



C·B·E
CENTER FOR BIBLE ENGAGEMENT

Bible Literacy & Spiritual Growth: Survey Results
November 2006

Executive Summary

The Bible Literacy Research Center of Back to the Bible in Lincoln, Nebraska, conducted a 113-question survey with 8,665 respondents from across the United States. The primary purpose of the research was to determine why so many Christ-followers own Bibles but fail to read them.

In our quest to understand why so many believers own Bibles but fail to read them, the Back to the Bible research team studied the following variables: psychological (attributes relating to personality, attitudes, interests or lifestyles); demographic (age and gender); behavioral (how often and what time of day the Bible is read); and spiritual growth (amount of time spent in prayer and in the Word). The goal was to determine which variables would significantly increase the likelihood of an individual reading his/her Bible.

Of our 8,665 survey respondents, three out of five were women and 39% were men. About four-fifths of those responding to the survey identified themselves as White. A little less than one-tenth (8.4%) indicated that they are African-American. The average age for respondents is 46 years, with more than half (55.5%) between the ages of 42 and 60 (Baby Boomers). Young people under the age of 23 (Mosaics) represent only 5.0% of the sample.

Nearly all of those surveyed (99.7%) said they are followers of Jesus Christ with 75% saying they had been followers for more than ten years. When asked their religious preference, one out of three respondents indicated that they are Baptist. Interestingly, the most common response was “Other”. Typically those who chose the “other” category indicated that they were either Bible-believing, non-denominational, and/or evangelical.

Consistent with other studies, we find a disconnect between respondents’ expressed beliefs about the importance of the Bible and their reading habits.

The vast majority of respondents indicated that the Bible is relevant to their every day lives and is their life authority. However, only one-half read the Bible daily, with another 37% reading it more than once a week, but not daily. Only two out of five respondents have read the entire Bible. When asked what hinders their Bible reading, most participants indicated that they are “too busy”.

As expected, Bible reading habits are correlated with both Bible knowledge and spiritual growth.

A little more than half (53.5%) of those who read the Bible daily answered all or almost all questions correctly on a 12-item Bible knowledge scale. In contrast, only one out of four (25.6%) Weekly readers answered 11 to 12 questions correctly. Similarly, about three out of five (58.8%) respondents who read the Bible daily chose the highest-level response (daily Bible reading and passion to connect with God and share Him with others) on the Kroll Bible Literacy Scale. Fewer than one in five (17.8%) participants who read the Bible more than weekly, but not daily scored at the highest level.

In terms of spiritual growth, we find that those in leadership positions read the Bible more. Respondents who read the Bible at least four times a week are less likely to engage in behaviors such as gambling, pornography, getting drunk, and sex outside marriage.

In addition, the more the respondent reads the Bible, the more witnessing he or she does. Three-fifths (59.7%) of those who shared their faith with more than 10 people in the past year read the Bible daily, compared to only one-third (33.4%) of those who did not share their faith at all.

Our analysis of the relationship between demographic, psychological, and behavior factors reveals several predictors of Bible reading. Some predictors, such as age and gender, can not be changed, but may be useful for targeting materials. Other predictors, such as having a mentor or following a Bible reading plan, may be able to be influenced by various strategies to increase Bible reading and literacy.

In terms of demographic characteristics, we find Bible reading more common among women, older respondents, those who were baptized later in life, and members of denominations other than Lutheran or Catholic. The following bullets summarize these results:

- Women are significantly more likely to read the Bible than men. In comparison to male respondents, female respondents were 22.1% more likely to read the Bible daily.
- Older respondents tend to read the Bible more than younger respondents. For example, only one-third (34.7%) of Mosaics (age 22 and under) read the Bible daily, compared to 64.4% of Builders (age 61 to 79).
- For every year of age older when baptized, respondents were 2.5% times more likely to read the Bible daily. Those respondents that were baptized as an infant were less likely to read the Bible on a daily basis (46.9%) compared to sample members who were baptized later in life (49.4%).
- About half of sample members who identified themselves as Baptist (50.5%) or “Other” religious preference (48.6%) reported that they read the Bible daily.
- Compared to all other denominations, Roman Catholic respondents were 64.4% to 83.4% less likely to read the Bible daily. Lutherans respondents are 62.4% less likely to read seven days per week.

The data also reveal many predictors, which could be influenced by various strategies. In particular, frequent and consistent Bible reading is associated with reading the Bible while growing up, not having difficulty understanding the Bible, journaling, following a Bible reading plan, using a study guide or aid, reading in the morning, having an accountability partner and having a spiritual mentor. The following bullets summarize these findings:

- If the family of the respondent read the Bible while growing up, the respondent is significantly more likely to read the Bible at least once a week and to read the Bible all the way through.
- For each additional Bible owned, respondents were 35% more likely to read the Bible daily than not at all.
- People who find the Bible difficult to understand read the Bible less than those who do not find it difficult to understand and are less likely to have read it completely. Only one-quarter of those who find the Bible difficult to understand read it daily, compared to more than half of other respondents.
- Respondents who use a journal are significantly more likely to read the Bible at least four times a week, compared to those who do not use a journal.
- Following a Bible reading plan was significantly more common among people who read the Bible five to seven times a week than those who read less frequently. Seven out of ten respondents who use a Bible reading plan read the Bible daily, compared to only a little more than one-third of those who do not follow a plan.
- Those respondents who read the Bible more often are significantly more likely to use Bible study guides.
- Those that prefer to read the Bible in the morning are significantly more likely to read the Bible five to seven times per week, compared to people who prefer to read in the evening.
- Participants who prefer group study read the Bible less often than those who like both group and personal study.
- Respondents who make reading the Bible a high priority in their life are significantly more likely to read the Bible seven times a week.
- There is a highly significant relationship between attending Sunday School and how often the respondent reads the Bible. Those respondents who attend Sunday School are more likely to read the Bible daily.
- Participants in group Bible study are far more likely to read their Bible on a daily basis (56.1%), compared to those do not participate (41.1%).
- Having an accountability partner is associated with more days and more time spent reading the Bible.
- Respondents with a spiritual mentor read the Bible significantly more than their counterparts without a mentor.

Before discussing the implications of the survey findings, it's important to consider some limitations and issues inherent in the survey process. In designing the survey, the research team was concerned that respondents would over-report their Bible reading. To minimize the likelihood that survey respondents would over-report their Bible reading habits, we built a lie factor into the survey design. Pertaining to Bible reading, we asked the question several different ways and did an analysis of the consistency of the responses. The statistical correlations among these similar questions suggest that this issue was kept to a minimum.

A second study limitation concerns the representativeness of the sample. Because random sampling techniques were not used to select survey responders, these findings may not represent the general population of Christ-followers living in the United States. However, we do believe the significant relationships uncovered here suggest further study of this very complex issue is warranted.

A final study limitation centers on the use of internet-based surveys. Although Web-based surveying is very attractive, at this point it should be used with caution. Currently the biggest concern in Internet surveying is coverage bias or bias due to potential sample members not having or choosing not to access the Internet (Crawford, Couper & Lamias, 2001; Kaye & Johnson, 1999).

Despite these limitations, the findings from this survey provide a great deal of information about the Bible reading habits and associated factors among Christ-followers. **One implication of our results is that the amount of time one actually spend reading the Bible may be a far better indicator of the state of a person's spiritual life.** Gallup, Barna and many other survey organizations have typically used attendance at religious services as an index of religiosity. Attendance represents a single behavior that encompasses a tiny fraction of the whole spiritual life. For Christ-followers in particular, Bible reading may be a more reliable measure. The data from this study indicate that time spent in the Word correlates with an individual's spiritual growth, including his or her knowledge of the Bible and attempts to share his or her faith.

Our evidence also suggests it is no longer enough to just hand someone a Bible because there is a high statistical probability they won't take the time to read it. According to our analysis of the open-ended question to Christ-followers, "What hinders you from reading the Bible?"- 11,025 reasons were given for not reading the Bible (too busy, too distracted, too tired, no discipline, not a priority, to name a few). There were only 335 respondents that said nothing hinders them from reading the Bible. Simply stated—we do what is important to us. Sadly for most people, reading God's Word, which is the only way we can be sure that we are hearing from God, is of low importance to a majority of people who claim to be His followers.

