MORPHOGENESIS OF THE MISSION OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA BETWEEN 1967 AND 2022

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2023

CERTIFICATION

Statement of Original Authorship

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted previously for a degree or diploma at this institution, an Australian or overseas university or any other institution of higher education. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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DEDICATION

To my soulmate, Barbara

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis marks a waypoint in a life-changing intellectual journey first inspired and described as such by Professor Richard Bates, my doctoral supervisor at Deakin University almost 40 years ago. To him, I remain deeply indebted.

I am also indebted to my colleague, Rommert (Bob) Spoor with whom I have worked professionally and personally over the past fifty years and benefited from numerous scholarly conversations enroute. It was a double pleasure when I later served beside him in the SPD Education Department of Education. At that stage, I also appreciated the encouragement and support of Director, Dr Lester Devine, both in serving as one of his departmental team members and being granted permission to access and cite from his personal historical journals.

I also wish to express my gratitude for the encouragement and collegiality of Associate Professor Phil Fitzsimmons from Avondale, where he first introduced me to critical realism as a viable approach for my research.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explain how the mission of Adventist education in Australia changed between 1967 and 2022. Initially, the research defines mission as a phenomenon representing Adventist Education's (AE's) raison d'être. However, a subsequent view of such mission from a Critical Realist (CR) perspective enables it to be explained at a deeper level utilising Roy Bhaskar's (1979) Transformative Model of Social Activity (TMSA). From that perspective, mission represents a complex social phenomenon comprising social structures with material relational, normative, and cultural properties that put pressure on each other or on new entities with the potential to cause more problems. In this context, change is a dynamic process conceptualised as a succession of morphogenic cycles in the tradition of Margaret Archer, with each cycle initiated by structural conditions that trigger responsive interaction between human agents, producing structural elaboration or reproduction. At one level, data represent concrete evidence located in the actual and empirical domains. However, by the application of analytic dualism and retroductive inference, potentially effective mechanisms and connections existing in the real domain can also be identified. In the thesis, those data are presented and explained in the body of the thesis in the form of analytic narrative. Further analysis and explanation of each of the five cycles is based on an analytical model adapted for the thesis. Subsequently, when the cycles representing the 55-year span are viewed collectively, further nuances are evident. There are many known causes and effects between the structural, agential, and cultural factors that affect each cycle. However, it is only now that the unexpected results of these factors being connected across the whole span become clear as conditions that might affect future emergence.

TEXT

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Adventist Education
ASA	Adventist Schools Australia – the department overseeing Adventist Education in Australia in conjunction with the AUC
AUC	Australian Union Conference of the SDA Church in Australia
ED	Education Director
GC	General Conference – overseeing the SDA Church worldwide
LC	Local Conference – administering a cluster of SDA Churches in a state region
SDA	The Seventh-day Adventist Church
SPD	South Pacific Division of the SDA Church in Australia and the South Pacific
TAUC	Trans-Australian Union Conference
TTUC	Trans-Tasman Union Conference
UC	Union Conference – a cluster of Local Conferences

TERMINOLOGY

Adventism	An informal term used to describe the SDA Church as a sociocultural milieu
President	The elected head of each administrative level of the SDA Church such as the GC, AUC and LCs
Division	An informal term in reference to the SPD
Union	An informal term reference to the AUC
Conference	An informal term reference to the Local Conferences
Director	An officer appointed to administer and coordinate the work of a department of the church structure, e.g., Education, Health, Youth Ministry
Associate Director	An appointee to assist the Director in administering and coordinating aspects of work of a department

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

As an organisational entity, the Adventist system of schools and tertiary institutions worldwide is embedded firmly in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church structure that has evolved since its inauguration in 1883, extending from the General Conference (GC) in Washington DC to 13 Divisions around the world. The South Pacific Division (SPD) in Sydney, Australia, is one of these. Like other such Divisions, the SPD is comprised of several Union Conferences, including the Australian Union Conference (AUC). The AUC consists of nine Local Conferences (LC) comprising SDA churches and schools. Each level of the structural hierarchy is overseen by an administrative body headed by a president assisted by departmental directors. One such department is the Education Department (more recently School Company), each with its own Director of Education, or as is the case in the last decade, a CEO.

Since its establishment in the USA in 1872, Adventist Education (AE) has grown to the point where in 2018, the SDA system of education worldwide operated 6,106 primary schools, 2,548 secondary schools, 34 training schools, such as hospital-based nursing programs, and some non-degree ministerial training schools, and 119 tertiary colleges and universities. These 8,807 educational institutions around the world employed 106,031 teachers educating 1,881,571 students (Murdoch, 2020).

The first Seventh-day Adventist school in Australia was established in Melbourne in the early 1890s. Shortly afterwards, in 1897, the Avondale School opened to prepare workers to fulfil the mission of the Church. Today, Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) administers the educational interests of the Church, providing strategic direction and support to 48 school campuses spread across Australia, and Christian education to almost 14,000 students (ASA, 2018).

Relationship to the Research Situation

For the first decade of my career in education, 1959-1969, I served as a teacher and school administrator in the New South Wales Department of Education. Then, in mid-1969, I resigned to take up employment in the previous Australasian Division of the SDA Church serving as the principal of a boarding school in the Western

Highlands of Papua-New Guinea. The motivation for that change was a missional sensitivity that I experienced as an active member of the SDA Church. My professional roles since then have ranged from classroom teaching and administration in primary, secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate roles, with research and specialist interests in curriculum development in both Adventist and private religious and public education sectors in Australia and overseas. I was employed in a full-time capacity until my formal retirement in 2004. Since then, I have maintained an active relationship with AE, teaching part-time and assisting in research in the postgraduate education sector, and serving as an education board director in regional AE. Arguably, the insights into the nuances of AE gained from this first-hand professional relationship warrant my engagement in a study such as this. (The methodological implications are addressed in Chapter 3).

In 1980, a return to formal tertiary studies led to personal enlightenment through exposure to a body of critical curriculum and pedagogical studies associated with a sociological turn in education research (Apple, 1979; Bates, 1981, 1986; Bernstein, 1975; Giddens, 1984; Grams, 2009). The philosophical awareness and conceptual tools developed during that period provided a lens to make sense of the nature of education broadly, and how it played out within the sociocultural milieu of which I was a part.

During the mid-1980s, while teaching in a large SDA secondary school and later serving as the deputy principal, several problems arose that caused me to think critically about what was happening, and to search for reasons for the difficulties being experienced in attempting to transmit SDA culture — something that was considered to be central to the school's function. These issues appeared to relate identity, attitudes, and practice of teachers in SDA schools, the parent church, the supporting community, and AE as a system with the rest of society. The school was composed of knowledgeable individuals with shared aspirations, establishing an organisation that reflected the culture they created and experienced, and the constraints imposed on it. The problems confronting the school motivated my first doctoral research: a critical ethnographic study of the school's attempt to transmit and reproduce SDA culture (Roy, 1988). The study highlighted the dialectic relationship between human agency and social structures and brought to light a complex sociocultural milieu in which personal, social, cultural, and structural

phenomena affected each another. The research reached a conclusion that the attempt to maintain cultural continuity through transmission was exposed to contestation, redefinition, and transformation by the various participants, while forces from wider society threatened to impact their thinking and undermine formal intentions. But while that research focused on a single Adventist secondary school and its attempt to transmit culture, a new problem was causing serious concern affecting the whole system. The perceived mission of the organisation was apparently susceptible to significant change. At that time, I believed that the complexity of that situation and the conviction that the issue was poorly understood warranted a different research approach from the dominant traditions. My lengthy lived experience in AE and prior experience in critical social research motivated my further interest and engagement as represented by this thesis.

The Emerging Problem

The concept of mission figures prominently in the identity and discourse of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) leaders, writers, commentators, and administrators living in the 21st century as they articulate organisational aspirations and seek to justify the existence of the Church and its agencies, or "ministries", as they are commonly referred to. Typical of such usage is a recent report in *Adventist Record (Online)*, the news magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific, where the editor declared, as part of the title of the report, "Mission is in our DNA" (Stackelroth, 2021). The same is true of the Adventist system of schools and institutions around the world which are embedded structurally and culturally in a symbiotic relationship with the Church and its ultimate authority. Consequently, what happens in the Church affects the function of Adventist Education (AE).

However, perceived change in the form of "shift" or "drift" in the mission of both the Church and its schools has raised concerns expressed openly. For many constituents, the revival of mission is a matter of stated urgency. While some commentators warn of the risk of change, others allege it is well under way, and urge revival. Several examples indicative of these concerns offered:

- In an article in *Journal of Adventist Education* entitled, "Education for What?", Adventist historian and philosopher, George Knight (2016) described what he believed to be Adventist education's identity and mission. The same year, Knight

added a book entitled *Educating for Eternity* where he asserted that "the distinctive doctrinal understandings and apocalyptic vision that set Adventism apart from other Christian perspectives must inform the content of Adventist education" (2016, loc. 1392). Because of this, he argued that unless AE embraces that mission, it has no right to exist.

- Shortly afterwards, Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Director of Education at the GC headquarters of the Church located in the USA added her voice to the discussion in *Adventist News*, inferring something of value had been lost. The article was entitled, "Adventist Education: Rediscovering our Mission" (Beardsley-Hardy, 2017, February).

- In Australia, the periodical *Adventist Record* reported on a meeting of administrators of the departments of the AUC of the Seventh-day Adventist Church convened in March 2017. It was apparent that the problem was not limited to AE but applied to the whole Church. At that meeting, Daryl Murdoch, the Director of Education of ASA, spoke of the risk of mission drift, emphasising "the importance for the church and schools in Australia to make mission the main focus" (Stackelroth, 2017, p. 8).

Conflicted Concepts of Mission

Recent research suggests that faith-based organisations tend to stray from their mission and lose sight of their original sense of purpose. For example, James Tunstead Burtchaell claimed in his work, *The Dying of the Light*, that many institutions reach a critical point where their culture and founding mission are likely to experience significant change (Burtchaell, 1998). A decade and a half later, Greer and Horst also postulated emphatically that "slowly, silently, and with little fanfare, organizations will drift from their original purpose" (2014, p. 15). In the discourse generated by such literature, the concept of mission has been central. However, in religious contexts, the term has been clouded by ambiguity and a lack of definitional clarity (Bellini, 2018; Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2011). In the 21st century, the terms mission and missional have become imprecise clichés. At the same time, ambiguity exists in the discourse of some Christian church communities, where the concept has long been associated with missionaries and missions located in remote cultures. Consequently, Alan Hirsch (2008) in *Christianity Today* comments on the ubiquitous

and illusive quality of the term. He asserts that the word missional is ubiquitous, but then asks, "What does it mean?" Consequently, the concept of mission requires greater clarity. In what appears to be frustration, David Bosch, goes as far as suggesting that "ultimately, mission remains undefinable" (1991, p. 9). (However, in view of Bosch's commentary urging a "transformation of mission", this remark is undoubtedly facetious.) While such considerations of mission are made in the context of Christian communities broadly, the problem is especially relevant to the SDA Church, including to its system of schools and higher education institutions. In most of the literature cited earlier, terms such as drift and change have negative connotations and tend to pre-empt bias in the discussion. On the other hand, Robert Benne argues in his book, *Quality with Soul: How Six Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (2001), that change does not necessarily represent deficiency. Knight (2016a) has similar room for optimism leading to positive change with focused effort, while de Waal (2017) also advocates a shift towards greater authenticity in the SDA Church. However, it is claimed by many of the church leaders that change has already taken place.

Judging from the examples of concern cited earlier, the connotations of the term mission in regular discourse are indicative of deeply engrained cultural sentiments rather than a bold dictionary definition. To constituents of this religious group, mission is implicit both in a global sense in response to Christianity's "Gospel Commission" (Matthew 28:18-20) and specifically in relation to the self-identity of the SDA Church as a corporate body and its relationship with society. This self-identity was articulated strongly again in 1975 in the 125th anniversary edition of *Review and Herald,* where it was asserted that *"*Seventh-day Adventists believe that the movement to which they belong is unique, that it is not "just another church" among the hundreds of Christian churches in the world" But despite that perceived identity, SDA discourse with respect to mission during the second decade of the 21st century lacks clarity and definition. This is problematic when church leaders stress the need for Adventist educators to faithfully uphold the mission of the Church. Knight (2008) goes so far as to assert that the legitimacy of Adventist education's existence and operation is contingent on that commitment. However, knowledge of what that means is sketchy.

An appreciable corpus of research and historical works regarding aspects of Adventist education and culture has been produced over the last half century in SDA universities and colleges (Patrick, 2010). Even so, it is difficult at times to engage the interest of many Adventist teachers and administrators in Australia, while many of the church's clergy appear to take the problem for granted and regard critique as a threat to stability and continuity.

Rationale for the Research

Many aspects of the life-history and culture of the SDA Church have attracted the interest of researchers to produce a variety of historical, critical, defensive, apologetic and polemic studies (Patrick, 2008). Two questions follow: first, what contribution does this thesis make to that body of research; and second, what is the nature and significance of the relational interplay between the AE and the SDA Church as distinct sub-entities in a larger context? A study such as this cannot ignore AE's relationship to the Church as a whole or the other agencies that are represented within its corporate structure. As will be demonstrated in the thesis to follow, there is, historically, an holistic quality to the way Seventh-day Adventism has sought to operate and be regarded by others (Wilson, 1975). Consequently, what happens in one facet has significance for what happens in another.

Due to the conservative character of the church from the beginning, inner tensions have been indicative of what esteemed Adventist historian, theologian, and academic Arthur Patrick (2008) described as "a constant process of struggle and rebirth". He argued:

> While the consequent tensions may be viewed as evidence of "growth, vitality and increased understanding," they also constitute an urgent call for effective internal and external dialogue. (Patrick, 2008, p. 272)

In response to "the voices that derive from differing convictions, including the enthusiastic participants and affirmative supporters" both within and without the Church, Patrick argued that ...

> the quest to understand will be helped most of all by the analysts who offer historical, biblical, theological, sociological, and other interpretations that point beyond the partisanship of apologetics and the rhetoric of controversy toward comprehensive understanding and constructive action. (2007, p. 2)

But despite the range of literature, sociological scholarship has been thinly represented. Nevertheless, it is widely agreed that there is need for further examples (Mutch, 2017). To my knowledge, there are no studies to date of Seventh-day Adventism from a Critical Realist (CR) perspective. For this reason, I claim a warrant for the relevance of this research and its potential contribution to the literature.

Significance of the Research

To this point, the scope of this research has been considered in relation to AE. However, the research also makes a wider contribution to scholarship and the advancement of CR as a valuable philosophical framework for the study of society more widely. Elger observed that examples of a "distinctively critical realist conception of case study research remain underdeveloped and are only now being discussed" (2010, p. 9). Blom & Moren (2011) are of similar mind, claiming that (until that time) "research on generative mechanisms is very rare within the field of social work, which makes it a challenge to search out and develop suitable research methods" (p. 3).

Other voices have joined the call for further development of applied CR methodologies. For example, despite the theoretical and practical strength of CR, Fletcher (2017, p. 181) argues that "little guidance is available on which precise methods – including methods of data collection, coding, and analysis – are best suited to applied CR research." In similar vein, Ackroyd & Karlsson (2014, p. 14) lamented the "serious lack of appealing and accessible material on CR-informed methodology" as exemplars of "interesting and insightful research". Vincent & Wapshott (2014, p. 167) also argue that "theoretical models developed in OCSs [Organisational Case Studies] become a transferable resource in themselves that can be reapplied analyses of similar institutional mechanisms". This study is a response to such calls. While the motive in this case is to identify, examine and critique such phenomena to bring clarity and understanding as a basis for further action on the part of the AE community, it also seeks to contribute to a wider body of scholarship representing this paradigm.

The Research Question

The sense of mission of the Adventist education system as a formal organisation in Australia is reflected by the identity, purpose, interaction, and discourse of its participant members. Basically, that mission represents the reason and justification for the organisation's existence. However, apparent change in the character of that mission has raised concern, although the nature of the change is unclear and elusive. The aim of this research is to identify and explain what that mission means and how it has occurred over time. In this case, the research question is:

> How has the mission of Adventist education in Australia changed over the past 55 years?

Clarifying Terms

To ensure construct clarity with respect to the research, it is important to define the key terms with respect to their attributes, their relationships and effects, and the context in which they have been produced (Hastings, 2021; Suddaby, 2010). As Sayer argues:

> Social phenomena such as actions, texts and institutions are concept-dependent. We therefore have not only to explain their production and material effects but to understand, read or interpret what they mean. Although they have to be interpreted by starting from the researcher's own frames of meaning, by and large they exist regardless of researchers' interpretations of them. (1992, p. 6)

Thus, of particular importance to this research and in need of clarification are the meanings and connotations of the terms mission and change.

Defining Mission in the Context of This Research

The term mission in the context of this research poses a challenge due to its abstract, complex and subjective character. As such, it represents a phenomenon that is unobservable in a natural empirical sense. As such, its existence may only be inferred. Knowledge about it is context-sensitive and context-dependent, and it is reflected in the connotations of discourse rather than in lexical definitions. This means that public discourse will differ from that associated with educational and religious institutions, as reflected in the modes of language, culture, self-conscious identity, and sense of purpose of its agents. Discourse, together with circumstances and conditions designed to fulfil the organisation's purpose (or mission), reflects a

distinct paradigm (Bhaskar, 1978, 2016; Elder-Vass, 2012; Fairclough, 2005; Kuhn, 1962/2012; Lawson, 1997).

Mission in Educational Settings

The significance of mission in educational settings is implied in the Glossary of Education Reform (2015). In these terms, mission represents "a public declaration that schools or other educational organizations use to describe their founding purpose and major organizational commitments" regarding "operational values" and "public commitments to its students and community". According to the Glossary, mission statements may also appear along with vision statements representing "organizational purpose or mission" or "what it hopes its students will learn or be capable of doing after graduating". In practice, it is common for schools to use the terms interchangeably, imprecisely, or to blur the boundaries (Glossary of Education Reform, 2015).

Summary Definition of Mission

Based on the preceding discussion, the focus of the research question proposes mission be viewed as a social phenomenon representing an organisation's raison d'être. As a starting point for the thesis, mission is regarded as a complex construct representing a series of interrelated elements. Firstly, the existence of mission presumes a fundamental rationale and logic that displays its identity and delineates how its constituents wish to be regarded by others. Secondly, mission has implications for how the members act to fulfill their aspirations via roles and relationships, strategic plans, actions, and practices. Thirdly, the identity, rationale and values held by the organisation's agents are indicative of a distinct culture. However, while these dimensions may be identified as distinct components, there is a holistic, dynamic relationship between them. Such mission is personal and embodied. It represents a complex phenomenon composed of both abstract and concrete elements with roots in the social order, representing the confluence of structural, cultural, and agential elements. Important to the research is the premise that mission is seen as an intangible and nuanced social phenomenon that becomes evident in behaviours, events, and conditions that affect humans and are shaped by them in return. But over time, mission may become unstable, and change inevitably. Ultimately, the durability of mission in a specific milieu is precarious.

Such premises have major implications for the kind of ontology to which the research question relates, and how the problem can be addressed methodologically.

The Concept of Change

A premise of the thesis is that mission is susceptible to change. However, describing what that means and how it presents is a further challenge. Logically, change implies movement between different structural states or sets of conditions existing at particular moments in time. Tsoukas & Chia (2002) follow after William James in describing such change as "the occupancy of serially successive points of space at serially successive instants of time" (James, 1909/1996, p. 234). Even so, "change per se remains elusive and unaccounted – strangely, change is whatever goes on between the positions representing change" (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 571). Thus, change can be regarded as an abstract phenomenon that has both a synchronic (static) and a diachronic (dynamic) quality, both of which are pertinent to the aims of the research. The researcher is faced with the task then of identifying potentially significant structural and behavioural patterns of elements having causative potential and invoking a methodology with capacity to explain its dynamic character. But while it is possible to compare patterns of evidence interpreted as indicators of change at different points of time, the research needs a method to explain how change has taken place. In this case, several connotations of "how" are relevant: *process* (explaining the steps that led to the changes); *mechanisms* (factors that brought about the changes); *specifics* (details about exactly what has changed and to what extent); *reasons* (causes behind the changes); and, *comparison* (comparing the current state and a previous state to understand the extent of change.

Initial Sociological Insights and Assumptions

According to Archer (2017b, p. 284), "All social theorising takes off from a springboard that is itself theoretical." Later, she added, "personal and collective biographies—including their contingent elements—help shape our theoretical starting blocks" (2020, p. 2). In similar vein, Fletcher described that springboard as akin to what Gouldner called "domain assumptions…" (2017, p. 184). Similarly, this research has a theoretical, pre-ordinate" phase where "a priori ideas, themes…key points, analytic framework" may both pave the way for early analysis, and may be "responsive to the emerging data and their analysis and interpretation (a posteriori) and what they reveal" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 664).

As a formally incorporated organisation, Adventist Education in Australia (AE) represents a group of rational, reflexive, relational people interacting with purpose to realise shared goals and vision. This network constitutes a social reality that is formed, maintained, and shaped over time by complex, multilayered sets of material, relational, and cultural mechanisms, while at another level, the dynamic interplay between those elements, their properties, and powers serves to reproduce or transform its constitution, character, and identity. Nonetheless, Berger argues that such constructions are "precarious" (Berger, 1961).

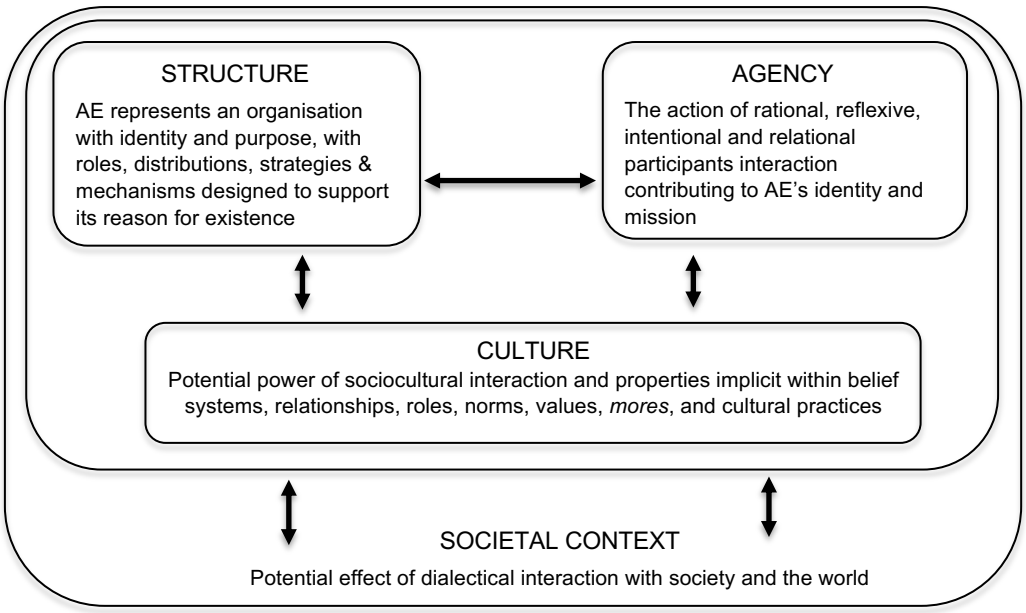
According to Archer (2020), such examples of social reality may be best explained in terms of three distinct, intertwined, ontological components —structure, agency, and culture (SAC*)*—which form the basis of any analytical social representation (p. 138). Figure 1.1 is a representation of this perspective with respect to AE.

It is also important to note that while both the AE system and the SDA Church have their respective educational or ecclesiastical roles and functions, the two agencies exist in symbiotic relationship, functioning in the same sociocultural milieu. For that reason, there appear to be causal links between them that influence both social structures and personal identities. Thus, modes of management and organisational decisions at church level are held to have observable impact on the management and practice of the church's education system and its participants.

The merging of personal and social identities has been a longstanding and extraordinary characteristic of the SDA church community. This feature was noted almost four decades ago when sociologist, Bryan Wilson described Adventist identity as reflecting a pervading sense of religion, and thus, to state that a person is a Seventh-day Adventist, "... is in itself the single most important fact about him, telling one more of what to expect of him than any other piece of information pertaining to him" (Wilson, 1982, p. 92). Accordingly, SDA identity at this time may be seen as the embodiment of a deeply embedded culture lived out both tacitly and consciously where a typically implicit sense of mission has been evident at both the personal and corporate levels. However, considering the allegations of missional change cited above, it is reasonable to question whether Wilson's observation still holds true.

Figure 1.1

An SAC Model Representing Adventist Education



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Theoretical Underpinnings

Given that in this research, mission is seen as an abstract, complex, and stratified phenomenon with an intrinsic tendency to change, the social constructivist perspective pioneered by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), and Anthony Giddens (1984) was considered to be significantly limited, for the following reasons. Giddens' terms "agency" and "structure" stand as a duality in which each component is an equally constitutive ontological entity enabling or constraining ongoing social construction. That paradigm that has been influential over the latter part of the 20th century. However, the social constructionist approach oversimplifies the situation by conflating any associated interaction and unwittingly produces a flat, static, and lifeless ontology. According to Margaret Archer (2000), social constructionist approaches are inadequate because they conflate structure and agency. As a result, dynamic interrelationships in which humans feature as rational, reflexive meaning makers with intentions, emotions, and morality remain hidden. Furthermore, the complex ontology is inaccessible to naturalistic and physical scientific approaches and methodologies. Consequently, a theoretical middle-ground alternative was adopted to avoid the extremes of empiricism and structuralism, thus enabling the

teasing-out of the interaction, and explaining the complexity of the phenomena of interest and their location in the social order (Frauly, 2017).

Since the mid-1980s, a (critical) realist turn in organisation and management studies has led to "the reconstruction of social and organization theory" (Reed, 2005, p. 1632). This theoretical transformation enables a re-definition of the nature of social and organisational analysis, and our understanding of the relationships between them. Reed argues:

> This impact has been most evident in relation to the "structure/agency" issue and its implications for the way in which social phenomena are conceptualized and explained... But it has also been manifested in relation to the status of and relationship between, respectively, "historical", "structural" and "discursive" analysis in social science and the wider implications of this issue for the various ways in which social change might be explained forms. (2005, p. 1632)

Pioneered by Bhaskar (1978; 1979; 1993) and developed by Archer (1995;1996; 2000; 2003), CR represents systems of belief or paradigms comprising three interrelated categories: ontology, which relates to views of "the nature of reality" and "whatever really exists"; epistemology, which implies "how what exists can be studied and known"; and methodological implications that influence "the possibilities and limits of the research methods, techniques, and analyses that they employ" (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, p. 1).

Researching mission and the apparent change that has occurred with respect to Adventist education over a specified period of time aligns with CR's aims, capacity, and potential. Therefore, it was confirmed as the preferred approach—or more precisely, meta-approach.

Since the turn of the century, a growing corpus of organisational case studies has appeared to explain change and stability through a critical realist lens (Elder-Vass, 2010; Vincent & Wapshott, 2014). Tapping into that trend has made it possible to penetrate the complexities of organisations when viewed as social structures and reveal the dynamic nature of their causal mechanisms (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). Reed (2005, p. 1632) also argues:

> The implications of these critical realist "domain assumptions" have profound implications for the reconstruction of social and organisation theory. Indeed, taken as a complete package, they fundamentally redefine both the nature of the "explanatory task" in social and organisational analysis and the contribution that

explanatory knowledge can make to our understanding of and participation in emergent socio-organisational forms.

Ethics of the Research

This research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Avondale University. While the primary aim is to identify causal mechanisms responsible for emergence and change, the intention of the research is to explain that dynamic rather than to judge. That is the prerogative of other parties for whom it may be relevant. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that some judgement is likely in the minds of the readers based on the evidence presented. But while implicit judgement is inevitable on occasions, that is not my primary intention. Wherever personal names are used, they are used with discretion. On occasions, however, individuals are referred to according to their designate role title.

A closer discussion of the theoretical and methodological implications of CR for the study of organisational situations generally, and its importance for this inquiry will continue in chapter 2 (Theoretical Foundations) and chapter 3 (Methodology).

Delimitations of the Research

First, setting the physical boundaries for the thesis was challenging. The 55 year-long major focus of this study covers a complex field comprising many recognisable, interrelated strands that cannot be ignored in ensuring a valid portrayal. It is important to keep in mind that the study of AE cannot be dislocated from its roots in the morphology of the SDA Church. Thus, a careful balance needs to be maintained in the presentation of data to keep the reader appropriately informed and to do justice to the milieu being addressed.

Secondly, AE in Australia today spans preschool to postgraduate education under the jurisdiction of several allied departments of the SDA Church's organisational structure. Primarily, the focus of this study is social interaction affecting Early Childhood to Year 12 education in Australia, with ASA being responsible for its oversight and management. However, certain aspects of the tertiary teacher education program provided by the SDA Church are significant to the research and cannot be disregarded. But in this thesis, unless otherwise indicated, the use of the title Adventist Education or AE primarily denotes the EC-12 education system.

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has addressed the apparent change in the mission of Adventist education in Australia over the past 55 years. As a preliminary step, the terms mission and change were defined by following an abductive consideration of their nature and relevance in an organisational context. Consequently, a critical realist meta-approach was selected as the preferred option to interrogate the situation further in greater depth.

Chapter 2 takes a CR stance to re-conceptualise mission and change as emergent social phenomena with distinctive ontological and epistemological properties. On that basis, two relevant models are adopted: one, representing mission as transformative social action, and the other depicting change in terms of morphogenesis of key social entities in the context of educational and religious organisations. These theoretical constructs are then teased out to articulate the theoretical foundations on which the thesis is based.

Chapter 3 considers the epistemological implications of the situation with a view first, to devise a suitable methodological design to guide the research, and second, to devise methods to access data and process the findings.

Chapter 4 offers a series of antecedents of Adventist Education's origin and formation. The historical backdrop highlights conditions and events that represent distinct organisational change in the evolution of the SDA Church and its education system, and either continuing to exist, or re-emerge in recognisable form during the period 1967 to 2022.

Chapters 5 to 9 comprise the body of the thesis in the form of analytic narrative that aligns with the principles of a morphogenetic approach. That approach envisages the morphology of a social entity, in this case, Adventist education in Australia, as a succession of cycles in which social conditions marking the beginning of each cycle exert influence on the social interaction that follows. That interaction leads ultimately to the elaboration or reproduction of those prior conditions, which then activate a new cycle. Thus, the narrative in each chapter identifies social conditions (structures) that triggered interaction between human agents (agency), and how that affected the formation and shaping of the organisational identity and mission of the Church and its system of education over time. Each chapter concludes

with analytic reflections highlighting the significance to the research question. To assist the reader in these chapters, the opening paragraphs are intended firstly to provide an overview to inform the reader the terrain to be navigated and its contours. Secondly, the chapter turns to a form of analytic narrative that presents a synthetic view. This section avoids reductionism and over-simplification to sterile facts and references. Such a disposition reflects a positivist tendency that is unacceptable in CR methodology. Many of the conclusions articulated are the consequence of combinations of causative factors involving interaction between structures, mechanisms, and events. Their emergence is thus complex. It is that complexity that the analytic narrative seeks to capture. Thirdly, the chapter is complemented by an "analytic reflections" section that interfaces the narrative and the theory with the aim of sharpening the focus on the research question.

