

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES GLOBAL CONFERENCE

## *No Phishing Allowed: Preparing to Disciple Generations Z and A*

Dr. Ella Smith Simmons  
General Vice President  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
January 27, 2022



# No *Phishing* Allowed

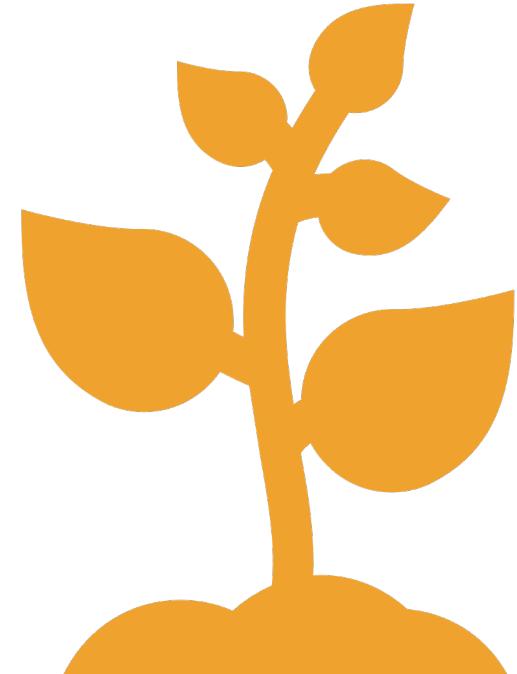
Phishing: the practice of tricking Internet users (as through the use of deceptive email messages or websites) into revealing personal or confidential information which can then be used illicitly

- Phishing is the opposite of Christian discipling. For discipling to Jesus, we need to be true, to be authentic in our ministry. We must
  - know who we are trying to reach
  - understand how they learn and develop
  - know what they like
  - know what gets their attention
  - understand how to influence and lead them
  - comprehend the fullness of the process
  - have a clear, complete understanding and view of the end goal
  - have courage to pursue these under God's guidance and power

# *Intentional Disciple-makers*

- As intentional disciple-makers, it is important for us to evaluate where our disciples are on their spiritual journey so that we can determine what they need from us.
- In order to do this well, we must be in relationship with them.
- As a disciple maker, our role is to help the disciple mature and grow so he [or she] can move from one stage of development to the next so they can eventually disciple others.
- Time and proximity enable us to get to know the maturity level of the person we are discipling, and where he [or she] needs to grow.

*Jim Putman, 2020*



# Who are the Gen Zs?

- aka iGen or centennials
- born between 1997-2009, following millennials
- raised on the internet and social media; smartphone by age 12
- communicate primarily through social media and texts





# *A Closer Look At Generation Z*

In Trust Magazine  
Autumn 2021

GEN Z: Restoring  
Trust in a  
Disconnected  
Generation

# Uncertain and Unbundled: Are you Ready for Gen Z

Kevin Singer and Josh Packard

pp.5-7

- The data show that young people will turn to trusted relationships when they have questions or concerns about how to live a meaningful life or navigate an uncertain time.
- Seminary leaders and educators have an opportunity to be the trusted adults that young people turn to, and to model the presence with aspiring ministry leaders that is critical to building trust with Gen Z.



Trust is low across almost every institution, . . . Rebuilding trust with young people will mean learning to respond to their doubts, questions, and experiences of uncertainty with listening and support . . .

# A 16-Year-Old Explains 10 Things You Need to Know About Generation Z

Josh Miller  
October 30, 2018

SHRM

**Gen Z always knows the score:** will put everything on the line to win.; grew up with sports culture.

Gen Z is entrepreneurial.

Gen Z prefers to work independently.

Gen Z wants a voice.

Gen Z adopted Gen X's skepticism and individuality.

Gen Z is connected.

Gen Z is so diverse that [they] don't even recognize diversity.

Gen Z is financially focused.

Gen Z craves human interaction.

Gen Z embraces change.