Preliminary findings of this study indicate that certain demographic, psychological and behavioral factors are associated with the likelihood of an individual reading the Bible. We plan now to utilize those factors to develop strategies, techniques, and approaches for increasing Bible reading and literacy among today's Christians. The next phase of the project has four main goals:

1. **Create Profiles** - Averages and distributions can be computed for a broad range of variables such as Bible reading habits and “age,” “level of education,” “marital status” and “denomination.” Feed this information to a good product development staff and the result will be interesting insights into how to tailor Bible reading promotional material, products and methodology to the characteristics of different individuals.
2. **Generate Segments** - Divide a database into groups of identical, or “homogeneous,” individuals (or churches). Back to the Bible would create a manageable number of homogeneous life-stage segments and then target them with customized material.
3. **Explore Statistical Predictive Models** – Use statistical techniques, which methodically analyze multiple variables to predict future Bible reading behavior and to discover the best practices to improve Bible reading. This would open the door to helping churches encourage their members to become daily Bible readers.
4. **Identify Pockets of Unbelievers** – Use information from Christ-following respondents to identify unbelievers and increase their responsiveness to want to read the Bible.

Our research on the Bible reading habits of Christ-followers found that most reported very little time spent in listening to what God has to say to them through His Word. This has resulted in less knowledge and less spiritual growth. Not surprising to this research team, the more time an individual spent reading the Word the greater the impact in all areas of spiritual growth.

It is the fundamental belief of this research team that God speaks to us directly only through the Bible. That is to say, the only sure way of knowing the voice we hear is that of the Lord Jesus Christ is through His written Word. Whatever any other source may say, it must be in agreement with Scripture (Acts 17:11). That requires a consistent study and a thorough knowledge of what God says in the Bible.

Our research of Christ-followers also indicates that we must determine how people think God communicates with them. At least two aspects of this issue need to be added to our research: 1) in what manner does He speak? and 2) what does He speak about? In addition, it would be beneficial for Christ-followers to also consider how Satan communicates to them.

The theoretical foundation of this survey was following the logic behind asking the fundamental question that Henry Ford once asked about the importance of the automobile- “ask the man that owns one.” One can wonder the state of the automobile today if the answer was “yes, I own three but never use them”. This study is the fifth and most extensive survey Back to the Bible has done thus far. The most glaring conclusion is that it is no longer enough to just hand someone a Bible; most people don’t know the importance of reading it. We hope that the information reported here can be useful in reconnecting believers everywhere to the living God and His Word.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Study Method.....	2
Survey Instrument.....	2
Survey Implementation.....	3
Profile of Respondents.....	3
Findings.....	4
Spiritual Beliefs and Disciplines.....	4
Bible Reading Habits.....	6
Beliefs about the Importance of Bible Reading.....	6
Bible Reading Tools, Plans, and Aids.....	8
Reasons for Not Reading the Bible.....	9
Bible Reading & Knowledge.....	11
Bible Reading & Other Dimensions of Spiritual Growth.....	12
Predictors of Consistent Bible Reading.....	12
Demographic Characteristics.....	13
Other Predictors.....	14
Conclusions & Implications.....	15
References.....	19
Appendix A: Survey Questions.....	20
The Bible Literacy Research Team.....	39

List of Tables

Table 1. Age of Survey Respondents.....	4
Table 2. Bible Reading Approaches	9
Table 3. What Hinders You from Reading the Bible?.....	11

List of Figures

Figure 1. Geographical Distribution of Survey Sample.....	3
Figure 2. Respondents' Beliefs about Biblical Truths	5
Figure 3. How Often Respondents Read the Bible.....	6
Figure 4. The Kroll Bible Literacy Scale.....	8
Figure 5. Relationship between Bible Reading Frequency and Knowledge	12

Bible Literacy & Spiritual Growth: Survey Results

This research is the beginning of a series of nationwide surveys, conducted by the Bible Literacy Research Center of Back to the Bible. It seeks to determine causes of and solutions for the current national crisis of biblical illiteracy in America among Christ-followers of all ages.

Four key research questions are addressed by the surveys:

1. Why do so many people own Bibles but so few read them?
2. Are there significant differences in habits, behaviors, beliefs, environment and spiritual growth between those who read the Bible on a regular basis and those who do not?
3. Is there a relationship (positive correlation) between an increased time spent in the Word and spiritual growth over time? Is this predictable?
4. If there are significant differences in behavior and habits between those who read the Word regularly and those who do not, can those findings be used to increase personal bible literacy?

Based on the findings of the research, we will seek to develop new products and methodologies to stimulate Bible reading and study.

Background

Recent studies by The Barna Group and the Gallup Organization conclude that any reasonable understanding of biblical facts and truths is seriously lacking among Americans. Today, basic Christian truths are virtually unknown to a majority in this nation.

“American Christians are biblically illiterate. Although most of them contend that the Bible contains truth and is worth knowing, and most of them argue that they know all of the relevant truths and principles, our research shows otherwise. And the trend line is frightening: the younger a person is, the less they understand about the Christian faith.” —Barna

“Bibles are cheap and plentiful in America. Right now anyone can purchase the entire Bible in paperback for less than the shipping costs on Amazon.com, or walk into any church or hotel and simply get one for free. According to a 2001 Gallup poll, the average American household contains four Bibles.” —Gallup

“Bibles everywhere don’t seem to be making much of a difference. About the same number of people who attend church weekly read the Bible during the week (45%).” —Barna

“Women’s Bibles, men’s Bibles, student Bibles, even software Bibles or the Bible online have not increased the numbers of people reading what remains as the bestselling book of all time.” —Barna

According to a recent Gallup poll, about six in ten Americans (59%) say they read the Bible at least on occasion, with the most likely readers being women, non-whites, older people, Republicans, and political conservatives. Readership of the Bible has declined from the 1980s overall, from 73% to 59% today. The percentage of frequent readers, that is, those who read the Bible at least once a week, has decreased slightly over the last decade, from 40% in 1990 to 37% today. About one American in seven reports an involvement that goes beyond reading the Bible. Fourteen percent currently belong to a Bible study group. In terms of frequency of readership, 16% of Americans say that they read the Bible every day, 21% say they read it weekly, 12% say they read the Bible monthly, 10% say less than monthly and 41% say that they rarely or never read the Bible. (Source to follow)

The investigation into this problem undertaken by The Barna Group indicates that people are oblivious or resistant to committed study of the Bible for various reasons—they feel they already know what is important; churches have de-emphasized Bible teaching; families are too busy and have demoted Bible learning as a family endeavor and priority; most parents depend on churches to provide Bible training for their children, but churches rely upon volunteers who are ill-prepared to provide meaningful, long-term Bible training; and the messages derived from cultural communications often conflicts directly with biblical messages, causing confusion or an outright rejection of biblical themes. (Source to follow)

Study Method

This study was designed to explore the relationships among demographic (age and gender), psychological (personality, attitudes, interests, and lifestyle), and behavioral factors and Bible-reading habits. A second goal was to examine if there is a correlation between Bible reading habits and spiritual growth/knowledge of the Bible. The next sections describe the survey instrument and procedure in more detail and provide a general profile of the survey sample.

Survey Instrument

Simply put, seven steps best describe the development of the survey instrument: (1) established the target group as Christ-followers of all ages living in the United States; (2) conducted an extensive interview with two individuals about their Bible reading habits; (3) built a survey question database; (4) beta-tested the survey instrument; (5) analyzed the survey results; (6) appraised the approach and rebuilt the survey tool based on analysis of the responses; and (7) distributed the final draft of the survey. The final survey instrument is easily understood and allows for responses in a variety of formats, including the Likert scale, yes/no questions and open-ended questions that permit comments. A sample survey form is included as Appendix A.

Early in the development of the survey instrument, a ten-hour videotaped interview was used, which documented the dramatic changes in the lives of one couple as they increasingly read and studied the Bible. Key issues in their lives were noted and used in developing core concepts for the survey process. Using those concepts and input from ministry staff, a 2,100-question database was created.

The first survey tool included 311 questions and was taken by Back to the Bible employees and friends of the ministry. The instrument allowed for comments on each question. Then a sifting process began based on clarity and agreed-upon definitions. The end result was a 113-question survey instrument.

The 113-item questionnaire was Beta-tested in partnership with Precept Ministries at a youth Bible conference. Two hundred twenty-two respondents were surveyed, and the results analyzed. Interviews and surveys were also conducted with Joni Erickson Tada Ministries to confirm that the survey questions were valid for people with disabilities. The analysis was done, and two open-ended questions were added.

