

# UPDATE

**UPDATE - 2002**

- Family Importance
  - Religiousness of Parents
  - Limits & Climate in the Home
- John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry-La Sierra University and the North American Division Office of Education*

**Number 7 — Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup> information you can use**

**August, 2002**

## It's all about Family...

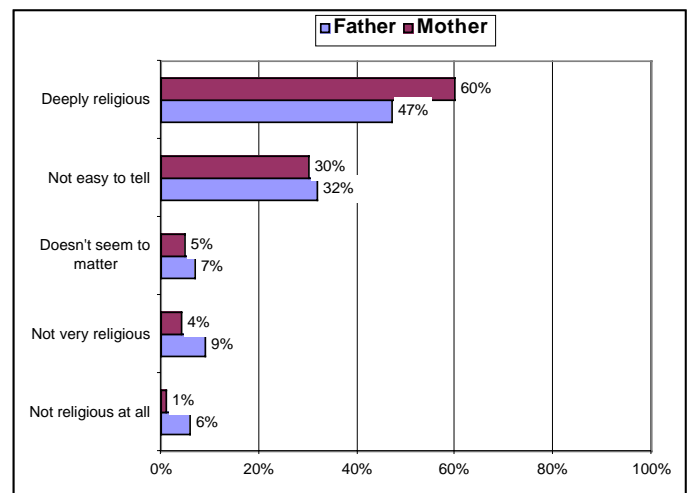
Valuegenesis research has shown that homes that are religiously united provide the best environments for the development of a mature value system. "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3) In the newest research in Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup> we found that 77% of the fathers and 92% of the mothers of our youth sample were presently members of the Seventh-day Adventist church as compared to 81% of the fathers and 94% of the mothers in our research ten years ago in Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>.

In our first research project we created what we called a "biological Adventist scale." Not surprisingly, biological Adventists are more likely to be in the Adventist school system. We can assume then that when both parents are long-time members, they are more likely to agree on providing a Christian education for their children.<sup>1</sup>

Another bit of information that is both interesting and helpful in understanding the youth in Adventist schools dealt with their ethnic origins. Notice that 48% of the total Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup> respondents are of mixed or specific ethnicity.

## Religiousness of Parents...

Parents are an important continuing resource for values acquired and maintained by youth of the church. When we asked, "Which of the following best describes, in your opinion, the way your father is religious?" the



Column 1	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total %
Indian	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific	8%	11%	10%	9%	11%	9%	12%	10%
African American	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	9%	9%	9%
Latino	10%	13%	12%	12%	9%	9%	9%	11%
Multi-racial	28%	20%	19%	18%	14%	11%	10%	17%
Caucasian	42%	44%	49%	51%	57%	60%	60%	52%

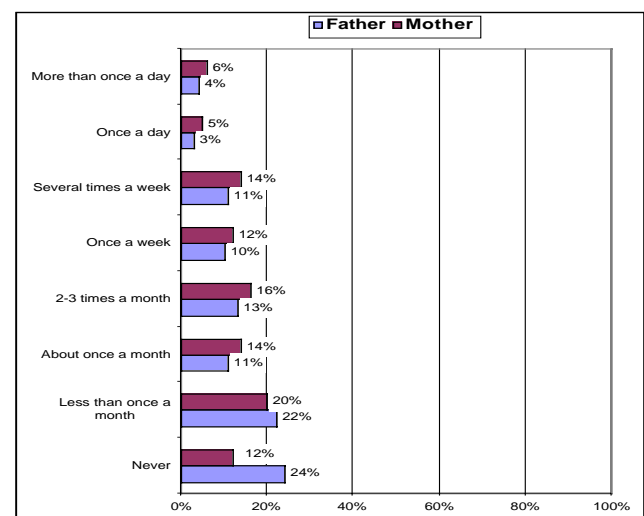
responses were significant.

As you can see, mothers are somewhat more religious than fathers and their statistical percentage is four points higher than ten years ago in our original research. Parents need to do more than just be religious. He/she needs to communicate that faith to their chil-

## Family Solidarity...

Perhaps the most important component of family structure is the intactness of the parents' marriage. While 81% indicated that they lived all or most of the time in a family with two parents (the same percentage as Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup> research), evidence indicates that in some of those cases the family is a blended one. Nearly 74% said that their parents were not divorced or separated, 23% said they were. (Compared to 77% married and 20% divorced or separated in Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup> research) Clearly the divorced or separated percentage in our latest research is slightly higher and reflects society's growing rate in this area. Nearly 3% indicated that their parents were never married, and a final 1% checked that they were not sure.

NOTE: Go to [www.lasierra.edu/centers/hcyfm](http://www.lasierra.edu/centers/hcyfm) for downloads of previous Valuegenesis UPDATES.



dren. The youth were asked, "How often does your father or mother talk with you about their faith or religious experiences they have had?" The following chart illustrates their responses.