**GENERATION Z**

# Education Chapter 34 Discipline

Ellen White  
pp. 290-291



- The wise educator, . . . , will seek to encourage confidence and to strengthen the sense of honor. . . Many, . . . have a high sense of honor; all desire to be treated with confidence and respect, and this is their right. . . Lead the youth to feel that they are trusted, and there are few who will not seek to prove themselves worthy of the trust.
- The parent or teacher who by such instruction trains the child to self-control will be the most useful and permanently successful.
- Rules should be few and well considered; and when once made, they should be enforced.
- The youth have an inborn love of liberty; they desire freedom; and they need to understand that these inestimable blessings are to be enjoyed only in obedience to the law of God.
- Flowers do not unfold under the breath of a blighting wind.

# Education

## Chapter 34

### Discipline

Ellen White

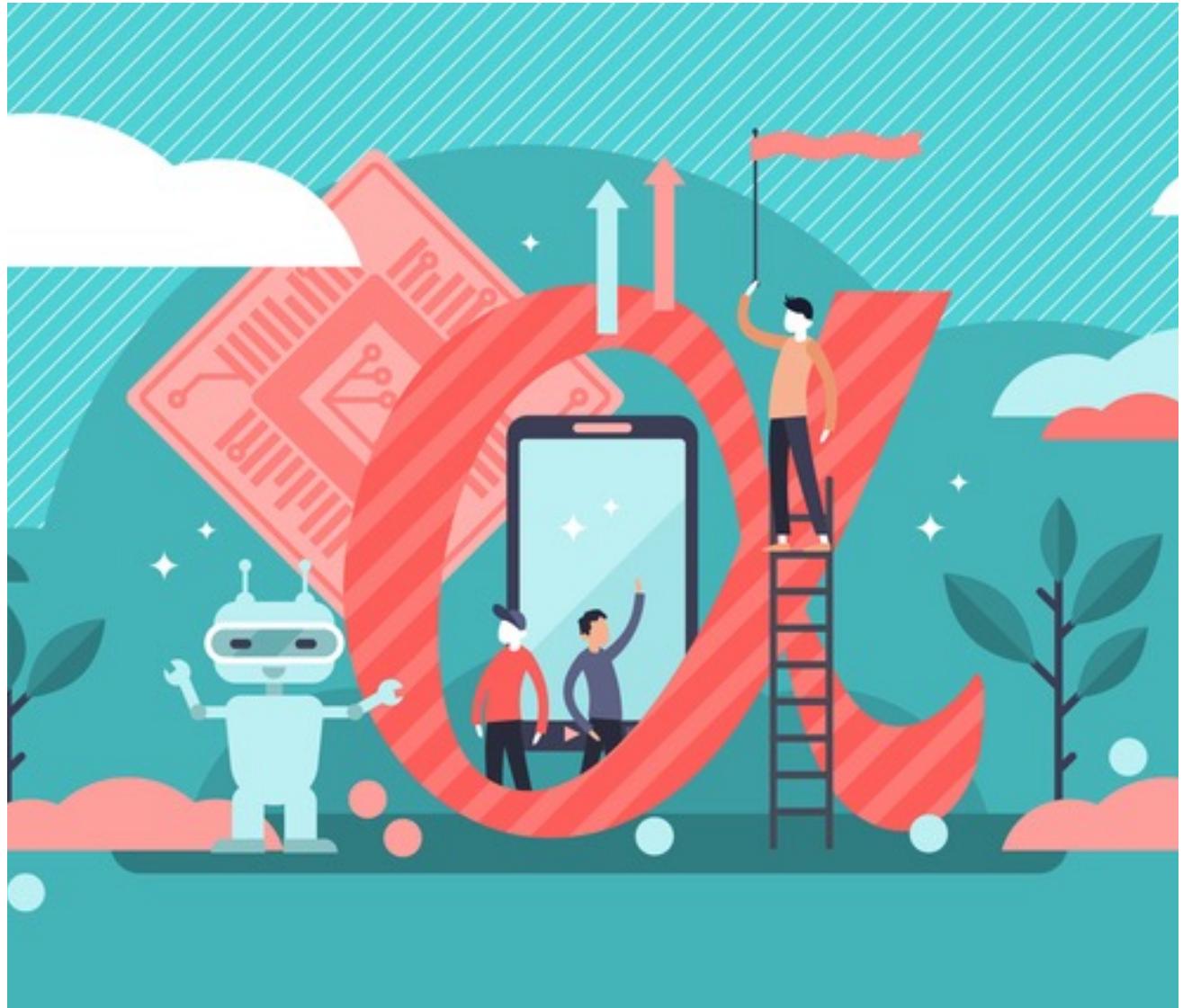
pp. 297



- "Something better" is the watchword of education, the law of all true living.
- Often the youth cherish objects, pursuits, and pleasures that may not appear to be evil, but that fall short of the highest good. They divert the life from its noblest aim. . . Let them be directed to something better than display, ambition, or self-indulgence. Bring them in contact with truer beauty, with loftier principles, and with nobler lives.
- Lead them to behold the One "altogether lovely." When once the gaze is fixed upon Him, the life finds its center. The enthusiasm, the generous devotion, the passionate ardor, of the youth find here their true object.
- Duty becomes a delight and sacrifice a pleasure. To honor Christ, to become like Him, to work for Him, is the life's highest ambition and its greatest joy.

## Who are the Gen Alphas?

- the current generation of children born in 2010 and after (2010-2025)
- the first generation born completely within the 21st century
- the children of the Millennials, and often the younger siblings of Generation Z
- And while Gen Z were our first true digital natives, Gen Alpha will mark a new digital age.





# *A Closer Look At Generation A*

- Driven socially, Gen Alpha share their life and thoughts publicly and knows no boundaries.
- They will presumably grow up being creative and unconventional.
- They will likely grow up with “the need for achievement, autonomy, and recognition, along with competitiveness, narcissism, ambiguity intolerance, impulsivity, attention-seeking, and risk-taking behavior . . .”

Amrit Kumar Jha, June 2020

# Understanding Generation Alpha

There are more than 2.8 million born globally every week.



