RELIGIOUS GROWTH AND SALVATION
DURING CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH:
IMPLICATIONS FOR PHILOSOPHY OF SDA EDUCATION

Presented by

Donna J. Habenicht
Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0104 USA
E-mail: donnah@andrews.edu

Conference on Philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education
General Conference Department of Education
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA

April 9, 2001
SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND SALVATION DURING CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH: IMPLICATIONS FOR PHILOSOPHY OF SDA EDUCATION

Donna J. Habenicht

Introduction

Seventh-day Adventist educators have frequently and widely stated that education is to be redemptive. The draft of our new proposed philosophy statement seems quite clear on this matter: The greatest need of the student is to accept Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Education is to develop a life of faith and elementary students should have had the opportunity to commit their whole lives to God through conversion, baptism, and a desire to do God’s will in every area of living.

About ten years ago my students and I became interested in exploring salvation in more depth. I wanted to understand how children and youth develop their ideas about salvation and be able to integrate this new knowledge into an overall understanding of religious development during childhood and youth. Many aspects of the religious experience have been studied, but there were no published studies on an understanding of salvation from a developmental perspective.

In this presentation I will discuss informally some of the findings of our research on the development of an understanding of salvation and review briefly the religious development of children and adolescents. I will attempt to integrate insights from developmental psychology and the writings of Ellen G. White, with preliminary findings from our continuing research on salvation. Finally, I will offer some suggestions for a philosophy of SDA education.

A word about the terms spiritual and religious might be in order, as some writers distinguish between the two. Spiritual seems to be used more often to refer to the affective-relational aspects of a connection with a Supreme Being or even to feelings associated with an inner peace derived from within the self or from Eastern or Native thought, such as in the New Age spirituality being introduced into the counseling and therapy literature. The term religious is sometimes used to refer to the cognitive and organizational aspects of belonging to a formal religious organization and the understanding of theology and church doctrine.

I do not wish to make that fine a distinction between the two terms because I believe that a relationship with God and the Christian church are interwoven in such a way as to be difficult to separate. This relationship involves cognition and affect and includes organizational and doctrinal issues, as well as personal commitment and ongoing personal encounters with the Divine. Thus, for this presentation I will refer to religious development in an all-inclusive manner.

Early Childhood

Religious Development

We began our interviews about salvation with four-year-olds, the youngest children we thought could be enticed into an interview about such an abstract subject. However, the foundation for a religious experience is laid much earlier. White states: "Bring your children in prayer to Jesus, for He has made it possible for them to learn religion as they learn to frame the words of the language" (1952, Adventist Home, p. 321)
What kind of religion do children learn during babyhood? In another statement, White describes the most important religious lessons of early childhood: "As the mother teaches her children to obey her because they love her, she is teaching them the first lessons in the Christian life. The mother's love represents to the child the love of Christ, and the little ones who trust and obey their mother are learning to trust and obey the Saviour" (1940, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 515).

Love, trust, and obedience are important building blocks of personality, well documented by developmental psychologists (Aden, 1992; Ainsworth, 1969, 1979; Bowlby, 1958; Erik Erikson ([1959] 1980). Trust and obedience are two of the earliest stages of personality development. I believe this initial trust in the dependability of life is an important precursor to the development of trust in God. Gradually the amorphous sense of trust of the infant develops into the more focused trust in the power and presence of God. If the infant develops doubt instead of trust, in later life suspicion and doubt may make it much more difficult to rely on God for pardon and grace and for direction in daily living.

The ability to give and receive love begins with the bonding experience between parent and child. Through this experiential learning of the meaning of love, the child grows into a person for whom love comes naturally--both the giving and the receiving. This person more easily understands and accepts God's love and bases her religious life on love-receiving love from God, returning love to God, and giving love to others. The ability to give and receive love is learned most easily during early childhood.

Ellen White suggests that children can learn to differentiate between right and wrong at an early age: During the first three years of the life of Samuel the prophet his mother carefully taught him to distinguish between good and evil (1954, *Child Guidance*, p. 197). Moral development specialists today agree that a child becomes a moral being by three years of age, showing guilt and the beginnings of conscience and realizing that some actions are good and others are bad. The strength of the parent-child bond appears to be an important foundation for the development of conscience (Magid & McKelvey, 1987).

