation. "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). Obedience to this directive is best accomplished through a process of values formation and maturation that involves analysis, reflection, and action. The Apostle Paul describes well this vast, value-laden agenda:

"Finally, . . .whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice" (Philippians 4:8, 9, NIV).

This perspective regarding God-derived truth and values must permeate every subject area. In the sciences, for example, students are to integrate the words and works of God. The basis for this integration is found in these premises:

• The living Word formed nature (John 1:1-4);

• God set aside a day of rest in which to view His handiwork from a spiritual perspective (Exodus 20:8-11);

• Christ derived spiritual truth from natural settings, and we can do so also (Matthew 6:28-30; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 12:6, 7);

• In the New Earth, the redeemed will continue their study of God's creation (Isaiah 11:6-9).

A Bible-based approach to language and literature might begin with the understanding that it is God who gave the gift of creative expression (Genesis 2:19). Although sin has distorted language (Genesis 11:4-9), God has taken the initiative to bridge the communication gap (Acts 2:7-12), ultimately seeking to restore and unify language (Revelation 7:9, 10). This approach may also consider the study of quality literature as a Christian mandate (1 Timothy 4:13) and apply Paul's guidelines to identify and reject literature that is worthless or injurious (1 Timothy 6:20). Students will thereby learn that there are God-given standards for Christian literature (Philippians 4:8), and that their lives can be either uplifted or debased by what they read (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In the arts, a biblical approach might seek to help the student develop Christian criteria for evaluating art forms.[30] This may include an application of the following criteria, among others:

• Is the work of art in harmony with divine values? (Philippians 4:8)

• Does it direct attention toward God or does it exalt the artist or performer? (Isaiah 14:12-14)

• Does it glorify immoral or unethical conduct? (Exodus 32:15-19)

• Does it mingle the sacred and the common? (Leviticus 10:1, 2)

• Can it be performed or experienced to the glory of God? (1 Corinthians 10:32)

• Is its effect to bring the performers and the audience closer to God, or to make God and religion seem irrelevant? (Matthew 7:20)

Similar Bible-based perspectives may be developed in other subject areas.[31]

Conclusion

Based on Scripture, the concept of the integration of faith and learning in Seventh-day Adventist education seems defensible, indeed, an imperative. The Bible teaches the importance of receiving the mind of Christ, the comprehensiveness of Christian life and learning, as well as the interrelationship of faith and learning in life. Furthermore, Scripture describes the parameters of an integrated educational program, defines the role of divine and human instrumentalities in the educational process, and provides spiritual perspectives for both content and method.

Through the integration of faith and learning, Adventist education becomes distinctive—in the world, but not of the world (John 17:15, 16). It enables students to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Such education represents a challenge—a high calling for teachers and administrators. It is, however, attainable.

"Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, 'Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, so

that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it" (Deuteronomy 30:11-14, NIV).

Today, we must choose whom we will serve—whether the gods of traditional education, the gods of this secular age in which we now live, or the one true God.[32] May we affirm, "But as for me and my house, as for me and my classroom, as for me and my school, we will serve the Lord!" ✐

This article has been peer reviewed.

John Wesley Taylor V, Ph.D., Ed.D., *serves as Associate Director of Education at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. He has served as a professor of educational philosophy at universities in the U.S. and the Philippines, and continues to present seminars and workshops on the integration of faith and learning.*
He may be reached at taylorjw@gc.adventist.org.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2005), p. 4.

2. These include the following works, among others: *Counsels on Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1968); *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1943); *Education* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1952); *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Assn., 1923).

3. Evidence of this may be found, for example, in the sessions of the International Faith and Learning Seminars, sponsored by the Institute of Christian Teaching since 1988. Essays developed at these conferences are published in the scholarly series *Christ in the Classroom* (Humberto Rasi, editor, 1991-), with a sample of these essays available online at http://ict.adventist.org.

4. Unless otherwise indicated, the passages of Scripture quoted in this article are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

5. There are, of course, certain true dichotomies, such as good versus evil (Deuteronomy 30:15; Psalm 34:14; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Isaiah 5:20; 7:15; Jeremiah 13:23; Amos 5:14, 15; Matthew 12:35; Luke 6:9; John 5:29; Romans 12:9; 1 Peter 3:11), truth versus error (Proverbs 12:17, 19, 22; 14:22, 25; Isaiah 59:4; Jeremiah 9:5; Ephesians 4:25; James 5:19; 1 John 4:6), and the sacred versus the common (Exodus 3:5; 20:8-11; Leviticus 10:1, 2; 1 Samuel 13:9-14; 1 Chronicles 13:9, 10; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Acts 5:1-11).

6. There is a difference between the spiritual and the sacred. All of life, for example, is to be Spirit-filled and viewed from the divine perspective. Certain things in life, however, are sacred, made holy either by God's direct presence or by His express command, or because they have been dedicated to God. Consequently, the Sabbath, the tithe, and the place of worship, among others, are sacred. Yet all days of the week are to be filled with God's Spirit, all one's resources are to be employed to God's glory, and wherever one may be, he or she is to abide in God's presence.

7. This concept that God's glory is found in the attributes of His character finds support, for example, in Exodus 33:18-22 and 34:6.

8. These implications are discussed more fully in the seminal work by Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God's Truth: The Integration of Faith and Learning* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1968).

9. Also 2 Timothy 3:15.

10. Also Galatians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; and James 1:22-25; 2:17, 18.

11. This concept of faith finds support in the following passages, among others: Luke 24:25-26; John 10:37-38; 13:19; 14:11; 20:31; Hebrews 11:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 1 John 5:13.

12. Such as the evidences revealed in the life of Christ (John 3:16; Acts 1:9-11).

13. See Matthew 8:10; 9:22; 15:28; Mark 11:22; Luke 7:9; 1 Corinthians 2:5; and 1 Peter 1:21.

14. See Matthew 6:30; Acts 20:21; and Romans 10:8.

15. See Jeremiah 29:11; Mark 10:27; and Philippians 2:13.

16. See Romans 12:2; and Hebrews 8:10.

17. See Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:23, 24; and 2 Corinthians 5:17.

18. Foundational concepts in the integration of faith, learning, and life are discussed more fully in the following works, among others: William D. Beck, ed., *Opening the American Mind: The Integration of Biblical Truth in the Curriculum of the University* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991); Carol Fider, *Integration of Faith and Learning: Understanding Christian Learning in Tertiary Education* (Saarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2009); Robert A. Harris, *The Integration of Faith and Learning: A Worldview Approach* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2004).

19. It might be noted that when Jesus quoted this passage (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27), He added the concept of "mind," perhaps in response to the Greco-Roman context of His time and in harmony with the intent of Deuteronomy 6: 8 and 9.

20. These phylacteries are referenced, for example, in Matthew 23:5.

21. The defining characteristics of a Christian worldview are discussed more fully in the following works, among others: James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalogue,* 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997); Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984); Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009).

22. Also 1 Corinthians 2:12-13.

23. For example, Psalm 34:11; Isaiah 38:19; and 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15.

24. These schools of the prophets are referred to in 1 Samuel 7:16, 17; 19:2; and 2 Kings 2:3-5; 4:38.

25. See Acts 2:42; 28:31; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; and 2 Timothy 1:11.

26. This concept is further developed in Daniel L. Hocking, "The Theological Basis for the Philosophy of Christian School Education," in *The Philosophy of Christian School Education*, Paul A. Kienel, ed. (Whittier, Calif.: Association of Christian Schools International, 1978), p. 21.

27. Also 2 Corinthians 5:20.28. An insightful essay may be found in a book by Arthur F. Holmes titled, *All Truth Is God's Truth* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1977).

29. This concept is highlighted, for example, in Psalm 25:5; 43:3; Proverbs 2:6; 9:10; and Daniel 1:17; 2:21.

30. Further developed in John Wesley Taylor V, "A Christian Focus for the Arts," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 71:1 (Oct/Nov 2008):5-11.

31. An exploration of integrational strategies is provided in John Wesley Taylor, "Instructional Strategies for Integrating Faith and Learning," ibid., 63:5 (Summer 2001):5-14. The following works further explore integrational strategies: Harold Heie and David L. Wolfe, *The Reality of Christian Learning: Strategies for Faith-Discipline Integration* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock Publishing, 2004); Harry L. Poe, *Christianity in the Academy: Teaching at the Intersection of Faith and Learning* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004). Also, the essays in the *Christ in the Classroom* series (Humberto Rasi, ed., Silver Spring, Md.: The Institute for Christian Teaching) illustrate in tangible ways a biblical approach in various disciplines and subject areas. Selected essays from the series may be found online at the Institute for Christian Teaching Website (http://ict.adventist.org).

32. Adapted from Joshua 24:15.

A MODEL FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Many people are in-volved in the lives of children, adolescents, and new believers, and thereby—either inten-tionally or by default—take on the role of a discipler or religious educator. The problem, in many cases, is that these key Christians—parents, friends, teachers, and the local church congregation—are themselves not growing toward "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13, NASB).[1]

Also, many adult believers do not know how to implement the numerous New Testament commands describing how church members are to care for and support one another[2] because they have never seen this behavior modeled. Today's "consumer religion" is often empty and ineffectual. As a result, many young people and new believers lack positive models of Christianity and do not know how to develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus.

A Growth Model

The *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* (*TGFD*)[3] framework is designed to help us think more clearly and deeply about the spiritual growth and maturity of ourselves and others as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is based on four processes in which all committed Christians should be involved. These processes, while described one by one, are not linear or sequential. Each disciple, regardless of his or her level of maturity, should be growing spirally in each of the processes simultaneously. Although the fourth process involves individuals, it is acted out in community.[4]

Because discipleship happens in the arena of daily life, and within loving relationships in the body of Christ, its processes and content cannot be reduced to statements in a grid. However,

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the *TGFD* framework has been designed to serve as a skeleton of basic characteristics of discipleship that can provide a structure around which individuals, groups, and churches can organize experiences that edify the followers of Christ. Those who disciple others can use the framework to create learning events for many areas of discipling such as parenting, mentoring, teaching, and facilitating small groups.

Within the *TGFD* framework, *commitments* are defined for each of the individual processes, and these are further divided into key aspects of spiritual growth called *indicators,* which describe the characteristics of a vibrant relationship with Jesus.

Thus, the framework of *processes, commitments,* and *indicators* helps to define the scope of discipleship and discipling. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, both can be evaluated using this framework. Some *commitments* and *indicators* have been adequately addressed in particular contexts in which we do church, while others may have been overlooked. Evaluations based on this framework can help Adventist leaders and educators make informed decisions that will enhance discipleship and discipling in the body of Christ—at church, at school, and at home.

CONNECTING

This process is relational, and focuses on the disciple's relationship with God, self, and others. Jesus articulated this connection in statements such as, "'By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another'" (John 13:35), and "'"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"'" (Matthew

22:37-39). This process involves not only the way Christians ought to relate to God, but also the way they should relate to themselves, their families, their fellow believers, and their neighbors. It also involves how Christians function: joined together, as the visible body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23; and 2:16). This kind of connecting has a social and communal dimension (Acts 2:44), which allows the church to function as an organic whole.

Christian discipleship occurs in relationships. It begins with the believer's response to Jesus' call to connect with and abide in Him. Through this transforming connection with Him, we come to know ourselves as Jesus created us to be, we appreciate our infinite value to Him, and we grow into a more balanced view of our strengths and weaknesses. We are then able to connect with those around us in more tangible, healing, and redeeming ways.

A dynamic and deepening relationship with Jesus through His Spirit is the basis for growth in discipleship. Concurrently, believers develop (1) an individual identity complete in Christ, (2) Christ-centered relationships

within their families and within the local and global body of Christ, and (3) positive relationships with people outside the body of Christ with whom He wants to be reconciled. Disciples thus become avenues for administering God's grace in its various forms as they continue to strengthen their connections with God and all of His children.

UNDERSTANDING

This process is cognitive, but it includes the experiential as well as the intellectual. It was articulated by Jesus in these words: "'If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine'" (John 8:31), and "'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"'" (Matthew 4:4).

Relationships grow as both parties develop a deepening understanding of the core identity of each person. It's similar in a relationship with Jesus. Through Scripture, humans encounter God and come to understand more clearly Christ's character and mission. Thus, disciples need to learn how to

B ecause the first command of the Gospel Commission is to *Go,* the "going" has often been emphasized apart from the disciple-making and teaching-equipping processes, which are strongly commanded in these verses. This has been dubbed "the Great Omission" because these vital processes are absent from many models of Christian formation/spiritual development.

study the Bible, find Jesus in its pages, hear Him speak, and follow Him. Reading, contemplating, and obeying the Scriptures and praying are methods by which believers access the teaching and transforming presence of the Holy Spirit. In the broadest sense, we learn through the Word what God intends us to be and to do, both individually and corporately. We come to understand how the story of our life fits into the great story of salvation.

For a growing disciple, encountering God through Scripture and learning more of Jesus' invitation to be His disciple are vital commitments. He calls us to "come" and "reason" with Him (Isaiah 1:18), an encounter that must precede a full and heartfelt obedience to His Word. Through a deepening understanding of God's Word, disciples come to realize and embrace these propositional truths: (1) God is the source of life; (2) Humans fell from God's original plan and experience consequences; (3) God supplies everything needed for our redemption; and (4) God has provided everything needed for the restoration of human beings into the image of God. This biblical worldview is foundational to knowing God and to being transformed into His image.[5]

MINISTERING

This process relates to service and evangelism. Jesus expressed it this way: "'The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least *of them*, you did it to Me"'" (Matthew 25:40, italics supplied), and, "'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (28:19, 20).