- With proper parenting and guidance, the prerequisite is to install in them the right virtues and values, which are in line with the societal and traditional ethos.
- It is essential to inculcate in them the essence of being human, managing emotions, forming stable relationships, and a healthy-assimilation with technology in daily life.

Amrit Kumar Jha, June 2020

## Understanding Generation Alpha



# Understanding Generation Alpha

Amrit Kumar Jha, June 2020

With the right mix of outdoor activities including play and forest bathing, regulated use of technology, authoritative parenting, education and instilling the 21st-century skills namely

adaptability

curiosity

persistence

critical thinking

social

teaming

cultural awareness

(World Economic Forum, 2016)

will go long in shaping them to be *an asset for family, society, country, and the world in future.*

# The Adventist Home

## Chapter 3 Family Companionship

p. 190



### *Parents to Become Acquainted With Children*

- Some parents do not understand their children and are not really acquainted with them. . . . If the parents would enter more fully into the feelings of their children and draw out what is in their hearts, it would have a beneficial influence upon them.
- . . . They should make themselves companions to their children.
- Parents should study the best and most successful manner of winning the love and confidence of their children, that they may lead them in the right path. They should reflect the sunshine of love upon the household.

### *Encouragement and Commendation*

- Young children love companionship and can seldom enjoy themselves alone. They yearn for sympathy and tenderness. . . . An approving glance, a word of encouragement or commendation, will be like sunshine in their hearts, often making the whole day happy.

# The Adventist Home

## Chapter 3 Family Companionship pp. 190-191



### *Parents to Be Child's Confidants*

- Parents should encourage their children to confide in *them* and unburden to them their heart griefs, their little daily annoyances and trials.
- Kindly instruct them and bind them to your hearts. It is a critical time for children. Influences will be thrown around them to wean them from you which you must counteract. Teach them to make you their confidant. . . .
- Children would be saved from many evils if they would be more familiar with their parents.
- Parents should encourage in their children a disposition to be open and frank with them, to come to them with their difficulties and, when they are perplexed as to what course is right, to lay the matter just as they view it before the parents and ask their advice.



