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## **Images of leadership in Seventh-Day Adventist higher education : the challenges of a new century.**

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**IMAGES OF LEADERSHIP IN  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
HIGHER EDUCATION:  
THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW CENTURY**

A Dissertation Presented

by

LINDA SEAL THORMAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1996

Education

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Approved as to style and content by:



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Jana Nidiffer, Chair



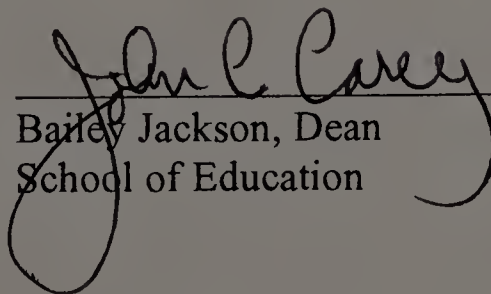
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The people who deserve my biggest thanks, however, are my family and extended family. Jeanne and David win an award for hand-holding and general support. Steve cannot ever be thanked enough. We worked together toward a goal. We were often told that a marriage could not survive two partners working toward doctorates at the same time. We beat the odds! Jennifer loaned me many precious moments during her pre-school years. Now, at age seven, her career goal is to become "anything that doesn't require a dissertation."



ABSTRACT

**IMAGES OF LEADERSHIP IN  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
HIGHER EDUCATION:  
THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW CENTURY**

MAY 1996

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The perceived challenges for Seventh-day Adventist higher education in the 21st century according to its future leaders, the leadership necessary to meet these challenges, and the system's development of leaders were examined using a two-phase process of sample identification/selection and data collection.

The sample identification and selection phase involved "expert identification" by individuals holding current positions in SDA higher education. The data collection phase involved elaborated, semi-structured interviewing.

According to the participants, Seventh-day Adventist higher education is different from mainstream higher education in mission, culture, and understanding of its 21st century challenges. SDA higher education may seemingly face many of the same challenges as mainstream higher education, but the cultural differences change the nature

of the overlapping challenges. They make many of the standard leadership suggestions, available in the higher education leadership literature, unworkable.

There are also challenges to the system which are unique to SDA higher education. Almost all of these involve the church which sponsors these colleges. The SDA church is currently examining itself and redefining its mission in terms of the 21st century. The purpose of the SDA colleges and the role they play in the church's mission is one aspect of this redefinition.

Proposals concerning the future of these colleges range from maintaining the *status quo* to closing the schools. These proposals must be discussed and understood at the local church level.

The perceived leaders find it difficult to prepare themselves for their leadership roles. The unique subculture contains factors which discourage openly identifying future leaders and providing resources for their continued education.

Even though the participants are not well acquainted with the literature of higher education leadership, two categories may be useful to the future of the system. Transformation theory, especially the concept of "trans-vigorous leadership," would be helpful to a system with a deeply ingrained church subculture and distinctive academic cultures. Cultural or symbolic theory would help the system define itself, the priorities of its constituency, and the changes needed to accomplish its 21st century mission.



## PREFACE

This study is a view of where the Seventh-day Adventist higher education system stands at the close of the 20th century. It is a view of the system's future challenges (21st century) as perceived by those in line to be the next leaders. It is also a view of leadership in SDA higher education—how leaders are selected, how leaders relate to higher education leadership literature, and what types of higher education leadership solutions (helpful ideas which are literature based) can be applied to this system.

In retrospect, I believe that my interest in this study began while sitting around the conference tables of business and business-related departments, while I worked my way up the ranks of the academic faculty member. Often, my colleagues (business faculty members) would, in frustration, mention that if the administration would simply do “thus and so,” as leaders would in the business world, this college would run correctly. These solutions (which grew from the frustration) were often good ones. For some reason, though, the administration always found some “factor of difference” which complicated the implementation of these solutions.

Being a member of a college faculty in a specific academic discipline means that one spends much time viewing the world through a specific “academic lens.” Being a member of the business faculty means that one views the world, even the “world” of one’s college, through a business lens. There is a tendency to forget that a college is an institution which falls into a subset of institutions called higher education. The management and leadership

decisions, as well as the literature and research about these decisions, falls into a subset as well.

I remembered the conversations around business department conference tables with a big “ah ha” the day I first realized the differences between corporate and academic culture. I began to read the management and leadership literature aimed at general business problems in a different way, keeping the higher education subset in mind. I began to use care when using the college as an example of a business system or process.

This study is also the direct result of a personal growth experience. As a doctoral student, I experienced a period of disequilibrium—a transition to a new level of development in terms of seeing my career as a business professor in a Seventh-day Adventist college in a different world context. This began to happen to me in my first higher education course.

My colleagues in the higher education program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst were mainly faculty members and administrators from community colleges, state colleges, or private colleges in Massachusetts and neighboring states. In this course, we explored the problems with the current state of higher education in the United States and the challenges it will face in the 21st century. We also read the opinions of many experts as to what academe should be doing to improve higher education and to prevent future catastrophe. I didn't find the suggestions of these authors to be radical or different, as did many of my colleagues.

Many of the suggestions proposed by these higher education authors were the things I had experienced while working in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) higher education



system for 15 years. On the other side of the coin, though, I realized that some of the other expert suggestions—many of the best ones, in my opinion—would never be accepted by the constituents of SDA colleges. Some would never even be considered.

While trying to understand these revelations, it became clear to me that I had never actually looked at SDA higher education as being anything very different from mainstream higher education. Yes, I saw some curricular and student life differences in our programs. Yes, when I read the mission statements, I saw the addition of a religious component. Yet I still approached planning, management, and leadership within SDA higher education as being the same as in the mainstream, only smaller in scale. I viewed SDA higher education as having something added, not as being culturally different. I did not yet see that the cultural differences of the Seventh-day Adventist church—the differences which give these colleges a reason for existing—make the standard literature-based “solutions” to mainstream higher education challenges unworkable or at least very difficult to implement. I did not yet see that the culture makes the actual challenges facing the system seem deceptively similar even when they are very different.

The research questions guiding this study grew from my search to understand how the opinions of higher education experts relate to the system of colleges which employs me. They grew from a need to better understand where SDA higher education fits into the much larger picture of higher education in the United States. They grew from a need to understand the differences, the strengths, and the weaknesses of SDA colleges and those chosen to lead them.

As we approach the beginning of a new century, higher education “experts” are using that point in time as a visible marker, much as we use the beginning of a new year as a point to make changes in our lives. These authors are being prescriptive as they suggest pro-active steps for higher education leaders to take. But, this study looks at whether these suggestions will be helpful or harmful to colleges and systems of colleges whose missions, academic cultures, and traditions vary greatly from the mainstream. This study looks at whether the leaders in SDA colleges should apply the principles of a single book or two which they read out of the context of the large body of higher education literature available today. Finally, this study explores how the future leaders—the ones who will be shaping the SDA higher education system in the 21st century—will relate to the challenges and solutions.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BHE** Board of Higher Education  
The BHE is part of the organizational structure of the NAD.
- GC** General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
The GC is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, just outside Washington, D.C.
- NAD** North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The NAD is an organizational structure, comprised of union conferences, in the United States and Canada.
- SDA** Seventh-day Adventist

## GLOSSARY

Academy	SDA term for secondary schools—this is a term which does not reflect a quality perception as it does in the secular education world
Board of Higher Education	Advisory Board—Part of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists
Divisions	Organizational structure of the SDA church comprised of union conferences. Divisions report to the General Conference of SDAs
Elder	This term is used on two levels: 1) it is used as a courtesy title when speaking of or to SDA ordained ministers (Elder Jones); 2) it is the unordained, lay group of leaders in a local church—women are frequently elders in more liberal SDA congregations, although at this time, they are not ordained as ministers in the SDA church
General Conference	Located in Silver Spring, Maryland; the world headquarters for the SDA church
Local Conferences	Organizational structure (usually including several smaller states or part of a large state) of the SDA church
Ministers	The ordained clergy of the SDA church—sometimes also referred to as pastors
North American Division	Division which includes the United States and Canada
Seventh-day Adventist	Name of the church; name includes two beliefs—that the true Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, and that there will be a literal second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth
Union Conferences	Organizational structure of the SDA church comprised of local conferences



## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### A. Introduction to the Study

It can be said that organizations and social institutions have a “life.” The periods of that life can be likened to the periods in a human life: childhood, youth, young adulthood, mature development, etc. Higher education in America is one of those social institutions (comprised of separate organizations) which is now well over 300 years old—but is just now entering its period of mature growth.

According to Clark Kerr, higher education, during its “growing up” period, has gone through two major periods of transformation. The issues of the first transformation (1870-1890) involved replacing its religious orientation with a scientific one and reorienting itself to serve more of the population. The issues of the second transformation (1960-1980) involved the political unrest of faculty members and students during an unprecedented enrollment explosion (Kerr, 1994a).

The period of mature growth, and the current transformation (1990-2010), a period which has been called the “academic faculty generation,” involves several categories of new and long-term issues. According to Kerr, these include “the eternal issue of merit versus equality, the impacts of new orientations of knowledge, the changing mentalities of faculties and students related to social and political identifications, and a scarcity of resources and intensified competition for their allocation” (Kerr, 1994a, p. 5).

These issues are the central challenges for higher education and must be faced in the 21st century—a fast approaching marker in time which has become popular with futuristic

thinkers. These challenges include an increasingly diverse student population, rising educational costs, an aging professorate, the need for multiculturalism, a lowered public image, government intervention, a sophisticated “consumer-driven” student pool, the need to assess and document the quality of programs, and a changing world (with respect to demographics, economics, and technology).

These new challenges bring with them new pressures for leadership—making leadership more difficult but more necessary. It will take a different type of college leader (board member, president, or faculty leader) to address the problems of the new century. Leadership will be based more on persuasion and less on power (Kerr, 1994a, p. 33).

Literature from various academic fields such as business, higher education, psychology, sociology, and history can help future leaders address the challenges of higher education and develop appropriate solutions. Further, it is possible, using the literature, to define the type and style of leadership which will be needed to meet the challenges for the 21st century.

An important first step in defining the leadership solutions<sup>1</sup> to the expected 21st century challenges is to recognize institutional diversity within higher education. Mission, goals, and character all vary by institutional type. These differences have an effect on the challenges an institution must face. And, in some cases, these differences make the

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<sup>1</sup>The term “solutions” is used in this context to indicate suggestions found in the literature which can be combined to form a plan to address 21st century challenges.

standard proposed leadership solutions ineffective. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) higher education system may be such a case.

## B. Context of the Study

The Seventh-day Adventist church was officially organized as a denomination in 1863 with 125 churches and 3,500 members. These members were located only in the United States until 1874 when the first missionary was sent abroad. The SDA church has now expanded to include churches in 209 countries. As of June 30, 1994, there were over 8 million church members and over 37,000 organized churches<sup>2</sup>. The church is known for its work in publishing (56 publishing houses; 206 languages), education (5,530 schools), food companies (35), and health care institutions (148 hospitals and sanitariums; 354 dispensaries & clinics; and 92 retirement homes and orphanages).

The church operates 5,530 schools and colleges throughout the world, with a total enrollment of 828,833. There are 4,492 primary schools, 953 secondary schools, and 85 colleges and universities. Fourteen of these colleges and universities are located in the United States.

The SDA church is organized into geographically based administrative layers (Lawson, 1990)—11 divisions worldwide, which report to a central church office (the General Conference) located near Washington, D.C. The General Conference has a

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<sup>2</sup>All figures in this section are taken from the 1995 edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*.



pyramid-like hierarchical structure with a president, vice-presidents, and so forth, as do the divisions. These divisions contain union conferences (92), which contain local conferences (447), which own and organize the local SDA churches (37,747). The total contributions to the church exceed one billion dollars per year, with tithe being passed up the structure instead of being retained at the congregational level.

The United States is located in the North American Division (comprising the U.S. and Canada) and contains eight of the 92 union conferences (North Pacific Union, Pacific Union, Mid-America Union, Southwestern Union, Lake Union, Southern Union, Atlantic Union, and Columbia Union). There is at least one SDA college located in, owned by, and run by each union. The names of some of these reflect this organizational feature (e.g. Pacific Union College, Atlantic Union College, Southwestern Adventist College).

Of the 14 SDA college or universities in the U.S., three grant medical or health-care degrees (the most prominent being Loma Linda University). In addition, there are 11 institutions which identify themselves as either baccalaureate (liberal arts) colleges or master's (comprehensive) colleges or universities<sup>3</sup>. These are Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan; La Sierra University in Riverside, California; Walla Walla College in Walla Walla, Washington; Pacific Union College in Angwin, California; Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska; Southwestern Adventist College in Keene, Texas; Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Massachusetts; Columbia Union College in Takoma

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<sup>3</sup>According to the 1994 Carnegie Classifications

Park, Maryland; Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama; Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists in Collegedale, Tennessee; and Home Study International/Griggs University in Silver Spring, Maryland.

It is on these Seventh-day Adventist colleges within the U.S. that this study is focused. The academic cultures and missions of these institutions are unique. Because they are owned and run by a conservative, Protestant denomination, the moral and cultural values of the church are present in the mission, curriculum, and policies of each institution. They are different from traditional institutions of higher education in terms of financial status, student enrollment, academic freedom, student life, constituent attitudes, and faculty expectations. These differences will be explained in a later chapter.

Because of these differences, the question arises as to whether the challenges to be met by the system are *perceived* to be the same or are indeed the same as the challenges facing the field of higher education as a whole. Also, the question arises as to whether the type of leadership appropriate for mainstream institutions and systems (universities, state colleges, community colleges) will suit these special institutions. And finally, there is the question of whether leadership development needs to be the same or different for these unique institutions with distinct cultures, traditions, and missions.

### C. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what the perceived challenges are for SDA higher education in the 21st century according to its future leaders, what type of

leadership is perceived to be required to meet these challenges, and how best the SDA system might address the question of developing future leaders.

The specific research questions which emerge from this aim are

1. What do the future college presidents in the SDA higher education system perceive to be the challenges facing SDA higher education in the 21st century?
2. What type of leadership do the individuals in the “pipeline” for SDA college presidencies perceive to be necessary to meet these challenges?
3. What are these individuals doing to prepare themselves for the leadership challenges of the 21st century? How do they see the system preparing leaders for the future?

These questions will help to guide the research in its initial stages.

#### D. Conceptual Framework

What grounds this study are the various theories of leadership found in the literature. The field of leadership theory is enormous, dating from ancient times and increasing exponentially each year.

The theories which are especially important to this study are the more recent, emerging ones—the theories which attempt to prescribe solutions to future challenges. These are the theories which typify a shifting paradigm in leadership theory.

This paradigm shift is the ability to successfully combine two more narrow views of leadership theory into a third, more broad, view. This third view is a combination of “trait theories” of leadership, which hold that great leadership is dependent on certain qualities of a dynamic leader, and “situation/environmental theories” of leadership, which hold that



leadership involves the entire organization and must adapt to its individual culture. These new theories are “hybrid” theories (Thorman, 1994) and reflect the changing world of work and the entrance of women into the workplace by including elements which our society has culturally defined as “feminine.”

Many of these new theories (which I have chosen to call “hybrid”) have been adapted and applied to the world of higher education. Instead of the presidential leadership role being that of a spokesperson or philosopher (Kelly, 1991), it is more recently being seen as that of the person establishing goals, transmitting values, and creating a vision (Birnbaum, 1992).

Research on higher education leadership can be grouped into six traditional categories: trait; power and influence; behavioral; contingency; cultural and symbolic; and cognitive—with hybrid theories actually falling into more than one category. Most of the successful modern presidents have come to see leadership as something more than a theory about a person or an organizational situation or environment. They see presidential leadership as a process of being the type of leader who is able to influence others or emphasize goals in a given situation (Bensimon, 1989a).

#### E. Significance of the Study

Many authors writing about qualitative research point out that the importance of any study is that it be meaningful to the advancement of knowledge and the development of practice (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988). Some suggest that the importance

of a study is that it changes the way we view or think about familiar phenomena (Pondy, 1989). This study will do some of each of these things.

First, it will serve to educate those in the world of higher education about the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. It will help those involved in higher education to better understand not only this unique system, but the ways in which the future leaders perceive their challenges. It will provide a scholarly contribution as it analyzes the adequacy of these perceptions in light of the large body of higher education literature.

Second, it will add to the body of knowledge within the SDA educational system. By exploring SDA higher education from the perspective of its future leaders, and determining how these professionals make meaning of the future of SDA higher education and the needed leadership skills and styles, it will look at SDA higher education in a new way. While those in SDA higher education often speak and write of the future, they rarely explore how those in the “pipeline” perceive and prepare for the future. This study will provide implications for the future of leadership training within SDA higher education.

Third, this study is about influencing practice. By adding to the general body of knowledge about Seventh-day Adventist higher education and SDA educational leadership, it will influence policy and practice in the SDA higher education system by giving search committees and governing boards specific information to use when searching for presidential candidates. It will also give planning committees new insights with which to work.

## F. Limitations to the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, it is impossible to look into the future and know for certain who the presidents of 21st century SDA colleges will be. This study cannot pretend to actually be identifying and interviewing these individuals.

However, by turning to the current presidents, chief academic officers, board chairs, and Board of Higher Education members for help—using them as “expert identifiers”—every effort has been made to locate and include individuals very likely to be considered by 21st century search committees.

Second, because time and finances make it impossible to interview every potential candidate identified by the “experts,” my purposeful and pragmatic selection of participants could influence the results. However, by consulting with an expert who is familiar with the SDA higher education system and by taking steps to include a cross-section of age, sex, race, and SDA philosophy, every effort was made to select a representative group of participants.

Third, even though my membership in the SDA higher education community gives me the insight into the unique culture of the system necessary to conduct such a study, there are some demographic factors of difference between myself and the participants which might have influenced the data gathered.

The current presidents of the colleges in the narrowly defined study group (the 11 non-medical colleges in the United States) are males. The majority of these presidents are past the age of 50. Many of them are ordained SDA clergy. The **majority** of the

candidates identified as potential participants (the potential 21st century presidents) for this study and the participants actually selected for this study were also male. In some cases, the participants were indeed the current SDA college presidents mentioned above. I, as the researcher, am a female in my early 40s who has worked in the system for 18 years. I was younger and less experienced (in terms of years in the system) than **all** of the participants in this study.

Some within the system believe that there is an “old boys' club” mentality which often takes over when administrators speak of the future of SDA higher education. I suspected that some of my participants might not share opinions with me that would have been shared with an older, male researcher. Great care was taken to establish credibility and a professional tone in order to address this potential problem.

On the other hand, in the course of the interviews, this potential problem sometimes became an asset. Because I was an “outsider” in terms of age and sex, the participants often explained their answers in greater detail in an effort to “educate” me. I believe that this added to the clarity and depth of responses.



## CHAPTER II METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Design

This research study is a descriptive study (Light, Singer, & Willett, 1990). It describes the way potential SDA college presidents—those most likely to be seriously considered by search committees—perceive the challenges in SDA higher education, the types of leadership necessary to meet these challenges, and the leadership development opportunities available to them.

Because the focus of this research is on discovery, insight, and understanding of a phenomenon, the research questions were addressed primarily by using the qualitative research method of elaborated, semi-structured interviewing. The purpose of using this method was to get these individuals to relate how they view future SDA higher education challenges and leadership needs and how they prepare for leadership.

Qualitative research is concerned with the meaning individuals construct from their experiences and holds that the interpretation of that meaning can only be understood by taking the context within which the meaning is constructed into account. The voices of the participants were important to this study, especially during the data analysis stage when trends and themes were identified. The goal of qualitative research is to “uncover how people negotiate meaning,” with the role of the researcher being to discover how these people interpret that meaning and structure the social world in which they live (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 28).

The use of qualitative methods is especially important to this study because it is a study involving leadership. Bass (1990) identifies the need for qualitative methods to study leadership as one of the major leadership issues for the 21st century.

