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**An examination of the institutional character and organizational  
ethos at Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States**

**Ritter, David Malcolm, Jr., Ed.D.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1992**

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL ETHOS AT  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
COLLEGES IN THE  
UNITED STATES

by

David Malcolm Ritter, Jr.

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The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
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Approved by

  
Dissertation Advisor

## APPROVAL PAGE

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RITTER, DAVID MALCOLM, JR., Ed.D. An Examination of the Institutional Character and Organizational Ethos at Seventh-day Adventist Colleges in the United States. (1992) Directed by Dr. Joseph E. Bryson. 99 pp.

The purpose of this study was to examine the institutional character and organizational ethos at Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) colleges in the United States. Given the problem of a scarcity of published information about SDA colleges, this study has served to investigate an otherwise un-researched facet of American higher education.

Six Seventh-day Adventist colleges participated in this study. A modified version of the Institutional Functioning Inventory (I.F.I.), which utilized six of its scales, was used for collecting data. The survey instrument was presented to 528 faculty members at the six colleges and 245 responses were received.

A college's institutional mean score on the I.F.I. scales was the basis for the description of the institutional culture of each participating college. An ANOVA was performed, designating each college as the independent variable and each I.F.I. scale, in turn, as a dependent variable.

The findings allow for certain generalizations to be made about SDA colleges. The participants, collectively, scored very high on measures of faculty morale and commitment to a shared sense of purpose while, at the same time, faculty reported generally low levels of personal and academic freedom. There was a generally high level of concern for undergraduate learning with the academic environments reported to be modestly interesting places for work and study.

The findings also showed the participating colleges to be a diverse group of institutions with distinct differences between the colleges. The results of the ANOVA showed little more likeness than would be expected from a group of private colleges

selected randomly from a population of institutions on some basis other than religious affiliation.

The conclusions were that SDA colleges do not show a common institutional ethos. Though they share certain similarities, each college has its own "flavor" or character and the ways in which they are different are as strong, or stronger, than the ways in which they are alike.



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Lastly, though perhaps most importantly, my father pledged a part of his retirement portfolio as collateral for the bank loan I needed to pay for my dissertation credits. Growing up during the Depression and the youngest of four brothers, my father's formal education ended with high school. Perhaps that was why it was so important to him that his own children should go to college and do well there. For his support, and for his dream that his son should have opportunities which were not available to him, I am eternally grateful.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

The small, private, church related, liberal arts college is a uniquely American institution with an institutional culture that differs from that of the larger and more well-known state colleges, large, endowed private universities, or research universities.<sup>1 2</sup> Characterized largely by their smallness and their relative invisibility outside of their own constituencies and locales these colleges, which were once the only models of American higher education, have somehow managed to survive (if not thrive) and adapt in an environment populated with comparative giants. While higher education has become almost completely secularized these small colleges have maintained their religious ties and spiritual rootedness. While large universities define their mission in terms of serving their State or the nation, these colleges still define themselves in terms of serving God first.<sup>3</sup>

The paradigm of America's colonial colleges, itself modeled on the residential

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey T. Fouts and Loyde W. Hales. "A Controlled Environment: The Nature of Small, Liberal Arts, Christian Colleges," Journal of College Student Personnel v.26 (November 1985): 524-41.

<sup>2</sup>Richard W. Jonsen. "Small Liberal Arts Colleges: Diversity at the Crossroads?" AAHE-ERIC / Higher Education Research Report (Washington, D.C: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, 1978).

<sup>3</sup>see, for example, Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists Catalog, p. 9.

colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, of preserving and nurturing religious faith through an educated clergy and a literate, loyal, and well indoctrinated laity is still alive in many of America's small colleges.<sup>4</sup> Though some private colleges maintain religious affiliations only superficially, others are closely-bound to their parent church organizations and still give high priority to matters of faith and doctrine.

This study will focus on one sector of American private higher education, namely the colleges affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are only eleven such colleges in the United States and two of these are predominantly post-baccalaureate institutions for training ministers, church workers, and medical professionals, while a third is a medical arts college for training nurses and medical paraprofessionals. Of the remaining eight colleges none has more than 1,800 students and three have fewer than seven hundred fifty.<sup>5</sup>

Very little has been written about these colleges. Comparatively little, therefore, is known about them in terms of their institutional culture. This study will gather information from faculty members at Seventh-day Adventist colleges about their collective perceptions of their institutions and, on the basis of this information, attempt to describe the institutional character of Seventh-day Adventist colleges, as well as the dimensions of their organizational culture.

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<sup>4</sup>Richard W. Jonsen. op.cit., p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Office of Archives and Statistics of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Silver Spring, Maryland: 1991) 128th Annual Statistical Report - 1990, p. 28.

### Statement of the Problem

The Seventh-day Adventists are a Protestant church with 760,000 members in the United States and six and a half million members worldwide. With a long tradition of believing in the value of education and referring to themselves as "an educated church," the Adventists operate 1073 private primary schools, 101 private secondary schools, and ten post-secondary colleges or universities in the United States.<sup>6</sup> It is this latter category of institutions which are the focus of this study. Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) colleges, in the 1990-1991 academic year, enrolled 17,775 students and employed a total of 1736 faculty.<sup>7</sup> While this higher education sector would be characterized as relatively small, compared to some other protestant denominations which operate church affiliated colleges, it is by no means insignificant.

Surprisingly little research has been done on this sector of American higher education. A review of literature conducted in 1992 and reviewing publications going back through 1974 yielded only two citations referring to SDA education. One of these was a chapter in a bibliography of American religious colleges and universities<sup>8</sup> and the other, which was the only work focusing directly on Seventh-day

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Dr. Gordon Madgwick, Board of Higher Education (North American Division) of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Silver Spring, Maryland. 11 October 1991.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas C. Hunt and James C. Carper, Religious Colleges and Universities in America: A Selected Bibliography (New York, New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1988).

Adventist colleges, examined student attrition at two Adventist colleges in the Midwest<sup>9</sup>

While other researchers have examined, in various contexts, the nature and culture of private, Christian, liberal arts colleges,<sup>10</sup> none of these has focused on Seventh-day Adventist colleges nor, as their research indicates, even included this sector of colleges in their samples. More surprisingly, the Adventists seem to have published very little about themselves.

In view of the scarcity of published material about Seventh Day Adventist colleges this study will seek to determine the nature of the organizational ethos and institutional culture at Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States. It will be a descriptive study, seeking to portray the nature of the environment at eight of these [non-University] colleges and to examine the degree of homogeneity which exists among them.

### Conceptual Base

Every college and university is influenced by strong environmental factors, external to itself, such as economic or demographic forces which inevitably impact

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<sup>9</sup>William R. Cash and H. LeVerne Bissel, "Testing Tinto's Model of Attrition on the Church-Related Campus." Paper presented at the 25th Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Portland, Oregon, 28 April 1985.

<sup>10</sup>See A.W. Astin and B.T. Lee, The Invisible Colleges: A Profile of Small, Private Colleges with Limited Resources (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972); C.R. Pace, Education and Evangelism: A Profile of Protestant Colleges (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972); see also Fouts and Hales, op. cit.



on the institution. Every college and university, however, is also powerfully shaped and molded by forces from within, internal mechanisms that are often more difficult to describe: culture, mission, values, and "ethos." These mechanisms, though intangible, are very real. They determine (or at least focus) an institution's goals and direction, prescribe its day-to-day direction, define what is expected of both leaders and personnel, and, in the broadest sense, "hold the place together."<sup>11</sup> In other words, organizational culture, a system of shared assumptions and values, communicated through patterns of behavior and symbolism that are institutionally reinforced and perpetuated, is the "glue" that binds an organization together and distinguishes it from others.<sup>12</sup>

A number of recent studies have examined institutional culture at colleges and universities. Barley, et al., for example, found one hundred ninety two articles about organizational culture written between 1975 and 1984, and in these found that definitions and conceptions of the phenomenon are converging towards commonality.<sup>13</sup> A number of writers conclude that an institution's culture can, thus,

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<sup>11</sup>Ellen E. Chaffee and William G. Tierney, Collegiate Culture and Leadership Strategies (New York, New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Stephen R. Barley and others, "Culture of Cultures: Practitioners and the Pragmatics of Normative Control," Administrative Science Quarterly, v.33 (March 1988) pp. 24-80.

be both defined and assessed.<sup>14</sup>

Although institutional culture can be both defined and assessed it seems that no one has attempted to do this at any of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) colleges or universities. While methods have been developed to analyze and describe collegiate ethos these have not been applied in this instance, and thus a "gap" appears in terms of what is known about the nature of institutional culture and organizational ethos in the Seventh-day Adventist sector of American private higher education.

#### Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the institutional character and organizational ethos at the eight [non-University] Seventh Day Adventist colleges in the United States. This study will attempt to describe, in commonly accepted dimensions, the institutional culture which prevails at Seventh-day Adventist colleges.

#### Statement of the Research Questions

This study will address the following research questions:

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<sup>14</sup>See Terance E. Deal and Allan A. Kennedy, Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982); Andrew T. Masland, "Organizational Culture in the Study of Higher Education," Review of Higher Education v.8 (Winter 1985) pp. 157-88; William G. Tierney, "Dimensions of Culture: Analyzing Educational Institutions." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, St. Louis, Missouri, 3-6 November 1988.

1. What is the nature of the institutional character and ethos which exists at each college?
2. Can a common institutional character be described?
3. Does the religious, doctrinal foundation of these colleges foster a distinct institutional self-concept?

### Significance of the Study

Every institution, as was noted earlier, can be described in terms of its cultural dimensions which are embodied in internalized values, goals, and behaviors. Though it is accepted that all colleges have an institutional culture it does not follow that this has been investigated or described in all institutional settings.

Seventh-day Adventist colleges are a sector of American higher education where almost no research has been conducted. Little exists among research-based works that can give the reader any insight into the workings and inner mechanism of SDA education, and although a fairly large body of published material exists which has been written by Adventists about themselves, most of this deals with discussion of what SDA's call "the Blueprint" of how their educational institutions ought to be operated and says very little about how they actually do operate or what their institutional character is like. More will be said about this institutional character in the Review of Literature chapter which follows.

Examination of both ERIC and Dissertation Abstracts show an almost total lack of published research on any aspect of the Seventh-day Adventist system of

higher education. Yet these colleges and universities, eleven in number, enroll a significant number of students and employ over 1700 faculty members. Clearly this shows a need to further examine this sector of American private higher education.

As will be shown in Chapter II, SDA's make certain claims about the uniqueness of their education system, yet these institutions have not been researched in any way which portrays their institutional ethos or organizational culture. This study which explores a virtually un-researched aspect of higher education will make a significant contribution to the knowledge base of the profession of higher education.

#### Limitations of this Study

This study will focus rather narrowly on the cultural dimensions of Seventh-day Adventist colleges. In examining institutional culture there will not be any attempt made to investigate the administrative practices at the colleges nor to research whether or not they are attaining their stated institutional mission(s) or goal(s). Neither will this paper inquire into the theological or philosophical bases of SDA colleges except in so far as it directly relates to their understanding of their own identity. Further, no attempt will be made to compare SDA colleges with other private Christian colleges except in so far as the Review of Literature examines what has been written about organizational culture at religiously-based private colleges. This study will attempt to narrowly focus on discovering and then describing the

institutional culture and organizational ethos at Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States.

### Organization of the Remainder of this Study

The remainder of this study is divided into four parts. Chapter II reviews literature related to institutional culture, beginning with a general review of materials which define and describe organizational culture more generally before focusing on works which look more specifically at the culture and ethos of colleges and universities. Furthermore, Chapter II will then examine more narrowly the literature relating to the smaller, private colleges (especially those with strong ties to church bodies) and end with a discussion of the specifics of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophies of education.

Chapter III identifies the methodologies employed. It names the eight Seventh-day Adventist colleges upon which this study will center and describes and enumerates their teaching faculty, who are the population selected to be surveyed. Chapter III then describes the chosen survey instrument for this study, the Institutional Functioning Inventory, discusses its validity and reliability, and describes how it will be administered to the population.

Chapter IV contains the results which were obtained from the administering of the survey instrument as described in Chapter III. The six scales from the I.F.I. will be analyzed for each institution separately and then the institutions' composite results will be reported, described, and compared. In addition, Chapter IV will

address the question of whether commonality of institutional ethos exists among the colleges studied.

In the concluding chapter, Chapter V, a summary will be given of the information obtained from both the Review of the Literature and from the analysis of the surveys which were administered. The research questions which were proposed earlier in this chapter will be reviewed and answered in Chapter V. Conclusions will be offered based on the information which this study has collected and analyzed. Finally, recommendations will be given for further research on the institutional character of Seventh-day Adventist colleges.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter contains the four sections. Following this introductory section there is a section on culture in institutions of higher education. After this there is a section on the institutional character of the small private college. Following this there is a fourth and final section on the character of Seventh-day Adventist institutions.