# Spiritual Growth and Development

## Some Theories and Approaches

# Challenges for Dialogue and Analysis

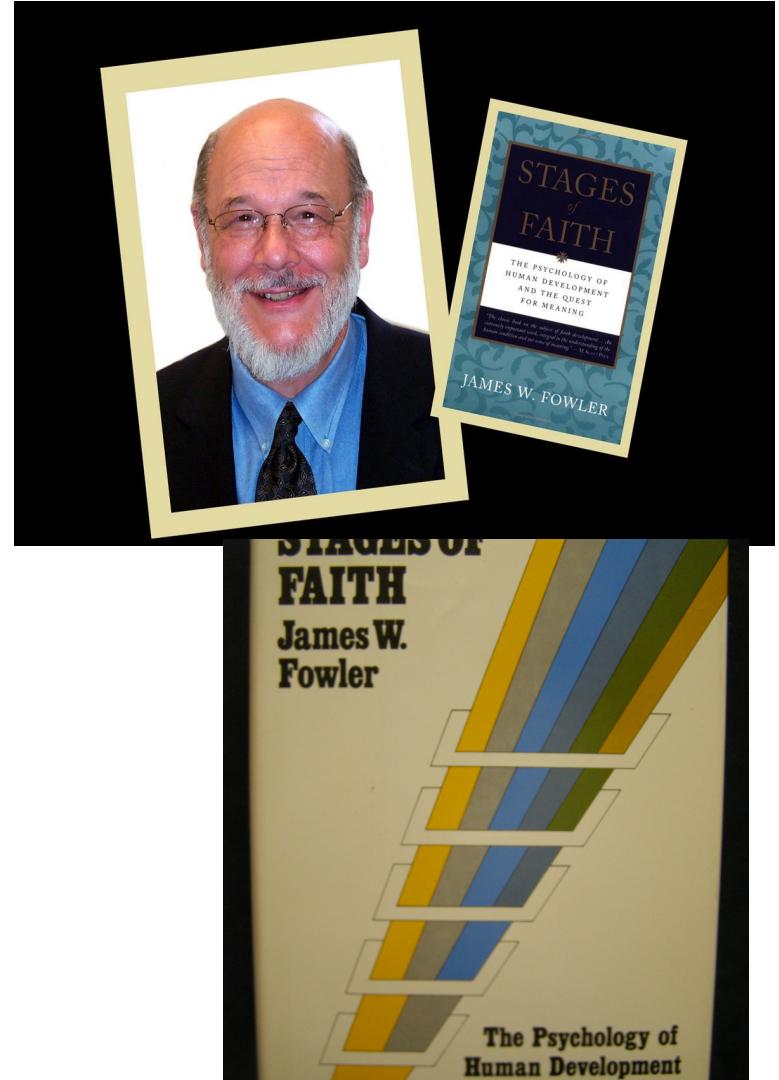
- Spirituality and faith development are topics that pose challenges for dialogue and analysis. Although prominent thinkers going back to Plato and Aristotle have publicly pondered questions of faith, for many of us it is an intensely personal subject, generally limited to discussion in places of worship or the home. . .
- Education scholars have begun only in the past few decades to study how people develop their faith over the course of their lives, as both an internal process and one that involves a community other like-minded individuals.

# The Stages of Faith According to James W. Fowler

Thomas Armstrong  
June 12, 2020

James W. Fowler (1940-2015) was an American theologian who was Professor of Theology and Human Development at Emory University.

- He was director of both the Center for Research on Faith and Moral Development and the Center for Ethics until he retired in 2005.
- He was a minister in the United Methodist Church.
- He is perhaps best known for his developmental model based on faith, which he wrote about in his book Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning.