There are many leadership theorists who agree with Bass. They suggest that qualitative research can uncover a wider array of variables which are grounded in the experiences of people, and, therefore, are more accessible to leaders and researchers alike (Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth, & Keil, 1988). They advocate qualitative methods because they believe that more attention should be paid to the unconscious motives that affect the perspectives of both leaders and followers (McCall & Lombardo, 1978).

Leadership theorists also urge the on-going, circular analysis process which was used for this study—the search for and collection of specific data, the development of preliminary assertions, and the examination of the data (and new data) to see how well they fit the inferred assertions (Brogdan & Taylor, 1975).

#### B. The Setting, Population, and Procedures

I chose the Seventh-day Adventist higher education system in the United States as the setting for my study because I am particularly interested in the future of this system. My background as a SDA church member, student, faculty member, and administrator within the system serves to give me special insight into the academic culture present in this system. My involvement with and knowledge of this organization enables me to fit this

study into the larger picture of the future of higher education. I became more familiar with this larger picture as a doctoral student in higher education.

A second motivation was that of access. Marshall & Rossman (1989) assert that one characteristic of an ideal research site (or sites) is that entry is possible. My background within this system eased the question of access.

Even though there are 78 SDA colleges and universities in the world, I chose to bound my study by selecting only the 11 non-medical colleges in the United States. The reason for this is two-fold. First, there is a conversation going on within the SDA denomination worldwide concerning church issues such as the SDA educational mission, the ordination of women, and certain traditional church standards and theological issues. The attitude differences between the North American Division (primarily the United States) and the rest of the world is pronounced. I do not feel that mixing colleges from different divisions would strengthen my study.

Second, I have learned in exploring higher education literature that there is an entirely separate body of work concerning medical education. It points out that the dynamics involved in such institutions, their organizational cultures, and the way in which they select leaders differs from mainstream higher education. The inclusion of such SDA schools would also unnecessarily complicate this study.

The reason why I chose potential presidents—those most likely to be seriously considered by search committees—as my population, instead of only current presidents, involves the future orientation of the study, the potential sample size, and the age of the

current presidents. There are 11 SDA colleges in the United States which fit the stated criteria of this study. This made the total number of potential participants for a study with a population of “current presidents” only 11 members. Several of these current presidents will have reached retirement age before the year 2001—making it doubtful that they will even be the future leaders. I believe that it is more useful to include individuals “expertly” identified as potential presidents in the study. Some of these individuals actually turned out to be current SDA college presidents. Others were academic leaders, faculty members, or SDA church leaders.

The research questions in this study were addressed using a two-phase process of sample identification/selection and data collection. The first phase—the sample identification and selection process—involved “expert identification” from individuals who, by holding their current positions in SDA higher education, were best able to suggest who will appear on presidential selection lists in the 21st century. These “experts” are the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Board of Higher Education, current SDA college presidents, current academic vice presidents, and current board chairs.

The “experts” were sent a letter briefly explaining the study and asking them to fill out an enclosed form (see Appendix). On the form they indicated the names of individuals whom they would place on a presidential selection list in the year 2001. The forms were returned to a member of my dissertation committee, Dr. Patt Dodds, rather than to me. This precaution helped to guarantee confidentiality to the respondents. No one within the



SDA higher education system (myself included) connected the actual names with the respondent.

The response to this survey yielded 78 names. A list of these names was given to me by Dr. Dodds with an indication of how many times they were identified. I purposefully and pragmatically selected a sample of ten participants from this list, informed them of the study, and asked them to participate.

My “purposeful and pragmatic” selection process was based on the number of times the individual was identified and an effort to obtain a diverse population in relation to issues of gender, race, and geographic location. By the means of this selection process, I narrowed the list to 10 names.

These individuals were contacted first by letter (see Appendix) and then by phone, through their executive assistants (if one existed) to schedule the interviews. In the letter, I briefly explained the study and asked if the individual was interested in participating. A copy of the Participant Consent Form (see Appendix) was included with the letter. This form requested permission to audio-tape the interviews. None of the ten selected declined to participate, so I did not need to go on to other names.

### C. Data Collection Methods

The second phase—the data collection—involved the qualitative research method of elaborated, semi-structured interviewing. These semi-structured interviews allowed for full discussion of the 21st century challenges and leadership issues in Seventh-day

Adventist higher education. The data collected during these interviews was analyzed for themes, trends, and assertions.

Interviewing methodology was relevant to my study as a process of inquiry because it is important to hear the story of each participant in his or her own words. I structured the conversation and asked questions which allowed the participants to select details of their experiences from their stream of consciousness. Not only were these details important, they allowed the participant to talk about what meaning they made of the experiences. The interview portion of the study provided access to the context of the behavior and/or demeanor of the participants which I observed during the interviews. I supplemented the interview transcripts with limited field notes which recorded my impressions and brief observations about the participant.

This type of interview process can be described as “open but focused” because even though it structured what the participants talked about, I was able to closely attend to the participant's reasoning while probing for all the complexity and nuances of the story. I was able to allow the participant's descriptions and logic to guide the interview questions. This type of interview was conducted as a purposeful “conversation” designed to elicit responses (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Because of the depth and intimacy of these responses, confidentiality arrangements were particularly important. Even though the 11 colleges are not in direct “competition,” I was aware that my affiliation with one of the colleges might tend to make participants uncomfortable about telling me the “secrets” of another. This did not turn out to be the

case. I felt in each case that where I currently work was soon forgotten and became insignificant.

During the interview process, I asked each participant about his/her experiences which led to this current position in the SDA higher education system, what insights into the SDA higher education system have been gained during these experiences (Interview #1—Who are you?), and what meaning he or she made of these insights (Interview #2—Reflections on the Future).

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions which were designed to allow the participant to reconstruct his or her experiences within the bounds of the topic under study. The two interviews were separate and distinct in the focus of the topic discussed, but both involved the basic, underlying questions of what the future challenges of SDA higher education involve, what types of leadership are needed to meet those challenges, and what these individuals are being provided with or are doing to prepare for leadership.

In the first interview, I asked the participant to tell about his/her past life experiences and experiences within the SDA system which have led to the participant's current position and identification as a future leader. I asked about the special insights and knowledge about the SDA higher education system which they have collected along the way. I tried to determine how they viewed the SDA educational mission.

In the second interview, I tried to determine what the participant identifies as the strengths and weaknesses of the system, and what they perceive the challenges of the 21st century to be. I tried to determine their awareness of similar issues in “peer” systems and

in mainstream higher education. I asked the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences and insights. I tried to determine their familiarity with mainstream higher education and leadership literature, and explored the methods of leadership development available to and utilized by each participant.

I piloted the study by interviewing two individuals who currently hold positions at upper administrative levels within the SDA higher education system. I used the interview protocol sheets (see Appendices) and followed them closely. By analyzing the transcripts from these interviews, I worked with a UMASS faculty member to make any necessary adjustments or changes to the interview protocol.

#### D. Data Management and Analysis

I transcribed the interview tapes and notes and used a combination of electronic and manual methods to code and arrange the data. Each participant's interview files were coded (using pseudonyms) and a demographic face sheet was attached. The large volume of data was reduced by looking for sections which were related to challenges in SDA higher education, leadership needs, or leadership development opportunities. These coded passages were grouped into categories which made sense by constructing a domain analysis. This domain analysis took the smaller categories of meaning and grouped them into larger cultural domains. In this context, culture was defined as an organization of things—the meaning given by people to patterns of behavior and knowledge that people have learned or created (Spradley, 1980).



Next, I looked for contrasts by constructing a componential analysis—a systematic search for the attributes associated with the cultural domains (Spradley, 1980). I then looked for patterns and connections among the passages and between the various categories and inductively derived themes from them.

This process as a form of “content analysis” was very non-intrusive because it was done with the data after it has been gathered and did not disturb the original setting of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

#### E. Ensuring the Trustworthiness of the Study

Any material which was confusing or vague was sent to the participant along with my interpretation of the material. Where necessary, I also checked back with the individual participant for verification of the validity of assertions and themes. This was a form of “member checking” which added to the trustworthiness of the data. Another way I provided a “reality check” on the data gathered from within the SDA higher education system was to ask the graduate school to appoint one individual from within the SDA system to my dissertation committee. By looking for someone with extensive experience (both as faculty and administrator) and an academic lens from outside of the field of education through which to view the data, I took steps to protect myself from an unrealistic interpretation.

#### F. Timeline for the Conduct of the Study

My "expert identifier" questionnaires were sent during October of 1994 and returned during November. Participants were contacted during the first two weeks of December 1994 at which time interviews were scheduled. I made site visits and gathered my data during January and February of 1995.

## **CHAPTER III REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

### **A. Introduction**

Four distinct bodies of literature inform this study. Many relevant selections from the first three will be discussed in this chapter. The fourth body of literature will be discussed in the following chapter in order to explain the context of the study.

The first body of literature traces the general development of leadership theory. This literature discusses how our society views leadership, both historically and currently, and crosses many academic boundaries which include education, management, political science, and sociology. This literature is extensive and ever-increasing.

The second body of literature deals with higher education. Especially important to this study is the material which addresses how higher education is changing, and the challenges it faces in the 21st century. Because it is incumbent on institutional leaders to face the challenges of the future, some of the higher education literature looks specifically at leadership in higher education. This segment of higher education literature can be viewed as a subset of general leadership literature.

However, church-related colleges are unique. So, yet another literature must be examined. This third body explores Christian higher education and church-related colleges. It defines these colleges and looks at leadership problems specific to them.

Seventh-day Adventist colleges are a subset of church-related colleges, however. So, to understand the context of this study—SDA higher education—the SDA church and specifically its colleges must be understood. Seventh-day Adventist education has some

challenges which appear to be similar to mainstream higher education. Many others are completely different. In fact, some SDA challenges are different from other church-related colleges. This is because of the unique subculture created by the SDA church.

An exploration of this fourth body of literature provides a thorough understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist church and its colleges, as well as its unique mission, culture, and attitudes toward leadership. This discussion will occur in the next chapter. However, the literature in this area is more limited. Because it is believed that a thorough understanding of the context of the study is necessary to understand the data gathered, the voices of the participants will be brought into the review of the literature at this point.

The research problem and questions for this study lie at the intersection of these four bodies of literature—traditional leadership theory, the future of higher education, the distinctiveness of church-related colleges, and the Seventh-day Adventist church and its system of higher education..

## B. Leadership Theory

It is necessary to begin the exploration of leadership theory with the introductory material—the definition of leadership and its expanding conceptualization. Leadership has several meanings. It has been described as a focus of group processes (Blackmar, 1911; Cooley, 1902), as personality and its effects (Bingham, 1927; Bowden, 1926; Tead, 1935), as the art of inducing compliance (Allport, 1924; Bennis, 1959; Munson, 1921), as the exercise of influence (Nash, 1929; Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 1961), as an act or behavior (Carter, 1953; Shartle, 1956), as a form of persuasion



(Koontz & O'Donnell, 1955), as a power relationship (Janda, 1960; Smith, 1948), and as an instrument of goal achievement (Bellows, 1959; Davis, 1962). It has also been described as the initiation of structure (Homans, 1950). More recent literature pays attention to context (Yuki, 1981) and interactive dynamic properties (Bennis, 1993; Blohowiak, 1992; Nanus, 1989).

There are typologies and taxonomies of leadership (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Myers, 1962) as well as theories and models (Maslow, 1943; McGregor, 1957). These include personal and situational theories, interaction and social learning theories, theories and models of interactive processes, perceptual and cognitive theories, and hybrids of these.

Research traditions in leadership fall roughly into six categories: 1) trait theories—specific personal characteristics, 2) power and influence theories—sources and amounts of power and how it is exercised, 3) behavioral theories—patterns of activity and managerial roles, 4) contingency theories—situational factors such as nature of task or external environment, 5) cultural and symbolic theories—influence in reinterpreting shared beliefs and values, and 6) cognitive theories—leadership as a social attribution which helps people to make sense of the world (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989).

Researchers studying trait theory believe that good leadership depends on characteristics found within a person. The traits researched include activity level (Wendt & Light, 1976), energy, assertiveness, task competence (Boyatzis, 1982; Hollander, 1978), interpersonal competence, social insight (Carter, Haythorn, Shriver, & Lanzetta, 1951), empathy (Cline & Richards, 1960; Cline & Richards, 1961), authoritarianism

(Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), power orientation (Frost, 1986; McClelland, 1975), Machiavellianism (Argyris, 1962; Bennis, 1964; Gibb, 1964; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), and charisma (Fromm, 1941; Lawler, 1982).

Another group of authors deals primarily with the power and legitimacy of leadership (Burns, 1978; Etzioni, 1961; French & Raven, 1959; Roberts, 1986; Taylor, 1986; Thibaut & Riecken, 1959). They discuss the sources of power, the bases of power, the distribution of power, the power of the group, power sharing, and industrial democracy. They discuss sources of conflict, how to resolve conflict, and how to manage conflict, as well as organizational authority, responsibility, and delegation.

Yet another group focuses not so much on power as the leadership situation or environment. These authors write of the external environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), organizational constraints (Porter, 1963), group development (Bass, Flint, & Pryer, 1957; Sterling & Rosenthal, 1950), path-goal theory (Evans, 1970; Georgopoulos, Mahoney, & Jones, 1957; House, 1971), stress (Downton, 1973; Mileti, Drabek, & Haas, 1975), spatial and social arrangement (Ward, 1968; Yammarino & Naughton, 1988), and psychological space and distance (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Jennings, 1943; Moreno, 1934/1953).

One fascinating collection of authors writes mainly of the transactional exchange between great leaders and those in their environment. These authors and researchers speak of followership, dynamics of exchange, contingent reinforcement, performance analysis, and the use and impact of feedback (Blanchard & Johnson, 1982;

Kay, Myer, & French, 1965; Zaleznik, 1967). Many developed bi-polar leadership theories (Burns, 1978; Likert, 1967) where a leader can be rated or classified on a scale with distinctive and opposite ending points. These include autocratic and authoritarian versus democratic and egalitarian leadership, directive versus participative leadership, task- versus relations-oriented leadership, and laissez-faire leadership versus motivation to manage.

There is a more miscellaneous group of work involving differences in leadership for diverse cultures and groups, gendered aspects of leadership, the education and training for leadership, and the ability to assess and forecast leaders' performance (Alpander, 1986; Bass, Burger, Doktor, & Barrett, 1979; Ghiselli, 1971). It is interesting to note that although much of the traditional leadership literature applies in these miscellaneous situations, a different lens is used to view the literature. Often the reader is cautioned to avoid applying standard solutions and theories to unusual groups or circumstances, which is significant in the case of this study.

When traditional leadership theory is combined with future-oriented thinking, it becomes especially interesting. Bass believes that there are six major considerations which should guide us in viewing leadership theory and research through a future-oriented lens. These are: 1) extrapolation from the past; 2) societal changes; 3) new technologies; 4) organizational trends; 5) changes in personnel practices; and, 6) new paradigms (Bass, 1990, p. 879).



The literature resulting from research in the field of leadership is already reflecting these six considerations. Organizational structures are changing as many management positions (especially middle management) are being eliminated (Byrne & Zellner, 1988; Tomasko, 1987). The character of the leadership role is being changed by the information revolution (Cleveland, 1985). And, mentoring is playing an increasingly important role in leadership development (Zey, 1988).

### C. Higher Education Theory—21st Century Challenges

The literature surrounding the future of higher education—the speculation as to the challenges and solutions—is based on the concept that higher education, like most social organizations in this country, is experiencing difficulties. There are numerous works detailing the ways in which the system does not meet the needs of society (Adams & Palmer, 1993; Barnard, et al., 1990; Bennis, 1989; Bogler, 1993; Bok, 1991; Bok, 1992; Coombs, 1981; Duffey, 1992; Friedel, 1989; Gale, 1992; Gerald & Hussar, 1992; Gilley, 1991; Hauptman, 1991; Lorenzo, 1987; Marien, 1982; Mets & Stark, 1988; Newman, 1987; Shapiro, 1993; Tyree, et al., 1984).

The precise mark—the beginning of the 21st century—seems to be a popular one with authors. It catches the audience's attention because we seem to view a new century, even though it is only a few years away, as a time much different from now. It serves to order our thinking. Clark Kerr believes that this mark will come in the middle of the third great period of transformation for higher education (1990-2010); the first being



1860-1890, and the second being 1960-1980. He thinks that this period ahead will pose new problems to higher education and some old problems in new forms. He defines these challenges as: 1) management of stasis in overall growth but with changes in programs; 2) strengthening decision-making processes; 3) handling polycentric conflicts; 4) advancing community welfare and citizenship responsibilities; 5) maintaining leadership in the intellectual world; 6) earning autonomy and resources and freedom; and 7) advancing equality and merit (Kerr, 1994b, p. 19-29).

### 1. Higher Education Leadership

Many of the scholars who discuss the future challenges of higher education point to leadership as a key resource for meeting these challenges (Association of American Colleges, et al., 1985; Bennett, 1984; Bennis, 1989; Brown & Walworth, 1986; Cunningham, 1983; Doucette, 1990; Gilley, 1991; Kelly, 1991; Shalala, 1989).

Simultaneously, however, there is much criticism for what is perceived to be a breakdown of governance and leadership in higher education (Bennett, 1984; Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Keller, 1983)—especially presidential leadership (Brewster Jr., 1976; Cohen & March, 1974; Corson, 1960; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978; Trow, 1984).

Much of the leadership advice given to college administrators is confusing and contradictory. It is based on mainstream leadership literature (which still tends to focus on personality traits and styles) and is not helpful to higher education which has dual control systems, conflicts between professional and administrative authority, unclear goals, and

special properties present in normative, professional organizations (Bensimon, 1989a). To deal with these differences, a subfield of “higher education leadership” literature has appeared.

This subfield has brought about an apparent paradigm shift away from the traditional, rational view of higher education leadership toward a cultural and symbolic perspective. This new perspective is especially appropriate to higher education because, unlike the corporate world, its purpose is often ambiguous, power and authority on campuses is diffused, and there is often an absence of clear and measurable outcomes (Bensimon, 1989a).

The six categories of mainstream leadership literature (trait theory, power & influence theory, behavioral theory, contingency theory, cultural or symbolic theory, and cognitive theory) are especially helpful when viewing this subfield. The categories become important when trying to find the correct applications for the research.

Finding the correct application means that an informed leader would use information from a certain category of literature to help form an opinion about a certain issue or find a solution for a particular problem. Applying the information incorrectly or rashly could lead to an unworkable solution. When attempting to find the right application, higher education leadership literature can be supplemented by a knowledge of leadership theory from non-higher education literature.

Trait theory literature can be used when describing successful presidents, searching for and selecting presidents, or comparing effective versus ineffective presidents

(Eble, 1978; Fisher & Tack, 1988; Gilley, Fulmer, & Reithlingshoefer, 1986; Kaplowitz, 1986; Kerr, 1984; Kerr & Gade, 1987; Vaughan, 1986; Walker, 1979). Behavioral theory can be used for self-assessment by leaders (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Blake, Mouton, & Williams, 1981; Knight & Holen, 1985; Madron, Craig, & Mendel, 1976; Tucker, 1981).

Power and influence theory can be divided into two types: 1) social power theory and transformational leadership theory (which speaks of the effects leaders have on followers) and 2) social exchange theory and transactional leadership theory (which speaks of the mutual influence and reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers).

Social power theory is best used to help presidents shape their own understanding of leadership and power (Birnbaum, 1989; Keohane, 1985; Whetton, 1984).

Transformational theory helps a leader understand the symbolism, visions, and images of an institution (Bensimon, 1989b; Burns, 1978; Cameron & Ulrich, 1986; Green, et al., 1988; Hesburgh, 1979; Keller, 1983). Social exchange or transactional theory is best for examining shared governance or the image of a president as first among equals (Bensimon, 1987; Birnbaum, 1988; Cohen & March, 1974; Corson, 1960; Hollander, 1978; Kerr & Gade, 1986a; Walker, 1979).