Upon completion of the Precept survey and analysis, a Web-based format was developed. As the World Wide Web has grown in popularity, the use of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) forms or Web-based surveys are becoming the dominant method of gathering survey data. These forms streamline the data collection process, formatting and entering responses directly into a database for analysis. Because HTML forms can be made programmable, it is also possible to have real time error checking and correction, increasing the accuracy of the data collection process. The formatting capabilities of HTML allow the creation of easy-to-read and attractive forms that may improve response rates. In addition, the programmability of HTML forms makes it possible to randomly order responses and tailor options based on information the respondent supplies earlier in the survey.

Survey Implementation

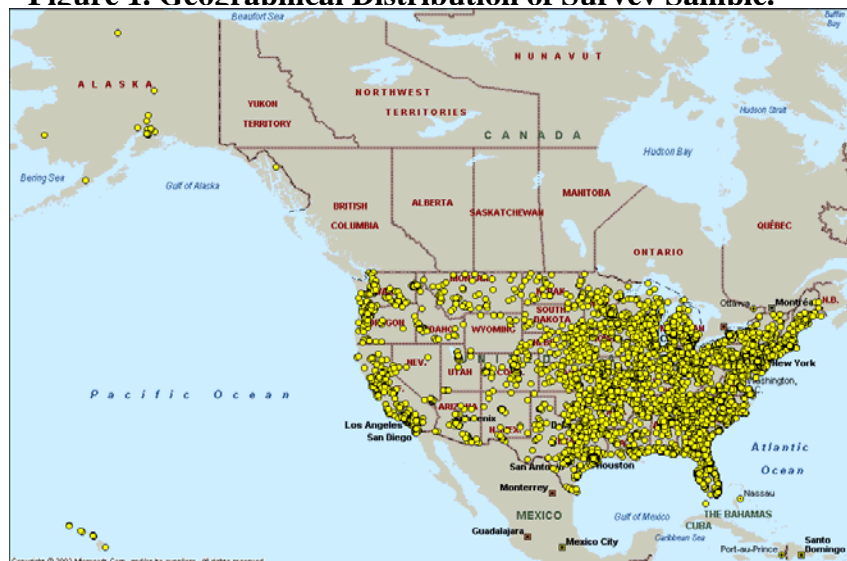
Survey respondents were recruited by three methods. First, NotReligion.com business cards were handed out at the DC/LA Youth for Christ conference directing youth to the survey Web site where they could win a free iPod for completing the survey.

Respondents were also recruited through the Back to the Bible broadcast. Listeners were encouraged to visit the website to complete the survey and enter to win a trip for two to a Bible conference in Bermuda. Approximately 30 one-minute radio spots asked people to fill out the survey. The third method for recruiting survey participants was a notice posted on the Back to the Bible home page.

Profile of Respondents

This survey was completed by 8,665 people from all over the United States representing all 50 states (see Figure 1). The highest percentage of respondents was from Texas (10.4%) with Pennsylvania coming in second with 7.8% .

Figure 1. Geographical Distribution of Survey Sample.



Relative to their proportion in the population, women and Caucasians are slightly overrepresented among the survey sample. Three out of five (61%; n = 5,311) respondents were women and 39% (n = 3,354) were men. About four-fifths of those responding to the survey identified themselves as White. A little less than one-tenth (8.4%) indicated that they are African-American.

Table 1 displays the age distribution of our survey sample. The average age for respondents is 46 years, with more than half (55.5%) between the ages of 42 and 60 (Baby Boomers). Young people under the age of 23 (Mosaics) represent only 5.0% of the sample.

Table 1. Age of Survey Respondents

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mosaics – Age 22 and under	<u>5.0%</u>
Baby Busters – Age 23 to 41	<u>28.6%</u>
Baby Boomers – Age 42 to 60	<u>55.5%</u>
Builders – Age 61 to 79	<u>10.7%</u>
Seniors – Age 80 and up	<u>0.2%</u>

Almost three out of four (73.8%) respondents reported that they are married. An additional one-tenth each indicated that they are single/have never married (11.4%) or are divorced (10.2%). Only 0.4% of the sample (n = 38) reported that they are “living with a significant other.”

Finally, in terms of education, the vast majority of survey respondents (96.1%) have at least a high school diploma. Three out of ten (30.5%) indicated that they had completed some college courses; almost the same percentage of respondents (31.1%) had graduated from college. One-tenth of the sample had a Masters (9.0%) or Doctorate degree (1.7%).

Findings

Spiritual Beliefs and Disciplines

Nearly all those surveyed (99.7%) said they were followers of Jesus Christ with 75% saying they had been followers for more than ten years. When asked their religious preference, one out of three respondents indicated that they are Baptist. Less than five percent each chose Lutheran (3.0%), Methodist (4.2%) or Roman Catholic (2.5%). Interestingly, the most common response was “Other”. Typically those who chose the “other” category indicated that they were either Bible-believing, non-denominational, and/or evangelical.

Almost all respondents (97.0%) had been baptized, with most (64.5%) saying they were not baptized as an infant. The largest number of baptisms occurred prior to the age of 21 (62%), with half of those occurring by age ten.

When asked “why did you become a Christian,” the most common response was “want to go to heaven”, given by just over half (53.7%) of respondents. When asked what is necessary to “get a person into heaven,” the top response was “faith alone in Jesus Christ”, accounting for 95.2% of the sample. It is interesting to note that 817 respondents (9%) felt they were born Christians.

More than four-fifths (86.7%) of sample members indicated that they attend church at least once per week. Two-fifths (44.2%) attend church more than once a week. The vast majority (94.4%)

said they give money to their church and that they had shared their faith in Christ with at least one other person in the past year (88.0%). Curiously, a smaller proportion, about seven out of ten (70.1%) stated that they could do a “good job” of telling someone how to become a Christian and one-fourth (25.4%) indicated that it is difficult to share their faith in Christ.

The most common forms of Christian teaching for respondents were radio and in-person. Nine out of ten (90.8%) had listened to at least one hour of teaching on the radio in the past week. Four-fifths (82.2%) had experienced at least one hour of teaching in person.

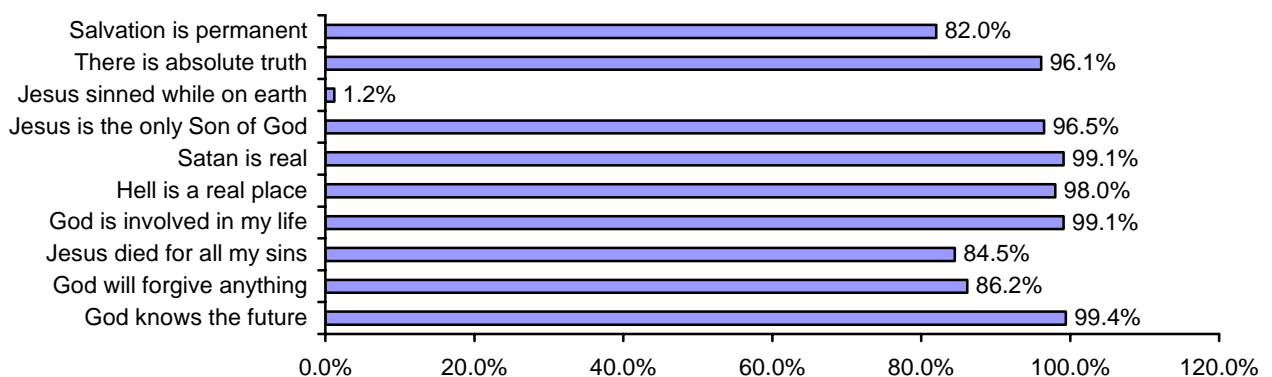
In terms of sample members’ involvement with discipling, mentoring, and leadership, we find that a little more than one-third (36.6%) hold some type of leadership position in a church or ministry. About two-fifths (44.0%) are involved in discipling at least one person. A similar proportion has an accountability partner (40.9%) or a spiritual mentor (40.8%).

The majority of sample members reported placing a high priority on their relationship with God and their spiritual growth. About four-fifths (84.6%) agreed that their relationship with God is the highest priority in their life right now and that they are committed or very committed to fulfilling specific spiritual goals (78.4%).

The survey also asked about respondents’ involvement in prayer. A little more than half (54.7%) reported that they have a designated prayer time every day. An additional 12.9% indicated that they have a personal prayer time five days a week. A cumulative 83.4% “strongly agree” or “agree” that they regularly pray for people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, and 93.4% of respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” that they frequently turn to God in spontaneous prayer throughout the day. Four out of five (81.4%) respondents say they sense the presence of God when they pray.