In response to God's love, disciples minister to others. As they connect with Jesus and learn of His unfailing love, they are eager to invite others to share in the joy they experience as His followers. They feel compelled to share the story of the Holy Spirit's work in their lives and of their blessed hope of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Growing disciples will also seek daily opportunities to minister to others. They will recognize and respond to the needs of God's suffering children locally and globally; share the story of Jesus with community members, friends, and co-workers; support the ministries of the local and global church with their personal resources; and embrace the evangelistic mission of the church.

EQUIPPING

This process combines the social and the communal aspect, and is the responsibility of both individual disciples and the corporate body to which they belong. The Apostle Paul described this process and its accomplishment in the life of the church: "Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:15, 16, NIV).

Paul described the church as Christ's body to illustrate the interdependence of the members in achieving its mission. This metaphor helps disciples to understand their role in supporting, nurturing, and strengthening one another. It is within the church that we are discipled and then equipped to disciple others.

Equipping, as defined in the *TGFD* framework, focuses on Christians helping one another grow through the three processes of *Connecting, Understanding,* and *Ministering.* In the New International Version (1994), 72 passages include the phrase "one another," and more than 40 refer to the process of *Equipping.*[6]

Growing Christians have the unique opportunity, through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, to be discipled by other Christians, and in turn, to invest themselves in helping other members to grow spiritually. *Equipping* commitments reflect the actions of those who are fulfilling the Great Commission to "'make disciples'" by "'teaching them to obey all that I commanded you'" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

For a growing discipler, helping other disciples learn to connect with Christ through His Word in a transformational devotional life is an essential commitment. Other commitments include helping other disciples to build Christlike relationships; to study and obey God's Word; to live a contagious, holistic Christian life; to discern where God is working in all aspects of one's life; and to use their spiritual gifts in fulfilling a personal call to mission and ministry.

Because the first command of the Gospel Commission is to *Go,* the "going" has often been emphasized apart from the disciple-making and teaching-equipping processes, which are strongly commanded in these verses. This has been dubbed "the Great Omission" because these vital processes are absent from many models of Christian formation/spiritual development. The discipling and teaching aspects of Christian growth, like ministering, involve serving others. But their key role in the Gospel Commission, as well as the frequent biblical references to building up the community of fellow believers in all three other processes, led to designating Equipping as a separate item in this model.

The *TGFD* framework asserts that

the individual processes will function fully in the lives of the individual members of the Christian body only to the extent that the corporate process is functioning, and vice versa—a symbiotic relationship. In the case of young people and new believers, the corporate process may affect their individual growth more than their individual processes affect the corporate functioning of the body. However, it is important at every level of spiritual maturity for a growing disciple to be concurrently discipling and being discipled by others. The positive influence of encouraging, equipping, and challenging one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ should flow most strongly from the corporate church to the young and new believers, helping them develop their connecting relationships, their understanding, and their ministry.

Christian churches implement the fourth process, *Equipping,* in a variety of ways. Although aspects of it appear in the goals of various ministries (pastoral, children and youth, education), the equipping principles are often neglected in these activities. Ministry usually involves a disciple at one level attempting to address the needs of disciples at a different level, or of non-disciples. It tends to be hierarchical instead of reciprocal, and programmatic rather than relational. Because many church ministries function in this way (Sabbath school classes, youth and Bible study groups), their structure tends to obscure the need of those ministering or leading to also be discipled.

The church's attempt to implement the process of equipping can also be seen in religious education, whether it be formal (denominational schools), non-formal (at church and camps, etc.), or through socialization (home and society). Education clearly occurs in many areas of life. However, within the church, planners must not focus on the cognitive to the exclusion of the relational—favoring information over

the sharing of personal faith and story (see Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Relational stories of personal faith, although often left untold, can be of profound influence in the discipling process. However, religious educators in the formal, non-formal, and social settings may not recognize that a form of equipping (discipling) also happens through, or can be sabotaged by, the "hidden curriculum" of the lives and attitudes of fellow believers. The actions of members of the body of Christ that others see and imitate can form a "hidden curriculum" that counteracts the goals of discipleship. This is the reason for the order of God's commands given to Israelite adults in the SHEMA ISRAEL (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NKJV). Having "'these words, which I command you today,'" in their hearts preceded God's command to "'teach them diligently'" to their children. Belonging—to a family, a congregation, or a society—influences a person to be like the group. "The regular interaction of church members is a powerful form of education because it influences the perspective by which members interpret the Christian faith."[7] The "hidden curriculum" can occur in any context in which people are learning.

Growing God's Kingdom

From these basic concepts of discipleship and discipling, articulated by the ministries departments of the General Conference and religious educators from Andrews University, grew the TGFD framework that can be used to be intentional and balanced about how we help and guide our fellow believers in preparing for God's kingdom. ✐

To learn more about the TGFD *Framework, go to http://www.growing fruitfuldisciples.org.*

Kathleen Beagles, Ph.D., *is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Discipleship and Religious Education at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. She represents Andrews University on the Creative Advisory for the* Together Growing Fruitful Disciples *model of discipleship.*

Juvenal Balisasa, M.A., *is a Chaplain at Valley View University in Accra, Ghana, and is completing a Ph.D. in Religious Education at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES
1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture texts in this article are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible.*

2. For example, Matthew 7:12; John 15:12; Romans 12:10; 14:3; 5:7; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:4; Hebrews 10:24, 25; 1 John 4:11, 12.

3. *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* is the full, legal name of this discipleship framework. However, the term "Growing Fruitful Disciples" and acronym *TGFD* are often used in its place for simplicity.

4. To view the complete framework in graphic form, see page 19 of this issue.

5. For an article by Gordon Kainer defining the concept of "biblical worldview," go to http://circle. adventist.org//files/jae/en/jae201073021006.pdf.

6. Examples include Zechariah 7:9; John 13:34; Romans 12:16; 13:8, 15:14; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:9; 1 John 3:11, 23; 2 John 1:5; Hebrews 3:13.

7. C. Ellis Nelson, *Growing Up Christian: A Congregational Strategy for Nurturing Disciples* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), p. 97.

Together Growing Fruitful Disciples

FRAMEWORK

The Together Growing Fruitful Disciples *Curriculum Framework was developed by a team of educators at Andrews University in collaboration with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: Dr. Larry Burton, Dr. Glynis Bradfield, and Monica Desir, School of Education; Dr. Kathleen Beagles and Dr. Jane Thayer, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. To receive notification when the framework has been revised, please go to www.growingfruitfuldisciples.com/notify, and follow the directions to add your name to the distribution list.*

Connecting
Growing in relationship with God, self, and others.

As a growing disciple, I am:
1. Developing a dynamic relationship with God.
2. Developing an identity that is complete in Christ.
3. Developing Christ-centered family relationships.
4. Developing Christ-centered relationships in the local and global church as a member of the body of Christ.
5. Developing positive relationships with those outside the church to fulfill the Gospel commission.

Understanding
Growing in knowledge of Jesus and His teachings.

As a growing disciple, I am:
1. Realizing that Christ calls me to be His disciple.
2. Realizing that God is the source of life.
3. Realizing about the human fall from God's original plan, and its consequences.
4. Realizing that God has provided everything that is needed for the redemption of human beings.
5. Realizing that God has provided everything needed for the restoration of human beings into the image of God.

Ministering
Growing in participation in God's mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration.

As a growing disciple, I am:
1. Seeking opportunities in all daily activities to minister to others.
2. Investing myself in the discipleship of others.
3. Recognizing and responding to the needs of God's suffering children in the local community and around the world.
4. Supporting the ministries of the local and global church with my personal resources.
5. Embracing the evangelistic mission of the church to tell the world the story of Jesus.

Equipping
Growing the Body of Christ by walking alongside other disciples in order to support, nurture, and strengthen in love.

As a growing discipler, I am:
1. Helping other disciples engage in a transformational devotional life.
2. Helping other disciples build Christ-like relationships.
3. Helping other disciples study and obey God's word.
4. Helping other disciples live a contagious, holistic Christian life.
5. Helping other disciples discern where God is working in His world and in their lives.
6. Helping other disciples use their spiritual gifts in fulfilling a personal call to mission and ministry.

Connecting: *Growing in relationship with God, self, and others*

C1. To develop a dynamic, deepening, love relationship with God, I am:
C1.1 communing with God regularly through His word, prayer, and other Christian disciplines.
C1.2 participating with other believers in worshiping God on Sabbath and at other times.
C1.3 worshiping God daily as a living sacrifice by choosing His will over my own will.
C1.4 paying attention to what God is doing and praising Him for His love and faithfulness.
C1.5 participating with God in His mission of reconciliation and restoration.

C2. To develop an individual identity that is complete in Christ, I am:
C2.1 surrendering my heart and my will to God.
C2.2 learning that God places infinite value on me.
C2.3 recognizing my continual need of God's forgiving and empowering grace.
C2.4 inviting the Holy Spirit to guide in my ongoing self-reflection and actions.
C2.5 embracing cultural expectations that are aligned with the Bible and replacing those that are not.

C3. To develop Christ-centered family relationships, I am:
C3.1 recognizing that my commitment to Christ takes priority over every human relationship.
C3.2 contributing, supporting, and extending unconditional love to those within my family circle.
C3.3 holding as sacred my family commitments and responsibilities to parents, spouse, and children.
C3.4 passing on the Christian faith to my children through both teaching and living an authentic Christian life.
C3.5 practicing hospitality, welcoming into my family or home those who God brings to my attention.
C3.6 committing to live by biblical standards of sexual morality.

C4. To develop Christ-centered relationships in the local and global church as a member of the body of Christ, I am:
C4.1 being supported and nurtured by the community of believers.
C4.2 praying with and for fellow believers, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and caring for those who are in need.
C4.3 loving and serving the church's children, and continuing to disciple them as they mature into adults.
C4.4 treating others redemptively when they are disciplined or shunned by church or society.
C4.5 keeping informed and responding to news and stories of the world church.

C5. To develop positive relationships with those outside the church, I am:
C5.1 respecting and praying for non-believers because all are of infinite value to their Creator.
C5.2 being a good neighbor, participating in community life, and helping those in need.
C5.3 being ethical in all my business dealings and in my professional and personal life.
C5.4 reflecting the character of Christ in all my interactions with others.

Understanding: *Growing in knowledge of Jesus and His teachings*

U1. To understand that Christ calls me to be His disciple, I am realizing that:

U1.1 by beholding Jesus and abiding in Him, I will continue to grow more Christ-like.

U1.2 the love of Christ constrains me to a life of obedience and self-denial.

U1.3 all biblical teachings illustrate the character and mission of Christ.

U1.4 being a disciple involves all of my life – my worldview, my relationships, and my purpose and mission.

U1.5 I will participate in the body of Christ and its work in the world.

U1.6 I accept life – both now and eternally – as a gift from God to be shared with others.

U2. To understand that God is the source of life, I am realizing that:

U2.1 God is the creator and sustainer of the universe, including all people created in His image.

U2.2 God is a triune God consisting of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

U2.3 God reveals Himself to us in many ways, but most clearly through His Son, the Incarnate Word.

U2.4 God is love and He desires from me a response of love for Himself and for others.

U2.5 the God-given purpose of humanity is to glorify God through daily life, work, and relationships with others.

U3. To understand the consequences of the human fall from God's original plan, I am realizing that:

U3.1 the Great Controversy between God and Satan originated in heaven.

U3.2 because of the disobedience of the first human beings, I have a will to sin and a sinful nature.

U3.3 the ten-commandment law of God expresses the character of God and gives the standard for human conduct.

U3.4 the natural world no longer reflects the perfection in which God created it.

U3.5 the Bible is needed to interpret the natural world as an expression of the character of God.

U4. To understand that God has provided everything that is needed for my redemption, I am realizing that:

U4.1 salvation and eternal life are gifts to me through the grace of God.

U4.2 Christ came to Earth to reveal the character of God and to die in my place as atonement for my sin.

U4.3 the love of God draws me to feel sorrow for my sin, to confess, and to repent.

U4.4 God forgives sin and heals brokenness.

U5. To understand that God has provided everything needed for my restoration, I am realizing that:

U5.1 Jesus died to redeem me from sin and now lives to restore me to physical, mental, and spiritual wholeness.

U5.2 through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ will live in me and I will live in Him.

U5.3 because every person is created in God's image, my relationships will be based on love, forgiveness, and respect.

U5.4 the Holy Spirit daily prompts me to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.

U5.5 God expects me to be a steward of all He created.

U5.6 the Great Controversy ends when God brings an end to sin and restores Earth to its original perfection.

Ministering: *Growing in participation in God's mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration*

M1. To seek opportunities in all daily activities to minister to others, I am:

M1.1 inviting God to change me to bear the fruits of the Spirit.

M1.2 choosing Jesus as a daily companion and sharing Him joyfully.

M1.3 investing myself in service wherever the Holy Spirit leads.

M1.4 carrying out my occupation as a calling to ministry.

M1.5 building networks for friendship, fellowship, and support.

M2. To invest myself in the discipleship of others, I am:

M2.1 willing to be mentored by maturing Christians, accountable for my spiritual growth.

M2.2 willing to be humble and honest when sharing my walk as a disciple.

M2.3 committing time and effort to mentoring growing Christians.

M2.4 working intentionally to train fellow believers to disciple others.

M3. To recognize and respond to the needs of God's suffering children locally and globally, I am:

M3.1 looking for physical, mental, social and spiritual needs in the local community.

M3.2 responding mercifully to the discovered needs, individually and/or as a church.

M3.3 speaking out and acting to relieve suffering and injustice in society.

M3.4 reducing human suffering by being a faithful steward of God's creation.

M3.5 acting compassionately on behalf of people who are disadvantaged or at risk.

M4. To support the ministries of the local and global church with personal resources, I am:

M4.1 managing my resources with the understanding that all belong to God.

M4.2 returning a faithful tithe and giving offerings systematically.

M4.3 serving in one or more ministries of my local church.

M4.4 participating personally, as possible, in global service projects or ministries.