In his preface to his novel The Sun Also Rises, Ernest Hemingway lifts a passage from the Bible, from the book of Ecclesiastes. Beginning with a calm and simple statement of the temporality of man on an eternal earth, the passage transitions to images of harmonious natural processes and the cycle of the seasons.

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever... The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose... The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits... All rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.<sup>15</sup>

The study of human organizations seems to arise from an innate human propensity to seek order and structure in the world.

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<sup>15</sup>from Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.) (Opening page, not numbered.)

The sun rises and sets; people are born and die; the seasons come and go. The spatial patterning and temporality of man's experience establishes an *imagery of order*, forming a backdrop to the drama of cosmos arising out of chaos...there has been built into man's semiotic of experience... *the unquestionable assumption that this is an orderly universe.*<sup>16</sup>

Whether "order" is inherent among human societies or whether "order" is a construction or paradigm through which we choose to view the world is not a settled question, as arguments can be raised to support each view. Kuh and Whitt state that, for more than 50 years, the "conventional paradigm" has dominated our thinking about institutions of higher education and how they should be managed. "Conventional organizational models" are based on scientific or logical positivist paradigms that presuppose organizational and managerial rationality. The problem with such paradigms is that they often fail to explain events and behaviors that are neither rational nor based on "linear reasoning."<sup>17</sup>

The "conventional paradigm" is evident in administrative practices such as management-by-objectives, goal-based planning, organizational charts with commensurate channels of communication and lines of authority, and hierarchal structures.<sup>18</sup> These practices are, themselves, manifestations of Max Weber's ideal

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<sup>16</sup>P.Meadows, "The Metaphors of Order: Towards a Taxonomy of Organizational Theory," in Sociological Theory: Inquiries and Paradigms, edited by L. Gross, (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 78. (emphasis added)

<sup>17</sup>George Kuh and Elizabeth Whitt, The Invisible Tapestry: Culture in American Colleges and Universities (Washington, D.C: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1, Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1988) pp. 4-5.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.



bureaucracy, which would display coordinated and goal-seeking behaviors, employ specialized workers who function only within the area(s) of their expertise, and rely on a body of rules and codified procedures to focus the organization's decision-making.<sup>19</sup>

An alternative paradigm is that order and organization is not what is inherent in human society -- ambiguity and uncertainty are intrinsic characteristics of human interaction -- and that to understand "organizations" one must suspend the presupposition of organizational rationality and view these entities through phenomenological or cultural "lenses."

The core of the problem...[is that] pictures and explanations are ... not the real world. They are "conventions" [and]...if one treats them as reality they are impossible to transcend... Ultimately what makes sense is irrevocably culturally determined and depends heavily on the context in which the evaluation is made.<sup>20</sup>

In other words, examining organizational culture is a way of finding structure in reality -- of discovering the contextual clues needed to interpret behaviors, words, and acts and to give these events meaning within their given frame of reference.<sup>21</sup>

The problem with attempting to rely on "culture" as a tool for organizational analysis is that the word "culture" is so often used and misused that it could,

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<sup>19</sup>see Max Weber, Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology (New York, New York: Bedminster Publishing, 1968).

<sup>20</sup>H.T. Hall, The Hidden Dimensions (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 188

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

conceivably, cease to have a definitive meaning. According to Kuh and Whitt, "cultural perspectives have been ...used in a general, all-encompassing manner to subsume almost every concept, event, or activity that might occur within an organized setting," up to and including the use of the word "culture" itself as a metaphor for organizations.<sup>22</sup>

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined culture as

...a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols; a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which [people] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.<sup>23</sup>

Other definitions show similar, but not altogether identical, perspectives, especially when examining the phenomenon in an organizational context. Deal and Kennedy defined culture as "the core set of assumptions, understandings, and implicit rules that govern day-to-day behavior in the workplace."<sup>24</sup> Peterson et al. relied on the definition of "the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that participants have about their organizations."<sup>25</sup> William Tierney relies on Clifford Geertz's work

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<sup>22</sup> George Kuh and Elizabeth Whitt, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> T.E. Deal and A.A. Kennedy, Corporate Cultures (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1982), p. 498.

<sup>25</sup> M.W. Peterson et. al., The Organizational Context for Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Research Literature (Ann Arbor, Michigan: National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, 1986), p.81.

to suggest a more descriptive definition of organizational culture. Beginning from a Geertzian statement that "man is an animal suspended in the webs of significance he himself has spun," Tierney says

...an analysis of organizational culture of a college or university occurs as if the institution were an interconnected web that cannot be understood unless one looks not only at the structure and natural laws of the web, but also at the actors' interpretations of the web itself. *Organizational culture, then, is the study of the particular webs of significance within an organizational setting.*<sup>26</sup>

### Culture in Institutions of Higher Education

Because culture, academic or otherwise, is inseparably connected to a context or setting, every institution's culture will be, to a greater or lesser degree, different. Notwithstanding this, every organization's culture is shaped or created by the same basic forces or factors. Chaffee and Tierney point to the "powerful external factors" which impinge on every organization. These would be political, economic, and demographic forces which shape an organization and propel it in certain directions, with or without its cooperation.<sup>27</sup>

This should not be surprising. Every educational institution is a participant in its country's economic and political context, and it stands to reason that events or

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<sup>26</sup>William G. Tierney, "Organizational Culture in Higher Education," Journal of Higher Education, vol. 59, No. 1, (January/February 1988), p. 4.

<sup>27</sup>Ellen Chaffee and William Tierney, Collegiate Culture and Leadership Strategies (New York, New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1988), p. 7.

forces in the latter will impact on the former. As will be seen later in this chapter, however, some higher education institutions are less affected by external forces than are others, because they seek (as a matter of policy) to insulate themselves from those forces or changes.

Every organization's culture is also shaped by "internal dynamics" as well. Chaffee and Tierney point to an entity's history and origins as having a powerful influence on its culture. History, however, is affected by values, which are oftentimes in the process of evolving, and by the interpretation of these by the organization's people, both leaders and employees.<sup>28</sup> Traditions arise and take on a life of their own. Stories of past events at a particular college are told and re-told, not always accurately, serving to reinforce certain core values or behaviors or to negatively reinforce others. Over time these stories, often characterized now by the descriptive term "institutional saga," become part of the essential fabric of institutional identity and help a college's people define who they are, what is important, and what they should be doing.<sup>29</sup>

Kuh and Whitt delineate, perhaps as succinctly as anyone has, the "cultural forms" which mutually interact with each other, making "cumulative contributions" to create a college or university's own distinctive culture. These "cultural forms" which follow, it must be understood, are both process and product, as each is both

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>see Burton Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education," in Readings in Managerial Psychology (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago University Press, 1980).

an input and an outcome in creating and maintaining an institutional culture.<sup>30</sup>

Rituals are social constructions such as convocations, graduations, presidential inaugurations, dedications, or recurring activities of campus societies or organizations, which help to create and maintain patterns of collective action and social structure. They are both "staged" and public, and demonstrate the importance of traditions.

Rites are elaborate, dramatic, and planned occurrences designed to consolidate a number of cultural values and interactions into one event, and performed before an audience.

Symbols are an object, act, or event that serves as a vehicle for conveying meaning by representing some other thing. Symbols come in many varieties (an office well located, having one's own secretary, parking place, or letterhead) but all serve to denote that their possessor has a value which merits possessing or receiving them.

Myths are dramatic narratives of imagined events, serving to explain the origins or importance of some other thing. They are also unquestioned beliefs, widely held, which serve to motivate and empower their hearers.

Legends are handed-down narratives of some major event (it can be either good or bad) which has some historical basis but which has been "embellished" with fictional details. The fact that a legend continues to be remembered and re-told shows that it serves an important role in perpetuating some common or important value(s).

Language, to be organization-specific, refers a system for transmitting thoughts or meanings to other members. Clearly, it must have a form that can be shared and understood by others, but language has a special organizational application when meanings are apparent only to initiates and insiders.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Their list of "cultural forms" is adapted from H.M. Trice and J. Beyer, "Studying Organizational Cultures through Rites and Ceremonials, in Academy of Management Review (vol. 9, 1984), pp. 653-69.

<sup>31</sup>George Kuh and Elizabeth Whitt, op. cit., pp. 16-23.

There are other "cultural forms" such as settings (physical surroundings, including the intangibles surrounding these), artifacts (material objects generated by people in order to encapsulate or represent something of cultural significance), and even time (how people spend time, plus what is considered either an important use or "waste" thereof), but what is important here is the understanding that all of these "cultural forms" provide clues to a deeper, pervasive system of *shared* meanings.<sup>32</sup> Culture is transmitted through these forms described here above, and the individuals functioning in this cultural milieu understand both the organization and their place and role in it by virtue of the entire system of interlocking meanings -- Geertz and Tierney's "web" of meanings mentioned earlier -- that is communicated to them through these forms, symbols, and events.<sup>33</sup>

Academic culture should not be an abstraction, however. One important justification for examining institutional character is that institutional success and managerial performance depend on understanding the context(s) in which academic leaders and their faculty members interact.<sup>34</sup> Tierney states that one central goal of understanding organizational culture is to minimize conflict and to help foster the development of shared goals. Further,

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 13, 14, and 23.

<sup>34</sup>R. Eugene Rice and Ann E. Austin, "High Faculty Morale: What Exemplary Colleges Do Right" in Change, March/April 1988, pp. 51-58.

as decision-making contexts grow more obscure, costs increase, and resources become more difficult to allocate, leaders in higher education can benefit from understanding their institutions as cultural entities...To implement decisions leaders must have a full, nuanced understanding of the organization's culture.<sup>35</sup>

Tierney also stresses the point that an awareness of culture enables participants to recognize those actions and shared goals most likely to succeed and how they can best be implemented adding, with a noticeable tone of regret, that "administrators tend to recognize their organization's culture only when they have transgressed its bounds." He continues,

our lack of understanding about the role of organizational culture in improving management and institutional performance inhibits our ability to address the challenges that face higher education.<sup>36</sup>

At least some colleges, most notably certain smaller liberal arts colleges have long been, according to Rice and Austin, "quite aware of the power and significance of organizational culture in the life of an institution."<sup>37</sup> In their article on what exemplary colleges are doing that makes them so exemplary they give as the first of four key features "they all have *distinctive organizational cultures* that are carefully nurtured and built upon."<sup>38</sup> They describe these as "strong, penetrating cultures,"

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<sup>35</sup>William G. Tierney, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>37</sup>R. Eugene Rice and Ann E. Austin, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid. (emphasis theirs.)

pointing out that what is distinctive or special about these exemplary colleges they identified is that each has a clearly articulated mission and "a coherent culture [which] permeates the fabric of the institution." The nurturing and building which was referred to above

...is made evident and reinforced through events and structures that are heavily laden with the symbolic -- the stories that are told, the people honored, the ceremonies and rituals, the personnel policies, even the architecture.<sup>39</sup>

Rice and Austin also point to another key characteristic of exemplary colleges, one which is deeply imbedded in the institution's milieu. Focusing on the faculty members themselves they found that "faculty...have an unusually strong identification with their institution," and that the congruence between individual faculty members' commitments and goals and those of the college is "particularly striking."<sup>40</sup>

This sense of identification with one's college, its beliefs, and its values, may lead to the developing of an *institutional ethos*. Not all colleges have a distinctive institutional ethos; large institutions, or those which are structurally complex (including those with multiple campuses or large proportions of commuter students)

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p.53.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.56.



rarely develop an "ethos,"<sup>41</sup> though some would argue that the lack of an ethos is, itself, a sort of ethos. The presence of a strong, distinctive culture, however, feelings of community and "...a capacity for relatedness within individuals -- relatedness not only to people but to events in history...[and] to the world of ideas..." often lead to an unspoken sense of connectedness that is called "an ethos."<sup>42</sup>

Kuh and Whitt refer to institutional ethos as "an underlying attitude that describes how faculty and students feel about themselves," comprised of "the moral and aesthetic aspects of culture that reflect and set the tone, character, and quality of institutional life," and arising from "deeply held beliefs and guiding principles"<sup>43</sup> Heath defined five "themes" of institutional ethos. In order for an institution to be said to possess its own, distinct ethos, it must be: (1) reflectively self-aware, (2) empathically responsive, (3) internally coherent (4) stably resilient, and (5) autonomously distinctive.<sup>44</sup> These themes, given slight interpretive license, are consistent with the characteristics that define the exemplary colleges in the research by Rice and Austin which was earlier referred to previously and which will be referred to again under the next heading.

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<sup>41</sup>see, for example, Burton R. Clark, "Faculty Culture" in The Study of Campus Cultures (Boulder, Colorado: Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 1963), pp. 39-54.

<sup>42</sup>P.J. Palmer, "Community, Conflict, and Ways of Knowing," in Change, vol.19 No.5, 1987, p. 24.