Figure 2, following, summarizes survey responses concerning sample members’ beliefs about key Biblical truths, such as Jesus being the only Son of God and that Hell is a real place. The vast majority of respondents indicated beliefs consistent with these truths.

Figure 2. Respondents' Beliefs about Biblical Truths



Our final analysis concerning sample members' spiritual beliefs concerns several moral issues. More than nine out of ten respondents said that it is morally unacceptable to cheat (97.1%) and that abortion is morally unacceptable (95.4%). A smaller percentage, 75.5%, feel it is morally unacceptable to marry an unbeliever.

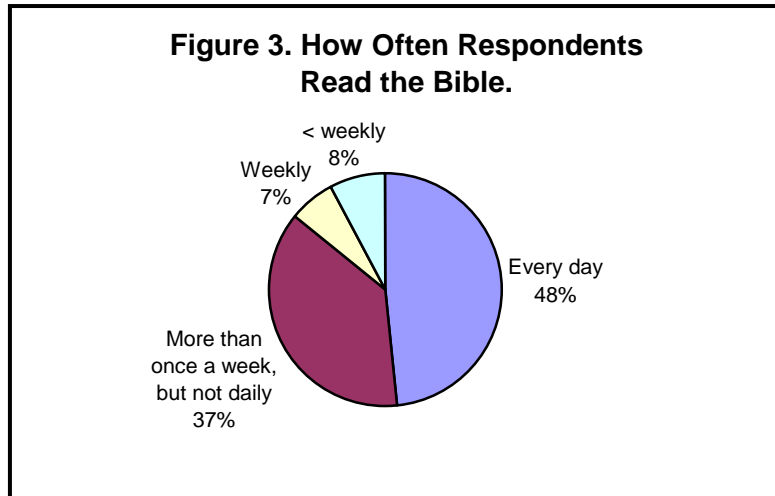
Bible Reading Habits

Consistent with national surveys, we find Bible ownership almost universal among our survey sample. Nearly all respondents (99.9%) own Bibles, with 4.5% owning one Bible and the majority (50.5%) saying they own three to five Bibles.

Relatively few respondents (20.8%) read the Bible as a family growing up.

When asked how often they read their Bibles, 85% said they read the Bible more than once a week.

As shown in Figure 3, to the right, almost one-half reported daily Bible reading and a little more than one-third chose "More than once a week but not daily." The New International Version translation was a strong favorite (33.5%) with the King James Version rating second at 20%.



In terms of how long they spend reading the Bible, respondents most commonly reported spending 10 to 20 minutes per session (38.8%). One-half (48.9%) read for 30 minutes and about one in ten read for more than 30 minutes (10.4%).

Despite the reported time spent reading the Word, it is somewhat surprising that only about two out of five (43.7%) survey respondents indicated that they had read the entire Bible. A little more than half (52.0%) reported that they had not.

Scripture memorization was much more common among respondents. Nearly two out of three (63.9%) said that they had committed at least one Bible verse to memory in the past year, with most memorizing between one and five verses.

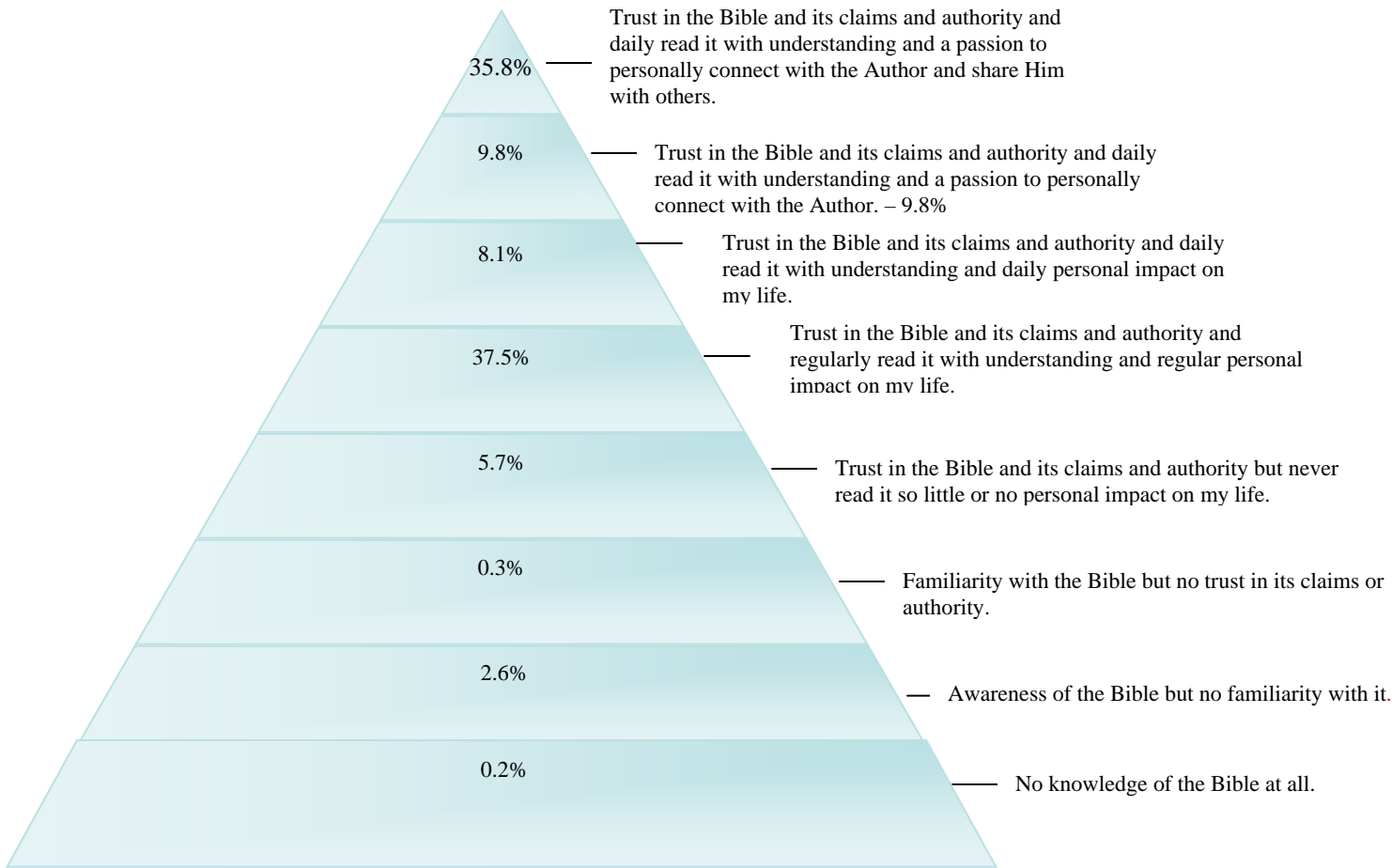
Beliefs about the Importance of Bible Reading

Several survey questions assessed respondents beliefs about the Bible and the importance of reading it. There was universal agreement among survey participants that the Ten Commandments are relevant today (98.8%) and that the Bible is relevant in their everyday lives (98.7%). When asked if they believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, 99.4% said "yes." More than nine out of ten (94.3%) also agree that the Bible is without error.

Similarly, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the Bible is their life authority (96.7%), they must read the Bible to know God (94.4%), and they consult the Bible for counsel on serious matters (90.0%). More than nine out of ten (93.5%) respondents said that God wants us to read the Bible every day. However, only a minority (14.4%) feel that God is mad at them when they don't read the Bible. A large majority (84%) indicated that reading the Bible has a high priority in their life and they feel that something is missing in their day when they don't read the Bible.

One final question asked respondents to rate themselves on the Kroll Bible Literacy Scale. As shown in Figure 4, on the following page, the Kroll Bible Literacy Scale contains eight levels from no knowledge of the Bible at all to "Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority and daily read it with understanding and a passion to personally connect with the Author and share Him with others." Among our survey sample, a little more than one third (35.8%) chose the highest level. The next most common response, indicated by 37.5% of participants, is the fifth level of the scale: "Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority and regularly read it with understanding and regular personal impact on my life. "

Figure 4. The Kroll Bible Literacy Scale.



Bible Reading Tools, Plans, and Aids

Several survey questions focused on how respondents approach Bible reading. The majority (84.1%) agree that they read the Bible often when they are not at church. Table 2, following this discussion, presents details about how sample members approach their Bible reading.

Morning was the preferred time for Bible reading and most respondents like both personal and group Bible study. About two out of three respondents indicated that they do not follow a plan for Bible reading. Few, less than one quarter, use a journal while reading, but more than half use some type of study guide or aid. Interestingly, when asked about the ingredients necessary for staying consistent in Bible reading, the majority of respondents (60.6%) said that they thought a specific time, place, AND plan were important.