# The Stages of Faith According to James W. Fowler

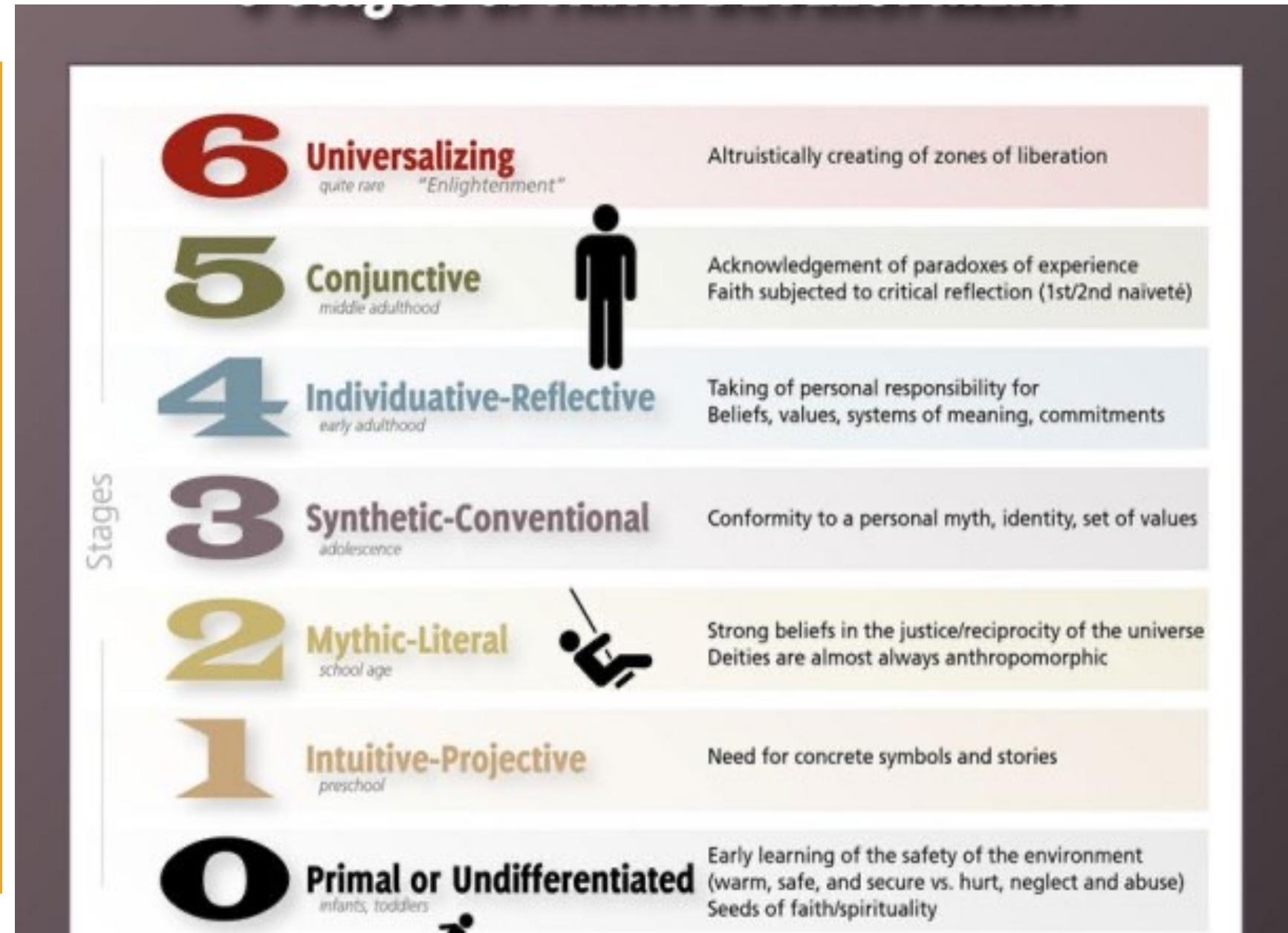
*According to Fowler,  
there are seven primary  
stages of faith (including  
Stage 0) in the life of the  
individual.*

They are as follows:



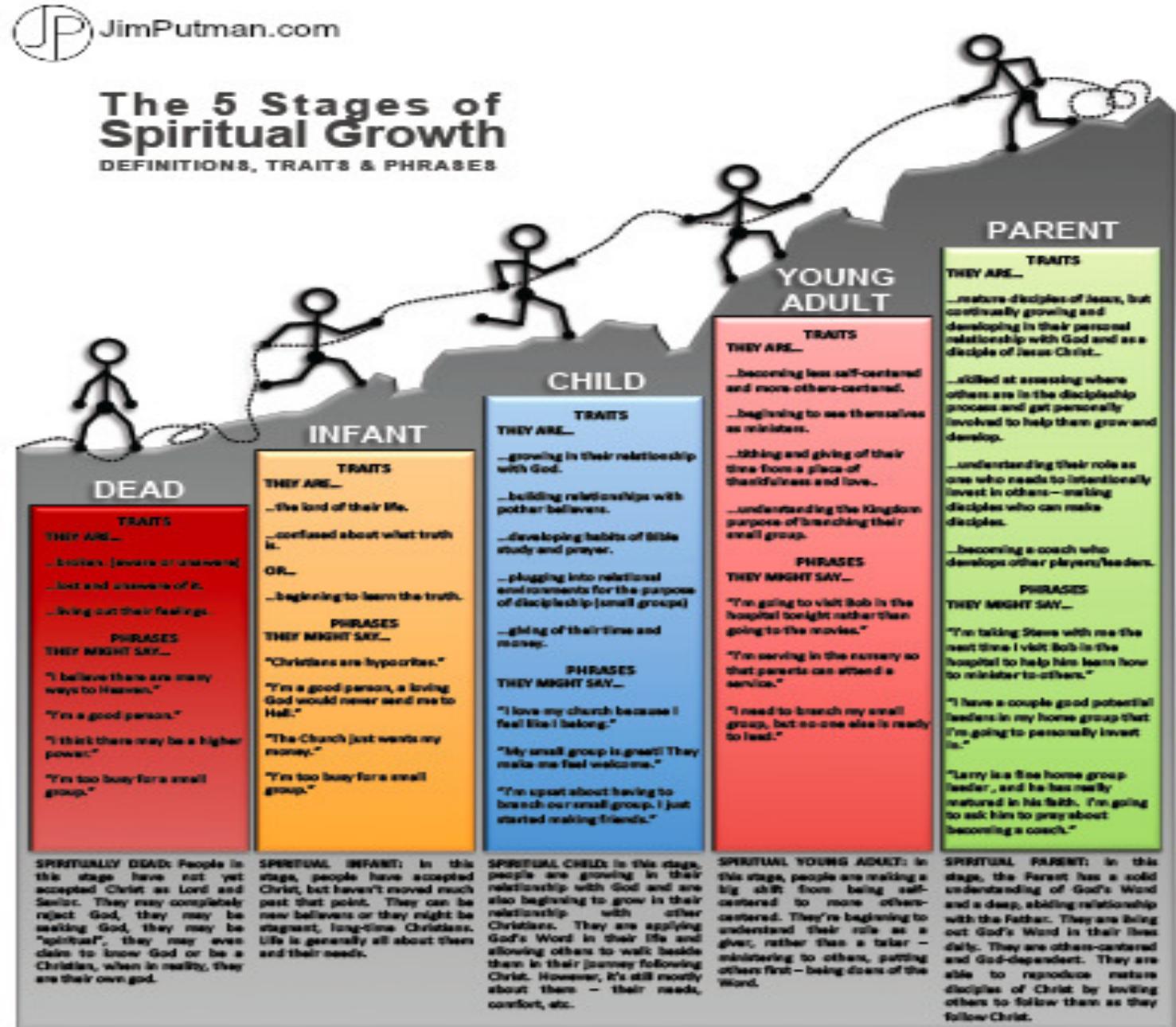
# *The Stages of Faith: Earth, Wind, Fire and Water*

Rod White  
November 5, 2018



# The 5 Stages of Growth of a Disciple

Putman  
June 4, 2018



# The Disciple Maker's Journey Starts With This Step

Jim Putman  
April 10, 2018

- Be totally honest and transparent with ourselves and with others.
- Let people into our lives, and we have to enter theirs.
- Live with integrity, letting others see the real you.
  - We are empowered and driven by the Holy Spirit to reach out to others, to show them the love of Christ (*John 13:35*), and then to tell them about what makes us so different.
- Say something about our faith.
- There's our part, their part, and God's part.

# Astin and Astin's 12 Content Areas or Domains for Designing Measures of Spirituality and Religiousness

Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin,  
Cultivating the Spirit, 2011

- Spiritual or religious outlook (orientation/worldview)
- Spiritual well-being
- Spiritual/religious behavior/practice
- Self-assessments
- Compassionate behavior
- Sense of connectedness to others and the world
- Spiritual quest
- Spiritual/mystical experiences
- Facilitators/inhibitors of spiritual development
- theological/ metaphysical beliefs
- Attitudes toward religion/spirituality
- Religious affiliation/identity

Sharon D. Parks,  
2000. Big questions,  
worthy dreams:  
Mentoring young  
adults in their search  
for meaning, purpose  
and faith. p. 34

## Parks: mentoring students through their faith journey

- Described faith as a canopy, or “the deep ground, the loom on which the rest of the particular threads of life’s tapestry find their place.”
- Parks stages of emerging adult faith development:
  - Requires multiple developmental stages and a certain type of nurturing environment
    - Adolescent/conventional
    - Emerging adult
    - Tested adult
    - Mature adult

In Jenny Small, ed., 2015. Making meaning: Embracing spirituality, faith, religion, and life purpose in student affairs

# Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual intelligence is "the ability to act with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances.