<sup>43</sup>George Kuh and Elizabeth Whitt, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>44</sup>D.H. Heath, "A College's Ethos: A Neglected Key to Effectiveness and Survival," in Liberal Education vol. 67, 1981.

### Institutional Character of the Small, Private College

"At its most general level," states Robert D. Peck, Vice-president of the Council for Independent Colleges, "the purpose of the liberal arts college is to graft each new generation into the stream of human culture and civilization."<sup>45</sup> He continues,

Scholarship in the liberal arts college is not aimed immediately at expanding the store of knowledge but at informing the lives of young people with that knowledge. It is essentially a synthesizing operation aimed at the whole person.<sup>46</sup>

In his capacity as an officer for the Council for Independent Colleges, a Washington, D.C.-based organization which represents the interests of smaller, private colleges, Robert Peck has written several articles which will be reviewed here. Of interest is much of his writing in the mid-1980's which sought to identify characteristics of small colleges which made them "successful."<sup>47</sup> In his research he found a number of characteristics common to the culture and character of small, private, liberal arts colleges and it is these findings which follow.

"Evidence suggests a difficult future for small, independent colleges -- the

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<sup>45</sup>Robert D. Peck, "Entrepreneurship as a Significant Factor in Successful Adaptation," Journal of Higher Education vol.55, no.2 (March/April 1984), p. 273.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Dr. Peck's criteria for what constitutes a "successful" small college is not related to the purpose of this study and will, thus, not be delineated here.

invisible colleges of the eighties," according to Peck.<sup>48</sup> Despite this, many small colleges continue to exist and even thrive in a highly competitive higher education market. Peck reports that the general characteristics of the colleges [in his studies] appear to be so universal as to constitute a reliable profile of small colleges which remain viable and which show successful adaptation to their environment and its challenges.<sup>49</sup>

The particular or distinctive mission of certain small colleges creates for each one a set of institutional *values*: purposes and values that inform each campus's elan. These institutional values, which are seen by Peck as being of critical importance to a college's success, "...not only define the ways in which relationships are formed throughout the community, but they define the content of nearly all activities."<sup>50</sup> Values "...bind all members [of the college community] into a common outlook with a common goal."<sup>51</sup>

Successful administration of a small college, in fact, "arises in the context of a commitment to a mission..." and "...it is extremely important that there be an opportunity to participate in the formulation of mission as well as in its

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<sup>48</sup>Robert D. Peck, "The Entrepreneurial College Presidency," Educational Record (Winter 1983), p. 19.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>50</sup>Robert D. Peck, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

implementation."<sup>52</sup>

The centrality of mission, well-understood and widely-accepted, to collegiate culture has been reported by other researchers. Fleischauer stated that, while many management models tended to oversimplify the complex job of the college administrator, his key task is still to seek coherence of goals and a commitment to student development by focusing disparate visions towards common ends.<sup>53</sup> Rice and Austin also reported on mission and the faculty's commitment to it. Rice and Austin also reported on mission and the faculty's commitment to it. Rice and Austin also reported on mission and the faculty's commitment to it. While their study was attempting to identify the commonalities among colleges where the faculty have high morale, their findings show that academic culture is strongly influence by the prevalence of a sense of mission. "Particularly striking," they state, "is the congruence between individual faculty members' commitments and goals and those of the institution."<sup>54</sup>

Small, private colleges, according to Peck, are extensively shaped by the personality and performance of their presidents.

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>53</sup>John F. Fleischauer, "Thoughts of a Small College Dean on Management," Educational Record (vol.71, no.1) Winter 1990, pp. 22-23.

<sup>54</sup>R. Eugene Rice and Ann. E. Austin, op. cit., p. 56.

...if there is one central characteristic of college presidents it is ... the feeling of "top-down" administration [that] pervades the small college -- not so much by the exercise of autocratic power as by an exercise of will.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps because of the comparatively smaller size of private liberal arts college their administrators are able, far better than at a large university to know something about "everything" that is going on at their institution. Small college presidents, according to Peck,

...reported a need to know what is happening on the campus and in the constituent environment...Presidents walk the campus, visit with students, staff members, and faculty members casually as well as formally...In the widest possible variety of ways, small college presidents keep in touch with the internal and external environments of their respective institutions.<sup>56</sup>

Of course, the mission and the administration of the small, private college are not the only bases on which its characteristics and culture can be described. In a 1978 study published through the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Jonsen produced a thorough paper describing this sector of American higher education, which he believed to be endangered. Though he cautioned that "there is no 'typical' small, less-selective, private liberal arts college,"<sup>57</sup> he suggests that there are a number of what he terms "patterns," a brief discussion of which follows.

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<sup>55</sup>Robert D. Peck, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>57</sup>Richard W. Jonsen, Small Liberal Arts Colleges: Diversity at the Crossroads? ASHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report no.4 (Washington, D.C: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, 1978), p. 19.

There is a pronounced tendency for the small, private college to be located in a rural area. In fact, less than twenty percent of what Astin called "the Invisible Colleges" are located in or near a major city.<sup>58</sup> Further, there is a tendency for the smaller liberal arts colleges to be located in the Midwest and the Southeast, although they are present in nearly every state, "...with twenty eight percent of all small, private, less selective liberal arts colleges being located in the Southeastern states."<sup>59</sup> Such colleges, not surprisingly, attract a disproportionate number of students from rural backgrounds.<sup>60</sup>

Jonsen also found that small, private, liberal arts colleges (SPLAC's) show many characteristics intrinsically related to their size, i.e., what he termed "the benefits of smallness, which are cohesiveness, community, friendliness, and warmth." Writing with an almost nostalgic quality, he states,

These colleges have an atmosphere of cohesiveness and friendliness with close and informal contacts among students, and between students and faculty. "Concern for the individual student" and identification with the college are social realities, not just catalog rhetoric.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>see A.W. Astin and B.T. Lee, The Invisible Colleges: A Profile of Small, Private Colleges with Limited Resources (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1972).

<sup>59</sup>Richard W. Jonsen, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

He adds, however, that because these colleges tend to be less selective, "the cohesiveness and warmth gained because of smallness is traded-off for climates weak in intellectual and academic aspiration."<sup>62</sup>

Continuing on the characteristics pertaining to academic rigor and intellectual life, Jonsen notes that the faculty members at SPLAC's "appear to possess less powerful academic preparation than [the faculty at] other kinds of institutions."<sup>63</sup> He points to the lower-than-market salaries received by the typical faculty member at these small colleges and notes that doctoral degrees (of which there are fewer than would be expected among the faculty at comparable state colleges) "are more often from second rank and regional universities."<sup>64</sup> Yet in spite of these less than optimum factors, Jonsen observes that faculty members place greater priority (than their colleagues at other types of institutions) on students' emotional and moral development and on fostering deeper levels of students' self-understanding. Further,

...because of the attractiveness of the atmosphere, religious affiliation, or other [quality-of-life] factors... [these colleges] recruit and retain remarkably talented and dedicated faculty.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 13. Jonsen cites a figure of on 35.1% of faculty at SPLAC's holding a doctorate or equivalent degree, but his source for this figure was a 1973 study by the American Council for Education (ACE).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

Institutional character at small, private colleges has been studied by other researchers as well. In a 1987 paper examining the work values<sup>66</sup> and job satisfaction of faculty members at 40 institutions (20 church-related and 20 independent) Skaggs found that "way of life," (work that permits one to live the kind of life one chooses and to be the type of person one wants to be) was the most valued outcome sought by faculty members.<sup>67</sup> When the colleges in his sample were separated into the two categories of church-related and independent, however, the faculty from church-related colleges placed their highest value on Altruism,<sup>68</sup> which, he says, "...support[s] the expected finding that church-related faculty consider their teaching as a ministry."<sup>69</sup>

Faculty at church-related colleges also differed significantly from their colleagues at independent colleges in the value they place on their associates and co-workers -- faculty at church-related colleges placed much higher value on their fellow faculty members as a source of satisfaction in their work.<sup>70</sup> Skaggs, in fact, found

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<sup>66</sup>defined as "the satisfaction which men and women seek in work and the satisfactions which may be the concomitant or outcomes of work; values which are extrinsic to, and intrinsic in, work." This definition was adapted by Skaggs from D.E. Super, Work Values Manual (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton-Mifflin), 1970.

<sup>67</sup>W. Jack Skaggs, Work Values of Faculty Members in Selected Small Liberal Arts Colleges: A Comparative Study. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Baltimore, Maryland, November 21-24, 1987), p. 14.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 14 & 18.



this to be the "most significant difference" in his comparison of faculty members at the two types of small colleges: faculty at church-related colleges have a greater desire for associating with colleagues. He attributed this to "...the similarity of backgrounds, beliefs, and basic life style."<sup>71</sup>

Skaggs points to a number of similarities in work values of faculty members at both categories of SPLAC's but one of his concluding points seems especially germane for the purposes of this paper. Skaggs states that

...there is a distinctiveness that can be attached to the church-related college faculty. The study suggests a greater closeness and sense of mission than is found at the independent college. At the same time, there seems to be a more submissive attitude among faculty at the church-related college.<sup>72</sup>

Fouts and Hales, whose study was cited in the Introduction, seem to be the researchers who have examined most closely the types of colleges which it is the purpose of this paper to investigate. In their 1985 article they reported on the nature of the environment at small, liberal arts Christian colleges.<sup>73</sup> They focused on six small, regionally-accredited Christian colleges who, according to their catalogs, state that a Christian environment or a Christian education is an important or major purpose of the institution.

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>73</sup>Jeffrey T. Fouts and Loyde W. Hales, "A Controlled Environment: The Nature of the Small, Liberal Arts, Christian College," Journal of College Student Personnel (vol.26, no.6) November 1985.

In their findings they report that behavioral and social expectations at these colleges are clearly defined and enforced. Faculty members perceive themselves as having less opportunities for personal and academic freedom and report low diversity (in terms of the types of people that both work at and attend their colleges) among themselves and among the college's student population. These institutions were said by their faculty to provide far fewer activities for intellectual and aesthetic activities and to not place high priority on research or publishing. They showed low attention to community service or involvement and were not highly concerned about improving society or changing social conditions.<sup>74</sup> The colleges did, however, show a very strong sense of community and the faculty reported a high degree of commitment to their college and its mission.<sup>75</sup>

Fouts and Hales ventured a "generic description" of the SPLAC's in their sample, reporting that

These small, liberal arts Christian colleges may be described as institutions that are relatively homogeneous in faculty and student ethnicity, social background, political and religious beliefs, and personal tastes... There is heavy institutional emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates; it is a major priority... There is a genuine feeling of community on these campuses, with shared beliefs in the goals and objectives of the institutions and positive faculty-administrator relationships.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 528-30.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p.539.

### The Institutional Character of Seventh-day Adventist Institutions

In the Introduction chapter of this study a statement was made that "Seventh-day Adventist colleges are a sector of American higher education where almost no research has been conducted." (page 7). It also stated that a fairly large body of published material exists which has been written by Adventist about themselves, and though not all of this published material is specific to education or the SDA perspective on it, this latter body of literature is what this section will review.

Jonsen, whose study was cited previously, comments on the sectarian origins of American higher education. Speaking about the founding of colleges in the pre-Civil War era he states that

The controlling vision was of a single set of beliefs... Orthodoxy of thought and behavior was always expected of both students and faculty. Academically, the religious mission of these colleges was expressed in a rigidly prescribed and sequential four-year pattern of studies based on traditional antecedents.<sup>77</sup>

Seventh-day Adventist education is accurately described by Jonsen's historical summary. The Seventh-day Adventists believed that it was necessary to conduct their own, separate schools. This was due to SDA beliefs, summarized briefly, that man's fallen nature is inherently tending towards evil, and that restoring in man -- and the student -- the "defaced image of his/her creator" and the developing of

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<sup>77</sup>Richard W. Jonsen, op. cit., p.4.

Christian character should be the primary goals of education.<sup>78</sup>

The Adventists identified, and rejected, a "trinity of false education" which their schools were created to counteract. These were (1) Humanism -- the deification of human reason and intellect; (2) Naturalism -- the denial of the existence of anything supernatural; and, (3) Relativism -- the principle that there are no absolutes and that Truth is relative.<sup>79</sup> Early in the denomination's history Adventist parents found that they, alone, were unable to successfully counteract the influence of these teachings which their children were receiving in public schools, so they began to establish church-supported schools "...that would serve as cities of refuge for tempted youth."<sup>80</sup>

From the beginning Adventists have emphasized that education should be "practical." Students should be taught to think and to reason, especially in seeing cause and effect relationships, but they should also be involved in "daily systematic work" as an integral part of every program of education, so that each student might learn "the dignity of manual labor." This labor by students was also intended to be a means of financial assistance (in other words, wage or revenue generating) to help

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<sup>78</sup>Roger W. Coon, unpublished manuscript "Ellen White and the SDA Education Message," lecture notes for GSEM 532 at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. (Copy provided by the author.)