M5. To embrace the evangelistic mission of the church, I am:

M5.1 praying for the Holy Spirit to prepare me to reach others for Christ.

M5.2 choosing to be aware of the spiritual climate locally and globally.

M5.3 using my spiritual gifts to help tell the world the story of Jesus.

M5.4 able to give a reason for my faith when asked.

M5.5 sharing the story of my personal relationship with Jesus with community members, family, friends, and co-workers.

Equipping: *Growing the Body of Christ by walking alongside one another in love*

E1.   To help believers engage in a transformational devotional life, I am showing others how to:
E1.1   study the Bible to know Christ and to develop a biblical worldview.
E1.2   communicate with God through prayer and Christian meditation.
E1.3   participate in other Christian disciplines to be open to the Holy Spirit.
E1.4   set priorities to allow for regular, quality devotional time.
E1.5   seek spiritual-growth opportunities with other believers.

E2.   To help believers build Christ-like relationships, I am showing others how to:
E2.1   inventory themselves, acknowledge defects of character, and invite God to remove them.
E2.2   work with God to care for themselves and live a balanced life.
E2.3   cherish, respect, and nurture family members as children of God.
E2.4   be discipled by other believers in the body of Christ.
E2.5   resolve conflicts within the home, church, workplace, and community.

E3.   To help believers study and obey God's word, I am showing others how to:
E.3.1   understand the purpose of Scripture.
E.3.2   use study tools to more effectively interpret biblical meanings.
E.3.3   discover study methods that will help them engage in regular Bible study.
E.3.4   apply biblical principles to their lives thoughtfully and faithfully.
E.3.5   discern spiritual truth in a balanced manner.

E4.   To help believers live a contagious, holistic Christian life, I am showing others how to:
E4.1   understand the biblical teaching to love the Lord with our heart, soul, strength, and mind.
E4.2   explain how Christ is the center of all biblical teachings.
E4.3   express Christ's love by creatively using their talents and interests.
E4.4   apply biblical principles to every aspect of their lives — mind, body, and spirit.
E4.5   lead someone to accept and follow Christ.

E5.   To help believers discern where God is working, I am showing others how to:
E5.1   pray for a clear understanding of what God wants to accomplish through them.
E5.2   recognize the work of the Holy Spirit within and around them.
E5.3   detect where God is calling them to serve.
E5.4   assess the needs of those God has called them to serve.
E5.5   evaluate the culture they are called to serve in, in order to find and reach others.

E6.   To help believers use their spiritual gifts to fulfill a personal call to mission and ministry, I am showing others how to:
E6.1   confer with fellow believers to confirm and refine their areas of spiritual giftedness.
E6.2   be prepared for mission and ministry by participating in training programs.
E6.3   disciple other believers in the body of Christ.
E6.4   choose and participate in ministries that use their gifts and talents.
E6.5   find ways to support Adventist mission and evangelism, ministries, and education.

THE GROWING DISCIPLES INVENTORY

Assessing the Spiritual Development Goals of Christian Education

Psychological inventories of personality, interest, abilities, and values inform decisions regarding career direction and personal development. Measures of physical fitness build self-awareness and facilitate realistic individual goal setting for physical wellbeing. Academic assessments provide information to improve teaching and learning.

However, the purpose of Christian education is broader than the transmission of knowledge or the achievement of national or regional educational agendas; rather, it seeks "the whole-person equipping" of students for "knowledgeable and competent discipleship in a hurting world."[1] Thus, we need effective ways to assess our success in achieving core Christian education goals for both curricular and co-curricular learning.

Schools committed to integrating faith and values will seek to evaluate moral, religious, and spiritual education outcomes as well as academic achievement.[2] "Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about."[3]

While a variety of norm-referenced measures of religiosity and spirituality exist for adults, in 2009 the author of this article could find no criterion-referenced assessments of adolescent Christian spiritual development utilizing online technology. Personal experience in teaching and leading Adventist schools in several countries, across three divisions, prompted further study of the principles of Adventist education, and whatever could be found on Adventist curriculum and assessments glob-

BY GLYNIS BRADFIELD

ally. The apparent gap between the broad goals set for Christian character and faith development, and how their achievement was assessed, strongly suggested the need for research and practical solutions.

This article (1) defines Christian spiritual development and why it should be assessed; (2) introduces the *Growing Disciples Inventory* (*GDI*) as a specific tool for evaluating Christian spiritual development; and (3) suggests practical ways to use the *GDI* to facilitate spiritual growth in Christian education.

Discipleship: Lifelong Christian Spiritual Development

Christian spiritual development has been described as a journey,[4] "an intentional and continual commitment to a lifelong process of growth toward wholeness in Christ."[5] *Discipleship* has been defined as the ongoing process of "becoming a complete and competent follower of Jesus Christ."[6] Thus, a *growing disciple* is a Christian engaged in the process of lifelong *spiritual development* who in turn mentors or *disciples* other Christians.

The terms *disciple* and *discipleship* are used to capture the Christian perspective on lifelong Christian spiritual development as articulated in the *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples (TGFD)* framework, to which the *Growing Disciples Inventory* (introduced in this article) was aligned. Reading pages 15-23 will provide a helpful overview of the *TGFD* framework, as space does not allow for a complete description here. Throughout this article, the term *Christian spiritual development* is used in place of *discipleship,* for consistency and ease of understanding.

Selecting the *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* Curriculum

The absence of assessments that provided opportunities for formative assessment of integrated and cumulative learning throughout Adventist education spurred a search for a curriculum that transcended regional and/or level-specific (e.g., Bible or religion course) curricula. Assessment of class-specific skills, concepts, and understanding are essential, but better tools can provide a more detailed analysis.

Recent research has helped to inform decisions about the development of a valid spiritual growth self-assessment tool. For some time, the study of human development has branched into several rather insular fields (cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development). Faith development studies by Fowler[7] and Westerhoff,[8] for example, led to planning for religious education based on the assumption that students develop sequentially through specific stages. More recently, computerized modeling has provided evidence[9] that human development is more cyclical or web-like, rather than sequential or ladder-like, as postulated by earlier theories. Continuing research on human development has informed the *TGFD* cyclical mode, which recognizes that through life, individual growth deepens in the same areas of development.

Optimal Christian spiritual development has been described as *holistic growth* toward maturity in beliefs, attitudes, and relational practices.[10] The Adventist view of true education as the "harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers"[11] indicates the need for assessments of essential learnings that span sacred-secular curriculum chasms—even in schools committed to Christ-centered education.

Assessing Spiritual Growth?

In the past two decades, several empirical studies have assessed various aspects of Christian spiritual development in Adventist schools.[12] These large studies had an indirect impact on individual students because of organizational change that occurred when educators implemented the recommended changes in their home, church, or school settings. Self-assessment tools can assist both the student and the teacher in Spirit-led planning for lifelong spiritual development.

But is it even possible to assess Christian spiritual development? Gorsuch states that "everything that anyone can communicate to another in any form can be quantitatively analysed."[13] While recognizing the complexity of measuring personal spirituality, Moberg[14] argues that the spiritual nature of humanity is just as amenable to study as other attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. Although these cannot be directly observed, they have become acceptable topics for behavioral science research.

The working of the Holy Spirit in a student's life is not always visible. However, reflective assignments and self-assessments can help both the student and teacher recognize God's working through the "real-life curriculum"—all that the student experiences daily, both during and beyond schooling.

Although the objectivity of assessing oneself has been questioned, all assessments are imprecise to some degree and represent, at best, estimates of what a learner knows and can do. Tuck[15] argues that examiners, and even teachers who interact with students daily, do not know students as well as students know themselves. Students thus learn more when they understand the criteria and apply them in self-assessment.[16]

Aligned to the Together Growing Fruitful Disciples Curriculum

As a brief introduction to the *TGFD* framework to which the *Growing Disciples Inventory* is aligned, it will be helpful to compare several models. Boa's[17] in-depth exploration of 12 approaches to Christian spirituality builds on the premise that all growing Christians, regardless of temperament and natural aptitude, need a healthy balance of doctrine/knowing, experience/being, and practice/doing. The *TGFD* processes of *Connecting, Understanding,* and *Ministering* correspond to Boa's constructs. Both models correspond with what Rice[18] labels as *Being, Believing,* and *Behaving.* Two other Christian education summations of the holistic nature of Christian spiritual devel-

opment use similar three-part models, correlating with the affective, cognitive, and behavioral domains respectively: *educating the head, heart, and hand,*[19] and *helping students know, love, and serve God.*[20] While three or four words cannot fully capture a theological construct, each model reflects the essence of the personal processes of the *TGFD* framework structure, as shown in Table 1.

The community process of *Equipping* may appear to overlap with the individual process of *Ministering* or serving. *Equipping* focuses on Christians helping *one another* to grow in the three individual processes of *Connecting, Understanding,* and *Ministering*. Of the 86 Bible passages including the phrase *one another* in the New International Version (1984), more than 40 refer to the process of *Equipping*, as these examples demonstrate: encourage and build *one another* (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8; 5:11, Hebrews 3:13); instruct *one another* (Romans 15:14); serve *one another* in love (Galatians 5:13); forgive *one another* (Colossians 3:13); comfort *one another* (2 Corinthians 1:4); and live in harmony with *one another* (Romans 12:16, 1 Peter 3:8).

The alignment of these models supports the *TGFD* four-cyclical processes model. Additional evidence was provided through structural equation modeling to determine the validity of the *Growing Disciples Inventory*.

The Development and Validation of the *Growing Disciples Inventory*

The online *Growing Disciples Inventory (GDI)* was developed and validated using a mixed-methods approach to educational design research.[21] Following cycles of development, expert review, and usability testing, 595 grade 7-12 students attending eight Adventist middle and high schools on three continents completed the final 100-item *GDI* online. Each cycle of design research provided evidence of the inventory's effectiveness in facilitating Christian spiritual development.

The biblically based *TGFD* model provides a framework to explore the cycles of lifelong Christian spiritual development. Focused on growth, it assumes as a baseline a personal decision to follow Christ. The cyclical nature of this framework recognizes the diversity of learning styles and the varied ways people come to know, love, and serve God. Thus, the *GDI* was developed for individual use, within the context of the home, church, or Christian school where students and others have become or are interested in becoming followers of Christ. It was not designed as a system-wide assessment, as it would be inappropriate in schools where the majority of students are from non-Christian backgrounds. In such situations, it may still be useful in Christian worship and Bible study situations.

After the *GDI* is completed, reports can be immediately and securely accessed online. A concise, visual report is presented as a circle graph and four bar graphs, as shown in Figure 1. This provides two levels of comparative information. Color-coded graph segments depict the results within the four *TGFD* framework's cyclical processes, and the five or six more specific commitments or objectives, within each process, as shown in the bar graph. Smaller segments represent a self-assessed area needing development; larger segments are currently perceived as areas of strength. Because of (1) the cyclical nature of spiritual growth; (2) the inextricable connections between the discipleship Processes, Commitments, and Indicators (see the *TGFD* framework, pages 19-23); and (3) human nature, which always seeks to compare and label, *GDI* reports do not include numerical values.

While values are never included in reports, they have been added to the bar graphs in Figure 1 to show the mean of the 595 student responses in the validation study while developing the *GDI*. How might such a report about your students influence what you plan to teach and test across the curriculum or how you focus your school's spiritual life plan? Clearly, Christian education strengthens understanding of biblical truths and nurtures connecting with God, self, and others. Results indicate that students rated their experience in a broad range of ministering or service options and engaging in equipping (*being discipled* while *discipling others*) as growth points. In perspective, where comparable items were found, these findings are consistent with prior studies of adolescent faith.[22] Should this not prompt the rethinking of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure that holistic Christian spiritual development is made a high priority?

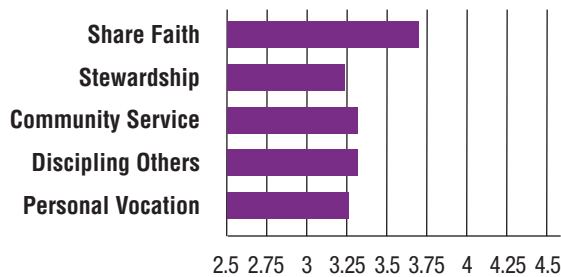| Table 1. Comparison of Models of Christian Spiritual Development						
Together Growing Fruitful Disciples Model		Boa	Rice	Taylor	Trent, et al.	Domains
Personal Processes	**Connecting**	Experience	Being	Heart	Love	Affective
	Understanding	Doctrine	Believing	Head	Know	Cognitive
	Ministering	Practice	Behaving	Hand	Serve	Behavioral
Community Processes	**Equipping** one another in the processes of Connecting, Understanding, and Ministering					

Figure 1. *Growing Disciples Inventory* Individual Report With Research Data

THE BIG PICTURE

Four Ways of Growing Spiritually

MINISTERING — CONNECTING

EQUIPPING — UNDERSTANDING
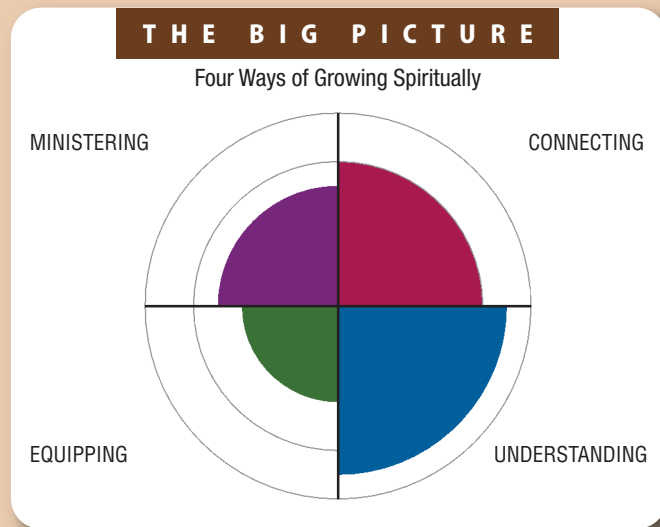
MINISTERING

Growing by participating in God's mission to reveal and restore

- Share Faith
- Stewardship
- Community Service
- Discipling Others
- Personal Vocation