Contingency theory helps a leader adapt a personal leadership style to situational factors (Birnbaum, 1989; Dill, 1984; Gilley, et al., 1986; Staw, 1983; Vroom, 1983). It is good for understanding leadership in academic departments (Taylor, 1982; Tucker, 1981).

Cultural or symbolic theory helps us understand the academic culture and symbolic actions (Chaffee, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Clark, 1970, 1972; Corbally, 1984;

Deshler, 1985; Dill, 1982; Green, 1988; Kuh, 1988; Neumann, 1989, 1990; Peck, 1983, 1985; Tierney, 1988, 1989; Vaughan, 1986a, 1986b). And, cognitive theory is helpful when studying the perception of a leader's effectiveness or the way we attribute credit or blame (Birnbaum, 1986; Birnbaum, 1987; Birnbaum, 1989).

One level deeper, when combined with organizational theory, higher education leadership literature can become even more useful. When the theories are viewed through the lenses of organizational typologies, leaders can interpret events in a variety of ways, understand the multiple realities of an organization, and be more flexible in their responses (Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1978; Birnbaum, 1986; Fisher, et al., 1988a; Kerr & Gade, 1986b; Morgan, 1986; Steinbruner, 1974; Weick, 1979). One example of such a typology is the "four frames" (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) which provides different perspectives or vantage points from which to apply the literature (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

When college presidents use older, more traditional mainstream leadership literature (rational and power based) alone to guide them, they are apt to feel that their job is an impossible one. When they explore this subfield of higher education leadership, they find that it addresses the constraints placed upon them as we near the 21st century. When they view their jobs symbolically, they are less concerned with bold leadership and more concerned with constituency/campus relations, mission, and making relevant (although sometimes small) improvements (Bensimon, et al., 1989).



## 2. College Presidents

Kerr (1994b) proposes that there are at least **three major models** of the college presidency in the academic world today. The **first** is the organized anarchy model where the president makes the bureaucracy work, but the presidency is of the most importance only to the president (Cohen & March, 1974). The **second** is the faculty opinion model where presidents are viewed by faculty members as being autocratic and exercising excessive control. The **third** is the presidents who make a difference model where the president varies according to personality, but holds the organization together internally, defends and advances it externally, and selects and assists movement in new directions (Kerr, 1984). In talking with individuals about the college presidency (as was done in this study), it is important to understand which of the three or which parts of the three models correctly identify their opinion of college presidents. How people view the role or influence of college presidents directly affects how they imagine themselves, as a president, facing the challenges of an institution.

Authors of higher education literature, when speaking of the future, believe that as leaders college presidents will spend much time building consensus between trustees, students, and staff (Brown & Walworth, 1986)—a cohesive and dedicated staff (Briscoe, 1988). Higher education literature shows that the college presidency has changed (Fisher, 1984a; Fisher, 1984b; Fisher, 1985; Fisher, 1988; Fisher, 1991; Fisher, et al., 1988a; Fisher, et al., 1988b; Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Fisher & Tack, 1988; Fisher & Tack, 1990; Kauffman, 1982; Kauffman, 1984) and will continue to do so in the 21st century. The

traditional view of a male president with a volunteer spouse is no longer the norm (Beadle, 1972; Blum, 1990; Corbally, 1977; Dougherty, 1992; Gade, 1986; Gaudiani, 1992; Green, et al., 1988; Kemeny, 1979; Kerr & Gade, 1986a; Kipetz, 1990; Lilly, 1987; Magrath & Magrath, 1985; McPhail, 1989; Ostar, 1986; Riesman, 1982; Siegel, 1989; Sturnick, Milley, & Tisinger, 1991; Tinsley, Secor, & Kaplan, 1984; Wheeler & Tack, 1989; Whisnant, 1990).

From this body of work, it is clear that there is material which would help a college president address the 21st century challenges of his or her institution. But, these leadership solutions are aimed at mainstream higher education which is expected to face mainstream challenges. These solutions cannot be taken by a consultant and directly applied to a system of colleges and universities, built on Christian principles and possessing a unique culture, such as the Seventh-day Adventist system.

#### D. Church-related Colleges

##### 1. Christian Higher Education

According to authors who write about Christian higher education, the differences between Christian and secular colleges and universities are related to their aims (Pelikan, Pollard, Moeller, Eisendrath, & Wittenberg, 1964). Christian colleges view the student as a whole person, whose spiritual and moral development is as important as his or her intellectual development (De Jong, 1990). They teach all subjects with a Christian world view (von Gruening, 1957) and with Christian wisdom (Hassel, 1983). They stress

education for church-related vocations, attempt to integrate faith and learning, decompartmentalize religion, and act as a religious community of learning with *in loco parentis* responsibilities (Holmes, 1975).

The advantages of Christian colleges are pointed out to prospective students in advertising material as: caring and supportive environments where all persons are recognized and regarded as important, an integrated world view which undergirds the theories and facts, character development, and a Christ-centered view of life and work.

Is attending a Christian college important to a Christian young person? That question brings up one of the hottest debates surrounding Christian education. Some studies show that attending a Christian colleges is the strongest tie to a person's growth in faith and to their loyalty to their congregation and denomination (Christianity Today, 1990). One could assume, then, that Christian colleges are ways for churches to perpetuate themselves.

The other side of the argument, though, is that Christian higher education actually weakens the tenacity with which Christian evangelicals cling to orthodoxy (Frame, 1990). So, is educating a young person in a Christian environment, and teaching that person to think for him/herself, actually destroying or changing the future of a church as its members presently define it?

These two views lead Christian educators to ask whether a Christian college is the place for a church to teach (perpetuate itself) or to learn (examine its doctrines in the

modern age). The "teaching or learning" question leads to some of the problems in Christian higher education today.

One of these problems is academic freedom (for both students and faculty members) in light of the above question (Andrews, Dang, & McLean, 1987; Annarelli, 1987; Curran, 1980; Hunt & Connelly, 1969; Ingalls, 1987; Kliever, 1988a; Kliever, 1988b; Laycock & Waelbroeck, 1988; Maguire, 1988; Manier & Houck, 1967; May, 1988; McConnell, 1990; Moots & Gaffney, 1979; Ramm, 1963; Sherman, 1988). Other problems include the excessive control such an environment sometimes has over an individual (employee or student) and the expectation of the constituency (in this case the members of the entire denomination as well as the members of the local church community) that the college will be the defender of faith (Holmes, 1975).

## 2. Church-Related Colleges

The terms church controlled, church related, church sponsored, church affiliated, Christian, sectarian, denominational, and religiously oriented have become interchangeable and inaccurate terms in higher education literature (Pattilo & Mackenzie, 1966).

According to Pace (1972), there are four categories of church colleges.

The first is colleges with church roots. The second is colleges which are still nominally related to the church but are on the verge of disengagement. The third (and largest) category is colleges which are currently acknowledged as church-sponsored. The fourth (and fastest growing) is colleges which are associated with evangelical,



fundamentalist, or interdenominational Christian churches. The fourth category might be considered a subset of the third. For the purposes of this study I will identify all four types as *church-related*, recognizing that there are differences.

There are some basic differences in the way in which church-related colleges relate to the law. These differences involve religious preference in employment policies, student admissions and discipline (including alcoholism, drug addiction, and segregation of student housing by sex), taxes, and public funds (Gaffney & Moots, 1982).

The basic classification differences between church-related colleges can be identified by looking at the composition of the governing board (Is it composed of only church members? Are the members nominated or elected by the church?). Another method used to distinguish between church-related colleges is to understand fiscal matters or the source of revenue (Is the institution is owned by the church? Does the institution receive financial support from official church sources—general budget, contributed services, capital funds?). Further, one can look at whether the institution subscribes to a set of church standards, whether the institution's mission statement reflects a religious orientation, and whether preferential treatment is given to church members in faculty and staff selection (Pattilo & Mackenzie, 1966). These areas—basic control and finances—make church-related colleges as different from each other as they are from mainstream higher education.

The current distinction in the literature surrounding church-related colleges is between bible colleges and Christian liberal arts colleges or universities (Kallgren, 1991). Bible colleges are similar to seminaries as their main purpose is the training of students for

ministry to the world. All students take dual majors—religion and a major to prepare them for a career. All students do internships where they use their education to develop their ministry skills. The ethos of a bible college is evangelistic, devotional, family-oriented, and disciplined. Enrollments vary between 50 and 1,500 students, and tuition is about half of that in private liberal arts colleges.

One of the challenges facing bible colleges, according to a recent study, is that women freshmen arrive with much lower self esteem than mainstream college freshmen, while men freshmen arrive with much higher self esteem than others in their peer group (Neff, 1991).

It is difficult to identify a peer group for SDA higher education among church-related colleges. Authors who classify colleges into denominational systems such as Roman Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian, list SDA colleges in the “other church colleges” section (Snavely, 1955). This is most likely the result of several discussions which have been going on within the SDA church for years, some of which will be discussed in the next section. They include the identity of the SDA church, the debate over whether SDA colleges are bible colleges or liberal arts colleges and universities, and the debate over whether SDA colleges should be marketed to non-members.

The literature identifies differences in management and leadership issues for church-related colleges. There are different expectations of the presidents (Beeson, 1988). Most presidents are expected to be spiritual directors as well as administrators—there is a moral

imperative in their leadership expectation (Kingsley, 1992). There are distinct differences in the areas of planning, financial development, campus culture, academic freedom, and working with trustees (Dagley, 1988; Moots & Gaffney, 1979; Noftzger, 1992; Oosting, 1985; Pattilo & Mackenzie, 1966; Ramm, 1963; Thomas, 1992).

No “expert” on church-related colleges surfaces in the literature. This literature does not seem to be dominated by one or more individuals. Although there appears to be a niche for these colleges, and their contribution to the common good has been researched and discussed (Magill, 1970), the common theme seems to be that they are difficult to run. The relationship between church-related colleges and their sponsoring church is fragile. It is based on shared commitments and mutual benefit (Van-Harn, 1992).

This fragile relationship is very apparent in the Seventh-day Adventist church and higher education system which is the context of this study. A review of the literature supplemented by the individual voices of the participant in this study is the subject of the next chapter.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**CONTEXT OF THE STUDY:**  
**THE SDA CHURCH, SUBCULTURE, AND COLLEGES**

One cannot understand the context of this study by simply reviewing the literature or talking to the participants in this study. It takes a combination of both of these things. The literature reveals some things about the church and its system of higher education that are often internalized or forgotten by long-time Adventists. The literature alone does not reveal the cultural semantics and idiosyncracies of the way the SDA church “does business.”

The SDA subculture involves a century and a half of tradition and attitudes. The next chapter discusses the themes resulting from a discussion of those which directly relate to the research questions. This chapter discusses the literature and attitudes (as expressed by the participants) which help to explain the SDA church.

**A. History of the SDA Church**

The literature which sets the Seventh-day Adventist church in its historical context shows that the original church has its roots in the second advent movement of the early nineteenth century, specifically the Millerite movement of 1830-1845 (Knight, 1993). Most Millerites came from the Methodist, Baptist, or Christian Connection churches (Mustard, 1990). The Millerite movement split apart in 1845 after its members were severely disappointed when Jesus did not return to earth on October 22, 1844.



One splinter of the movement, the Sabbatarian Adventists, formally organized as the Seventh-day Adventists in 1863 (Knight, 1995). “The Great Disappointment of 1844,” which was sensationalized by the popular press of that time, still surfaces when researchers study the church (Bull & Lockhart, 1989) or when the American public is surveyed concerning their knowledge or opinion regarding Seventh-day Adventists (The Gallup Organization, Inc., as cited in Bull & Lockhart, 1989).

The first Sabbatarian Adventist church was organized in Washington, New Hampshire, many years before the formal organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church structure. Formal, organized religion was seen as secular by the early Sabbatarian Adventists. When it became necessary to formally organize, early Sabbatarian Adventists did so reluctantly. Their formal structure was based on the influence of James White. His wife, Ellen Harmon White, another of the church founders, is believed by most SDAs to have received visions which became the basis for much of her prolific writing.

The major doctrines of the church, from which the name is derived, are the seventh-day (Saturday) as Sabbath and the second coming (Advent) of Jesus Christ. Early SDAs viewed themselves as a “remnant” people who had been given as their mission the preaching of the message of the three angels in *Revelation* 14. They considered their message to be urgent because they believed that they were living in the last days of the earth's history. The church developed a strong stand on lifestyle—healthy living (for many, vegetarianism) and abstinence from tobacco and alcohol (Land, 1986). Thus, the

Seventh-day Adventist culture which we find today had its roots in both mission and lifestyle (Knight, 1995).

Many Adventists use the writings of Ellen White as a lens through which they interpret the Bible for modern times. Some conservative Adventists ignore that this woman has been dead for 80 years. Some believe that whatever she wrote then has the same literal meaning today. Conservative Adventist lay people tend to use the “proof text” or “grab a quote” method (finding a Bible text and an Ellen White quote) to address new or inconsistent areas—and, due to the rapid changes in American society, there are many in the 1990s.

George Knight makes four interesting observations about the formation of values and standards by the early church. First, many of the standards were products of the nineteenth century New England culture in which the church was born. These included “strict Sabbath observance, avoidance of worldly entertainment, abstinence from alcoholic beverages, and ‘Puritan’ approaches to personal adornment” (p. 109). Second, specific problems in their daily existence brought about the formation of these standards. Third, there was no systematic procedure for the formation of these standards. And, fourth, it was the repeated similarity of the first Sabbatarian Adventists’ answers to these problems which grew into an SDA cultural heritage (Knight, 1995).

Seventh-day Adventism is a subtle rejection of the American dream. Elements of that dream are the ideas that (a) America is uniquely blessed by God with unprecedented opportunity for self-realization and material gain; (b) America, through leadership and

example, offers hope to the rest of the world; and (c) the progress of humanity can be achieved through individual effort. Bull and Lockhart argue that Seventh-day Adventism is “one of the most subtly differentiated, systematically developed and institutionally successful of all alternatives to the American way of life” (Bull & Lockhart, 1989, preface). Early Adventists did not believe that the republican experiment would either lead to the betterment of humanity or be a lasting success. Although the church has never expressed open opposition to the state, it has created an alternative by replicating the institutions and functions of American society (Bull & Lockhart, 1989). Examples of these would be publishing houses, hospitals and clinics, and schools.

Since its formal organization in 1863, the SDA church has grown and experienced many changes. The period between 1901 and 1910 was one of reorganization. Between 1910 and 1955 it experienced phenomenal world-wide growth (Knight, 1993). These changes can be viewed as an organizational life cycle.

Sociologist David O. Moberg holds that there are five stages in the life cycle of a church: (a) Incipient Organization, (b) Formal Organization, (c) Maximum Efficiency, (d) Institutionalism, and (e) Disintegration (Moberg, 1984). Keeping in mind that certain sectors of a church or certain individuals in a church can be in different stages at the same time, Knight speculates that the current SDA church is largely in the stage called maximum efficiency while it teeters on the brink of institutionalism (Knight, 1995).



The SDA Church encountered some challenges while moving through the life-cycle stages of organizational growth. One of these challenges has been to become accepted by mainstream religion. Many Protestants have been suspicious of Adventists because they claim a prophet (Knight, 1993). Adventists have often been classified as a cult by non-Adventists because of this prophet and their theological differences (McDowell, 1982). A series of theological conferences between SDA leaders and prominent evangelicals helped this relationship with the larger Christian community, but the church still is not considered by many to be part of mainstream American religion.

Another challenge to the SDA church is its internal differences. Several schema could explain the current diversity (in terms of beliefs and lifestyle) of the church. Some scholars say that there are three broad currents within Adventism.

*Traditional Adventism* places Ellen White as an authority for Biblical interpretation. It emphasizes the distinctiveness of Adventism. It claims that evangelical adventism is a new theology which destroys the SDA identity. It is suspicious of public schools and critical of anything in SDA schools which makes them more like public schools.

*Evangelical Adventism* places the SDA church in the mainstream of Christianity. Evangelical Adventists claim that while Ellen White possessed a gift of prophecy, her works are not infallible and should not be used as doctrinal authority. They often view SDA schools as good Christian schools with a special niche.

*Liberal Adventism* does not arise out of theological controversy, but partly out of the fact that many young Adventists are receiving advanced degrees from liberal,



non-Adventist universities. Liberal Adventists are comfortable with diversity of practice and pluralism of thought. They are not concerned with retaining the remnant identity of the nineteenth century pioneers (Samples & Neff, 1990). Liberal Adventists sometimes question the need for SDA schools, or push to use other schools (often other private schools) as a quality norming device.

Another schema (the one which I found most useful in analyzing the data gathered in this study) places the current membership into four groups of beliefs and behaviors: (a) the regular Adventists, (b) the traditional Adventists, (c) the intellectual Adventists, and (d) the cultural Adventists (Martin, 1990). According to Martin, *Regular Adventists* (believed to be the majority of church-attending members) believe in the traditional doctrines of the church and support it with their tithes and offerings. They admire the strict lifestyle of their parents and grandparents but may vary from it. They believe in the inspiration of Ellen White but may question how her writings apply to their lives.

The *Traditional Adventists*, some of whom have formed “offshoot” or “independent” ministries, long for the spiritual commitment of early Adventism. They are rigid in lifestyle and enthusiastic about doctrine. They are distressed that the church is not following more closely the writings of Ellen White, which they believe to border on “verbally inspired.”

The *Intellectual Adventists*, often leaders in the church or members near Adventist institutional centers, are well educated and prestigious in the community. They believe the

core doctrines but many times challenge (with logic and scientific evidence) the traditional positions of the church.

Although it has been pointed out to me that some view the fourth category of this schema differently, Martin believes that *Cultural Adventists* are those who may have grown up in the church or believe the basic doctrines. They have chosen, however, to no longer live as conventional Adventists. They do not look, act, or think as Adventists. They attend church only when convenient, but may remain on the church books as members. The church no longer meets their needs.

As with the first schema suggested, each category of this second schema brings with it educational values. The spectrum ranges from those who still see SDA education as a necessary alternative to public education to those who see no need for SDA education. This spectrum of educational values affects elementary, secondary, and even post-secondary SDA education.

## B. History of SDA Education

Seventh-day Adventist education is part of the “missiological quadrilateral”—a four-fold program of publishing, medical, educational, and evangelistic aspects of the mission outreach in the Adventist Church (Knight, 1995). Seventh-day Adventist education had its beginning in 1853 with a five-family elementary school in Buck's Bridge, New York. Today, while the SDA church is not one of the largest denominations in the world, it

operates the second-largest Protestant school system in the United States and the largest Protestant school system in the world (Peterson, 1991).

Over the years, church leaders have relied heavily on the writings of Ellen White in the organization and conduct of the educational system. At the time of her death in 1915, she had published over 26 books and 4,600 periodical articles. She is the one individual thought to have had the most influence on the philosophy of SDA education. Her views are scattered through three books on education, 23 books containing one or more chapters on education, and many other books containing excerpts on education. While White read extensively in the literature of her time (e.g. Horace Mann), the basis of her philosophy was her understanding of the Bible.

Excerpts from Ellen White's writings, which out of context appear to be ultra-conservative, are often incorrectly quoted today by individuals trying to make a case against educational change (Knight, 1985; Weber, 1992) or an excuse for the unequal role of women in the church (Rosado, 1990b). But when her works are read in their entirety and interpreted in their proper historical context (Land, 1987), it is apparent that this woman actually was striving to design a system of education which addressed social issues and was up-to-date, even a bit revolutionary at its inception.

### C. Philosophy and Mission of SDA Education

Many Adventists do not understand the original purpose of SDA education (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). Most Adventists do not realize at least three things about the original

plan for SDA education: (a) that it contained a more narrow mission which was part of a broader concept of SDA lifelong education; (b) that it was originally a modern concept still in tune with today's social causes; and (c) that it was meant to be a necessary alternative (kept separate) to public education for SDA families because its mission was in tune with the concept of the Adventist life.

The SDA Philosophy of Education as stated in the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (as cited by Farr, 1978, p. 7) reflects a view that "man's ultimate purpose is to love and serve God and his fellow men . . . a major objective is the salvation of youth . . . objectives include spiritual atmosphere, Biblical-centered studies, character development, healthful living, home skills, and service."