Chapter 10 offers a summary answer to the research question based on the collation of analytic reflections from the preceding chapters and drawing out their deeper significance in the context of the total period. The chapter concludes with contributions to the research on the application of CR to the study of organisations, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The research question targets the mission of the Adventist education system in Australia and how it has changed over the previous 55 years. As a preliminary step, an interim definition of mission was generated based on an abductive analysis of empirical evidence associated with the concept. However, it also became apparent that some properties of mission exist by inference and are unobservable to the human senses. For this reason, a critical realist meta-approach was adopted to redefine, and explain the nexus of properties of such mission from a deeper perspective grounded in theories represented by Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer.

A Critical Realist Meta-Approach

As one of the acknowledged co-pioneers of CR and its relevance in explaining organisational change, Margaret Archer emphasises that CR serves as an underlabourer', as a methodological toolkit rather than as a method in itself (2017b). Thus, it is important to understand that function, and how CR may be engaged to explore mission as a complex social phenomenon, and to understand the ontological and epistemological implications of that engagement.

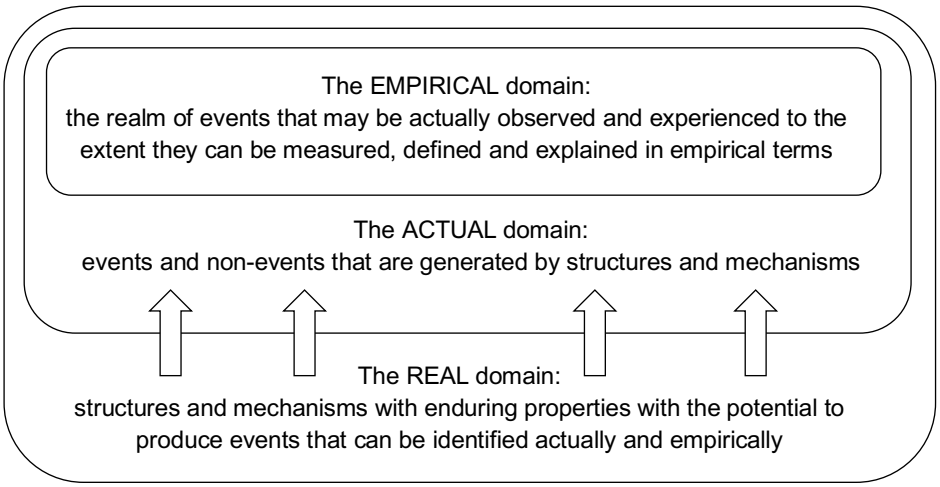
Ontological Implications

Critical realism regards reality as consisting of an open, complex, stratified, system of emergent entities or mechanisms that either alone or in interaction have the potential to generate events. Syed et al. (2009) argue that although the occurrence of events and social structures may not be directly observable, "we can accept their existence because of their causal effect" (p. 73). On this basis, CR subscribes to a "depth ontology", in which reality is nested and stratified over three domains as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

First, the *empirical* domain represents the realm of events we experience and observe to the extent they can be measured, defined, and explained in empirical terms. However, CR sees events at this level as only a part of reality and should be acknowledged as humanly mediated and interpreted. Second, the *actual* level represents events and non-events that are generated by structures and mechanisms, regardless of whether we observe or experience them or not. Third, the *real* level comprises causal structures or generative mechanisms that, although they

Figure 2.1.

The Domains of Critical Realist Ontology



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may remain unperceived, still have the potential to trigger events that can be identified at the actual and empirical levels (Collier, 1994; Fletcher, 2020).

Epistemological Implications

Critical realist ontology is committed to an epistemology that accepts that "our knowledge is always socially and historically relative" (Syed et al., 2009, p. 73). Nevertheless, a distinction is made between knowledge of transitive and subject-dependent knowledge, and the knowledge relating to the intransitive aspects of our knowledge. Thus, in overview:

- Knowledge is stratified, differentiated, and open, encompassing the empirical, actual, and real domains of reality, and may be either intransitive or transitive in character. Our knowledge represents "our beliefs, theories, and concepts about the entities that constitute reality…are constantly subject to revision or reinterpretation" (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p. 791).

- Knowledge is partial. Limited access to reality via experience means that it is impossible for humans to fully understand or perceive it. (Syed et al., 2009).

- Knowledge is mediated. Our knowledge is mediated and emerging from the data available to us. It is important to avoid the epistemic fallacy, that is, the reduction of ontology to epistemology. From a CR perspective, "human knowledge captures only a small part of a deeper and vaster reality" (Fletcher, 2017, p. 182).

Archer describes the application of critical realism as "explication via mechanisms" (2012, p. 794). As such, it is committed to methodological pluralism that accepts the existence of a variety of structures—material, social, and conceptual. Thus, a distinct priority of CR methodology is its capacity to explain the generative potential of those mechanisms and their emergence as new entities. Importantly, however, Archer argues that by itself, CR explains nothing. Rather, it provides "an explanatory toolkit" to enable "the identification of causal powers exercised at some given place or time" (2020, p. 138). Accordingly, CR-based research "allows researchers to develop in-depth explanations for the outcomes of ...social, organizational, and environmental factors which may have played a causal role in their occurrence" (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p. 787). In situations such as this, Archer, argues, "every theory about the social order … must incorporate Structure, Agency and Culture" (2020, p. 138). From this perspective, the world is constituted by objects and structures of both the natural and social orders. Ontologically, social structures owe their emergence to antecedent generative mechanisms that have power to behave in particular ways in the context of human rationality, relationships, and activity (Archer, 2020; Bhaskar, 2016). This enables an explanation for the emergence and causation of social phenomena, and how change has occurred with respect to structure and agency in a temporal, historical and cultural context (Marks & O'Mahoney, 2014). This potential has relevance when applied to the concept of mission in this research. The methodological implications of this perspective are further discussed in Chapter 3.

A Model of Intentional Transformative Social Activity

In such a context, Bhaskar proposes a *Transformational Model of Social Activity* (TMSA) to accommodate subjective, objective, and temporal dimensions of conditions motivating and constraining dynamic and intentional social action (1998, 2016). He argues:

> We can display the emergence from the natural order of human beings as persons, and of a social world similarly emergent from human being. Concepts of intentional causality, on which reasons can be causes, and of mind as a synchronic emergent power of body are developed, and social structure is seen to be the condition and outcome (normally unintended) of human agency. (2016, p. 38)

The TMSA identifies five basic characteristics of the intrinsic structure of his model that he describes as "a matrix of the subjective sources of action where each component is learnt, formed, and developed" (2016, p. 98). The components of this model are as follows:

- *cognitive* (underlying reasons, beliefs and rationale);
- *conative* (the desire, will and intention);
- *affective* (enthusiasm and commitment);
- *expressive* (demonstrative, indicative), and
- *performative* (drawing on competencies, facilities and access to resources, and providing opportunities that enable or constrain).

Adapted from Bhaskar (2016, pp. 98, 99)

Based on the TMSA at a deeper level, Bhaskar proposes that "every social event occurs along each of the following dimensions: material transactions with nature; social interactions between people; social structure proper; and the stratification of the embodied personality" (2016, p. 99). Consequently, this conception becomes apparent at the levels of the empirical, actual, and real. As such, it correlates with Archer's theorising ontologically and epistemologically, and with the concept of mission promoted in this thesis. Archer herself (1995, p. 154) acknowledges a possible correlation between her approach and Bhaskar's TMSA. Likewise, Bhaskar's endorsement of Archer's work and its resonance with the ontology of the TMSA is indicative of their mutual respect for their respective theoretical positions (2016).

A Morphogenetic Model of Social Change

According to Archer (2020), the aim of CR-based research is "to account for the 'who', 'when', 'why' and 'what' of change" in respect of the phenomenon of interest. She continues:

> Full significance is accorded to the timescale through which structure, culture and agency themselves emerge, intertwine and redefine one another, since this is the bedrock of the explanatory form at employed in accounting for any substantive change in social forms. (p. 141)

In the late 20th century, Archer proposed a "morphogenic approach" to explain comparative changes in several education systems in Europe. Since then, the concept has been developed extensively by Archer herself (1979, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2020) and a substantial group of social theorists and researchers in numerous publications

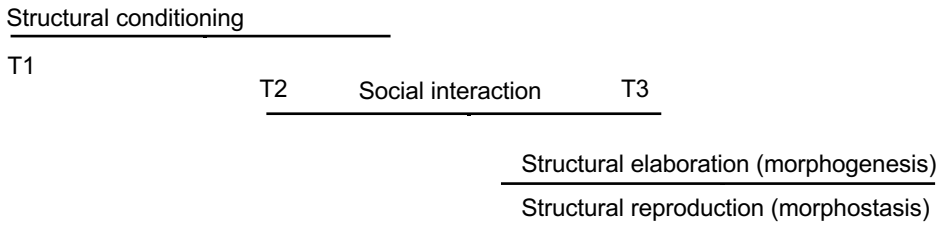
and international conferences. Typical of that effort is work by Sayer (1992, 2000), Collier (1994), Elder-Vass (2007, 2010), Smith (2011), Porpora (2015) and many others. Because the concept of missional change over time in an organisational context is central to this thesis, Archer's approach is especially relevant. It is important to note, however, her emphasis that the morphogenetic approach is "the practical methodological embodiment of the realist social ontology", and is not, of itself, a method (1995, p. 16). Rather, it provides a theoretical view of structure, agency, and culture as analytically distinct, though essentially interdependent facets of the social order. Archer explains:

> The morphogenetic cycle and the three phases which are involved – structural conditioning → social interaction → structural elaboration, and their direct parallels for culture and for agency itself. The morphogenetic approach is thus presented as the practical methodological embodiment of the realist social ontology, the two together representing a distinctive alternative to both the upward and downward conflationary theorising of the old debate and to the central conflation with which many now seek to replace it. *It constitutes a distinctive linkage between social ontology, explanatory methodology and practical social theorising*. (1995, p. 16–emphasis mine)

She continues her argument stating that change is more commonly experienced and recognised than continuity, or *stasis*, although reproduction is a possibility. Thus, the model may also be referred to as a "morphogenesis/morphostasis framework" – or for convenience, the "M/M approach" (Archer, 1995, p. 36). Figure 2.2 illustrates the basic morphogenetic/static cycle with its three phases.

Figure 2.2

The Basic Morphogenetic/static Cycle with its Three Phases



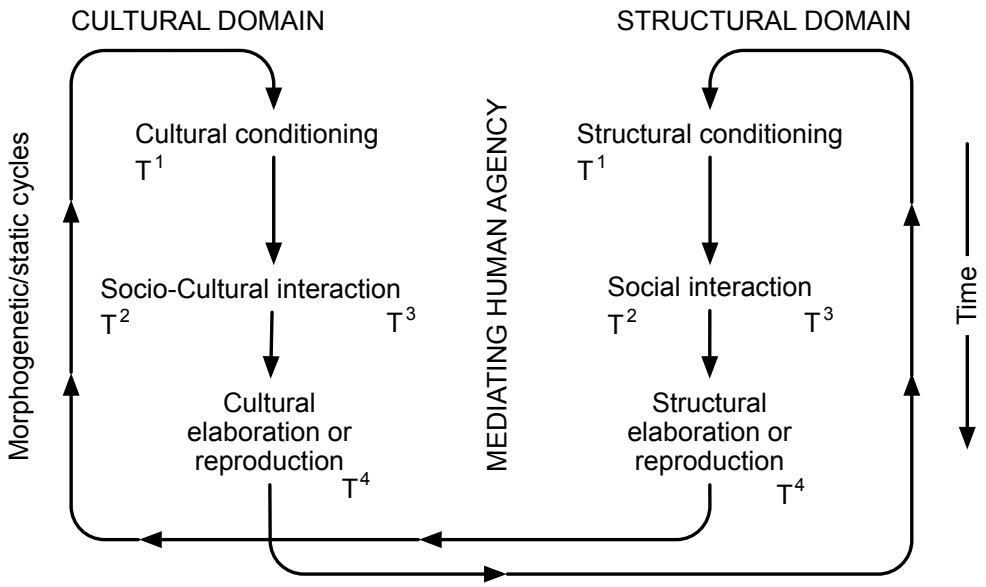
Archer (1995, p. 157)

An important characteristic of an M/M approach is the concept of cycles of emergence. Emergence is activity dependent in which "every aspect of the social order is susceptible of change [ontologically]. Temporality is intrinsic to its

constitution" so that in the course of time and events, change may reach a point where the structural elaboration will translate to constitute structural conditioning and thus initiate a new cycle (2020, p. 142). In this approach, analytical differentiation is based on "analytical dualism", a methodological principle that avoids conflation of social interaction. Figure 2.3 enlarges upon the basic dynamics depicted in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.3

Structural and Cultural Configurations Producing Emergent Cycles



Adapted from Archer (1995, p. 309)

Archer's morphogenetic approach transcends traditional structuration theories that conflate structure, agency, and culture to a mere epiphenomenon. Structures and agency are domains with distinct properties and powers, but they each determine the shaping of the other. However, Archer's concept of social structures and human agency refer to a context in which actions and interaction occur, while "social interaction represents the social milieu in which these structures are reproduced or transformed" (Danermark, et al, 2019, p. 80). Archer explains:

> The process of conditioning involves the interplay between two types of causal powers: structures and subjects. An effective conceptualisation of "conditioning" must explicitly address the impact of structural and cultural powers on agents and their personal actions in such situations. This involves two elements: action "upon" (which is objective) and "response to" (which is a subjective). (1995, p. 172)

Figure 2.2 also shows the configuration of structural and cultural emergent properties (SEPs and CEPs) that promote reproductive cycles. The diagram highlights the following phases in the process:

a) structural conditioning, cultural conditioning, and socio-cultural conditioning of groups of corporate and primary agents;

b) social interaction, socio-cultural cultural interaction, and group interaction between corporate and primary agents; and

c) structural elaboration/reproduction, culturally elaboration/reproduction, and group elaboration/reproduction of corporate and primary agents.

At any point in the process, Archer stresses that "structures are the results of human interaction, including the results of the results of that interaction - any of which may be unintended, unwanted and unacknowledged" (Archer, 1995, p. 196). Agents exercise material (structural) and ideational (cultural) emergent properties — SEPs and CEPs — that influence causal powers in social reality. Thus, of necessity, any view of social change represents "(i) structured human relations (context-dependence) (ii) human actions (activity-dependence), and (iii) human ideas (concept-dependence)" (Archer, 2020, p. 138). In the process, human agents mediate in the social interaction at the intersection of the structural and cultural domains.

Structure, Agency, and Culture

The preceding discussion has explored the concept of social change in the context of a morphogenetic approach based on the intersection of SAC. In the situation it possible and appropriate to employ analytic dualism to separate 'structure' and 'agency' and to examine their interplay to account for the structuring and restructuring of the social order.' (Archer, 2017b, p. 3).

Structure

Structures represent enduring and relatively stable patterns, mechanisms, relationships, and regularities in the social domain affecting the behaviours and interactions of individuals and groups. Structures include social systems, organisations, belief and systems, cultural phenomena, material resources, and modes of communication that influence the decisions and actions of human actors

both individually and as a group. They are neither deterministic nor fixed. Rather they are emergent phenomena resulting from the interaction of generative mechanisms, and in turn, have causal power to affect others. Structures constitute social entities in a conceptual frame of reference to which people relate. Archer contends that social structures have a dual nature because they both support and constrain human agency.

The Ontology of Social Structures

The following ontological profile of social structures is provided by Smith (2011):

- First, structures are "actively sustained by human behaviours practices and interactions". (p. 322)
- Second, structures have "specific dynamic historical exigencies involving generation, development, and change". (p. 323)
- Third, structures involve "human bodily practices of various kinds to be sustained and expressed that are not only abstract items like values and ideas and relations, but also the physical, corporeal objects of human bodies in place and motion". (p. 323)
- Fourth, structures "always implicate inanimate material objects in their existence". (p. 324)
- Fifth, structures are "always constituted in part by mental categories that are culturally significant". (p. 324)
- Sixth, structures always have significant normative and moral implications associated with "beliefs motives and intentions". (p. 325)
- Seventh, "conformity is governed and encouraged by normalising sanctions". (p. 325)
- Eighth, social structures "usually encourage passive acquiescence if not agreeable adherence". (p. 326)

Consequently, change becomes evident at the level of social structures associated with specific phenomena. Smith (2011) summarises how such structures may be maintained or transformed:

- First, "social structures are often transformed when new relationships between different groups are initiated and when old relationships are severely weakened or terminated". (p. 369)
- Second, "social structures are often transformed when the basic cognitive categories that help to constitute and justify them are altered". (p. 370)

- Third, “social structures are often transformed when sustaining material resources are significantly reduced…or increased)”. (p. 371)
- Fourth, “social structures can be transformed as a result of changes in the moral and normative beliefs of affected people and in the practices, procedures, rules, and laws those beliefs underwrite”. (p. 372)
- Fifth, “social structures can be transformed when enough of their participants simply...stop sanctioning noncompliance, deviance, and rebellion. This can happen when actors genuinely change their moral and normative views, … or other considerations shift balances of interests”. (p. 374)
- Sixth, “social structures can change when new or newly mobilized systems of communication decrease the intractability of coordinated interactions”. (p. 375)
- Seventh, “social structures are also accumulated historically. Social structures are not reinvented for every new situation and generation. They usually do not disappear simply because their ‘founders’ have lost interest or died. They accrue to new generations as populations age and reproduce”. (p. 376)

Agency

Agency represents the capacity for humans to reflect, plan, and respond actively within social structural contexts. The concept of agency is grounded in the premise that reflexivity allows individuals to weigh up alternatives and make deliberate decisions based on what they believe and value. While social structures provide the conditions and resources for action, agency empowers groups and individuals to participate in the reproduction or transformation of those structures, thus making agency central to social change or stability.

Agency and the Significance of Personhood

Social structures do not possess a direct force of their own, and there is no objective social context that has a direct causal influence outside the actions of individuals. Social entities cannot cause effects beyond the realm of the social domain. The primary driving force behind social entities is the individuals themselves, their goals, and their self-aware orientations. Hence, it is unwise to attribute causal efficacy to social entities or structural conditions independently of human agency (Elster, 2017).

The publication of the book *Being Human* by Margaret Archer in 2000 signalled the beginning of a project to revive the human element in examining social continuity or change. This book, which she described as polemic, was the first in a trilogy. The primary assertion stressed the necessity of including active human

presence in the process and highlights the importance of human subjectivity, awareness, and choice in negotiating and potentially transforming social structures over time (Archer (2017b, p. 286). The second book, *Structure, Agency, and the Internal Conversation* (2003), emphasises the mediating power of human agents who in response to an inner dialogue, reflexively and actively "make their way through the world "rather than as 'passive agents' to whom things merely happen" (Archer, 2007, p. 42). Archer's view of active agents correlates closely with the view of mission as proposed in this thesis. She posits:

> Being an "active agent" hinges on the fact that individuals develop and define their ultimate concerns, those internal goods that they care about most and whose precise constellation makes for their concrete singularity as persons. No one can have an ultimate concern and fail to do something about it. Instead, each seeks to develop a course(s) of action to realise that concern by elaborating a project, in the (fallible) belief that to accomplish the project is to realise one's concern. (Archer, 1995, p. 42)

Those individuals who are deliberately reflexive about their personal concerns and their social context, shape themselves and contribute to the reshaping of the social world. In her book *Making Our Way Through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility* (2007b), she argues how reflexivity is exercised through different modalities such as "Communicative Reflexivity" (representing social immobility), "Autonomous Reflexivity" (associated with upward social mobility), and "Meta-Reflexivity" associated with social instability (2017b, p. 290). Thus, in the relationship between structure and agency, agency is the bearer of emergent powers, meaning socio-cultural conditioning only affects people and is effective through them. No conditional influence acts independently but is subject to reflective evaluation by agents who weigh it against their own concerns due to their self-consciousness and self-monitoring (Archer, 1995).

Based on his analysis of social structures as summarised earlier, Smith (2011) argues that while …

> …structures work to define, pattern, organize, regulate, motivate, express, and control human life as powerfully as they do because they ride directly upon the human capacities and limitations out of which they emerge. (p. 346)

Archer herself acknowledges what she describes as the "vexatious task" of understanding the link between structure and agency without obscuring the centrality

of active human beings (1995, p. 1). Human reflexivity is a socially embedded process that mediates between the social realm and the actions of agents. It is a generative mechanism that links structural or cultural powers to social action. Proponents of this view, such as Archer, see reflexivity as regular, intra-active representations such as conversations occurring within individuals. They argue that reflexivity is a generative mechanism that should be indispensable in almost every branch of sociological theory (Archer, 2007).

In his complementary theorising, Smith (2011) seeks to characterise the nature and potential of active human agents in what he defines as "personhood" (p. 47). While being conscious of its wordiness, he stresses unapologetically that this characterisation is indicative of the complexity of what it means to be a human. Elsewhere, his analysis of personhood appears as a hierarchy of 30 distinct human capacities arranged over five levels based on their "centrality, complexity, and primary exercise or expression of engagement" (Smith, 2011, p. 54). His summary definition declares:

> By person I mean a conscious, reflexive, embodied, bodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who—as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interactions—exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world. (p. 47)

Personhood is emergent with these unique properties interdependent with persons envisaged as "centers of purpose" (Smith, 2010, p. 78-88). Thus, they are seen as integrating centres of personal intention. The correlation between this and the concept of mission as proposed in this thesis is significance.

Thus, personhood is emergent and exists as "a unique center of subjective experience" that integrates, coordinates, and directs capacities in purposeful ways (Smith, 2011, p. 79). However, humans do not exist alone. The emergence of personhood is dependent on interactive relationships.

Culture

Archer (1998) challenges traditional views of culture that tend to be linear and deterministic in their assumptions about the transmission and reproduction of cultural beliefs, values, and norms through socialisation. Cultural knowledge and

meanings are also embedded within social structures and reproduced through social interaction. However, Archer prefers to describe culture in terms of a cultural system that should be seen both synchronically and diachronically, where systems shape both social structures and individual agency and are potentially re-shaped in the process. Accordingly, individuals apply interpretive frameworks that influence their understanding of social reality and drive their actions in affirming or contesting the consequences with the potential of reshaping the cultural system.

Culture, Relationality, Communication, and Discourse

Donati and Archer (2016) propose a view of persons as "relational subjects" whose actions and identities are shaped by their connections and interactions with others within various social contexts. Such connections and interactions are indicative of the intersection and systematic blending of structural, agentic, and cultural properties and dynamics. From Archer's perspective, the emerging milieu represents a "cultural system" characterised by "the corpus of existing intelligibilia – by all things capable of being grasped, deciphered, understood or known by someone" (1998, p. 504). This corpus is engaged, shared, and disseminated through modes of communication, and discursive interplay (Archer & Elder-Vass, 2012). In that interaction, Archer posits three propositions:

> 1. Ideas are real, and propositions are human products that can be true or false. The stock of knowledge contains both, but we cannot determine which is true for many ideas. The Cultural System (C.S.) is the full corpus of ideas, which is either consistent or contradictory.
>
> 2. Communication as in the sharing of ideas salient in the social order at a particular time, that is promoting, upholding, diffusing, or imposing particular ideas, how well they do it, and what opposition they encounter or stimulate.
>
> 3. The dynamic interplay between ideas (C.S.) and groups (S-C) is crucial for cultural elaboration. A comprehensive theoretical approach to culture requires diachronic analysis of ideas' social currency, sponsorship, and opposition, as well as synchronic analysis of the maintenance of cultural stability and longevity.
>
> (Archer & Elder-Vass, 2012, p. 95)

Such interaction may also account for the production of ideologies from a historical vantage point, Wuthnow (1989) argues that to understand how an ideology is shaped by its social environment...

> ... one must therefore examine the specific circumstances under which these expressions come into being, the audience to whom they are enunciated, the slogans and other materials that are available at the time for incorporation into discursive acts, the roles of speakers and audiences relative to one another and in relation to positions of power, and even the financial resources that make publishing activities possible. (Wuthnow, 1989, p. 540)

Thus, examining the contexts of ideological production helps understand why specific ideas are institutionalised successfully in a specific setting.

A Critical Realist Perspective of Organisations

The realist turn in organisation and management studies towards the end of the 20th century stresses the need to see beyond commonly held functionalist assumptions regarding organisations (Mumby & Stohl, 1996). Alternatively, CR emphasises an understanding of organisations as emergent entities (Contu & Willmott, 2005). Adopting this turn, Reed (2005) claims, a CR approach to management and organisation studies provides "a coherent ontological rationale and causal-explanatory method for identifying underlying structures and mechanisms ...[which]...generate observable events and outcomes that may or may not be actualized in specific historical contexts and social situations" (p. 1637). Critical realists are interested in subjective meaning systems and how these emerge, and combine to inform collective social processes, as entities or institutional mechanisms (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014).

From a CR perspective, an organisation is characterised by roles or social positions which help to define the structure and responsibilities of an organisation and how incumbents relate to members and outsiders. Occupying a role involves being recognised by relevant agents and performing defined behaviours, within the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2007). Organisations are dynamic and far from stable. As Mumby and Stohl (1996, p. 63) argue:

> For us, organization—or organizing, to use Weick's (1979) term—is a precarious, ambiguous, uncertain process that is continually being made and remade. In Weick's (1979, 1995) sense, organizations are only seen as stable, rational structures when viewed retrospectively. Communication, then, is the substance of organizing in the sense that through discursive practices organization members engage in the construction of a complex and diverse system of meanings.

In this context, organisational change is reflected in a changing structural and relational conditions implying human agency (Archer, 2017b).

The Causal Power of Organisations

From a CR perspective, the causal processes in the emergence of organisations may be explained in terms of potential power inherent in their structural configuration and normative patterns. As Elder-Vass argues, these elements "work together like parts in a machine to produce collective effect" (2010, p. 57). On this basis, Vincent and Wapshott (2014, p. 151) specify four forms of causal process, based first, on the powers and potential of structural configuration, and normative patterns, with each category then analysed in terms of their upwards or downwards causational causes, as depicted in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1.

Classification of Causal Mechanisms

	Normative Powers and Potentials	Configurational Powers and Potentials
Upwards Causation	Upwards normative causes Internal normative routines active within and affecting the institutional mechanism observed	Upwards configurational causes Internal organisational configurations which articulate the institutional mechanism observed.
Downwards Causation	Downwards normative causes Extra-organisational norms which shape outcomes within the institutional mechanism observed	Downwards configurational causes Higher level organisational systems affecting the institutional mechanism observed.

Adapted from Vincent & Wapshott (2014, p. 151)

These elements are defined as follows:

1. Normative powers and potentials that emerge from enduring patterns of activities and habits of agents, which recreate and potentially transform institutional mechanisms, and can be considered in terms of their antecedent causes.

2. Configurational powers and potentials that lie in the spatial distribution of individuals and groups come together and interact, leading to the emergence of new patterns, structures, and organizational forms.

3. Upward and downward causation are concepts used to understand the complex interplay between different levels of reality and their influence on one another. Upward causation refers to the effects or outcomes that emerge at higher levels of organization and influence the behaviour or properties of lower-level components. In the context of organizations, this means that higher-level organizational structures, strategies, and policies can shape the behaviour, attitudes, and performance of individuals and groups within the organisation. Downward causation, on the other hand, refers to the effects or influences that flow from lower-level components to higher-level structures or phenomena. In the context of organizations, this means that individual and group behaviours, motivations, and interactions can have an impact on the overall organisational structure, strategies, and performance.

(Vincent and Wapshott 2014, p. 152)

Factors Affecting Interaction and Change in Organisations

A vital consideration in explaining social interaction and change is the relationship between personal and social identity. According to Archer (2003) personal identity attributes emergent personal powers (PEPs) which are neither derived exclusively from society nor are reducible to society. Personal identity is the result of human involvement with the natural, practical, and social orders endorsed reflexively as the "ultimate concern" of the subjects involved (Archer, 2003, p. 121). By contrast, social identity is a subset of personal identity, as it relates to how individuals in their inner conversation evaluate their self-worth in society, and how much they are willing to invest voluntarily as actors to society (Archer, 2003). Consequently, as Marks and O'Mahoney (2014) also argue the stability of the organisation is dependent on the strength of the correlation existing between personal and social identities at any time. While the transformative capacity of agency in social context is influenced by the quality of that interface, the inter-relations and construction of self-identity and organisations are multi-faceted and indeterminate. In similar vein, Ybema et al., (2009) also argue:

> Individuals deploy a wide variety of inter-textual identification processes to develop an ongoing sense of the "self" and the "other" in interaction with their social environments. Following such routines permits the simultaneous construction of their personal identities as human beings and their public identities as social actors. And, since such practices articulate the personal in relation to the social, analytically, the notion of "identity" may be regarded as a fundamental bridging concept between the individual and society. (p. 300)

Thus, personal identity formation is seen as a complex, reflexive, dialectic, social process that constantly undergoes construction and re-construction. This multifaceted process produces a temporary outcome through the dynamic interplay between internal efforts, external prescriptions, self-presentation, ascription, and regulation and resistance While a stable identity may be achieved momentarily, it may be temporary, and continue as "resilient fiction" (Ybema et al., 2009, p. 301).

Churches as Organisations

Although space limits extensive coverage here, it is important to acknowledge the contributions of several prominent sociologists who exemplify a long-standing interest in the topic of churches as religious organisations in the sociology of religion over at least the past century. This interest is well represented by the following: Ernst Troeltsch (1960)[1912], who focused on the historical development of different Christian traditions and how churches have related to society; Max Weber (1966 [1922], who focused on the relationship between religion and social change, and the role of charisma in religious leadership; and H. Richard Niebuhr (1975)[1929], who explored social and cultural factors as sources of denominationalism. Subsequent work by David Moberg (1962), Peter Berger (1967), and Bryan Wilson (1975) built on such insights, adding to a body of literature from which a metatheoretical foundation can be derived to define distinct types. Although these sociologists were not critical realists, their contributions are still widely acknowledged for their seminal quality.

More recently, however, Armet (2017) seeks to explain factors contributing to the durability or decline of religion. Rather than resorting to traditional positivist theories of socialisation, he emphasises the importance of studying the process of emergence leading towards reproduction (durability) or transformation (decline) as reflected in interplay between structure, culture, and agency without conflating the particulars of dynamic interaction.

From a CR perspective, religious organisations are social structures that have a characteristic relationship to the world. In 1975, Wilson applied a theoretical model specifically to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in an article entitled, *Sect or Denomination: Can Adventism Maintain its Identity?* Of particular interest in Wilson's analysis and its pertinence to this thesis is the notion of "sect" as a

sociological category. In this a case, sect is a non-pejorative sociological term describing an ideal type and subset of churches at large. Religious sects have a fundamental attitude towards the world, which is influenced by their social structure and mission. New religious movements typically begin as a separated body of believers which arises in protest against existing clerical or secular authority. As such, the sect emphasises its own monopoly of truth. This attitude is a mix of subjective and objective aspects. A summary of his theoretical framework is as follows.