2.5 2.75 3 3.25 3.5 3.75 4 4.25 4.5

CONNECTING

Growing in relationship with God, self, and others

- With Others
- With Church
- With Family
- With Self
- With God

2.5 2.75 3 3.25 3.5 3.75 4 4.25 4.5
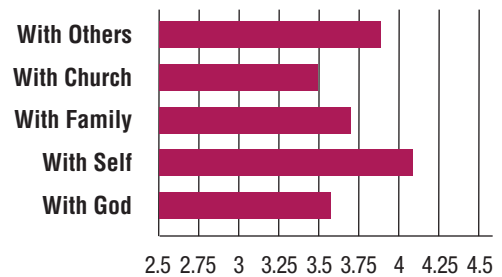
EQUIPPING

Growing the body of Christ by discipling one another

- Using Spiritual Gifts
- Doing God's Will
- Christian Lifestyle
- Bible Study
- Christ-like Relationships
- Devotional Life

2.5 2.75 3 3.25 3.5 3.75 4 4.25 4.5
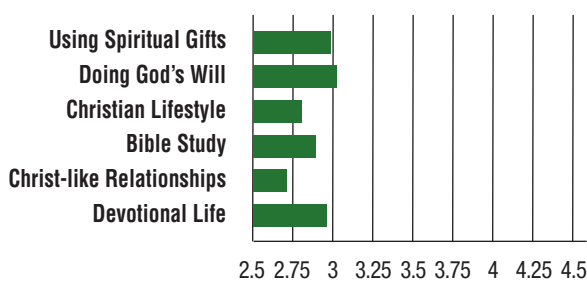
UNDERSTANDING

Growing through knowledge of Jesus and His teachings

- Restoration
- Redemption
- Sin & Suffering
- God

2.5 2.75 3 3.25 3.5 3.75 4 4.25 4.5
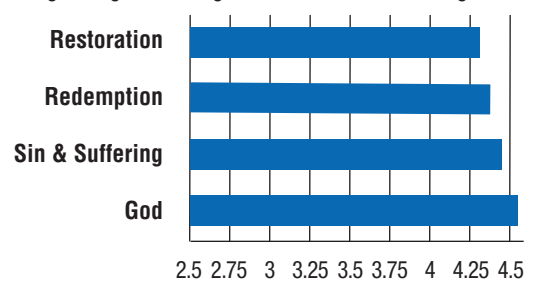
Using the *Growing Disciples Inventory* in Your School

No prior knowledge of the *TGFD* framework is needed to administer or complete the *GDI*. However, the value of completing the *GDI* will be maximized when the students review the *GDI* with a mature Christian who has carefully considered the *TGFD* framework and understands the key concepts of *discipleship*, *disciple*, and *discipling*.

To access the *GDI*, go to http://growingfruitfuldisciples. com/gdi. After completing the 15-minute inventory, a password-protected report is instantly available online to anyone 13 years or older. A short paper version (download at http://growing

fruitfuldisciples.com/gdishorte.pdf or request from the author) can be copied, completed, and discussed within two class periods. Either format could be used as (1) a personal self-awareness activity, (2) an introduction to a course, or (3) a key component of a school-wide spiritual master plan. The online version contains prompts to guide you, and the computer instantly scores each student's report. The online report includes links to the *TGFD* framework, suggested activities, and other resources for students completing the *GDI* with teacher guidance.

Students and teachers who have completed the *GDI* have provided valuable feedback, suggesting ways to use this self-assessment tool with adolescents and young adults in a variety of settings.

To use the GDI *during a specific course, a teacher might:*

1. Introduce the concept of discipleship; have students take the *GDI* and reflect on their individual reports; discuss observations in groups or alone; or have students write a thought paper on their journey to this point, and where they see God leading them to grow next. If your class has a flexible lesson plan, you might allow several days to address student discoveries and follow up on class interests. Or you can create a list of questions to address in greater depth when they fit into the prescribed curriculum.

2. Before introducing the concept of discipleship, have students take the *GDI* and print their reports. Compile a list of questions raised by the individual student reports or your group (class) reports. Then weave the answers to these questions into a series of lessons on discipleship, having students review their reports to connect new understandings from the discipleship lessons to their self-assessment.

3. Begin the school year by having students take the *GDI*, and file their reports as the first item in a discipleship portfolio. Have each student complete a *Christian Spiritual Growth Plan* (e.g., http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/action-plan-blank.doc). Sample activities (or actions) that enhance spiritual growth and that correspond with each of the *TGFD* framework Commitments (or objectives) are available online at http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/action-plan. Either (a) commit to meeting with students individually at least three times during a term/year to discuss their progress (confidentially, using their individual report as a diagnostic and formative assessment tool); or (b) pair students to equip each other, with accountability checkpoints and clear expectations for what to include in the portfolio (i.e., equipping them to disciple others while being discipled by you). Portfolios should reflect the holistic goals of Adventist education, with personal goals set for spiritual, physical, mental, and social development. Ideally, these holistic and personal goals should align with the *TGFD* Processes, Commitments, and Indicators. Repeat the *GDI* at the end of the year/class, and use part of the final exam/essay to have students reflect on changes they have made based on their spiritual plan, and what they plan to do about what they discovered.

4. Create a group account (for details, go to http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/group-reg-info). Have students enter the group code when they take their individual *GDI*. Every time individual students are assigned to take the *GDI*, a group report can be accessed to provide anonymous aggregate data for the class/group. This data could be used to (1) adjust plans for topics to cover within a defined course curriculum, (2) adjust the length of time allotted to each topic; (3) influence choices made about which assignments and service projects to assign. Group reports facilitate student-centered teaching and learning.

The General Conference and Andrews University work in partnership to coordinate the development of resources aligned to the *TGFD* framework. Free use of the *GDI* is made possible by the General Conference and the creator of the Inventory.

- *GDI* – online youth version: http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/gdi
- *GDI* – short paper version: http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/gdishorte.pdf
- A full paper version and translations are under construction for school or church use. Adult and child versions will follow. Check availability at http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com.

To use the GDI *to plan curricular and co-curricular learning experiences in contexts where students are open to or already committed to Christ, the educator(s) might do the following:*

A. Under the leadership of a pastor, counselor, or Bible/religion teacher, the *GDI* group report can be used to gauge spiritual climate (i.e., a summative evaluation at a point in time). Such a report could (a) be included in a school evaluation report, (b) guide the spiritual master plan for the year, or (c) be used in choosing Week of Prayer speakers, worship programs, outreach and service projects, or as the focus of camp experiences, etc. The sample action plans for each *TGFD* framework Commitment, available at http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/action-plan, could facilitate this level of planning.

B. Choose a specific class in which students will take the *GDI*. This could begin a portfolio requirement as in Option 3 above. As part of the school-wide spiritual master plan, projects begun in one class could be included as part of a portfolio requirement that continues for one or more years, and culminates in a final project for a capstone course prior to graduation.

C. At the undergraduate/college level, include the *GDI* (1) in

a Christian Life course, (2) as an activity in a small-group Bible study, (3) as preparation for student mission experience, (4) in student counseling, and (5) as an invitation to reflect on the student's spiritual experience on campus during senior testing.

D. When adopting a new Bible or religion curriculum, the *GDI* could be used as a pre- and post-assessment. Data from the group report could aid in assessing and improving curriculum and instruction.

E. The *TGFD* framework Processes, Commitments, and Indicators could be used as a checklist to review the Bible curriculum. If necessary, supplement existing courses, or create new components to fill major gaps. "In Step With Jesus," the *New Members' Bible Study Guide* series (four books, 13 lessons each), which is aligned with the *TGFD* framework, may be a helpful tool for older adolescents or young adults. (See pages 46 to 48 for an article about this series.) The iFollow discipleship resources available online through http://ifollowdiscipleship.org are another excellent source for youth and adult students.

F. Reporting findings from the large U.S.A. National Study on Youth and Religion, Smith and Denton[23] captured the importance of the religious experience of significant adults in the lives of adolescents with this phrase, "We get what we are." *The quality of student spiritual life is significantly impacted by the quality of each teacher's commitment to following Christ, aware that their actions speak louder than their best curriculum, instruction, or assessments.* The *GDI* can be a helpful staff assignment, as well. Each year, another aspect of discipleship could be chosen to equip colleagues first, and then to build stronger students for Christ.

Conclusion

A slogan caught my attention recently. It succinctly describes the purpose of the *Growing Disciples Inventory*: "Know to grow." The *GDI* is a self-assessment that can provide tools to help you grow and equip your students to be "knowledgeable and competent disciples in a hurting world."[24] It is hoped that the *GDI* will facilitate reflection and planning for Christian education in home, church, or school settings. ✍

This article has been peer reviewed.

Glynis Bradfield, Ph.D., *is the Director of Student Services at the Andrews University School of Distance Education, including Griggs International Academy, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Dr. Bradfield created the* Growing Disciples Inventory *and enjoys helping teachers find and share resources through circle.adventist.org that facilitate Christian spiritual development. For more information about the* GDI, *feel free to e-mail glynisb@andrews.edu.*

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A COLLISION
OF FAITH
Church · Home · School

Our higher calling—and God's ultimate desire—is for our students to connect, in a real way, with Him. We fight to compete for the attention of our students in a modern world that pulls at the materialistic, mind dulling, self-loving human nature in all of us. How then, can we truly nurture in our students a meaningful encounter with God? (From the "Encounter" Bible Curriculum Overview)[1]

"Growing in Discipleship" is the mission statement for the Greater Sydney Conference in Australia. All of the conference's ministries, including the church's educational system, are working together to create a disciple-making environment. The *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* (*TGFD*) model is being used extensively in this process.[2]

The *TGFD* model provides a framework for developing a shared understanding of discipleship, as well as for shaping and delivering resources. Pastors, teachers, and church leaders are able to see how the various resources and processes being promoted by the conference fit into the overall discipleship picture.

A key focus area in the discipleship strategy is being intentional about creating disciple-making environments for children. It is during childhood that worldviews are shaped, values are formed, and most decisions for Christ are made.[3]

No one program, event, ministry, or even school can do it alone. We must connect the dots between home, school, and church. While spiritual growth is the Holy Spirit's work, the Greater Sydney Conference believes it is called to do all it can to create environments conducive to the Spirit's leading.

Church

Over the past four years, the Greater Sydney Conference has invested significant resources into creating healthy church discipleship environments. The conference has trained its pastors and elders extensively in the *TGFD* discipleship model, and much work has been done to help pastors grow in their spiritual walk with God. This has included

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spiritual growth workshops, a guided reading program, emphasis on personal spirituality, as well as pastors' meetings and retreats.

Every second week, pastors from across Sydney come together for discipleship resourcing and to discuss how they are implementing their discipleship plans. The conference discipleship coordinator meets with church leadership teams to guide them in discerning God's guidance for their congregation. The team then maps out its next step. The *Growing Disciples Inventory* (see pages 24 to 29 of this issue of JAE for an overview of this tool) is used to give a quick overview of the congregation. The *TGFD* framework helps the church identify areas of needed growth, as well as ways to synergize the ministries of the church toward discipleship.

Conference leaders are pleased with how congregations have embraced the model. While each church expresses differently what it means to "be church" and may be working on a different "next step," overall the churches are working together with a common framework.

Conference leadership has observed significant increases in various measures of church health. Nonetheless, the conference's strategic planning team still felt they were missing the mark. It was then that they developed and began to implement the "Home Grown" discipleship strategy.

Home Grown

The Home Grown strategy still uses the *TGFD* framework as a base but modifies it to function in a home environment. The Greater Sydney Conference recognizes that, for the most part, the church is the watering can while what happens at home is the soil of discipleship. It is in the home where most children come to understand how to interpret the world. It is here, too, that most children are first exposed to a model of what it means to be a disciple.

In the early chapters of *Child Guidance*, Ellen White spells out the importance of the home being the primary environment for discipleship:

"It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life."[4]

Subsequent chapters outline the important role of the school in shaping a child's character. Chapter 54 describes how teachers and parents can work in partnership:

"The character of the work done in our church schools should be of the very highest order . . . both at home and at school simplicity and godliness should be maintained."[5]

"Our schools are the Lord's special instrumentality to fit the children and youth for missionary work."[6]

"In the formation of character no other influences count so much as the influence of the home. The teacher's work should supplement that of the parents, but is not to take its place. In all that concerns the well-being of the child, it should be the effort of parents and teachers to cooperate."[7]

Later chapters of *Child Guidance* emphasize the place of a healthy church community in the spiritual formation of children and the need for coordination between the home and the church.

The Home Grown strategy aims to empower every family to take the "next step" in terms of discipleship. From initial observations of its implementation, it appears that once a home takes one discipleship step, other steps soon follow.

One father who joined a Home Grown Sabbath school class realized that he rarely prayed for his children.

Thus, he decided to begin to do so when he dropped them at school and watched them walk through the gate. The next Sabbath, he described how taking this step brought him to tears. He then found himself praying for his children throughout the day. Furthermore, he began to pray that he would be the husband and father his family needed. His family now participates in family worship together, as one step led to another.

The local church, with assistance from the conference, provides supporting ministries: The conference coordinates Home Grown parenting workshops and makes available an electronic newsletter with Home

Grown ideas.[8] It also schedules family worship resourcing events, trains children's ministry leaders to have an impact on the home, and is developing a coaching system in which more-experienced parents mentor younger families.