Table 2. Bible Reading Approaches.

Question	Percentage
Preferred time of day for reading	
<i>Morning</i>	42.8%
<i>Afternoon</i>	1.8%
<i>Evening</i>	21.5%
<i>Various Times</i>	25.5%
<i>No preference</i>	6.9%
<i>Do not read</i>	1.5%
Preferred Bible Study Format	
<i>Personal</i>	24.4%
<i>Group</i>	12.4%
<i>Both</i>	61.7%
<i>Neither</i>	1.4%
Follow a Bible Reading Plan	
<i>Yes</i>	33.1%
<i>No</i>	66.9%
Use a Journal while Reading	
<i>Agree/strongly agree</i>	23.9%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	27.1%
<i>Disagree/strongly disagree</i>	48.9%
Use Study Guides or Aids while Reading	
<i>Agree/strongly agree</i>	54.8%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	26.8%
<i>Disagree/strongly disagree</i>	18.3%
Ingredients Necessary to Remain Consistent in Bible Reading	
<i>Specific time</i>	16.4%
<i>Specific place</i>	3.8%
<i>Specific plan</i>	13.3%
<i>All of the above</i>	60.6%
<i>None of the above</i>	5.9%

Reasons for Not Reading the Bible

The previous sections revealed some interesting disconnects between how people view the Bible (e.g., life authority) and what they do in terms of reading and studying it. The survey attempted to address this disconnect by asking questions regarding why respondents may not be reading their Bibles. One possibility is that many find the Bible too difficult to understand. Our survey results indicate that this is true for only a minority of respondents. A little more than one out of ten (11.5%) sample members agreed or strongly agreed that the Bible is “extremely difficult to understand”.

Respondents were also asked an open-ended question designed to solicit reasons for not reading the Bible: “*What hinders you from reading the Bible?*” Text analysis was used to analyze responses to this question. “Text analysis, a form of qualitative analysis, is the extraction of

useful information from text (such as open-ended responses) so that the key ideas contained within this text can be grouped into an appropriate number of categories...SPSS Text Analysis for surveys offers a combination of automated linguistic and statistical techniques to yield most reliable results for each stage of the process". (SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys, SPSS Inc. 2006, pg.2).

SPSS Text Analysis was the product used on the open-ended questions of the survey. Linguistic-based techniques were used to extract the key concepts from the responses automatically, and both linguistic and statistical techniques were used to create the category definitions that were assigned to responses.

The literature today provides several warnings regarding the use of open-ended questions in a survey:

"Because open-ended questions provide no structure for the answer, they should be tightly focused to elicit the kind of information the researcher wants to get. And, because they require accurate and time-consuming transcription, their use should be limited to initial research where the number of respondents is small and the object is to refine the research direction and determine more precise questions that can be structured another way". (ERIC Development Team, 1997).

"Avoid open ended questions. In most cases open-ended questions should be avoided due to variation in willingness and ability to respond in writing" (Frery, 1996).

The fundamental issue faced by the Bible Literacy research team in creating the open-ended questions is the coding of the categories for the open-ended questions. Then the challenge is transforming a complete transcript of the answers into manageable pieces of data.

For the question regarding what hinders Bible reading, there were 11,025 responses given by the 8,665 survey respondents. These responses were divided into 21 categories, which are displayed in Table 3. By far, the most common response given, accounting for more than half of the responses and two-thirds (65.1%) of sample members, was that the respondent is "too busy." An additional one-fifth of responses were unique and could not be grouped into one of the other 21 categories. Interestingly, in about 3% of the cases, the respondent indicated that nothing hinders their Bible reading.

Table 3. What Hinders You from Reading the Bible?

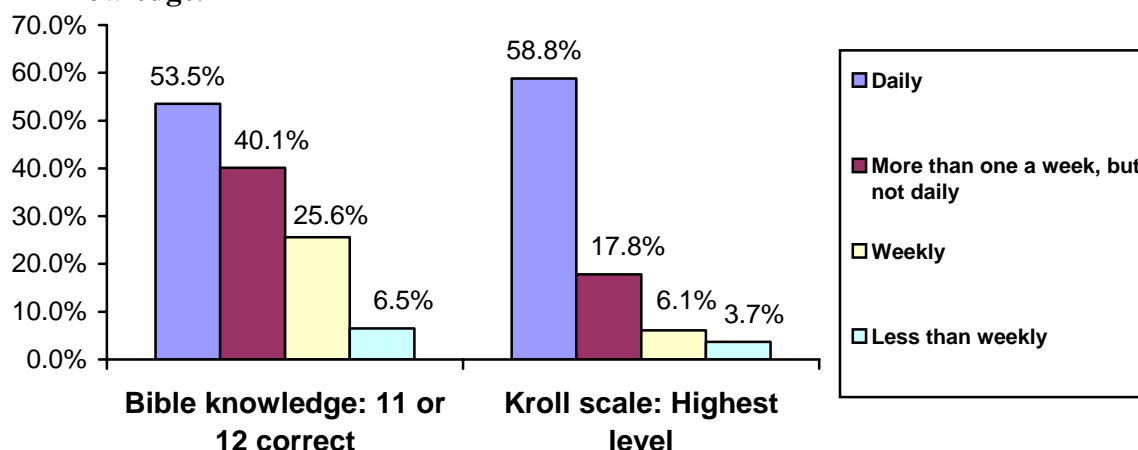
Category	Responses	Percentage
Too busy	5643	51.2%
Unique reason	1940	17.6%
Too distracted	752	6.8%
Fatigue	531	4.8%
Nothing	335	3.0%
Laziness	334	3.0%
Individual	315	2.9%
No discipline	202	1.8%
Priority	181	1.6%
Health issues	113	1.0%
Sin	111	1.0%
Uncertain	107	1.0%
Difficult to understand	93	0.8%
Time management issues	67	0.6%
No plan or goal	66	0.6%
School	63	0.6%
Lack of desire/motivation	47	0.4%
Read other teachings	45	0.4%
Negative experience	37	0.3%
Church says not to	24	0.2%
Life crisis	19	0.2%
Total	11025	100%

Bible Reading & Knowledge

Not surprisingly, our data reveal that the more a respondent reads the Bible, the higher their score on a 12-item Bible knowledge scale ($p < .001$) and the higher their level on the Kroll Bible Literacy Scale ($p < .001$). For example, Figure 4 displays the percentage of respondents answering 11 to 12 of the Bible knowledge items by Bible reading frequency. A little more than half (53.5%) of those who read the Bible daily answered all or almost all questions correctly. In contrast, only one out of four (25.6%) Weekly readers answered 11 to 12 questions correctly.

A similar pattern is observed for the Kroll Bible Literacy Scale. Figure 5 displays the percentage choosing the highest level response on the Kroll scale by Bible reading frequency. About three out of five (58.8%) respondents who read the Bible daily chose the highest-level response (daily Bible reading and passion to connect with God and share Him with others). Fewer than one in five (17.8%) participants who read the Bible more than weekly, but not daily scored at the highest level.

Figure 5. Relationship between Bible Reading Frequency and Knowledge.



We also find that more frequent Bible reading is associated with more time spent in the Word each day, with memorizing more verses and with reading the Bible completely. For each additional Bible verse respondents had memorized in the past year, the probability of reading the Bible daily compared to not at all increases by 69.7%. Among those who have read the Bible completely, 65.4% indicated that they read the Bible daily. In contrast, only one-third (34.0%) of respondents who have not read the Bible completely reported daily reading.

Bible Reading & Other Dimensions of Spiritual Growth

As expected, our analyses reveal statistically significant relationships between Bible reading and spiritual growth/maturity. The following bullets summarize several of the key findings:

- Respondents in leadership positions read the Bible significantly more than those who are not in leadership positions.
- The more the respondent reads the Bible, the more witnessing the respondent does. For example, three-fifths (59.7%) of those who shared their faith with more than 10 people in the past year read the Bible daily. Only one-third (33.4%) of those who did not share their faith at all read the Bible daily.
- People who read the Bible at least four times a week are less likely to participate in these behaviors: gambling; pornography; getting drunk; and sex outside of marriage.

Predictors of Consistent Bible Reading

One important goal of this study was to identify predictors of consistent Bible reading. In this section, we discuss some predictors, such as demographic characteristics, which can not be changed, but may be useful for targeting materials. Other predictors, such as having a mentor or following a Bible reading plan, may be able to be influenced by various strategies to increase Bible reading and literacy.