> 1. A sect is a minority group that differentiates itself from mainstream church organisations on the basis of its system of beliefs, ethical principles and practices, group identity, and distinctive sense of mission. Thus, it represents an ethical protest movement against society in general which is regarded as "damned".
>
> 2. Sect members believe they hold and maintain "'the truth" in relation to time and culture; hence, they have a distinctive "historical sense of [their] own role and destiny, re-evaluating the historical past in contrast with the present'.
>
> 3. Members of a sect are located in "a total environment" where they are required to adhere to "modes of behaviour and patterns of ethical obligations that represent a distinctive way of life".
>
> 4. Admission to the sect is voluntary, but conditional on "tests of merit, modes of conduct, and ethical obligations". Membership is maintained using "modes of control and censure" and "mechanisms for expelling the wayward".
>
> 5. Emphasis is placed on "lay leadership and equality among members" and "the rejection of a specialised, professional ministry".
>
> Adapted from Wilson (1975, pp. 34, 35)

This structural, agential, and cultural dimension of this profile are clearly apparent and relevant both in understanding the contours of a distinctive ideal type in the sociology of religious organisations and the analysis of historical and contemporary Adventism.

Mission in the Context of Structure, Agency, and Culture

Mission is assumed to be a socially structured phenomenon that is emergent, formative, personal, and teleological. As such, it acknowledges the causal power of human cognition, reflexivity, action, and agency (Archer, 2000). The research problem in this research is framed in a network of social relationships and interaction in terms of structure and agency, informed by culture justifying the existence and

operation of Adventist education in its Australian context. To make sense of their dynamic relationship, Archer stresses the importance of analytic dualism by a way of examining social interaction at the interface of structural conditions and human agency. As a critical realist, she emphasises the necessity for the separation of structure and agency, preventing conflation that either over-emphasises agency's influence on structure or underestimates its role in reproducing and transforming structures. This approach prevents an unbalanced emphasis on agency and ensures that the influence of structure is not overlooked. (Contu & Wilmott, 2005)

The nature and relationship between these categories have been interpreted extensively in complementary works by other theorists. This includes expansive treatments by Dave Elder-Vass (2010), and Christian Smith (2011), and a growing number of others who are cited elsewhere in the thesis.

Mission in Religious Organisations

In the case of this thesis, the aim of a CR perspective is to identify mechanisms and trajectories of emergence, and transformation over time with perceived relevance to Adventism's status as a religious organisation. The traditional connotations of the term mission in evangelical Christianity stem from what is commonly regarded as the "Great Commission" grounded in the New Testament, Matthew 28:19-20 (Ma & Ma, 2010, p. 5). Since its formal inauguration in that context, two millennia hence, the term has undergone both extensive and intensive elaboration and development while endeavouring to maintain fidelity to its primal essence.

The recent resurgence of interest in mission and missional churches in several protestant denominations in South Africa also throws some light on the concept and its implications. In this context, mission is seen essentially as embodied, personal and relational — a derivative of *missio Dei* (the mission of God) where mission is, in essence, part of the very nature of God (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2011). Thus, mission is "an organic, spontaneous response" that reflects deference to a party's initiative and authority, while missional implies "what the church is" rather than "what the church does" (p. 42). Van Gelder & Zscheile argue that the effort to define mission in an ecclesiastical context should "resist the common tendency to reduce the missional church to a set of rules to follow, discrete characteristics, or summary

principles" (2011, p. 149). Rather, mission is dynamic, complex, and stratified in overlapping layers, representing an ontology that is nuanced and personal. The implications are that mission will produce tangible, observable, empirical evidence in the form of products, arrangements, expressions, and events that emerge over time. The way it is perceived to exist and function is a manifestation of the values and assumptions held by its members, its governing body and its supporting communities (Roy, 1988).

Concluding Remarks

The discussion in this chapter represents what Archer would describe as a "social ontology" (2020, p. 138). This represents the first stage of Archer's explanatory toolkit for developing a practical social theory to support the application of a morphogenetic meta-approach to the phenomenon of interest, the mission of AE. The methodological implications and its application are the subject of the next chapter**.**

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In designing this research project, it was important to clarify the difference between "methodology" and "methods". Their relationship reflects a "connection and interdependence between metatheoretical considerations and the choice of research methods" (Blom & Moren, 2011, p. 61). According to Tennis (2008, p. 102), "Methodology is the combination of epistemic stance and the methods of investigation", while "method" refers specifically to techniques and design devised to conduct the research. Thus, this chapter first explores the epistemological implications of a CR approach in this case, while the second section considers the design adopted to conduct the research itself.

Epistemological Implications

A reliable and effective analytical framework is essential for determining causality in phenomena involving causal mechanisms as the source of explanatory power (Armet, 2013). O'Mahoney & Vincent (2014) remind us that ontology and epistemology relate not only to the nature of the studied phenomenon, but also to possible research methods and analytical frameworks that can be used consequently. More specifically, a CR approach provides such a framework, a way of identifying and conceptualising the social elements that represent the phenomenon of interest at each of the ontological levels — the empirical, the actual, and the real —and describing those social elements in terms of their potential as causative mechanisms, and how they emerge to bring about change. CR thus offers a sympathetic analytical approach to making explanatory sense of relevant data through the application of two fundamental processes, abduction and retroduction. In this context, abduction, or theoretical redescription, aims at bringing clarity and new understanding to the research problem by identifying and reconceptualising the elements and relations that constitute it, but are unobservable (Armet, 2013, pp. 304-310). Retroduction makes it possible "to identify the necessary and sufficient causes and conditions for the social phenomenon to come into existence and be what it is" (Armet, pp. 308)

A Hermeneutic Process

While the research process might be presumed to follow a sequence of steps, an appreciation of their interrelationship and holistic character is vital. Thus, Danermark et al. (2019, p. 131) stress that strategic steps adopted in research

approach should not be regarded as a rigid template to be followed in strict sequence but rather, acknowledge "movement from the concrete to the abstract and back to the concrete". In contrast to methodologies associated with the natural sciences, methodologies in the social sciences need to be recognised as hermeneutic processes (Gorski, 2013). In fact, Mutch (2014) acknowledges that in this regard, CR research may sometimes appear messy. It is an iterative and recursive approach rather than one that is strictly sequential. Analysis is not simply a step to be taken after gathering and assembling all the relevant data. A degree of informal analysis is present early in the research, indicating a trajectory leading from tacit understandings and hunches through to concrete aspects of reality.

O'Mahoney & Vincent (2014) suggest that researchers can often get a head start by reviewing literature by discovering the ideas and theories that already exist and then critique or attempt to improve them. Such an iterative and recursive methodological approach necessarily engages the reflexive capacity of the researcher, recognised as having accumulated knowledge and tacit understandings (Elster, 2017; Polanyi, 2009). Andrew Wright (2013, p. 2) describes this form of rational engagement as a "hermeneutic circle" and "an ongoing interpretive dialectic" as the interpreter of the text understands the whole in relation to its parts, and vice versa. Such an approach is an open, emergent process that involves deep reflection on the part of the researcher where a level of analysis is active throughout the inquiry. From its inception, my own research project has reflected this character.

Multidisciplinarity

The argument that viewing a particular phenomenon through a variety of disciplinary lenses has the potential to provide richness and coherence in understanding is not new (Hastings, 2021; van Dijk, 1988). However, while Bhaskar (2016) endorses the idea of "multidisciplinarity", he argues that this is not the mere pooling of knowledge. Successive levels of emergence may produce "a qualitatively new or emergent outcome" or "species of *transdisciplinarity* studied from an *interdisciplinary*, and possibly an *intradisciplinary* vantage point" (Bhaskar, 2016, p.127 – Italics his).

This disposition reflects an openness to epistemic relativism which is accepting of a *real* ontological domain, whether we are aware of it or not. On that basis, we

employ *judgemental rationality* as we strive for the best explanation under the circumstances, avoiding polar extremes of epistemic certainty and postmodern scepticism by engaging these philosophical principles. As Wright (2013, pp. 13, 14) explains:

> Ontological realism asserts that reality exists for the most part independently of human perception, epistemic relativism asserts that our knowledge of reality is limited and contingent, and judgemental rationality asserts that it is nevertheless possible to judge between conflicting truth claims while recognising that all such judgements necessarily remain open to further adjudication.

Thus, CR research is also pragmatic in that it accepts a theoretical best fit. Consequently, this view is supportive of the use of multimethodology to generate stratified knowledge.

Types of Data

The aim of CR is to explain causation and emergence based on structures, mechanisms, and events, but not as regularities or predictable patterns. In this case, the initial focus is on the empirical and the actual domains. From a critical realist perspective, this represents a stratified ontology in which structures are viewed as underlying and enduring patterns of relationships, institutions, and arrangements that shape and constrain social interaction and behaviour. These structures are seen as real and objective, existing independently of individual perceptions or beliefs. Such structures are understood to generate events and recurring features in social life through underlying cause or mechanisms that may not always be observable but have significant influence on individual and collective actions (Wynn & Williams, 2012). However, as Archer (2020) points out, the causes of events exist at the level of the real, not the empirical or actual, and as such, they are invisible by direct observation; they can only be identified via causal inference. Table 3.1 shows the relationship and theoretical difference between these domains and the type of data potentially accessible at each level.

Table 3.1

Types of Data in a Stratified Ontology

	Real Domain	Actual Domain	Empirical Domain
Structures & mechanisms	✓		
Events	✓	✓	
Experiences	✓	✓	✓

Bhaskar (1975, p. 13)

It should be emphasised, however, that from this perspective, it is conceivable for causation of the same phenomena to be attributable to multiple, overlapping layers. However, that such causation should not be seen as direct cause and effect. Thus, Danermark et al. (2019, p. 65) argue:

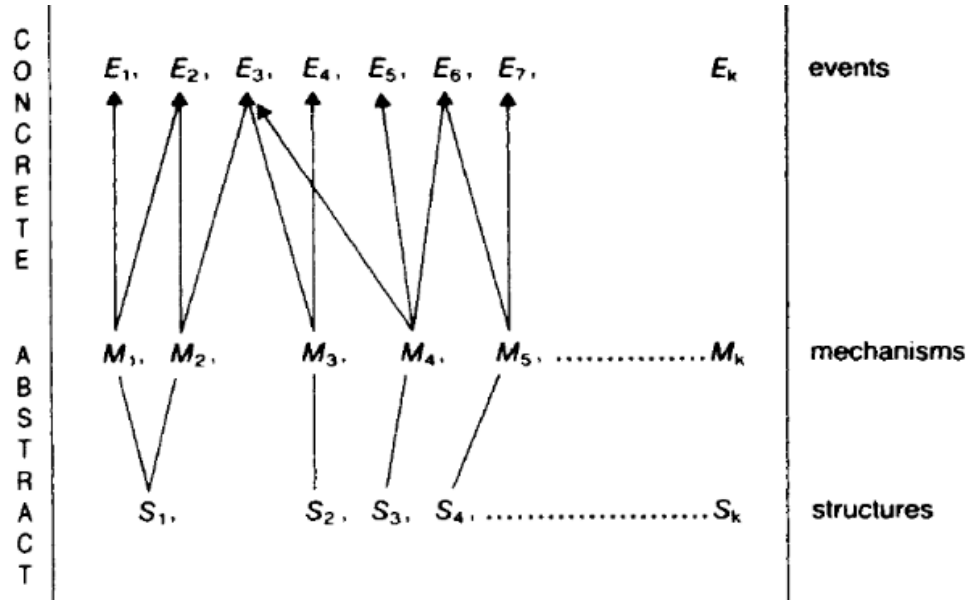
> An explanation is about causes, and a cause is that which can make something happen in the world. In connection with this, we saw what objects, structures, mechanisms, and tendencies mean. This resulted in the crucial conclusion that while there is a necessary relationship between an object and its causal mechanisms, the relationship between the generative mechanisms and their effect is contingent.

As Sayer explains, this relationship is reflected in the causal interaction between structures, mechanisms, and events. When activated, mechanisms produce effects in "conjunctures", which may be unique (1992, p. 116). However, in other circumstances, mechanisms may combine in terms of their causal power and generate new objects, thus making it possible "to cover meanings, experiences, beliefs and so forth, but as these can form structures, function as causes, or be considered as events" (p. 116). This process is depicted in Figure 3.1. Mission as a social phenomenon is a case in point, where the focus is on how and why the events happened in relation to those mechanisms, whether conceptualised or not. As de Souza (2014, p. 149) explains:

> Possible explanations of social practice and interactions in a delineated context … move from observing certain behaviour, to seeking agents' reasons for action or non-action, to searching for social structural rules operating in that context within which the reasons given make sense, to understanding the social structures (cultural, structural, relational, agential aspects) that generate or maintain these rules and perpetuate their existence.

Figure 3.1

The Causal Interaction between Structures, Mechanisms, and Events



Adapted from Sayer (1992, p. 116)

The challenge for the researcher is the application of suitable methodology and methods employed to help identify, organise, and analyse relevant data, and explain what they appear to represent.

From Methodology to Method

To this point, we have explored the kinds of data and their origin. But attention must now turn to methods and techniques to obtain such data and analyse them to answer the research question.

Archer's (2020) project, by her own admission, has been to articulate a theory based on a critical realist social ontology "to provide guidelines for breaking down material into three temporal phases" — social conditioning, and social interaction, leading to structural elaboration (change), or reproduction (stability) creating a single morphogenetic cycle (2020, p. 140). Archer stipulates, "a Practical Social Theory (PST) is necessary to do the explaining" (p. 141). The process enables components of the indicative of change to be identified and assembled. Furthermore, she asserts that for any process to merit consideration as a generator of social change it must necessarily incorporate structured human relations (context-dependence), human actions (activity-dependence), and human ideas (concept-dependence), thus marking

a logical transition from methodology to a focus on method. However, Archer passes the responsibility for formulating methods and techniques that constitute such a PST to others for application and analysis in specific contexts.

Implications for Method

The efficacy and reliability of the analytical approach employed is dependent on several fundamental principles. In enlarging upon the implications of the interplay between conditioning, interaction, and elaboration at the structural, and cultural levels, there are two elements that require consideration. As Archer (2020, p. 172) explains:

> Firstly, this involves a specification of how structural and cultural powers impinge upon agents, and secondly of how agents use their own personal powers to act so rather than otherwise in such situations. Thus, there are two elements involved, the "impingement upon" (which is objective) and the "response to it" (which is subjective).

Elder-Vass (2007, p. 31) also takes up the challenge by emphasising that a complete causal analysis of the real powers or emergent properties of any emergent entity would include five elements:

> (a) a list of its characteristic parts;
>
> (b) an explanation of how these must be structured (i.e., related to each other) to form the whole;
>
> (c) a morphogenetic account of how this comes about;
>
> d) a morphostatic account of how it is sustained; and
>
> (e) an explanatory reduction showing how the powers or properties of the whole are produced because of it having the parts it does, organised as they are—in other words, an explanation of the generative mechanism underlying each causal power.

The nuances of these proposed elements and their methodological practicality are also notable in the seminal thought of acknowledged founder of CR, Roy Bhaskar, who also proposed several schematic models for its application (Elger, 2010, p. 4). Bhaskar labelled these models using acronyms in which the letters represented key stages or steps in the research process. One such example is his DREI(C) schema (Bhaskar, 2016, p. 117). In this case the steps are:

D–*description* of the phenomenon of interest;
R–*retroduction* of possible explanatory mechanisms or structures;
E–*elimination* of competing alternatives;
I–*identification* of the causally efficacious generative mechanism or structure; and
C–*correction* of earlier findings in the light of this identification.

Importantly, Bhaskar accepted variations of the schema. Instead, he foresaw the possibility of "a unified general model" with flexibility to suit the needs of a particular research situation (Bhaskar, 2016, p. 120). Several critical realists have adapted the schemas accordingly while maintaining the essence of Bhaskar's approach (Danermark et al., 2019). I have followed likewise in devising a schematic model suitable to the needs of my own research. In this case, my DRRRCS model represents:

D — *description* of the research situation;
R_1 — *resolution*, identifying and analysing key components.
R_2 — *redescription* (abduction) of the components of the event or phenomenon in a new way, in the context of a different theoretical framework*)*;
R_3 —*retroduction*, to extract causal mechanisms;
C — *contextualisation*;
S — *synthesis.*

A Practical Analytic Model

Danermark et. al., (2019) have constructed a practical model that meets these stipulations and resonates with the morphogenetic concept promoted by Archer (Figure 3.2). The model highlights and delineates evidence of social conditioning, social interaction, and elaboration as follows:

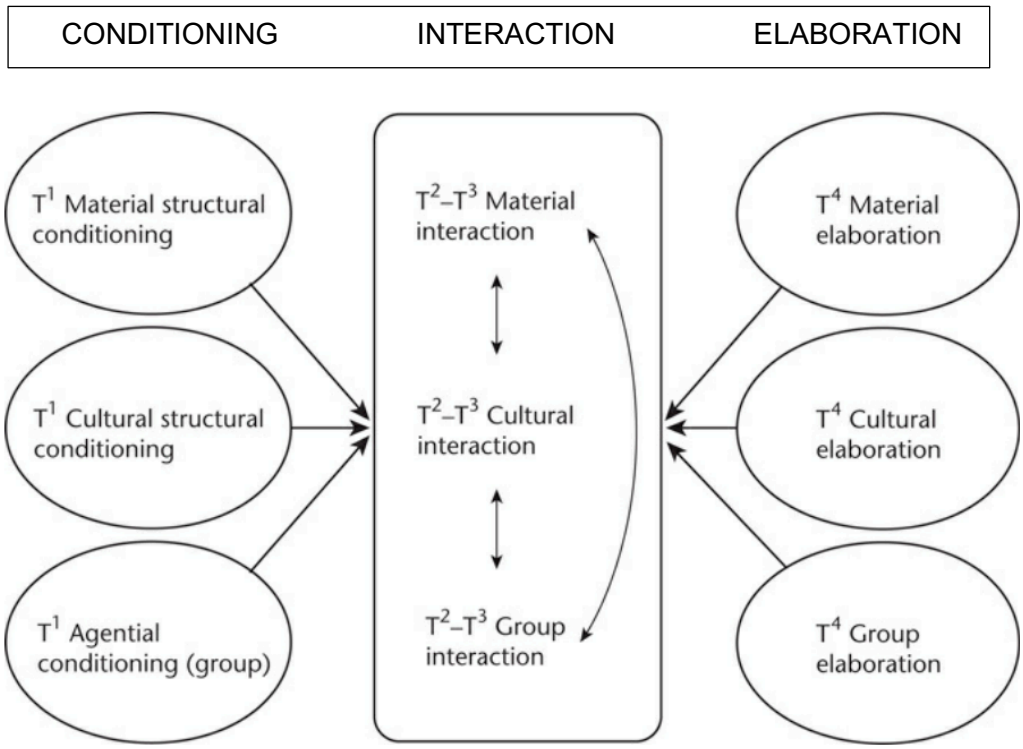
a) structural conditioning, cultural conditioning, and socio-cultural conditioning of groups of corporate and primary agents;

b) social interaction, socio-cultural cultural interaction, and group interaction between corporate and primary agents; and

c) structural elaboration/reproduction, culturally elaboration, and group elaboration of corporate and primary agents.

Figure 3.2

Interaction between Social Structural Conditions and Social Conditions of Agency



Adapted from Danermark et al. (2019, p. 93)

Research Design

Based on the model depicted in Figure 3.2, and informed by a body of CR-based empirical research, in particular, the contributions of Archer, (1995, 2000, 2003, 2020), Bhaskar (2016), and Sayer (1992), the research design ultimately comprised four phases: first, arriving at a meta-theoretical definition of the key phenomena framed by the research question; second, deriving a means of identifying and organising suitable data; third, devising ways of analysing the data to explain missional change in terms of structural, cultural, and agential morphogenesis discernible at various points of time; and fourth, determining a theoretically consistent approach to presentation of findings. The following section describes the application of the phases and steps taken in conducting the research depicted in Figure 3.3.

Phase 1 – Defining Key Phenomena Framed by the Research Question

This phase entailed a. description of the research situation; b. resolution understood as identifying and analysing key components; c. redescription, involving abduction and theoretical redescription; and d. formulation of the research question. These processes are explained as follows.

a. Description

The initial phase of the research seeks to describe the research situation in terms of concepts, events, circumstances, and conditions relative to the problem in terms most likely understood by rational persons. Such description tends to relate to tangible and observable features located in the empirical and actual domains. This step was taken as part of Chapter 1 of the thesis.

Adventist educators in Australia have perceived change in the organisation's sense of mission extending over more than half-century. The description is based on comments, publications, the behaviour of significant persons in the organisation, and other evidence of missional change. The description also cites events and circumstances that first attracted my interest in the problem, my personal lived experience in the AE, and my capacity in the role of participant-as-observer.

b. Resolution

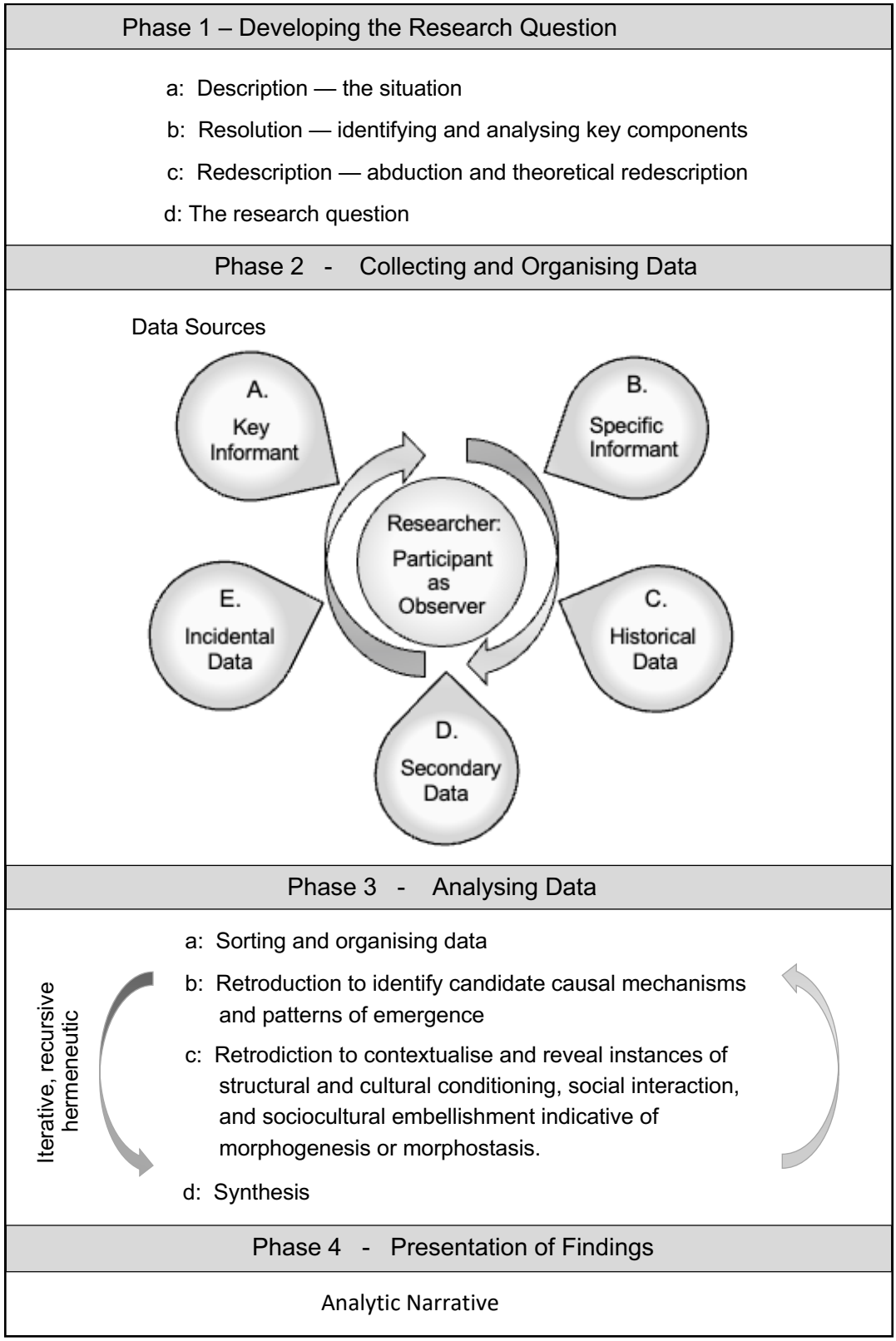
This part of the process seeks to clarify what the research is aiming to explain by identifying and distinguishing the component parts of the milieu in which the research problem is located and evaluating them in terms of their apparent causal significance and potential.

c. Redescription

This step involves a process of abduction where elements of the situation are interpreted and reconfigured as new conceptual frameworks associated with pre-existing theories. This transfactual process shifts the focus from concrete observable characteristics to abstract theoretical analysis and representation of its identity and purpose. Wright (2013) argues that the construction of theoretical models in this manner is conducive to richer and more comprehensive understandings and

Figure 3.3.

Phases and Steps in the Research Process



Generated for this research

explanations. Reinterpreting and recontextualising elements of the situation also have the potential to offer new conceptual leads flowing from a different theoretical framework or the integration of several of them.

d. Formulation of the Research Question

Based on this activity, the research question was then able to be confirmed and articulated.

Phase 2 – Collecting and Organising Data

In this phase, data from a range of sources were identified, collected, and organised. Consequently, this phase of the research and its representation in Fig. 3.3 is necessarily extensive and detailed. Consistent with CR's interdisciplinary stance, data from other methodologies sensitive to the empirical and actual domains were gathered with a view to identifying observable or historical phenomena and events.

The data collected included the following kinds: ethnographic data (interview, observation, lived experience); historical and documentary data; secondary data gained from the results of previous research, presentations at scholarly conferences, and publications; and incidental data noted from a variety of sources (e.g., conversations, news items, observations) as stated.

a. Ethnographic Data

Ethnographic data was drawn from personal accounts, observations, reflections, memoirs from groups of informants, including observations from my own lived experience. The methodological practice of 'purposive sampling' followed in this inquiry focuses on 'individuals, groups of individuals, institutions…based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions' (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p.77). Teddlie and Yu cite Maxwell's definition of this type of sampling as where 'settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices' (p. 87). Participants were selected because of their close association with Adventist education as a distinctive sociocultural organisational setting. These individuals proved to be a source of rich data.

One subgroup of informants was identified as "key participants". This designation represented a distinct group with substantial experience by virtue of their location and roles over at least the last 50 years, or had entered the system at some

point during that period. Apart from myself, six individuals represented this group with extensive experience as educators, administrators, and researchers in AE within the timeframe of the study. This group was considered important in ensuring the highest level of validity, accuracy, plausibility, and creditability of the data produced. The six key participants were selected because:

- all had been long-term employees or were retirees from administrative positions at various levels of the AE organisational structure;
- all were postgraduates in the field of education from a range of tertiary institutions, both Adventist and public, in Australia or overseas – 4 of the 6 held doctoral degrees; the remainder had masters degrees;
- four of the six had been or were currently engaged as lecturers, tutors or supervisors of postgraduate studies;
- all had extensive experience as educators in Adventist schools at several levels such as administration of SDA schools (5 of the 6); and/or served as Directors or Associate Education Directors at Conference, Union or Division level, and/or served on Boards of Education; and
- all had served as representatives of Adventist education on external, government, and private committees and advisory and regulatory educational bodies.

Ethical Considerations. Approval was granted by the Avondale University Human Research Ethics Committee covering all aspects of the research methodology to protect the participants and minimise inherent personal risks. This was considered to be a priority when conducting interviews, collecting, analysing and presenting data obtained from all participants and the potential impact on individuals, especially in relation to contentious issues and episodes. While some given names have been used where there is minimal risk of embarrassment, in other situations, positional role titles have been used. In the case of informants, the respective names were assigned alphabetical tags, and the corresponding transcripts and coded list filed in a password-protected folder on my personal computer, inaccessible to unauthorised users.

Interviewing Key Informants. Data from the key informants were gathered in a series of two meetings as described below. However, the process of analysis was not delayed until all data had been collected; rather, analysis began as ongoing

dialectic interaction between data identified at any point to provide feedback to refocus and refine it or reveal new insights of understanding or other untapped sources of data. The data developed in two stages. The first stage of analysis was regarded as a stage in the co-construction between researcher and interviewee of interview data being produced, while the second stage would come into play in the analysis of the data as a whole.

Meeting 1 (Exploratory Interview). The first unstructured interview began with the question:

- How would you define the mission of Adventist education?
- How do you think that mission of Adventist education in Australia has changed over the last 50 years or more?
- What circumstances, people, and relationships have contributed to the various kinds of change over that period?
- How do you think trends of perceived change developed?
- What concerns do you have for such change?

As expected, the responses were substantial and led logically to identifying people, events, social factors, perceived causes and explanations offered that the elements represented in the aims of the study were woven into the conversation. However, due to the diversity of prior experience of the participants, the sets of observation were unique. In proceeding further, I used the responses as cues to pursue and elaborate on why they thought they were significant. If any of these elements appeared to be omitted, an appropriate question was asked in order to focus the conversation. My own thinking at this time was influenced by the theoretical model presented in Chapter 1, although I did not wish to limit the extent of the participant's response. Thus, the interview was theory-driven in the sense that I sought structural, agential, and cultural insights which could lead to further probing or restructured questions (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 678).

The initial meeting in each case was planned to take approximately 40 minutes and be audio-recorded and then transcribed. However, in most cases, the initial interview ran closer to 60 minutes because of the high level of interest in the topic and the obvious volume of data produced. Early in the interview process, it was noted that the responses were substantially different from typical ethnographic

interviews where the researcher is a relative newcomer to the situation. In this case, there were two advantages in the process. First, the participants, as experienced post-graduate researchers themselves, articulated responses that were typically reflective, analytical, and critical in character. As such, the data was thick and insightful. Second, it was noted that at various points during the interviews, their comments triggered additional insights in my own mind as interviewer and I took the opportunity then to reframe these insights into further questions. As a result, parts of the interviews were more like scholarly collaborative conversations, again providing data of rich quality. Although several participants, before the interviews, suggested that their memories may have posed 'a problem', the conversation quickly triggered recollection of significant experiences and produced lucid narratives relevant to the aims of the study. Supplementary questions were addressed also where possible during the interviews. As soon as possible after the interview, each recording was transcribed.