In the Greater Sydney Conference, the departmental team is working with churches and schools to deliver and promote resources for family worship, tools for growing in faith as a family, and ideas to help in shaping faith-building conversations and experiences.[9] One such resource is the Table Talk tin. This resource, which is being well received, includes conversation-starting questions for families to discuss at mealtime.

Pastors and teachers in the Greater Sydney Conference are being taught that the home has a very significant impact on young lives. If we fail to influence the home, we will never make a lasting impact on students. The "Think Orange" material by Reggie Joiner[10] has been adapted and used extensively in training churches to synergize ministries with a focus on re-activating the home.

The Home Grown strategy invests a great deal of energy and resources to address the consumerist worldview. Marriages, church involvement, and personal spiritual practices are being strangled by this orientation. Church members have beautiful homes that lack spiritually fertile soil, and many need help in understanding and developing a commitment to biblical values. The conference is doing what it can to make the home the primary place for spiritual growth. The Greater Sydney Conference Stewardship Department is addressing worldview issues and promoting a biblical worldview that is conducive to discipleship.[11]

School

Parents are not the only adult influences children need for healthy faith development. Educators also play a significant role in a child's discipleship training.

The Adventist schools of the Greater Sydney Conference are eager to connect the dots between home, church, and school. Denominational schools also participate in the Home Grown strategy, which provides another resource base for parents. Various workshops coordinated through the school,

newsletter sections, and send-home materials are available to assist parents with discipleship in the home.[12] One campus leader teaches a class on Sabbath mornings at a local church to prepare parents for discipleship. This class also has proved to be a useful outreach tool for parents who are not members of the church community.

Our educators understand that while it is important for children to succeed academically, the only thing that will matter in the long run is the child's relationship with God. One school is testing the use of the *TGFD* framework individually for each student, after which the teachers help the children plan their own next step. One principal commented, "We have very intentional programs in place for developing children academically. What would it take to be even more intentional about their faith development?"

Once again, the *TGFD* framework provides a template for understanding for how the home, church, and school can work together. Some educators are using the key discipleship areas to help them craft homework assignments.

The schools provide healthy role models and environments that promote spiritual discovery and growth. A child's faith development is significantly enhanced if other adults who have a relationship with him or her give the same faith message as a parent. Schools are an ideal place for this to happen.

The Adventist schools in the Greater Sydney Conference are currently implementing "Encounter," a new Australia/New Zealand inter-union-coordinated biblical studies curriculum. This curriculum is based on the building blocks of healthy faith development, using the Spiritual Growth model developed by Ben Maxson.[13] The curriculum promotes a worldview that integrates faith into all aspects of life by using the Transformational Planning framework developed by Lanelle Cobbin.[14] The Greater Sydney Conference discipleship coordinator is

making pastors aware of this curriculum so that their sermons, terminology, and local church initiatives can work with the same foundations in mind**.** The Transformation Planning framework provides a delivery system for sharing the *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* concepts.

Some churches work with their local Adventist school to integrate the GraceLink Sabbath school curriculum so that one main message and set of memory verses are being presented at church and school.[15] While still having more work to do, the Greater Sydney Conference schools and churches are committed to collaborating to facilitate faith development. Imagine the synergy if parents, educators, and Sabbath school leaders all come together to pray for and discuss the faith development of each child!

Visions of a Collision Course

The church and the school cannot take the place of the home. Even though amazing stories show how the Holy Spirit changes lives in these environments in spite of difficult home situations, the ideal is to have the school and church complement what happens in the home.

• Children need parents who will help them advance in their relationship with God.

• Children need teachers who promote healthy pictures of what it means to grow in faith.

• Children and youth need churches where they feel welcome and can play an active role.

• Parents need churches that will help them know how to be spiritual leaders.

• Parents need schools that will help them integrate faith and learning.

Imagine the positive impact when faith development in the home, school, and church collide! ✑

Brendan Pratt *is the Discipleship Coordinator and Children's Ministries Director for the Greater Sydney Conference in Epping, New South Wales, Australia. He is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. research program examining how consumerism impacts faith development.*

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TEACHERS AS DISCIPLE-MAKERS in the Classroom

Some years ago, alarmed by statistics showing that more than 50 percent of Adventist young people in North America left the church by their mid-20s,* Pastor Don MacLafferty created the *Kids in Discipleship Ministry* at the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tennessee (now called the *In Discipleship Ministry*). The program focused on training parents to make disciples of their children. In 2003, Pastor MacLafferty and Principal Murray Cooper met to discuss the next step for a discipleship initiative they had launched the previous year at A. W. Spalding Elementary School (AWS), also in Collegedale, Tennessee. MacLafferty and Cooper wanted to train teachers to be disciple-makers of the children in their care.

In a recent interview, Cooper said, "Sometimes it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that just because we are a Seventh-day Adventist school where worship happens every day, all is good regarding the spiritual development of the young people. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Teachers and administrators need to have their own walk with God first to lay the foundation for a school that is spiritually alive. With that foundation in place, there is no limit to what can happen in building spiritual relationships if the teacher is intentional about developing a teaching strategy, similar to preparing for the next math or reading lesson."

For nearly 10 years, AWS has been proactive in focusing on discipleship. Two years ago, the teachers at AWS chose a single discipleship characteristic upon which to focus school-wide: time alone with God (T.A.G.). Teresa Littell wondered how she could possibly teach her kindergarten students to do T.A.G. when most could not yet read. "I know the Holy Spirit gave me my plan," she declared. A friend had given her a small tent shaped like a shark. Using the tent to represent a "big fish," Littell introduced the concept of private prayer, using the story of Jonah. She told her students, "Jonah had three days of time alone with God while he was in the belly of the big fish." She and the children discussed what Jonah might have said to God during his private prayer time.

Littell asked her students to think about a special place at home where they could spend time alone with God. She gave

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* Roger L. Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories From a 10-Year Study* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2000), p. 35.

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each student a paper that said, "My Favorite Place to Spend Time Alone With God Is _____." The children dictated to her the name of their favorite place, then drew a picture of it on the paper. Littell made a classroom book with the pictures, then circulated the book to each family. She sent a letter to each home explaining to the parents what their child was learning about spending time alone with God. Littell encouraged the parents to create their own T.A.G. as models for their children.

The fish tent has become the classroom place for T.A.G. One at a time, the children go into the tent during free time or whenever they have extra minutes throughout the day. Littell has taught her kindergartners that they can use the T.A.G. tent when, like Jonah, they have a problem, and also when they feel happy and want to share that with Jesus. Littell has placed Bible story picture books in the tent along with a laminated picture of a child praying to remind the children to pray during their T.A.G. Her students learn that when they spend time alone with God, they focus on His Word and come to value talking to Him, just as they talk to their friends.

Littell never sends a child into the T.A.G. tent; however, when a child comes to her and says, "I'm having a bad day," is upset, has been hurt, or feels guilty for hurting another person, Littell says, "Do you want some time alone with God?" She has noticed on many occasions that a child will go into the tent shaking with emotional tension and come out calm. "It always touches my heart," she said, "when I walk by the tent and see a child on his or her knees, head bowed, lips moving." The T.A.G. focus has helped young students learn ways to connect to God in a meaningful way.

One of Teresa Littell's kindergarten students prays in the "big fish."

Recently, Littell's classroom was packed with visitors for "Grandparents' Day." She wondered if she should take down the T.A.G. tent to make more space but decided not to. "The tent and what it represents are too important to remove, even for a day," she concluded.
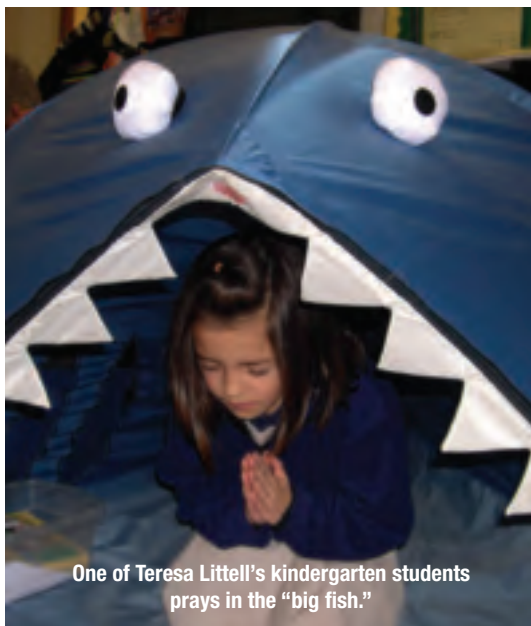
Discipling Older Students

While teaching young children to connect with God requires intentionality, guiding earliteens into a meaningful relationship with Jesus can be especially challenging. Cindy Ladi, 7th-grade homeroom teacher at Collegedale Adventist Middle School (CAMS), has responded to the challenge. A specific area of her discipleship focus is helping students become authentic disciples through prayer. In her Bible classes, Ladi has incorporated meth-

ods that help her students experience intercessory prayer. Ladi teaches her students that Christians need trusted partners to share ideas, concerns, and the need for intercessory prayer. "I want students to become more comfortable sharing private needs with another person and seeking out this experience," she says. She invites the students to choose a partner, share a need that they are comfortable discussing, and pray for each other.

Ladi also uses journals in Bible class, which she alone reads. During journal time, she invites the children to focus on the students in their assigned table groups. The students are to write specific ways that they can be a blessing to each member of their table group in thoughts, words, or actions. Ladi then has the students pray for each member in their group and look out for them throughout the day. When Ladi notices students who seem unwilling or unable to enter into the assigned journal activity, she suggests: "Keep it simple. Just connect to God."

One day a week, part of Ladi's Bible class focuses on T.A.G., which gives the students time for creative self-expression. "When they realize that they can be creative with God, it develops an openness in the way they express themselves to and with God. My students look forward to these moments with God," Ladi says. Facilitating T.A.G. at school has expanded into students setting aside time at home for T.A.G.-related activities. "It's exciting," Ladi says, "to watch students discover that communicating with God isn't boring and for them to look eagerly for an opportunity to spend time with Him."

One activity that Ladi's students especially enjoy is going to the school Prayer Room, a place devoted solely to enabling students to get closer to God. In 2011, Ladi's 7th graders created a Prayer Room to be used by the entire student body at CAMS. Soon afterward, Ladi introduced the class to the Prayer Room, the atmosphere to be maintained, and the procedures to follow. The activities are changed throughout the year to keep the prayer room relevant to students' experiences. One current activity is called "Satan vs. Jesus." Students look through a list of adjectives and categorize each one as describing either Satan or Jesus. They reflect on those that describe Jesus, then write one or more on sticky notes. They stick these to a "Jesus is. . . ." space on the wall and reflect on how they can be more like Him.

Another activity is called "Children of God." The students are invited to sign their names on a white board if they consider themselves children of God. They then trace their hands on a

sheet of paper and reflect on Jesus' love and how they can show others that they are His child. The instructions invite the students to write their names on their handprints, then tape them to the wall around the white board, thereby declaring to others who see their name that they are children of God.

A favorite activity is called "Lead Me to the Cross." The students write their prayer requests on a sticky note with or without their name. To encourage the students to take their requests to Jesus, the notes are tacked to a wooden cross. Students know that others who come to the Prayer Room will read their requests and pray for them. Ladi reports that the very deep and emotional appeals are often tacked to the back of the cross. One student said, "It really moves me to pray for my classmates." At times, students hesitate to participate, yet Ladi reports that even reluctant students try most of the activities.

One 7th grader did not want to go to the Prayer Room, but later decided to try it. Afterwards he said, "That was awesome." He then talked one of his friends into going there, too. "The difference I've seen over the years is the willingness to participate in spiritually focused activities because it's becoming the norm," Ladi said.

During the 2012 winter semester, Ladi's 7th-grade classroom conducted a Week of Spiritual Emphasis for grades 3-5 at A. W. Spalding Elementary School. "This helps my students build Christian leadership skills," Ladi says. If a student feels uncomfortable in a leadership role, Ladi links him or her with another stu-

"Lead Me to the Cross" is a favorite activity of Cindi Ladi's 7th-grade class in the Prayer Room at Collegedale Adventist Middle School.

dent to create a leadership team. Another initiative Ladi uses once each semester challenges students to be a missionary at home by leading their family in worship. Ladi knows that for some students, this is the only family worship they have in the home.

Utilizing Volunteer Classroom Chaplains

Tom Fogg, principal of A. W. Spalding Elementary School, says, "One of the benefits of the discipleship program we initiated at our school is the strengthened relationships in our families as our students live discipleship at home. Another strength is the linking of the home, school, and church in working together for our children." One key element that has helped link home, school, and church is the use of parents, pastors, and church members as classroom chaplains. Individuals who volunteer to become a classroom chaplain commit to giving a worship experience in the classroom once a week, occasionally spending time with the students during recess, and facilitating

community outreach activities for the class. The students come to view the classroom chaplain as a spiritual mentor with whom they can share personal needs.

Carla McKenzie volunteered to be a chaplain at A. W. Spalding for a classroom that included one of her four children. She spent one school year each with grades 2, 3, 5, and 7. McKenzie said, "You go in thinking you have so much to offer spiritually, that you will give the children a foundation for private devotions and mentor them spiritually. After a while, you realize that the children are teaching you. It's incredible to me the level of sharing they did, telling me who Jesus was to them." The children also go home and encourage their parents to schedule private time with God and to have family worship.