Demographic Characteristics

Concerning demographic characteristics, we find that gender, age, age at baptism, marital status, and religious preference are significantly related to Bible reading. Contrary to other analyses, we do not find race to be significant. The following bullets summarize the demographic relationships:

Gender

- In comparison to male respondents, female respondents were 22.1% more likely to read the Bible daily.
- Female respondents were 51% or one and one half times more likely to read the Bible than male respondents on a regular basis.
- A female respondent is 4.2% more likely to read seven days per week than males.

Age & Age at Baptism

- Older respondents tend to read the Bible more than younger respondents. For example, only one-third (34.7%) of Mosaics (age 22 and under) read the Bible daily, compared to 64.4% of Builders (age 61 to 79).
- For every year of age older when baptized, respondents were 2.5% times more likely to read the Bible daily. Older age at baptism is also associated with an increased likelihood of participating in Bible study.
- Those respondents that were baptized as an infant were less likely to read the Bible on a daily basis (46.9%) compared to sample members who were baptized later in life (49.4%).

Religious Preference

- About half of sample members who identified themselves as Baptist (50.5%) or “Other” religious preference (48.6%) reported that they read the Bible daily.
- Compared to all other denominations, Roman Catholic respondents were 64.4% to 83.4% less likely to read the Bible daily.
- Lutherans respondents are 62.4% less likely to read seven days per week.
- The biggest predictors of not reading the Bible seven times per week is living with a significant other or being Lutheran or Roman Catholic.

Other Predictors

The final set of predictors concern factors, such as using guides or aids, which may be changed to increase Bible reading and literacy. Our analyses reveal that frequency of Bible reading is associated with:

1. Reading the Bible as a family growing up
2. Bible ownership
3. Less difficulty understanding the Bible
4. Journaling
5. Using a guide or study aid
6. Following a reading plan
7. A preference for reading in the morning
8. Equal preference for personal & group study
9. Attending Sunday School
10. Participating in group Bible study
11. Having an accountability partner
12. Having a spiritual mentor

The following bullets summarize these relationships:

- If the family of the respondent read the Bible while growing up, the respondent is significantly more likely to read the Bible at least once a week and to read the Bible all the way through.
- For each additional Bible owned, respondents were 35% more likely to read the Bible daily than not at all.
- People who find the Bible difficult to understand read the Bible less and are less likely to have read it completely than those who do not find it difficult to understand. Only one-quarter of those who find the Bible difficult to understand read it daily, compared to more than half of other respondents.
- People who use journaling are more likely to read that Bible at least four times a week than those who do not use a journal.
- Following a Bible reading plan was significantly more common among people who read the Bible five to seven times a week than those who read less frequently. Seven out of ten respondents who use a Bible reading plan read the Bible daily, compared to only a little more than one-third of those who do not follow a plan.
- Respondents who feel that only a specific place is important for remaining consistent in Bible reading read less than those who believe a specific time, a specific plan, or all three (time, place & plan) are important.
- Those respondents who read the Bible more often are significantly more likely to use Bible study guides.

- Those that prefer to read the Bible in the morning are significantly more likely to read the Bible five to seven times per week, compared to people who prefer to read in the evening.
- Participants who prefer group study read the Bible less often than those who like both group and personal study.
- Respondents who make reading the Bible a high priority in their life are significantly more likely to read the Bible seven times a week.
- There is a highly significant relationship between attending Sunday School and how often the respondent reads the Bible. Those respondents who attend Sunday School are more likely to read the Bible daily.
- Participants in group Bible study are far more likely to read their Bible on a daily basis (56.1%), compared to those do not participate (41.1%).
- Having an accountability partner is associated with more days and more time spent reading the Bible.
- Respondents with a spiritual mentor read the Bible significantly more than their counterparts without a mentor.

Conclusions and Implications

Before discussing the implications of the survey findings, it's important to consider some limitations and issues inherent in the survey process. In designing the survey, the research team was concerned that respondents would over-report their Bible reading. An over-reporting problem regarding survey respondents and church attendance has been reported in the literature. Gallup has reported for years that 40% of Americans attend church each week. Barna's findings are similar at 47%. However, recent analyses suggest that actual attendance may be as low as 20%. Hadaway & Marler (2005) report that less than 22% of Americans attend worship services each week. This lower level of attendance provides further evidence that Americans tend to over-report worship participation and are less religiously active than the polls indicate.

One cause of over-reporting is behavior identity congruence, where respondents desire to report what they usually do or what they would like to think they usually do, instead of what actually happened. To minimize the likelihood that survey respondents would over-report their Bible reading habits, we built a lie factor into the survey design. Pertaining to Bible reading, we asked the question several different ways and did an analysis of the consistency of the responses. The statistical correlations among these similar questions suggest that these issues were kept to a minimum.

A second study limitation concerns the representativeness of the sample. Because random sampling techniques were not used to select survey responders, these findings may not represent the general population of Christ-followers living in the United States. However, we do believe

the significant relationships uncovered here suggest further study of this very complex issue is warranted.

A final study limitation centers on the use of internet-based surveys. Although Web-based surveying is very attractive, at this point it should be used with caution. Currently the biggest concern in Internet surveying is coverage bias or bias due to sampled people not having or choosing not to access the Internet (Crawford, Couper & Lamias, 2001; Kaye & Johnson, 1999). Despite the exponential growth of the Internet, there are still large numbers of people who do not have access and/or choose not to use it. It is also clear that there are wide disparities in Internet access among ethnic and socioeconomic groups (Selwyn & Robson, 1998). The use of HTML forms for surveying poses a unique set of issues and challenges that needs to be addressed to ensure valid data. The Web is a very public place and unless steps are taken to limit access to a survey, it may be found and responded to by people who are not among those sampled by the researcher. This can either happen by accident or maliciously. Because one only has to “click” their mouse pointer on the “submit” button to respond to a Web-based survey instrument once it is filled out, it is also quite possible for respondents to either mistakenly or purposefully submit multiple copies of their responses.

While Internet-based surveying techniques need to be used with caution and safeguards installed, their benefits do give us a major advantage. Use of a Web-based survey allowed us to survey a large number of participants in a relatively short period of time and at a lower cost than traditional telephone surveys.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this survey provide a great deal of information about the Bible reading habits and associated factors among Christ-followers. One implication of our results is that the amount of time one actually spend reading the Bible may be a far better indicator of the state of a person’s spiritual life. Gallup, Barna and many other survey organizations have typically used attendance at religious services as an index of religiosity. Attendance represents a single behavior that encompasses a tiny fraction of the whole spiritual life. For Christ-followers in particular, Bible reading may be a more reliable measure. The data from this study indicate that time spent in the Word correlates with an individual’s spiritual growth, including his or her knowledge of the Bible and attempts to share his or her faith.

According to our analysis of the open-ended question to Christ-followers, “What hinders you from reading the Bible?”- 11,025 reasons were given for not reading the Bible (too busy, too distracted, too tired, no discipline, not a priority, to name a few). There were only 335 respondents that said nothing hinders them from reading the Bible. Simply stated—we do what is important to us. Sadly, reading God’s Word, which is the only way we can be sure that we are hearing from God, is of low importance to many who claim to be His followers. Our evidence suggests it is no longer enough to just hand someone a Bible because there is a high statistical probability they won’t take the time to read it.

Preliminary findings of this study indicate that certain demographic, psychological and behavioral factors are associated with the likelihood of an individual reading the Bible. Our goal is now to utilize those factors to develop strategies, techniques, and approaches for increasing Bible reading and literacy among today’s Christians. For example, upon completion of this

study, the data will be used to create homogeneous “life-stage” segments, which can assist in building powerful predictive models and increase the likelihood of increasing Bible reading regardless of age.

The next phase of the project has four main goals:

1. **Create Profiles** - Averages and distributions can be computed for a broad range of variables such as Bible reading habits and “age,” “level of education,” “marital status” and “denomination.” Feed this information to a good product development staff and the result will be interesting insights into how to tailor Bible reading promotional material, products and methodology to the characteristics of each individual.
2. **Generate Segments** - Divide a database into groups of identical, or “homogeneous,” individuals (or churches). Back to the Bible would create a manageable number of homogeneous life-stage segments and then target them with customized material.
3. **Explore Statistical Predictive Models** – Use statistical techniques, which methodically analyze multiple variables to predict future Bible reading behavior and to discover the best practices to improve Bible reading. This would open the door to helping churches encourage their members to become daily Bible readers.
4. **Identify Pockets of Unbelievers** – Use information from Christ-following respondents to identify unbelievers and increase their responsiveness to want to read the Bible.