Meeting 2 (Depth Interview). The initial interviews were extensive and produced a large volume of data. But it was then deemed necessary to subject the transcripts to first level analysis to identify aspects of potential significance to the study and a waypoint on journey in gathering data. These aspects were then organised into an interview agenda with pertinent questions for deeper discussion in the follow-up meeting. In some instances, pertinent points made in interview with other participants were posed as questions for confirmation, elaboration or alternative comment while not breaking confidentiality regarding the identity of the participant. Again, the interview was audio-recorded. At this stage the aim was to develop focus and depth. It was inevitable that there would be some repetition of comments made in the first interview. However, a valuable body of additional insight was forthcoming in each case, and insights considered to be extensions or new to the discussion were noted. Following this, each instance was reviewed and summarised for further analysis.

b. Data from Specific Informants

On occasions during the depth interviews with key participants, significant events were recognised together with individuals who were closely associated with that instance. An example is, Lloyd (2006) was commissioned by ASA to survey all teachers in Australian Adventist schools on their perceptions of the value and

function of the Curriculum Unit. Information-gathering from such a source fits Teddlie and Yu's "purposive sampling" typology which identifies several forms of emergent sampling – "revelatory", "opportunistic", "sequential" and "snowball" or "chain sampling". (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, pp. 96, 97). Where relevant and possible, the people concerned were invited to provide their information either in conversation or documentary form. Data included personal accounts, observations, reflections, memoirs, and lived experience of the researcher. Data also related to events or phases of AE's history and knowledge obtained from specific participants with first-hand experience of the events or situations documented in journal articles, books, published records and archives relating to the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its organisational agencies. This also included policy documents, manual, reports, minutes, communiques and memos, promotional materials, brochures, yearbooks, archives, websites, etc.

c. Historical Data

Data relating to events or phases of AE's history and knowledge obtained from specific participants with first-hand experience of the events or situations contained in journal articles, books, published records and archives relating to the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its organisational agencies. This also included policy documents, manual, reports, minutes, communiques and memos, promotional materials, brochures, yearbooks, archives, websites, etc. From a CR perspective, this data source is potentially valuable in providing evidence of empirical reality, i.e. experiences, empirical observations, such as, what is observable through the senses or in historical documents, and actual reality comprising events, whether observed or not, either in the natural world or resulting from human action. The thesis demonstrates that while the recent circa half-century of AE's existence and function is the focus of the thesis, an informed awareness of the longer history of the SDA Church is relevant and necessary to understand the implications of the research question. For the purposes of the study, this period extends back to the early 19th century, thus pre-dating the lives of contemporary participants. Consequently, to identify significant causal antecedents that help to explain events and situations in recent times, the researcher is dependent on historical and documentary data.

However, it is not only historical events from the more distant past that are

relevant. Significant events, organisational discourse and action through the whole period until the present are supported by documentary evidence. The following sources are repositories of potentially useful data consulted in the research: books, articles and position papers; reports, proceedings and statistics; minutes of meetings; media sources; school prospectuses and promotional material; records (formal and informal); memos and correspondence; presentations; policy documents; and external archival sources such as government reports, acts and regulations. While many documents of this kind have been drawn from my personal files, access has been available to extensive SDA archives and repositories containing letters, communiques, periodicals, etc. beginning in the mid-19th century have been accessible, either physically or online.

d. Secondary Data

Secondary data relevant to the project have also been derived from doctoral research, published books, and refereed journals. As observed by Patrick (2008), numerous postgraduate research studies have been conducted into many aspects of SDA culture, belief systems and practice over the relevant period. Several of these have relevance to an understanding of issues that are part of this study. While these might be considered as historical data which is another category of intended sources, these works offer complementary potential to the data in this case. The benefits of tapping into the findings of robust research relevant to my own. These studies include those conducted by: Chamberlain (2001), Devine (1986), Ferret and Patrick (2008), and Roy (1988). Several major reviews and surveys from the following authors are also significant: Lloyd (2006), Kilgour and McIver (2017) and ASA (2018). For this thesis, the challenge was to select relevant data from this vast body of literature to account for relevant structural entities, mechanisms, and sequences of events to compose a coherent, focused analytic narrative in response to the research question without distorting the essence of the work of the respective authors.

e. Incidental Data

This category represents opportunistic additions to the interview sources data, for example, a chance conversation with a key participant in the supermarket, or a TV forum on a current topic on Australian education that is relevant to this research. Two other examples of such data sources, both occurring in 2019 are offered. First, I

was permitted to participate in proceedings at the orientation day for new teacher appointees in the largest Local Conference School Company, North New South Wales. A second instance was my participation in the ASA Leadership Conference for the Australian AE system. Also, I have been a socialised participant in the SDA Church and school system. Such a relationship is common in ethnography and social research of this type and is formally described as the role of "participant-as-observer" (Roy, 1988). In that capacity, I also have a legitimate voice in the research process. Archer (2015) also sees this as a first-person advantage that has the potential for better quality by virtue of the fact it does not need to be translated by a third party. Arguably, this should come to bear in both interpreting and reporting data. As a researcher in this situation, I benefit from being able to adopt both an insider and outsider position in terms of sensitivity to the subtleties and nuances of the milieu. However, it does raise the challenge as to maintain critical distance, as it typical, of all such social research, and how to remain vigilant in avoiding bias. It is for this reason that a critical analytic model is so important.

Phase 3 – Analysis

While the steps of analysis outlined in this phase are listed in sequence, they were not necessarily lock-stepped and discrete. Analysis followed an iterative, recursive hermeneutic process in which engagement with the data triggered further data or necessitated reconfiguration. For example, the sorting and organising of data was itself analytical in character. Similarly, during open-ended interviews of informants, the triggering of further questions from the informant's responses was indicative of formative analysis in progress.

a. Sorting and Organising Data

This step was designed to sort and organise the data into the three temporal phases of distinct morphogenetic cycles in terms of the categories such as:

(i) The conditioning influence of identifiable social structures towards change or stability. This may be evident as material social structures in the form of organisational hierarchies, groups, formal arrangements, roles, procedures, and strategies indicative of the organisational identity and purpose. It may also be represented in a cultural system constituted by beliefs, relationships, roles, norms, values, mores, and cultural practices.

(ii) Social interaction. This will be discernible in events and products of human agency. This will occur in the context of relationship between groups and individuals associated with the promotion of institutional purpose and goals.

(iii) External influences. These may be exerted by societal, cultural, political, and governmental regulation.

(iv) Elaboration and change. This will be evident in changes at the level of structures, human relationships, and the respective cultural system.

b. Retroduction

The focus of research throughout was to provide an explanation for the underlying factors that appear to generate change in the mission of Adventist education in Australia. The aim of the exercise was to identify causal mechanisms at the empirical level (Danermark, et al., 2019). While an event may be a direct product of one mechanism, and observable at different levels (Sayer, 1992, pp. 116, 237) it is possible that the event could be a product of combinations of structural and causal antecedents. (Note Fig. 3.2 earlier.) This step marks a transition from the "concrete to abstract level of analysis" (Sousa, 2010, p. 491). To keep track of this process, countless mind maps linking events, mechanisms and structures were drawn. In that process it became clear that the combinations of these elements represented emerging morphogenetic cycles, each cycle having a distinctive character needing further interpretation.

c. Retrodiction and Contextualisation

This step involved further exploration of the interplay between the structural, cultural, and agential conditions, and changes in the form of structural and cultural and group elaboration. This involved a recognition of upward and downward conflation and patterns of configuration. In due course, adjustments were made to the analytic maps to account for the distinctive relationships and trajectories that had emerged. Based on this evidence, cycles of morphogenesis took form.

This step builds on identified structures and mechanisms to investigate empirically how they become apparent in concrete circumstances. Their relevance and causal depth are assessed and validated in the context of social and cultural conditions, interaction, and events. Mechanisms are seen to have normative or

configurational powers and potentials, that is: (a) normative, which represents the habitual patterns of everyday life that continually recreate and, potentially, transform specific institutional mechanisms...considered in terms of their antecedents and causes', and (b) configurational, due to the "spacial distribution of people" … and the capacity for "collective effect" (Vincent & Wapshot, 2014, p. 151). Second, these mechanisms may be further classified according to the level of their upwards and downwards causal effect on emergence, and the interactive relationships between the respective mechanisms. The stratified nature of this reality justifies the use of analytic dualism to explain the interplay between agency and structure and its effect in the form of structural and cultural transformation or reproduction. The retroduction/retrodiction process reveals "material-structural, cultural-structural, and agential (group) conditioning", and "material, cultural, and group elaboration" that has occurred (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 93). In this process, the concept of change or continuity implies a temporal dimension. Consequently, cycles of morphogenesis or morphostasis may be confirmed.

d. Synthesis

In this step, an attempt was made to combine abstract and concrete research findings in terms of "a wide range of constitutive structures, mechanisms and events" (Sayer, 1992, p. 236). At this stage, this form of synthetic analysis also served as the bridge into Phase 4. In Archer's terms this represents "analytical histories of emergence" based on morphogenetic or morphostatic cycles, thus accounting for and explaining "the dynamic interplay that shapes, and is reciprocally shaped by the outcomes" (Archer, 1995, p. 194). This phase of the process also allows for synthesis of different forms of research and theoretical frameworks. In this research, synthesis was a necessary stage that led logically into the compilation of the research report.

Phase 4 – Presentation of Findings

For this phase, analytic narrative served as an appropriate literary device, not only for presenting the data, but also to delineate and explain the findings of the research. Archer (1995) argues that "the causative power of mechanisms and the interplay between the real, the actual and the empirical to explain precise outcomes", may be effectively articulated through "analytic narratives of emergence" (p. 343).

Wright (2013 pp. 273, 274) also concurs, arguing that analytic narratives offer "the best possible retroductive explanation of past events" (pp. 273-4). These narratives provide "a detailed and textured account of context and process" with concern for both "temporal sequencing" and "assessing causality in situations where, particular events, and path dependence must be taken into account" (Levi, 2002, p. 112).

A morphogenetic approach represents a "paradigmatic form of explanation with the particularities of time and place always taken into account" (Porpora, 2015, p. 60). Furthermore, the presentation of the report of findings in the form of narrative resonates with human experience and its relationship to time. Following after Ricoeur (1986), Richardson (2011, p. 2) asserts that narrative is a "transcultural form of necessity [in which] temporality becomes interpretable in human terms. Time is made human; narrative is a condition of temporal experience" (p. 2). In essence, it represents historical knowledge through which ...

> the story-telling human community launches enquiries, forms provisional judgements about which stories are likely to be successful in answering these enquiries, and then tests these judgements by further interaction with the data. (Wright, 1992, p. 109)

Thus, the storytelling process captures and makes sense of the past, explaining how a phenomenon has emerged. But it also sets the stage for consideration of what might be in the future. To engage the reader, each of Chapter 5-9, the analytic narrative section is preceded with an overview of the terrain to be navigated, and then in conclusion, complemented by an "analytic reflections" section which interfaces the narrative and the theory with the aim of sharpening the focus on the research question.

Concluding Remarks

As a preliminary step in the research, the next chapter provides the background story of the beginnings of Adventism in the mid-1800s and the emergence of AE from it. The account identifies the historical antecedents of the 55-year period of particular interest, consistent with a critical realist approach, where social structures show in various ways, their emergence out of a definitive sociocultural milieu (Archer, 2020; Bhaskar, 2016; Marks & O'Mahoney, 2014).

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION —EARLY 1800s TO 1967

Historian and theologian Arthur Patrick asserts, “Contemporary Seventh-day Adventism cannot be understood adequately without due attention to its nineteenth century origins and development in the United States” (Patrick, 2010, p. 2). On such a basis, this chapter identifies the historical antecedents of the Adventist Education System in Australia, consistent with a morphogenetic approach. It explains the symbiotic connection of AE with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and recounts significant events associated with the morphogenesis of their mission as defined in Chapter 1, providing a backdrop of antecedent conditions to the targeted era recounted and analysed in Chapters 5 to 9 of this thesis.

The narrative begins in the early 19th century on the east coast of the United States, before turning the spotlight on Australia in the 1890s, leading up to 1967 – the beginning of the 55-year period of particular interest to the research question. The narrative identifies cycles of social conditions that triggered interaction between human agents, and how that agency affected the formation and shaping of the emergent identity and mission of the Church and its education department over time.

The account is divided into two phases: the first, covering the period between the early 1800s and the genesis of Adventism, through to the death of Ellen G. White in 1915. The second phase describes the dynamic social interaction affecting Adventism in the aftermath of White’s death, until 1967.

Phase One—Early 1800s to 1915

Seventh-day Adventism originated from the Millerite movement that formed at a time of turbulent social, economic, political, and ideological change in the early 19th century in the United States (Mustard, 1987; Patrick, 1987). This was a period of religious ferment and unprecedented expansion unparalleled since the days of the early Christian church. In an early work, Patrick described how “from a revivalist/millennialist/pietist matrix, a new denomination was born and by 1860 was being organized, believing its raison d’être was to herald an imminent Second Advent and to call for a series of reforms in Christian doctrine and practice” (Patrick, 1987, pp. 310, 311). In view of the group’s perceptions of the atheistic or agnostic philosophies of the age, they set out to restore the original simplicity and purity of

the New Testament faith which they felt had been lost in the Methodist, Baptist, Congregational and Christian Connection denominations they had left behind (Chamberlain, 2008). But despite stepping away to form new alliances, this hybrid group tacitly embodied attitudes and assumptions derived from previous experience that would influence future relationships and practices with respect to organisation, authority and practice (Mustard, 1987).

The Millerite Roots of Adventism in the Early 19th Century

The political ferment at the time stimulated extensive interest in biblical eschatology and commentary which was widely publicised (Mustard, 1987). In that context, William Miller developed a keen interest in the topic of the Second Advent of Christ and its implications. While Miller was not the only person making millennialist predictions, he was regarded as one of the principal exponents, perhaps *the* principal exponent of premillennialism in America during this time' (Mustard, 1987, p. 33). His interest in the Second Coming was maintained over thirteen years prior to 1831 while associating with the Baptist community. Mustard's account suggests that while Miller did not have an extensive formal education in his early years, it has been acknowledged that he was well-informed because of his private studies, and over time gained respect and prominence in the community.

In his interpretation of prophecy, Miller adopted a historicist approach, comparing portions of Scripture similar to what was believed to be the "tried and true hermeneutic" adopted by the Protestant Reformers (Chamberlain, 2008, p. 34). Accordingly, Miller predicted Christ's imminent return to the earth in 1843, which he later amended to October 22, 1844. Mustard argues that it was this form of prophetic interpretation that made Miller's presentations acceptable to his audiences.

For a considerable time, Miller's teachings enjoyed popularity and his movement grew rapidly largely due his association with Joshua V. Himes who had served previously as a minister with the Christian Connection church. In joining forces with Miller, Himes directed his publishing skills to the production and distribution of more than an estimated eight million periodicals between 1840 and 1844 on the topic of the Second Coming (Froom, 1954). Although Miller and his associates did not directly promote a separation from their earlier denominational roots, as Froom (1954, pp. 761) explains, it was inevitable that calls from some

Millerite leaders "to come out of Babylon" triggered rejection and persecution by members of those congregations.

The Great Disappointment

When Christ did not return in 1844 as the Millerites expected, they were plunged into bewildering turmoil that threatened the group's existence. But while many were disillusioned by the Great Disappointment, and left the group, many returned to studying the prophecies of the Bible to determine where they had gone wrong in their calculations. The perplexing predicament forced the survivors to search within themselves to understand and redefine their identity (Skrzypaszek, 2016). In that pursuit, many believed that it was not miscalculation that had caused the problem, but rather, they had misunderstood the nature of the event itself (Damsteegt, 1977). This alternative solution had a profound effect on the group's relationship with the modified doctrinal foundations – the consequences of which are still problematic for some members of the 21st century church.

Following the Great Disappointment, James White assumed a leading role in attempting to restore unity in the group (Mustard, 1987). Another who shared in the traumatic experience of the Disappointment was a young woman, Ellen Harmon, who later married White, and together they had a strong influence on the group. History attests to James White's influence in holding and directing the group, especially through his writing in the group's periodical, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. However, for many Adventists, his work appears to be overshadowed by that of Ellen, and research indicates that he had greater influence on the group's development than he is given credit for. Nevertheless, Ellen emerged as a charismatic figure in the leadership of the emerging subculture due to what was believed to be a prophetic gift. Her description of those early events provides a poignant account of the personal impact of the Disappointment and its aftermath:

> We were perplexed and disappointed, yet did not renounce our faith. Many still clung to the hope that Jesus would not long delay His coming; the word of the Lord was sure, it could not fail. We felt that we had done our duty, we had lived up to our precious faith; we were disappointed, but not discouraged. The signs of the times denoted that the end of all things was at hand; we must watch and hold ourselves in readiness for the coming of the Master at any time. We must wait with hope and trust, not neglecting the assembling of ourselves together for

> instruction, encouragement, and comfort, that our light might shine forth into the darkness of the world. (White, 1947, p. 52)

During the four years after the Disappointment, James and Ellen White took a lead in holding the scattered group together and seeking to discover where they had gone wrong in their predictions.

It is surprising to many contemporary Adventists that after the Disappointment until circa 1848, the movement was virtually anti-missional by virtue of its "shut door" theory. This theory derived from the parable of the Ten Virgins, who had been shut out of the Kingdom because they had been too concerned with earthly matters. This parable was associated with their interpretation of Daniel's reference in the Old Testament to the sanctuary in heaven and Christ's mediatorial work on behalf of sinners. But because they believed that for many people "the door of probation" was already closed, mission outreach was irrelevant (Chamberlain, 2008). However, by 1851 the shut door view was modified to allow entry to those outside the group (Mustard, 1987).

Skrzypaszek (2016) describes how the events and circumstances of this period had a profound effect both on the identity of the group and their emerging apologetic based on a revised interpretation of the Bible and the reformulation of their doctrinal framework. He comments:

> The dynamic nature of this journey shaped the contours of their identity, not only in the framework of the social, political and religious climate of that time, but especially in relation to the progressive understanding of God's revelation. (2016, p. 156)

It was also during this time that the significance of the Seventh-day Sabbath as a "perpetual sign" was promoted, largely motivated by a tract by Joseph Bates in 1847, and endorsed by Ellen White (Mustard, 1987). On this basis, the group soon came to be known as *Sabbatarian Adventists*. However, it was not the view of the Sabbath alone that carried significance. Mustard identifies how the "unique and foremost doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism", which coalesced between 1846 and 1848, represented an "eschatological understanding of the Sabbath", and included a veneration of the role of Ellen G. White as a messenger of God (1987, p. 98). In observing the seventh-day Sabbath, Adventism also saw itself as "the remnant" referred to in Revelation 12:17 (KJV), the few who remained true to God's

injunction to reject Sunday as the Sabbath, who would then be saved (Chamberlain, 2008). Thus, relating observance of the seventh-day Sabbath to the second coming of Christ, and the acceptance of White's interpretations of the Book of Revelation, allowed the early Adventists to claim a distinctive identity based in biblical eschatology.

But the developing perspective continued to have a literalist, proof-text character and lacked a critical exegesis informed by a knowledge of the original languages of the biblical text. The group could not have appreciated at the time how heated and divisive episodes would resurface from time to time, even to the 21st century. The focus of this new apologetic was on distinctive doctrines rather than on beliefs shared with other faiths, thus reinforcing a sectarian separateness and identity. However, the group was adamant that these were not to be regarded as creeds.

For these Sabbatarian Adventists, the character of their relationship to the world tended to be polemic and fractious, and projected a fundamentalist ethos. Nevertheless, the group numbering 200 in 1850 increased to 2,000 by 1852 (Maxwell, 1977, p. 129). According to Mustard (1987), several factors together appear to have promoted the expansion of the group: a sense of doctrinal unity following the series of conferences convened in 1848; the gradual opening of the shut door; the fading sense of failure in the aftermath of the Disappointment; the unifying impact of a new periodical, *Present Truth* first published in 1849; and the occurrence in 1848 of several political revolutions and unrest in Europe that were interpreted as signs of the end.

As mentioned, early in this period the group was anti-missional because their fate was already decided. However, this was followed by a change in the group's sense of mission in relation to the public. A preoccupation with emphasising an exclusive doctrinal apologetic while ignoring the similarities of belief held by the other denominational bodies, gave way to a new perception of the movement's relation to society at large. Skrzypaszek (2012) describes what followed as a critical time characterised by significant social and structural elaboration in the form of a redefined belief structure, more clearly defined roles, norms of order, mechanisms of control, and a new social identity – Sabbatarian Adventist. Throughout the period, the organisation closely fitted a sectarian typology defined by Wilson (1975), with

one notable variation – the appointment of a professional clergy signified by granting ministerial credentials and ordination to give status and authority to the group's leaders. Notably, Ellen White, although not being formally ordained, held a central role in the structural and cultural development of the group.

Organisational Growing Pains

In the early stages, the Millerites had no apparent organisational aspirations, a fact which is partly explained by their expectation of the imminent return of Christ. Thus, the need for personal readiness for that predicted event was the primary motivation for their action. But the focus soon changed to consider the movement's role and raison d'être. During the 1850s, as the group grew in number, leaders of the Sabbatarian Adventists were concerned about maintaining unity and order. However, historical accounts describe an increasing sense of mission. Growth and locational distribution also brought new challenges. Existing organisational structures with defined roles, and the status and authority of leaders were inadequate in maintaining order and control. The work of the group was also hampered by pockets of fanaticism, the appearance of imposters and several offshoots. This led the leaders of the group to begin issuing the mentioned ministerial credentials and ordaining ministers commencing in 1851 (Mustard, 1987). It was also agreed that the group had a responsibility to provide adequate financial support for these ministers as well as the ongoing financial support of the organisation. To meet this need, a plan of "systematic benevolence" was established. That plan was maintained until its replacement by a tithing system in the late 1870s (Anderson, 1975). The tithing system has continued to the present day, complemented by regular freewill offerings of members of the church.

The path of development for the group was by no means smooth or uncontested. Ellen White was deeply concerned at what she believed to be a destructive trend exacerbated by what she believed to be a misuse of the Bible. Several unintended consequences emerged because of the group's preoccupation with refining their doctrinal foundations. Skrzypaszek notes that their identity changed from being "seekers of truth to the defenders and protectors of the established beliefs and traditions…" which, he argued, "initiated a disengaging insensitivity to the value of a transformational journey with God" (2016, p. 158). Ellen White's communication to church leaders argued the need to transform the character of their apologetic to

give it a more relational, Christocentric and soteriological character (White, 1855). In 1858 she began to advocate a radically different paradigm that came to be called the Great Controversy framework: a motif representing a biblical metanarrative spanning Creation, Fall, Redemption and Second Advent. White's advocacy for this new emphasis was demonstrated and best known through five volumes that came to be known as, the *Conflict of the Ages* series. As will be shown shortly, from that point onwards, the Great Controversy motif became foundational to White's theological perspective broadly, and of her educational perspective.

The Inauguration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

By the end of the 1850s, concern had grown in the group for what was felt to be a lack of identity in the eyes of the wider society. Some members identified themselves as belonging to the Great Second Advent Movement, while others, as mentioned, called themselves Sabbatarian Adventists (Casebolt, 2022). But it was becoming self-apparent that they needed to organise themselves to fulfil what they believed to be Christ's commission to evangelise and proclaim to the world the Third Angel's Message from the book of Revelation, which they interpreted as warning against bowing to a worldly authority symbolised as Babylon. Babylon, in this context, evoked the captivity of the Israelites, equating to the slavery of modern Protestantism to the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy. Towards this end, delegates from across the United States met together on October 1, 1860, and agreed to the name Seventh-day Adventist. Over the next 3 years, the new weekly periodical, *Review and Herald*, reported in close detail the extensive debate regarding the group's plans to form a church organisation. Some in the group were opposed to the concept, believing that such moves were emulating Babylonish Protestantism. Others also expressed fear of centralised control, arguing that any organisational change should be in harmony with New Testament ecclesiastical principles.

Choosing a Name for the Church

It should not be ignored, however, that other factors at play reflected another side to the emergence of identity and mission of the group at the time. For instance, James White was interested not only in deciding on a suitable name. In the *SDA Encyclopedia* under the heading *Organization*, Oliver (1989) cites several reasons

why the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1860s needed to organise itself. These were: "the rapid increase in adherents in the 1850s; the legal problems of holding church property; …selecting, directing, and supporting a ministry; and…controlling personal ambition, fanaticism, and off-shoot movements" (p. 47).

But eventually, on May 20 and 21, 1863, delegates from newly established church communities met, confirmed the name Seventh-day Adventist, and formed the General Conference as the administrative headquarters of the Church. The name chosen to represent and identify the church was believed to emphasise two fundamental principles – the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath and the imminent return of Christ to the earth. Ellen White declared, "The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind" (White, 1947, p. 224). Thus, the decision to adopt this name was an intentional public statement of identity signifying how the group wished to be known.

The newly formed church numbered some 3,500 members spread over 125 local church groups and six conferences in the north-eastern United States with overall governance vested in the General Conference consisting of a president, a secretary, a treasurer, and an executive committee of three (Oliver, 1989). According to Oliver, it was understandable that the form of governance that eventuated for the new church reflected characteristics derived from the earlier denominational affiliation of the various leaders – episcopal, congregational, and presbyterian – although this appears to have been "more by accident than by design" (p. 50). But Oliver (1989) and Anderson (1986) concur in their view that the tendency for Seventh-day Adventists to follow an episcopal system over one that was more congregational, operated by ministers rather than by lay people, was that the organisation had developed from the top down. Thus, an emerging view of leadership that was vested in, and assumed by the clergy of the movement, was being progressively reinforced.

The Role of Ellen Gould White

The part played by Ellen White is of particular interest. She was prolific in her pastoral guidance to the developing church with counsel in the form of advice, correction, and on occasions, stern rebuke, validated by her prophetic status and authority in the church. However, both before and after 1863, Ellen White filled no

administrative roles in the organisation as did her husband James. Despite that, it is she who has appeared to propound the need for organisation more than her husband, following a vision she claims to have had in 1850 (Oliver, 1989). But although she was an advocate of order through organisation, she was strongly opposed to decision-making and control that centralised in the hands of too few leaders (pp. 56-60). She was also strongly opposed to the over-centralisation in the physical location of organisational departments of the church and the congregating of church members in Battle Creek (p. 61). For example, George Knight (2017) recounts how at times during the 1880s and 90s, Ellen White challenged the trend towards centralisation at the General Conference, describing it as the exercising of "high-handed kingly power" (p. 43). However, as the constituency grew and the scope of the church's sense of mission and activity expanded, several auxiliary departments were established. These were devoted to the work of publishing, education, health and temperance, the Sabbath School, religious liberty, and foreign missions. The emerging problem was that although the departments operated as "legally independent auxiliary associations that had developed in Battle Creek…there was no effective way to coordinate their work" (Knight, 2017, p. 46).

With growth of the SDA Church internationally came the need to modify structures that were no longer adequate. A revolutionary initiative in 1894 was the addition of a union conference to the organisational hierarchy in Australia to meet specific needs (Knight, 2017, p. 45). The implications were significant. It meant that in the revised organisational structure, the new union conferences had executive powers greater than the General Conference (Oliver, 1989). It is especially significant to the present research that the *Australian Union*, as it was known, later became the Australian Division, then the South Pacific Division, the title under which it currently exists. Little did the church leaders at the time realise how this action would constitute a challenging precedent structurally for the years ahead, even to the present time.

Other Critical Events

In further identification of significant antecedents of the church's morphogenesis, space allows the citation of only two other critical events, the 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, and subsequent action by church

leaders to silence Ellen white by relocating her in Australia, the other side of the world.

The 1888 General Conference Session

The first relates to an event that Knight claims was "one of the most explosive and significant the denomination has ever had" (Knight, 2012, p. 87). The first event was the 1888 General Conference Session held in Minneapolis. Over the previous decade, a crisis had been brewing because of proposed Sunday legislation, and Adventist ministers in several states had been arrested for Sunday desecration and set to work on chain gangs. The situation came to a head when at the national level, the first bill was introduced into the United States Senate promoting "the Lord's Day" as a day of religious worship (Knight, 2012). Some Adventist leaders reacted to the situation by beginning to review the validity of core doctrines, especially the theology of the perpetuity of the Law as expressed in the Ten Commandments. This was highly significant in view of the assumed "remnant-identity" of the Church, who kept the Commandments and their faith in Jesus Christ, as advocated in Revelation 14:12 (KJV).

Ellen White is Moved to Australia

When the Minneapolis Conference was convened, the atmosphere was emotionally charged, and because of the strong personalities present, the conference turned out to be confrontational and less than Christian. Ellen White was highly critical of what transpired, and called for a radical reorientation from a legalistic, dogmatic emphasis to a more soteriological, relational perspective. She commented on the inappropriate behaviour of several of the leading participants thus:

> I have seen that precious souls who would have embraced the truth have been turned away from it because of the manner in which the truth has been handled, because Jesus was not in it. And this is what I have been pleading with you for all the time — we want Jesus… I saw marked evidence that many had not the spirit of Christ… I felt sad to see that a different spirit had come into the experience of our brother ministers, and that it was leavening the camp. (White, 1987, p. 153)

This was reminiscent of 1858, when the doctrinal refocusing on the Great Controversy theme served as a catalyst for change. The 1888 event was cemented into Adventist historiography where it is regarded as marking the beginning of

emphasis and debate concerning the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith. But White's support of the two main speakers on that topic at the conference, Ellet Waggoner and Alonzo Jones, and the continuing promotion of the concept around North America did not sit well with the church leaders (Hill, 2008, 2011). In 1891, after three years, the General Conference separated the trio, with Waggoner being sent to England, and White to Australia.

Meanwhile, uneasy tension was building in church organisation between centralised and decentralised authority. In an effort to resolve the issue, the General Conference in Session in 1901 and 1903 exercised central authority to relocate several semi-independent ministries of the church as departments of the General Conference, while at the same time creating semi-independent union conferences which together would form the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Fortin, 2018).

The Genesis of Adventist Education

It had been more than 15 years following the Disappointment before serious attention was given to the education of the children of the emerging group. Contrary to myths still held by many SDAs about the beginnings of Adventist education, early attempts by the pioneer leaders of the movement to establish their own schools were not grounded in a neatly formulated philosophy or blueprint. Rather, the move to establish schools for Adventists was a struggling, evolving response to changing urban and industrial conditions and other sociocultural influences of the time (Greenleaf, 2005). Several reasons are posited to explain the motivation for the establishment of such schools. Firstly, after the Disappointment, it was still believed by some of the group that Christ's Coming was imminent, thus the education of their children was of little or no concern. But with the passing of time and the Coming not realised, parents began to reconsider their children's schooling.

While the need to provide basic education became apparent, Ellen White warned in the *Review and Herald* that it was the duty of parents, in order that they be saved, "to separate them from the world" and "keep them from the company of wicked children" (White, 1854, para. 13). A second reason for the establishment of schools was that as the church membership grew, questions were being raised concerning the training of future workers to carry on the movement's mission. Opinions were put

forward as to how to answer these perceived needs. But the initiatives proposed were often contentious. Between 1854 and the mid-1860s, various attempts were made at home-schooling or setting up clusters of small family-group schools. However, as Brown's (1972) *Chronology of Seventh-day Adventist Education* shows, these initiatives were short-lived.

Influence of Reforms in Public Education

It should be noted that these educational initiatives did not occur in a vacuum. Again, they were historically conditioned and, to a large extent, motivated by world advances in industry, transport, communication, urban development, and technology. By the latter half of the nineteenth century tension was building as new demands were being placed on society and the nation. Snorrason (2005) argues how out of this sociocultural melting-pot emerged a dream of progress, of an ideal society based on democratic principles, and upon reason and scientific thinking. This newly emerging worldview clashed with tradition, challenging the religious faith, supernaturalism, and dogmas of the Church.