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Paul E. Plummer, "Adventist Education -- distinctively different," in Adventist Review, January 31, 1989, p. 14.

defray the costs of a student's education.<sup>81</sup>

The first "official" denominationally-sponsored school in Battle Creek, Michigan, was approved by the church's General Conference Committee in 1872, though it had been begun (with twelve students) in 1868. The first Seventh-day Adventist college, Battle Creek College (later Andrews University) was opened in August of 1874, later being moved, in 1901, to Berrien Springs, Michigan, where its successor remains today. At about the same time two other colleges whose successors also still operate were founded in 1882. Healdsburg College, which later became Pacific Union College, was founded in Healdsburg, California, and later moved to its present location near St. Helena in Napa County, California. South Lancaster, Massachusetts, was the site for the predecessor of the current Atlantic Union College, which was originally founded as a boarding, secondary school.<sup>82</sup>

The early Adventist schools were intended

to serve as a barrier against widespread moral corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the church by furnishing it with workers qualified to act in the fear of God as counselors and leaders...They were not to be patterned after the schools of the world. They were to stand as peculiar and be governed and controlled by Bible standards.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Roger W. Coon, op. cit. To this day, most SDA educational institutions have one or more campus-based "industries" which produce, with student labor, goods or services which are revenue generating.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid. Dr. Coon's unpublished manuscript contains material drawn from The SDA Encyclopedia, 1976 edition.

<sup>83</sup>Paul E. Plummer, op. cit.

In a recent article written by the President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dr. Robert Folkenberg updated the philosophy of the denomination, calling for the world church to renew its educational mission and to re-focus its efforts. The SDA church has recently devoted a large amount of time and resources into a thorough studying of its educational institutions and their effectiveness in serving God and the church. Folkenberg proposed a three-point strategy for all SDA educational institutions, every one of which must:

(1) purposefully create caring environments -- "students must experience a warm, supportive environment...you can't teach a student to love if you don't love that student."

(2) encourage debate, discussion, and self-discovery -- "passing the torch of faith is not the legalistic lockstep duplication of traditions of the past...this is where the student internalizes the morality that has been taught and modeled."

(3) develop service opportunities -- "if we are to train young people for service we need to *do* service things as a *part* of their education."<sup>84</sup>

The North American Division of the Adventist church recently completed a major project of self-study and introspection called *Project Affirmation*. While the three year-long study has produced two major policy documents, a summary of the goals and expectations for SDA education can be gleaned from one of them. Based on extensive surveys of students and teachers in Adventist education at all (though primarily focused on elementary and secondary schools) the Taskforce states that

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<sup>84</sup>Robert S. Folkenberg, "Nurturing our Next Generation Through the School," in Adventist Review, January 3, 1991, p. 16. (Emphasis his.)

"...the vast majority of Adventist parents... expect the schools to:

- provide quality academic training.
- serve as a major avenue for spiritual development and for *transmitting Adventist culture and values*.
- protect young students from teachings and influences that parents consider undesirable.
- educate a new generation of Church leaders.
- win young people for the Lord."<sup>85</sup>

This, it seems, is how the SDA's currently understand the institutional mission of their schools in general, whether primary, secondary, or post-secondary.

The statement just cited answers the purpose, or mandate, that was given to the Taskforce which generated the report. In an editorial announcing the completion of this exhaustive self-study published in the denomination's weekly magazine the editor refers to the assigned task, in tones that sounds as if that assignment has now been completed, which was

to set forth a clear, bold agenda for the future of Adventist education and to launch an ongoing process of planned change to achieve it.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Risk and Promise, A Report of the Project Affirmation Taskforces (Silver Spring, Maryland: North American Division Office of Education of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1991). (Emphasis added.) No author(s) or editor(s) were listed.

<sup>86</sup>Myron Widmer, "Project Affirmation -- Now What?" in Adventist Review, January 31, 1991, p. 4.

Yet Seventh-day Adventist higher education is a aspect of the church's mission where discussion to define its role still continues. In a 1991 article in The Journal of Adventist Education George Knight, a professor of Church History at the denomination's theological seminary, attempted to answer the questions about the "costs" of SDA college education and whether such education was "value for money."<sup>87</sup> Declaring that Adventists simply could not win a "quality-of-education war" against better funded state universities or heavily endowed private institutions, he said,

If the goal of Adventist education is to out-Harvard Harvard it is doomed to failure. In fact, in most cases Adventist Education can't even out-Podunk local Podunk U. when it comes to facilities and financial base.<sup>88</sup>

Surviving in the academic marketplace, Knight argues, is "insufficient grounds" for the high cost of an SDA college education; to justify their existence, Seventh-day Adventist colleges

must fill a gap that other institutions do not and *cannot* fill...The survival of Adventist colleges will not be worth the effort if these schools fail to produce a *unique* product.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>George R. Knight, "What Knowledge is of Most Worth ? Adventist Colleges and the Search for Meaning," Journal of Adventist Education, vol.54, n.2, December 1991/January 1992, p.5.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid. Emphasis his.



What that "unique product" must be is not a matter of uncertainty, according to Knight, but is, rather, a matter of applying what SDA educators already know.

This means that the curriculum of Adventist schools and colleges must not be a mere readjustment or adaption of the secular curriculum of the larger society. Biblical Christianity has a unique world view. Therefore, the Adventist curriculum must incorporate a unique philosophic framework and content if the denomination's schools and colleges are to help the church perform its special mission to the world.<sup>90</sup>

Notice the words Knight chooses here. The idea of being "unique" is clearly important to how Adventists understand themselves and their schools and colleges. SDA's do not seem to shirk from this characterization; they, in fact, seem to revel in what Knight calls "...the radical nature of Adventist world view compared to that of the larger culture."<sup>91</sup>

In the same issue of the Journal of Adventist Education another writer, discussing the core curriculum at SDA colleges stated that one of the justifications for a Christian-based core was that it would "...ground [SDA] students in a coherent vision of the truth...A core curriculum provides a way of incorporating our mission in a highly visible way."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>92</sup>Gary Land, "Getting to the Core: Redesigning the General Education Curriculum," Journal of Adventist Education, vol. 54, n. 2, December 1991/January 1992, p. 11.

Returning, then, in conclusion, to consideration of institutional culture, a statement from a 1972 non-SDA authored study seems especially appropriate.

The more firmly and zealously a college is related to a church, the more clearly it emerges as a distinctive environment. And this distinctiveness is defined by the uniformity [within the college community] of characteristics labeled community, propriety, and practicality.<sup>83</sup>

In the next chapter the methodology for investigating this distinct, institutional character of Seventh-day Adventist colleges will be discussed.

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<sup>83</sup>C.R. Pace, Education and Evangelism: A Profile of Protestant Colleges (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1972) p. 37.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

In order to establish a sound background for this study a thorough review of the literature was conducted. As was shown in the previous chapter, institutional culture and organizational ethos are concepts about which universal agreement still eludes us, through numerous common themes as to their nature and dimensions were identified and discussed. The selection of a methodology to describe and characterize institutional culture, therefore, is subject to certain limitations.

Several limitations to the research methodology which follows must be understood.

First, the population a researcher chooses will affect the generalizability of his results.<sup>94</sup> In this study the population to be surveyed are faculty members at Seventh-day Adventist colleges. The degree to which this population of college teachers can be demonstrated to be homogeneous with other, similar individuals at other private, church-related, liberal arts colleges has not been conclusively shown, though a paper by Skaggs<sup>95</sup> described a number of characteristics and attitudes

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<sup>94</sup>. Thomas J. Long, et.al., Completing Dissertations in the Behavioral Sciences and Education (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), p. 85.

<sup>95</sup> Jack W. Skaggs, "Work Values of Faculty Members in Selected Small Liberal Arts Colleges: A Comparative Study," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Baltimore, Maryland, November 1987.

which are closely related to the variables which this study will investigate. (A further discussion of this issue will follow in this chapter.)

A second limitation is that the survey instrument which this study will utilize, and all survey instruments in general, cannot report characteristics which it was not designed to measure. The selection of an instrument is necessarily, then, also a decision about what will not be investigated. (A further discussion of the chosen survey instrument and its limitations will follow later in this chapter.)

One further limitation must be expected, and that is the degree to which non-responses from surveys, both from individuals in the population and, moreover, by individual colleges invited to participate in this study but whose administrators may decline to do so, can reduce the validity of the data obtained.<sup>96</sup> Steps which will be taken to reduce the likelihood of non-response, as well as steps to encourage all colleges in the chosen population to participate in this study, will be described later in this chapter.

### Population

The population of this study are the faculty members of the eight Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States. The names of these colleges, the state in which each is located, and the numbers of their full-time faculty members are shown in Table 1.

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<sup>96</sup> Thomas J. Long, et.al., op. cit.

Table 1  
The Seventh-day Adventist Colleges  
in the United States

	faculty
Atlantic Union College (Massachusetts)	64
Columbia Union College (Maryland)	62
Oakwood College (Alabama)	107
Pacific Union College (California)	105
Southern College (Tennessee)	109
Southwestern Adventist College (Texas)	61
Union College (Nebraska)	60
Walla Walla College (Washington)	81
total faculty	649 <sup>97</sup>

Two additional Seventh-day Adventist universities and one medical junior college also exist and some explanation is necessary as to why they were not included in the population. Essentially it is because that they are distinctly different from the other eight colleges.

Andrews University (Michigan) employs 279 faculty and had a 1990 enrollment of 2869 students. While the students' numbers alone would tend to place this institution out of the same category as the other, smaller SDA colleges, Andrews was excluded because it is the location of the denomination's Theological Seminary and, together with a Graduate School, thirty-two percent of its students are not

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<sup>97</sup> Statistical Report of Seventh-day Adventist Conferences, Missions, and Institutions throughout the World for the Year Ending December 31, 1990, (Silver Spring, Maryland: Office of Archives and Statistics of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1991), p. 28.

undergraduates.<sup>98</sup>

Loma Linda University (California) employs 246 faculty members and enrolls 4098 students, but it is the location of the denomination's medical and dental schools as well as another Graduate School, and these latter three together account for forty three percent of Loma Linda's enrollment.<sup>99</sup>

Lastly, there is the Kettering College of Medical Arts (Ohio) which trains medical professionals and para-professionals and offers only Associate degrees.<sup>100</sup>

### Instrument

The purpose of this study, as was stated previously, is to examine the institutional character and organizational ethos at Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States. What is the nature of that institutional character and whether a common institutional character can be defined among the colleges are this study's research questions, and the instrument chosen must be one which will provide sufficient information to answer those questions.

The Institutional Functioning Inventory (I.F.I.) has been used in other, past

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

studies to measure and describe institutional culture and organizational ethos.<sup>101 102</sup> The I.F.I. was developed by the Institute of Higher Education, Columbia University, and is currently owned by the Educational Testing Service, (E.T.S.) Princeton, New Jersey.<sup>103</sup> The Technical Manual for the I.F.I. states that, while the I.F.I. was originally designed for use in institutional self-studies, it has been successfully utilized in research where an institution is being studied "externally," and

students of higher education may find the I.F.I. *useful in multicollege studies* that seek a better understanding of the varying roles of different colleges... An instrument aimed at recording faculty views may, therefore, add considerably to what is now known... Intercollegiate comparisons of I.F.I. data among the group may serve to *reveal differences not otherwise apparent*.<sup>104</sup> (Emphasis added.)

The Institutional Functioning Inventory is an instrument which was designed to be used primarily with college faculty members and relies on the collective perception technique to measure the institution's cultural characteristics. It contains 132 questions which are divided among eleven different dimensions or scales, though not all of these scales were judged to be useful for the purposes of this study.

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<sup>101</sup> Jeffrey T. Fouts, op. cit.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Birnbaum, "Presidential Succession and Institutional Functioning in Higher Education," Journal of Higher Education, March-April 1989, pp. 123-135.

<sup>103</sup> Institutional Functioning Inventory, Revised Edition, (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, College and University Programs, 1968, 1978)

<sup>104</sup> Richard E. Peterson, et.al., Institutional Functioning Inventory Technical Manual (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, Institutional Research Program for Higher Education, 1970, 1983, 1989) p. 13.

Additionally, a pre-test of the I.F.I. conducted at a Seventh-day Adventist college overseas brought a number of complaints about the length of the complete instrument and a resistance to taking the required time necessary to respond to 132 questions. A close examination of the potential eleven scales showed that the information which would be reported by *six* of these scales would provide sufficient information to answer this study's research questions.

No questions pertaining to a scale utilized in this study's instrument were edited or deleted. When a scale of the full-length I.F.I. was not used then none of the questions associated with that scale were used either.

A brief description of each scale included in this study's resulting instrument follows (the instrument itself is printed as Appendix A):

Intellectual-Aesthetic Extracurriculum (IAE): the extent to which activities and opportunities for intellectual and aesthetic stimulation are available outside the classroom.