The young child's cognitive development greatly affects the way he or she understands religious instruction and the everyday experiences which give form to the content and meaning of the family's religion. The literal quality of thinking during the preoperational period proposed by Piaget (1952) limits the young child's understanding of the symbols of religion and may lead to misconceptions.

While these qualities of the young child's thinking may be viewed as limiting understanding when compared with an adult view of religion, I believe they also create a positive climate of belief. The child is not cognitively ready to question the religious teachings of the home and the church as she will do later. Rather, she is eager to accept and embrace these teachings with a simple belief, perhaps best illustrated by the young child's implicit faith that Jesus will answer her prayers.

The child is not born with religious knowledge. Generally he or she learns about religion and begins to relate to it as a result of the instruction of the family during early childhood. Naturally, the child reflects the religious orientation of the home. However, I believe that Christian faith and the consequent religious experience is also a gift from God. Without that gift there would be no religious experience. God can, and undoubtedly does, give this gift of faith to young children in a form appropriate to their relational and understanding capabilities.

During early childhood the child's response to the world is far more affective than cognitive. The God image the child embraces may be loving and supporting or frightening. Religious images may be associated with profound feelings of joy or fear (Reich, 1993). The child may develop positive or negative feelings about religion as he participates in religious activities. Most children probably will enter the elementary school with strong affective responses to their previous religious experiences, but limited cognitive understanding.
Understanding Salvation

In our research on the understanding of salvation, the young child’s simple belief showed as spontaneous, unconditional trust that Jesus would take him or her to heaven. Four-, five-, and six-year-olds have no doubts about God’s love and salvation. They are quick to provide every day illustrations of their thinking and in general tend to be very behavior oriented. Their understanding of sin and its effects is very limited. More than half believe adults are good they do not sin! Although their understanding of the cross is quite limited, their drawings about salvation often include Jesus’ death on the cross. Some children draw the Second Coming and others draw human actions related to salvation, such as praying or doing good things.

There was quite a leap of understanding between four and six. Fours and 5s generally understood at Level 1, the most concrete level of understanding, while quite a few 6s were moving ahead a level. The brightest children understood like eight- and nine-year-olds. We must be alert to their needs for greater understanding of salvation than other children their own age.

At these young ages, understanding of salvation is simple and full of trust and love for Jesus. With good reasons Jesus stated that adults must be converted and become as little children to be saved (Matt. 18:3 NKJV). We must return to the simple, trusting love of the child.

Late Childhood

General Religious Development

Children from six to twelve years of age make profound changes in cognitive abilities, personality and moral development. With appropriate instruction in a positive religious climate, their religious development also can make great strides.

The major personality issue is to master the tasks of their world, including the mastery of things and experience (Erikson, [1959] 1980). This need to master also includes the mastery of meaning and values. Aden (1992) suggests that this changes the focus of faith from obedience to assent. He describes assent as a wholehearted acceptance of God as he is disclosed and symbolized in the claim and the confession of the Christian community (p. 27). Indeed, most churches recognize this stage of religious development by providing systematic instruction in the Christian faith and ceremonial acknowledgment of the child’s participation as a full member of the community of faith during these years.

The emergence of concrete operational thinking allows more flexibility in understanding religious instruction, although the symbolisms of the Scriptures can remain somewhat mysterious until concrete operational thinking has fully matured and formal operational thinking is beginning to emerge. Concrete operational thinking tends to focus on rules and relationships between events. Not unreasonably, then, this appears to be an excellent time to teach the God’s Ten Commandments and their implications for daily living. Children of this age need a very practical religion. They want to know exactly what to do in everyday situations. Formal instruction in doctrines can begin toward the end of this period as formal operational thinking is emerging, although much informal learning occurs earlier.

During the early elementary school years most children have a very rigid sense of fairness--I will do to you exactly what you do to me. They are primarily interested in their own point of view, usually thinking, What’s in it for me? They tend to make constant comparisons and demand absolutely equal treatment, to the consternation of all adults who deal with them. They get into a lot of fights and name calling because they think they have to pay everything back.

As Lickona (1983) points out, we can deal with them in the same manner (I did this for you, so you should do that for me) and do a lot of negotiation. This goes with the flow of their understanding. To
help them grow, we need to challenge their thinking by appealing to love instead of fairness, and teaching religious values that emphasize the importance of love. It helps to model kind and caring actions in our own behavior and to help children become more sensitive to how other people feel.