In the aftermath of the American Civil War, and with the utopian dream shattered, American society was losing patience with the apparent failure of its schools (Akers, 1989; Snorrason, 2005). The issue of education was proving contentious and in a state of flux, with many theories and approaches being propounded. Hitherto, the approach to education had focused on the intellect and was regarded increasingly as elitist and reserved for the upper class. But by 1872, dramatic changes in society, culture and politics were driving reforms in public education aimed at providing more appropriate, practical opportunities for all.

During this period, the ideas of Herbert Spencer in England and John Dewey in the United States were attracting interest as a way towards the idea of "complete living", based on practicality and the maximum development and growth of both the individual and society (Snorrason, 2005). At the same time in England and Germany, the Manual Arts Movement considered practical and vocational needs, again with a personal and societal focus. In that context in 1872, Ellen White published her first major statement on the principles of education in an article entitled *Proper Education* in the church periodical *Health Reformer.* The statement is regarded as a

landmark foreshadowing the systematic development of educational theory to follow (Greenleaf, 2005). In the article she argued that authentic education…

> … embraces more than merely having a knowledge of books. It takes everything that is good, virtuous, righteous, and holy. It comprehends the practice of temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to God and to one another. In order to obtain this object, the physical, mental, moral and religious education of children must have attention. (White, 1872, p. 131)

The article is regarded as seminal, and portions of it appeared later in many of White's publications in various related contexts that are representative of its holistic character. For example, personal health and wellbeing were regarded as important factors affecting intellectual potential.

Educational Philosophy of Ellen White

One of the myths associated with Adventist education's origin is that Ellen White's views on education were a hundred years ahead of her time (Knight, 1985). Instead, Greenleaf argues that White was not a lone voice on educational reform at the time. It would be more accurate to see her perspective as a reconceptualisation that brought together features from several schools of thought relating to education that were being promoted at the time. Like several of them, White's manifesto also encompassed physical, mental, moral and religious dimensions. But in marked contrast, they were not regarded as discrete elements, but essentially in holistic relationship. But the fundamental difference compared with humanistic bodies of thought was her theocentric orientation in which humans were characterised as rational, reflective, social and moral beings, who derive meaning from a transcendent source, and respond in loving relationships with others. As such, humans were not seen as robots, but were free to think, make decisions, and act with respect for others, and appreciation for potential consequences. However, while some aspects of White's ideas appear similar to those of her contemporaries, her perspective was different from them in essence in terms of their orientation, context, focus, authority, purpose, and ultimate aim. Snorrason (2005, p. ii) summarises the philosophical contours of White's perspective:

> White's ultimate aim of education is the restoration of the image of God in the human being. The chief elements in her concept of the image of God are freedom of choice, dignity, individuality, and a character of love expressed in unselfish service to God and fellow human beings. Such character includes the

> development of the whole being for service. The ultimate epistemological aim of education, a personal and experiential knowledge of God, is indispensable to the ultimate metaphysical and axiological educational aim, the restoration of the image of God in the human being. This ultimate aim of education is not static, but dynamic. The human being will reflect this image, the glory of God, more and more fully throughout eternity.

But despite the publication of *Proper Education* in 1872, attempts to establish church schools were spasmodic. Eventually, an attempt was made to establish a school designed to implement this vision at Battle Creek, Michigan with Goodloe Harper Bell appointed as head teacher. But despite the idealistic essence of the initiative, Bull and Lockhart (2007) have identified three underlying motivations the Battle Creek establishment attributed largely to James White. Firstly, both the Millerites generally, and James White in particular, has been quoted as believing that the capacity to "best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent" depended on "a well-disciplined and informed mind" (White, 1862, p. 29.11). Secondly, White always felt a need to provide for the ongoing training of workers for the ministry of the church (Graham, cited in Knight, 1983). Thirdly, Bull and Lockhart (2007) cite a basic mistrust in the public school system as exhibited generally by the believers.

However, as Bull and Lockhart point out, this disposition was based on a self-imposed separation towards institutional independence, rather than on a philosophical position (2007). After a mixed response, the Battle Creek school was officially endorsed by the church. However, over the following decade, Ellen White herself clashed with school administrators (Bull & Lockhart, 2007). White's perspective on how to implement it proved contentious, because it undermined the dominance of a classical educational approach that was being followed. Valentine and Whidden (2014, p. 13) describe how "serious differences over vision and mission emerged at the church's flagship" and a "lack of leadership failed to unite the faculty and adequately address systemic problems". Consequently, in 1883 the college closed. However, in 1885, Battle Creek College reopened under the leadership of William Warren Prescott. Valentine and Whidden describe Prescott as Adventist education's Renaissance Man who, in working closely with Ellen White, "was able to reset the compass, strengthen the rigging, and chart a new course for the church's education system" (2014, p. 14).

Throughout the period covered thus far, the experiment continued with mixed success. The priority of the church's leaders for the educational efforts in the early years was to produce future workers for the potential growth of the church itself. This was one of the expected roles of new colleges like Battle Creek College in Michigan and Healdsburg College in northern California. However, for twenty-five years, despite sporadic attempts to establish some eighteen church schools across North-Eastern USA, education for the primary grades was neglected (Greenleaf, 2005). Opposition came from a surprising quarter:

> The chief doubters were members of the General Conference Committee. The church's leaders summoned Sutherland, Magan, and Griggs [supporters of White's views] to a lecture that essentially blamed them for diverting money from more needy causes, primarily missions outside the United States, to establish elementary schools. (Greenleaf, 2005, p. 89)

The Confluence of Forces

The confluence of several forces led to what Adventist historians have labelled The Movement of 1897 (Greenleaf, 2005). This represents a period of arguably the most significant change within Adventist educational efforts to that time, and the real start of elementary education for Seventh-day Adventists. In the early 1890s the impact of progressive education in wider society was being felt by Adventist educators. In addition, legislation for compulsory education was making its appearance in various parts of the world. In response, Ellen White's tone changed, and her admonitions became more direct. It was not only considered advisable to encourage churches to establish schools, but now parents were obliged to expect it (Greenleaf, 2005). This change now envisaged schooling as catering for children as young as five years of age. This was a significant departure from her view in 1872 where she advocated, "until children were eight to ten years old they should run free as lambs" (Greenleaf, 2005, p. 84).

By the mid-1890s, eighteen schools had been established by the Church across the northern United States. With the growth came the challenge of providing competent teachers for the present needs and to ensure ongoing training for provide workers for future growth of the Church. Shortly afterwards in 1896, Frederick Griggs established the first Adventist teacher-preparation department at the Battle Creek College. Further development of the schools was supported by a small group

of capable supporters of White's concepts including E. A. Sutherland, P. T. Magan, Frederick Griggs, and Bessie DeGraw, each of whom had experience either as a principal, college dean, teacher, or trainer of teachers (Greenleaf, 2005). A curriculum was also needed to match the principles promoted by White together with a pedagogy that moved beyond rote learning to more thoughtful reflection. Furthermore, Ellen White also advised that all levels of learning should be centred on the Bible. But there was a serious lack of textbooks and instruction as to how to put that into practice. Individual creativity and innovation on the part of teachers could only extend so far. The situation motivated several teachers to produce and share a growing collection of textbooks covering the teaching of Bible, English grammar and readers, history, geography, science and the study of nature, healthful living, and anatomy (Greenleaf, 2005). This trend was to continue and grow well into the new century.

Establishing Adventist Education in Australia

Despite the fact that in 1893 the General Conference had sent White to live and work in Australia, she was still able to maintain influential contact through her relationship with W. W. Prescott, who proved to be an influential ally both in the United States and Australia. In 1897, following early work to establish an educational presence for the Church in the state of Victoria in Australia, White was instrumental in the establishment of the Avondale School for Christian Workers, later named Australasian Missionary College, now Avondale University. White described this relocation as a second attempt to establish what she defined as a "model school" that followed her concept more closely (Chamberlain, 2008, p. 44). This was followed by a period of prolific writing developing this perspective on Christian education until her death in 1915 (Snorrason, 2005). In speaking of this period and the development and struggles of Adventist education, Knight (1983) emphasises the strong contrast between the events in Battle Creek when compared with the Avondale School for Christian Workers. This period saw the maturation of her concepts regarding education growing out of that experience. In 1903, following White's return to the United States, her developed philosophy was published under the title *Education* (1903, 1952) a book that has been regarded by Adventist educators since that time as representing and clearly articulating the essence of Adventist education. In that book she stated:

> True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual powers. It prepares the students for a joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of service in the world to come. (White, 1903, p. 13)

In pursuit of that vision, she declared: "In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one" (p. 30). The biblical context of this perspective is explicit, as later she added:

> The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the book clusters is the redemption plan, the restoration of the human soul in the image of God. (p. 30)

To echo that theme, the slogan, *The Restoration of the Image of God in Man*, appeared for many years at the head of most official school documentation as the ultimate goal of Christian education. Knight explains how this concept represented a reformational perspective with a biblical, soteriological emphasis that emerged as an elaboration from the social and religious upheaval of the time (1985). From White's corpus emerged a distinctive and substantive expression of Adventist educational philosophy that was to inform the conduct and management of the Church's educational institutions worldwide and into the future. Skrzypaszek's succinct summary captures the significance of the development:

> Ellen White's understanding of education developed progressively, first in regard to its potential for education to contribute to life in the changing world, and second in regard to its role in Christian mission. The foundations of the symbiotic relationship between education and mission were laid as early as 1861. Over time Ellen White's emphasis on education as the quintessence of mission underwent a gradual metamorphosis. Furthermore, the developmental stage of Ellen White's understanding of this relationship occurred during her nine-year residence in the mission field of Australia…The Great Controversy theme was woven by Ellen White into the fabrics of mission and education, aimed to energise students with a spiritually-oriented passion for purposeful service. (2017, p. 28)

Australian educator and researcher, Trevor Lloyd, notes the coincidence of the emergence of the primary and secondary schools in Australia and White's prolific writing about education during that time:

> Although Australasian Missionary College began as a worker-training school, about a third of its students were elementary level, thus the traditional primary

> school movement as well as what would become higher education began at Cooranbong. By 1906 Adventist elementary schools spread to every state in Australia. (Cited in Greenleaf, 2005, p. 238)

Greenleaf (2005) also observes a contrast that unlike North America, where Adventist elementary education appeared a considerable time after Battle Creek College's establishment, that in the case of the Australasian church school movement, it began and developed simultaneously with the training school in Cooranbong.

The End of an Era—1915

The foregoing narrative provides a backdrop explaining the emergence of Adventist education since its inception in the 19th century. The relationship between social conditions and human agency is clear. The social interplay also demonstrates the causative power of ideas and beliefs and the reflexive response of agents acting with purpose, though sometimes, pragmatically, as the fledgling movement dealt with the dilemma caused by the Great Disappointment. In that interaction, the power of charismatic agents such as William Miller, Ellen White and her husband James, to lead and influence the group is prominent. The hybrid nature of the emerging movement and the social background of the various parties had a significant bearing later in time on the production of new structural forms and culture. This, in turn, affected the climate of growth and development of the church's school system. The narrative notes how until the early 1900s, there was continuous tension between supporters and dissenters from the model of education promoted by White and how it could be implemented. It is important to note again the close correspondence between the emergence of Adventist education and of the church itself. With Ellen White's death in 1915, major issues intensified concerning the accuracy of her work, its validity, and her authority in the church. However, she was now unable to defend herself in person.

Phase 2—1915 to 1967

A common theme emerging thus far is the normative function of a belief system and its production and management by the church and its education system. From the outset, the narrative depicts repetitive patterns of social activity in response to changing social conditions leading to outcomes reflecting continuity or change.

Patrick (2008, p. 3) summed up the situation accurately when he described the character of Adventism as "a constant process of struggle and rebirth". While this characterisation certainly fits the period described in Phase 1 above, its continuing relevance to Phase 2 is by no means exaggerated.

Space limits the scope and detail of the narrative over the period from 1920 to 1967—the beginning of the targeted period of interest. Nonetheless, an abundant corpus of literature exists covering the development of the Church and Adventist education over that period by scholars including Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, Michael Campbell, Floyd Greenleaf, George Knight, Arthur Patrick, Richard Schwarz, and Gilbert Valentine, to name just a few cited in this work. But despite the limitations, it is possible to identify several events or emerging situations as key reference points to explain the dynamic social climate and the situational conditions that define AE in Australia beginning 1967.

The 1919 Bible Conference

Following White's passing, concerns over the nature of her work and the implications for her authority and status escalated. The major concern focused on the nature of inspiration, accuracy, errancy, and validity. At the same time issues relating to biblical hermeneutics became matters of urgency. A critical event in response to these issues was the 1919 Bible Conference convened four years after White's passing. According to Campbell (2019), the conference addressed topics relating to biblical hermeneutics and interpretation particularly with respect to eschatology and several foundational tenets of SDA doctrinal identity. But the topic that drew the most fractious debate was the nature of inspiration, and thus, the status and validity of White's work. This was the first occasion in four years following her death that such issues were formally addressed in such a manner without her personal involvement. For some time previously to White's death, several Bible and history teachers had drawn attention to several factual errors in her book, *The Great Controversy*, and opinion was growing that important editorial work was necessary. It is notable that White herself had not only been made aware previously of these errors, but correspondence cited by Campbell (2019) reveals she was keen to have them corrected in the reprinting of a further edition to ensure historical accuracy.

At the 1919 Bible Conference, the problem fuelled debate regarding the nature of inspiration and the legitimacy of the literal text published under White's name. To compound the problem, serious allegations were being expressed regarding her apparent dependence on other primary sources and assistance from secretarial staff in work published under her authorship. Consequently, the issue of the nature of prophetic inspiration was vigorously contested and debated. For the first time, polarisation was strongly evident between fundamentalist and liberal sectors of the Church based on theological positions. According to Campbell (2019), the bulk of the conference was devoted to the twin issues of Ellen White's writings and interpretation of the Bible took centre stage. But the dominant concern was the nature of inspiration which had direct implications for the durability of White's prophetic status. The fundamentalists defended the concept of verbal inspiration with its characteristics of inerrancy and infallibility, while others, citing White's own prior testimony to the contrary, wanted to portray White and her work as more realistic. Campbell (2019) claims that this stand-off at the 1919 Bible Conference was the first time in Adventist history that progressives and conservatives were pitted against each other. However, as Campbell claims, these matters were not resolved in 1919, and would continue to be a topic of debate throughout the rest of the twentieth century, and beyond. He goes on to reveal the curious fact that although the transcripts of the Conference were mislaid at the time, they were actually lay on a shelf in the Ellen G. White Estate archives, unopened, until discovered by accident 60 years later and then published in *Spectrum,* a journal first published in 1969, which promoted the examination and evaluation of the Church and its institutions by both SDA and non-SDA scholars.

Tension between Conservatism and Change

To this point, a prominent feature of Adventism's emergence was the centrality of its doctrine. This provided motivation, empowerment, and focus for the responsive interaction of the group and its mission. As a body of propositional knowledge, it represented the movement's distinctive view of knowledge, its source, and its authority. At first, the apocalyptic emphasis of the doctrines highlighted the differences between the beliefs of other churches and reinforced the sectarian character of Adventism. However, key events such as the 1888 Conference in Minneapolis and the 1919 Bible Conference testify to the building tension between

conservatives and progressives based on conflicting interpretations and understandings. Such tension was not new. As noted earlier, White had previously challenged a legalistic doctrinal bias and consistently advocated a soteriological and grace directed re-emphasis. But, after 1919, a fundamentalist trend followed within Adventism, resonating with the wider fundamentalist/evangelical movement beyond (Campbell, 2019).

During this period, debate, critique, and controversy surrounding doctrine followed as proponents of fresh insights and reinterpretations of old positions were vigorously contested by conservatives intent on the preservation of Truth at all costs. However, as Pöhler (1995) describes, early in the history of the Church, efforts were directed towards securing and defending doctrinal development within. However, he attributes greater external influence to new social and historical external factors. Pöhler concludes that "the various forces gradually seem to pull the church away from its sectarian roots towards a more denominational stance" (1995, p. 292). So, both internal and external forces contributed to tension between those with a will to preserve a heritage and others motivated to reimagine the way forward.

The *Questions on Doctrine* Event

By the mid-1950s, a need for doctrinal clarity had emerged. Church leaders commented, "In recent years especially, there seems to be a desire on the part of many non-Adventists for a clearer understanding of our teachings and objectives" (Editorial Committee, 1957, p. 7). In addition, opinion had intensified in *Eternity* magazine claiming SDAism to be a sect or a cult (Patrick, 2007). These factors led to the production of the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, by the General Conference (Editorial Committee, 1957). Sufficient to say, space limits the extent of reference to the protracted interaction between the SDA Church and external parties, especially complicated by acrimonious internal comment by some noted Adventist theologians. Such was the discourse that despite the eager anticipation of the book, which I also experienced personally at the time. Nonetheless, the work sufficiently convinced Donald Grey Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity magazine* to revise his opinion of Adventism in an article titled "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" (Barnhouse, 1956, September, p. 7) in which he stated, "I should like to say that we are delighted to do justice to a much-maligned group of sincere believers, and … to acknowledge them as redeemed brethren and members of the Body of Christ".

However, the view was not totally accepted by the Eternity readership, while Knight described it as "undoubtedly the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history" (2007, p. 1).

Concluding Comments

Adventist schools continued to function in the shadow of this complex milieu, but totally subservient to the Church. In the closing years of Ellen White's life, the setting up of schools was the first step in establishing the Church's presence in many locations around the world (Greenleaf, 2005, Ch. 10). However, the establishment of the Australasian Missionary College in Australia, initially as a "worker-training school", was a centre of interest (Greenfield, 2005, p. 238). At this time also, elementary (primary) schools began to develop in parallel to worker-training. However, it took until the 1940s and post-World War II for intermediate schools to develop. A statement by the Australasian Division of the Church summarised its perspective of the place and purpose of its system of schools (See Appendix A, para. 3).

> The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates a school system to ensure that its youth receive an education in harmony with the Church's Christian standards and ideals and at the same time incorporating an appropriate balance between the academic, social, vocational and spiritual needs of the individual. Seventh-day Adventists believe *that there is peculiar to the church, a body of knowledge with its values, beliefs, attitudes and habits that must be transmitted to each succeeding generation in order that the church may continue to exist*. (Emphasis mine)

Thus, although the statement emphasised "character building" and the development of "a spiritual foundation" of its students as a primary purpose (Appendix A, para. 4) the Church's future existence was seen as being dependent on the transmission of its dogma, through its education system.

CHAPTER 5: ADVENTIST EDUCATION 1967 TO 1979

Chapter 4 accounted for the emergence of Adventist education from its beginnings in the nineteenth century via a sequence of morphogenetic cycles extending to a short period following the death in 1915 of Ellen White, the church's charismatic female protagonist. The chapter explained how particular events, together with the emerging culture and circumstances that contributed to their emergence approximately a century earlier constituted a sequence of events and circumstances that not only influenced the formation of identity and purpose of AE until circa 1915, but continued to do so until circa the mid-1960s and 1970s, the beginning of the half-century of primary interest to this thesis.

This chapter begins with an account of the policies and politics of the Adventist school system circa the latter 1960s and the 1970s, in the context of post-war Australian culture and society. The sectarian character of the SDA Church and its schools at the time was to change radically over this turbulent decade, however. The narrative explains how changes in Federal and State policies regarding education affected the boundaries of separation the Church had constructed, thus maintaining its sectarian character. The next agent of change described in this chapter is the critical turn in Adventist scholarship flagged by the publication of *Spectrum* in 1969. The chapter concludes with Analytical Reflections, where the events portrayed in the narrative are viewed through a Critical Realist lens, to identify the morphogenetic trajectory of the phenomenon of mission in Adventist Education.

Policies and Politics within Australian Adventist Education

By the 1970s, SDA primary schools operating in centres around Australia where enough church members lived to support them financially. In addition, secondary schools operated in all capital cities of the Australian states. In New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, some secondary schools had boarding facilities enabling students from outlying areas of Australia to reside and study; also, the children of parents working as missionaries of the church in other countries.

Administration of the Schools

Churches large enough to sponsor their own schools thus had at least two agencies operating at the same location. One of these ministries was headed by the

church pastor, usually ordained, whose role was to care for the pastoral needs of the local parish. The missional focus of the church focused on evangelism to the outside world. By contrast, the church school, managed by the headteacher and staff, was expected to provide Christian education, so-called, for the children of the church members. Essentially, the school's mission was to socialise the children to ensure continuity, church stability, and to encourage children for future roles in the work of the church. While the church and the school functioned independently as two entities by virtue of their different characters and official managers, the Pastor assumed ultimate authority over the local school. However, few pastors understood or had any background experience in the conduct and management of schools. In most cases, education was regarded in instrumental terms.

This collection of schools included several in New Zealand that were regarded as part of the Australasian church-school system, so-called. Administrative responsibility for the system was divided between the two Union Conferences of the Australasian Division of the SDA Church – the Trans-Tasman Union Conference (TTUC) located in Sydney, and the Trans-Australian Union Conference (TAUC) located in Melbourne, each with an Education Director to oversee their operation. At the same time, there was an administrative presence representing education at the Australasian Division in the person of an Education Director, although, as Wright (1993, p. 43) observes, "there were brief times when there was no Division Education Director at all". When there was such a person, his efforts were shared across other administrative responsibilities of the church in such a way that "the time available to be spent on educational matters was spread thinly among it all" (Wright, 1993, p. 43). The day-to-day running of schools at the local level was entrusted to the principal or headteacher, who was answerable to the school board which, in turn, was accountable to the President of the Local Conference. The churches directly sponsoring the schools were typically passionate in their commitment to Christian education and made significant contributions to their maintenance. The motivation to establish a church school in the first place often grew from the interests of members in a local church or region, and a belief that it formed an ideal complement to the formative influence of the church and the family. But such initiatives were only approved by Church authorities if the financial sustainability of the proposed school and sufficient enrolment numbers were maintained.

The staffing of schools was managed at the Local Conference by the President. However, the financial support and oversight of the school's daily operation was the responsibility of the school board, which comprised representatives elected annually from the membership of the sponsoring church, or from clusters of churches in the case of larger regional schools. While smaller schools faced their own problems relative to the limitations of the pool of potential board members with expertise, the larger schools wielded significant power in controlling the affairs of the school, particularly by the board treasurer. Financial viability was a major, ongoing concern. Each church or church cluster was responsible for both the maintenance for the school and 60-65 percent of the teachers' salaries and allowances (Wright, 1993, pp. 45, 46). The balance of the wages, together with assistance for capital expenses associated with the school were the responsibility of the Local Conference and the Union Conference, with occasional assistance from the Division by means of grants and loans for school buildings. At the local school level, parents paid fees for their children's education to help meet the church's ongoing financial obligation. Although regular church offerings were scheduled for this purpose, it was common, albeit necessary, for fundraising initiatives to be created. Working bees involving parents and supportive church members were common in many schools to care for the physical maintenance of facilities. Also, routine management matters were addressed by regular meetings of the school board.

The Power of the President

In the culture of the church, the position of President carried implicit power and authority. The normal progression to this elected position was via Division appointment of an individual with significant pastoral experience. It is not known whether there was an official requirement to have experience in public evangelism, but certainly, the aptitude of a prospective president was gauged by the number of baptisms reported. At the Local Conference level, this entailed the management of a range of interests or specific ministries such as education, evangelism, young people, health and temperance, lay activities, and literature evangelism. In most conferences, education often required the greatest attention with respect to general management, staffing and finance. The President was normally assisted by the Secretary-Treasurer and any managerial, maintenance or strategic development needed to gain the approval of this alliance. Officially, Local Conference business was overseen by the

Executive Committee which the President chaired. He wielded considerable authority and influence on the members of the church constituency, and the organisational viability of the Conference. Immediately on acceptance of the appointment, a President was assumed to have expertise in all departments of the church in his Conference, including the management of the church's schools. It is pertinent to the research to note that presidential control was ubiquitous at all levels of church organisation – Local Conference, Union Conference, and Division.

However, it was at the Local Conference where for most employees, presidential action appears to have been more observable. In most cases, Presidents at the higher levels of the hierarchy would be expected to have served previously at Local Conference level. However, at the Local Conference level, presidents were elected by a nominating committee every quadrennium. Nominees came predominantly from pastoral ministry at the local church level, backed by demonstrated success in "soul-winning" gauged by the annual, personal tally of baptisms into church membership. However, none of these experiences could be reasonably expected to guarantee successful and efficient management. After serving at the Local Conference level in the 1970s and 1980s, one ex-President commented that he took up his presidency without the benefit of training in administration. He commented: "As far as I know, the church has never trained a person specifically for administration." Nevertheless, many older members, particularly retired ex-employees of the church can affirm particular past-Presidents for the way they were perceived to have successfully managed the affairs of the church in their assigned area of jurisdiction. However, other informants observed that most Presidents appear to have regarded education as either religious or secular and had difficulty understanding and appreciating the educational process or its spiritual implications. The main expectation was for schools where children could be taught a liberal curriculum while being socialised securely as SDAs. The purpose of the Adventist school had little, if anything, to contribute to the mission of the church. If they were going to remain operating, their viability was driven mainly by economics; they had to pay their way.

The Appointment of Teachers

There was no clearly defined, long-term staffing policy or consideration of career paths for individual teachers at this time. The Education Directors at the

TTUC and the TAUC participated in the appointment of teachers at the end of each year or any other time a vacancy occurred. Teachers were notified and requested to fill positions, with no provision for them to apply for a particular position that they thought was likely to be vacant. In many respects, they were pawns in a system over which they had no direct control. One commonly held view in Adventist culture, albeit regarded somewhat cynically by some, was that "the Lord works through committees". Apart from individuals who felt that their lives, and the lives of their families had been adversely affected, they cooperated with the decisions of administrators. Nevertheless, there is no denying that many Adventist teachers do attribute the reality of a "Divine plan" informing their personal lives and their vocation.

At the same time, convoluted power plays often became evident between the two Union Conference Education Secretaries and sometimes a Conference president. One of my key informants had accepted an offer of employment after his graduation made by the Union Education Secretary, who was upstaged shortly afterwards by the Education Secretary in the other Union, who changed my informant's appointment. This change was then ratified by a Conference President. In recounting the circumstances surrounding his first appointment, my informant commented:

> I went to ___, and the first thing I did was to go and see the President. I asked him how I had finished up here when I was originally appointed to ____. "Simple", he said, "the other guy appointed was a married man. We're not prepared to pay for a married man, pay his rent and all the rest of it. You're here because you're single, and you're going to stay that way". So I started my teaching life at ____ , and while I was there, the President transferred to another Conference. But before he left he assured me that I would have a job in teaching, as long as I kept my mouth shut. (Informant A)

Ultimately, my informant *did* marry, but had to endure poor-standard housing, while his employment was affected by the whim of administrators, often driven by financial considerations and personality traits.

Shortly after this sequence of events this informant was moved to a different state to replace a principal who had moved on for reasons unknown to most people at the time. Eventually, he soon learned what had got his predecessor offside with the Conference administrators. He recounted:

> The president wanted to get rid of him because the school was “too successful”. It was growing too fast. When I arrived and was still unpacking my goods, I got a phone call from the President and the Secretary-Treasurer asking me to see them in the office. When I arrived, the President started by saying, “The first thing is, we expect your loyalty to this conference. The second thing is about trying to grow the school. We can't afford a bigger school. If you try to grow the school, you’ll go the same way as the last fellow”. It illustrates the power of the organisational strata keeping education under control. But I lasted five years there and enjoyed the school, and it grew despite what they decreed. (Informant A)

The flexing of presidential muscle was not only at the Conference level. Just prior to the era represented in this chapter, Lilydale Adventist Academy had been established as a significant boarding school as the fulfilment of a dream by its founder, W. J. Gilson, who also served as Union Education Secretary. This school was to provide education especially for children from remote areas, especially of parents serving as missionaries overseas. It continues operating today as a day school. However, the school had been established without the express approval of the Division President, who, when the school began operating declared, “I will never set foot on that property.” After his passing, the President’s son confirmed that his father had kept his word!

The good-will of the teachers and the absence of militancy allowed heavy-handed autocratic rule from Presidents at the various levels of church administration to run unchecked, as described in the following anecdote. By coincidence, this incident involved the staff of Lilydale Adventist Academy in the mid-1970s. Under normal circumstances, the administration of Adventist schools in Australia was the responsibility of the respective Local Conferences and their Presidents. However, Lilydale was different. As a boarding secondary school in Victoria, “the Academy”, as it was known, came under the jurisdiction of the TAUC. Appointment to the teaching staff carried the added responsibility of being rostered to supervise boarding students 24 hours per day, including weekends. At term ends, students returned to their homes. However, instead of teachers being free to utilise the vacation time independently in the typical way, for planning and recreation, the Union President at the time decreed that all teachers at the Academy needed to spend half of each term vacation on duty assisting with general maintenance and repairs. On one such occasion, I recall spending the time removing loose floor-tiles from the shower block

in the boys' dormitory. When pressed for justification for his edict, the President stated that the ministers only had one annual vacation, so in his opinion, it was unfair for teachers to expect to have term breaks as well as their annual vacation.

In the face of occasional high-handed, impulsive, *ad hoc* behaviour of administrators as described, the possibility of career security and personal career paths was problematic for teachers at the time and contributed to low levels of morale with little apparent opportunity for resolution.

Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning

Australian Adventist schools have always been legally required by the education department of each state to teach a general curriculum for an allotted period each week. Clifford (1988, p. 38) provides a succinct summary of the schools' obligations:

> Approval to operate a school or college in Australia is granted by a state Department of Education. The curriculum is largely prescribed by the same authority. Acceptance of and conformity to the prescribed curriculum is a condition of registration and approval to function. Student progress is evaluated through a series of state controlled public examinations. Matriculation into tertiary institutions is competitive and essentially on the basis of performance in these examinations.

However, in the 1970s, this legal requirement allowed for topics that clashed with SDA faith and belief to be modified accordingly. This adaptation was assumed to be a task carried out by teachers as part of their routine preparation and delivery. This process depended on the professional, cultural and intellectual capacity of teachers, based on their college training and their prior socialisation in the culture of the church.

At this time, an educational strategy known as school-based curriculum development (SBCD) was advancing, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States (Keiny, 1993). Australia followed suit, and efforts made to implement the concept in various state curricula. Local school communities were charged with the responsibility for curricular matters related to their respective schools and were expected to develop programs that meet the needs and interests of the community. This freedom worked to the advantage of Adventist education in Australia. Curriculum content dealing with the creation versus evolution of the natural order,

and the implications for cosmology, anthropology, the sciences, health and morality were prominent issues of concern. Apart from that, subjects of the public curriculum were assumed to be value-neutral and serving the development of literacy, numeracy, and general education.