In 2009, the Southern Union Office of Education and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference invited MacLafferty to train other schools to focus on discipleship. MacLafferty says, "*Schools in Discipleship* is a simple, practical way to call teachers and students to biblically based spirituality and a life of discipleship." The training event had three goals: (1) to invite and equip the members of each school team to deepen their personal walk with God; (2) to incorporate practical methods to bring intentional discipleship into the classroom; and (3) to unite the team to partner as representatives of the home, school, and church to disciple every child to Jesus Christ.
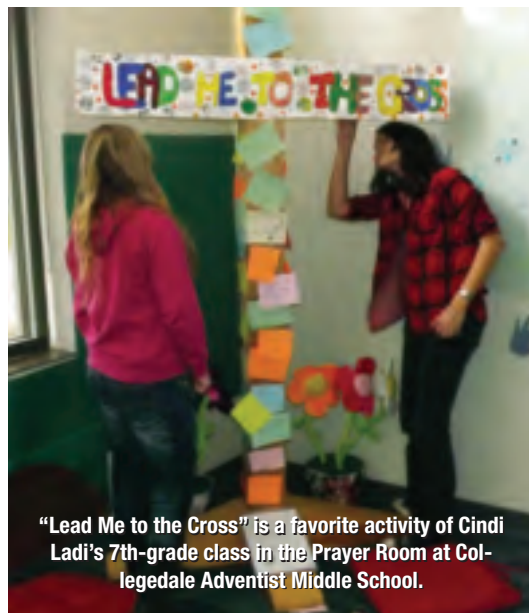
Discipleship in the Bible Curriculum

Gerard Carter attended a *Schools in Discipleship* training event as the teacher in his school team of pastor, principal, parent, and teacher. A 7th-grade teacher at Duluth Adventist Christian School in Georgia, Carter came to teaching in mid-life from another career path. When he first started teaching, God gave him a dream in which he saw himself standing in heaven before God's throne. The Lord said to him, "Turn around." He turned and saw people lined up going into hell's fire. He recognized people he knew, students he was teaching. This experience made him passionate to lead his students into a saving relationship with Jesus. Attending *Schools in Discipleship* gave Carter practical methods to help him do this.

To bring discipleship intentionally into his Bible lessons, Carter utilizes three steps. First, he selects a Bible lesson from his teacher's guide, to which he adds a discipleship goal. Second, he identifies a story from his own faith experience that illustrates that discipleship goal. Last, he identifies a specific

choice to invite his students to make that grows naturally out of the Bible lesson and the discipleship goal.

An example of Carter's Bible lesson adaptation is the chapter "Faith Tried in the Fire" from the 7th-grade Bible textbook, the story of the three young Hebrew men in King Nebuchadnezzar's court. Carter added a discipleship goal to the lesson: to determine to take a stand for Jesus. As he led his students through the Bible lesson, he shared his own story of taking a stand for Jesus. When he became a Seventh-day Adventist, he had a conflict with working on Sabbath. One month after Carter took his stand for Sabbath, instead of being fired, he was promoted and given every Sabbath off. Carter invited his students to share stories of people they knew who have taken a stand for God, then to make a personal choice to stand for Jesus themselves.

Recently, Carter's students conducted a chapel for the school. A Korean girl and recent immigrant helped her classmates present the chapel program. Carter knew the girl had declared to her guardians that she was an atheist, so he felt pleased that she elected to help with the chapel. He reports that her heart is softening as she is being drawn to Jesus. "It's one thing to mentally say you understand what discipleship is about. It's another thing to intentionally disciple another. You have to be a disciple before you can make a disciple," Carter says.

Discipleship in Education Training

One unique discipleship initiative in schools was started in 2009 at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee: *Discipleship for Teachers in Training.* The School of Education and Psychology strategized about ways to equip future teachers with discipleship philosophy, skills, and methods. Dr. Freddy Fuentes says, "All teachers have a serving role to make disciples. Learning to be a teacher is not all about the content. It's also about being connected to God and connected to others. The *In Discipleship Ministry* helped me visualize in a very tangible way a format where I can help myself and my students become better disciples—deepening relationship with God—and teach them how do that with their own students when they become teachers."

The university has implemented a three-stage discipleship program for education majors. Stage One focuses on how to develop and deepen one's own personal journey and is embedded in the Introduction to Education classes. This stage includes a one-day spiritual retreat when education students focus on methods of personal Bible study and prayer. Stage Two will teach methods to use in making disciples of the students in their future classrooms. Among these are methods to teach discipleship skills like leading others to receive Jesus as their personal Savior, to have the assurance of salvation, and to trust Jesus with day-to-day challenges. Stage Three will implement how to be a discipleship advocate in the home, school, church, and community.

Professor Faith Laughlin says, "For too long we have had generations of people growing up as Adventist Christians who are not truly disciples of Jesus Christ. It is the difference be-

tween learning about something or actually experiencing something. I liken discipleship education to studies I've done on language learning. You can learn about Spanish in a classroom filled with English-speaking people but not learn to use the language because you're not jumping in, not doing it. We need to teach our students about discipleship—what it is and why it's important—then give our students the tools they need to jump in and use it in their daily lives."

Fuentes and Laughlin have teamed up to bring intentional discipleship into the teacher education program at Southern Adventist University. "If our teachers are going to make an impact in their future ministry, they need to renew themselves by going constantly to the source—Jesus Christ," Fuentes said. "We want our teacher education program to point out the way to get there, to recognize that they can't have an impact with their own effort."

"Both of us," Laughlin said, "have taught in public schools as well as Seventh-day Adventist schools. We give our students specific tips on how they can be a disciple and a disciple-maker even if they're teaching in public schools. We need missionaries in public schools just as we need missionaries overseas. We let our students know that they will be limited, but it's not impossible."

Scheduling Training Events

Schools in Discipleship training events are scheduled by union conference educational departments and offered by *In Discipleship* without training fees. At the time this article was written, four North American Division unions had held these events: Canadian, Lake, Southern, and Southwestern. The South Pacific Division recently facilitated a "Schools in Discipleship" training event in Vanatu.

School administrators and teachers within NAD who are interested in bringing intentional discipleship into their schools should contact their union office of education to request the scheduling of a local discipleship training event. Those outside NAD should contact their division office of education. For more information, contact *In Discipleship* at (423) 396-2120 or http://www.kidsindiscipleship.org. ✎

Kathy Goddard, M.A., *is an Assistant Professor of English at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee. Her 25 years of experience in Adventist education have included teaching every grade from elementary through college, serving as a Coordinator for a special issue of* The Journal of Adventist Education *on Integrating Faith and Learning, and as the Author and Senior Editor for the 1998 edition of* God Is the Victor, *a 7th-grade North American Division religion textbook. From 2007-2010, she was the Director of Training and Curriculum Design for the* In Discipleship Ministry *in Collegedale.*

DISCIPLESHIP
The Reinventing of Adventist Higher Education

I had just finished teaching a class when one of the students tapped my arm and asked to see me. Upon entering my office, he sat down without a word. Normally an effervescent contributor from the back row, his usual smile was replaced with an agitated nervousness. "Professor," he began, "I'm addicted to sex. My girlfriend and I sometimes have it five or six times a day. And now. . . ," his voice trailed off, "she's pregnant." He paused to gather his thoughts. "She left for Europe this morning to attend classes abroad. I want her to get an abortion, but she wants to keep the baby. I'm too young to be a father, and I'm not sure I can survive without sex while she is gone. What should I do?"

That counseling situation helped me define questions I had about my teaching role:

• *What is my purpose in the classroom?* I saw myself as an expert sharing content, while this student needed a mentor who could help shape his character.

• *How can I have an impact not only on my students' knowledge, but also regarding their life choices?* The answer, I believe, lies in a reinventing of Adventist higher education according to the discipleship model of Jesus.

A close look at Jesus' model of ministry indicates that He not only transmitted truth but also molded and shaped character. Jesus' method for helping His followers incorporate His kingdom principles into their lives used a process of discipleship that profoundly transformed them.

The Purpose of Adventist Higher Education

Comparing Christ's model of education with my own teaching led me to ask whether I had missed the point. Was I dependent on content delivery and lectures rather than character change? In contrast, Jesus' ministry emphasized *transformation* more than *information.*

Ellen White's vision of education also helped steer me in the direction of discipleship. She helped me identify that the purpose of education is to re-

BY ALAN PARKER

store the image of God in humanity.[1] This involves not only the salvation of the student, but also his or her development in all spheres of life. Thus, Christian education is holistic, practical, and eternal in its perspective. According to Ellen White, true education is not simply the acquisition of facts about the sciences and the humanities, but a "knowledge of God."[2] Throughout her writings, she showed that education is not about becoming more intelligent or skillful; it is becoming like Christ.[3]

In a similar vein, Howard Hendricks, who for more than 50 years taught religion and encouraged discipleship at Dallas Theological Seminary, states, "Secular education seeks to make better, more effective, more successful, more intelligent people. The Christian educator aspires to nothing less than the transformation of a believer into the image of Christ."[4]

Hendricks notes additional contrasts between secular education and Christian education. Secular education is concerned with business and money, molecules and matter, people and issues. Christian education is concerned with things that last, such as character and the kingdom of God. Secular education helps a person fit into the world; Christian education helps lift a person above the world.

But how is character transformation achieved? Pointing to the ministry of Christ, Ellen White declared that, "there is no education to be gained higher than that given to the early disciples, and which is revealed to us through the word of God."[5] She stated that "higher education" is about character development, and it can be accomplished only through discipleship.[6] Hendricks comes to the same powerful conclusion as Ellen White. "Christian educators should view themselves as nothing less than disciplers."[7]

Likewise, Arthur Holmes, in his classic work on Christian education,[8] challenges the notion that the Christian college is simply a "defender of the faith." Christian higher education does not exist to "offer a good education plus biblical studies in an atmosphere of piety." Neither is its purpose just to "train people for church-related vocations." He shows that neither of these reasons justifies the expense and time required to offer a distinctive Christian education.[9]

According to Holmes, a Christian liberal-arts education must go beyond the transmission of content or even values to deal with the "making of a person."[10] It is about imaging God in every phase of our human existence.[11] Offering a Christian liberal-arts education means "teaching students to be responsible agents in all of life's relationships, which presupposes our development as reflective and valuing beings."[12]

More recently, a growing chorus of voices has been declaring that the purpose of education should be the shaping of character.[13] David Shields points out that "we have too often equated excellence with the quantity of content learned, rather than with the quality of *character* the person develops." He adds that "the goal of education is not acquiring knowledge alone, but developing the dispositions to seek and use knowledge in effective and ethical ways."[14]

Weaknesses of Contemporary Christian Education

How is this view of person-based education different from what currently happens in most classrooms? Unfortunately, teaching students to make wise choices and helping to shape their character is often considered incidental to the real task of teaching the subject matter of the course. In many courses, the maturity of students is assumed rather than actively directed and promoted.

In higher education, interaction between students and faculty is generally limited to the classroom, especially with large General Education (GE) classes. Since lifestyle and work issues occur outside of the classroom, students quickly learn that they must de-

SALT students work on a scenario with their mentor, Alan Parker, the author of this article, before doing outreach in the community.

velop their own coping mechanisms, and the ones they acquire may be completely unrelated to the class content. Without mentoring, youthful decisions lead to lifetime habits that may endanger young people's future success—both temporal and eternal. Especially in their first two years of college, students are often on their own, drifting between departments trying to choose a major, while at the same time making poor choices with no guidance.

Many students also fail to find a meaningful spiritual or learning community when they enter the university environment, even on an Adventist campus. Since students largely interact with strangers in their GE classes, and at large campus churches, they have little sense of connection to their teachers, pastors, and other adult church members. As a result, many of their lifestyle decisions are influenced by their peer group, which may lack the maturity to make reasoned decisions about faith and at-risk behaviors.[15]

On Adventist campuses, students also experience dormitory living; however, this more often than not leads to programmed faith, late nights, escapism, and superficial spirituality. Students may make adjustments to the institution's behavioral expectations, but underlying issues such as sexuality and faith development are often not addressed.

The need for character development is especially critical because during their university years, students go through an incredibly transformative period: They often decide on their career and calling, develop their belief systems, make faith commitments, engage in dating and even marry, and ultimately establish their worldviews. The need for community, dialogue, mentoring, and a sense of mission and values is more critical now than perhaps at any other time in their lives. Yet, much of this formative development takes place *outside the classroom* rather than in it.

Lisa-Marie Heldzinger and Amir Davis practice their survey skills at the door of a Tennessee resident.

The net effect of contemporary Christian education is that students gain knowledge and skills (probably in that order) and some awareness of Christian values, but often at the expense of holistic living and the development of true Christian character.

It is within this context that we as Adventist educators need to re-evaluate our pedagogical methodology and recapture Ellen White's original vision. We need to bring back an integrated, coherent approach to the task of educating the *person* rather than equipping the *product*. I believe that Jesus' method of discipleship provides the basis for developing a process that will enable us to be more effective in achieving the grand purposes of Adventist higher education.

Jesus' Method of Discipleship Education

What is a discipleship model, and how can it be applied to the Adventist educational system? Obviously, differences exist between Jesus' itinerant ministry in the first century and a tu-

ition-based university education in the 21st century. In today's world, teachers cannot live with their students in other people's homes while wandering the fields teaching parables and depending on handouts. Yet, trends in contemporary education suggest that there are powerful ways in which we can apply Jesus' discipleship model today.

The most obvious element of Jesus' discipleship model was the sense of community that He fostered among His followers. He selected a few "students" and spent most of His time with them rather than mainly teaching large crowds. Robert E. Coleman argues that Jesus' primary concern was with His disciples: "His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes but with men whom the multitudes would follow. . . . The initial objective of Jesus' plan was to enlist men who could bear witness to his life and carry on his work after he returned to the Father."[16]

Coleman explains Jesus' method further: "One cannot transform the

world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master. The necessity is apparent not only to select a few helpers, but also to keep the group small enough to be able to work effectively with them."[17]

The idea of working consistently with a small group over an extended period of time is known in educational circles as the *cohort model*. Simply stated, this means assigning students to take courses together in order to build bonds of peer support. It has been used with remarkable success at the graduate level, where social factors such as loneliness, isolation, and stress negatively affected students' ability to complete their programs.[18] However, even at the undergraduate level, the use of peer support groups has proved effective. Deborah Bial used "posses" to help prepare students with low SAT scores to gain admission to the elite colleges

they wished to attend. Because a full cohort experience was impractical in this situation, the posse group involved 10 students meeting with a faculty member once a week on an ongoing basis. As a result, 90 percent of the Posse Students graduated, half of them made the dean's list, and a quarter of them earned academic honors.[19]

Adventist universities are also experimenting with this kind of discipleship model. At Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, I am one of the teachers for a First Year Experience class called Southern Connections. Similar to the posse model, it requires students from a common discipline to meet once a week to discuss how to succeed in college life.