Benn (1981) defines SDA education by comparing it to secular education. He states that secular education educates for social standing, for self-aggrandizement, for self-serving, while SDA education must educate for service (p. 39).

Ott (1978) believes that the religion in SDA education provides both a complement and a corrective to education (p. 21). He believes that students need to be properly informed by being presented with a Christian world view and a Christian self-understanding.



#### D. Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education

Seventh-day Adventist higher education is occasionally written about in mainstream education literature or becomes the subject of a dissertation from a non-SDA university (Coates, 1992; Nelson, 1971; Peterson, 1991; Ritter, 1992). But, it is mostly discussed within the intellectual circles of the church in SDA periodicals and more recently on the internet. There are many SDA periodicals from weekly newsletters of the local or union conferences, to world-wide publications. The Seventh-day Adventist Periodicals Index (Drazen, 1992) indexes 35 publications. Education is a popular topic with Adventists; however, there is considerably less written about higher education than K-12 education. There are also books written each year on the subject of SDA education which are more difficult to locate and are poorly indexed. The libraries at the SDA colleges seem to be the best source of information.

The bulk of the recent material which is related to higher education is generated in response to several crises within the system. The first two crises in SDA higher education are directly related to each other—adherence to “original” mission and stratification of church members.

When discussing the first crisis, SDA educational mission, there is polarization of camps which believe that (a) SDA higher education should either retain what is believed to be its original, separatist mission, or (b) join the mainstream and strive for quality based on educational standards used for public schools or other private schools. The former group

often sees SDA colleges as bible colleges, while the latter group sees them as Christian liberal arts colleges and universities.

The conflict between those who cherish the original SDA educational mission (the way they define it) (Hodgen, 1978; Moore & Murdoch, 1975) and those who want it to change and look to the American educational system for standards of measurement (Glenn, 1979; Hammill, 1988; Jones, 1988; Thompson, 1979) is pronounced. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, at all levels of its educational system, is dedicated to teaching students about cooperation, service, equality, mercy, and meekness, and yet in the 1990s its constituencies are calling for honor societies, higher academic standards, and higher test scores.

Parents send their children to Adventist schools (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary) for reasons which may not have anything to do with the original mission: smaller classes, caring teachers, safer environment, or a general belief in Christian education without a commitment to SDA education. SDA schools are asked to teach a general curriculum and meet state accrediting standards, and are slowly being shaped not by religious demands, but by how culture defines schools. Students are expected to receive job preparation at the post-secondary level which allows them to live a financially comfortable life-style. There is a dichotomy between the main purpose of SDA education and the expectations of many of its constituents. Some SDA schools and colleges are trying to compete with public schools (Knight, 1992), which was never the purpose.

Akers (1973) asks if SDA education has not reached a point where it is accepting the concepts of public education. He points out that the most cynical of our students will tell you that the religious trappings of our institutions are simply there to keep the anxieties of the laity assuaged and reassure them that the place is really "Christian" after all (p. 6).

These conflicts between mission and reality at all levels of SDA education are reminiscent of authors who are critics of education especially higher education. Geraty (1990) in his review of Ernest Boyer's book, *College: The Undergraduate Experience*, looks at Boyer's recommendations to alleviate the problems in higher education and points out that they read like a blueprint of the Adventist educational model.

Peterson (1991) believes that if Adventist education (at all levels) is going to meet the needs of the 1990s and beyond, as well as adhere to its original standards, it must follow a new paradigm contextualizing the mission of Adventist education into a democratic pedagogy which enables and ennobles students (p. 143). He believes that Adventist education must provide the truth about the world condition and the human condition, and then face up to the challenge of responsible, creative, effective, and ethical ways to relieve and reform both humankind and the world (p. 143). He thinks that Adventists must recognize in building this new paradigm that sexism (as well as classism and racism) exists in their educational system even though they don't want to admit it. He also believes that the me-centered attitude which the mass media tends to plant in young people places many of our youth "at risk" of being sucked into unhealthy behaviors such as drug abuse, sexual immorality, apathy, and vandalism (p. 156).



Bailey Gillespie (1974) said this in a slightly different way twenty years ago. He believes that students can be taught to think as Christians through a model of maintenance or a model of mission (p. 4). He feels that many SDA educational programs have slipped into a maintenance role of perpetuating and maintaining comfortable feelings of status quo and of approval. In this situation “truth” becomes something that is handed down from one who knows the truth (p. 4). He advocates a mission model where educators examine the great world issues with students and guide them in their interpretation of world events and problems, while preparing them to help others.

The second crisis within the system involves the stratification of church members (different currents within Adventism, as mentioned above) with regard to spiritual beliefs, the denominational structure, and their approach to traditional SDA lifestyle issues, all of which are reflected in the academic communities. Each group of church members has expectations for their SDA college. Each group sees SDA colleges as having a different mission, has a different vision of how to accomplish that mission, and has different lifestyle expectations surrounding that mission.

Because many of these SDA groups do not write and publish on a regular basis, and because there are different types of SDA (church-sponsored and private) publications read by the various groups, the second crisis is difficult to document in the literature. It is subtly uncovered when reading the “letters to the editor” following articles on SDA higher education. More recently it can be documented in a new type of publication—the postings to different threads in a special forum on CompuServe called “SDAs On-Line.”



Other crises reflected in the literature involve faculty salaries (Schwab, 1994), the cost of SDA higher education (Larson, 1995) and the costs of running the colleges, the need to increasingly discount tuition, questions of service learning, and questions surrounding the target markets of SDA higher education (Cassell, 1994; Dittes, 1994; Jacobsen, 1994; Land, 1994; Reinke, 1995).

Those within the system know of other crises. This became apparent during the interview phase of this study. They are hinted at throughout the literature, but are often not addressed directly. Some involve the same issues being addressed by every American college: finding and keeping a qualified president or other administrator; addressing the concerns of those who question the quality of the institution—the government, the public, students, parents, and other constituents; addressing issues of diversity, racism, and sexism; the need for pluralism of thought; and redefining the role and job of the academic faculty member.

There have been two proposals published since this project began—each outlining and discussing several possible options for the future of SDA higher education. One of these articles was published in an official church periodical (Widmer, 1994) and one was not (Guy, 1994). Even so, the articles were surprising similar.

Some of the options suggested in these articles included (a) liquidating all SDA colleges and universities, (b) consolidating all the institutions, (c) specializing the institutions, (d) centralizing the institutions, (e) allowing the institutions to be privately owned, and (f) simply doing nothing—continuing under the present organizational

structure. The significance of these two articles and their suggestions cannot be overstated. Proposals which were discussed in private have now become background material for public discussions within constituencies.

#### E. Unique Leadership Circumstances for SDA College Presidents

The crises in SDA higher education and the solutions being discussed make the job of SDA college presidents very difficult. The unique circumstances for SDA college presidents arise because SDA colleges are small (Duggan, 1986; Floyd, 1983; Harran, 1985; Scarlett, 1982; Thompson, et al., 1990; West, 1983; Willmer, 1985; Zastrocky, 1986), Christian (Dagley, 1988; Kingsley, 1992; Noftzger, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Van-Harn, 1992), and contain a distinct Seventh-day Adventist culture (Bacchiocchi, 1987; Daily, 1993; Ghazal, 1989; Habada & Rumble, 1992; Knight, 1985; Ministerial Association of the SDA Church, 1988; Nelson, 1971; Rosado, 1990a; Rosado, 1990b; Weber, 1992; Weber, 1993).

These unique circumstances include conflicting demands from all constituencies with an additional constituent, the denomination (Quehl as cited in Dagley, 1988); the expectation of many that the president is a spiritual director and a virtuous church leader (Rock, 1990); the need to appease boards stacked with clergy, to please students whose home lifestyle differs from campus expectations, and to satisfy faculty members with varying levels of personal mission to the church; and the need to maintain the SDA educational mission in a new, modern context (Dagley, 1988).

What the literature does not reveal about the context of this study, but the participants in study were eager to add and comment on, are some of the idiosyncracies of the Seventh-day Adventist subculture which directly affect the SDA colleges. These have great influence on the way college presidents are selected and viewed.

#### F. Adding the Voices of the Participants

The ten participants in this study were a delightful group of individuals who, for the most part, were very willing to share their personal experiences, their wisdom, and their views of the future. Their voices helped to greatly develop the story beyond the limited amount of available literature.

In getting to know these individuals, I found that they nearly always talked openly about the good and bad things in SDA higher education, as well as its unique culture. Most of their current positions involve analysis and planning. Whether or not they do these two things through a cultural lens (and which cultural lens) depends on their individual background and personality.

Their backgrounds and personalities were important in the first portion of the interview protocol. The participants told me stories from their own backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge of the SDA college presidency which led them to form their own perception of the system. I was constantly reminded, while talking with these individuals, that where you stand is determined by where you sit. The number of years they had been involved in SDA higher education, the level of church or college

administration at which they were currently employed, the area of the country in which they lived, their ethnicity and sex, and even the relationship of their local constituency to the corporate church became important factors in our conversation. These factors made a big difference in the way each participant viewed the system at the end of the 20th century and visualized the challenges of the 21st century.

There were more differences than similarities among the ten participants. They ranged in age from late 40s to early 60s. The gender representation of the participants did not correspond to the SDA church membership (eight were males). The membership of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is 62 percent female and 38 percent male. Only four participants represented minority groups. The ethnic makeup of the church in North America is 3 percent Asian, 25 percent Black, 7 percent Hispanic, 64 percent Caucasian, and 1 percent other<sup>4</sup>.

A chart containing brief demographic information about the participants follows. This chart is for literary purposes only. Although the demographic information is correct, the columns have been shuffled to protect the anonymity of the participants. Each time a participant is cited in this document the participant name will reflect the correct (and relevant) demographic characteristic.

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<sup>4</sup>According to a special edition of the *Adventist Review* entitled "The Adventist Almanac," December 2, 1993.



Table 4.1

<b>Participant Demographics</b>				
<b>Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>A. Sex</b>	<b>B. Race</b>	<b>C. Current Region of the U.S.</b>	<b>D. Years in System</b>
Mike	M	Caucasian	Western	20
Sam	M	African American	Eastern	30
Doug	M	Caucasian	Northern	25
Joan	F	Caucasian	Northern	20
Bob	M	African American	Eastern	5
George	M	Caucasian	Western	10
Jean	F	Caucasian	Mid-Western	20
Paul	M	Hispanic	Southern	15
Joe	M	Caucasian	Western	25
Alex	M	Hispanic	Western	35

This table has been constructed for literary purposes only. Any attempt to cite this table or use its data for quantitative analysis would yield inaccurate results.

In the original design of this study, care was given in choosing the participants to allow for SDA theological streams of thought represented in different areas of the country. It turned out, though, that this particular issue was more complicated than expected. First of all, it was not simply the grouping of Adventist beliefs and behaviors—regular Adventists, traditional Adventists, intellectual Adventists, or cultural Adventists (Martin, 1990)—predominant in a participant's current college constituency which influenced that participant. It soon emerged that the career path through different SDA academic communities, the influence those communities had on a participant, and the “fit” of that

individual with the successive community (up to and most profoundly the current one) influenced each participant. Therefore, each person represented different Adventist cultural groups at different times.

Participants spoke to me, at first, as any good administrator has learned to do. If they were college presidents, deans, or faculty members, they were careful to identify with and represent the “intellectual Adventists” who predominate and are most vocal in SDA academic communities. If they were clergy or board members, on the other hand, they were careful to reflect the “regular Adventists” which they would like to believe make up the majority of the SDA church membership. After some time, however, each participant revealed a more fundamentally personal level.

The first level was the type of Adventist they had learned to appear to be—what their various publics insist a leader be. The second level was what their background and personality had made them. I soon found that beneath these “intellectual Adventists” were “regular Adventists,” “cultural Adventists,” and even an occasional “traditional Adventist.”

The two separate levels were so pronounced that at one point I had an individual insist that I turn off the tape recorders for a moment. There was a personal story he/she wanted to tell me which could not be “on the record.” Hiding this difference between the two levels may be the main reason for the demand for anonymity.

## G. Cultural Differences in the SDA Church and Colleges

As the participants explained, the Seventh-day Adventist culture is complicated and takes years for new members to assimilate and understand. For members who are second, third, or fourth generation Adventists (those referred to as “lifers” by one participant), the culture is part of who they are. This is one of the reasons why the responses of the “lifer” participants differed from those who were newer to the system.

There is an Adventist culture and lifestyle which you never get away from whether you are at work, home, on weekends; it's just what you are. (Joe)

For those in SDA academic communities, especially the more isolated campuses, it is almost impossible to distinguish what is actually “SDA culture” until it is compared directly with something incongruous outside the community. Students first joining these communities of learners see the differences much more clearly than do faculty members who have been on campus for quite a while.

Being Adventist, very much like being Jewish or Catholic, brings with it unique foods, humor, music, forms of recreation, family and worship rituals, and a particular network of friends and acquaintances. Examples of these will vary by community and SDA family, but some examples are the one of meat analogs and soy products, specific vocal and instrumental artists (such as the King’s Heralds or Del Delker) and labels (such as Chapel), an emphasis by many on recreation involving nature, and a commitment by many to a daily family devotion time.



These cultural traditions are more pronounced in the SDA academic communities (where most of the participants in this study live) where the churches are larger than in small SDA churches across the United States. Even though it is likely that a “lifer” could walk into any SDA church, feel comfortable in the worship service, and find someone who knows someone that they know, walking into a church connected with an SDA academic community or even a large Adventist hospital has been described by many as “going home.” The feeling of familiarity, especially to those who have attended SDA colleges, is comforting. Furthermore, there is a marked improvement in the quality level of the speakers, music, and formality of dress.

In a traditional Adventist church of the early to middle 20th century, one would notice simplicity of dress and an absence of jewelry (even wedding bands in most cases), vegetarian food at the fellowship dinner following the church service, and a marked absence of swearing. There would be a presumption of no smoking or alcohol use. Besides believing that Saturday is the Sabbath, these members would observe the Sabbath (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown) by refraining from work and choosing their activities with care.

However, the church is now in transition. Large Adventist centers—communities of intellectual Adventists associated with SDA hospitals, colleges, or church offices—show a growing diversity in thought and action. What Adventists eat, drink, wear, or do for recreation may vary. How they approach “Sabbath keeping” may reflect their stream of thought.



Those who study the SDA church are not surprised at this diversity and attribute it to things such as the rapid growth of the church, the increasing cultural multiplicity in the church, the emphasis on education which has turned the membership into independent and creative thinkers, and the social revolution in society at large (Martin, 1990).

There are some slight differences which are noticeable to SDA college and university campus visitors when they compare what they see to large state universities.

Ellen White's book, *Education*, gives us a holistic sort of approach—you know—head, hand and heart, together. Newcomers notice how our programs, academic and work and recreational, are all designed with this in mind, to fit together. (Joan)

Our academic communities have been founded out and away—some still are, but cities have grown up around others. The seclusion sometimes shocks people. There is a joke that some SDA colleges are *x* number of miles from the nearest sin (grins). (Mike)

The concept of *in loco parentis* still applies on SDA campuses. Dorms are segregated by sex and there are door closing times and regulations. Only vegetarian food is served in the cafeterias. There are restrictions on many campuses addressing issues of dress, entertainment, and health (alcohol consumption, smoking, abstinence from pre-marital sex).

There are different methods of mandating worship service attendance. Some campuses take attendance at most services and count “skips.” Some have students accumulate “worship credits.”

Sabbath observance (although not always rigidly enforced) is the expected norm. Somewhat confusing to a non-SDA student on a SDA campus is the fact that a roommate from a conservative SDA home might only be comfortable with certain types of music on Sabbath. That student might choose never to study on Sabbath, might wear "Sabbath clothes" which are a bit dressier, might not choose to eat in restaurants on Sabbath, and might choose to not do any shopping on Sabbath.

Cultural norms exist on SDA campuses involving ethics, morals (especially sexual), and expression of thought (language), although they are not overtly advertised as in Bible colleges. This does not mean that SDA colleges have a student body which entirely follows these rules. And, I did not get the impression that any of the participants actually believed that they did. But, the expectation is that choices will be made with certain biblical (and cultural) principles in mind.

One struggle is that a significant number of our students simply do not come from homes which hold the same values as we are expected to maintain in the colleges. But, the constituency expects us to have these values . . . (Bob)

It is not usual to find published honor codes at SDA colleges. But, the elements of present-day college honor codes found in mainstream higher education are present in the moral fabric of the institutions. I heard about violations of these, too, from several participants.

We just expect our students to be honest individuals.  
Finding a student who cheats is still a shock to most of us.  
But, I would be less than honest if I said it didn't happen.  
(Joe)

This is a concern to administrators who strive to integrate faith with learning and infuse everyday life with moral principles.

There is no indication that “traditional family values” or any other identification with the religious right in the United States is part of the SDA cultural heritage affecting SDA colleges. In fact, several participants expressed a concern over being considered a “Christian” college in the late 1990s. What many “intellectual Adventists” mean by “Christian” in no way resembles the views of the Christian Coalition. Expressions of this concern varied, but intolerance and loss of free choice were mentioned repeatedly. The participants who chose to speak to this point believed strongly in the separation of church and state.

We have always believed that the church should stay out of government and the government should stay out of church matters. (Doug)

I can't identify with the religious right at all. Their intolerance doesn't sound like the Jesus story I have read. (Jean)

Another cultural difference is that collective bargaining does not exist on SDA campuses. There are no faculty unions. Even the authority of the AAUP has been questioned on one SDA campus, when it intervened in a faculty dismissal (Behrens, 1992).

Those of us who have grown up in the church have always been taught that labor unions were not a good thing. Our colleagues who are recent converts do not have this as part

of their cultural heritage. It will be interesting to see what happens . . . (Jean)

The concept of “academic community” exists in most SDA colleges in a way that mainstream higher education only generates on small, isolated campuses. On most SDA campuses, students see their teachers, administrators, and custodians in church, at the grocery store, and at the local gas station. Students working at the local day-care center will take care of faculty children and students working at the local nursing home will take care of faculty parents.

The alumni of the college often choose to return and retire in the community. Retired SDA pastors (who help to provide church historical context and theological perspective) also become part of the community. Special events and programs (music, speakers, awards) are held on campus which bring members of the church constituency onto campus regularly. Programs designed to support the SDA “feeder” schools (elementary and secondary) bring potential students onto the campus at an early age, helping to provide “cognitive mapping.”

These cultural norms are highly valued by SDA parents who may want their college age children to make life choices for themselves, but secretly hope (as do most parents in this country) that the values the children choose will be consistent with their own. Part of the SDA heritage is that a happy family involves a shared faith. Although it is not overtly stated, one aspect of SDA college attendance is the hope that a student will find a life partner.



Let's be honest—most of us met our spouses because of SDA education—one way or another. But, we don't market higher education as a marriage broker—or a way to keep our children in the church—but some people expect that we should do both, and are upset if their children choose differently. (Alex)

The unspoken fear of many conservative SDA parents is that SDA colleges will lose their cultural distinctiveness with the addition of non-SDA students, non-traditional ages of students, non-SDA teachers, and less control of lifestyle issues.

#### H. SDA Attitudes—“The Call”

There are certain terms or concepts which have significant meaning within the SDA subculture. The first of these is the use of the term “the call” by Adventists. It is used to mean two separate and distinct things:

##### 1. Work as a Calling

More than once, a participant referred to the Habits of the Heart (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985) sentiment that our American society is losing the idea of a “life work” or viewing a career as a “calling.”