Freedom (F): the extent of academic freedom for the faculty and students as well as freedom in their personal lives for individuals in the campus community. This includes respondents perceiving themselves free to discuss topics of potential controversy.

Human Diversity (HD): the degree to which faculty and the student body are heterogeneous in their backgrounds and present attitudes.

Concern for Undergraduate Learning (UL): the degree to which the college -- in its structure, function, and professional commitment of faculty -- emphasizes undergraduate teaching and learning.

Concern for the Advancement of Knowledge (AK): the degree to which the institution -- in its structure, function, and professional commitment of faculty -- emphasizes research and scholarship aimed at extending the scope of human knowledge.



Institutional Esprit (IE): the state of morale and sense of shared purposes among faculty and administrators.<sup>105</sup>

The Institutional Functioning Inventory is a questionnaire which is designed to be completed in approximately 20 minutes by filling in the respondent's answers onto an accompanying template-scorable answer sheet. Twenty six of the 72 questions ask the faculty member to respond with "yes," "no," or "don't know" ("yes" being defined as *the statement applies or is true at your institution*, and "no" being defined as *the statement does not apply or is not true at your institution*) to such questions as **"a number of departments frequently hold seminars or colloquia in which a visiting scholar discusses his ideas or research findings"** (question 21, associated with the Concern for Advancing Knowledge scale) or **"a concerted effort is made to attract students of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds"** (question 14, associated with the Human Diversity scale).<sup>106</sup>

The I.F.I. also contains 46 questions where a Likert-type scale is utilized for the respondent to provide an answer from among the choices "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." There is not an option among these questions to answer with "no opinion" or "don't know." Among these types of questions are **"religious authority has meant some curtailment of academic freedom for faculty and students,"** (question 34, which is associated with the Freedom scale)

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<sup>105</sup>Peterson, et.al., op. cit., pp. 1-2.

<sup>106</sup> Institutional Functioning Inventory, Revised Edition, op. cit.

and "the faculty in general is strongly committed to the acknowledged purposes and ideals of the institution" (question 70, which is associated with the Institutional Esprit' scale).<sup>107</sup> A complete copy of the research instrument, as stated previously, is contained in Appendix A.

As with any survey instrument some attention must be given to considerations of validity and reliability. The original version of the I.F.I. was first administered in 1968 and subsequent, revised versions of the instrument have, over time, generated a considerable base of data on which to make judgements as to how much confidence one can give to the results, or scores, which the I.F.I. reports.

Unlike many measurement instruments, the Institutional Functioning Inventory is a group measure and not an individual measure. Nonetheless, when considering the question of the *reliability* of the I.F.I. the important question, as is the case in any decision on reliability, is whether the items in one's chosen instrument are actually measuring the trait or quality the researcher is seeking to measure.<sup>108</sup> The internal consistency reliabilities of the I.F.I., based on more than 20 years of its use, are quite high. None of the eleven scales of the complete *I.F.I.* has a coefficient alpha lower than .86 and the median internal consistency coefficient is .92.<sup>109</sup> Intercorrelations among the eleven scales is also quite high. Four of the eleven scales show intercorrelations above .70 while an additional four scales have

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Richard E. Peterson, et. al., op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

intercorrelations at .60 or above. To use the Manual's example,

institutions perceived by their faculty as having a great deal of academic freedom (F) tend also to be perceived as attracting people with diverse backgrounds and values (HD) and as being committed to improving society.<sup>110</sup>

In considering the question of the Institutional Functioning Inventory's *validity*, the researcher must be able to demonstrate that the institutional characteristics defined in the I.F.I.'s scales are actually measured by the instrument. In other words, once certain scales that purport to describe institutional functioning and character are defined, can the test's authors show that colleges which score high on a given trait or scale also exhibit other characteristics which can be shown to be related to, or correlated with, the trait or scale in question?<sup>111</sup>

In the I.F.I.'s Technical Manual the authors rely on four different kinds of external (to the I.F.I.) information to demonstrate that the instrument does, indeed, meet sufficient criteria to assert its validity. They utilize relevant published institutional data, student perceptions of their college environment<sup>112</sup>, and a

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<sup>110</sup>op. cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>111</sup>op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>112</sup>Based on a study of thirty institutions by C.R. Pace. College and University Environment Scales, second edition. (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1969).

national study of student protest<sup>113</sup> to demonstrate that the pattern of correlations for given scales correspond to the logically expected pattern, and thus assert that "...the construct validity for the scale[s] is supported."<sup>114</sup>

They also use a multigroup - multiscale matrix to analyze whether the responses received from similar groups of respondents are, in fact, similar.<sup>115</sup> In doing they find that "agreement is attained between groups in the way they respond to [a] scale..." which demonstrates that "...similar scale properties...are being measured."<sup>116</sup>

### Procedures

The I.F.I. was administered at those Seventh-day Adventist colleges which consented to participate in this study during the months of June, July, and August of 1992. At each campus the goal was to ensure that every full-time faculty member and administrator with faculty rank was asked for his/her responses. This was in accordance with the recommendations of the I.F.I.'s originators that, at smaller institutions (defined by them as institutions with a faculty numbering 100 or fewer

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<sup>113</sup>The protest data was obtained from a survey of student personnel deans at 859 four-year institutions during the 1967-68 academic year. R.E. Peterson, The Scope of Student Protest in 1967-1968. (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1968).

<sup>114</sup>op. cit., pp. 20-26.

<sup>115</sup>The instrument's authors present an intercorrelation matrix computed on the I.F.I.'s responses from three groups (faculty, administrators, and students). [The version of the I.F.I. administered to students measures only six of the eleven scales.]

<sup>116</sup>Ibid. p. 26.

members), "it will usually be preferable to distribute the I.F.I. to all of the faculty rather than a sample."<sup>17</sup>

At each campus a copy of the survey instrument (see Appendix A) plus an explanatory cover letter (see Appendix B) with an addressed, stamped envelope was delivered to each full-time faculty member as well as to each administrator having faculty rank. In three of the six colleges this delivery was made by the researcher personally, using that college's internal mail or faculty members' mailboxes as the medium for delivery. In the other three participating colleges the delivery of an instrument to each faculty member was accomplished through the assistance of an employee designated by the college's President.

In all six participating colleges an employee in the mail room (or, in one case, the college's Post Office) was enlisted to circulate the researcher's "follow-up" or reminder note to each participant who had previously received a survey instrument. A copy of this reminder, which is included as Appendix C, was placed in the mailbox of each faculty member approximately ten days to two weeks after he/she received his/her copy of the survey.

Each faculty member, as will be seen from reading the cover letter which was attached to each survey instrument (see Appendix B) was promised anonymity. The cover letter stated that each respondent's teaching field or academic department was not being requested. Further, no place was offered on the response sheet to provide

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<sup>17</sup>op. cit., p. 13.

such information. Additionally, no record was made of the names of faculty members at each college and no effort was made to associate any responses received with its respondent.

Each participating college was also promised anonymity. The six colleges participating in this study will henceforth be referred to as "college A," "college B," "college C," "college D," "college E," and "college F." These letters were assigned to a respective college on the basis of a random selection.

### Data Analysis

The instrument which this studies relies on in collecting its data, the Institutional Functioning Inventory, will report data on six different scales. (These scales were described earlier in this chapter.) If all the college faculty members invited to participate in this study actually do so then responses could potentially be received from a total of six hundred 49 faculty members at eight different Seventh-day Adventist colleges.

It should be remembered, during the discussion which follows, that the shortened version of the I.F.I. which this study is utilizing contains 72 questions. Two types of item formats are employed, which the Technical Manual labels as "factual items" (questions requiring a response of "yes," "no," or "don't know") and "opinion items" (which utilize a Likert scale, asking a response of "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree").<sup>118</sup> There are 26 of the former type of question

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<sup>118</sup>Richard E. Peterson, et. al., op. cit., p. 8.

and 46 of the latter.

Each college's responses will first be analyzed separately from the others. When the Educational Testing Service conducts the I.F.I. it first generates summary data for each institution, giving the institutional mean and standard deviation for each of the scales.

Each scale, it should be remembered, is represented by a total of twelve questions. (Six scales with twelve items for each, total 72 questions.) If a given respondent answered in the affirmative to each item representing, for example, the scale *Concern for Undergraduate Learning* (U) then his/her score on that item would be reported as a 12. The institutional mean, therefore, will represent a summarization of that college's responses for each scale.<sup>119</sup> This mean score, in turn, represents the "...performance of a relevant, representative group on the trait or characteristic in question."<sup>120</sup> Stated differently, the reported score on a given scale represents the "strength" or degree of presence of a give characteristic at the college under consideration.

What, then, is the meaning of a "high" or "low" score? Moreover, just what is a "high" score? The Technical Manual provides a set of norms to use as a basis for comparing a given college to other institutions. (These are based on previous applications of the I.F.I. at a number of institutions. The I.F.I. norm group is based

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<sup>119</sup>op. cit., pp. 34-39.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

on a population of 37 colleges and universities.) To continue with the example of the *Concern for Undergraduate Learning* (U) scale, the mean score, based on norms approximating the "national distribution [for] senior colleges" the mean score on the U scale is 8.49, with a standard deviation of 2.11. *Concern for Advancing Knowledge* (AK) has a mean score of 4.50 and *Freedom* (F) has a mean score of 9.05.<sup>121</sup> What is noteworthy is when individual institutions or classes of institutions depart significantly from these national norms. Such departures or deviations would show that a certain college had measurable differences in institutional character. Further, the appearance of a pattern of differences could give support to a conclusion that the institutional culture and character at the college(s) under study was distinctly different from the institutional culture found elsewhere.

This is precisely what Fouts and Hales found in their 1985 study of small, Christian liberal arts colleges. In their utilization of the I.F.I. they reported (to use the same three scales given as examples, above) institutional means of 9.25 for *Concern for Undergraduate Learning* (U), 1.42 for *Concern for Advancing Knowledge* (AK), and 4.49 for *Freedom* (F).

This study will report the institutional means for each scale at each participating college. This information, based on the data from the six scales, will form the basis for the answer to the first Research Question, i.e., what is the nature of the institutional character and organizational ethos which exists at each college?

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 37.



In order to answer the second Research Question, whether a common institutional character can be described, this study will compare the summary scores of all participating colleges first by plotting onto a graph the findings obtained for each institution on each of the six scales. A visual inspection of the graph will allow a first approximation of whether "commonality" can be discerned. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) will then be performed where the participating colleges will be the independent variables and the six scales of the I.F.I. will each, in turn, be considered as the dependent variable. With a significant F ratio for the ANOVA, and selecting an alpha level of .05, this analysis of variance procedure will show whether each of the college's mean scores differ sufficiently to conclude that they are significantly "different" from each other or whether they are "alike."<sup>122</sup>

In order to answer the third and last Research Question, i.e., whether the religious, doctrinal foundation of these colleges fosters a distinct institutional self-concept, the results obtained in answering the second Research Question (as described above) will be considered and compared to data from other studies which have relied on the I.F.I., especially the E.T.S.'s own "norm" for institutional mean scores as well as the Fouts and Hales [1983] study of Christian colleges.<sup>123</sup> Given the information which will have been obtained about the "aliqueness" of SDA colleges this study should be able to state whether a "character" of Seventh-day Adventist

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<sup>122</sup>This data analysis follows the procedures for data analysis used by both the E.T.S. and the Fouts and Hales (1985) study.

<sup>123</sup>op.cit.

colleges that is distinct from other institutions can be said to have appeared. Alternately, if the above-described analyses show that there are distinct differences between the participating SDA colleges, or if SDA colleges show themselves to be much like other Christian colleges or secular institutions, then a distinct institutional self-concept cannot be said to have been found.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Of the eight Seventh-day Adventist colleges identified in the previous chapter, six participated in this study. Two colleges did not participate because of a decision by their presidents that they not be included. Thus, the response rate for the SDA colleges, as a whole, was seventy-five percent. The two non-participating colleges, however, employ a less than proportional share of the SDA faculty members (i.e., only 121 out of a population of 649, or 18.6%), so that 81.4% of the faculty members at the non-University Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States were asked to participate in this study and received survey instruments enabling them to do so.

The total number of responses received was 245. From a population of SDA college faculty of 528 this represents a response rate of 46.4%. The response sheets were screened by the researcher and all 245 response sheets were found to be usable. None had to be discarded or deleted on account of un-readability or deliberate or accidental spoilage.

While a 46.4% response rate is not all that a researcher would hope for, it is about as high as is likely to be obtained from a study such as this, given the nature of the instrument (a questionnaire requiring the respondent to fill in his/her responses on a separate answer sheet, a procedure which takes an estimated 20

minutes time) and with each potential respondent receiving only one follow-up reminder. The time of year when the instrument was administered was also not ideal (summer, when many faculty are on campus less regularly than during the regular academic terms).