I have also begun a new program called SALT (Soul-winning and Leadership Training), which provides a unique cohort experience for incoming freshmen for their first semester. Because class sizes are limited, students are able to take all their courses to-

gether and to engage in shared spiritual and outreach experiences. Not only does this produce more effective student bonding, but participants also become more willing to share what is happening in their lives outside of the classroom. I have discovered that opportunities for mentoring and character development are greatly enhanced by this kind of cohort system.

However, I have also learned that establishing community means spending time with students outside of the classroom. It means helping them understand relationships and giving them advice on how relationships work. It means "hanging out" in addition to lecturing. It means having students write journals and share their hearts with teachers. It means becoming involved in their lives.

Missional Service

Jesus not only brought His disciples into community, He also engaged them in active service on behalf of the King-

The first set of cohort students in the SALT Program at Southern Adventist University. The group took all of their classes together.

dom. He helped them to understand God's plan for them and for society. In the same way, unless we have a clear mission for our teaching, and unless we train our students to think with a missional mindset, we will have failed in our task. Students must see the needs of the world and be inspired to share their resources and time. They will likely do this only when they see these attitudes modeled in the lives of the adults around them. When they see their teachers and pastors passionate about the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, and the lost, it will ignite a passion within them. They need to see that we, as Adventist educators, believe in God's mission in the world.

In contemporary education, we often seek to achieve this goal through engaging students in service and service learning, which are gaining in popularity. Volunteerism means engaging students in community projects that enhance their academic learning and benefit the community.[20] Many Adventist institutions are implementing a variety of service projects, with good success. However, to implement service *learning*, teachers need to design appropriate academic projects that connect with the student's discipline.

Service learning is an effective learning tool—studies show that it has a positive effect on students' grades, writing skills, critical thinking skills, and understanding of course content.[21] I incorporate service-learning components in most of my classes because I believe this makes the educational experience not only more transformative, but also more Christlike. I engage in community activities, invite students to join me, and then we reflect on these experiences together.

I have repeatedly seen the transforming effects of service learning. Students come to see themselves as partners in God's mission. Every summer, I lead 10 theology students in a field

Student preachers and their mentoring pastors at the Southern Union Conference Field School in Meridian, Mississippi.

school of evangelism where they work in local churches and are mentored in preaching their own evangelistic meetings. Since I also preach my own series, we share a common bond as we experience the highs and the lows of the evangelistic experience together. This enhances our relationships and makes our conversations about ministry much more genuine and nuanced.

Experiential Learning

How Jesus involved His disciples in ministry and service also has application to how we do Christian education today. First, we see Jesus calling His disciples into service (Matthew 4:19). Then we see Him preaching and healing so they could see what ministry looked like in practical terms (Matthew 4:23). Once He had their attention, Jesus directed His disciples' minds to the principles of His kingdom (Matthew 5-7). He then lived out those principles in ministry (Matthew 8 and 9). Once the disciples grasped these principles, He sent them out with explicit instructions on how to engage in ministry themselves (Matthew 10). He then followed the disciples and preached in the towns that they had

just visited (Matthew 11:1).

Today, we refer to this as *experiential learning,* or what Stephen Kemp calls "situated learning."[22] David Kolb popularized this concept, which emphasizes "the central role that experience plays in the learning process."[23] To illustrate: if you want to teach people to swim, you don't do so by simply assigning them to read about the theory of swimming. They need to jump in the water and practice! In the same way, trying to teach students the Christian life using only classroom discussions and reading assignments is obviously inadequate. Christian teachers can learn from Jesus' method of discipleship and have students engage in actual life experiences, and then help them to meaningfully reflect on what they have learned.

Kolb suggests that we move from concrete experience to reflective observation to abstract conceptualization to active experimentation, and then repeat the cycle. We can thus move our students from experience to knowledge back to experience.

We can see this learning cycle constantly at work in Jesus' ministry. In

Matthew 16, Jesus asks, "'Who do you say that I am?'"[24] While Peter answers that Jesus is the Messiah, he clearly does not understand what this concept means. When Jesus responds by telling him about His portending suffering and death, Peter vehemently denies this view and is emphatically corrected by Jesus. This same cycle—confession, explanation, denial, and correction—is repeated several times. It is only when the experience of the Cross and the Resurrection shatters Peter's version of reality that he comes to understand the true meaning of Jesus' role as the Messiah.

But how would this model work in an educational setting? Many programs now include practical experience as part of the undergraduate program. For theology students, Southern Adventist University requires two years of "externship" in a local church. Not only do students gain hands-on ministry involvement, but they also meet with a pastor for eight sessions every semester to reflect on the practical realities of ministry.

The impact of this approach on my Church Ministry class has been invaluable. Rather than listening to academic discussions about how ministry works, they can relate to real-life examples and reflect on church boards they have attended, visitation in which they have participated, and political and social challenges their pastor mentors are facing. We also teach participating pastors how to use Kolb's theory of learning to enable them to successfully mentor students and engage them in dialogue.

Experiential learning offers a wonderful way to engage students in reflecting on their practical experiences and moving toward a discipleship model of education. However, experiential learning alone is inadequate and incomplete.

Intentional Character Development

The Gospels repeatedly portray Jesus engaging in the intentional development of character. As a result of His disciple-

ship methods, the disciples moved from unbelief to belief, from brashness to humility, from anger to love, from prejudice to hospitality, from fear of the religious leaders to holy boldness, from position-seeking to readiness for persecution. Jesus seized teachable moments and turned them into lessons of transformation (as happened in the story of Peter and the temple tax).

However, we cannot expect character development to happen automatically in our schools. It requires intentionality on the part of everyone who participates in the education of students. We can start by looking at the emotional, ethical, and spiritual needs of the young people who are entering our universities and colleges. How can we offer age-appropriate strategies to help them embrace a relationship with Christ and grow in their Christian walk? How can we help them understand the kingdom of God and the mission of the church? How can we help the ones who struggle with the spiritual and emotional bankruptcy of their families, their churches, and their past?

According to David Shields, character development includes four components:[25]

1. *Intellectual Character*. Referencing Ron Ritchhart's book *Intellectual Character*, Shields describes a person with intellectual character as curious, open-minded, reflective, strategic, skeptical, and truth-seeking. If we are intentional about developing intellectual character, we will be far more concerned with *how* students are learning than *what* they are learning.

2. *Moral Character*. Shields defines this as the disposition to do good and right. In my classes, I have seen students give the right answer to a question on why Christians should avoid alcohol but go out and have a big drinking party that weekend. We need to find ways to achieve integration between our students' cognitive under-

standing and their behavior.

3. *Civic Character*, the passion for the common good. We need to not only teach social issues, but also encourage students to engage in them. As an example, some students on our campus helped raise $25,000 for a girls' school in Uganda, went to Congress to lobby for war recovery, and travelled to the school in Uganda to help mentor students and their families. We need to develop both a local and global civic consciousness.

4. *Performance Character*, the ability of a person to accomplish intentions and goals. This is the characteristic that makes the other character elements effective. One way that I have found to be successful in developing performance character is to show students not only how I get tasks done, but also describe my failures and successes with spiritual growth. In our attempt to be intentional about character development, my colleagues and I have found it helpful to have students develop a personal growth plan.

In our Christian Spirituality classes, we have students take a personal spiritual assessment at http://assessyourself.org, which examines character, worldview, love for God, and obstacles to growth. In response, students develop a set of personalized goals and activities, and give monthly updates to a faculty member who mentors them in their growth process.

Teaching from a discipleship perspective requires a different model of education. We must have clear character outcomes in mind as we plan our curriculum. We need to see the student as less of a test taker and more of a person in need of emotional and spiritual wholeness. One strategy that we have followed in our department is to identify specific student character outcomes we would like to see in our graduates. We have the students develop portfolios and meet with them annually to discuss their goals. We also do the 16PF

(Personality Factor) Test[26] every two years, and dialogue with students about strengths and weaknesses in their personality types.

Although a programmed approach to character development has significant advantages over random and uncoordinated approaches, by itself, it will not transform students' characters. What is needed is for faculty and senior students to intentionally mentor younger students, all the while maintaining clear goals.[27] By embracing Jesus' discipleship style, we can be certain that effective lifestyle and character changes are much more likely to occur.

Conclusion

It is time to reinvent Adventist education. We need to focus on the development of the person rather than the equipping of the product. I believe that discipleship is the best way to do this. Jesus' method of establishing community; reflecting on experience; engaging in missional service; and enhancing social, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional development will transform our task of educating today. ✏

This article has been peer reviewed.

Alan Parker, D.Th., *is a Professor of Ministry and Evangelism at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, where he also serves as the Director of the Pierson Institute of Evangelism and Missions, leads the externship program for junior and theology students, and recently launched a new cohort program for incoming freshmen. Dr. Parker previously worked as the vice-president of evangelism at* Amazing Facts *in California and was the director of their school of evangelism. This article has been condensed from a presentation at the Biblical Foundations for Faith and Learning Conference in Cancun, Mexico, in February 2011.*

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24. Matthew 16:15, NKJV.

25. See Shields, "Character as the Aim of Education," *Phi Delta Kappan,* op cit., pp. 49-52.

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27. The good news is that today's millennial population actively seeks mentoring and is more open to it than previous generations. See Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, "Mentoring Millennials" in *Harvard Business Review* (May 2010): http://hbr.org/2010/05/mentoring-millennials/ar/1; and Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* (Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Publishing, 2011), pp. 40, 41.

Designing Discipling Guides

Theology and Teaching/Learning Principles Working Together

Christians are familiar with the Great Commission that Jesus gave to the church: "'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'" (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV). However, we too often interpret that passage to be solely a call to evangelize—thereby neglecting the lifelong teaching and nurture that must follow baptism. Dallas Willard calls this blind spot the Christian Church's "Great Omission."[1]

This necessary lifelong teaching and learning may be one solution to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's challenge with retaining its young adults and new members. This hypothesis is being tested with a new set of discipling guides produced by the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Designed to re-semble a regular *Adult Bible Study Guide* (informally known as the "Sabbath school quarterly"), these undated *New Members'*

Bible Study Guides (Study Guides) have been written specifi-cally for new or "renewed" Adventists. Their purpose is to dis-ciple new or returning believers, thereby helping them achieve the transformations and growth necessary for them to become mature Christians. However, the Study Guides will also be use-ful in many Adventist school contexts.

Of special interest to educators and those who design disci-pling curricula is the use of the recently developed *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* (*TGFD*) framework and the blending of theology and teaching/learning principles. In order to disciple students, teachers have to be acquainted with two basic subjects: (1) the content of discipleship, and (2) the way people learn. In other words, theology and teaching/learning principles need to be combined. As the writer of the *New Members' Bible Study Guides,* I chose the *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* framework to provide a map for selecting the discipleship content.

The Study Guides serve as an example of how educators at any level can use the *TGFD* framework to develop discipling/

BY JANE THAYER

discipleship materials, and how biblical content (theology) and teaching principles can work together.

Understanding Discipleship

Too often, when Adventists sit down to write a discipleship curriculum, they default to the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, which outline and undergird the Adventist understanding of Christianity. Disciples need to know and love Jesus, and they need to know how to follow Him in their daily life. Christianity as defined by the Fundamental Beliefs, and "following Jesus" are closely related; however, they have different perspectives. The Fundamental Beliefs deal with propositional truth, while "Following Jesus" starts with knowing Jesus. The Fundamental Beliefs *are* part of every lesson in the Study Guides, but they are not dealt with as doctrines. Instead, the lessons grow out of the life and teachings of Jesus.

The *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* framework incorporates the four processes of discipling: *Connecting, Understanding, Ministering*, and *Equipping*. The terms used for the processes are shorthand expressions that attempt to summarize the theology of discipling. The series title of the Study Guides is "In Step With Jesus." Titles for each of the four quarters of the Study Guides and the *TGFD* discipling processes are listed below:

Understanding the Learner

Before the writing process began, the editorial team had to understand who the new members were and what challenges they faced. Thus, the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department and the Ministerial Department of the General Conference joined together to sponsor four focus groups of pastors. Held in three different locations across the United States, these focus groups brought together a total of 41 pastors from nine conferences. In the focus groups, the planners learned the needs and challenges of new members from the pastors' perspectives.

In the process of writing the Study Guides, I conducted dozens of interviews with new members. Books and articles about new church members added to my understanding. Of special insight was James Cress's *You Can Keep Them If You Care*.[2]

What the editorial team discovered from their research about new members' needs and challenges is summarized below. The new members struggled with the following areas:
• Developing a close relationship with Jesus.
• Translating "following Jesus" into their real-life experiences.
• Making new church friends.
• Making lifestyle changes.

• Dealing with objections from family and old friends.
• Understanding the culture of the church that they have joined.

After gaining an understanding of the new members, the editorial team applied the principles of how people learn to design instruction that can make a difference in their lives. Most educators are familiar with James Kolb's[3] experiential learning theory. That theory is mirrored in Richard Osmer's[4] "tasks of practical theology." Although Osmer gives no indication that he has built on Kolb's theory, the similarities are evident and may simply reflect the fact that both theories describe how people learn, even though they use different wording. Because Osmer's work focuses specifically on teaching in a Christian setting, his model was adopted as the basic learning theory for the lessons. Osmer's model asks four questions, starting with the learner's situation:
• What is going on?
• Why is this going on?
• What ought to be going on?
• How can we implement the "ought"?