In Adventist schools, it was part of the daily routine to teach a subject that was commonly called "Bible" – in addition to the public-school curriculum as required for registration with the State. The resources for teaching this subject in all Adventist schools worldwide were published by the General Conference of the SDA Church in the United States. Further explanation of the production and nature of the Bible curriculum will be given in the following chapter. But at this point it should be noted that while the legitimacy and practice of teaching the subject, Bible, was relatively uncontested by Adventist teachers, modification of some content was common, particularly in the secondary years where units of "denominational history" were expected to be studied: but as one retired teacher commented, "The history of the church in the South Pacific was hardly an attention-grabber for 15-year-olds'. Another bone of contention towards the end of the 1970s was towards several prophecy-based units whose content was the focus of growing doctrinal dissent within the church at the time. The private substitution of topics and subject matter behind closed doors was common (Roy, 1988).

At the school level, the preparation of programs of work and documentation associated with teaching and learning was administered locally. In staffed schools, the supervision and coordination of teaching and learning was the responsibility of the principal. Apart from this local responsibility, occasional visits, or inspections were conducted by one of the two Union Conference Education Secretaries who was also involved in the appointment of teachers. These personnel held at least a bachelor's degree, although for a time, one held a doctorate from a public university. My personal recollection of inspections is that the major focus was on personal teaching programs, efficient classroom management and general professional performance as a teacher. However, at the times of inspection or official supervisory visits during this period, I cannot recall any comment being made or any question asked of me regarding my personal awareness or identity with the mission of

Adventist education. In hindsight, that appears to have been presumed and taken for granted.

Preachers and Teachers

It did not take long for a new employee in Adventist schools to become aware of the nuances of difference and elitism lived out between the pastoral ministry and the teaching ministry. There was unanimous agreement between interviewees regarding this reality and the coexistence of two distinct, and sometimes antagonist sub-cultures. I asked one of the interviewees where he thought this attitude originated. Without hesitation, he replied,

> I think it came from Avondale. It came from the ministers. The Ministerial Association at the College made up of the student theologians, were considered and treated as first class, and I think it carried on ever since.

When theology graduates were eventually employed in the pastoral ministry of the Church, an ambivalence towards Adventist education and a tacit disregard for its teachers remained. Education was regarded merely as a service, not a ministry. In many cases, a school was regarded as a financial drain on the Church that siphoned funds from its evangelistic plans.

As a further distinction between the two ministries, church pastors were typically ordained after a probationary period, thus confirming their status and signifying it with the title, Pastor, as mentioned. Only in exceptional circumstances was ordination conferred on teachers. A typical exception would be when the constituents of a large boarding school in the mission field also represented a church community. In such a case, the principal could also serve as the church pastor and be ordained.

Another significant difference between the preaching and teaching ministries was the salary structure. The key reference point on the salary scale for church employees equated with the work of an ordained pastor. From the point of view of the organisation, all other positions were thus related. An ordained pastor in local church was deemed to attract 100 percent of the basic salary. However, teachers received 85 percent. In the 21st-century this difference would be likely to be contentious. But in the 1970s, it was accepted as the way it was.

The distinction between church employees being classified as “workers” and “teachers” is a well-known part of Australian Adventist education’s folk history. It first seems to have appeared on occasions where teachers and ministers worked together on a joint task. For example, one previously mentioned informant recounted how in his first year of employment he joined the team of church employees in pitching the tents and preparing for the annual regional camp meeting. He recounted how the Conference President — "the tin god”, as he described him — had called a meeting for all workers (Informant A). At the appointed time, he made his way to the meeting place, but as he tried to enter, the President who was standing at the door, stretched his arm across the entrance and curtly stated, “This isn’t for *teachers*, it’s only for *workers*”. However, this was not an isolated incident. Several of the other informants shared similar anecdotes, and the question, “Are you a teacher or a worker?’ became immortalised in the light-hearted banter at teacher gatherings over the years. However, another retired teacher described it as “the insult of the difference”.

Teacher Identity

My memory of the culture and ethos of the AE system in Australia in the 1970s remains clear. For the most part, a strong, spiritually-motivated service-ethic existed between colleagues, and Adventist teachers appeared to relate comfortably, albeit cynically at times, to the credentialed status of minister-teacher.

At that time, AE’s mission was reflected in documents associated with the management of the schools and teaching and learning. It was common for such documents to articulate educational aims and objectives in a hierarchy ranging from “ultimate” to “immediate” (Appendix B). The ultimate goal – “the restoration of the image of God in man” – appeared at the beginning of virtually all formal school documentation and personal teaching programs. The connotations of the ultimate goal itself were assumed and uncontested, although occasional comments by teachers indicated that they felt the practice of commencing all documentation with goals and aims amounted to window-dressing.

Most Adventist teachers in the 1970s appeared to identify with AE’s role in relation to the church. A sense of “calling to the teaching ministry” was evident at several levels. Many of these teachers had made a conscious decision to follow the

teacher training course at Australasian Missionary College as it was known at the time of their enrolment. (The institution was renamed "Avondale College" in 1964.) Occasionally, when staffing needs in the schools were not met by Avondale graduates, SDAs "in good and regular [church] standing" but who had been trained elsewhere and employed as teachers in other schools and systems were invited to join the ranks of AE. But in all cases, teachers were required to be baptised members of the Church as a condition of appointment to Adventist schools.

The teacher-minister role, as it was called, consisted of both pastoral and educational dimensions. The typical career path for intended teachers was via study at Avondale. After completing the "Theological Normal" course, primary teaching graduates received a teacher's certificate, while secondary teaching graduates received a bachelor's degree in a major and minor teaching field. While these qualifications met the requirements for teacher registration with the various state education jurisdictions at that time, it was not until later that completion of a university degree became a pre-requisite for graduate study. To offset this perceived disadvantage, affiliation was negotiated with a fully accredited American Adventist institution, Loma Linda University (LLU), to endorse Avondale's Arts degrees. Students in the sciences were able to study remotely at Avondale for a Bachelor of Science degree from London University, supervised by approved local SDA scientists holding recognised postgraduate qualifications from public universities.

A systematic understanding by the church's educators of the distinctive perspective of Adventist education and its implications for curriculum and pedagogy appears to have taken time to grow. Till then, it appears that the motivation and maintenance of AE's ethos was largely cultural tradition and sentiment. The significance of study in the various disciplines and teaching fields other than the sciences was informed by wider contemporary understandings and approaches. However, the holistic character of Adventist education encompassing the mental, spiritual, social, and physical dimensions of human personhood does appear to have been assumed and expressed. Those understandings came directly from the writings of Ellen G. White on the subject.

Until the seventies, formal theoretical education studies based on that corpus of literature appear to have been poorly presented despite the assumed importance it held. One of my key informants who had been trained originally in a state teachers'

college and had then been employed as a teacher in that state, was impressed by what he had read in White's book *Education.* For that reason, he decided to resign from his position in the public education system and study further at Avondale. However, he expressed disappointment with what he found.

> I had been state school teacher and I was coming to college for the first time and I was wanting to discover what Adventist education was all about, and I was incredibly disappointed. I felt what I was being shown about Adventist education was way behind what I had understood from my own reading of Ellen White's Education. I had studied that book thoroughly more than any other of her writings about education before I ever went to college because I was wanting to make sure I was taking the right step. I had plenty of colleagues in the state system who thought I was stupid - teachers, Adventist teachers. So it was an interesting transition. Some of them were Adventist teachers within the Adventist school system; some were in the state school system. It was a mix. But when I got to Avondale, I was surprised. … The guy taking the Christian Education class simply stood at the front and read the book *Education* to us for a year. I could not believe the model that I was observing. I remember commenting to one of the other lecturers that I knew, asking why these lecturers weren't actually modelling the kind of education they wanted us to practice. That lecturer was actually angry about what was going on as well. Eventually a new head was appointed who was quite different. (Informant B)

Nevertheless, for most young people in the years leading up to this era, participation in "the College experience" was regarded as a logical path to take, and as highly desirable for its social benefits as well as vocational preparation, typically in ministry/theology, education, commerce, secretarial, or general studies. The close bonds and camaraderie forged between students and alumni over the years are still on display annually at the annual Homecoming. While studying at Avondale, many Adventist teachers met their future spouses and several, including some of the key informants for this research were also born and raised from such family unions.

Perceptions of Mission in Adventist Education

In the past, the choice to study at Avondale was highly valued. Students were required to combine study with part-time work in the local health food factory, cafeteria, dairy, or library, or perform domestic duties to have a healthy work-life balance. This enabled even young people with limited financial means to work their way through their college program, to earn financial credits towards their college fees. Stories abound from past students and their background circumstances that fostered a high level of dedication and commitment driven through a sense of

mission as seen through Adventist eyes. In SDA churches in Australia, the decision by some young people to attend public universities and tertiary institutions rather than Avondale often raised questions as to their loyalty to the evangelistic mission of the Church.

The sectarian character of the Church at this time and the enculturation of its members was strongly evident. Their life experience was firmly embedded in the activities and relationships in the local church community. Prior to this, Adventist schools only existed in locations where SDAs lived in sufficient numbers to support them. For that reason, not all students beginning their vocation as an Adventist teacher had themselves been educated in an Adventist school. Nevertheless, socialisation in SDA culture for many of them was in an almost closed environment where there was a pervasive sense of separation from "the world". The formation of values in the children in Adventist homes was continually reinforced by reading Arthur Maxwell's (alias Uncle Arthur) series of *Bedtime Stories* produced by SDA publishing houses around the world, complemented by the *Children's Hour* series. Countless members of the church experiencing the practice testify to the profound influence of the Maxwellian worldview it promoted.

At the same time, personal investment in mission permeated every aspect of the Church's activity worldwide. For example, missional sensitivity was encouraged and nurtured in various activities of the church, such as the MV Society (Missionary Volunteers or later, Pathfinders – similar to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Movements), at conference youth camps at which College representatives were often sent to promote Avondale courses. One interviewee cited the positive influence during her upbringing in a pastoral family. Yet another interviewee spoke of the influence of missionaries visiting on furlough in their local church or speaking at the annual regional camp conventions as guest presenters. He also recalled how at regular "young people's' meetings" held every Sabbath afternoon, attendees would stand to attention at the beginning of the program, with right hands raised, and recite together the Missionary Volunteer Aim – "The Advent message to all the world in this generation". It is no surprise that many Adventist teachers were motivated by such experience and came to serve at some stage of their lives in foreign mission schools, mainly in the Pacific in regions under the care of the Australasian Division.

Thus, most Adventist teachers appear to have sensed a "call to ministry". In acknowledgement of that role, these teachers were issued with teacher-minister credentials by the Australasian Division. As part of the role, teachers were expected to teach the subject known as "Bible" — the prescribed religious studies curriculum — along with the regular school subjects. This meant all primary classroom teachers were Bible teachers by default, while secondary teachers were expected to be called upon to do so for an assigned roll class, depending on staff teaching loadings. In the main, the majority of secondary teachers accepted this responsibility without complaint, as it was consistent with their embraced identity. In preparation for teaching Bible in this way, trainee teachers were required to study a collection of biblical subjects representative of SDA faith and doctrine throughout their courses. However, when graduate teachers from the College were occasionally in short supply, qualified SDA teachers from other sources outside the church were employed on the basis of their good and regular standing in their local church. Therefore, with respect to status in the church as an organisation, although teachers were officially regarded as teacher-ministers, a clear distinction was made between the teaching ministry and the pastoral ministry of the Church.

An insight into the perception of the purpose and status of Adventist schools in the minds of church members can be gained from the Trans-Tasman Union Conference Secretary's Report for the Quadrennial Period, published in the church's weekly journal, *Australasian Record,* 1970 (Craig, 1970, November 16, p. 11).

> We have said for many years that the finishing of the work of God depends on our youth. Education thus becomes a vital part of our church programme. This quadrennium has seen an increasing development in our schoolwork. The number of school buildings has increased, school enrolments have lifted over 20 per cent and our teachers have increased in number and qualifications. Above all, the number of children baptized through the efforts of schools and pastors has shown a pleasing increase.

But while the claimed growth was encouraging, attention was directed in the report to emerging problems faced by the school system.

> As the problems confronting young people have multiplied there has been a deeper concern shown by parents, and this has brought more interest in Christian education. In these difficult times we need to use every influence to bring our young people to make decisions for Christ. (p. 11)

Clearly, the church school was believed to serve a vital, multifaceted function in conjunction with the church and its own identity and mission.

Historically, the rationale for Adventist education is located in the writings on education by Ellen G. White. Consequently, it is that body of work that has traditionally set the standards by which Adventist schools are evaluated and validated. Documents relating to the character and management of Adventist schools commonly cited quotes from White's publications. Common topics included the following: principles of education; goals; the curriculum; the role of the teacher; a view of the students; modes of teaching; discipline; personal health; recreation; lifestyle; and the administration and climate of the school. Typical of these publications was a handbook based on E.M. Cadwallader's doctoral thesis, Principles of Education in the Writings of Ellen G. White (1949). In the years following WWII, the Department of Education at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Washington D.C. published a series of pamphlets in which the role and function (or mission and vision) of AE in the context of the Church's structure was spelled out. In the early 1970s, many such publications were still on shelves of Adventist schools, and they represent the purpose of AE since its beginnings in Australia in 1892 and up until that time.

From such literature it is apparent that a key reason for Adventist schools, as White had advocated, was the comprehensive socialisation of children and young people of the church, personally, culturally, socially, intellectually, spiritually, morally, and vocationally. This role was envisaged in a complementary relationship with family and the Church. But while the diverse "needs of the individual' are emphasised as important, the role of the schools stands out:"... in order that the church may continue to exist'. Clearly, in the past, the primary purpose of Adventist schools was to prepare the young people to serve in various roles of the church's outreach to the world. As one informant commented, "Adventist schools were for Adventist kids, and for the Adventist church" (Informant D). Consequently, most students were from SDA families, although non-SDA children could enrol to a maximum of 15 percent in any particular school. I asked one of my key informants who had taught in an Adventist primary school in the seventies her perceptions of Adventist culture at that time in its relationship with the church. She replied:

> I guess it is fair to say that our aim today is to reach people with the gospel of salvation. However, that wasn't really the mission of Adventist schools in that period in history, because it is my perception that we were operating these wonderful little islands to protect our children. And their salvation was certainly important. But our mission was inwards focused. So, at my first school, yes, we did have a community of people who were part of the school; but we had to abide by the 15 percent rule. So only up to 15 percent of your total student population could be of some faith other than Seventh-day Adventist, because that was regarded as a risk. So, while the ministry arm of the church was more about evangelism and reaching out to the community, the school, the education arm of the church was more about strategies and tactics. That's just the way that was. It stayed like that for quite some time. (Informant D)

Thus, education was expected to serve as a means of ensuring the continuity of the church through the reproduction of a distinctive culture and its trappings, and in the eyes of church administration in Australia the stated raison d'être of Adventist schools was clear and uncontested.

Winds of Change from Within and Without

Although it is normal practice to refer to the Adventist school system', in Australia in the 1970s these schools, in fact, could scarcely be described as systemic. Certainly, a strong sense of vocation was shared by the majority of teachers in the schools scattered around the nation. Rather, they reflected *ad hoc* management practices with teaching staff and principal answerable to multiple authorities—a situation that caused ongoing conflict. On the surface, it represented a hierarchical administrative structure – Australian Division (at the time), Union Conference, Local Conference, School Board, principal. But in reality, it was convoluted and cumbersome with representatives of various levels often usurping the authority of others.

Despite tension caused by internal politics, Adventist schools in Australia survived. This was due in no small part to the dedication, good-will and resilience of its teachers, and the sense they were "doing the Lord's work'. Also, a large proportion of SDA parents preferred to have their children educated in a church school wherever possible. However, management was becoming increasingly dysfunctional. Lack of organisation, role conflict, turf protection, and incompetence at the various levels triggered a growing sense of need for change. At the same time, there was a need to clarify organisational identity and the reason for existence and

function of Adventist schools. This clarification process was accelerated by two significant events; the first was the appointment of a new Director of Education, and the second was a pivotal change in both Federal and State Government policies towards private schools, particularly with respect to funding.

A New Division Education Director

In 1976, the South Pacific Division Executive Committee appointed Dr Gerald Clifford from South Africa as the new Education Director for the Division in the hope that his proven efforts would bring order and efficiency to the region's schools. Clifford came to be regarded by many of his colleagues as "the father of the Australian Adventist Education system". With the passing of time, appreciation grew for his intellect and capacity for systemic, strategic vision and action, together with drive that sometimes met with resistance from those who disagreed or could not keep pace with the changes. But he was tenacious and resolute in his efforts such that a new level of order and efficiency soon followed. Regarded as "a systems man", he was able to quickly identify problem areas and formulate strategic responses. One retired Local Conference education administrator commented:

> Gerald had a vision to broaden our whole education program. I remember when he first came into the job and he was sounding out those of us who had come in from different quarters, and you could see where he was coming from. He was a really sharp guy, a very astute operator. He knew where he wanted to go. He was a big factor in encouraging schools to look beyond the traditional picture of the little backroom school of the church. However, for some the changes posed a personal challenge, and lots of people were trying to pull him back at times. (Informant B)

Despite the relatively small size of the system, the staffing process typically began around August each year. But often, some teaching positions remained unfilled into the new year. The whole process desperately needed reorganisation. Clifford set up a committee to centralise the process for staffing of Adventist schools across Australia and New Zealand. However, the problem would not be solved overnight. Old habits were difficult to change.

Financial Assistance to Australian Schools

According to the Australian Constitution (Section 96), the Australian states and territories bear responsibility for all compulsory education (Harrington, 2013). Prior

to 1964, non-government schools did not receive government financial assistance, however, and their survival and viability depended on pupil fees and money raised privately. This posed a constant challenge in Australian independent schools, especially the Catholic sector. SDA schools faced similar challenges in making ends meet. Nevertheless, Adventist commitment to Christian education was such that Adventist schools managed not only to survive, but grow, albeit slowly.

However, economic and social changes in Australia following World War II not only brought greater affluence but new demands for an improvement in quality and access to education, especially in science and technology following the launch of Sputnik in 1957 (Wright, 1993). While Adventist schools had kept a distance, the importance now of "keeping up" and "competing" with their counterparts elsewhere was increasing especially in cases where parents were facing a choice between enrolling their children in an Adventist school or other schools, either public or private.

Prior to the mid-1960s, the long-standing Liberal Government had supported a European style government. However, in response to the changing mood, the Commonwealth Government made a strategic move on the States' constitutional control of education. In 1964, the Liberal government passed the *States Grants (Science Laboratories and Technical Training) Act 1964* which not only provided capital grants for science laboratories and equipment in both government and non-government schools, but also signified a substantive involvement by the Australian Government's in school funding, and thus, a level of potential control (Harrington, 2013). Further Acts were passed in succession extending capital assistance to other aspects of schooling: in 1969, for library facilities in both government and non-government schools; in 1972, for capital expenditure, first in government primary and secondary schools; and then amended in 1973 to include non-government schools (Harrington, 2013).

A further change of substantial proportions came as the result of the *States Grants (Independent Schools) Act 1969* which marked the beginning in 1970 of recurrent per capita funding for school all students. The financial assistance for non-government schools was life-changing, ensuring their survival. For Adventist schools, a response was unavoidable. Customarily, the SDA Church has been uneasy

both on philosophical grounds and from previous experience about the receipt of government funds for any part of the operation of its schools. As Spoor commented in an inter-departmental memo:

> SDA schools had been given begrudging approval by the Church [administration] to accept Science and Library grants; but the per capita grants raised a major problem. (Personal notes, 1994)

Acceptance of that assistance was "the thin end of the wedge" in shaping further the character of Adventist education in Australia (Kilgour & Williams, 2017). The changes taking place outside the walls of Adventist education, were to have a profound impact on the character, identity and mission of its schools, the extent of which was, and is underestimated even to the present day. Several outcomes relating to government funding will be discussed in the following chapters.

The DOGS Case

The generosity of the Commonwealth Government was not appreciated by everybody. A major threat to religious schools arose due to action by the Australian Council for the Defense of Government Schools movement (DOGS). In 1964, the movement began to challenge the validity of State Aid to religious schools. In its push to promote and protect public education, DOGS argued on Constitutional grounds for the separation of Church and State. It was alleged that the aim of religious schools was to promote their particular faith, and that they could not claim to be any more religious than public schools (Australian Council for the Defense of Government Schools, 1981). Between 1975 and 1980, the intensity of the campaign was building, and a legal showdown was anticipated. SDA schools were highly vulnerable as were the Catholic schools. However, several Catholic Bishops boldly countered the challenge by threatening to close all their schools and send their students to local public schools—something that would throw state schools into chaos (Devine, 1991).

One key informant described the SDA Church's administrators at the time as being in a state of panic over what they perceived to be a major threat to their independence, and thus, the survival of Adventist education (Informant C). This was a further reason for the appointment of Gerald Clifford as the Australasian Division's Education Director to take responsibility for representing the SDA school system in a protracted legal wrangle that would ultimately be contested in the High

Court of Australia in 1980 before Justice Lionel Murphy (Devine, 1991). The trial at which Clifford represented SDA Church schools along with representatives of other churches lasted for 26 days (D.O.G.S., 1981). Eventually, DOGS lost the case and the religious school sector survived. However, the DOGS' campaign continues to the present day. Within Adventist Education and the SDA Church, the practice of receiving financial support from the State was, at first, a highly contentious issue. However, it is doubtful that Adventist schools would have survived without it.

The Impact of Government Policy

In varying degrees, there has always been a ubiquitous sense of government control threatening the independence of schools in the private sector associated with funding. But in the early 1970, it was not only direct government grants and recurrent funding that changed the character, identity and operation of Adventist schools. Societal views in Australia were also changing dramatically with profound impact on virtually every aspect of education in both the public and independent sectors. Previous policies and practices that were seen to favour an elite class were contested on the grounds of inequity, and a failure "to acknowledge and address cultural differences and consequent [social] disadvantage" (Seddon, 2001, p. 316). However, in May 1973, the Whitlam government appointed an interim committee for the Australian Schools Commission, chaired by Peter Karmel. It's aim was ...

> ... to examine the position of government and non-government primary and secondary schools throughout Australia and to make recommendations on the financial needs of those schools, and the measures to assist in meeting them. The report identified many inequities in the funding system, which for the first time led to the federal government providing funding to state schools. (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973)

While renewed opportunities for financial assistance from the government contributed significantly to the potential viability and maintenance of Adventist schools, opinion among Adventist administrators with respect to the implications for ultimate freedom and control were deeply divided. The situation was not to be quickly resolved.

A Critical Turn in Adventist Scholarship and Culture

Patrick (2006) characterised Adventist culture as "a constant process of struggle and rebirth" (p. 1). Much of that ferment can be attributed to the growing awareness,

over time, of anomalies, contradictions, and mythologising typical of religious organisations, including the SDA Church. It also depicts responses that are typical within such conservative organisations to resist contestation and withstand the threat of change as a result. Adventist historian Donald McAdams (1980) describes how previous generations of a religious movement follow a pattern to first get the group established, then stabilise and build it. However, as he explains,

> … inevitably, a third generation arises – a generation that has been reared in what is no longer a young and struggling movement, but a well-established and apparently indestructible party, nation or church. Secure in the stability and strength of the organization, the third generation will commence the critical examination of the movement's origin. (p. 27)

Indicative of this new wave of revisionism came in December 1969, when the first copy of *Spectrum* was published by the Association of Adventist Forums (AAF). The journal's editor from 1969-1975 was an Adventist physician, Dr Molleurus Couperus, financially supported at first by a group of his medical colleagues. The objective of this non-official quarterly publication was to examine…freely ideas and issues relevant to the church in all its aspects' and "to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject" (Bull & Lockhart, 2007, p. 322). Rather ironically, as it eventuated, early support for the venture came from the General Conference President and administration (Review & Herald, 11 January 1968). However, it is doubtful that they appreciated the implications and potential of the initiative at the time.

The new venture gave Adventist academics, representing many disciplines, "the opportunity to turn their scholarly expertise on the Adventist tradition, sometimes to devastating effect" (Bull & Lockhart, 2007, p. 322). Professionals from these fields began critically reviewing topics such as: the nature of inspiration and the authenticity of Ellen White's writings and her sources; the historical accuracy in her major writings; her views on physical health; problems relating to biblical and theological interpretation; creationism and cosmology; and criticism of the church's hierarchical structure and governance. The journal promoted an open style of critical scholarship that served to demythologise and delegitimise significant facets of the culture of traditional Adventism. This dialogue stood in contrast to its predominantly promotional discourse hitherto. Bull & Lockhart (2007) also describe how this also affected the official media of the Church, particularly *Ministry,* an official journal of

the church for the benefit of the preaching ministry. The impact of *Spectrum* and the interest it generated produced a distinct change in style and the way information was reported and disseminated in *Ministry*. Following the appointment of a new editor for *Spectrum* in 1975, the practice of commissioning trained journalists to report objectively on church affairs was introduced (2007). This included the engagement of non-SDA researchers such as sociologist, Bryan Wilson who critically reviewed the apparent transition of the Church in an article entitled *From Sect to Denomination: Can Adventism Maintain Its Identity?* (1975). It is significant also that a branch of AAF was also established in Australia; a forum that continues to convene to the present time.

In another *Spectrum* article, *Where are the Historians Taking Us?,* Benjamin McArthur (1979, p. 10) argued:

> There has been created a new class of intellectuals within the church, . . . whose function is to offer critical examination of the church's tradition. The Adventist Church has not known such a group before and is having trouble accepting its legitimacy.

The dissemination of information and critique via the pages of *Spectrum* had a definite impact on the thinking of its readers and their view of the church, particularly with respect to its belief system, organisational character, and administration. However, the appearance of *Spectrum* was indicative of a set of other causes, not only within the church, but in wider society. Notably, the events of Watergate in the United States created a watershed in attitudes and opinion, which very quickly raised a new level of suspicion and cynicism. Whereas in the past, the sectarian nature of Adventism provided a buffer against the intrusion of corrosive ideologies, the boundaries were beginning to suffer substantial erosion. Although the apparent causes were numerous, McArthur (1979, p. 10) captured the emergent trajectory of the change:

> Adventist historiography has followed a pattern of development similar to that of the historical profession as a whole, albeit with a time lag of many decades. Histories of the Adventist Church have always been apologetic. Loughborough, Olson, Froom, Nichol, Spaulding and Maxwell used history to inspire confidence in God's leading among members of the church and to refute the charges of outsiders. Lines of causation frequently led to an underlying providential guidance. To a striking degree, the church's history was divorced from its social matrix. Above all, the apologias accepted

> unquestioningly the inspiration of Ellen White's pen, thus making the search for historical influences not only unnecessary but also threatening.

However, the credibility and power of White's charisma suffered a violent blow when in 1979, *Spectrum* published segments of the transcripts of the 1919 Bible Conference that had taken place shortly after White's death. According to Campbell (2019, p. 54) the bulk of the conference "revolved in some way or another around the twin issues of how to interpret the Bible and Ellen White's writings". But the *dominant* issue of the conference was the nature of Divine inspiration which had direct implications for the stability of White's prophetic status. The "fundamentalists" defended the concept of "verbal inspiration with its characteristics of inerrancy and infallibility", while others, citing White's own prior testimony to the contrary, "wanted to portray a more realistic view of Ellen White and her work". Campbell claims, "The 1919 Bible Conference was the first time in our Adventist past when 'progressives' and 'conservatives' were polarized against each other" (2019, p. 51). The curious fact is that the transcripts of the conference were conveniently mislaid and lay unopened on a shelf in the Ellen G. White Estate archives until discovered by accident 60 years later and published in *Spectrum* (1979).

Interaction with External Teacher Educators

Myths regarding Ellen White's views on education produced a sense of superiority and a silo mentality regarding the value of any external sources of knowledge. However, towards the end of the decade, an initiative was taken by Dr Trevor Lloyd, Chairman of the Teacher Education Department at Avondale College, as it was then known, signalling a new level of collaboration with educators at the nearby Newcastle CAE. The initiative of interest, developed by Sydney University was based on a view of pedagogy focusing on the mastery of a set of micro skills. Avondale's contribution to the initiative took the form of preparing and video-recording simulations in the demonstration school depicting examples of those micro-skills for reference in pre-service teacher education programs. This involved both lecturers in the teacher education program and classroom teachers at the nearby demonstration school. As a teacher in the demonstration school at the time, I was also personally involved in the program until the end of 1979. This was not only an example of significant innovation and creativity, especially with the technology

available at the time, but it was an unwitting demonstration of the benefits in collaborating with others beyond the boundaries of Adventism rather than remaining aloof.

Analytical Reflections

Social Conditioning

Structurally, Adventist educational interests in Australia were represented by a cluster of parochial schools embedded firmly in the Church's hierarchical, top-down structure. Relationally, AE was subservient to the Church and its interests, reinforced by a process of downward normative causation based on mechanisms embedded in roles, obligations, and sanctions potentially holding members together and ensuring collective effect. In that situation, the raison d'être of AE was articulated explicitly in a formal statement of purpose, commonly expressed as, "Adventist schools for Adventist kids".

At a cultural level, every school identified unconditionally as "Seventh-day Adventist" in its name and its alignment with the SDA belief system and ethos. In that context, the influential power of a charismatic agent, Ellen G. White, is evident in the cultural norms and practices. However, in practice, AE tended to be seen in dualistic terms, as either sacred or secular.

The realisation of AEs mission was dependent on internal relationships between two key groups of corporate agents— one, teachers as a group of education practitioners, and the second, presidents and ministers, despite little or no experience as school administrators. In addition, the president's role was conflicted. On one hand he was a minister, while on the other, he was expected to fulfil an administrative role, overseeing finances, and PR matters amongst others. The president's power was hegemonic, reinforced by the myth that it was taboo to criticise the "Lord's anointed". Consequently, relations between teachers and pastors were often tenuous. At this time, compliance with conditions set by the State for registration of the schools posed no apparent normative conflict, although its potential implications for autonomy and control were not lost on AE leaders at times.

Social Interaction

Events, phenomena, and dynamic situations cited in the narrative represent interactive responses initiated by agents defined by Archer as communicative reflexives, intent on both refining administrative procedures and clarifying perceptions of AE's raison d'être. Structural mechanisms, either directly, or intertwined with other mechanisms had potential to create novel entities emerging from the dialectical interplay.

Cultural activity in this cycle included the new wave of scholarship focusing on biblical studies, historical research, and alternative literary sources, to form a new corpus of critique disseminated through widening modes of communication and technologies. At the same time, interaction with representatives from state universities, Government initiated advisory bodies, and external teacher educational academics and practitioners influenced the transformation of teacher education programs provided by Adventist tertiary institutions.

Group interactions at this time suggest that these changes appeared personally threatening to many long-standing administrators. New ways of viewing AE and its raison d'être was met by intense efforts of church administrators to counter and minimise the destabilising effects. Meanwhile, government financial support continued to be received for educational facilities conditional on meeting externally determined criteria, with the potential to compromise efforts to clarify AE's mission.