One of the drawbacks of the mailed questionnaire technique of data collection is the amount of nonresponse typically present. When a questionnaire is to be completed and mailed back

...many of the respondents may not care to return it. The initial response rate may be 40 percent *if you are lucky*. Repeated reminders *may* push this rate up to 60 percent."<sup>124</sup>

The same author suggested ways to increase the response rate: enclose a postpaid envelope, assure the respondent of the confidentiality of his/her answers, make an appeal explaining why the information you are seeking is important and how it could benefit the respondent to respond, and, lastly, by offering a gift.<sup>125</sup> All of these steps were taken with the exception of offering a gift. Jessen reports that response rates from mailed questionnaires commonly vary from five to ninety percent.<sup>126</sup> If there is a difference between the responses received and the responses which were not received (but which might have altered the data if they had been) then error

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<sup>124</sup>Des Raj, The Design of Sample Surveys (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), p.111. Emphasis added.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Raymond J. Jessen, Statistical Survey Technique (New York, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), pp. 455 - 458.

could enter one's reported findings.

Each response sheet which was returned was hand-scored by the researcher using templates. One template was used for each of the six scales of the instrument. Every response or "answer" sheet was then entered into two separate data files: one for the respondent's individual college and one for the data from all respondents from all participating colleges. There was no possibility that a respondent's answers would be incorrectly attributed to another, different college, as each college's response sheets were a different color.

Data analysis was performed through the Academic Computer Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro using the VAX/VMS computer. Initial data entry and analysis was carried out using *Minitab* and additional analysis (specifically the ANOVA) was performed using the *Statistical Analysis System*.

Table 2, which follows, shows a summary of the findings. It depicts the institutional mean score of each of the six scales for each of the six colleges and also shows the mean score (for each scale) for all 245 respondents without regard to college.

Table 2  
Institutional Means on the *I.F.I.* Scales

Scale	IAE	F	HD	UL	AK	IE
college A <sub>n=71</sub>	6.48	3.44	4.31	8.93	4.16	11.56
college B <sub>n=30</sub>	7.70	4.99	7.70	9.03	3.10	10.00
college C <sub>n=22</sub>	5.96	4.50	5.14	8.77	4.09	10.27
college D <sub>n=35</sub>	8.11	5.46	5.09	9.23	4.11	11.11
college E <sub>n=29</sub>	4.14	4.14	6.21	7.10	2.41	6.35
college F <sub>n=57</sub>	5.90	3.93	5.40	9.07	3.39	10.90
all responses, all colleges <sub>n=245</sub>	6.41	4.22	5.40	8.80	3.64	10.42

*n* indicates the number of responses

Table 3 shows the means scores for all respondents and presents these for comparison with the mean scores from the *I.F.I.*'s Technical Manual (which are the basis for comparing institutional responses with those of all other colleges) as well as comparable data obtained from an earlier study by Fouts and Hales.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> op. cit.

Table 3

*I.F.I.* Institutional Mean Scores

Scale	IAE	F	HD	UL	AK	IE
SDA colleges, 1992 <sub>n=245</sub>	6.41	4.22	5.40	8.80	3.64	10.42
"norm" score (mean), all U.S. colleges	8.49	9.05	7.11	8.18	4.50	8.51
Fouts & Hales, 1985 <sub>n=125</sub>	3.71	4.49	3.87	9.25	1.42	9.96

Findings as Related to Research Question 1

The first research question asked was "what is the nature of the institutional character and organizational ethos which exists at each college?" Each Seventh-day Adventist college will be examined in turn.

College A was, by coincidence, the college with the highest response rate. The scores which were obtained from college A on the instrument show an institution with the highest institutional esprit' of any Seventh-day Adventist college. The IE scale measures an institution's sense of shared purpose and the level of morale among faculty. According to the *I.F.I.*'s Technical Manual,

high scores reflect a feeling of genuine community (as commitment to shared objectives), loyalty to the institution and satisfaction with its work, open and honest communication among faculty and administrators, and respect for competency of administrative leaders.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>op.cit., p.2.

At the same time, college A scored lowest among SDA colleges on both the Freedom and Human Diversity scales. The Freedom scale measures the degree of both academic and personal freedom that respondents perceive they (and their students) possess. Not only is college A lowest among SDA colleges in "freedom," but it is lower than the norm for all American colleges and lower even than Fouts and Hales found among conservative Christian colleges in their 1983 study. (see Table 3.) Low scores here suggest an atmosphere where faculty and students are not permitted to discuss controversial topics or to behave in "non-conformist" ways. Such an environment, according to Peterson, et al., is one characterized by many restraints (whether explicit or implicit) on both on the members' personal and private lives, though he also points out that "avowedly sectarian colleges...may not be expected to score high on the...F [scale]."<sup>129</sup>

College A is also the most homogeneous among SDA colleges. A low score on the HD scale suggests that those in the college community, both faculty and students, are all essentially similar in outlook, values, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. Stated differently, those in the campus community at college A are generally "cut from the same cloth." The instrument's question number 35 is illustrative of this point. When asked their response to the statement "when recruiting new faculty, care is taken to seek candidates with a particular set of personal values," 67 out of 71 respondents (ninety-five percent) answered with either

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<sup>129</sup>Richard E. Peterson, et. al., op.cit., pp. 2-3.



*strongly agree or agree.*

College A scored much like other SDA colleges on the scales measuring Concern for Undergraduate Learning (UL) and Concern for Advancing Knowledge (AK). In each case they were above the mean score for all Adventist faculty members, but not significantly so.

College B, forty seven percent of whose faculty responded to the instrument, was more than one standard deviation [ $s=2.16$ ] above the SDA colleges' mean score on Human Diversity. They were the only participant to score above the "norm" score for all colleges on HD, so college B, as Seventh-day Adventist colleges go, has succeeded in attracting comparatively more students and faculty of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, and its community reflects a greater diversity of personal tastes and styles.<sup>130</sup>

College B is one of the least committed to what is usually labeled "scholarship" as measured by the Concern for Advancing Knowledge scale, though this is an ordinal finding and is not statistically significant at an alpha level of .05. College B showed the second highest level of personal and academic Freedom among all Adventist colleges though, again, this ordinal finding was not statistically significant.

Lastly, college B is among the most aesthetically and culturally stimulating of SDA colleges. On the instrument's question number five, for example, which asks

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

for a "yes" or "no" response to the statement "this institution attempts each year to sponsor a rich program of cultural events -- lectures, concerts, plays, exhibits, and the like," one hundred percent of respondents answered in the affirmative.

College C represented both the fewest number of responses returned and the lowest response rate, yet it is, arguably, the most "average" of Adventist colleges in the sense that the responses from college C showed mean scores most closely fitting the mean scores of all respondents. (A Pearson's *r* correlation of .99 appeared when college C's mean scores were compared to those of all respondents.) Its institutional mean scores are neither "highest" or "lowest" on any scale; ordinarily, college C is "in the middle" (i.e., ranks third or fourth in order, from highest to lowest) on every scale except Concern for Undergraduate Learning, where it is second from last (though none of these distinctions is statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$ ).

College D scored highest among SDA colleges on three scales: Institutional-Aesthetic Extracurricular (IAE), Freedom (F), and Concern for Undergraduate Learning (UL). Its difference on the IAE scale is statistically significant in its difference from all other participating colleges (at an alpha level of .05). Colleges which score high on IAE are, according to Peterson, et.al., "characterized by deliberate efforts to encourage intellectual and artistic interests."<sup>131</sup> Such an atmosphere, it should be noted, is occurring outside of the classroom, as the IAE scale attempts to measure opportunities for artistic and intellectual stimulation which

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

are "extracurricular." Clearly, college D has a rich, multifaceted, and "interesting" environment. Respondents report that there are many diverse activities and events: eighty-eight percent answered "yes" to question number eleven that students publish a literary magazine (the other twelve percent answered "don't know"); eighty-five percent answered "yes" to question number one about a campus art gallery displaying traveling or loaned exhibits or collections; and eighty-five percent answered affirmatively to question number seven about nationally known scientists and/or scholars being invited to campus each year to address students and/or faculty.

College D also has the highest level of Freedom among those campus surveyed. (When compared to colleges A and F this difference is statistically significant at an alpha of .05.) Likewise college D is highest on the scale measuring Concerns for Undergraduate Learning and was virtually tied with college A on Concern for Advancing Knowledge, and while these are merely ordinal positions and not significantly higher than other SDA colleges, these two scales considered together could, arguably represent a higher degree of commitment at college D to teaching and scholarship.

College E is a college that places lowest among participating colleges on four of the six scales, including Institutional-Aesthetic Extracurricular (IAE), Concern for Undergraduate Learning (UL), Concern for Advancing Knowledge (AK), and Institutional Esprit'(IE). With the exception of the AK scale these differences are statistically significant at the alpha level of .05.

A college scoring low on the Institutional-Aesthetic scale, for example, is a

relatively unstimulating environment. This college's responses to question number five which was earlier discussed (institutional attempts to sponsor artistic and cultural programs and events -- college B, for example, had a one hundred percent "yes" response) was overwhelmingly negative with seventy percent responding "no." Similarly, only twenty-five percent responded "yes" to question number 7 which asks whether national known scientists and/or scholars are invited to speak on campus.

College E also showed a significantly lower level of Concern for Undergraduate Learning. As an undergraduate institution with no graduate programs this, presumably, is central to their mission. College E's responses on the UL scale were lower than all other colleges in this study, and lower than all colleges which participated in Fouts and Hales [1985] study of Christian colleges.

Perhaps most unfortunate is college E's significantly lower scores on Institutional Esprit'. Institutional Esprit' is a measure of a college's sense of shared purpose and faculty morale. Low scores, according to Peterson, et al., "...suggest antagonism among and between faculty and administrators, low faculty estimates of the worth of the college, and poor morale in general."<sup>132</sup> The responses to two questions are illustrative of college E's low level of faculty morale. Forty four percent (forty-four percent) expressed agreement to question number 62's proposition that "staff infighting, backbiting, and the like seem to be more the rule than the exception." Similarly, fifty-nine percent expressed disagreement with

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<sup>132</sup>Peterson, et.al., op. cit., p.2.

question number 56's statement that senior administrators were both able and well qualified.

College F is another college whose responses generally followed the mean scores of all other respondents. The Aesthetic-Extracurricular environment is a little less stimulating than other SDA colleges, but not significantly so. The sense of personal and academic freedom perceived on campus is not high, but is not significantly worse than other Adventist colleges. The diversity of the community at college F is neither high nor low but is equal to the mean reported by all respondents. Their commitment to undergraduate teaching is higher than any other SDA college except college D, but this difference is only statistically significant when compared to college E. Similarly, the concern for advancing knowledge is slightly lower than other Adventist schools but the differences are not significant. Likewise, faculty morale and sense of commitment to a common purpose is relatively high at college F, but this difference is only significant when compared to college E.

The survey instrument is, thus, showing that the participating colleges have an academic character which can both be assessed and described. Whether the colleges, considered collectively, have a character or ethos which they share will be the focus of the next two sections, which follow.

### Findings Related to Research Question 2

The second research question asked was "can a common institutional character be defined?" In other words, are the Seventh-day Adventist colleges

sufficiently alike that an accurate generalized description can be offered? The institutional profiles, as measured by the I.F.I., show a number of similarities. For instance, when each college's responses on the separate scales are *ranked*, (in other words, the scales are ranked from highest to lowest) and then compared to the other responding college, the data appears as shown in Table 4, below.

Table 4  
Institutional Rankings and Median Rank  
for scales on the Institutional Functioning Inventory  
Rank within Institution

Scale	A	B	C	D	E	F	Median Rank
IAE	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
F	5	5	5	5	6	4	5
HD	3	3	4	4	4	5	4
UL	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
AK	6	6	6	6	5	6	6
IE	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

The institutional rankings of the scale means as depicted in Table 4 show no difference in scale rankings is larger than 2, and no college's scale ranking is more than one increment from the median. Note, for example, that all respondents (except those from college E) give their highest ranking to the IE scale and their lowest ranking to the AK scale. In other words, though individual colleges may score

differently when considering their mean scores on the separate I.F.I. scales there is a high level of consistency when it comes to the "weight" or prioritization given to the respective scales. Viewed in this manner the separate colleges display a good deal of similarity.