Wigglesworth in O'Doherty, *The Spirit of Laws in the Information Age: Synergizing spiritual intelligence with the legal philosophy*, 2015, p. 18



# Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual intelligence is the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment.

Emmons in O'Doherty, The Spirit of Laws in the Information Age: Synergizing spiritual intelligence with the legal philosophy, 2015, p. 18



# Spiritual Intelligence

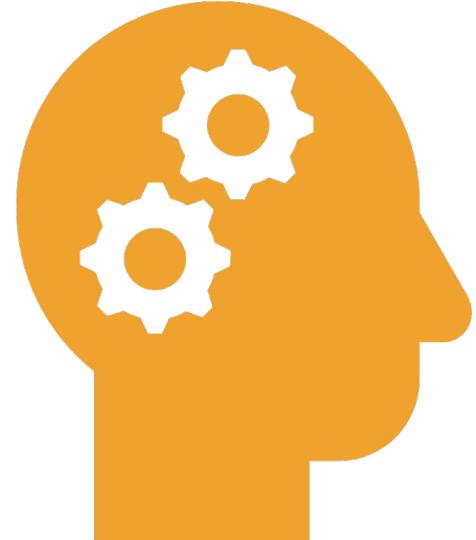
- Spiritual intelligence is what we use to develop our capacity for meaning, vision and values.
- It allows us to dream and to strive.
- It underlies the things we believe in and the role our beliefs and values play in the actions that we take.



Mark O'Doherty, *The Spirit of Laws in the Information Age: Synergizing spiritual intelligence with the legal philosophy*, 2015, p. 18

# Spiritual Intelligence

*If there were more praying among us, more exercise of a living faith, and less dependence upon someone else to have an experience for us, we would be far in advance of where we are today in spiritual intelligence. What we need is a deep, individual heart and soul experience.*



White, E. G., Fundamentals of Christian Education, 1977,  
Page 531

# *12 Principles Underlying Spiritual Intelligence*

Danah Zohar, 1997

1. **Self-awareness**: Knowing what I believe in and value, and what deeply motivates me.
2. **Spontaneity**: Living in and being responsive to the moment.
3. **Vision and value-led life**: Acting from principles and deep beliefs, and living accordingly.
4. **[W]Holism**: Seeing larger patterns, relationships, and connections; having a sense of belonging.

# 12 Principles Underlying Spiritual Intelligence

Danah Zohar, 1997

5. **Compassion**: Having the quality of "feeling-with" and deep empathy for others.
6. **Celebration of diversity**: Valuing other people for their differences, not despite their differences.
7. **Field independence**: Standing against the crowd and having one's own convictions.
8. **Humility**: Having the sense of being a player in a larger drama, of one's true place in the world.

# *12 Principles Underlying Spiritual Intelligence*

Danah Zohar, 1997

9. **Tendency to ask fundamental "Why?" questions:** Needing to understand things and get to the bottom of them.
10. **Ability to reframe:** Standing back from a situation or problem and seeing the bigger picture or wider context.
11. **Positive use of adversity:** Learning and growing from mistakes, setbacks, and suffering.
12. **Sense of vocation:** Feeling called upon to serve, to give something back.

# 8 Keys to Recognizing Spiritual Growth

Philip Nation

Facts & Trends Magazine

[LifeWay.com/factsandtrends](http://LifeWay.com/factsandtrends)



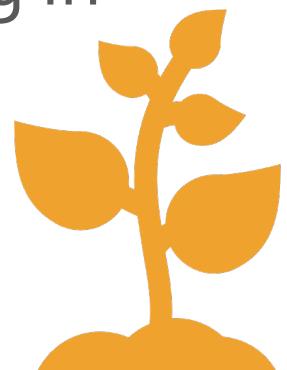
**Transformational  
Discipleship  
Project Led by  
LifeWay Research**

## Measuring Spiritual Growth

- Described: infantile, growing, or mature
- Uncovered attributes that indicate spiritual growth and/or the desire that growth is occurring

The research revealed eight factors at work in the lives of believers who are progressing in spiritual maturity.