Elaboration

By the end of the cycle, multi-levelled complementary elaboration was evident. Structurally, relationally, and culturally, tension was building between morphogenesis and morphostasis. However, elaboration in the form of more systematic administrative structures led to improved efficiency, reduced resistance, and strengthened internal relationships. In addition, the group of intellectuals introduced in the foregoing narrative represented communicative modes of reflexivity and contributed to the elaboration of modes of discourse growing out of Adventist scholarship. At another level, interaction between Adventist and non-Adventist agents and tertiary educators transformed ways of viewing and understanding Adventist education and its mission. Consequently, a new paradigm was emerging.

However, interaction during the cycle also created unanticipated consequences. For example, public education policies had a causative effect on parental expectations, which forced Adventist schools to be self-consciously competitive, generating a normative and cultural change, which in turn affected AE's identity and mission. In addition, new scholarly literature and critique attracted interest and scrutiny from both within and beyond Adventism. This had an undermining effect on boundaries of separation and contributed to a transition towards a denominational model.

CHAPTER 6: ADVENTIST EDUCATION 1980 TO 1989

The 1980s represents a distinctive cycle in the history of Australian Adventist education, a decade described as such by Division Education Directors, Drs. Gerald Clifford and Lester Devine in an article entitled *A Time of Change and Challenge* (1975). This chapter provides an insight into the drama behind the changes and challenges, beginning with the complex set of conditions that mark the beginning of the period, including the defrocking of Desmond Ford, a controversial personality in Adventist history, and the shockwaves that followed. The subsequent re-examination of fundamental doctrines in an attempt to achieve stability is recounted, then responses to changes in government policy regarding funding for private schools, and the organisational changes that marked the beginning of the decade are outlined. An account is given of the philosophical and intellectual turn that marked the middle of the decade, and the birth of a new curriculum planning body for both primary and secondary Adventist schools. The chapter concludes with Analytical Reflections of the events recounted in the narrative, to further explain the morphogenetic trajectory of AE's mission.

Adventism at the Beginning of the Decade

The spirit of open enquiry fostered by AAF and *Spectrum* mentioned in Chapter 5 was to be severely tested at Glacier View, Colorado. Australian theologian and scholar, Dr Desmond Ford, had been the head of the Theology Department of Avondale College from 1961 to 1970. During that time, he made a profound and positive impact on students from every faculty, including education students who still remember and hold him in the highest esteem for his inspirational teaching, preaching, keen intellect, and impeccable integrity. Many Adventists who had witnessed his critique regarding the doctrine of "righteousness by faith" at that time, had found his presentations transformative. Some who had been born into Adventist families and socialised in SDA culture described Ford's influence as a breath of fresh air. But to the fundamentalists, it was blatant heresy. Nevertheless, most Adventist scholars and pastors today have accepted Ford's formulations concerning righteousness by faith (Pfandl, 2019). However, on October 27, 1979, Ford had been invited to make another presentation to the AAF in Angwin, California, in which he challenged the traditional interpretation of parts of the Bible focusing on future

events in the world, and on which identity and raison d'être depended. Ford claimed that the doctrinal position had no biblical support and was totally based on White's writings. As a result, Ford was summoned to a meeting of more than 100 theologians and administrators at Glacier View Ranch in August 1980 to evaluate his 991-page document entitled *Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment.* Ford's subsequent defrocking sent a shock of seismic proportions through Adventism (Pfandl, 2019) with periodic aftershocks being experienced to this day. It is important to note that neither at Glacier View, nor subsequently at a series of meetings were the issues resolved. To a substantial group of Adventists at the time, important issues that were significant to the Church's identity had once again been swept under the carpet.

The removal of Desmond Ford from the ministry of the SDA Church in August 1980 at Glacier View, Colorado was yet another defining moment in Church History at every level and Division of the Church, especially in the South Pacific Division where Ford had impacted countless lives over many years. Many Adventist teachers had been strongly influenced by Ford's intellect and integrity while attending his lectures in their preservice studies at Avondale. His ultimate defrocking by the church administration, and the way it was carried out produced anger, distrust of leadership, polarisation and instability. As a result, between 1980 and 1988, more than 180 pastors from Australia and New Zealand left the ministry. This equated to 40 percent of the ministers employed at the time (Ballis, 1999).

Attempts to Stabilise the Church

In Australia especially, the Glacier View event raised many concerns among Adventists both in terms of the actual issues that had been addressed, and of the dubious nature of the way the proceedings had been conducted, especially the complicity of the Australian church administration. Relations between the Division President and the Director of the Ellen White Research Centre had been cordial and open since its establishment 4 years earlier but soured in the wake of Glacier View and put them on a collision course (Patrick, 2012). The product of Patrick's scholarship then and following was formidable, insightful, robust and informative both theologically and historically. However, for the Division President, Patrick's writing was "upsetting the people"; for him it was more important to maintain order

and control. Thus, he deemed it necessary to remove Patrick from his role as Director of the Research Centre.

The 27 Fundamental Beliefs of the SDA Church

For 120 years, the SDA Church had resisted formally articulating its foundational doctrines in the belief that it would represent a creed. In 1861, suggestions to do so drew a strong reaction from J. N. Loughborough, one of the Church's pioneers, recorded in the minutes of a conference of church elders at Battle Creek. He asserted:

> The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And fifth, to commence persecution against such. (Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald, 1861, p. 149)

However, as McIver (2020, p. 385) points out, "there was still a need for a list of the kinds of beliefs that joined them together". But now, the circumstances were different. Because of the destabilising effect of Glacier View, leaders of the Church deemed it necessary to be more explicit with respect to the official belief structure of the Church. Thus, in 1984 at the General Conference Session of the international Church convened in the United States, a doctrinal statement entitled *The 27 Fundamentals of the SDA Church* was proposed and accepted, albeit unofficially. (An additional Fundamental Belief – Number 11 – was added in 2005 to give a total of 28.) As McIver (2020, p. 385) comments:

> Anti-creedalism has led to some highly interesting and convoluted maneuvering as this set of unofficial beliefs of the Church was developed and included in the official documentation of the Church, all without being voted at a General Conference Session of the SDA Church (GC). The GC vote had to be avoided, because to do so was seen to be taking a major step towards setting up a creed.

It is significant to note that several of these fundamental beliefs were those about which Ford had expressed concerns earlier. However, it would take a great deal more to resolve the polarisation that had occurred.

Shortly afterwards in 1985, one of the Union Conference Presidents in Australia began using the *27 Fundamentals* as a compliance test for the ministers of the Church. In the aftermath, approximately 180 or 40 percent of the Australian and

New Zealand ministerial workforce were either terminated or withdrew from the ministry (Ballis, 1999; Knight, 2000). Although this inquisition directly affected ordained ministers at the time, many of them had been personal friends of teachers who themselves began to feel apprehensive about the spotlight being turned on them (Roy, 1988). This fear appeared to be justified when in 1985, the same Union President who had led the ministerial purge happened to visit the Division headquarters. A Union Education Director of the time recounted a diary entry he had made concerning a corridor conversation in which the President in question had expressed the opinion, "Now the church has gotten rid of dissident preachers, it is time to start on the teachers". The comment was overheard in the nearby office of the Associate Educator Director, who in an impulsive response, tendered his resignation. In due course, however, after the situation calmed, he was invited to replace the Union Education Director who had been appointed recently to the role of Division Education Director following Gerald Clifford's retirement. For some unknown reason, the Union President did not follow through with his resolve. Nevertheless, he was also a member of the Avondale College Board at the time and began to target a particular theology faculty lecturer whom he considered a dissident. However, that board member was cleverly outmanoeuvred in his attempt, and the lecturer remained in his position until retirement.

Elsewhere, during the remainder of the 1980s, some teachers, including myself, were occasionally reported to church authorities for alleged comments made or opinions expressed. Such events did constrain the discourse that followed among many Australian Adventists. But informal discussion continued, albeit covertly, to avoid being stereotyped as either a liberal or a conservative.

Adventist Education in Australia at the Beginning of the Decade

By the beginning of the decade, the maintenance and viability of Adventist schools had improved to a point where there were student vacancies, but insufficient numbers of Adventist children to fill them. Other private schools had also benefited from government funds and fiercely competitive enrolment campaigns set up to attract new students.

It is important to acknowledge the socio-political context of this situation. According to Barcan (2010):

> The period from the late 1970s to the late 1980s were transition years for most public (government) school systems in Australia. A reaction was developing against the neo-progressive and radical (neo-Marxist) innovations of the late 1960s and 1970s such as school-based curricula, activity methods, and "open education"… This change was facilitated by a new form of political control of the administration: ministers for education, premiers and prime ministers and their political advisers determined policy, no longer relying heavily on the advice of educational professionals. (p. 1)

The situation led to a drift of enrolments from state to private schools (Barcan, 2010, p. 8). The private sector, including Adventist schools, were set to benefit from the trend in terms of their continuity and potential growth. Until then, Adventist schools in Australia had been relatively small in size and remained so largely due to the 15 percent limit on the enrolment of non-SDA students.

The Dilemma of Government Funding for Adventist Schools

While Adventist schools in Australia began to grow, assisted by recently introduced government grants and the commencement of recurrent per capital funding, several Church administrators were anxious about the potential repercussions of the receipt of public funds. In the past, experience in other parts of the world proved that the acceptance of government financial grants placed the Church in an invidious position. Also, there was a perceived conflict in the mind of some Presidents who regarded such action as being out of step with Ellen White's counsel. One informant who was a Union Education Director at the time noted that it was not so much the receipt of funds for capital purposes; the bone of contention was the acceptance of government funds for recurrent operating costs (Informant C).

This opposition was expressed at several levels including voices from the conservative sector of the SDA community, and not by administration alone. Kilgour and Williams note the polarising effect of the issue fed by "many right-wing sectors of the Adventist community [who] were lobbying not to receive this funding support" (2017, p. 64). Representative of this concerted opposition was the publication of a book by Colin and Russell Standish entitled *Adventism Imperilled* (1984) in which they were against accepting government funding not only on philosophical grounds, but on the grounds of financial risks to the viability of schools in the event of the removal of funding (Kilgour & Williams, 2017, p. 65). Much debate followed at the Division headquarters. Several meetings had been held

to discuss the issue, but little progress had been made because of the strong objections raised repeatedly by a Union President who at one point, believed it would be better to close Adventist schools rather than compromise them. However, the vacillation of church administrators to reach a decision puzzled officials in Canberra until the matter came to a head; in the words from an informant's diary, "Finally the Commonwealth Government formally told the Church it must accept the government money for its intended purpose [operating expenses] or lose it entirely" (Informant C).

Pressure to survive as a system soon led to the removal of the 15 percent cap on non-SDA enrolments. Acceptance of government funding carried with it the expectation that private education recipients would be more open in their acceptance of new students. Even though most schools still overtly reminded students and their families not of Adventist faith that they were expected to comply with the Adventist ethos of the school, their inclusion in the school community had a profound effect. No longer did the premise hold, "Adventist schools for Adventist kids". Traditional perceptions of the purpose of Adventist schools were generally of minimal importance to non-SDA families. They were prepared to cooperate for the sake of better future life prospects likely from high academic performance. The Government Affairs Director at the time commented:

> The pressure to open the gates to fill the classrooms and make the schools more competitive in the private sector led to a change of policy. On September 6, 1985 the SPD approved the use of per capita grants for regular operating and opened the doors for increasing the number of non-SDA students in the schools. It also agreed to appoint a person to represent SDA schools in Canberra to monitor the Commonwealth funding mechanism. (Unpublished notes)

This resolution and removing the enrolment cap on non-SDA students was activated shortly afterward by the appointment of an Associate Director – Government Affairs whose role centred on monitoring Commonwealth funding and its implications for Adventist education and representing the SDA system before government officials in Canberra. The action was viewed positively by Canberra and relations that grew out of it were collegial. At the time, other Christian school groups were also nominating representatives for the same reason. The group comprised Christian Schools Australia (CSA), Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS), Lutheran Education Australia (LEA), and SDA Schools in

Australia. Because each entity was relatively small compared to the public school system, it was mutually agreed that these representatives would best form a coalition to represent the interests of a large proportion of Christian education in Australia as a group, but still allow for the uniqueness of character and ethos of each entity to be maintained and expressed. The arrangement yielded significant benefits as time continued, especially the building of collegial relationships, and promoting interaction and collaboration between the system representatives and their respective educational communities.

As Adventist schools grew, the SPD Department of Education also grew under Clifford's leadership. One informant who was a colleague of Clifford at the time commented, "He sought to bring about a strong uniformity across the nation in policy, appointment of teachers, curriculum, school uniforms and management style" (Informant C). Nevertheless, progress was not always smooth. The new approaches were discussed widely at conference and union level. The informant added, "There were some moves at the SPD to reduce the strength of the Clifford Empire". The representation of the Education Department on the SPD Executive Committee was reduced.

Organisational Changes in Adventist Education

Following his appointment as the new Division Education Director in 1976, Gerald Clifford had begun boldly to bring order to the structural chaos affecting Adventist education. Retired colleagues of the time recall during interviews how difficult it was to bring about substantial change. This was also confirmed some years later in personal observation when I joined the administration team following Clifford's retirement. It became clear how the opposition to initiatives were influenced by a deeply ingrained culture power-play involving both education administrators and Presidents. Some administrators supported Clifford in his effort to develop more systematic approaches, while others were more resistant or cynical. For example, during 1981, I had a casual conversation with the Division Associate Director during an accreditation visit to the college where I was teaching. I was engaged at the time in further tertiary studies and had reached a point where I needed to choose which direction to take. I was seeking advice from him as an educational administrator as to what might be of greatest value to Adventist education in the future. One of the alternatives offered was organisation administration. In response,

he scoffed, “Administration! You don’t *study* administration. You learn that on the job!” Such attitudes made Clifford’s efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of the administrators difficult.

Navigating the Hierarchical Labyrinth

Another cause of organisational inefficiency was the hierarchical administrative structure comprising Division, Union Conference, and Local Conference levels. As explained in Chapter 4, a pragmatic decision had been made in 1894 at the General Conference of SDA Church in Washington DC to insert a new administrative level to meet local needs in Australia because of the distance and the long delays in addressing management issues. But that action created an anomaly due to a lower level of the hierarchy being able to exert power over a higher level. However, some ninety years later, the organisational hierarchy remained similar: a director and his assistant operating at Division level, two directors at Union level, and a director at each of the 11 Local Conferences. Given the number of schools and employees it was difficult to justify such a top-heavy structure in terms such as the following: the ratio of administrators to teachers and staff; the remoteness of the upper levels of management from the schools; and the convoluted lines of communication that frequently saw some administrators left “out of the loop”. One informant described the organisational structure as “an upside-down hierarchy” (Informant C). On occasion, it was reported that government officials interacting with the Church were critical of the convoluted, top-heavy nature of AE administration.

The Appointment of Teachers

One of the most challenging processes where structural inefficiency was exposed was the annual staffing of schools in Australia and New Zealand. Early in the 1980s, Local Conference Education Directors were not included in the process, even though in many respects they were closer to the action in dealing with problems associated with the ongoing management of their schools. However, the situation was exacerbated on occasions when Presidents also became involved in dealing with education issues. To complicate matters further, principals of larger schools acted without authority to secure new staff members with particular professional expertise and personal appeal.

Lester Devine had returned to Australia in 1983 to be the new TTUC Education Director, following service in the role of both an academy principal and conference superintendent (Education Director). One of the assumptions that had been driving the staffing of schools in Australia was the opinion that teachers should be moved every few years "to keep them fresh" (Devine, journal notes). Devine disagreed with that view arguing that "however long a teacher stayed in a community should be determined by that teacher's ability to maintain his or her welcome to remain". Part of the logic behind his opinion was the saving of costs involved in the needless transfer of teachers and breaking the momentum of their work in a particular location, not to speak of the more frequent impact on personal and family lives. Several teachers had already been "burnt" by being sent to locations against their expressed wishes, and that experience created distrust. It was no surprise that several teachers resigned due to frustration. My informant commented:

> The Church could not afford to have so many good teachers resigning in frustration with their professional and human needs not being met. But it was really tough to get the teachers to open up and share their professional and human wishes and on the other hand resist those who opposed a more open and less top-down approach. (Informant H)

At first, the new proposal was viewed with scepticism by some of the old guard. Nevertheless, Devine persisted with the concept and encouraged teachers to advise him of their wishes while strengthening the administrative role and input from Conference Education Directors in the staffing process.

However, achieving this was less than straightforward and confusion reigned largely due to a lack of clarity regarding the respective roles of directors. Another past Union Director described the confusion:

> Conference education directors were confused too — none of them knew whether they were supposed to visit the secondary schools or not. In the past sometimes they were asked to and then later would find, after the fact, the Union guy had been there. Also in some Conferences the Education Director was consulted by the Union Director with regard to primary staffing while in others he was considered merely a curriculum and teacher supervisor. Consistently the Union Directors did the secondary staffing in consultation with the Conference officers and without any consultation with the local Education Directors. (Informant C)

The revised approach proposed meant more than simply reassigning roles and designated responsibilities. Traditional powers and status were potentially under threat. Presidents whose backgrounds were pastoral, or Secretary-Treasurers whose views were predominantly biased towards finance tended to regard their Education Directors as mere supervisors of instruction with no legitimate role in administrative decision making or leadership. A further complication was that Conference Education Directors tended to have a background in primary education with only certificate qualifications, while Union Directors and secondary principals held at least a university degree. Consequently, secondary principals were strongly resistant to the change, and the injunction to take a more collegial attitude towards their "inferior" primary colleagues was a challenge. Nevertheless, the Conference Education Directors appreciated the increased potential the changes offered.

The Birth of CASE and CAPE

Teachers' programs of work and related documentation at this time in both primary and secondary schools tended to lack cohesiveness or to show evidence of coordinated collaboration in whole-school curriculum planning. Teachers were expected to prepare their own teaching plans and resources independently relative to grade and the state curriculum, except for Religious Studies, or "Bible", as it was commonly called. Some of the larger schools occasionally purchased commercially produced curriculum resources and units of work, but teachers in smaller schools were left to their own resources, efforts, and creativity. This contributed to a deeply ingrained individuality between teachers who were reluctant to share resources in which they had invested much time, effort, and expense. They tended to guard their work jealously and on transfer to another location would take their programs and resources with them. The opportunity for teachers to employ information technology to develop and file records was only beginning to grow. Despite that, teachers knew they were expected to leave copies of work on departure from their old school. But this proved difficult to enforce. Incoming teachers to new schools without such records often complained about the situation.

In 1983 at the annual teachers' meetings in the North NSW Conference held at Byron Bay, NSW, two secondary school principals appealed for approval to be given to the formation of a grass roots organisation of teachers with a view to collaborate to produce and share ideas, unit plans and teaching strategies in the various subjects

of the curriculum, especially for the benefit of students being prepared to sit public examinations at the end of Year 12. This was seen as potentially saving time for teachers and lightening their workload. It was also believed to have a mentoring effect as junior teachers would benefit from the expertise of their senior teachers in other schools. The proposal was well promoted and strongly supported by the teachers in attendance. I was personally present on that occasion. Recently, in conversation, one of the initiators recalled with appreciation the support given to him by the newly appointed Union Education Director who was visiting this group of teachers for the first time. He had recently returned to Australia after serving in several education administration roles in the United States, and the concept being proposed resonated with him as he had previously witnessed a similar innovation in a large SDA boarding academy in California where the principal had organised the school calendar for such activity. Teachers in the various disciplines were elected to serve as leaders to plan and organise their activities to produce resources for teaching.

Now, in Australia, a similar venture was approved, and CASE (Curriculum for Adventist Secondary Educators) was born. Shortly afterward, CAPE (Curriculum for Adventist Primary Educators) was also formed. It took time for the idea to gain traction across all the Local Conferences and at one point, almost died. However, the concept was eventually revived and a charter with agreeable terms of reference was drawn up allowing CAPE/CASE subject groups to function continuously, each with a volunteer coordinator. In each state, a CAPE/CASE meeting became an annual event focusing on relevant curriculum-related issues. This involving two pupil free days hosted by each of the large K-12 schools in rotation. One by one the other Conferences followed suit. Although there have been modifications to the program over time, the concept is still in place and operating in some shape and form in all the Australian Conferences.

Developments in the Religious Instruction Curriculum

As discussed in the previous chapter, regular religious instruction has always been considered a core component of Adventist education. Bible classes typically followed a common curriculum prescribed and published by the General Conference an adaptation by Australian and New Zealand authors for use in their respective SDA schools. However, the version was poorly received and often replaced, ad hoc,

with unofficial teaching resources in the United States. This practice continued post-WWII until the early 1980s when several attempts were made to replace the official secondary Bible curriculum with.

Primary and Secondary Bible Classes

However, in the primary grades during that time the official Bible curriculum prepared in the United States was less contentious, although many teachers disliked the worksheet-based approach which they felt was wasteful and did not promote deep, reflective learning. The scope and sequence of the curriculum extended over two stages; the first stage covered grades K-2, with the second stage covering the remaining primary grades. The content was arranged sequentially in a four-year cycle spanning the biblical narrative from Creation to the Second Advent. The curriculum was designed to build comprehensive biblical literacy in students by the time they had completed their church-schooling.

The practice of teachers of primary grades in Australian SDA schools teaching Bible persists. Traditionally, it has been assumed that preparation for teachers to fill that role was achievable since many of them were graduates of Avondale College. Because compulsory core religious studies were part of the pre-service curriculum, plus the fact that all students had been socialised within the SDA culture, graduates were assumed to have the preparedness to serve in that capacity.

In Adventist secondary schools or departments in the 20th century across Australia, it was common practice for Bible classes to be taught by teachers whose major or minor specialisation was in other academic disciplines. Again, because most of these teachers were Avondale graduates and had completed core religion subjects, it was assumed that teachers would be willing to teach Bible in addition to their major or minor subjects. In larger schools, some teachers were not called on for such responsibility. However, the large proportion of secondary teachers teaching Bible did so willingly with the positive attitude that were contributing to the spiritual development of the students under their tutelage.

Traditionally, the secondary Bible syllabus was doctrinal, theological, and systematic in character, setting out to build on the foundations created in the primary grades. For the first two years of the secondary program the aim was to build an understanding and appreciation of the Creation-Fall-Redemption metanarrative of

Scripture. In this sense, the syllabus was cyclic, but with the expectation that students would be engaged at a new level of development. However, the syllabus then included several components of denominational history which apparently was designed to project the identity of the Church in its relationship to aspects of its distinctive apocalyptic theology. These studies led in the final two years of the secondary school to studies focusing on the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation, and aspects of New Testament morality and lifestyle from an SDA perspective. It is also noteworthy that in the senior years the subject known as Bible came to be called Religious Studies, or similar. In cases where local state regulatory curriculum authorities prescribed a Religious Studies syllabus was available, several schools have chosen to teach that program with students assessed as part of their final Year 12 performance.

Resistance to Change

As reported in my earlier research (Roy, 1988), implementation of the Religious Studies syllabus during this decade was resisted by some students on occasions. The reactions varied. Frequently, students in the junior secondary years complained, "We've done all this before". This was not helped by the fact that secondary Bible teachers were poorly acquainted with the scope of the primary Bible syllabus and frequently went back over ground already familiar to most of the students. The reactions of students from mid-secondary (Years 9, 10) and onwards were somewhat different depending on whether they were SDA or not. A proportion of students at each level of the secondary school was relatively compliant with the religious identity of the school, including their attitude to Bible, and so did not pose a distraction or problem. However, a vocal minority occasionally made its presence felt and subverted the official agenda. For example, some students from SDA families complained about "having Ellen White crammed down their throats". Yet, during the 1980s, there was minimal reference made to White's writings because of the strong debate going on at the time in the SDA Church itself regarding the legitimacy and authenticity of her work, and as noted previously (Roy, 1988), a self-imposed embargo on any reference to Ellen White seemed to prevail during that period. It was concluded that that these students were not speaking from personal experience but were echoing what they were hearing at home and elsewhere relative to the doctrinal debate and sociocultural unrest. At times, students also contested the

interpretation of parts of Scripture cited in the senior secondary Bible syllabus. This sometimes affected some Adventist teachers who were conversant with the theological debate, and therefore were reluctant to run the risk of being labelled as adherents of a particular theological position. As noted previously, being so identified was feared by some teachers because exposing their position was perceived to be a risk to their employment. Such caution was not surprising as a significant number of the clergy had been dismissed or had resigned (Ballis, 1999).

On some occasions, students from non-SDA homes also openly contested some aspects of the Bible curriculum. One such example was a senior student protesting against some of the material on the study of Revelation. When reprimanded, she brought in her father to back her protest. When reminded of the agreement undertaken at the time of enrolment to comply with the school's ethos and practice, the student decided to withdraw from the school (Informant M).

On another occasion in a senior Bible class, study was based on content that happened to coincide with material loosely connected with the theological debate referred to above. During the class, a student who was the son of a local clergyman of a different faith protested, "How can you teach that when your church can't agree on it?" (Informant M). The student's protest was fuelled by a series of reports at the time in *Christianity Today* providing a detailed commentary on the fallout from the Glacier View meetings in the United States at which Dr Desmond Ford had been ultimately sanctioned by church administration after raising several questions about certain traditional SDA doctrines. The problem in the school situation was that the student was being briefed by his clergyman-father and in turn, on aspects of Daniel and Revelation. The student's intimidation was relentless to the extent that the class teacher eventually put the topic aside and resorted to alternative study material totally unrelated to the official curriculum.

Other concerns were beginning to mount; for example, there was growing opposition among teachers based on the fact that the syllabus was American production, and therefore, considered inappropriate for Australian students. Secondly, teachers were of the opinion that the syllabus was irrelevant to young adolescents and issues regarded as significant to their personal development. A growing reluctance to use these resources was based on perceived weakness in terms of syllabus content and pedagogical implications. Teachers of the time also sensed

the inroads being made on Adventist culture by secularism, judging these resources to be inadequate to meet the challenges.

It was widely appreciated among Adventist school administrators that many non-Adventist students were attracted to the school because of high academic standards and a relatively safe social environment compared to some of the local public schools (Roy, 1988). Nevertheless, they were prepared to run the gauntlet of being exposed to Adventist influence for the sake of other perceived benefits. The majority of these students were personable young people achieving good academic standards, especially in the HSC. Many of them were popular not only because of their personalities but because some SDA young people were envious of the imagined social freedom enjoyed by their non-SDA friends. Consequently, by the end of the 1980s, the morale of the teachers of religion in the Adventist school system in Australia was extremely low, especially among secondary teachers. The perceived need for alternative resources for the teaching of Bible, which was to continue into the mid-1990s, was becoming increasingly apparent.

A Culture of Fear

It is only now, some three decades later, that a degree of counter-productivity of Australian Adventist education in the 1980s may be better appreciated. In one of the largest Adventist high schools of the time, a large proportion of students from SDA families, either distanced or severed their relationship with the Church after a time. One apparent cause was the perceived negativity of the modality of the discourse associated with the Second Advent and the Apocalypse – a significant component of the identity carried in the name "Seventh day Adventist". This was especially typical of the decade of the 1980s where the discourse was heavily laden with terms such as Close of Probation, The Judgement, Persecution, Sunday Laws, Perfection, and the like.

Rogers (2021) cites several fictional portrayals of Last Day Events published in the 80s – *Project Sunlight* by June Strong (1980) and *Too Late to Hide* by L. Winsome Speck (1983). These accounts were intended to be speculative, fictitious interpretations of the final chapters of Ellen White's (1911) *Great Controversy*. The books were heavily promoted and sold in Adventist bookstores and read by countless young people. But instead of creating a sense of hopeful anticipation, as Rogers

(2021) argues, they fostered a culture of fear in the young readers in their expectations of the future.

Initiatives to Improve Religious Instruction

Some action to improve the quality of religious instruction in Adventist secondary schools posed a veiled threat to the traditional teacher-minister role. While the problem of ineffective religious instruction was not obvious at the primary level, concern was being expressed by secondary school principals and Presidents about the state of Bible teaching and staffing in secondary schools. When the situation became critical, a decision was made to pursue the possibilities of establishing specialist Bible teaching roles, despite the awareness that this was potentially undermining the concept of the traditional minister-teacher role. Acting on this decision, by the late 1980s, Avondale College gained statutory approval for a Bachelor of Education program in secondary education with a history major and a religious studies minor. For the religion component, core-content subjects were provided by the theology department of the College together with theology students, while the Religious Education component called Curriculum Studies (Religion) was provided by the Education Department.

The focus of the Religious Education component of the B.Ed (Religious Studies) program focused on the nature of personal faith development and its implications for curriculum and pedagogy in the context of Christian education. This focus stood in distinct contrast to the traditional doctrinaire approaches to that point. This may also be recognised as a response to a burgeoning body of literature theorising the development of faith and consequent values being led by such scholars as James Fowler (1995) and V. Bailey Gillespie (1998). The significance of this and other extensive influential literature of that time is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this thesis.

The course proved attractive to a small number of students, both male and female, whose interests lay in service to young people especially. Around this time, interest was building in the idea of "youth ministry" that promoted the comprehensive well-being of young people in Adventist schools and churches with the concepted being explored independently by principals of several of the larger

secondary schools. Such was the groundswell of interest that it was only a matter of time before the initiative would gain traction.

Problems Encountered

However, problems arose for these students in the course. The initiative was not embraced unanimously by all members of the Theology Faculty of the College. One of the long-standing Theology lecturers was deeply offended by what he regarded as an attempt "to enter the ministry via the backdoor". On one occasion, he openly challenged several of the students. The lecturer, now deceased, shook his finger in the face of one of the students stating, "You will never get into the ministry that way while ever I have anything to do with it!" The student's response was curt and simple: "Oh, but I will! Watch me!" Ironically, the student was eventually appointed to youth ministry in a local conference. In due course, he was ordained and shortly after was appointed as senior pastor of a large city church. But the situation was different for others, however, who remained unemployed for a time until deployed elsewhere. The stark irony of the situation was that while principals of the larger secondary schools figured prominently in the initial request for specialist Bible teachers, they were later reluctant to appoint them to their staffs because of difficulties in balancing teaching loads across all subject needs. This meant several high-quality Bible teacher graduates found themselves virtually unemployable. It took considerable effort to eventually find positions for these graduates, but rarely in roles as specialist Bible teachers. Eventually, the specialist Bible teacher course was discontinued.

The Philosophical Turn in Adventist Education

In the early 1980s at Andrews University, the flagship school of the SDA Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, a change was taking place in the perception and articulation of Christian education's theoretical distinctiveness. Dr George Akers and Gerald Moon published a series of articles in *Journal of Adventist Education* promoting a newly devised worldview approach attracting attention in the literature relating to Christian education – "the integration of faith and learning" (IFL) (Harris, 2004). Over the next four decades, several seminal books addressing the philosophy of Christian education, and practical guides for putting them into practice were published by Adventist scholars. This indicated a new paradigm for Adventist

education, a philosophical and intellectual turn that would define Adventist education in the United States and abroad.