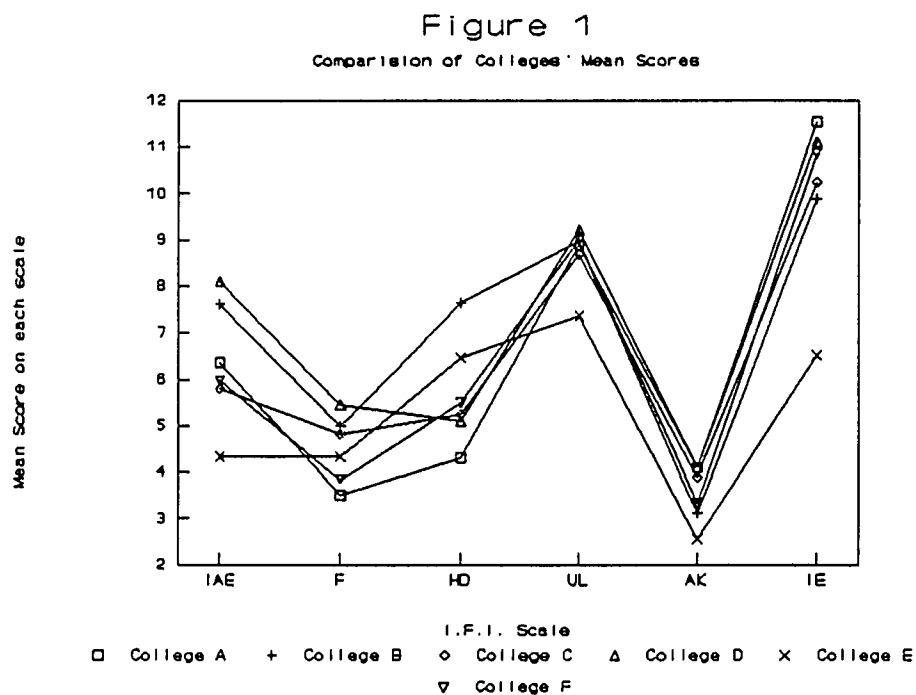
Another way to display the data in order to answer this research question is shown in Figure 1, which follows on the next page. The institutional mean score on each scale is presented for each separate college, but they are plotted on the same graph to facilitate a visual analysis.

Figure 1 shows that the institutional mean scores from the colleges display a degree of variance though the lines which represent each college's plotted scores show a degree of "fit" across the six scales.

Performing an analysis of variance (ANOVA) also provides data for answering the second research question. An ANOVA is an appropriate test to use here because this research question is seeking to determine if, as hypothesized, each of the populations surveyed have identical, or at least similar, mean scores (the possibility of which was raised in the Review of Literature chapter). The variations among the scale means between colleges were compared to the variation among the individual responses from each college.

An ANOVA was calculated, utilizing the data from all respondents at all participating colleges, with the computations being performed by the *Statistical Analysis System* (SAS) software. Each of the I.F.I. scales was entered as a dependent variable while the participating colleges were entered as independent variables. The

confidence interval selected was 0.95 ( $\alpha = .05$ ). The resulting information about variances between scales and among colleges is presented in Table 5.



Each I.F.I. scale is presented in a separate row. The abbreviations *SS*, *df*, and *MS* refer to sum of squares, degrees of freedom, and mean squares, respectively. The F-statistic, *F*, was arrived at by dividing the value of the *MS* Between Colleges by the value of the *MS* Within Colleges.



Table 5  
Analysis of Variance  
for I.F.I Scales  
IAE, F, HD, UL, AK, and IE

Scale	Source	SS	df	MS	F
IAE	Total	1223.2	244	--	--
	Between Colleges	323.8	5	64.77	17.21
	Within Colleges	899.3	239	3.76	--
F	Total	1314.7	244	--	--
	Between Colleges	129.8	5	25.95	5.23
	Within Colleges	1184.9	239	4.95	--
HD	Total	1132.6	244	--	--
	Between Colleges	266.5	5	53.30	14.71
	Within Colleges	866.1	239	3.62	--
UL	Total	787.8	244	--	--
	Between Colleges	98.7	5	19.74	6.85
	Within Colleges	689.1	239	2.88	--
AK	Total	794.7	244	--	--
	Between Colleges	89.3	5	17.86	6.05
	Within Colleges	705.4	239	2.95	--
IE	Total	1359.7	244	--	--
	Between Colleges	611.7	5	122.33	39.08
	Within Colleges	748.1	239	3.13	--

A brief discussion of Table 5 is in order. The columns headed *SS* show the sum of squares, which is a statistic that reflects variation. The larger the *SS* is, the more variation is indicated. The numbers for "between colleges" result from differences between the averages of the colleges in this study. The numbers for the "within colleges" entries arise from variation among the scores of respondents who are from the same college. In both cases, the more the respondents differ from each

other the larger the numbers in the respective *SS* columns will be.

Looking at the *MS* (Mean Square) column, the more the responses within a given college differ from each other the larger the *MS* within colleges will be. Similarly, the more the individual, participating colleges differ from each other the larger the *MS* between colleges will be.

The *F*-statistic is arrived at by dividing the value for the *MS* between colleges by the value for the *MS* within colleges. If the value of the *F*-statistic is larger than the critical value that corresponds to the chosen alpha level (which was .05) then the proposition that the respondents are identical, or even similar, must be rejected.<sup>133</sup> Consulting a statistical table for *F* Distributions<sup>134</sup> the critical value which corresponds to the degrees of freedom represented in Table 5 is 2.26. The values for the *F*-statistic on all I.F.I. scales is larger than the critical value for *F*, so the hypothesis that different Seventh-day Adventist colleges share a common institutional character, at least in so far as can be measured by this study's chosen instrument, must be rejected.

### Findings Related to Research Question 3

The third and last research question asked was "does the religious, doctrinal

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<sup>133</sup>Richard M. Jaeger, Statistics: A Spectator Sport (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), pp. 264 - 268. The discussion concerning the ANOVA analysis has also made use of Jaeger's book.

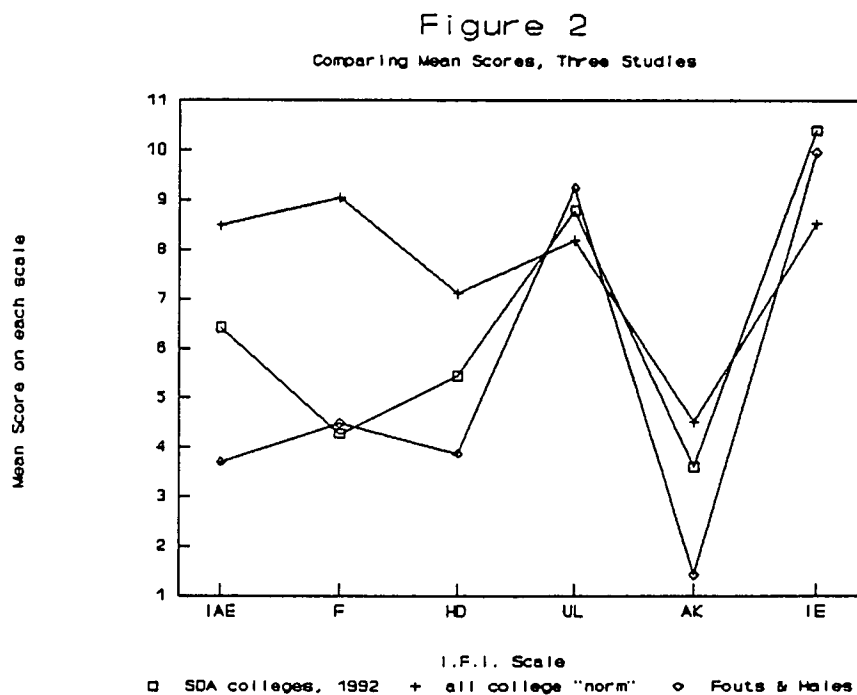
<sup>134</sup>Chris Spatz and James O. Johnston, Basic Statistics: Tables of Distributions (Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 209 & 304.

foundation of these colleges foster a distinct institutional self-concept?" By "distinct," this study is seeking to determine whether Seventh-day Adventist colleges are different from other colleges, whether the latter are religiously-based institutions or non-sectarian ones. In this study's Review of Literature chapter it was shown that SDA's make certain claims about themselves and their institutions with regard to being "unique." Is this claim borne out by the data which the faculty members at Adventist colleges report about their institutions?

One way to answer this question is to look at a summary of the SDA colleges' collective responses to the survey instrument and then to compare these to responses obtained in the past when the I.F.I. has been used with other, non-Adventist institutions. The "norm" score (mean) of each of the I.F.I.'s scales is, as was previously discussed in the Methodology chapter, presented as the basis for comparing individual institutions with the population of U.S. colleges generally. Additionally, other researchers have used this same instrument in studies of other colleges and data exists specifically on a population of conservative Christian colleges, i.e., the Fouts and Hales [1985] study cited previously. This data is presented in Figure 2, which is shown on the next page.

The data plotted here show that the degree of "fit" between the data from this study and two others is, at best, an imperfect fit.

A more compelling finding which answers this third research question, however, was provided by Table 5, shown earlier, which was created to answer the second research question. Results of an ANOVA calculated on the respondent data



showed that the value of the F-statistic was higher than the critical value required to reject the hypothesis that the colleges were similar.

This chapter has presented and summarized the findings which this study has generated. Data have been reported and analyzed to answer the research questions that were stated in the first chapter. Chapter V, which follows, will offer specific answers to the study's research questions, draw conclusions based on those answers, and propose recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

This purpose of this study was to examine the institutional character and organizational ethos at Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States. Given the scarcity of published information about SDA colleges, this study has served to provide new information about an otherwise un-researched facet of American higher education and, thus, makes a contribution to the knowledge base of the profession of higher education.

The first chapter stated the problem, to determine the nature of, and then to describe, the institutional character of the Adventist colleges. The conceptual base for examining institutional character was then briefly discussed, followed by statements of this study's purpose and research questions.

Chapter II contained a review of the literature. After a brief introduction, which included a discussion of the nature of organizational culture and its applicability as a vehicle for studying institutions of higher education, there followed a review of published material dealing with the institutional character of small, private colleges. It was demonstrated that small, private, liberal arts colleges have a number of discernable characteristics which they generally share, and reference was made to the findings of other studies which had examined culture and ethos at these institutions. Finally, Chapter Two discussed published information about

Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions, though much of the available materials were of a general or philosophical nature, dealing with the church's position or beliefs on education policy. In this latter section statements about SDA's beliefs that their institutions were, or at least ought to be, *unique*, were reported.

The research methodology and the survey instrument were discussed. After naming the Seventh-day Adventist colleges who constituted the population under study, there followed a discussion of the chosen instrument for gathering the data to answer the study's research questions. The Institutional Functioning Inventory, an instrument whose copyright is owned by the Educational Testing service and which was used with their permission, was discussed at length, together with information about its validity and reliability. The chapter concluded by describing the procedures that would be followed in both administering the I.F.I. and then analyzing the data obtained from the instrument.

Though not all of the colleges which were invited to participate did so, six SDA colleges cooperated by allowing their faculty members to be surveyed. The data and findings were presented in order to address and to attempt to answer each of the study's research questions. It was found that each of the participating Seventh-day Adventist colleges showed a number of statistically significant differences from each other. Though the institutional character of each participating college could be described, thus answering the first research question, findings related to the second and third research questions (whether the SDA colleges had a common institutional character and whether they, collectively, could be said to

have a distinct institutional self-concept) showed that the participating colleges were distinctly different from each other. In other words, the participating SDA colleges displayed levels of variance on the I.F.I. scales sufficiently high to have to reject the hypothesis that the respondents were from the same population. Indeed, the *F-statistic* which appeared on each I.F.I. scale as a consequence of the ANOVA was much higher than the critical value for *F* which would allow one to argue that the population under study had common characteristics or a shared ethos.

#### Discussion of Findings Related to Research Question One

The first research question asked "what is the nature of the institutional character and organizational ethos which exists at each college?" A thorough reporting of the findings specific to each participating college was given in Chapter Four and, thus, will not be repeated here.

The data from the colleges show, in several cases, characteristics of a campus ethos which some senior-level college administrators would be proud to claim. The most visible example is the results from the IE scale, Institutional Esprit'. With the exception of college E, every institution scored high on this measure of faculty morale and commitment to a shared sense of purpose. Seventh-day Adventist college faculty thus share a commonly-held "vision" of their institution and report their devotion to their college and its aims. This coincides with findings from studies of other church-related colleges cited earlier, such as the Jonsen study, where these types of colleges, which were not SDA related, were characterized by cohesiveness,

community, friendliness, and warmth, where the faculty identifying strongly with their college was a social reality and not just catalog rhetoric. Skaggs' findings in his 1987 study of the work values of faculty at church-related also coincides with this study's findings. Skaggs found a greater closeness and sense of mission than is found at the independent college, and this characteristic is clearly present at all but one of the Adventist colleges which participated in this study.

Interestingly, Skaggs also found a more submissive attitude towards authority among faculty. This study's findings show generally low scores of the I.F.I.'s *Freedom* scale. Fouts and Hales 1985 study of Christian liberal arts colleges also found low levels of perceived personal freedom in the non-Adventist Christian colleges that they studied. Considered in light of the high level of Institutional Esprit' which this study found at all but one of the Adventist colleges, a lack of personal and academic freedom is apparently not perceived as a negative factor.