Usually by the middle to late years of the elementary school, many children begin to want to live up to their own internalized image of a nice person and believe they should be nice so others will think well of them and they can think well of themselves. They begin to think of what others need and become more forgiving and flexible in their thinking. They can also imagine their own character developing and relate to issues of character development.

A true internalized conscience begins to emerge during this time, but it is both inner and outer directed. The child has internalized standards, but these are very much affected by what others say and do. So it is an internalized conscience in the making.

Maintaining a personal relationship with children this age is very important. Their self-concept is emerging and needs adult reinforcement. Children need to be taught moral values and the reasons for these values. It is crucial to establish a strong base of moral principles with clearly understood reasons before adolescence. If this base is firmly in place, the adolescent task of making the previously learned values her own will be much easier.

The parent-child relationship often referred to as parenting style—strongly influences the child in many important ways which also have an impact on religious development (Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Hoffman, 1970, 1971; Maccoby and Martin, 1985)

The type of parent-child interaction described as the authoritative-reciprocal style encourages the strongest positive moral and religious development. These parents use a rational, issue-oriented manner of directing their children's behavior. They listen to their children and explain the reasons for their requirements, but they do not hesitate to use power-assertive techniques of discipline when necessary. Their children are expected to be independent and self-directing, but to conform to adult requirements. The parents do not hesitate to set standards and enforce them, but they are flexible when needed. Communication is a strong element of this parenting style. Interestingly, Ellen White also encourages the use of this same parenting style, explaining its advantages clearly (for example: Child Guidance, p. 263; Counsels to Teacher, p. 155; Education, p. 288; Testimonies, Vol. 3, pp. 132-33).

Understanding Salvation

Children reared in the Seventh-day Adventist faith come into late childhood with some knowledge about the beliefs of their church, although not in the formal sense of doctrine. They usually know that Jesus died on the cross to save people, but are not totally aware of the meaning of this event. They have only a vague understanding of issues of sin, forgiveness, and salvation. They have much to learn and are eager to master their religion as they master the rest of their environment.

Ellen White acknowledges this need for mastery: Children of eight, ten or twelve years are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion. . . . If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ (1954, Child Guidance, p. 490). In other statements she again emphasizes the importance of helping children understand salvation: Christ came to teach the human family the way of salvation, and He made this way so plain that a little child can walk in it (1930, Messages to Young People, p. 15). As the Holy Spirit moves upon the heart of the children, cooperate with His work. Teach them that the Saviour is calling them (1953, Ministry of Healing, p. 44). It is clear Ellen White expected that children could understand and accept salvation.

In our research on salvation, an understanding of sin grows gradually from the something bad responses of the 4- to 5-year-olds to the idea that sin is a break in the relationship with God, first mentioned
Salvation

at age 16. By ages 8 to 9 children are beginning to be more specific about sin as disobeying God, although a majority do not relate sin to disobeying God’s laws until the mid-teen years. Children tend to focus on actions and rules. They can measure their behavior by how well they obey home and classroom rules. It is the same with God. Perhaps from ages 10 to 12 onward would be the time to focus directly on the break in the relationship with God aspect of sin because children are poised for a leap in understanding during the teen years (Habenicht, 1996).

The 7- to 9-year-olds in our study seemed to be preoccupied with forgiveness. We need to understand this phase of religious development and counteract their preoccupation with assurances of forgiveness. Children expressed a great deal of uncertainty about one sin keeping them from being saved. They also talked a lot about trying hard. Christ’s righteousness as a solution to the uncertainty is not understood by most children during these years. The first clear statement on this matter did not come until age 16.

We need to emphasize the message of Christ’s righteousness. In God’s eyes we are perfect because Jesus is perfect. Our children need to internalize this message much earlier. It can be understood because some relatively young children in our study had gotten the message. Some children at all ages said, I have faith in Him and I trust Him. This seems to be the childhood expression of righteousness by faith: I have faith and I trust, or I believe.

Children ages 10 to 13 showed major transitions in understanding of sin, overcoming sin, the meaning of baptism, and the relationship of faith to salvation. Earlier, ages 6 to 9 showed major transitions in understanding of sin, overcoming sin, what it means to be saved, and the relationship of faith to salvation.