(A certain college) once offered me (a certain position), but I just didn't feel a calling to that. (George)

I've always felt that a commitment to God, for me, is wherever God sends me, I'm willing to go.  
(Bob)

This is a part of SDA culture which is so ingrained in the members that vocabulary alone may preserve it for many years. The most respected “calling” within the church

seems to be to the ministry, with other traditional Adventist occupations coming close behind (teaching, medical work, etc.). (Paul)

I've seen pastors criticized when they decided to go back to school and go into education—teaching. It's like “you've left your call.” (George)

This idea of being in a certain job for the “right reasons” may be the historical foundation of the attempt to tie the wage scales of many church occupations to the ministerial wage scale. This practice has been challenged in SDA health care, and is beginning to change in higher education. Hospital administrators are no longer tied to the denominational scale, and some of my participants told of ways they were finding to pay professors more money.

## 2. A Job Offer

Another way in which the term “call” is used within the SDA church is to describe a job offer. One participant described his understanding this way:

There are certain terms that get filled with meaning in a given culture or sub-culture and “the call” is one of those. I suppose it originally began with the idea that the organization is led by God, and God is directly involved in managing the day-to-day affairs of the organization and the decision-making that takes place. So, it really represents a theological world-view that views providence as the way that God relates to the world, and specifically the way God relates to the Church as the “apple of His eye.” Be that as defective as it is, it is the object of His supreme regard, which means that He is there and He's managing it and He intervenes and places a burden, and a sort of compelling force is laid on that individual. You don't have a choice, this

is what you are to do. And, He guides through this shaping circumstances and providence. So, other people sort of get the understanding that you are the person for the job, and if that happens in the ideal sense, then you ARE really the person for the job, because no one engineered it, it just happened. (Paul)

There is a “gentlemanly” unwritten rule in SDA colleges, as in any church-related organizations, that the head of one organization must check with the head of a candidate's current employing organization before extending a “call” (job offer) to that individual. A call can be “blocked” if the individual is too valuable to his/her current organization. In fact, one may never hear that he/she is being considered somewhere else.

Consequently, it has not, until recently, been deemed necessary or prudent to “apply” for a position. This attitude (which will be discussed further in a later chapter) has historical roots, according to one participant:

A generation ago we didn't even have search processes. People were just appointed to such posts in our system. But that's changed from the method of just appointing people, of calling them, I suppose into a formal search process which imitates or parrots what's happening in educational circles generally . . . I don't think there are inherent problems—just getting accustomed to our changing traditions. (Joan)

Employees within the church still take the idea of “a call” seriously, however. Many spoke to me of considering an offer prayerfully. Some ask for “a sign”—something that tells them whether their leaning toward a move is the “right thing to do.” This feeling

that God is involved directly in the day-to-day activities of the church work is evident on many levels.

#### I. SDA Attitudes—God is Involved Directly

It is rare that I ever heard a participant take direct credit for any good decision or program under his/her control. Seemingly, without much thought, they would say that “The Lord really helped us in that particular case.” Whether the level of belief and commitment is the same for everyone in the system, or whether the vocabulary has become a convenient way to appear humble, delay controversial decisions, or even to avoid responsibility is not easy to determine. But, the words are certainly part of the culture and vocabulary, as well as the working style of Church organizations, and consequently SDA colleges.

#### J. SDA Attitudes—Sacrificial Service

One of the reasons why it is easy to assume that individuals in the SDA higher education system believe in direct intervention by God is the fact that they choose to be employed by the system in the first place. Aside from the few who might have fallen into teaching because of family or church connections and are too comfortable to leave, most attended good graduate schools and had other options for faculty appointments at that time. They were well aware that although the salary level at the junior faculty levels may not have had the disparity (when compared to higher paying private or public colleges)



that is evident at the full professor level, that this would come with time. They were also aware that the emphasis on teaching would allow them less time for research and recognition in their own professional field, making them less employable on the “outside” in years to come. This is a tough decision to make, and the system loses many good people to secular schools every year. But, some still feel “called” to make their contribution to the church in this way.

The church is my organization and I want to rescue it from its distortions. I want to argue for a point of view in this church and I want to enact that in the church. And, that's why I am here. (Bob)

We have had a rather spartan view of life. It's really puritanical. It came from the Puritan heritage—that East Coast place where the church was born . . . basically, just picked up that whole—well, that austere view of life and said, “this is the ideal.” I'd like to change that. That's what education is supposed to do. (Alex)

The participants told me that some individuals on their faculties stay committed to their goals throughout their career—many putting in the 40 years necessary for full retirement benefits. Others, however, fall into the comfort trap or become too out of touch for outside faculty positions.

I would like to say everybody's in it for a sense of mission. But, I have to be realistic. Some people are in it because they are too habituated to change now. (George)

### K. SDA Attitudes—Two for One (Spouses' Involvement)

The idea of “two for the price of one” is not unique to SDA colleges, especially when used to describe a constituency's or board's view of a presidential couple. That is also true for SDA college presidents, where the spouse is often asked to accompany the candidate at the interview, and his/her absence at college functions is evident. But, in the SDA culture, this two for one attitude has other meanings—it reflects the value SDAs place on a loving family with a common belief system and commitment to service.

Although it is much more common in the 1990s for family moves to be a decision made by the entire household, the participants in this study often spoke of career moves as being a decision where the “will of the Lord” was sought by their spouse, as well. The idea of convincing the spouse to view a job offer favorably may extend to creating an acceptable employment opportunity for that spouse. The lower wages paid within the system usually make it necessary for both spouses to be employed.

It was interesting to hear the women in this study touch on the subject of their families. Although some male administrators package themselves as a “couple” with an acceptable SDA family, the women almost consciously avoid discussion of their personal lives in work-related situations. They feel the need to do the job or fill the position on their own merits, regardless of their family situation. They do not feel that it is necessary to “find a job” for their spouses. They avoid using children or child-care problems as excuses.

Although I did not ask outright, I did not find even one participant (those identified as potential 21st century SDA presidents) who was single. Divorce is seemingly more acceptable for potential leaders than it used to be, however. One participant spoke openly of a previous marriage and the resulting divorce. Almost all participants consciously or unconsciously mentioned their spouse and often their children in answering questions which did not require that information. This reflects a cultural norm.

The two women in this study, however, told a slightly different story about spouses and families. The schools which most recently hired them seemed relieved that their spouses did not need full-time employment at the school. The accommodations which were made for them in the hiring process were a new experience to their colleges. They both commented that it took a very open-minded “employer” to break the mold of traditional SDA hiring practices and meet their individual needs. Going into detail at this point, given the small number of women in this system, would compromise the anonymity of these participants.

#### L. SDA Attitudes—Inside and Outside

Another cultural norm is the idea of uniqueness and separateness which produces an insularity within the SDA system of higher education. Participants often referred to “inside and outside” of the SDA higher education system and of the SDA church. The concept affects the way the system views people—even its own members.

One of the unfortunate things about our system is that if an individual chooses to voluntarily leave our system, to go

and serve in a public university system, there is a tendency for us to feel abandoned, but a little skeptical of where they are in the church—they promoted themselves and put their stuff out there—and if I wanted to hire them back, a search committee might be skeptical of them. It doesn't usually come up, but it's probably in the back of some people's minds that someone returning to the system might try to change us or “do something” to the system. (Bob)

Some participants were candid enough to say that this concept of separateness is more of a cultural term and a mindset than reality.

We are absorbed with being “unique,” but we are stretching the truth. (Doug)

Many of our constituents are sad that towns have grown up around our colleges. (Mike)

Some of our campuses still market themselves as being apart—subtly, if not blatantly. That's legitimate—they are carving out a niche for themselves, within the SDA market. (Joe)

Mentally we still think of ourselves as being apart—even though many of our campuses aren't rural or isolated anymore. (Paul)

It's clear that our little community of Adventist colleges has its own identity, its own particular mission, its own way of doing things. And, I think it is substantially different from most other schools . . . and we're part of a family—there's the whole subculture. The fact is we're part of this little subculture, we still for the most part know each other better than we know the world outside, and the result is that I think for most of us our universe is too small. And, we are probably, most of us interested in trying to widen out the universe that we live in. But, because Adventism is the kind of religion it is, very close knit, very much a family, with all the joy and all the pain that goes along with family life, I think it is hard for us to reach out. So that we still, pretty



much talk to one another. And, I think we'd be stronger if we did a little talking to people outside our system—more so than we are now. (Alex)

It is true, from the stories of the participants, that most SDA college administrators are concerned about the issue of being unique. They struggle with faculty members, students, and members of their constituency who want them to be both different from and the same as mainstream higher education, at the same time.

This dichotomy helps to make the perception of the 21st century challenges to the system very deceptive, as will be shown in a later chapter. This dichotomy makes administration even more difficult in this subculture. The answer to the question of uniqueness varies according to the individual personality of the administrator.

#### M. Conclusion

The literature which explains the SDA church and its subculture as well as its system of higher education combined with the voices of the participants explaining how the idiosyncracies of the subculture affect their lives as college administrators helps to set up the individual interviews. These interviews will be the subject of the next few chapters. In these interviews, the participants were asked to describe the SDA system of higher education and comment on its strengths, weaknesses, and unique cultural circumstances.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PARTICIPANTS' VIEW OF THE SYSTEM: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE CULTURE

Four distinct themes relating to the subculture within which SDA colleges operate emerged from the data. It is these four themes which add clarity to the portion of the data which directly addresses the research questions. These themes include a discussion of “the system” of SDA higher education, the strengths of SDA higher education, the weaknesses of SDA higher education, and the SDA concept of leadership. The diversity of the population in this study gave texture to these themes.

#### A. Is It a System?

There is a difference of opinion among the participants as to whether the SDA higher education system is really even a “system.” Some feel that it is a quasi-administered system. Others believe it to be a group of totally unrelated colleges held together by common beliefs and (within the past 10-20 years) by friendship. One participant noted:

The “system” is an accident. It exists by conversations, (not planning or meaningful relationships—it's a courtesy organization), by shared faith and lifestyle issues, and by trading faculty and administrators which brings shared history and knowledge. (Bob)

In the past, there has been much competition among the schools for the shrinking pool of potential students and for the academic quality and lifestyle “reputations” (based heavily on gossip and personal opinion) which have become part of the “culture” of Adventism. The formation of the association of Adventist College and University Presidents (ACUP) was designed to bring the system together through networking.

Because the presidents now know each other personally, interact socially on a yearly basis, and have developed a telephone network, one current president indicated that:

I think any problem that would come to us (indicating another president) could be resolved because of our personal friendship. (Doug)

Is it a system? This is one of the most difficult questions to answer in this study. Some respondents tried to give an answer one way or another, but almost always gave other indications that they were hesitant to commit to one point of view.

This is an example of a point in this study where the story of each participant, alone, is not sufficient. After talking to all of them, I would have to make the observation that the SDA higher education "system" is in transition. Its relationship to the church structure is in question. Like any "volunteer" system, its strength is based on the individual commitment and mutual belief of its members. This commitment varies between colleges, and the strength of the "system" varies correspondingly. But, SDAs still speak of their colleges and universities as a "system."

## B. Strengths

All the participants in this study seemed to see the strengths and weaknesses of the system quite clearly, and there was much agreement as to what they were. There was a difference in the perspective from which they described these strengths and weaknesses, however. Much like a photographer backing up to include a wider and

bigger subject in the picture, some participants were able to describe a broader view of where they were.

Analysis of the data shows a direct correlation between this deeper or broader view of the system and several other factors. These include (a) the length of time the participant has been a part of the SDA culture (lifetime Adventist versus adult convert); (b) work experience “outside” the SDA church work (higher education or other); (c) number of relatives, friends, and professional contacts who are “outside” the system; and (d) amount of time the participant spends in his/her academic field.

What I mean by time spent in his/her academic field is the time an administrator reserves to keep up with the academic discipline from which he/she came. Most of the participants have an academic background as a faculty member. Some are still active scholars, but some have used administration as a way out or a step up from classroom teaching and research. The broader view is directly correlated to the retention of a connection with faculty members and colleagues in an academic discipline.

Most of the strengths of the system, as perceived by the participants, centered around the mission of SDA higher education—its heritage and faith, the personal care given to students, and the type of individuals who work at these institutions. Some examples of these perceptions are

We provide a supportive environment where students can define their faith, make decisions, develop critical methods of thinking about life, and make friends with faculty who become mentors and share their philosophy. (Joe)



We have a unique mission which provides opportunity for formation of student/faculty relationships, inquiry, and service. There is a positive sense of regional identity and smallness. (Paul)

Many commented on the facilities on most campuses and the way the campuses retain a clean and attractive appearance. Almost every participant mentioned the deep respect and appreciation they had for their colleagues—mostly high-quality individuals who are employable in mainstream higher education, but have chosen to work for less money and less recognition because of their desire to make a difference in the spiritual as well as the academic lives of students.

The differences in the participant's background, contact with others outside the system, and connection to an academic discipline made a difference in how he/she viewed the strengths. The more insulated from the outside world a participant seemed, the more he/she took the personal care, attractive campuses, and dedicated colleagues for granted. Those less insulated did not stress the heritage and faith aspects as much as the results of those things. They noticed the differences that a shared commitment makes in the everyday workings of an institution.

### C. Weaknesses

The weaknesses of the system, according to the participants, almost invariably involve financing or the involvement of the church in terms of organizational structure or insularity. Some examples are:

We are set up organizationally because of church structure [union structure] which has little to do with education. (Joe)

We have too much "in house" time, not enough interaction with the mainstream. (Sam)

We are inbred. We tend to talk to each other about our concerns, we are not up-to-date, we tend to be insular, parochial, reactionary, and we are self-congratulatory. (Bob)

We are financially perched on the brink, with a duplication of programs. There is a sense that each institution must be all to all. There is breakdown or erosion of higher ed. valuing by the corporate church. Our ability to retain faculty (resulting in brain drain) is decreasing because of low salaries. (Sam)

One of the financing points which is unique to SDA higher education is the cultural resistance to the idea of endowments. Even though this attitude is changing, many believe that it has permanently hurt the financial stability of the system. One participant observed:

Within the culture of the church there is a built-in resistance to endowments. It has become part of the unspoken assumptions of our membership, and I call that the culture. It's not just intellectual anymore. It is part of the corporate psyche that this thing probably runs in the face of what we believe about the end and the second coming. Now, that might weaken over time. (Paul)

Similar observations were made about grant funding:

Adventist education has done very little to educate itself in securing grants and this type of stuff for research and for funding of its programs, something that's done in other large universities. Occasionally somebody writes a grant and it's a

big thing. But it's not a substantive part of the educational heritage. Just like publishing and research is not. That whole component is missing in Adventist education. It probably has to do—it probably was driven in part by the insularity of the church, by the fact that early education was really Bible College education. There's no need to do that. And, we really haven't begun to develop that serious external view of things. (Doug)

Many participants mentioned concerns about quality and the way the system plans for the future. With regard to quality, several participants mentioned that even though individual SDA churches once felt a deep commitment to the concept of SDA education as an alternative to public education, this conversation has not been continued with vigor. The SDA colleges which make up a special niche in American higher education are being measured against the mainstream by their constituents. As was previously mentioned, many blame this on local church pastors and a changing society.

With regard to planning, it was mentioned that because the relationship of the colleges to the church's mission in North America is being questioned and doubted, planning efforts are not focused and are based on the personal beliefs of those in leadership positions. Those who do serious planning, in accord with their personal vision of SDA higher education, may be viewed as strong leaders, but take criticism from one or more “types” of Adventists.

It is important to note that the strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the participants would quite often not be viewed as such by higher education “experts,” such as Clark Kerr, who are proposing leadership solutions to 21st century challenges. This is

due to the cultural context of SDA higher education and the way the SDA church consciously identifies itself as “marginalized” in relation to mainstream American society.

#### D. Attitudes About Leadership

There are several factors that have contributed to SDA higher education being where it is, in terms of leadership, in the 1990s. Despite Ellen White's views on education, most SDA educators have been influenced more by their sense of professionalism (loyalty to their individual academic discipline) than her works. It has seemed, to them, undesirable and difficult to reverse the trend away from an “alternative” to mainstream higher education that is distinct and separate.

The revival of the liberal arts education in the 1930s caused a heated discussion in the church about accreditation. Accrediting the colleges changed the fundamental concerns of SDA higher education. More time was given to survival, maintaining recognition, finance, enrollment levels, quality of degrees, and consolidation than to creative thought about educational philosophy. SDAs no longer had to form an educational system, they had one that they needed to maintain.

The idea of Adventist scholarship is another factor that positions SDA higher education and its view of leadership at the end of the 20th century. College teachers were encouraged to go to the best secular schools for doctoral degrees. As they identified more with their professions, the energy that had been spent on defining



Adventist education was spent on defining their place within Adventism. They turned their scholarship on the church itself by organizing forums and publications where the church and its teachings were discussed on a new, more intellectual level.

The bottom line is that the General Conference, through its desire to create an institution that was an alternative to mainstream higher education, yet equal in quality (with the mainstream being qualitatively normative), made certain decisions. As one group of authors says, the General Conference “accepted accreditation, nurtured liberal arts colleges, and made the decisions that provided the resources for the denomination's universities. They supported the expansion of graduate education, encouraged talented individuals to secure Ph.D. degrees, and employed only those teachers with the best academic qualifications.” (Bull & Lockhart, p. 235). Yet, the basic cultural differences—the ones that make the standard mainstream solutions to higher education problems difficult, if not impossible—remain.

Many of these cultural differences were discussed while setting the context for this study. Another one, which is directly related to the research questions is the SDA leadership track. Any time I asked one of the participants about the higher education leadership track, he or she was likely to laugh and say, “What leadership track?” On the surface, because of the culturally accepted “call” system, the track to leadership positions is based on peer recognition, good work, and “providence.”

I suppose I'm thought of as leadership material because I really believe in what I'm doing and people know that.

(Joe)

It doesn't hurt to have an academic degree in a field people respect. (Joe)

I publish—that gives me credibility with some . . . and I'm active in professional societies, as well. (Doug)

I'm a high energy person, so I'm active in many things. (Sam)

Age is important. You must be old enough to have some experience but not old enough to have fossilized . . . (Mike)

But, under the surface, the participants talked about an “old boy network,” church politics, and false humility.

In some ways we do have (in the church) the standard view of a college president being a 50ish white male. (Bob)

There is a fear that we are not quite ready yet for minority (race/gender/etc.) candidates. (George)

I worry that there isn't a pool of presidential candidates out there like there used to be. (Alex)

I wish we had a better system for discovering those people on campus who go unidentified but would make good presidents. (Mike)

The Biblical emphasis on humility within the system is fascinating. One participant told me that the safest way to never become a college president is to say that you want to be one. Humility and being drafted into a position of leadership are part of the SDA higher education culture. Another person described it like this:

It's just one of those “norms” within our organizational culture that shouldn't be violated—or else, as soon as you

say "I'm qualified for the job" you've disqualified yourself in the eyes of people. (Sam)

I think it's tied to our theology which basically says that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" and "humility is the distinguishing criterion of the true leader"—I mean, this is what Christ demonstrated Himself. So, within our theological perspective, we've woven this into the conscious and unconscious part of our psyche. As such, the astute leader must never say "I'm able to do the job." The astute leader has to always say "if the brethren choose, I will be happy to see if it's the Lord's will." And it is a kind of hypocrisy where the person has to constantly preface his or her remarks with "I don't want the position, but if the brethren . . ." That's the way you have to campaign. (Joe)

Consequently, campaigning for a job has much to do with "brand name recognition"—an obvious marketing technique in a culture where marketing is not clearly understood. In this case, the brand name to be recognized is the individual with leadership potential. Instead of relying on education and quiet, careful job performance, a candidate must become well known at both the local and higher levels of the church. His or her name must become recognizable.

Who you know (on a search committee) does make a difference. And, you are really at a disadvantage when the other candidate is related to everybody in the church. (Bob)

There are three interesting facets of this "rule" of name recognition. The first is the way in which a name becomes recognizable. Knowing a well-connected member of the "network" and having that person speak of you favorably, is often the beginning of name recognition. Publishing in a church-sponsored or church-related publication is

another way. Even better, though, is being asked to act as a consultant or expert in an academic field that is currently important to the church.