Our research on the Bible reading habits of Christ-followers found that most reported very little time spent in listening to what God has to say to them through His Word. This has resulted in less knowledge and less spiritual growth. Not surprising to this research team, the more time an individual spent reading the Word the greater the impact in all areas of spiritual growth.

Research over time indicates that the importance of Bible reading has been in decline since World War II. The primary reason may be a major shift in the thinking of the Evangelical community. There is a wide-spread belief among Christ-followers that God communicates to people by many means in addition to the Bible. We are seeing trends in the Christian community that indicate worship and praise, popular Christian books, Christian music and pastors are being valued as much or more than the Bible as channels through which God communicates.

It is the fundamental belief of this research team that God speaks to us directly only through the Bible. That is to say, the only sure way of knowing the voice we hear is that of the Lord Jesus Christ is through His written Word. Whatever any other source may say, it must be in agreement with Scripture (Acts 17:11). That requires a consistent study and a thorough knowledge of what God says in the Bible.

Our research of Christ-followers also indicates that we must determine how people think God communicates with them. At least two aspects of this issue need to be added to our research: 1) in what manner does He speak? and 2) what does He speak about? Additionally, it would be beneficial for Christ-followers to also consider how Satan communicates to them.

So how did we develop such a low esteem for the Bible? In all likelihood it can be traced back to the 19th century when a system of studying the Bible called “Higher Criticism” came into vogue. Those who embraced this approach began with the belief that the Bible was written by mere humans. Consequently they assumed anything that could not be explained by human reasoning was obviously an error. The reaction to this approach split the Church into the liberal camp and the fundamental/evangelical camp. For society in general it communicated the belief that the Bible was just another book.

In the 20th century two other broad movements began that embraced not only the liberals but even more so the conservative segment of Christendom. The first was the charismatic movement. This brought about not only a renewed interest in the spiritual gifts (especially the more spectacular gifts such as speaking in tongues and miraculous healings) but also a focus on personal experience rather than the written Word. People began to claim communication from God through such things as ecstatic utterances and visions rather than Scripture. It was only natural that people would prefer this immediate (and easy) interaction with God over a labored study of His Word.

A second movement also began in the latter part of the 20th century called the Seeker-Friendly Church. While the desire was to draw back into the fold those who were unfamiliar with the Word or who had been turned off by the Church, the unintended result was a downplaying of the importance of the Bible. Even though the focus was on the “seeker,” both seekers and believers were sent a message by many of these churches that other means apart from the Bible could better be used to communicate God’s truth.

The theoretical foundation of this survey was following the logic behind asking the fundamental question that Henry Ford once asked about the importance of the automobile- “ask the man that owns one.” One can wonder the state of the automobile today if the answer was “yes, I own three but never use them”. This study is the fifth and most extensive survey Back to the Bible has done thus far. The most glaring conclusion is that it is no longer enough to just hand someone a Bible; most people don’t know the importance of reading it. We hope that the information reported here can be useful in reconnecting believers everywhere to the living God and His Word.

References

- Crawford, S.D., Couper, M.P.& Lamias, M.J.. (2001) Web Surveys: Perception of burden. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19,146-162.
- ERIC Development Team. (1997). Designing structured interviews for educational research. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 5(12). Retrieved November 4, 2006 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=5&n=12>. Eric Identifier ED421485
- Frary, R. B. (1996). Hints for designing effective questionnaires. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 5(3). Retrieved November 4, 2006 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=5&n=3> . Eric Identifier: ED410233
- Hadaway, C. K., & Marler, P.L. (2005). How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 44, 307-322.
- Kaye B.K. & Johnson T.J. (1999) .Research Methodology: Taming the Cyber Frontier. *Social Science Computer Review*, 17, 323-337.
- Selwyn, N., Robson, K. (1998) Using e-mail as a research tool. *Social Research Update*, Retrieved November 4, 2006 from <http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU21.html>

Appendix A
Survey Questions

Q1 What is your gender?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- female
- male

Q2 What is your age?

WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 1–99

Q3 What is the 5-digit zip code of your primary residence?

WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99999

Q4 What is your race?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- African-American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- White
- Other
- Don't Know

Q5 What is your religious preference?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Baptist
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Roman Catholic
- Seventh-Day Adventist
- Other

Q6 What is your marital status?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- single/never married
- married
- separated
- divorced
- widowed
- living with significant other
- refused

Q7 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- middle school
- some high school
- high school graduate/GED
- trade/technical/vocational training
- some college
- college graduate
- Masters
- Doctorate

Q8 For the majority of your education, up through and including high school, did you (or do you) attend:

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- public school
- home school
- Christian school
- private school

Q9 Which method of communicating with your friends, besides face to face, do you most prefer?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Letter
- Phone
- Instant Messaging (IM)
- Text Messaging
- E-mail

Q10 Which of these activities do you spend more than an hour a week doing?

SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- play video games
- listen to music
- read a book
- outdoor activities
- participate in sports
- watch television
- watch movies
- play an instrument
- none of the above

Q11 On any given day, are you likely to read:

SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- newspaper
- magazine
- Bible
- fiction/novel
- non-fiction
- don't like to read

Q12 How many hours did you spend reading books in the last seven days?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- more than 8 hours
- 6 to 8 hours
- 3 to 5 hours
- 1 to 2 hours
- 0

Q13 Did you volunteer at any charitable organization in the last month?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no

Q14 Are you a follower of Jesus Christ?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no

Q15 How many years have you been a follower of Jesus Christ?

(ENTER "00" IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0-99

Q16 Why did you become a Christian?

SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- I was born one
- scared of hell
- the church requires it
- want to go to heaven
- it's the popular thing to do
- someone special wanted me to
- I'm not a Christian

Q17 Have you been baptized?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no

Q18 Were you baptized as an infant?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- have not been baptized

Q19 At what age were you baptized?

(ENTER "00" IF NOT APPLICABLE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 1 – 99

Q20 Do you attend Sunday School/Christian Education?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- not available
- don't know

Q21 Do you currently participate in a group Bible study (other than Sunday School)?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no

Q22 Are you currently in a leadership position in a church or ministry?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no

Q23 How many mission trips have you been on in the past five years?
WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–9

Q24 Do you speak in tongues?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- refused

Q25 How many Bibles do you own?
(ENTER “00” IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q26 How often do you read the Bible?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- daily
- more than once a week but not daily
- weekly
- more than once a month but not weekly
- monthly
- more than six times a year but less than monthly
- less than six times a year but more than yearly
- yearly
- I don't read the Bible

Q27 What is your favorite translation/version of the Bible?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- King James Version (KJV)
- New King James Version (NKJV)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)
- New American Standard Bible (NASB)
- Revised Standard Version (RSV)
- New International Version (NIV)
- The Message (MSG)
- The Living Bible
- Today's New International Version (TNIV)
- Other

Q28 Do you have an accountability partner?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- don't know

Q29 Would you say you attend church:

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- more than once a week
- weekly
- more than once a month but not weekly
- monthly
- more than six times a year but less than monthly
- less than six times a year but more than yearly
- yearly
- less than once a year
- only on special occasions
- I don't attend church

Q30 Which of the following are factors in your decision to attend your current church?

SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- nearest church in my denomination
- closest to my home
- friends/neighbors were members
- warm welcome
- quality of sermons
- style of worship/music
- quality of the Sunday School/Christian education
- quality of youth programs
- quality of the small groups
- church activities/programs
- the people/fellowship
- none of the above
- Other

Q31 During the past year, with how many people have you shared your faith in Jesus Christ?