During the elementary years, the behavior orientation toward salvation peaks at ages 8 to 9 and then gradually decreases, while the grace-faith orientation gradually increases, with a strong increase from ages 13 to 14. These same ages also showed an increase in a relationship orientation toward salvation. Doubts about being saved begin at ages 6 to 7, and reach 40-50% of the children from ages 8 to 13. However, the rest of the children (50-60%) express a spontaneous, unconditional assurance of salvation during these years. In a previous study, eighth graders expressed much doubt about being ready if Jesus were to come today. Their reasons were very behavior oriented, almost pathetically so I didn’t make my bed today or I fought with my brother. The message about the importance of the direction of one’s life and the beauty of Christ’s covering grace has clearly not gotten through to everyone.

These are years when children experience great leaps in religious understanding, largely because of their increasing capacity for thinking. Many children experience conversion and desire to formally join the church through baptism during the later years of this period. These are very important years for salvation.

Clearly, the late childhood years are an important time for religious development. Understanding increases by leaps and bounds because the child is immersed in mastery of her religion as well as the rest of her environment and experience.

Adolescence and Youth

General Religious Development

Adolescence, often thought of as a time of personal turmoil and stress, offers an opportunity for solidifying the religious experience brought from childhood. The search for identity (Erikson [1959] 1980), both inner and in relationship to others, dominates this stage of life and provides a fruitful time for examining religious identity. The emergence of formal operational thinking (Piaget, 1952) continues during adolescence, with significant impact on religious thinking. A fully principled conscience is still in the making and usually does not appear until young adulthood, if it appears at all.
As adolescents are searching for the answer to the question, Who am I in relation to the other? the question about one’s ultimate destiny emerges as, Who am I in relation to God? A positive resolution of this question can have strong implications for the adolescent’s overall sense of identity. A sense of ultimate identity responds to the adolescent’s need to be recognized and respected as a significant person. It also provides a remedy for the adolescent’s struggle with inadequacy and self-doubt. She is of importance to God. She can deal with feelings of guilt and failure because she is accepted and forgiven by God in a way far beyond anything she could do for herself. She is a creature of infinite worth because she is the object of God’s great love. She can experience herself as whole through the healing power of Jesus Christ (Aden, 1992).

Religious faith can provide the strongest possible underpinning for the ego identity development of adolescents and young adults. If teachers and parents are aware of the identity struggle and the positive role religion can play in the resolution of the crisis, they can be more affirming and more helpful. Jesus Christ makes each person whole. This is the message our young people need to hear.

Adolescents need to develop an independent conscience based on the self-respect acquired from a strong religious identity. They need to participate in many serious discussions of the social and moral issues which surround them, and the relationship between the individual and society. They need first-hand experiences in service for others. For this reason the student missionary program has been notably successful in helping adolescents rethink their relationship to others and to God.

Adolescents and youth need to develop goals for their future which include thinking of themselves as a contributing member of the church community, as well as the community at large. They need many opportunities to make important choices while they have sympathetic and supportive adults to cushion the mistakes of some wrong choices as well as applaud the wise ones. They need close relationships with confirming adults.

Eventually, as youth merges into young adulthood, they must make the choice of affirming their relationship with God or rejecting it. The ultimate choice is theirs, as stated so well by Ellen White:

Daniel and his companions enjoyed the benefits of correct training and education in early life, but these advantages alone would not have made them what they were. The time came when they must act for themselves—when their future depended upon their own course. Then they decided to be true to the lessons given them in childhood (1954, Child Guidance, p. 167).

This choice weighs heavily with the collegian and the young adult in graduate school or the work force. Idealism still reigns and the pressure of advanced schooling or work looms high. The church does not seem to offer much help for the pressures. She still thinks of herself as an Adventist, or at least a Christian, but ties to the church community become very loose. Truly she is living in decision time, the most important one of her life.

Understanding Salvation

The more advanced cognitive processes used by adolescents clearly affect their thinking about religion and their relationship with God. In our study of salvation, the idea that sin represents a break in an individual’s relationship with God was not mentioned by anyone younger than 16 years, and was not given as a majority response until ages 24 to 25. The largest number of transitions in thinking about salvation occur between 14 and 17 years of age, making the academy years crucial for growth in religious understanding.