There is a fine line to walk, however, in all of these instances. Apart from your expertise, your personal philosophy, lifestyle, and relationship to the church are also constantly being scrutinized. And, falling on one side or another of each of these issues can be viewed as good or bad, depending on who is making the judgment.

The second facet of name recognition that is sometimes frustrating is the fact that name recognition, and consequently the perception that an individual is leadership material, can happen without the knowledge or consent of the candidate. This was apparent in the "expert identification" phase of this study, as well as the career path stories of the actual participants. Several participants told of being called to positions that they had never considered being able to handle. They felt compelled to consider these calls because of the "guilt" involved in turning them down.

The third facet, which is directly linked to the SDA culture, is that name recognition can be inherited within the system. There are still several SDA "royal" or "first" families known to longtime members but less well-known to newcomers. But, since it is still the individuals who are longtime members (often "lifers") who are identifying and promoting individuals into leadership positions, a curious thing often occurs. Some individuals with church "name recognition" have bypassed even the weakly established leadership track that exists. This has happened, often, without their knowledge or understanding.



Most of these cases involve another cultural difference in the perception of leadership. Many participants smiled and nodded when I mentioned a phrase uncovered in one of the pilot interviews for this study. That phrase is that “the seminary gives leadership credibility.” The SDA church is run primarily by ordained SDA ministers (all of which, at this time, are males).

Look where our presidents come from—the clergy. Yes, that tells you something. Clergy with academic credentials, but clergy none the less. Up until relatively recently, I doubt the extent to which our denominational entities, particularly the unions who run the colleges (and the union president of course is clergy, and a large part of our union boards are clergy)—that they would really seriously be willing to consider a non-clergy person as a college president. (Doug)

It is safe to say that either these individuals received their theological training at one of the SDA colleges (undergraduate), at the SDA seminary at Andrews University (graduate), or at a well-known theological seminary outside the system. I was told that the latter is the best case because outside credibility gives an added intellectual respect from their colleagues. But, even if they have been educated “outside” the system, it is probable that they still have a very strong tie (friendship, teaching, consulting, publishing) to the seminary “community.”

The SDA church has historically afforded an added respect and an added measure of “decision making” power to these ordained ministers. One participant explained it like this:

I think that ministerial training probably places some sort of a seal of approval, perhaps insures that the leader will not carry us astray. The church is very concerned about theological purity and orthodoxy and so forth. So, in a sense, this person understands the values of the organization—what we stand for as it is reflected in our theology—and has the right type of vision and attitude to give direction to an institution. So, it has a legitimizing function. (Paul)

Traditionally, members of the SDA church have simply viewed leadership differently than the more secular members of American society. One difference is the belief that institutional effectiveness is based both on personal integrity and divine presence. Another is the belief that leadership “authority” is critical to the success of the church. One participant thought that the SDA church needed a leadership hierarchy to have grown so dramatically in its first hundred years.

Although there may be many positive outcomes of these leadership beliefs, one of the negative outcomes is the strengthening of a hierarchical structure which is at odds with the academic premise of collegiality. For instance, church members view SDA college administration as a “step up” from teaching. For many, it is embarrassing to return to the classroom after a period of leadership. Many administrators go into church leadership or medical administration in church-related hospitals as an alternative to “stepping back.”

Still another difference in the way SDAs view leadership is found within the “leadership track” or lack of one. I asked several of my participants to tell me more

about what SDA colleges were doing to identify leaders, since there is no formal leadership track. Their answers varied by person and by school.

We just know here who is good on the staff—for promotion to administration. (Paul)

Faculty Governance and committee membership is an indicator—interaction, follow-up, organizational skills, a person who sees an opportunity and takes it. (George)

Our identification system is in people's heads—if I die tomorrow, it is gone—except for talking to people who are my sounding board. They would remember. (Jean)

There is no leadership track—it's something you leap into. The trick is to never appoint a vice-president who is not equipped to be president. You expect leadership functions from VPs. (Sam)

We get our presidents from the ministry or from history—sometimes from Academic Dean spots—or from family connections. (Jean)

In terms of these “differences” in viewing leadership, which are culturally based, and make leadership selection within the SDA higher education system more difficult, there appears to be some recent change. Almost all the participants in this study mentioned the attitude shift toward advertising for candidates to fill openings, receiving resumes, and seriously considering candidates who represent their qualifications openly.

The younger folks today aren't willing to put up with the hassles and low salaries we were—things are changing, people are changing. (Joe)

Even the ministers now aren't willing to put up with the old ways—the broad seminary training which used to be available is no longer. (Doug)

The way we used to wait for a call is changing. If you see an opening you want, you make sure someone knows it—where the opening is determines how you play the game. (George)

One last (and complicating) leadership difference directly affecting SDA colleges is the concept that even though there is a hierarchical organizational structure, the decisions, financial support, and direction is “supposed” to flow from the local, congregational level up through the system and “turn into” leadership. This plays out in the form of the power and influence of the “constituency” in SDA colleges. Important issues are often taken to a constituency meeting before the college board makes a decision. It is unclear, at times, how the SDA colleges define “constituency,” and even more unclear how they should relate to various segments of their constituency.

#### E. Conclusion

This view of the system, as described by the participants, is essential to an understanding of the tensions, challenges, and views of leadership which are identified later in each of the interviews. Even the participants themselves did not all seem to have an understanding of how significant the SDA subculture is to a leader in SDA higher education. Ignoring the subculture can make the challenges of the future look deceptively like those of the mainstream.



## CHAPTER VI 20TH CENTURY TENSIONS—21st CENTURY CHALLENGES

The first research question in this study involved the participants' perception of the 21st century challenges facing SDA higher education. The diversity of the population in this study became immediately apparent as I witnessed a difference in the individual abilities of the participants to visualize and conceptualize. Several had trouble separating the current tensions in the system from the future challenges. Some were fixated on the present, while others focused exclusively on the future. This fact seemed to indicate that some of the perceived presidents of the 21st century currently think as leaders while others think as managers. I will present their views with this classification in mind (tensions versus challenges).

### A. Current Tensions in SDA Higher Education

The current tensions, things which must be handled at the managerial level at the end of the 20th century, are directly related to and actually set up the challenges of the next century.

Table 6.1

Relationship of Current Tensions to 21st Century Challenges in SDA Higher Ed.	
Current Tensions	21st Century Challenges (Categories)
1. Church Control of the Colleges	1. Finance
2. Philosophical Support by the Church	2. Quality
3. Financial Support by the Church	3. Mission
4. Responsible Business Practices	4. Church/College Relationship
5. Resistance to Change	5. Diversity
6. Access	6. Others
7. Accountability	

One of the most pronounced themes which emerges from the data is the tension (often referred to as the “cold war”) between the colleges and the church. Talking about these tensions was often difficult for the participants. It was obvious that their loyalties were divided between being educators and being church members.

The **first** tension involves the place of the church in the schools—*the church control of the colleges*. It is the question asked in “academic freedom in church-related colleges” discussions: Is the college a place for the church to teach or a place for the church to learn? In other words, are church-related colleges the places for the church to indoctrinate the next generation of members or for the church to explore its beliefs in a current context? The Seventh-day Adventist Church would call this latter part “finding present truth.”

Most participants in this study believe that both parts are true, but feel that the more conservative members of the SDA church would not agree with them. One participant explained it this way:

The church should (use us to) teach, but what the church should teach is not simply the doctrines as ends in themselves. The church should try to teach, and that's difficult to do, the values of openness, critical thinking, and rugged individualism. In other words the church should try to pass on to the next generation a kind of entrepreneurial spirit in its curriculum, and that's difficult to do. (Doug)

The **second** tension is the feeling among those in higher education that the church is letting the colleges down. There appears to be a weakness in the *philosophical support by the church*. Many of the participants believe that they play an important role in the mission of the church. They chose their profession believing that the support of education (philosophically and financially) was fundamental to the SDA church.

Nonetheless, recently they (along with many SDA faculty members and administrators) are feeling that the church, all the way from the General Conference to the pastors in the local churches, are not supporting SDA education.

Pastors have changed—the seminary has changed. In previous generations there were lots of those who looked forward to ministry—who thought that was a place where intelligent people who wanted to make a difference in the world would go. I can't say that's true now except among certain ethnic groups. (Joe)

Most of our new pastors are recent converts. They don't have a sense of SDA history, they haven't experienced

lifelong SDA education, they are pastors for emotional reasons. (Bob)

Second and third generation Adventists who are gifted and want to serve the world are not going into ministry and I don't know that they would consider higher education (teaching) either. But, they are glad that there are people around who do. (Mike)

Participants also feel a **third tension**—that there is erosion in the *financial support by the church*. Church members are viewing other options for their own children's education as more attractive. This looks like betrayal to many participants because the historical mindset against endowments (the church claimed to be the “living endowment”—always there to support the colleges) has left college administrators unprepared for such an attitude or the consequences of such an attitude.

Adventists decided long ago not to go for endowments because the Lord was coming. Unions have said “we'll provide, we'll be the living endowment.” But what happens when you've gone that route and the “living endowment” begins to dry up and you've got to pay for these institutions somehow? Each institution is beginning to endow, but we're very late in the game. Some people say it's a lack of faith, but we all know the homes (referring to the lavish living conditions of some) of a lot of our members and priorities really have shifted. (Joe)

So many Adventist parents in this generation have an ivy league mentality about higher education. Some have become very successful, financially, with their SDA degrees. They want “the best” for their children and don't view the colleges they attended as the best. They forget why their parents sent them there—some even feel indoctrinated and betrayed. It's a complicated problem. (George)



The participants in this study were an intelligent, highly educated group of people, many of whom believe they have a solid understanding of the world of business. They reflected upon the **fourth** tension—that the church, being run by a group of preachers, doesn't use *responsible business practices*—doesn't “do business” correctly or with much thought. They related:

I've sat on committees and I've said, “You know what's happening here? Somebody's making the decisions and then theologians come after and create the theological structure that rationalizes the decision.” (Joan)

The church does not understand business. The church identifies business with treasury—in essence, the church's concept of management training is accounting. And that's all that it understands. It doesn't understand the importance of job descriptions, it doesn't understand strategic thinking . . . It has what (is called) “product orientation.” Its theology is its product and it doesn't even understand how that product evolved and how it's supposed to meet the needs and wants of its constituency. (Paul)

These individuals, most of whom recognize the importance of strategic planning in higher education, were frustrated by the **fifth** tension—that the church structure shows a *resistance to change*. In fact, many said that the only way the church changes is through financial crisis. Many felt that this resistance is keeping SDA higher education from doing what is necessary to survive. One frustrated participant said:

The church in North America has not attracted the caliber of thinking from its membership that can sit down and take on the task of reworking the message so that it can scratch where it itches. In effect our salary structures, our compensation structures, and our whole culture reinforces *status quo* behavior. And, by and large the ministry has

basically grown lazy. I mean, it's a nice life—preach a sermon on Sabbath, you stand by the true principles, you talk about the world is coming to an end next year, you talk about the signs of the times—we speak to each other, we repeat the platitudes, the young people leave, they come back later all with a sense of guilt, and that's what's happening—sad commentary. (Sam)

The **sixth** tension, which is evident at this time of financial crisis for the church, is the question of *access to SDA higher education*. On the one hand, many SDAs (and some of the participants in this study) feel that it is inherent in the mission of the church that every Adventist young person who is qualified (and maybe even some who are not) should be able to go to an SDA college. They insist that by cutting back the church's financial support of the colleges (which is directly tied to the giving habits of the members), and maybe even closing some of the colleges, access to SDA higher education will be limited. More precisely, access to lower income and minority SDAs will be limited—making SDA higher education something for the privileged.

On the other hand, there are those who feel that to compete with mainstream higher education, SDA schools should cap enrollment, be more selective in admissions, and compete for national recognition. Several SDA colleges have recently appeared in national polls in very competitive positions.

The understanding that this tension sounds like a mainstream higher education tension is significant. SDA higher education, which is supposed to be an alternative to the mainstream, is beginning to encounter some problems similar to the mainstream.

The **last** tension identified by the participants is one of *accountability*. What the church wants to hold the colleges accountable for is spiritual growth, and (in effect) orthodoxy. The tension is complicated because there is no singular definition of what constitutes an accurate measure of “spiritual growth.” This creates an assessment nightmare.

Even more frustrating to this group of educators is that the church would like this accountability for spiritual growth to be in quantitative terms. One participant explained this fear:

The church has never handled data well. First of all, I doubt that spiritual growth can be measured quantitatively. But, to give the church figures, which they can twist to mean anything at all, is dangerous. (Doug)

This last tension is SO different from the mainstream that it reminds us that all problems and challenges in this system have a cultural context.

## B. Future Challenges in SDA Higher Education

The challenges of the future involved a mindset change for some of the participants. They had to shift from managing the tensions of the present to planning for the challenges of the future. The two are related—unaddressed tensions become future challenges.

These challenges were so clear in the minds of several of the participants that they spoke of them much sooner than the interview protocol dictated. The problems pervaded

the thoughts of most, while the possible solutions were only evident to those who had either (a) made an attempt to get to know higher education as an academic discipline, or (b) spent much time talking to more experienced or vocal current leaders.

There was also a subtle attitude difference evident in some participants that, after analysis, could be tied to the personal commitment each participant is willing to make to the system in the future. Although they are currently perceived to be the SDA college presidents of the 21st century, I truly did not expect some of the participants to be working for the system by the year 2001, at the time I met them.

I had the feeling that some of the participants had personal goals which could not be reached within the system. They spoke of current plans to apply for jobs in large, research universities. Others were interested in making changes to individual colleges or to the system which would make them unemployable within the system. They saw a need to do some things which would be seen as "radical" and knew it could cost them the respect of some segments of their institution and possibly their jobs.

Indeed, at the time of this writing, this feeling I had during the interviews has proved to be correct. Not all of the participants are still working within the system, and not all of the participants still working within the system hold the same position.

Each participant worded his/her view of the challenges differently. With the possible exception of "money," there was less duplication of exact wording among responses than I discovered when I asked about strengths and weaknesses of the system.



Table 6.2

Perceived 21st Century Challenges: Mainstream versus SDA		
Mainstream Higher Ed.	Overlapping	SDA Higher Ed.
Massification	Technology	Survival of the Church
Private Sector Market Segment	Scarcity of Resources (Finances)	Mission—reforming
Unionization	Shared Governance	Reorganization of the Church
	Tenure & Academic Freedom	Faculty Commitment
	Strengthen Decision Making	Crisis of Faith in Church
	Management of Stasis	Training and Retraining Costs
	Change in Programs	Church Diversity
	Advancing Community Welfare	
	Citizenship Responsibilities	
	Maintaining Intellectual Leadership	
	Earning Autonomy, Resources, & Freedom	
	Public Service	
	Racial & Ethnic Composition	
	New Orientations of Knowledge	
	Social & Political Identification	
	Access	
	Affordability	
	Efficiency	
	Quality	
	Changing Size of Population	
	Changing Age of Population	
	Maintaining Integrity	
	New Teaching Methods	
	Supremacy of Labor Market	
	Merit Versus Equality	
	Globalization of Learning	
	Fluctuating Rates of HE Payoff	
	Grant Funding	
	Delivery Systems	
	Marketing	
	Maintaining Identity	
	Change of Mindset—Proactive versus Reactive	
	Endowments	
	Duplication of Programs	
	Attracting and Retaining Faculty	

My initial feeling, after completing the interviews, was that the challenges of the SDA higher education system were very different from the “mainstream” challenges suggested in the literature. But, when the lists of both were compared, side by side, an

overlapping category emerged. There were some seemingly identical challenges perceived by both higher education authors (writing about mainstream higher education—and most often meaning large, state supported universities) and potential 21st century SDA college presidents. But were these challenges really identical?

The SDA challenges perceived by the participants can be grouped into six categories. These categories include finance, quality, mission, church/college relationship, and diversity. The challenges falling into these first five groups were identified by many participants. Although stated in slightly different ways, they were mentioned often enough to warrant a distinct grouping. There is another category that I define as “others” which holds miscellaneous concerns.

It was the challenges in this “others” category—the ones not mentioned regularly—that often reflected a deeper level of thinking. This deeper level seemed related directly to one of two factors. Either the participant had an educational background that included the study of education (versus a background in a traditional academic area), or the participant spent time reading the literature about higher education or higher education leadership.

The challenges that are unique to SDA higher education (see chart) which do not overlap with the challenges of mainstream higher education (as imprecisely defined by higher education “experts”) usually involve the system's relationship to the church or a cultural factor (SDA) which pervades the system. The participants are very concerned about the future of the church (survival, possible reorganization, sense of mission, crisis in

faith) as it directly relates to the colleges. They are concerned that the individuals available to be SDA college faculty members do not have the needed sense of mission and commitment. They are worried about the diversity within the church over theological and lifestyle issues. They realize that the smaller labor pool of SDA teachers and administrators means that more funding must be allocated to training and retraining these individuals.

The biggest challenge we face in the 21st century in the United States is the survival of the church. Traditional churches are not flourishing while nondenominational TV preachers are doing well. The colleges are not altogether locked into what happens to the church, but we are all personally involved. (Jean)

They are concerned about the duplication of effort in the colleges that is directly related to the church structure.

We don't need a college in every union, but what union president wants a college to close on his watch. He will be remembered in infamy—even if they are losing money, losing students—they are going to keep a school in existence. (George)

I think we do unusual things to keep entities of the church that shouldn't be kept. (Alex)

Because almost all of the faculty members are also church members, the participants are concerned about how these church factors affect their faculty (sense of commitment, recruiting and retaining faculty, tenure and academic freedom).

We haven't figured out a good way to turn the benefit package into cash to meet the needs of people. (Joan)

We have to be careful to avoid pushing the concept of sacrifice and service over the line into exploitation. (Paul)

The mindset of the church members (reactive versus proactive) and the resistance of some to change and new technology (new delivery systems, new marketing methods, new teaching methods) are also deep concerns to some.

We have to get our constituency to become proactive instead of reactive in meeting the perceived needs of the future. NAD opinion is becoming more conservative and things move slower. We respond quickly only in crisis and take too long to come to a decision if it may not be politically popular or the church is not ready for it. (Joe)

We have to become more efficient in academics. We are being forced into efficiency. We must reduce multiple kinds of classes and encourage our teachers to become more interdisciplinary. (George)

Cultural factors and attitudes that are based in SDA history still affect the attitudes of some members. Because they read the writings of the church founders and take every word literally, they do not view the world the same way as other members. These attitudes make the challenges of seeking grant funding, building endowments, and investing in the training and retraining of faculty more difficult.

### C. Challenges Identified by Mainstream Literature

There are some challenges, which for several reasons, were either not mentioned by the SDA participants or do not affect SDA higher education as much as they affect



mainstream higher education (see chart). One of these is unionization. Collective bargaining is not an issue on SDA college campuses because SDAs have traditionally been opposed to labor unions. The only sense in which the participants in this study saw unionization as a challenge was the possibility of future generations losing the cultural attitude that now prevents unions.

Another unrelated challenge is massification (a higher education term referring to colleges or systems which grow too large). There is little chance of individual schools, or even the SDA higher education system, getting so large that the challenges faced by the mainstream in this area overlap. Individual departments in the SDA system will not likely pass the size of maximum effectiveness, and there is little chance of these schools becoming impersonal bureaucracies. If the SDA higher education system is able to address its problems successfully, and the system grows at an incredible rate, the problems of massification would only be faced in the latter portion of the 21st century.

Although there are other challenges to mainstream higher education (no pretense is made that all have been fairly represented), the only other challenge which is a non-issue to SDA higher education is the threat of the private market sector. All SDA college and universities are part of that private market segment. Only in the sense that other private colleges could attract students away from SDA colleges is this challenge applicable.

#### D. Overlapping Categories and Corresponding SDA Cultural Factors

The challenges which overlap with those of mainstream higher education (see chart) are the most deceptive. At first glance, it is possible to make a case for the application of recommended solutions to these challenges. Nonetheless, that would be very destructive. The reason for this is related to the cultural differences that are discussed in the previous chapters. It is the cultural ramifications of applying mainstream solutions to 21st century challenges that makes this study unique. Many cultural factors have already been discussed—humility, “the call,” sacrificial service, etc. Others will be discussed here.