## Family Climate...

We asked teens to think about the climate or atmosphere of their homes. This is even more vital than conversations about faith. No matter how noble our profession, if our children do not experience our families as happy and fulfilling, they will not want our values. Because of this concern, youth were asked to respond to the following statements on a five-point scale from "definitely disagree" to "definitely agree." The results are below:

- My parents give me help and support when I need it. (83% Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup>; 80%-Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>)
- There is a lot of love in my family (81% Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup>; 77%-Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>)
- My parents often tell me they love me (85% Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup>; 76%-Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>)
- I get along well with my parents (75% Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup>; 73%-Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>)
- My family life is happy (83% Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup>; 72%-Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>)
- If I break one of the rules set by my parents, I usually get punished (72% Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup>; 62%-Valuegenesis<sup>1</sup>)

The situation is much better than we might have expected, given the upheavals and rebellions we so often hear about adolescence. In the past ten years, each of these scaled items has improved. We can only hope that this is because of a deepening relationship with Christ as families reflect the model of heaven in their relationships with each other.

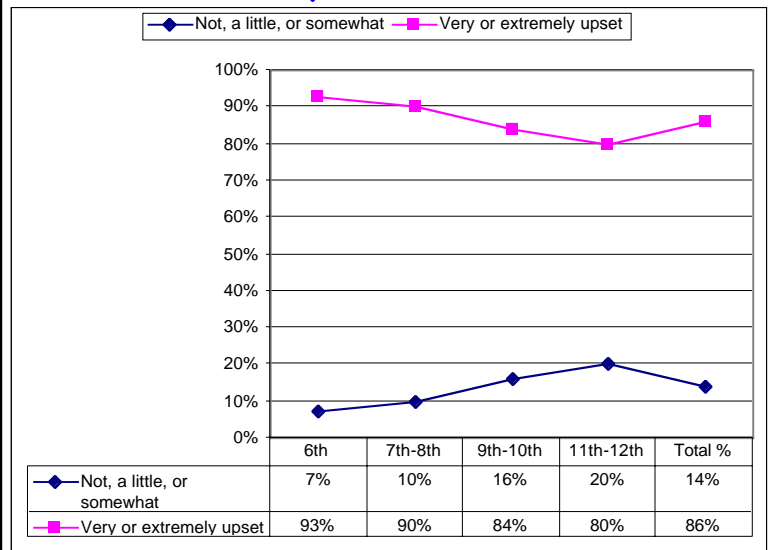
## Family Limits...

In a Christian home, support is usually balanced with control. Character development takes place best in a climate where reasonable limits are firmly but lovingly enforced. Thus the question: "If you came home from a party and your parents found out that you had been drinking, how upset do you think they would be?" The results are graphed on the next column.

In addition, youth were asked about six areas where the parents might place limits in Valuegenesis<sup>2</sup> research. Possible answers to the question: "How often do your parents do the following?" were: "never," "rarely," "sometimes," or "often." The percentages of those responding "often" are displayed below as well.

What is interesting about these statistics is that fewer than one-fourth of the parents often imposed these limits except in a few areas indicated in the chart. When we compared these students with those in public edu-

## "Upset" Scale



cation in our first research project, Adventist parents of public school students were just as likely to limit (or not to limit) the activities of the young people as were those in denominational schools.<sup>2</sup>

## "Limits" Scale

	VG <sup>1</sup>	VG <sup>2</sup>
• Limit the amount of time for going out with friends on school nights	35%	35%
• Limit the amount of time you can spend watching TV	22%	24%
• Limit the amount of time for going out with friends on weekends	20%	16%
• Limit the types of music you listen to	20%	14%
• Limit your time playing video games	NA	21%
• Limit time spent on the internet	NA	18%

There is no question that family life is important. Most research on spiritual values indicates that early family life is the most perdurable influence on spiritual values. The home is crucial and central in God's plan of redemption. Here His love is to be demonstrated, His attitudes of acceptance and concern seen, and it is in the home that the concepts and precepts of the Kingdom are to be instilled in the lives and minds of the youth of the church. Parents that take their role in the redemption of their children seriously will find the time to spend with their children, set reasonable limits that reflect high standards and values, and enforce them with love, compassion, and consistency.<sup>3</sup>

### For more information

<sup>1</sup>See Roger Dudley with V. Bailey Gillespie, *Faith in the Balance* (La Sierra University Press, 1992), 189.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>3</sup>We still have a few of the original study entitled *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance* by Roger Dudley with V. Bailey Gillespie. And our newest book, *Keeping the Faith: A Guidebook for Spiritual Parenting* by Bailey, Judy, and Tim Gillespie with Cheryl Webster is available from AdventSource. Email the Hancock Center for prices and availability at cwebster@lasierra.edu.