This study found that, with the exception of college B, Adventist colleges scored below the norm on *Human Diversity* (HD). Skaggs had also found the faculty at small, church-related colleges to display similarities in backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles, while Fouts and Hales reported their institutions to be relatively homogeneous in faculty and student ethnicity, social backgrounds and personal tastes. Both of these studies' findings were reflected in Seventh-day Adventist colleges generally.

Focusing specifically on academic ethos, and with the exception of college E, this study found *Concern for Undergraduate Learning* (UL) to be somewhat higher



at SDA colleges than American colleges generally, though not as high as Fouts and Hales found in the Christian colleges which they studied. (See Chapter Four's Table 3.) Jonsen's work had found that the small college's atmosphere of closeness and cohesiveness was traded-off for climates weak in intellectual and academic aspiration. Neither this study nor Fouts and Hales' work supports Jonsen's assertion. With the exception of college E, the SDA colleges studied all scored above the E.T.S. reported norm scores of the UL scale and within one standard deviation of the E.T.S. norms on the *Concern for Advancing Knowledge* (AK) scale.<sup>135</sup> Clearly, Seventh-day Adventist colleges (again, with the exception of college E) show strong academic environments and a high level of commitment to teaching and learning.

The Review of Literature reported several characteristics of small, private liberal arts colleges which this study could neither substantiate (as also being descriptive of Adventist colleges) nor refute (in so far as not being descriptive of SDA institutions). There were, of course, characteristics (such as "rural-ness" of the campus location or, for lack of a better phrase, relative "holiness" among the Christian colleges) which the chosen survey instrument was simply not designed to measure. There were other factors of environment or practice (such as levels of monetary remuneration, teaching loads for faculty, or the percentage of them holding Doctorates) which, though they could be determined, were not the purpose of this

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<sup>135</sup>see Richard E. Peterson, et. al., *op. cit.*, p. 37. The Christian colleges studied by Fouts and Hales all scored significantly lower on the AK scale than did the SDA colleges participating in this study.

study to investigate. Perhaps most significantly, one inescapably important element in creating and shaping institutional character -- leadership, and its influence on organizational ethos -- was not a subject of inquiry in this study.

### Discussion of Findings Related to Research Question Two

The second research question asked "can a common institutional character be defined?" This research question was seeking generalizations: whether the colleges were sufficiently alike that one general description could be applied to all of them. Based on the findings obtained, which were discussed in the previous chapter, the answer to this question must be no.

The analysis of variance of the participant's responses showed significant differences among the colleges. Though some common patterns appear, and though mean scores can be arrived at for any population larger than one, a comparison of the colleges' scores on each of the instrument's scales (which was reported in the previous chapter) showed distinct differences between participating institutions.

From the data in Table 5 (see page 68) an *F-statistic* was calculated by dividing the values for the mean squares (MS) between colleges by the values for the mean squares within colleges. With a chosen alpha level of .05 the critical value of *F* was determined from a statistical table. The value of the *F* arrived at from the ANOVA was greater than the critical value of *F* on each of the six I.F.I. scales, so the hypothesis that the participating colleges were "alike" (or, in statistical terms, that the respondents were from the same population) must be rejected.

This shows that the Seventh-day Adventist colleges which participated in this study show no more "aliqueness" than would be expected from a group of colleges selected randomly from a population of institutions on some other basis than religious affiliation. Despite the statements of church philosophy or policy which were cited in the Review of Literature, Adventist colleges cannot be deemed to have achieved a "unity" of character or practice. Though, perhaps, one or more individual SDA college(s) might be achieving a conjunction of philosophy and practice, considered together, Adventist colleges have not yet done so.

This finding is surprising when one considers the 1985 Fouts and Hales study of Christian colleges cited previously. These researchers also utilized the Institutional Functioning Inventory to investigate organizational culture at colleges whose stated goals strongly supported a Christian education in a Christian environment. Their population included colleges supported by five different protestant Christian denominations: two Baptist supported, with one each supported by the Church of Christ, Church of God, the Christian Church, and a conservative element of the Lutheran Church. Yet Fouts and Hales reported that these colleges supported by different denominations were substantially alike.

Although some diversity was found, it is reasonable to conclude that these colleges are similar in the environmental dimensions measured by the I.F.I. and that any generalizations formulated about the environment of the total sample would provide a reasonable approximation concerning the individual colleges in the sample... The failure to reject the MANOVA hypothesis...suggests that there may be substantial agreement...concerning the

general environments of these colleges.<sup>136</sup>

### Discussion of Findings Related to Research Question Three

The third research question asked "does the religious, doctrinal foundation of these colleges foster a distinct institutional self-concept?" Given the statements which Seventh-day Adventists make about their uniqueness, as were cited in Chapter Two, does the data from this study support their claim? Are the Adventist colleges "different" from other colleges? Based on the findings of this study the answer has to be no. Claims of uniqueness or distinctiveness are not supported by this study's findings. (Adventist institutions may, of course, be unique or distinct in ways that this study's instrument or methodology simply do not measure. That possibility cannot be excluded.)

In the previous chapter, Presentation of Data and Analysis of Findings, two Figures were presented which attempted to display, on graphs, the results obtained from this study and, in this case of Figure 2 (page 70) comparing those results with findings of other researchers. A cursory examination of Figure 2 might initially suggest that Adventist colleges could, arguably, be labeled as "different" from other colleges because their data graphs differently from the other two colleges' data. Each line on Figure 2, it must be remembered, is the result of calculating the mean scores of a number of different institutions. If, for example, the institutional mean scores from the six colleges from the Fouts and Hales study were added to Figure

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<sup>136</sup>Jeffrey T. Fouts and Loyde W. Hales, op. cit.

1 (which depicted the institutional mean scores from the six colleges in this study) there would be no basis for deciding which colleges had come from which study. In other words, without being told which colleges were Seventh-day Adventist and which were not, an observer would not be able to separate, from the graphed data, the colleges into their two, respective classifications.<sup>137</sup> Adventist colleges do not show enough "distinctiveness" from other Christian colleges to tell them apart.

A more empirical answer to this third research question was provided by the ANOVA. As was already stated in responding to the previous research question, the results suggest that the six colleges could not, on the basis of the ANOVA, be placed in the same population. Therefore there cannot be said to be a "distinct institutional self-concept," from whatever foundation.

### Conclusions

Based upon the analysis of the data several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study.

1. Seventh-day Adventist colleges in the United States exhibit environments and institutional cultures which can be assessed and analyzed. Jonsen, whose work was cited earlier, stated that there is no 'typical' small, private liberal arts college, yet there are a number of what he called

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<sup>137</sup>This exercise was actually performed. Unfortunately the resulting Figure, containing twelve horizontal lines, was virtually unreadable as each colleges' scale scores blended together. Any discernable detail was lost altogether when attempting to reproduce it into this paper.

"patterns." Adventist colleges, while eluding this study's search for "a common institutional character," do show "patterns."

2. In general, and because of the variations found among the different colleges *all* of the following generalizations must be labeled thus, SDA colleges show a high level of institutional esprit' and faculty morale. There is a generally high level of commonly-held sense of mission, and commitment to teaching and learning is high. "Scholarship," as that term is usually defined, is not high on Adventist campus but, as was shown in Table 3, it is probably higher than at other Christian colleges. Most of the people, both faculty and students, at most of the SDA colleges are relatively homogeneous and similar in their views, values, and lifestyles, with comparatively little acceptance given to eccentricities of beliefs or behaviors. Faculty perceive themselves as having relatively little personal or academic freedom, yet this does not seem to bother them. Lastly, Adventist college campus are modestly interesting places to work and study, displaying a level of activities, events, and artistic endeavors that falls within the midrange of the population of U.S. colleges.
3. Seventh-day Adventist colleges are also a diverse group of institutions. Differences among colleges are higher than would be expected from denominationally sponsored schools where church policy and philosophies of education have been so clearly published. Thus, it is almost surprising

to find that each college has its own "flavor" or ethos, and that the ways in which they are different are as strong, or perhaps even stronger, than the ways in which they are alike.

4. Reasons why these colleges are so dissimilar was not shown by the data. Logically, some responsibility rests with the denominational leadership, but neither the data nor the Review of Literature tells us whether or not they have consciously decided to *allow* individual colleges to seek their own paths in harmonizing theology with educational policy. It might be that church leaders do not know of the degree of differences between the colleges or, perhaps, have not considered it their duty to impose mandatory consistency.
5. Finally, it must be concluded, on the basis of this study's findings, that one of the SDA colleges, college E, is, in most ways, "out of step" with its sister institutions. College E showed significant differences from almost every other college on almost every scale. Further, these differences can only be categorized as unfavorable: lowest among Adventist colleges on the scales Institutional Aesthetic-Extracurricular, Concern for Undergraduate Learning, Concern for Advancing Knowledge, and Institutional Esprit' are not distinctions to be proud of.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The results of this study suggest the potential for other studies. The Review

of Literature pointed to the absence of material concerning institutional culture at Seventh-day Adventist colleges. In fact, very little work has been done studying any aspect of Adventist higher education. With this in mind, the following additional areas are recommended for study:

1. Leadership and its relationship to organizational culture in SDA or other Christian colleges should be an area of inquiry. More specifically, a researcher might investigate how the permanence or continuity of a president or other college officers relates to ethos.
2. Regionalism, i.e., where a college is located geographically, should be studied for any impact this may have on institutional character.
3. Management practices and administrative procedures at Seventh-day Adventist colleges could be profitably studied.
4. The two SDA universities, with their large proportion of graduate students and, by extension, large graduate faculties, warrant further study. For example, these institutions might be compared to other non-Adventist but Christian graduate/professional degree-granting institutions or, for that matter, to state-supported universities.
5. Students' perceptions of Adventist colleges merit comparison with their age-mates' perceptions of secular institutions.
6. A follow-up study could be conducted of the same SDA colleges investigating institutional character as perceived by its students.



### Summary

It is the researcher's hope that this study will serve to facilitate interest in the Seventh-day Adventist sector of American higher education. While these colleges are comparatively few in number they serve a church constituency of over three-quarters of a million members in the United States and train nearly all of the denomination's pastors and administrators and a large percentage of the church's laity. This researcher's perception, often reinforced during the unfolding of this research project, has been that Adventists do not like being studied or researched. Perhaps, like so many things in life, anxiety will be reduced as the object or source of that anxiety is faced squarely.

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## Appendix A

PLEASE NOTE

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Appendix A

Institutional Functioning Inventory  
91-95

University Microfilms International

## Appendix B



David M. Ritter, Ed.D. candidate (Higher Education Administration)  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
P.O. Box 5781  
Greensboro, NC 27435

Dear Colleague at

College:

I am requesting your response to the attached survey instrument. It represents an important final step in my doctoral dissertation and your response would be invaluable.

My dissertation is investigating academic culture and institutional ethos at Seventh-day Adventist colleges. My review of literature shows this to be an untouched area of inquiry and I am using the "collective perception" technique to gather data. Thus, your input is important to me and my work.

This instrument has been shortened from the original version, which was almost twice the length of the one you now hold. My preliminary testing shows that approximately twenty minutes is needed to complete the questionnaire. Would you be willing to allow me that much time?

Your president, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, has granted me permission to survey the faculty at \_\_\_\_\_ and he will receive a summary of my findings.

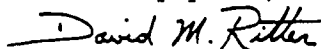
I can assure you of anonymity in your responses. Neither your name nor your teaching field or academic department is requested on the attached answer sheet.

I do realize that it is Summer and some of you are not readily available nor spending much time in your offices. (As a full time faculty member at Newbold College in England I, too, am not in my office this summer!) Unfortunately, I am up against a deadline imposed by my Graduate School, and must have this phase of my dissertation completed before I return to England for the Fall term. I would, therefore, appreciate your completing and returning this survey instrument at your earliest convenience.

Please forward your answer sheet to me by using the attached *addressed, stamped envelope*. I will have to begin processing your responses by the first or second week of August at the latest so your response by then would be appreciated.

Thank you very much for participating in my research.

Sincerely yours,



David M. Ritter  
Senior Lecturer, Newbold College

## Appendix C

-- *A Reminder ...*

A copy of a research questionnaire was placed in your mailbox approximately one week ago. If you have already returned it (in its attached *addressed, stamped envelope*) thank you very much.

If you have not yet completed your questionnaire, would you please take just a few minutes to fill-out the response sheet and to mail it back to me? Because I need to make a presentation to my dissertation committee before I return to England for Fall term it is important that I receive your completed answer sheet by the first week of August if at all possible. I am asking you that, as a colleague, you help me collect the information I need to finish my work.

As you can imagine, a good response is important to me.

Thank you again for assisting me in my research.

David M. Ritter, Senior Lecturer (Newbold College)  
Ed.D. candidate, University of North Carolina at Greensboro