It is the presence of these cultural factors that confuse outside consultants when they are hired to advise the SDA colleges. It is the presence of these cultural factors which make the overlapping challenges deceptive. It is these cultural factors that make decision making so complicated in the SDA higher education system.

Many of these overlapping challenges have to do with money, and the SDA future presidents have their own take on the issue. In a climate where resources are scarce, higher education is expected to do more in a more efficient way. The double bind is that the technology and the education (for teachers and administrators) necessary to become more efficient requires more resources.

We will have to downsize administration in the 21st century.  
We have to realize that colleges are for teaching and use students, with some guidance, to do things we've traditionally hired staff members to do. (Jean)

Technology is going to be a challenge. We can't have one-time infusions of funding. There must be a yearly budget—we must find ways to endow. (Bob)

New systems of delivery will be a challenge. We don't all need to be in the same place at the same time, but can the SDA mission be fulfilled that way? (Sam)

The costs of higher education keep rising, limiting affordability and, consequently, access.

I think our education system should be accessible to those who qualify academically to go. (So you don't believe in open admissions for the sake of accessibility?) Oh no, I think we need to have standards. I think we do people a disservice by becoming a community college where all you have to do is show where you live and we take you. (Sam)

Admittedly, a case could be made for long-term versus short-term investments, for amortizing costs, for cost/benefit ratios. Even so, it would appear that though these future leaders are not reluctant to address long-term investing, they sense an attitude in the church that such investing is wasteful and “faithless.” As with endowments and grant funding, many church members do not believe the world will last long enough to see these results—and it shows of lack of faith to plan in such a manner.

Other overlapping challenges are directly related to higher education's place in a society that is constantly changing. Higher education is expected to advance the welfare of the community, turn out responsible citizens, provide public service, and change its programs to reflect the current needs of business and the changing orientations of knowledge (which result in challenges to the curriculum). These expectations must be met in a dynamic society where the age and size of the population are changing, the integrity of

higher education is constantly being scrutinized, and students and faculty members are constantly changing their social and political identifications.

The climate in which higher education must constantly earn and re-earn its autonomy, resources, and freedom is difficult. It is not supportive to the calm, reflective care required for the development of leadership solutions to perceived challenges. And it most certainly is not conducive to the careful application of a cultural lens to these challenges.

Overlapping challenges involving the maintenance of intellectual leadership, autonomy, resources, and freedom all have a SDA church component (and complication) as well as a national one. Maintaining integrity (questions of quality) involves viewing the mainstream as normative and directly comparing SDA colleges to that norm. This is opposite from the traditional view that SDA colleges are an equal alternative to the mainstream institution of education.

The supremacy of the labor market is often mentioned as a mainstream 21st century challenge. This means that American colleges and universities strive to produce the type of educated citizens currently needed by employers. In contrast, the mission of the SDA system and the cultural attitude that the “church work” is the primary labor market to be served puts a different slant on this challenge. Although this attitude is undergoing change (hardly anyone sees SDA colleges as existing solely to provide workers for the SDA church—not enough of those jobs are available) and exists mainly in



the minds of “traditional Adventists” (Martin, 1990) who long for the ways of the past, it is surfacing as discussions of church restructuring and revitalizing take place.

Cultural SDA attitudes of educating members to be able to witness “in the world” to all levels of educated society complicate this issue as well. The tradition of upwardly mobile SDA generations seeking ever-increasing levels of quality higher education is yet another complication.

The globalization of learning is another overlapping challenge. In relation to SDA higher education, it is complicated by the mission and the idea of a world church.

Evidence shows that this world church, with its questions of equality and power, has organizational structures (divisions) that are in different stages of church growth and “life-cycle” at the same time (Moberg, 1984).

Tenure and academic freedom challenges differ because traditionally (and legally) both areas connote a different meaning than they do in the mainstream.

There is a question as to whether we actually have any academic freedom. Our guide is the most conservative of our customers. (Alex)

Having historically been teaching colleges, qualifications for promotion and tenure have been different from the mainstream. We are changing that here—we are in a period of transition. (Mike)

I doubt whether we actually have tenure the way it is usually defined. We have an appointment (contract) process which says that after a certain review process you aren't scrutinized as carefully. This may change—we are looking more closely at post-tenure review processes. (Jean)

Grant funding and endowments are encumbered with traditions of thinking which are held onto with desperation by some SDA constituents. These have been discussed previously.

Overlapping challenges which involve change and progress are also complicated when viewed through the lens of the SDA subculture. Progress is viewed with suspicion by certain types of Adventists. They point to the “original blueprint” of SDA education, often taken out of context from the writings of Ellen G. White when discussing changes in delivery systems, technology, or new teaching methods. Moving more into line with the mainstream is often viewed as compromise—a move away from the original blueprint.

#### E. Examples and Grand Paradoxes

The SDA cultural factors which make the literature-based ideas unworkable are numerous. One example would be the historical attitude toward endowments. Where some authors would recommend a strong development program to build an endowment, some SDA donors might view the college as faithless if that were presented as a solution to a current challenge. Where a sliding salary scale (with higher salaries being offered to certain “hard to employ” disciplines) might be suggested as a possible solution for the challenge of getting and retaining quality faculty members, some segments of the SDA constituency would view this as direct opposition to “sacrificial wages” and tying teachers’ wages to the ministerial wage scale. While some might suggest applying for more grant funding, others might fear “outside” funding.

Besides providing examples of cultural factors which make literature-based ideas unworkable, these attitudes also point out the grand paradoxes within the SDA subculture which were identified by the participants. SDA colleges need brilliant leadership and well trained leaders, but humility and "being called" to a position are still valued traditions. The system needs its teachers to go "outside" the system for graduate training but is suspicious of the ideas they bring back. The system desires to have SDA teachers in the classrooms, but cannot financially afford to ignore the advantages of non-SDAs as contract teachers and possibly even faculty members (especially when they are local and well-qualified Christians).

#### F. Conclusions

Most of these cultural implications to the overlapping challenges are present because of a small minority of SDA church members. But their existence in the ever-changing climate of a church ready to embark on a new phase of church growth throws a proverbial wrench into the workings of leadership solutions to apparent challenges. These leadership solutions, and the ability to apply them to SDA higher education, are the topic of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The second and third research questions in this study are both related to leadership and will be considered together in this chapter. The first of these two involves the type of leadership the participants perceive to be necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The final research question involves what the individual participants and the SDA higher education system are doing to prepare the perceived “future leaders.”

After reading great quantities of literature about leadership types and styles, I was startled to find that most of the participants did not know how to answer questions linking types of leadership with future challenges. Even when restated differently, the questions were evaded or changed to reflect what the colleges must do “to survive.” Only one participant asked me what I meant—and then had to admit that he/she had never really given the matter much thought. The type and quality of answers varied according to the background and sophistication of the participant.

Some had never given much thought to what leadership really is. Some confused it with managerial functions. It was obvious that most believed that leadership “styles” are linked to particular personality or demographic characteristics. When pressed for details, those who were conversant in this area would refer to a recent or popular management or leadership book intended for the world of business.

I was also surprised to find several participants who had never thought about leadership in peer systems. Those who had given it some thought believe the challenges



and leadership solutions (types of leadership, development needs, etc.) to be quite similar to other systems.

I never thought about it. Who ARE our peer systems?  
(Jean)

I think most church-related colleges are finding similar challenges and leadership needs today.  
(George)

On the other hand, the questions involving leadership development and higher education were always answered, quickly and sometimes vehemently. The answers were short and to the point:

We are doing nothing to develop future leaders, and it is such a shame. (Joan)

I'm not keeping up (in higher education) at all. (Bob)

I read books, mostly on the role of the president. (Joan)

I make decisions out of my own heart and soul—but inform them by reading. I wish I knew what I should be reading.  
(Paul)

I'm especially interested in the role of a president as a leader instead of manager—leadership and the ability to see beyond management issues. (George)

This concern with the lack of development opportunities for future presidents seemed to indicate that the participants thought of the presidency through the third of Clark Kerr's models (Kerr, 1994), the “presidents make a difference” model (defined in Chapter III). By thinking of the presidency through this lens they see a president as someone who holds the organization together, defends it, and leads it in new directions. Failing to see the church explicitly developing individuals who can do these things is a

concern to them. Admittedly, though, the participants were not pushed to acknowledge the “implicit” leadership preparation which their current positions provide.

I think that leaders make a difference—having a vision and inspiring people. (Mike)

The cynicism about leadership in the country and in the church is disturbing. (Jean)

Leadership development in SDA higher education is obviously an area of deficiency, but it is a difficult issue to address and change because of the SDA subculture. As was mentioned in the discussion of humility, to admit that you are qualified to be a leader or have intentions of becoming a leader is seen as “not humble.” Thus, to practice or prepare to be a college president is seen as an unwise thing. Likewise, to set up a program to identify and prepare leaders might meet with constituent disapproval.

Along that same line, I had one participant tell me a story:

I once knew a president who decided to retire in two years. He decided that, to make sure his programs and visions were carried out, he would position and prepare his successor. The trick was to make this happen without anyone knowing who that person was, because that was the sure way for the plan to fail. It did end up failing. (Joe)

As was suggested in the previous chapter, the SDA system of higher education is in a precarious position at the close of the twentieth century. It faces two different types of challenges. The first type seemingly overlaps with mainstream higher education but has cultural differences which make the successful application of suggestions found in higher education literature doubtful. The second type of challenges are unique to the

system and rarely addressed in higher education or leadership literature. It is the perceived leaders of the 21st century who must understand and meet these challenges.

We now see that the system is not preparing them for leadership and they do not have either the time or knowledge to prepare themselves. Business leaders and leaders in mainstream higher education often turn to leadership literature for help in leadership preparation. As has been shown in the review of the literature, futurists have been using higher education literature prescriptively to address 21st century higher education challenges. Is there anything in either business leadership or higher education leadership literature which can help the SDA system of higher education?

#### A. Applying Types of Higher Education Leadership Literature

Leadership in higher education differs from the corporate world because of academic culture, diffusion of power, dual control systems, and sometimes unclear expectations of outcomes. Therefore, a subfield of leadership literature, found in the higher education literature, has emerged which specifically addresses higher education leadership. Less than half of the participants in this study appeared to be aware of this literature.

Unknown to these participants, it seems, the literature in the subfield of higher education leadership can be divided into six categories that are comparable to the groupings of general leadership literature (Bensimon, 1989). These categories include trait theories, power and influence theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories.



The literature in each category can be matched up with a particular type of application to inform the reader or provide a solution to a particular type of leadership problem (refer to the literature review for a more detailed explanation).

*Table 7.1*

<b>Applications of Leadership Literature</b>	
<b>Category of Leadership Literature</b>	<b>Application for College Leadership</b>
Trait Theory	Describing Successful Presidents Searching for & Selecting Presidents Comparing Effective vs. Ineffective Presidents
Behavioral Theory	Self-Assessment
Social Power Theory	Shape Presidents' Understanding of Leadership & Power
Transformational Theory	Understand Symbolism, Visions, & Images of an Institution
Social Exchange Theory Transactional Theory	Examining Shared Governance or Image of President as First Among Equals
Contingency Theory	Adapt a Personal Leadership Style to Situational Factors
Cultural or Symbolic Theory	Understand Academic Culture & Symbolic Actions
Cognitive Theory	Perception of Leader's Effectiveness & How We Attribute Credit or Blame

Much of the readily available higher education leadership literature, and also that which deals with the future of higher education, presents different “leadership styles” or “leadership skills” which are necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century in



mainstream higher education. There are enough “emerging leadership skills” in the literature to form a veritable laundry list.

While some authors call for assertive, bold, or strong leadership (Gilley, 1991), others insist that the leadership style necessary in the future is an assertive partnership between president, trustees, and staff members focusing on the needs of students (Brown & Walworth, 1986).

It must be understood, however, that such solutions fall into the categories of trait theory or behavioral theory which say that a leader must be a certain type of individual or exhibit a particular behavior (as in the case of advocating “strong” leadership, above). This type of advice is confusing and often contradictory, because every person, situation, or group of followers is different. This advice often fails to address individual cultural differences.

As the chart shows, the theories in these categories (trait or behavioral theory) are best used to assess or describe leaders, not address future challenges. Taking general leadership material or higher education leadership material of a non-applicable type and using it as a template to “fix” a specific problem is a mistake, although this is attempted over and over, even by some of the participants in this study. This is generally what happens when someone does a “quick search” of the literature to find a “quick fix.”

Other higher education authors, those who subscribe more to hybrid or combination theories, feel that the key to effective institutional leadership will be the ability to simply build a cohesive, knowledgeable, and dedicated staff (Briscoe, 1988).

They agree that 21st century leadership will be based more on persuasion than power (Birnbaum, 1992).

### B. Will Leadership Literature Help SDA Colleges?

There are two levels at which it is doubtful that any of the standard business or higher education leadership advice or solutions to 21st century challenges will work for SDA colleges. The first level involves the inherent problems with applying leadership “advice” to any college or academic problem.

Such advice is often conflicting and confusing. The readers of the advice often come from a different conceptual orientation than the researchers. If a reader moves on to a second piece of “advice,” chances are that it will conflict with the first piece.

Also, there is the reality of leadership when viewed as organizational behavior. Because leadership is a social construct and is time and place dependent, much of what makes leadership “good” is simply doing what others (often, the followers) expect. Many solutions attributed to “assertive” or “courageous” leadership would have happened anyway, given the academic culture of the college.

This is not to say that an astute leader, well grounded in the literature of both leadership and higher education, could not come up with his or her own application of a piece of literature “advice.” It would, however, involve the careful application of such advice in light of the individual academic culture involved.

The second level at which the effectiveness of leadership solutions to SDA 21st century challenges is doubtful involves the reality of SDA colleges as church-related

institutions. I believe that leadership in church-related colleges is even more challenging because of the moral imperative and institution-specific problems of these colleges (Kingsley, 1992).

Leaders in church-related colleges must find different solutions to higher education's problems while, at the same time solving their theological problems. All the while they must struggle to clearly articulate their integration of faith, learning (Noftzger, 1992), and even student life (Thomas, 1992).

This is exactly the "story" told to me by the participants in this study. They constantly told me on the surface how things in SDA higher education weren't all that different from the mainstream (which many would define as any college other than an SDA or church-related college). They told me how good, standard management and leadership principles should work in SDA colleges. Yet, their stories, experiences, and perceived challenges, combined with the ever-present cultural factors, indicated that things are more difficult and different in SDA colleges.

The relationship between successful church-related colleges and their church depends on mutual belief and shared commitment. Within these successful colleges, the faculty and administration must have a shared vision of the mission and keep the curriculum and campus life consistent with that mission (Van-Harn, 1992). Many participants in this study suggested that shared vision was not present anymore in their institutions. This is an added challenge to SDA colleges.

### C. A Paradigm Shift

So, is there anything else in the literature that would be helpful to a system with “added” challenges? Ideas about leadership are relevant to a certain group, at a certain time, under certain conditions. Is it the right “time” and are these the right conditions in the history of SDA higher education for a paradigm shift with respect to leadership?

There may be “types” of leadership solutions that “fit” SDA higher education, at this point in time, considering its history, culture, strengths, and weaknesses. Based on what the participants told me, I believe that there are two. The first is called the “management of meaning.” The second is called “trans-vigoration” leadership, which is a popular perspective on “transformational” leadership (Bensimon, 1989b).

It is difficult to view an organization as objective and rational. Organizations are socially constructed and subjective. Through a lens of symbolic leadership, the most important thing that leaders do is to create or work with the academic culture of their organization to “manage its meaning.” Leadership, when viewed as symbol and myth, plays a very critical function in an organization.

Whether the members of an organization realize it, a college (or a system of colleges) is full of symbols. Symbols can be events, ceremonies, acts, language, dress, or structural roles. Leaders use these symbols to communicate organizational reality. The difficult part of this is making sure that the audience receiving the communication gets the correct message about the culture (Tierney, 1989).

The SDA academic culture is in crisis. The future of SDA colleges is directly linked to the future of the church. As this chapter is being written, the church is



preparing for a "General Conference Session" where issues of theology and control will be discussed and directions will be set. Colleges, in order to survive, both financially and reputationally, will need to be poised and dynamic enough to undergo an instant metamorphosis, if necessary. This is why I think it is significant that more than one of the participants in this study referred to the biggest challenge to the system as being "having a sense of who we are."

Meaning and symbols are very important to SDA higher education as it is trying to hold on to or regain a sense of "who we are." Because it is culturally necessary for major decisions and direction to come from the "grass roots level," which in this case is the constituency, presidents must listen and give a sense of meaning to the college. This can be done by communicating through the use of symbols, metaphors, and rituals. Presidents must be aware not only of what they are trying to communicate, but of how these messages are being received and perceived.

This one category of higher education leadership literature, the cultural and symbolic leadership category, is possibly the only one that can be read and directly applied to SDA higher education. But, once again, the application must be consistent with the category (see chart above). It should be used to understand academic culture and symbolic actions, not search for a new president or adapt a personal leadership style to situational factors.

Are my participants reading this type of literature? Only one referred to symbolic leadership directly. Another participant alluded to such material, but did not admit to direct familiarity.

Trans-vigoration leadership, a term which stems from popular interpretations of transformational leadership and is identified as such by Estela Bensimon (1989b), is another theory that fits perfectly with the unique circumstance of SDA higher education. Transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional leadership which is a two-way process of exchange and influence between leaders and followers, is a one-way process of changing an organizational culture. The leader introduces new beliefs and goals. Members of the organization end up redefining their roles.

As is obvious from the depth of cultural influence in this system, changing the culture of either the SDA higher education system or an individual campus, given the multi-generational constituencies involved, is a very difficult task. And, furthermore, too much change might even defeat the unique purpose or mission of these colleges. The popular interpretation of transformational leadership, "trans-vigoration leadership," is more applicable. This theory emphasizes improvement of what is already in place, instead of change. It conforms to the culture while simultaneously finding ways to improve it.

Are the participants familiar with or actively engaged in exploring this type of leadership theory? No, they are not. And, I believe that if they were, the future of the SDA higher education system would be brighter.

The combination of symbolically managing the meaning of an SDA college while attempting to re-invigorate it, may just be the answer to the system's leadership questions. It may just be the way to direct negative thinking and criticism into a productive discussion and redefinition of what purpose the colleges serve in the overall

church mission. And, it may position the colleges to be able to serve whatever purpose it is decided they should serve.      32

## CHAPTER VIII CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

### A. Conclusions

According to the participants in this study, Seventh-day Adventist higher education is different from mainstream higher education in mission, culture, and understanding of its 21st century challenges. Seventh-day Adventist higher education may seemingly face many of the same challenges as mainstream higher education, but the cultural differences change the nature of the overlapping challenges (those which are common to both mainstream and SDA higher education). They make many of the standard leadership solutions, available in the higher education leadership literature, unworkable.

There are also challenges to the system which are unique to SDA higher education. Almost all of these involve the church which sponsors these colleges. The SDA church is at a point in its history where it must examine itself and redefine its mission and purpose in terms of the 21st century. One aspect of this redefinition must be the purpose which the SDA colleges in the United States play in the church's mission in North America.

Proposals have been made for the future of the colleges. They range from maintaining the status quo to closing the schools. These proposals must be discussed and understood at the local levels of the church, while the church is redefining itself.

The current tensions in the SDA colleges, which help to set up and explain the challenges of the 21st century, include an atmosphere of uncertainty and suspicion within the constituencies of the colleges. The personal lifestyles and definitions of church standards of individual church members who support the colleges are varied.



Nonetheless, each church member expects the colleges to support the individual perceived education mission as he or she understands it. There are many more definitions of this mission at the end of the 20th century than when the colleges were founded.

The perceived leaders of the 21st century find it impossible to prepare themselves for their leadership roles. The unique subculture contains factors which discourage the church structure from openly identifying future leaders and providing the resources for their continued education—even when doing so would provide hope for the future of the system.