By 16-17 years three-fifths of the adolescents say God loves them even when they sin because they have experienced His love. They also believe sin can separate them from God. By this age the message of God’s grace is also coming across strongly, as four-fifths believe faith and grace are the way to overcome sin, instead of focusing on improving behavior.
However, our interviewees were 18-19 years before as many as half could explain the meaning of baptism, including the symbols and the covenant relationship involved. Perhaps the symbolism of baptism is not emphasized in our instruction for baptismal candidates because teenagers most likely have the cognitive ability to understand this type of symbolism.

The academy years did not yield as in depth an understanding of salvation as I had anticipated, so I decided to continue the interviews through the college and young adult years. As a preliminary project, Carole Anderson interviewed a small group of 70 youth ages 19 - 25. From these findings, we noted that some very significant changes may occur in the understanding of salvation during these years, so decided to enlarge the data base. Neval Regal has just completed 120 interviews of individuals 19 to 35 years of age. I have read some of the interviews for ages 19 to 25, but no formal analysis has been done on this new data. In my informal reading I noticed that many of the individuals did not regularly attend Sabbath school or church, but still considered themselves Seventh-day Adventists. We are eagerly anticipating the analysis of these new interviews to answer some of our questions about what happens to the understanding of salvation during young adulthood.

The years of youth are important years for solidifying the religious experience with a new encounter with Jesus on an adult level, an encounter which leads to a fuller understanding of righteousness by faith and what Jesus has really done on the cross for me. This new understanding makes the religious bridge from childhood to adulthood and leads to a serious commitment for the long haul. The joy of this new encounter with Jesus is central to the adult’s assurance of salvation.

**Church School vs. Public School**

Children who attend church school presumably receive more religious instruction than children who attend public school, at the very least because of the religion curriculum. Presumably both groups are involved in Sabbath school lessons at church and eventually baptismal classes. Does attending church school lead to greater understanding of salvation? I decided to seek an answer by doing a comparison of the interviews of children who had always attended church school (137) and those who had always attended public school (109). [Most of the public school interviews were done by Bradley Booth.] (The rest of our interviewees had a mixed educational background.) I do not presume that this small comparison really answers the question, but it may provide some food for thought and further research.

There is no significant difference between the groups in the number who are baptized members of the Adventist church, even though the public school group had significantly more teenagers ages 13 -17 than the church school group. Apparently, the children who attend church school are baptized earlier. There is no difference in the frequency of family worship, personal prayer, or Sabbath school attendance and church attendance. Church school students read their Bibles more often, while public school students watch more television.

On six questions there is no measurable difference between interviewees who had attended only public school and those who had attended only church school. This result might be interpreted in favor of church school children. Since there are more adolescents in the public school group, they would be expected to give more in depth responses to most questions, rather than being the same as the church school students.

On some questions public school students appear to have a more in depth understanding: how sin began, the meaning of baptism, the meaning of being saved, and the relationship between choice and overcoming sin. Most of these questions are among the most highly developmental (related to age) of all the questions asked in our interviews.
Even though the church school group has more younger children, they appear to have a more in-depth understanding of how sin affects one's relationship with God, how to overcome sin, the relationship between baptism and salvation, why Jesus came to earth, and what Jesus is doing now.

Neither group understands very much about why Jesus had to die on the cross. Public school and church school children have about the same assurance of salvation.

Their drawings are quite different, with 65% of the church school students focusing on Jesus' death on the cross and human conditions for salvation, such as right decisions, good actions, devotional practices, baptism, etc. More of the public school students (50%) focus on Jesus' second coming or the resurrection and the results of salvation, such as eternal life, heaven, freedom from sin and its consequences; with an additional 10% focusing on a new relationship with God or an outline of the plan of salvation, topics only one church school student drew.

In previous analyses we have noted that public school students who have been baptized give measurably different responses from those who have not been baptized (Booth). Baptism appears to make no difference in the responses of church school attendees. Perhaps they have been learning the topics covered in a baptismal class in their school religion classes, while specific instruction by the church makes a difference for the public school students.

In many ways, the data favor the church school students, although many public school students responded very well, especially those who are baptized members of the church.

**Implications for Philosophy and Curriculum in SDA Education**

Since the statement of philosophy clearly states that the greatest need of the student is to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, we need to pay careful attention to how children understand salvation. We can thus improve our teaching and our focus on this most important issue.