Elements of the New Members' Bible Study Guides

The Study Guides follow the basic format of the Sabbath school quarterly, and were designed to for use in Sabbath school classes or in small-group sessions. However, they are also useful in other venues. Because the lessons deal with, among

Quarter's Title	*Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* Process
1 – The Journey Begins: Following Jesus and His Teachings	(Connecting & Understanding)
2 – The Power of Love: Growing Through Relationships	(Connecting)
3 – The Power of the Word: Growing Through Understanding	(Understanding)
4 – The Power of Mission: Growing Through Discipling & Serving	(Ministering & Equipping)

other things, human beings' relationship with Christ, friendships, lifestyle, and church culture, the Study Guides can be a useful tool for high school and college-age students. Whether in a Sabbath school, a small group that meets on Friday nights (perhaps in a faculty member's home), or in a Bible class, these guides can help our young people strengthen their relationship with Christ and their church, and inform their decisions about friendships and lifestyle.

Introductory questions. Each week's lesson opens with introductory questions that focus on the student's situation. Examples: *How does my understanding of who Jesus is affect the way I live? How can I be confident that the Bible was inspired by God?*

Walking With Jesus in the Real World. Each week's lesson has a one-page story about real people that illustrates some as-

pect of the topic, and is designed to help people find courage from the testimony of others. Also, teachers can use the stories to discuss sensitive issues that people may not want to discuss about themselves. This feature will be useful for classroom worships and small group study.

Daily lesson study. This main feature follows the same format of the question-and-answer Bible study of the Sabbath school quarterly. However, the content and commentary on the texts are designed especially for new or "renewed" members.

A Closer Look. Because biblical terms or concepts may require additional explanation, a short sidebar fulfills this need. For example, the first quarter "closer look" topics include "Significance of the 'I AM' statements," "A hard saying [hate your father and mother]," and "Jesus' patience with Peter."

"Adventese" Sidebar. To help new members understand the Adventist culture and language, "Adventese" defines unique denominational terms, explains some Adventist history, and describes current institutions. Each Adventese sidebar has a theme, such as "Food Terms," "Familiar Acronyms," and "Early Church Leaders." Students and even teachers who are lifelong Adventists will benefit from the explanations of many of these terms!

Checking Up. Friday's lesson contains a quiz on the biblical lesson containing multiple choice or matching questions. In addition, an "Extend Your Learning" exercise concentrates on a biblical topic related to the lesson. And finally, a question or exercise entitled "Examine Your Experience" applies the objectives of the week to the student's own life.

Consider This. The last page of the week's study is devoted to an essay that uses psychology, sociology, history, current research, etc., to enhance the student's understanding of the topic. Examples from the undated first quarter include, "What Should I Do With My Life?", "The Famous 12 Steps," and "Which Bible Version Should I Use?"

"In Step With Jesus" Website. Additional resources for each week are provided online at http://www.instepwithjesus.org and include Ellen White quotations related to the topic, relevant Websites, and a variety of other resources.

Teacher's Guide. The first few pages of the *Teacher's Guide* for the first quarter's Study Guide contain basic instructions on how to teach a Sabbath school class, and will be helpful for classroom teachers as well. In order to discourage presenters from adopting the default approach of woodenly going through the lesson day by day, the teacher's guide provides three or four issues that synthesize the main points of the week's topic.

> **B**ecause the lessons deal with, among other things, human beings' relationship with Christ, friendships, lifestyle, and church culture, the Study Guides can be a useful tool for high school and college-age students.

Contextualizing the *New Members' Bible Study Guides*

One of the challenges of producing any study guide to be used in all the cultures where the Adventist Church exists is contextualizing the content. To provide the same biblical lesson for everyone, but also to provide unique contextual applications, the *New Members' Bible Study Guides* add features that can be easily changed to meet cultural perspectives.

Each world division of the church, as it translates the Study Guides, can remove any culturally inappropriate material and insert locally relevant adaptations, especially in the following features: "Walking With Jesus in the Real World (Personal Stories)," "Adventese," and the "Consider This" column. Making these changes will increase the value of the Study Guides to many groups around the globe.

Conclusion

The *New Members' Bible Study Guides*[5] demonstrate the use of the *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* framework and the combining of theology and teaching/learning principles, with a careful focus on the learners. These elements are essential for the development of discipling materials, whether such materials are prepared for use in the school or the church setting. ✐

Jane Thayer, *Associate Professor of Religious Education, Emerita, at Andrews University, holds a Ph.D. in religious education, and most recently was Director of the Ph.D. Program in Religious Education at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Her dissertation dealt with the assessment of Christian spirituality. As an elder at the Pioneer Memorial church in Berrien Springs, she is currently working to disciple Andrews University graduate students. She can be reached at thayerja@andrews.edu.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2006).

2. James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ministerial Association Resource Center, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000).

3. David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1984).

4. Richard R. Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

5. The *New Members' Bible Study Guides* can be obtained at your Adventist Book Center (http://adventistbookcenter.com or 800-765-6955).

EDUCATION

GRIGGS

International Academy Continues to Partner With Adventist Schools

Chris Juhl, a principal and teacher at Louisville Junior Academy (LJA) in Kentucky prayed that the Lord would lead his school in a direction that would enable his older students to continue to receive a quality Christian education. The prayer was personal since his son, Nathan, was entering the 7th grade, and LJA offered classes only through the 9th grade. No local Adventist school offered education beyond the junior academy level, which posed a problem, as LJA was continuing to grow.

In the spring of 2007, Juhl explored the Alternative Programs for Learning Enrichment (APLE) provided by Griggs International Academy. He had taking college classes from Griggs (then Home Study International) and was familiar with the program offered in the 1980s. Recognizing the advancement made by Griggs in the past three decades, Chris reflected that, "it didn't take long to realize that instead of a restric-

tive learning environment, God would use Griggs not only to be beneficial for my son but also to grow our school and provide a wonderful educational opportunity for all of our students."

• Griggs International Academy's regional and national accreditation enables it to offer Adventist schools a variety of programs, which enable them to expand their services in partnership with GIA in multiple ways:

• The Elementary Extension Pro-

BY SUMEETA RAJ, GLYNIS BRADFIELD, and LaRONDA FORSEY

gram (EEP) helps provide a Christian education for children who are unable to attend a traditional Seventh-day Adventist school. If churches or small schools are unable to hire enough teachers to offer a complete K–8 program, the EEP enables them to do so through partnership with Griggs's experienced teachers and accredited programs of study.

• The North American Division Office of Education and Griggs International Academy have developed the Alternative Program for Learning Enrichment (APLE) to assist local elementary schools seeking to offer grades 9–12 to students who would otherwise have to enroll in the public school system. Adventist secondary schools also use this program to extend course offerings in areas such as foreign languages. The APLE program also pro-

vides a transitional solution for schools wishing to permanently expand their program.

• A contract with USA Job Corp Centers provides opportunities for adults to complete high school by taking Griggs International Academy courses online.

• Currently, Griggs International Academy offers off-campus programs on four continents to a range of schools seeking a U.S.A.-accredited Christian elementary and/or secondary program of study. Requests for affiliate programs are processed through the Office of Off-Campus Programs.

With Griggs International Academy's APLE program, the renamed Louisville Adventist Academy (LAA) now offers both a basic diploma and a college preparatory diploma program. Since 2008-2009, more than 90 percent of eligible LAA students have gradu-

ated or received their General Education Diploma (GED) on time, 75 percent have gone on to higher education, and a third have chosen to attend an Adventist college. Three-quarters of these young people are still active in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This year's graduating class is on track to do the same. "In the past several years, the school has grown from 35 students in kindergarten through 9th grade, to 80 students attending the full range of elementary and high school classes. God is always very good," acknowledges Juhl.

New Directions in Griggs Service

Parents and teachers are always seeking options to provide quality Christian education. Tanya Spann, a Georgia resident and teacher, and her husband de-

The staff of Griggs International Academy and Griggs University gather outside their new building on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Rachel, a high school distance education student, instant messages her teacher for help with Geometry.

cided that she would stay at home once they started a family. As her children grew, she researched school options. When asked why she chose Griggs, she stated simply, "There wasn't an Adventist school close by. I had an Adventist education all my life, and Griggs is accredited. Accreditation mattered. Everything was included—instruction guides, textbooks, and other materials." Tanya

enrolled her three daughters with GIA. Her son turns 5 years old soon and will be enrolled, too.

With more than 100 years of experience in Christian distance education, Griggs University and Griggs International Academy have enrolled more than a quarter-million students from around the world. Now owned by Andrews University and operated by the School of Distance Education, Griggs provides a diverse array of educational services:

• Griggs Consortium provides more than 120 correspondence and interactive online tertiary courses for Adventist certification, college transfer credit, or online degrees, facilitated by 52 adjunct faculty working from a variety of locations.

• Griggs International Academy offers nearly 100 elementary and secondary courses using 46 certified teachers who live thousands of miles apart.

With its ability to extend access to Adventist education beyond campus, community, and national boundaries, Griggs is able to apply best practices in distance education. It strives to create a virtual community designed to nurture learning at multiple levels. Under the experienced leadership of School of Distance Education Dean Alayne Thorpe, Associate Dean and Principal La Ronda Forsey, Vice-Principal (Elementary) Stacy Gusky, Vice-Principal (JobCorps) Lamar Nangle, and Registrar Kathy Iwasa, Griggs's dedicated and professional staff understand the importance of:

• Developing student-teacher relationships that inspire lifelong learning;

• Supporting homeschooling parents and teachers in partnering schools;

• Creating services to bridge gaps in the availability of Adventist education;

• Understanding and flexibly serving an internationally diverse student body;

• Designing learning experiences that foster their students' holistic growth; and

• Continually training teachers to integrate faith and technology in NAD standards-aligned courses.

Spann reflects on her interactions with GIA's teachers and administrators alike, with the following accolade: "Thumbs up! You are awesome in helping my girls with questions, and are a team of wonderful people to partner with."

The absence of Adventist schools isn't always the problem. GIA is available for parents who long to have an Adventist education for their children, but are unable to enroll them in traditional programs due to overseas jobs, learning disabilities, illness, and children pursuing careers in sports and entertainment. Griggs International Academy helps parents and students solve these challenges in a number of ways. Interactive online and correspondence paper-based courses provide a variety of course delivery methods appropriate to the varying levels of tech-

Griggs International Academy Accreditation

Regional:
• The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commissions on Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Schools
• The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) Commission on Elementary Schools

National:
• Distance Education and Training Council (DETC)
• USA Department of Education for accrediting online schools
• Commission on International and Trans Regional Accreditation (CITA)

General Conference:
• Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA)

Ninth-grade students at Objetivo Sorocaba, a Griggs-affiliated school in Sorocaba, Brazil.

Paul Turner, a senior at Louisville Adventist Academy in Kentucky, is one of many students who have benefited from the APLE program.

schools as well as children who are homeschooled. Flexible enrollment options make it possible for a secondary student to pursue a college preparatory or basic high school diploma, or simply take individual courses to fulfill credits at his or her current secondary school. Elementary students typically enroll in a full grade level in the accredited program, but individual courses, such as the Adventist Bible curriculum, can be ordered by families seeking to supplement public schooling or homeschooling.

Serving Adventist Teachers

The quality of a Christian school depends largely on the character of its teachers. Because of its dedication to teacher education, Andrews University provides flexible teacher preparation and continuing education options for Seventh-day Adventist teachers through the School of Education, and the new School of Distance Education. Three options are available for North American Division K-12 teachers seeking Seventh-day Adventist certification or recertification (subject to approval by their union certification registrar):

1. Educators can register for Andrews University online or on-campus courses to meet specific requirements, or to earn a Master's or doctoral degree.

2. Teachers well-grounded in Seventh-day Adventist education and beliefs may challenge exams to fulfill certification requirements for courses such as Adventist Heritage and Mission, Principles of Christian Faith, Jesus and the Gospels, and Philosophy of Adventist Education.

3. The four courses listed above also provide teacher candidates who have not attended Adventist colleges with necessary religion courses and an orientation to Adventist education.

Griggs International Academy and Andrews University acknowledge and

nology available around the world. Reasonable tuition and payment plans facilitate access to Adventist education.

• Open enrollment makes it possible to complete studies at a pace set by the student to fit any type of lifestyle, illness, travel, or special education needs. With year-round registration and self-paced instruction, students can tailor

their class schedules to their individual learning needs.

• Griggs students can enjoy traveling, interaction with the distance education community for support and guidance, educational visits to museums and historical sites, and participation in faith-based and sport activities in their local communities.

Griggs International Academy serves students attending local Adventist

appreciate the dedication of Adventist education leaders and teachers to the holistic purposes of true education. Qualified teachers committed to improving teaching and learning from a biblical perspective utilizing current technology are contracted as adjunct faculty in their area of expertise and certification at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary level. Prospective adjunct faculty can visit http://www. tinyurl.com/86wc7kd to complete an interest form.

As the transition continues from Griggs University to Andrews University, the new School of Distance Education, managing Griggs International Academy, is improving and expanding its services to Adventist schools, homeschools, and church workers. Visit http://www.griggs.edu for updates and announcements about programs, tuition rates, student life, and employment opportunities at Griggs International Academy, and http://www. andrews.edu/distance for Andrews University distance education options for Adventist teachers. The new team of qualified Adventist faculty and staff are ready to advise and guide you in making the right decision for your school and your students. ✐

Sumeeta Raj *is SDE Marketing Coordinator at Andrews University Integrated Marketing and Communications, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

Glynis Bradfield *is Director of Student Services for the Andrews University School of Distance Education.*

LaRonda Forsey *is Associate Dean, Andrews University School of Distance Education, and Principal, Griggs International Academy.*