“Looking for leaders” is happening at the local level. There is no way for the church structure, the people dealing with the overall mission of the church, to see who is in the leadership track. It was evident from the “expert identification” methodology that they only know who is currently holding a position of leadership, who is visible, who is doing an acceptable (to them) job, or who is acting as a consultant to the church structure. They do not see the talent down within the system that only appears locally.

Despite these discouraging factors, the participants view the system as a place where leadership, particularly that of college presidents, does make a difference. They believe that college presidents can influence the future of the SDA colleges.

Even though many of the participants do not keep up in the literature of higher education leadership, there are two categories of this literature which may be useful to the future of the system. Transformation theory, which includes the concept of “trans-vigorous leadership” would be helpful to a system which has a deeply ingrained church subculture as well as individual campus academic cultures. Cultural or symbolic theory

would help the system to define what it is about, what things are important to the various parts of its constituency, and what things need to be changed in order to accomplish its 21st century mission.

## B. Recommendations

Based on the collective stories of the participants and the wisdom of higher education experts contained in the applicable categories of literature, it is possible to make certain recommendations for the SDA system of higher education.

### 1. College Presidents—Current and Future

For SDA higher education to regain its strength and be able to meet its 21st century challenges, its current and future presidents will need to use more symbolic leadership methods, such as “trans-vigoration” leadership, which are especially appropriate to higher education. These presidents must resist the temptation to apply leadership literature or research findings intended for the corporate world to their situations. They must also resist the temptation to apply higher education leadership literature to a problem not intended to be addressed by that category of literature. For example, an article describing an appropriate presidential leadership style should not be used to address a campus cultural problem.

Twenty-first century SDA college presidents will need to understand and monitor the changes, attitudes, and restructuring of the SDA church constantly—opening the

communication channels with the church leadership and membership simultaneously and in both directions.

These presidents will need to get their institutions to a dynamic state where instant metamorphosis is possible—where a college or university can quickly adapt its programs or delivery systems (as part of the missiological quadrilateral<sup>5</sup>) to a possible shift of emphasis in the SDA church's mission.

As an alternative to the above, in constituencies where this is not desirable or colleges cease to be necessary to the perceived mission, presidents must prepare their institutions financially and organizationally for an eventual change in relationship to the church (be spiritually connected to the church but no longer part of its missiological quadrilateral). Colleges in this situation could not rely on any funding from the church organization. The chart in the appendix of this document shows the possible scenarios (see appendix).

Leaders of Seventh-day Adventist higher education (specifically the presidents of the 21st century) must decide where they personally stand on several issues. They must ask themselves the following questions:

- 1) Are our institutions ends unto themselves (“we have always done . . .”, “we have a rich heritage and tradition of . . .”) or are they the post-secondary educational arm of the SDA church mission?
- 2) On a personal level, am I as an SDA educator a professional who works for an SDA college, or an

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<sup>5</sup>As defined by George Knight (1995) to be conference organization (evangelism), education, publishing, and medical work.

SDA making my contribution to the church's mission through the use of my profession?

- 3) Would I be willing to sacrifice my institution (job, lifestyle, etc.) if it meant finishing "the work" as the church understands it?

## 2. Search Committees

Search committees must take the job of selecting a new college president beyond the identification of a qualified candidate. Such committees should strive to fully understand the various complexities of the current SDA subculture, as well as the local academic culture. The search for candidates should be expanded to include local qualified individuals as well as those from within the system who are sensitive to the cultural complexities of the local academic community.

These committees should seek candidates who are fully aware of not only the current tensions within the system, but the unique challenges which face the system in the 21st century. Even further, they should seek candidates who understand the challenges of mainstream higher education and understand how those which overlap with SDA challenges are changed by cultural factors.

The members of presidential search committees should strive to understand how each candidate views presidential leadership. From which model of presidential leadership does the candidate speak? Which model does the committee feel is essential to the future success of their individual campus and its relations with the SDA system of higher education? For this task, the search committee may need special training or knowledge of higher education presidential leadership literature.



Search committees should agree on what particular personal philosophy will benefit their campus. Are they looking for a professional or a church member—first and foremost? Do they want a president who will lead an institution toward privatization, if the constituency does not view the college as being part of its church mission?

### 3. SDA Higher Education Planning Groups

In order for a helpful conversation in a “futures” context to continue examining leadership solutions to 21st century SDA higher education challenges, several things must change. It would be helpful if the future leaders of the system could be identified and enter the conversation, at both the local and system levels. They should discuss their perceptions and understanding of the 21st century challenges. Because this recommendation goes against “the culture” of the system, I am not prepared to be specific about how this should occur. The recognition of a needed change is the goal here. How that change takes place should be left to the current leaders. That is also part of “the culture.”

It would also be helpful if these future leaders could discuss their views of leadership, take inventory of what they are reading and doing to prepare themselves to meet these 21st century challenges, and be allowed to critique how the system is assisting them in that process.

It is possible that a template leadership approach at the system or local level—using mainstream solutions—could prove disastrous to the survival of the system. This is especially true if the leadership theory being applied is based on principles

applicable to the corporate world, and not just higher education. (As unlikely as this sounds, this does happen on college boards and in academic offices.) It is doubly true if the individual recommending or implementing these leadership solutions (possibly an outside consultant) is not totally familiar with the culture of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Maybe the system should be looking in the short-term for a group of “selfless” leaders who will begin this dialogue but take themselves out of the running for leadership positions at one of the SDA colleges. Maybe this would be a way to get around the hazards of the subculture.

#### 4. Constituents of SDA Colleges

Constituents of the 10 non-medical SDA colleges in the United States should become familiar with the current issues in SDA higher education. A conversation should be opened in each constituency (North American Division union conference) concerning the 21st century position of its college. This conversation should happen in churches, schools, publications, on the internet, and in social situations. This conversation should honestly and fairly define the options of (a) re-engineering the colleges to address the mission needs of the church versus (b) the college becoming an end in itself and moving toward privatization or non-church ownership. The financial, cultural, and spiritual implications of both positions should be fairly presented as they relate to each constituency. The needs of each constituency are different. The decisions they make may not be the same.

Time is a factor in what could be construed as a long-term process.

## 5. General Conference of SDAs

In the long-term, the system needs to address three issues: its leadership track, how it prepares its future leaders, and how it relates to its faculty. These issues must be discussed at a system-wide level, which necessitates the involvement of the church structure at the highest levels. First, the system must monitor the cultural changes occurring in relation to hiring practices in the SDA higher education system. A discussion needs to begin about the concept of "leadership track."

If local individuals could be identified as potential leaders and sent to central workshops where they would be visible to the church leaders (calls to present papers, etc.), the identifiable pool of candidates would grow. The ideal situation would be to locate a donor who is interested in college leadership. If this donor would endow a program, very much like the one currently in place to recognize excellence in teaching, this would be beneficial to the system.

Second, the system must strive to develop "cognitive complexity" in its future college presidents. A concerted effort must be made to locate and provide materials which address the symbolic leadership possibilities which work within a unique academic culture. More research and publishing should be attempted and funded in the area of SDA higher education. More individuals within the system now have graduate training in higher education than ever before. Yet, outside consultants are still brought in to study the system. We need to use the people we have to better advantage.

Third, it must recognize that the faculty members of the SDA colleges, by their personal commitment, are going to determine what kind of leadership is workable in the 21st century. If they see themselves professionally, as simply chemists, biologists, historians, or whatever, who happen to be working for an Adventist institution, then they are not going to respond to any kind of directive leadership that comes from corporate-type authority, hierarchy, or position. These types of leadership would soon become dysfunctional because the norms of the profession would be stronger than the Adventist culture.

If they see themselves as Seventh-day Adventist chemists, biologists, etc., they will be more willing to respect how their elected church leaders choose to restructure the denomination to recreate a mechanism for addressing the church's mission through higher education. Such Adventist individuals would be willing to fit into the educational part of this mechanism. They would expect less involvement in the decision making process about the educational part of the mission.

It could be that, at the point where the restructuring occurs, the system will lose some employees—those people who see themselves first as professionals and second as Adventists. The system needs to be aware of this possibility and plan for it.

### C. Further Study

This study is meant to contribute to an on-going conversation concerning the future of Seventh-day Adventist higher education. Although it answers certain questions, it raises others. There are several areas recommended for further study:



1. Precisely when did SDA higher education move from a strict “call” system for administrators toward a system of resumes, job advertisements, and self-promotion? What were the factors involved in this shift? What are the resulting cultural changes for SDA higher education? How do people perceive that this trend affects the future choice of leaders?
2. What are the “symbols” within SDA higher education which are important to the various constituent groups—alumni, local church congregations, students, faculty members, local communities? How do college presidents need to be able to use these symbols? Are these symbols compatible with saving and supporting SDA colleges?
3. What are the attitudes of SDA faculty members toward their relationship to SDA higher education? As they participate in the discussion of the future of SDA colleges (both on campus and as members of the college’s constituency) are they first and foremost professionals in an academic field, or are they SDAs who serve the church through their chosen profession?

#### D. Personal Conclusions and Observations

I leave this particular study with a surprisingly positive feeling about the future of the SDA system of higher education. I see the problems. There are many crises, conflicts, and inconsistencies. Each SDA college is encountering difficulty in articulating its mission to its potential markets.

The reason I am hopeful, however, involves some of the people I met during this study. There are brilliant, committed individuals who spend time thinking about the future of SDA higher education. I look forward to working with them someday.

These individuals have a solid understanding of the mission of SDA higher education and a unique vision for the future. They are determined to meet the needs of more people in more ways. Their task of education is much broader than educating traditional college-age students. They must educate an entire church. They can do it!

## APPENDIX A INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### INTERVIEW #1

1. How did you come to be a (position) at (institution)?  
(Probes: educational background, career path, relationship to the church)
2. Why do you think you have been identified as a “future SDA college president”?  
(Probes: qualifications, contacts, insights)
3. What can tell me about your experiences in SDA academic communities?  
(Probes: positive and negative memories as a student, staff member, faculty member, administrator, scholar)
4. During your experiences in SDA academic communities, how has your understanding of the SDA educational mission changed?  
(Probes: Ellen G. White—foremost SDA education writer, the changing demographics of the church membership, changing societal conditions, changing church standards)

### INTERVIEW #2

1. During your experiences in SDA academic communities, what have you perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of the system?
2. What do you think the challenges will be for SDA higher education in the 21st century? For peer systems?  
(Probes: describe a 21st century SDA college, an SDA college president)
3. How do you think your background and experiences in SDA academic communities affect your view of 21st century challenges for SDA higher education?
4. What do you do to learn more about or keep up in the field of higher education?
5. What do you do to prepare yourself to be a leader?  
(Probes: what skills do you work on; how do you deal with feelings of inadequacy; how do you see yourself as a leader?)

**APPENDIX B  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**“EXPERT IDENTIFIERS” CONSENT FORM**

for the study

**IMAGES OF LEADERSHIP IN  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
HIGHER EDUCATION:  
THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW CENTURY**

Linda Thorman, Researcher  
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree that the opinions I express on the enclosed form (Questionnaire for Participant Identification) may be used in the sample selection process for this study. I have been informed in the enclosed letter of the nature of this study and the proposed methodology.

I understand that I have the right not to participate. If I do choose to participate, all reasonable steps will be taken to guarantee my anonymity. This consent form and questionnaire will be seen only by Dr. Patt Dodds or her office staff and will be destroyed as soon as possible after the defense of Linda Thorman's dissertation.

---

Signed

Date

**APPENDIX C  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in the study, *Images of Leadership in Seventh-day Adventist Colleges: The Challenges of New Century*. I understand that the researcher, Linda Thorman, a member of the faculty of Pacific Union College, is undertaking this study as the dissertation portion of her requirements for a doctoral degree in higher education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of "expertly identified" future SDA college presidents concerning: 1) the challenges of SDA higher education in the 21st century; 2) the leadership needs of SDA higher education in the 21st century; and 3) the leadership development opportunities available within SDA higher education. I agree to participate in two interview sessions which will be tape recorded.

The researcher has agreed to keep all knowledge of my participation strictly confidential. She will make all attempts (through the use of pseudonyms) in talking or writing about our conversations to disguise my identity and that of my school. All interview tapes and transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's possession. These materials will be destroyed as soon as possible after the defense of her dissertation. I understand that my data may be used in professional publications, presentations, or for teaching purposes. Beyond that, the researcher will contact me if actual transcripts from this study are ever submitted for publication.

Even though every attempt will be made at confidentiality, I am aware that it is always possible for someone wanting to discover the identity of participants to do so. I am willing to take this risk.

I have been informed that I may withdraw from this study up until two weeks after the final interview. I also have the right, if I choose to do so, to review the material involved before it is published.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNED

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE



**APPENDIX D**  
**COVER LETTER TO EXPLAIN THE STUDY**

DATE  
INSIDE ADDRESS

Dear NAME:

I would like to invite you to participate in a study of the future of Seventh-day Adventist higher education. This study is the dissertation portion of my doctoral program in Higher Education Management at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. In it, I will look at the perceptions of future SDA college presidents with regard to (a) the challenges facing SDA higher education in the 21st century; (b) the leadership needs of SDA higher education in the 21st century; and (c) the leadership development opportunities currently available to future leaders.

My selection of the Seventh-day Adventist higher education system as a study group comes from my deep commitment to Seventh-day Adventist education. I am a member of the faculty at Pacific Union College and am currently on study leave to complete my degree. I hope that the results of this study will add to the ever-increasing body of knowledge which we may use to help meet the goals of Seventh-day Adventist education.

The first part of this study involves having you fill out this short questionnaire. You will return it and your consent form to Dr. Patt Dodds, a professor at the University of Massachusetts and a member of my dissertation committee, in the self-addressed, stamped envelope which is enclosed. This should only take a few moments of your time, but the results will allow us then to purposefully select the participants for the interview portion of the study. It is a methodological safeguard of this study that I will never see the questionnaire you return. Dr. Dodds, who has no connection with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, will present me with a list of those identified most often by each segment of "expert identifiers." You can feel confident that your response will be strictly confidential.

Why have you been asked to participate? By being either a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Board of Higher Education, the chair of a Seventh-day Adventist college board, or the president or chief academic officer of a Seventh-day Adventist college, you qualify as an "expert identifier" of potential Seventh-day Adventist college presidents.

If you have any questions about participating, please feel free to contact me to discuss the study further. I also invite you to contact either my dissertation committee chair at the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Patricia Crosson (413/545-2464 or 2554), or Dr. Malcolm Maxwell, president of Pacific Union College (707/965-6211), who will answer any questions you may have about the study or about me.

I am sure that when you think back on your own graduate program, you can remember the relief as well as the apprehension you felt at this stage. You will also remember how important it was to get responses to any questionnaires you may have sent out. Please take the time right now to fill out this questionnaire. Your response is needed before November 8, 1994.

Thank you for your willingness to share your opinions.

Sincerely,

Linda Thorman  
Assistant Academic Dean, Pacific Union College  
Doctoral Candidate, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Enclosures: 1. Self-addressed, stamped envelope  
2. "Expert Identifiers" Consent Form  
3. Questionnaire for Participant Identification

APPENDIX E  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION

QUESTIONNAIRE  
for  
Participant Identification

October 1994

IMAGES OF LEADERSHIP IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HIGHER  
EDUCATION:  
CHALLENGES FOR A NEW CENTURY

CONFIDENTIAL RESPONSE FORM

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please imagine that this is the year 2001. You are one of the members of a presidential search committee for a non-medical Seventh-day Adventist college or university in the United States. What names would you add to the nomination list for this position? (Note—feel free to nominate yourself.)

NAME (please print)                      PLACE OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

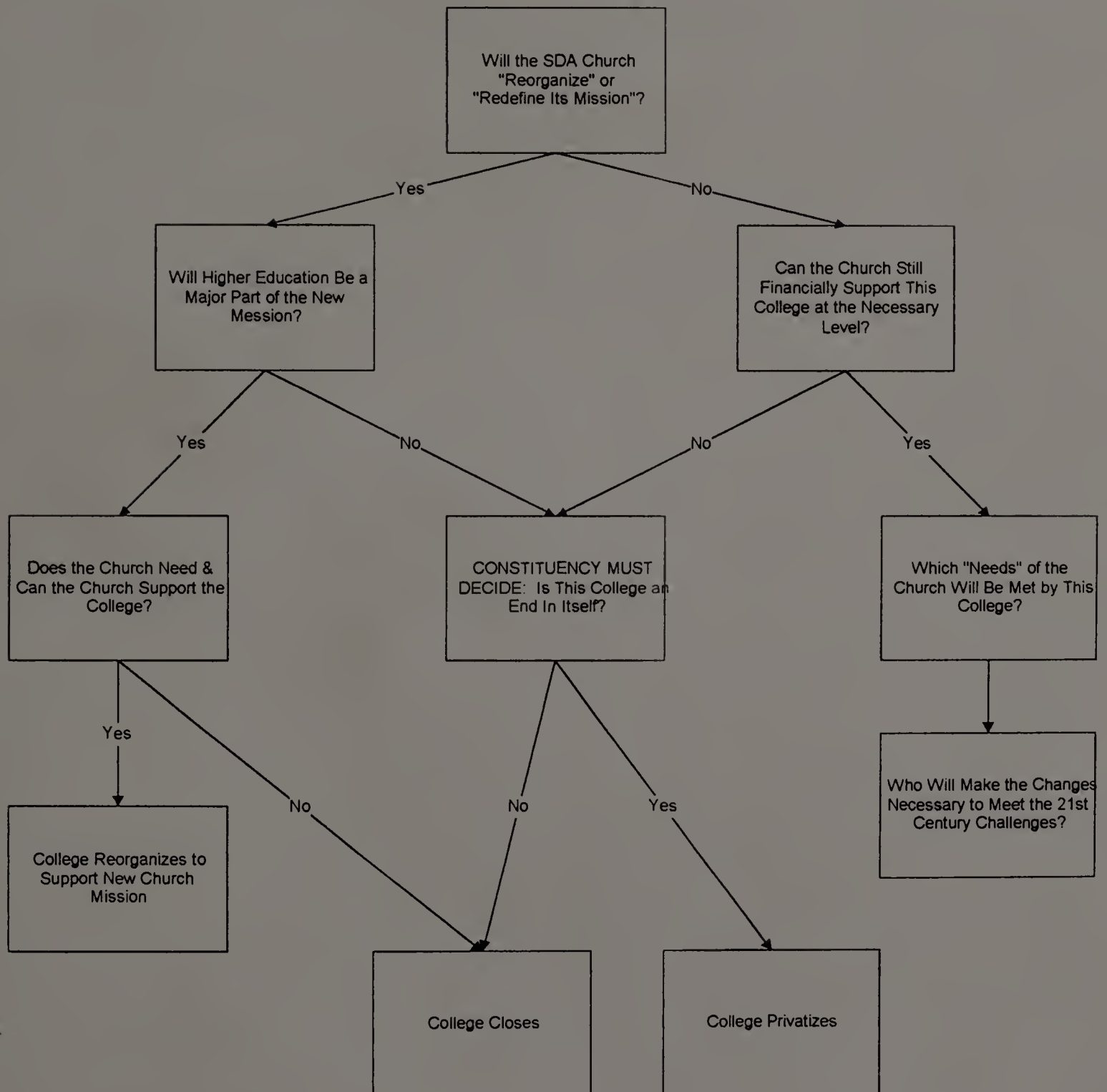
*(If you would like to nominate more than five individuals, you may continue on the back)*

-----  
*Thank you very much for your help. Please return this form in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope to Dr. Patt Dodds, Totman Building #105, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.*

*To discuss this study with the researcher, please contact Linda Thorman, 534 La Tierra Drive, Angwin, California 94508, (707) 965-0714, or e-mail lthorman@puc.edu.*

## APPENDIX F CHART OF POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO

### THE FUTURE OF SDA COLLEGES Questions to Be Answered



*\*privatize in this case means to separate from church financial support*



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