After reading over seven hundred interviews, I would like to suggest the following ideas for your consideration:

1. If we understand how children and adolescents develop their ideas and feelings related to salvation, we can be more effective in reaching each child or adolescent with the Good News of salvation. This is the first time a serious attempt has been made to describe how children and adolescents develop their ideas about salvation.

2. Information about the developmental aspects of salvation, such as we have found in our research, should be made available to teachers everywhere so they can be better prepared to help their students find salvation through Jesus Christ.

3. The developmental aspects of salvation should receive serious consideration in curriculum development. We can reach children more effectively if we present ideas they can understand, then lead them gradually to a more in-depth understanding of salvation.

4. Salvation concepts should be presented in a spiral form, presenting more advanced ideas for the benefit of children who can understand, but always presenting the basics also, using vocabulary and ideas which are understandable to a beginner. Intellectually gifted children are usually understanding salvation concepts at least one level above their classmates. We must be sure to meet their needs, too.

5. Include the plan of salvation at every level through grades 1 - 4, as well as in later grades, through all the Bible stories.

6. Some important ideas about salvation are not well understood by children or youth: forgiveness, grace, the direction of the life vs. the single wrong deed, Jesus' substitution for my sins, and others. Many of these concepts can be understood by relatively young children because some do understand. We need to search for appropriate ways to present them for childlike understanding. We need to teach in their terms,
adapted to their culture and level of understanding, and translated into everyday life. We are now beginning to accumulate research information which can guide our efforts to cooperate with the Holy Spirit for the salvation of our children and youth.

7. We need to ask ourselves the following questions about salvation. Once we have found the answers, our efforts will be more focused and probably more fruitful.
   a. What is essential?
   b. At what ages can the essentials be taught?
   c. How can they be taught?
   d. How can we make salvation personal?

**Conclusion**

An understanding of the general religious development, and specifically the development of an understanding of salvation, during childhood and youth can be very useful for guiding our students toward accepting Jesus as their personal Saviour. We are beginning to acquire research data about salvation which can guide our curriculum development and teaching efforts. We need to use this information wisely.

However, we must not be lured into thinking that research findings or our knowledge children, curriculum development, and teaching strategies provide all the answers to the religious development of our children and youth. I believe religious faith and salvation are always gifts from God, which He gives in accordance with our ability to understand and use. As teachers and parents we are completely dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit to draw children and youth toward the Saviour. We must never forget this dependence. It is the essential key to religious development and salvation.

**Notes:**

1. I am very grateful to the following colleagues and former students for helping with this project by providing ideas, collecting data, assisting with data analysis, and sharing their thesis and dissertation data: Carole Anderson, Bradley Booth, Lenore Brantley, Megan Brown, Judith Fischer, Dorothy Hayward, Markus Hill, Trudy Holmes, Jimmy Kijai, Victor Kornijczuk, Ermine Leader, Neva Regal, Ralph Schroeder, Jerry Thayer, and Zarko Vukmirovic.

2. For the convenience of the reader, I have included the names of the books written by Ellen G. White, as well as the date of publication in the body of the paper.

3. Please see Appendix A for basic information about the Salvation Concepts Research Project.
REFERENCES

APPENDIX A
Salvation Concept Research Project
Basic Information

Total number of interviews to date: 726
   606 from United States and Canada (many subjects born in other countries)
     (convenience sample, including small and large churches in rural and city areas, church
     school and public school students, same racial proportions as NAD membership in 1997)
   120 from Argentina and Uruguay (random sample) (Korniejczuk)

Data we have collected:
   Demographic information questionnaire (parents completed for younger children)
   Interview about salvation ideas and feelings
   Drawing about salvation
   Vocabulary test from the Wechsler Intelligence Scales

Salvation Interview includes:
   Sin: definition, origin, relationship with God, overcoming
   Baptism: meaning, symbolism
   Being saved: who will be saved, meaning, faith relationship, choice relationship, works
     (behavior), trust and grace, assurance of salvation
   Jesus: mission, present work
   Overall attitude toward salvation

Demographic Information:
   Living arrangements
   Religious background of parents
   Siblings
   Baptism
   Religious instruction in the home, family worship
   Personal Bible reading, prayer, church activities
   Television viewing