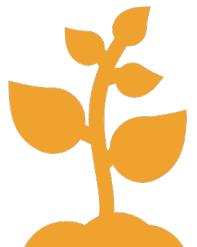
✓ labeled attributes of discipleship



## 1. Bible Engagement

**Growing Christians are engaged in studying the Scriptures.**

- Their perspectives are shaped by the Bible.
- Their actions are directed by the Bible.
- Transformation occurs and can be recognized in people whose minds are sharpened by the Bible.



## 2. Obeying God and Denying Self

**Discipleship is the process of obedience to one who is in authority over you.**

- People progressing in their faith prioritize God's desires over self-will.
- ❖ Transformation can be seen in them, because they progressively set aside earthly delights for Kingdom priorities.



### 3. Serving God and Others

**Just as Jesus said He had come to serve and not be served, so must believers.**

- The choice to serve others is just that—a choice.
  - It highlights a maturity of soul that we allow the needs of others to take priority over our own.
- ❖ **Transformation is evident when personal needs, and even life goals, are set aside for the needs we see in others.**



## 4. Sharing Christ

Inherent in being a disciple of Christ is the making of other disciple makers for Christ.

- Even with the need to live out the effects of the gospel, maturing believers know speaking about the message is a necessity.
- ❖ Transformation is evidenced when we talk about the source of the transformation.



## 5. Exercising Faith

Can you measure a person's faith? Probably not. But you can see it when it is put into action.

- Believers participating in the research said they knew the importance of living by faith as opposed to living by personal strength.
- ❖ Transformation is seen in believers when
  - risk aversion is set aside and
  - lives are characterized by faithful obedience to God's will.



## 6. Seeking God

People become disciples of Christ because they intend to follow Him and become like Him.

- A continuous hunger should arise from this life.
  - It is referred to in scripture as our “first love,” and believers are commanded to return to it.
- ❖ Transformation is seen when our desire is to know God more deeply and experience His work more fully.



## 7. Building Relationships

**Our faith is personal, but it is not intended to be private.**

- Jesus established the church for our collective good and our collective growth.
  - Humans are naturally relational. Spiritually, we are no different.
  - As believers, our horizontal relationships with others should develop just as our vertical relationship with God does.
- ❖ Transformation is occurring when relational maturity is evident in our lives.



## 8. Unashamed Witnessing

The research noted believers felt it appropriate and even necessary for others to know them as Christians and be held accountable for a life exemplary of that name.

- At the very heart of Christianity is the work of making disciples for Christ. It should never sit at the fringe of our lives or the church. It is always at the center.
- Transformation is evident when a believer is unashamed in presenting his own life as being aligned with Christ.



# Have A Mentor; Be a Mentor - The Biblical Model of Mentoring



- Young adults [children] place heavy value on connecting with people who have more life experience than they do.
- Some would call this mentoring or cross-generational ministry; the bottom line is that they want to learn from someone else's experiences.
- Mentoring is a Biblical concept... throughout the Biblical text.
- We see numerous examples of mentoring relationships taking place throughout the Bible.

# Have A Mentor; Be a Mentor - The Biblical Model of Mentoring

Lifeway Staff, January 01, 2014



- Jethro mentored Moses.
- Moses mentored Joshua and the elders of Israel.
- Joshua mentored the other remaining leaders of his army.
- Eli mentored Samuel.
- Samuel mentored Saul and David.
- David mentored his army commanders and government officials; he mentored Solomon.
- Solomon mentored the Queen of Sheba.
- Elijah mentored Elisha.
- Elisha mentored king Jehoash and others.
- Daniel mentored Nebuchadnezzar.
- Mordecai mentored Esther.
- Esther mentored King Artaxerxes.
- Priscilla and Aquila mentored Apollos.
- Jesus mentored the twelve apostles.
- The apostles mentored hundreds of other leaders, including Paul.
- Paul mentored Titus, Timothy, and many others.
- Timothy mentored "faithful men" such as Epaphras.

Mark 4:28  
NKJV

*For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.*

- The plant grows out of the earth and the earth contributes to its growth, but it is the plant itself that produces fruit.



Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Vol. 5, pp. 599–600). Review and Herald Publishing Association.