(ENTER "00" IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0-99

Q32 How many people are you currently discipling?
(ENTER "00" IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0-99

Q33 Do you have a spiritual mentor?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- don't know

Q34 In the past year, how many Bible verses have you memorized?
(ENTER "00" IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0-99

Q35 Do you give money to your church?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no

Q36 I'm currently engaged in the following habits or activities:
SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- smoking
- getting drunk
- abusing prescription/non-prescription drugs
- sex outside of marriage
- pornography
- gambling
- none of the above

Q37 On the average, I have a time of personal, designated prayer _____ days a week.
(ENTER "0" IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0-7

Q38 Each session of personal, designated prayer lasts about _____ minutes.
(ENTER "00" IF NONE) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0-99

Q39 I pray regularly with:
SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- my parents
- my spouse/significant other
- my children
- a friend
- only by myself
- I don't pray

Q40 I regularly pray for people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q41 I frequently turn to God in spontaneous prayer throughout the day.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q42 I am very committed to fulfilling specific spiritual goals.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q43 I choose not be openly identified with Christ where I work or go to school.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q44 I initiate conversations about Christ with unbelievers.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q45 Right now, I could do a great job of telling another person how to become a Christian if the opportunity presented itself.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

In the last week, how many hours of Christian teaching did you listen to on:

Q46 TV hours
WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q47 Radio hours
WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q48 Internet hours
WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q49 CD or DVD hours
WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q50 In person (i.e. live) hours
WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q51 I believe the Ten Commandments are relevant for today.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q52 I believe the Bible is relevant to my every day life.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q53 I am positive that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q54 I hold the Bible to be the standard and authority for all that I think, say and do.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

- Q55 I consult the Bible when I need advice or counsel on a serious matter.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q56 I believe I have to read the Bible to know God.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q57 I feel God is mad at me when I don't read the Bible.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q58 I find the Bible is extremely difficult to understand.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q59 I believe that God wants us to read the Bible every day.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q60 I feel like something is missing in my day when I don't read the Bible.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q61 When I go through difficult times, I am more likely to read the Bible.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q62 The majority of my friends read the Bible everyday.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q63 Did your family read the Bible together while you were growing up?**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- yes
 no
 don't know

Q64 I desire a closer relationship with God.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q65 My relationship with God is currently the highest priority in my life.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q66 I frequently sense the presence of God when I pray.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q67 I find it difficult to share my faith in Christ.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q68 I believe the Bible is without error.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q69 I am very convinced that regular fellowship with other believers is essential for my spiritual growth.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q70 I am positive that God knows the future.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q71 I believe there are some things so bad that God won't forgive.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q72 I believe God is involved in my life.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

- Q73 I am positive that, if I were to die today, I would immediately go to heaven.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q74 I believe hell is a real place.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q75 I believe Jesus sinned while on the earth.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q76 I believe Jesus is the ONLY Son of God.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q77 I believe it is morally acceptable to cheat (on a test, on taxes).**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q78 I believe it is morally acceptable for a Christ-follower to marry someone who does not have a relationship with Christ.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q79 I believe abortion is morally acceptable.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q80 I believe all religions lead to God.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree
- Q81 I am convinced that Christ died for all my sins-past, present, and future.**
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.
- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q82 I believe that salvation is permanent.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q83 I believe Satan is real.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q84 I believe there is absolute truth. (Truth that is right no matter what the circumstances)

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q85 I believe the following is/are necessary to get a person into heaven:

SELECT ALL ANSWERS THAT APPLY.

- baptism
 good works
 faith alone in Jesus Christ
 church membership
 faith in any god
 none of the above
 Other

Q86 How many books are in the Bible?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- 33
 44
 55
 66
 77
 None of the above
 Don't Know

Q87 Which of the following is not a book in the Bible?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Isaiah
- Hezekiah
- Obadiah
- Nehemiah
- Jeremiah
- All of them are books
- Don't Know

Q88 Who wrote the Book of Revelation in the Bible?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Peter
- Paul
- James
- Thomas
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q89 How many tribes of Israel are there?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- 6
- 8
- 10
- 12
- 14
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q90 Who was the first king of Israel?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Solomon
- David
- Moses
- Abraham
- Saul
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q91 Which prophet did God send to Nineveh?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Jonah
- Micah
- Balaam
- Malachi
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q92 What was the name of Adam and Eve's first son?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Seth
- Abel
- Cain
- Joseph
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q93 Who built the ark?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Isaac
- Jacob
- Abraham
- Noah
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q94 What is the first book in the Bible?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Matthew
- Genesis
- Psalms
- Hezekiah
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q95 Where was Jesus born?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Nazareth
- Egypt
- Jerusalem
- Rome
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q96 Who preached the sermon on the mount?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- John the Baptist
- Moses
- Jesus
- Paul
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q97 Which book of the Bible states, "God helps those who help themselves"?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Romans
- Acts
- None of the above
- Don't Know

Q98 Which statement below best describes you when it comes to knowing the Bible?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- No knowledge of the Bible at all.
- Awareness of the Bible but no familiarity with it.
- Familiarity with the Bible but no trust in its claims or authority.
- Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority but never read it so little or no personal impact on my life.
- Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority and regularly read it with understanding and regular personal impact on my life.
- Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority and daily read it with understanding and daily personal impact on my life.
- Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority and daily read it with understanding and a passion to personally connect with the Author.
- Trust in the Bible and its claims and authority and daily read it with understanding and a passion to personally connect with the Author and share Him with others.

Q99 I read the Bible _____ days a week.
(ENTER "0" IF YOU DO NOT READ) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–7

Q100 Each session of Bible reading lasts about _____ minutes.
(ENTER "00" IF YOU DO NOT READ) WRITE IN ANSWER WITHIN THE RANGE 0–99

Q101 Have you read the entire Bible?
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- don't know

Q102 I often read the Bible when I am not at church.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q103 I usually keep a journal as I read my Bible.
SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Q104 Do you follow a Bible reading plan?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- yes
- no
- don't know

Q105 I think it is important to have a _____ to stay consistent in Bible reading.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- specific time
- specific place
- specific plan
- all of the above
- none of the above
- don't know

Q106 When do you prefer to read your Bible?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- morning
- afternoon
- evening
- various times in a day
- no preference
- I don't read the Bible

Q107 When I read the Bible, I use study guides and/or aids.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q108 How many hours did you spend reading the Bible in the last seven days?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- More than 8 hours
- 6 to 8 hours
- 3 to 5 hours
- 1 to 2 hours
- 0

Q109 When you read the Bible, how long do you usually spend reading?

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- 10 minutes
- 30 minutes
- 1 hour
- More than one hour
- I don't read the Bible

Q110 Which do you prefer:

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- Personal Bible study
- Group Bible study
- Both
- Neither

Q111 Reading the Bible has a high priority in my life.

SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

- strongly agree agree neither disagree strongly disagree

Q112 What hinders you from reading the Bible?

WRITE YOUR ANSWER BELOW.

Q113 Why read the Bible?

WRITE YOUR ANSWER BELOW.

The Bible Literacy Research Team

Dr. Woodrow Kroll

Wood serves as president and Bible teacher for Back to the Bible International. Already known for his clear and insightful teaching of God's Word, he is passionate about connecting millions of people to the practical and life-changing message of the Bible. He received his ThD from Geneva-St. Albans Theological Seminary but also has graduate degrees and/or graduate studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the University of Strasbourg (France) and the University of Virginia. Before becoming president of Back to the Bible in 1990, Wood served as president of Davis College in Binghamton, New York. He is the author of more than 50 books. He and his wife, Linda, reside in Ashland, Nebraska and have four adult children and 14 grandchildren.

Dr. Arnie Cole

Arnie serves as the CEO of Back to the Bible and director of the Biblical Literacy Center. Prior to assuming this leadership role with Back to the Bible in 2004, Arnie earned his doctorate in institutional management from Pepperdine University and was CEO/Dir of research of a large service provider that did behavioral training, research, analysis and vocational training for people with a history of severe and profound mental retardation and violence. Additionally he has launched a number of successful business ventures in California. His strengths include strategic business planning, behavioral research, data analysis, market positioning, and management. Arnie and his wife, Char, live in the Lincoln, Nebraska area with their daughter Laura. Their two older boys reside in California.

Harry Conley- SPSS Trainer- Consultant. Henry was a former head researcher for the United States Government of Accounting.

Laretta Gibson

Laretta serves as the Database Developer for the Bible Literacy team. She has thirty-one years of experience in Systems and Database administration, design and development. Laretta has administered Digital Equipment PDP11/70, UNIX, Windows NT4 systems, UNIFY, SQL Server 7 and SQL Server 2000 database systems. Laretta designed and developed an ISAM database and the first donor-management application for Back to the Bible and a number of Access databases and applications. Laretta resides in Lincoln and enjoys reading, but has many interests.

Michael Krause

Michael serves as the Development Manager for the Bible Literacy Research team. He is responsible for the organization and development of the team's objectives. Michael earned his Masters in Biblical and Theological Studies from Talbot School of Theology of La Mirada, California. He has worked with youth in various capacities over the years and preaches at a local church. Michael's background in theology and youth work is a great asset to the team. Michael and his wife, Lesley, reside in Lincoln, Nebraska and have one son, Asher.