The Integration of Faith and Learning

In 1985, Akers was appointed Education Director for the Seventh-day Adventist World Church, where he served until 1990. He continued promoting the concept not only in writing but also in seminars that he convened in person around the world, including Australia. I attended the seminar that he presented at Avondale College. The response of the teachers was mixed. There was no question about Akers' sincerity and passion, and he was given a fair and polite hearing. But he was primarily a thought leader rather than a practitioner. A news post concerning Akers' passing, *Adventist Today* (2017, February 14) cited one of Akers' former students, Stanley Stevenson, testifying that Akers was the first to introduce him "to the larger world of ideas and experienced a real Socratic dialogue**".** However, the IFL concept was poorly defined and difficult to apply, a point Akers conceded decades later during a personal conversation at Andrews University with a doctoral research student from Australia. Some time later, during a return visit to Australia, Akers admitted that it had been a long time since he had taught in a K-12 classroom. We would all have to work it out for ourselves.

Akers was not alone in turning the spotlight on the imagined gap between theory and practice. Following the presentation, Union Education Directors in Australia attempted to implement the IFL concept. However, their attempts did not run smoothly. For example, a professional development meeting that I attended was convened in Sydney one weekend for secondary deputy principals. Implementation of IFL was a key issue. In one of the sessions, a Union Director complained that in all his visits to Adventist secondary schools under his jurisdiction he had not been able to find any worthy examples of faith integration in teachers' programs or schemes of work. One of the attendees protested that it would be helpful if he could provide some examples of what was expected. The curt response was, "That's your job, not mine!" Although the response was poorly received at the time, the concept itself did begin to gain traction. It is significant that until then, the discourse associated with Adventist education had tended to be dominated by the writings of Ellen White. But while alternative authors were being cited, White's legitimacy was

not lost. For example, it has become common practice among Adventist educators to describe their work as “Christian education from an Adventist perspective”.

Influential Visionaries: Knight, Rasi, and Clifford

Dr George Knight

When Dr George Knight, Emeritus Professor of Church History at Andrews University published his two books, *Philosophy and Education* (1980) and *Issues and Alternative in Educational Philosophy* (1982), he began what was to become a formidable corpus of scholarship extending over at least the last four decades, which accorded him charismatic status in Seventh-day Adventism. His reputation as a provocateur and maverick was well earned (Valentine & Whidden, 2014). Whether from the vantage point of historian, theologian, teacher, or critic, he has directed his skills to provide new insights into SDA culture and to challenge myths that have hindered positive development of the organisation.

While much of Knight’s writing is of interest primarily to an SDA audience, his two books on the philosophy of education were written with a universal audience in mind. Knight asserted, “... one cannot arrive at his destination unless he knows where he is going” (1980, p. v). It is noticeable that there is no reference to Ellen White’s writings in either of the books and for that reason, the former title of Knight’s book, now in its fourth edition has been used as a reference text in numerous non-SDA tertiary institutions, school systems, and denominations worldwide.

During the early 1980s, awareness grew concerning several apparent myths within SDA culture of the Church. This led to the publication of the book *Myths in Adventism* in which the author, George Knight (1985) systematically examined a series of contentious assumptions relating to Adventist education. The critique focused on such aspects as: Adventist education’s ultimate purpose; its view of human nature and of students; its view of the school as an educational organisation; its view of knowledge, curriculum, and methods; and the Church’s perspective of its history and its relevance to education in particular. However, in Australia, the book appeared to gain only limited attention at the time and knowledge of its existence among educators remains sketchy. What the book did do, however, was to add a

voice similar to those associated with *Spectrum* to promote robust critique of ideas and practices that had become cemented into the Adventist psyche.

Dr Humberto Rasi

Another influential person appearing in the decade was Dr Humberto Rasi, founder and Executive Director of the newly established Institute for Christian Teaching (ICT) founded in 1987, when he was appointed as Dr Akers' associate. Like Akers previously, Rasi believed that the quality and potency of mission was profoundly strengthened by an intentional integration of theoretical and practical knowledge and personal faith (Rasi, 1994). ICT's formation and development had been made possible due to a generous donation by an SDA businessman. Rasi's role was to provide seminars to support the implementation of IFL in Adventist schools, colleges, and universities around the world. Between 1988 and 2009, 40 such seminars were conducted in 21 countries. Each seminar was convened in residence lasting approximately 10 days. Prior to each event, delegates were expected to familiarise themselves with a set of prescribed texts after which, lectures would be delivered by invited experts. The seminar culminated in the production scholarly papers written by each participant, relative to their field of teaching. Over two decades, 1,400 such papers were produced. These were collated into 40 volumes under the title, *Christ in the Classroom.* Of these, 29 were in English, 4 in French, 2 in Portuguese and 5 in Spanish. Sets of volumes were distributed and housed in the libraries of all Adventist universities, colleges, and Division departments of education around the world. All papers are now also openly accessible via the Internet. However, while the published papers continue to have value as a resource, participants in the process of collaboration and research have also benefited personally. My SPD Curriculum Unit colleague and I were also invited on occasions by Rasi to present papers and served as mentors at several ICT seminars around the world and this experience provided positive feedback that in turn, enhanced the quality of work of the Curriculum Unit.

In 1989, Rasi initiated a new scholarly journal for college and university students entitled *Dialogue.* This was described as "... an international journal of faith, thought, and action produced by the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) in cooperation with the 13 world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church". Its mission was stated as follows:

> *Dialogue* seeks to nurture an intelligent, living faith; deepen the readers' commitment to Christ, the Bible, and Adventist Global Mission; articulate biblical responses to contemporary issues in the arts, humanities, philosophy, religion, and the sciences; and offer practical models of Christian service and outreach. (NEC Youth, n.d.)

By 2006, the journal was still being published three times a year in four languages – English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. a circulation of 30,000 per issue with an acknowledged readership located in 100 countries.

Dr Gerald Clifford

Although Clifford's legacy in many minds tends to be dominated by the already mentioned major structural changes he had made in the SPD Education Department, his skills extended to developing a holistic vision for Adventist education. In a scholarly paper entitled *The Priorities of Faith: Pervading the Secular Curriculum with the Christian Ethic: A South Pacific Model* in 1988, Clifford articulated an holistic vision for Adventist education that was emphatically Christocentric and Bible-based, and encompassed every component of Adventist education. Accordingly, he argued that every aspect of a school's character and operation needed to be informed by, and consistent with, biblical principles. In disseminating the concept and its exploring its implications, Clifford cited several exemplary proponents of integration of the time – Frank Gaebelein (1968) and his book, *The Pattern of God's Truth*, and Arthur Holmes (1987) in *The Idea of a Christian College.* This theoretical trajectory would become more pronounced in initiatives that followed. It also marked an intellectual turn in Australian Adventist education. Hitherto, theoretical foundations had been represented almost exclusively by statements by Ellen G. White and from her best-known books on the topic, *Education* (1903, 1952) and *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (1923). Now, a new body of authoritative literature was being cited which indicated significant respect for scholarly research originating beyond the borders of Adventist scholarship. This was indicative of a new paradigm that was emerging, gathering momentum, and having an impact on the way Christian education could be viewed and understood more widely among Adventist scholars.

Clifford (1988) argued that the continuity of private schools was guaranteed by the fact they had been established on a unique, distinctive philosophy. He was of the

opinion that "with curriculum difference removed and conformity to the mode, private schools [had] little reason to exist" (1988, p. 40). To Clifford, the legitimacy of Adventist education lay in its theistic orientation compared with that of public education. For that reason, he was anxious about what he saw as a potential threat in the guise of a secular humanist philosophy. He was concerned especially about the potential impact of a hidden agenda and implications of the federal government's proposals towards national agenda for reform initiated by the then Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education, and Training, John Dawkins. Piper (1997) describes this agenda as representing a watershed role in defining the government's intention (p.16). The policy statement titled *Strengthening Australia's Schools* was presented…

> …on the one hand as a crystallisation of past concerns, on the other as a catalyst for future action. The principal components of the national effort for schools called for in Strengthening Australia's Schools were a shared commitment to agreed national goals, the development by all concerned with education of "a national perspective", and "a clear statement of the fundamental purposes of our schools, their objectives and priorities", the latter presumably an elaboration of the [previously published] national goals. (Piper, 1997, p. 17)

The "past concerns" referred to the previous period in Australian education in which, since the 1970s, curriculum development had shifted from being centralised to school-based, referred to as SBCD (Piper, 1997). That concept constituted a departure from traditional curriculum planning and organisation where control was assumed by a centralised authority to "a more participatory form of decision-making" relating to curriculum development and implementation as expressed by curriculum development specialist J. Walton in 1981 (Cited in Piper, 1997, p. 25). In the short-term, SBCD permitted apparent freedoms in the definition and delivery of curriculum by Australian schools and education providers. But it is now widely acknowledged that the initiative was clouded in ambiguity and uncertainty. Assumptions about teachers' understanding and capacity to function in the new roles, responsibilities and relationships were unrealistic with expectations that were over-ambitious, and ahead of current practice (Piper, 1997).

The new roles, relationships and skills required to participate in formal decision-making had been assumed, but until then, untested. The fragmentation and disarray following the devolution of curriculum decision-making to schools and their communities proved to be catalytic, spawning future action (Piper, 1997). Reid

(2005, p. 17) describes John Dawkins' policy statement as "a full on frontal assault". In the policy, Dawkins argued:

> What is required is the development of a common framework that sets out the major areas of knowledge and the most appropriate mix of skills and experiences for students in all the years of schooling, but accommodates the different or specific needs of different parts of Australia. There is a need for regular assessment of the effectiveness and standards of our schools. A common curriculum framework should be complimented by a common national approach to assessment. We need to examine how schools can report to parents on their aims and achievements; how systems can report to the nation on how well our schools performing against established goals…[T]here is now a clear need to address the practical business of schooling, in the context of agreed national objectives and priorities…Australia can no longer afford fragmentation of effort and approaches must be developed and implemented in ways which result in real improvements in schooling across the nation. (Dawkins, 1988, pp. 4-5, 30)

The agenda was explicit. Curriculum was being exploited as a mechanism on the one hand, for social engineering towards national productivity, and on the other, towards control (Piper, 1997). Space does not permit more than an acknowledgement of the convoluted political interplay between the federal and state governments, in their efforts to exert legitimate and effective control over education which, until then, had been a constitutional right of the states. But the dynamics of the emerging situation had an impact on the way education at all levels in Australia would be conceived and conducted. While Piper (1997) observes that the proposed education reforms focused on education in government schools, it was regarded as inevitable that pressure would eventually be brought to bear on all education providers, including the private sector. This assumption was actually realised in following years as states established bodies to regulate the implementation of mandatory curricula.

The Birth of the Curriculum Unit

While the growing disarray in relation to the teaching of Bible was an obvious concern, the trending philosophical thought articulated by educational leaders such as Akers, Knight, and Rasi inspired Clifford to address "the growing need and indeed demand for an integrated' curriculum for the K-12 school system in the South Pacific Division" (Clifford, 1988, p. 47). He expressed concern for the potential infiltration of secular humanist approaches into Christian education (Clifford, 1988). Following a systematic critique of what he believed to be the

threats posed, he outlined a proposal for the establishment of a curriculum development program which was inaugurated following approval by the Division Executive Committee in 1987. The initiative provided for the appointment of two full-time positions, primary and secondary, assisted by a total of five practising teachers over a two-year period, with secretarial and clerical assistance, to be funded by an annual levy on the Local Conferences. The Division Executive Committee directed the Curriculum Unit personnel to:

1. Develop a comprehensive statement of philosophy and objectives for the K-12 Adventist school system operating in Australia and New Zealand.
2. Prepare a "framework" document covering the elementary school curriculum and a series of "framework" documents for each subject offered in the secondary schools in Australia and New Zealand.
3. At the secondary level list and classify by country and state the topics covered in each subject area and identify those topics which call for particular treatment from a Christian/ Adventist perspective, and
4. Prepare resource and support materials covering the topics so identified.

(Clifford, 1988, pp. 46-7)

It is noteworthy that the establishment of an entity devoted specifically to curriculum development was a first for Adventist school systems in the world. Consequently, Education Directors at both the General Conference and the North American Division (NAD) looked on with interest. However, as positive and visionary as the initiative appeared to be, there was also a degree of naivete concerning the scope of the task and the number of personnel considered necessary to bring it to fruition. While the initiative envisaged the production of teaching resources, there appears to be no consideration as to how they might be produced and implemented. In the future, this would prove to be a significant shortcoming.

Initially, two Associate Directors (ADs) were appointed to the Curriculum Unit (CU): one to care for primary curriculum development, and the other for the secondary curriculum. The Primary AD had been previously a classroom teacher followed by a period as a Local Conference Education Director. Although he was a highly innovative practitioner, he had no formal qualifications in curriculum design and development. The Secondary AD, on the other hand, held a doctorate with an emphasis on curriculum. He had also been the designer of the recent B.Ed.

(Religious Studies) program at Avondale and had transferred to fill the new role in the CU.

Apart from the directives cited above, there was no guidance offered as to how the appointees should proceed strategically on their separate development tasks. For the most part, curriculum development tasks took shape separately as primary or secondary projects and without strategic collaboration, thus maintaining inadvertently the legendary divide between primary and secondary teachers (Morey, 1996).

Early Projects of the Curriculum Unit

Primary Curriculum Framework

A new curriculum framework entitled "God Is Like This" (GILT) was proposed for the primary grades. Radical in both concept and structure, it took an interdisciplinary approach rather than following a traditional "forms and fields of knowledge" configuration. The author of GILT insisted that a disciplinary foundation was no longer relevant; the effort to break free of such convention was intentional and encouraged despite concerns that it raised when compared to common curriculum practice. While some had doubts, there was strong agreement in taking a holistic approach, where separation of the sacred and secular was held to be a false dichotomy. It was proposed that links to the well-established disciplines such as Mathematics and Science could be recognised intuitively here and there in the curriculum framework.

Accordingly, the content was sequenced across seven categories: He Creates; He Loves; He Communicates; He Is All Powerful; He Is All Knowing; He Trusts; and He Is Everywhere at All Times. GILT's author envisaged a distinctive pedagogy designed to engage students in meaningful learning activities involving the class working together as a group. Learning was to be approached through 24 "action units" or simulations of real-life situations in which children were to be assigned typical roles. Action units consisted of such simulations as Family, Farm, Building a House, Walled City, Hospital, Supermarket, Television Station, and Publisher. Each program was designed ideally to cover the entire curriculum for a school term. Needless to say, the new curriculum innovation presented a massive challenge on several fronts. It was one thing to venture explicitly beyond traditional concepts and

practically, but it was equally challenging logistically to produce the complete range of action units needed. Also, providing systematic implementation and teacher support in the field would be enormously expensive. Perhaps most serious, however, was the fact that it lacked scope and sequence; how to manage and document progress through and across the school grades was problematic.

Secondary Curriculum Framework

The secondary curriculum project was different from GILT in the sense that it was built around the traditional academic disciplines or subjects. The project involved the development of frameworks first to provide a core frame of reference with suggestions to assist teachers in sequencing and integrating values and principles pertinent to the subject when viewed from a biblical Adventist worldview perspective, while second, to consider implications for pedagogy relative to the subject and the assessment of student work. The overarching rationale for the frameworks was the potential contribution of each subject to the development of faith in the lives of the students. However, the frameworks were not intended to replace textbooks, but rather, to serve as a filter for teachers in their planning. The aim was for the resources to be practical with suggestions and strategies. The frameworks were also intended as a point of reference for principals and administrators as they endeavoured to lead their staff in developing approaches to teaching and learning from a Christian perspective. Finally, it was believed that they would demonstrate clearly to government authorities the distinctiveness of Adventist education.

A strong feature of the secondary frameworks project was the approach followed in their production. Wherever possible, and for each subject, every Adventist secondary school was expected to release a representative teacher to participate in writing workshops followed by editing and trialling. This approach gained greater acceptance than the primary project largely due to the sense of ownership it created due to extensive teacher input, and the perception that it represented grassroots understanding of the subject. Furthermore, an appreciable level of practicality was achieved in terms of rationale, comprehensibility, and personal cost.

A Transformational Paradigm

These strategic innovations represented more than simply the publication of teaching resources for use in Australian Adventist schools. At a deeper level, they presented an alternative that was a philosophically and pedagogically based renovation of the curriculum. In Adventist education to this time, official documentation and teaching programs were prefaced with the statement, "The ultimate goal of Adventist education – the restoration of the image of God in humanity". From a biblical perspective, it was argued that the curriculum should facilitate the restoration of Godly character as an outcome of the total educational experience.

This tangible response signalled the emergence of a new paradigm that was intentionally more dynamic, personal, relational, theocentric, and integrated. Interestingly, this response was also reminiscent of Ellen White's reaction to the curriculum alternatives being promoted in her day (see Chapter 4). However, by the 1970s the curriculum had tended to be dualistic, comprising a secular curriculum created by the state with Religious Studies (or Bible) tacked on. It should be noted that the changes envisaged were not designed to alter the belief system underpinning the philosophy statement as it stood at the time (See Appendix A). The aim was to make it an integral part of the curriculum and how it could be managed.

While the Curriculum Unit was established to meet a perceived need for teaching resources, it also served as a catalyst to focus on holistic academic development not only in respect of the nature of the curriculum, but coincidental to the emerging intellectual development among some administrators, both educational and ecclesiastical. In the previous decade, Gerald Clifford had made progress in bringing about substantial systemic order while successfully laying a foundation for ongoing leadership development. A major achievement had been the establishment of a formally established department of education at the South Pacific Division consisting of specialists to oversee and direct the work of all the schools and institutions in the region. Clifford believed that with better prepared educational leaders at Conference and Union levels, there would soon be a need to delegate authority and power to act. In his opinion, "Union Conference Education Directors came to function more as Associates of the SPD Education Department from their

respective regional offices, than as workers at a subordinate level in the denominational structure" (Appendix B).

Nurturing Intellectual Development in Leaders and Teachers

These changes were based on the assumption that efficient leadership and professionalism in teachers also depended on a robust understanding of relevant theory and practice. For that reason, Clifford explored the possibilities of conducting an MA program for South Pacific educators similar to the MA Theology program being recently commenced by Andrews University at Avondale. After extensive negotiation with Avondale and several Adventist Universities in the United States, a contract was drawn with La Sierra University in California to establish an MA in a series of specialist fields in education. The program was to be based on a series of intensive summer schools convened at Avondale, presented by La Sierra lecturers, with a final 8-week intensive at the La Sierra campus. The first intake of 40 teachers commenced the program in 1987.

Passing the Baton

In 1989, after 13 years in the role, and frustrated due to episodes of resistance and opposition, Clifford voluntarily vacated his directorship to take up a newly created role serving as Assistant to the Division President. Later that year (1989), Clifford's previous Associate Director, Lester Devine, was elected as his successor. Having worked closely with Clifford to this point, Devine continued to deal with ongoing administrative and strategic matters through the 1990s. But for those of us who associated and worked with him, Devine's mantra articulated in both his writing and conversation was, "Adventist education is a ministry, not a service". But statements of this kind proved increasingly confronting to the clergy of the Church, especially to some Division and Conference administrators.

Analytical Reflections

Social Conditioning

The social conditions at the commencement of the new cycle represented a complex configuration of structural, normative, and cultural mechanisms generated by the social interaction of agents during the preceding cycle. Individually or together, these mechanisms had the potential to influence further reproduction or

transformation. At church level, normative structures were vulnerable to downward normative pressure to change by virtue of the events associated with the doctrinal dispute between the Church and Ford. The polarisation of agents resulted in administrators being positioned against scholars, with implications for further normative or cultural change in the future, affecting both ministers and teachers.

At the school system level, the active relationship with government authorities exposed AE to mechanisms with a potential for normative change and institutional control. Internally, among teachers, dissatisfaction with the religious studies curriculum had become a major concern, exposing a key mechanism for normative reproduction. Education administrators anticipated the transformation in this facet of AE's missional activity.

Social Interaction

Responses to the prevailing conditions of the Church followed, exerting an influence on causal connections between the cultural system and interaction at the sociocultural level. Social interaction in this context had potent implications for the Church's belief system, modes of management, and institutional control. The imposing of degradation strategies by the Church on alleged dissidents represented normative mechanisms affecting its ministers. The prospect of extending the process to focus on teachers added to the fear and distrust of church administrators. In addition, the formal restating of the 27 Fundamentals Doctrines was an attempt to bolster stability and withstand change to normative structures.

Within AE during this cycle, the interaction was energised by the power of ideas, the rationality of agents, and the refinement of systemic structures. However, progress was restricted by conflicting paradigms frequently represented by the ministry on the one hand and significant groups of educators on the other, largely due to a lack of understanding of AE's essence and its legitimate role in the church structure. At the same time, changes in public education were also exerting external pressure on strategic management of AE, especially affecting the proportion of non-Adventist students permitted to enrol, and the normative impact of resistance exercised by some of them on the character of AE.

Elaboration

By the end of the 1980s, the stronger systemic character and strategic focus of AE exerted pressure on the traditional power structures by modifying existing relationships and creating new ones. At the same time, the establishment of the Curriculum Unit and the transformation of teacher education were tangible manifestations of an emerging paradigm at the sociocultural level. These instances were indicative of significant emergence of a transforming paradigm symptomatic of the changing focus and the perceived validity of AE and its distinct mission. This philosophical and intellectual change activated normative mechanisms to cause a change in missional focus.

Meanwhile, at another level, the elaboration was represented in a triple morphogenesis of structure, agency, and culture that confronted AE with a dilemma. In summary, this change represented a sequence of intertwined mechanisms, namely: the government ultimatum to AE to accept funding or forfeit further support; acceptance of funding and the subsequent improvement and expansion of facilities in Adventist schools; the shrinking pool of SDA students; the relaxation of limits on non-SDA student numbers; and potential for further structural and cultural elaboration.

CHAPTER 7 – ADVENTIST EDUCATION 1990 TO 1999

This chapter recounts the tangible transformation of self-conscious identity and mission of Adventist education in Australia in the 1990s. As the narrative demonstrates, this change did not occur in a social vacuum, but rather, in the context of its relationship to the Church in Australia, and restlessness within Adventism more broadly at the time. The chapter also explains the impact of government and other external bodies on Adventist education at several levels. In all, these circumstances are shown to constitute a complex set of influential social conditions and the interaction that was generated.

The narrative highlights two distinct, interrelated entities — the SPD representing the Church in Australia and the SPD Department of Education — and the uneasy tension that pervaded the relationship as each attempted to redefine their identity and mission approaching the new millennium. In this context, the chapter then focuses on a philosophical turn at both the General Conference and SPD Education level that led to the reconceptualising of the so-called special character of Adventist Education, and the building of tension between ministers and teachers. The chapter explains how two key events, Summits 1 and II, helped to stake a claim for AE's ministerial status in the Church. Then follows a description of how, despite the recently established Curriculum Unit and its key role, it came under increasing scrutiny in a fight for survival as the decade came to an end. The chapter concludes with Analytical Reflections concerning AE's mission from a morphogenetic perspective.

Adventism at the Beginning of the Decade

At the beginning of the 1990s, the fallout from Desmond Ford's defrocking at Glacier View ten years previously was still being felt worldwide. A low level of trust and respect for administrators who had figured in Glacier View, some of whom appeared to be still intent on maintaining control over the Church and its constituency at all costs, was to continue through the 1990s and beyond. In Australia, the unfolding saga and the pain caused by the termination of a significant number of ministers were still keenly felt (Ballis, 1999).

Implications for the church's identity were profound. Glacier View, as observed by Bradford (1994), was symptomatic of a discernible shift in some parts of

Adventism from a fundamentalist to a denominational mode of church organisation. Two contrasting paradigms had emerged with respect to identity and mission; one was relative to the Church struggling to maintain its identity and stability, and the second, to its school system as it navigated its way forward. Interaction between the Church's administrators inevitably impacted the micropolitics of the school system because ultimate authority over all phases of Adventist education was located in the Church's administrative hierarchy and mirrored at each level of governance — General Conference, Division, Union, and Local Conference.

Renewed Interest in SDA Identity and Purpose

In the 1990s, the General Conference compiled a major report based on a world survey of a series of areas characterised by the identity, purpose, and function of the Church. The categories of interest were: Christian Life and Nurture; Global Mission and Outreach; Communication; Leadership; Education and Youth; and Finance and Stewardship. Motivated by this activity, the SPD established the Strategic Planning Committee, focusing on the findings of the survey. As a result, a series of strategies and priorities was established for each area with the intention of monitoring and evaluating progress. This process was replicated by the Unions and Conferences to produce a raft of strategic policies for the foreseeable future, which set the tone for more deliberate focus on the purpose of the church and its departments, including education.

At this time also, discourse among Adventist educators internationally reflected an emerging concern regarding the mission of the Church's schools and institutions. The periodical, *Journal of Adventist Education* (JAE), was an effective means of promoting interest and disseminating thought on the topic. Articles such as *Reclaiming the Vision of Adventist Education* by educational leader and administrator, Lawrence Geraty (1990), and an editorial by GC Director of Education, Humberto Rasi (1994), entitled *A Matter of Mission* were typical of this revival. But in Australia, while every employed teacher received regular copies of JAE with subscriptions paid for by the SPD, it was left to everyone to read and identify with the content privately. From personal observation, it seemed that the Australian AE administrators around this time were absorbed and distracted by local issues and personally navigating the power-plays between education administrators

at Division, Union, and Local Conference levels, and engaging in philosophical reflection did not rank highly.

Strategic Changes in Australia

In 1991, two years after commencing work as SPD Director, Devine wrote a position paper entitled *1982–1992 Recent Shift from Generalised to Specialised in the Education System of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division and the Attendant Implications* (Appendix B). The paper highlighted inadequate skills, minimal qualifications, and lack of experience on the part of many education administrators, arguing that there was an obvious need for professional development and strategic planning. This marked a new interest in career planning, in recognising the value of advanced academic study and professional development initiatives, to the mutual benefit of individuals and the system. In addition, there were tangible attempts to engage administrative personnel involved in proactive succession planning to meet increasing needs and unexpected contingencies in schools. Early in his work at the SPD, Clifford had demonstrated his skills in the use of computer database software (FileMaker Pro) to streamline management and planning. Then, in the 1990s, Devine followed suit in applying a more systematic approach to staff appointments, also making use of computerised databases and spreadsheets. Although the improved efficiency was obvious, change did not come easily to some of the long-standing administrators, as they felt their territory was being invaded. But in due course, the new procedures became standard practice and many of the ad hoc practices that had previously burdened schools were reduced. A major advancement was that staffing was now centralised at the division level.

Adventist Education in Australia at the Beginning of the 1990s

The influence of Adventist thinkers such as Akers, Knight, and Rasi both in reimagining Adventist education and disseminating their work was having a transforming effect. In addition, Clifford's commitment to Adventist education especially in Australia was characterised by a robust vision of producing curricular resources based on a Christian theistic worldview and fostering supportive relationships between all members of the school community (Clifford, 1988). His major concern was what he believed to be ideological forces at play in secularist

approaches to schooling. In Clifford's estimation, counteraction was not a mere option for parents of children in Adventist schools, but an imperative.

The academic landscape in Australia represented an arena for ongoing critique, debate, and policy making regarding education at the government level has been noted earlier particularly with respect to government funding. But those benefits extended to something greater than material viability for the recipients. There appears to have been a positive social and cultural impact for agencies such as the Adventist school system as well. These changes affected curriculum, learning and teaching, standards, and the establishment of policies and government bodies to ensure compliance. An obvious question in response was how much freedom Adventist education had to operate its schools according to the principles of its mission. But in a deeper sense, it raised concern as to who was ultimately in control.

The Influence of Government and Society

Until the mid-1990s, Adventist schools had enjoyed relative freedom in matters relating to curriculum choice, process, and practice. All schools were required to be registered by their respective state authorities but the task of meeting the criteria was not philosophically problematic. As noted in Chapter 6, the SDA Curriculum Unit had been established by Gerald Clifford at the SPD in response to a concern over the secular humanist ideology underpinning state curricula. Until then, Bible (Religious Studies) was taught together with modified state curricula. However, a groundswell of dissatisfaction was being expressed by teachers regarding the current Bible curriculum, and faith-integration was being poorly interpreted and applied. It was now perceived that the Adventist curriculum needed to be more distinctive.

New Compliance Criteria

The political campaign to establish a national curriculum posed new challenges that were not recognised or appreciated at the time by most Adventist educational administrators. Previous liberties had been taken for granted, but now the hint of constraints, including curriculum compliance, were becoming ominous. By 1994, interest in the establishment of a national curriculum for Australian schools had intensified, and under a Labor Federal Government, the issue came to a head. In his *Strengthening Australia's Schools* proposal, Federal Education Minister John Dawkins attributed the failure to achieve that goal to the convoluted plays for power

and control between States and Territories (Dawkins, 1988). Although overshadowed by political agendas, the common denominator was the question of what kind of education best served the needs of Australia, especially economically and materially. While Dawkins identified reasons for the impasse, he also articulated his vision of what a national curriculum would look like and how it would meet the inadequacies and inefficiencies of previous curricular practices in Australia. He argued:

> What is required is the development of a common framework that sets out the major areas of knowledge and the most appropriate mix of skills and experience for students in all the years of schooling, but accommodates the different or specific needs of different parts of Australia. There is a need for regular assessment of the effectiveness and standards of our schools. A common curriculum framework should be complemented by a common national approach to assessment. We need to examine how schools can report to parents on their aims and achievements; how school systems can report to the nation on how well our schools are performing against established goals (Dawkins, 1988, pp. 4-5).

Although change did not happen overnight and the initiative would face many obstacles, an organisational infrastructure was formed. This led to the establishment of the Australian Education Council (AEC) in April 1989 consisting of Commonwealth and State Ministers of Education (Reid, 2005). At the Hobart National Declaration on Schooling which followed shortly after, goals for schooling were announced including plans to establish an agency responsible for collaborative curriculum development and reporting on schooling at the national level (Reid, 2005, p. 18). From the mid-1970s especially, these changes had brought new pressure and constraints on administrators responsible for curriculum development. Initiatives in the form of *Key Curriculum Policy Documents* and *Major Education Reports* were introduced with increasing frequency (Bradford, 1994).

The Influence of External Advisory Bodies

A growing trend in the education sector in Australia in the 1990s was the demand for teacher competence and capacity to prepare students to meet the increasing demands of society. In response, the revision of tertiary courses led to higher academic qualifications, advances made possible by the mentioned merger of CAEs with universities. Institutions such as Avondale College were also impacted

by this trend, not only with respect to compliance with regulatory bodies, but also with their efforts to attract potential students.

Developments in the Australian Tertiary Education Sector

At this time, dramatic changes were taking place in Australia's tertiary education sector. Many of the Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) had begun amalgamating with regional universities nearby in response to another initiative put forward by Dawkins. Some of these amalgamations were especially complex, and the repercussions and consequences were profound and considerable (Harman, 1991). Universities were traditionally oriented to knowledge and philosophy, whereas CAEs were vocationally oriented with substantial attention given to professional practice and skill development. A flow-on effect of the merger of universities and CAEs was the replacement of the 3-year diploma conferred by the old CAE with a 4-year bachelor's degree conferred by the newly created university entity.

For many senior teachers, such changes left teachers with the sense of being left behind by new teachers in terms of their professional development. However, the introduction of the Master of Arts program under the auspices of La Sierra University in the USA was acknowledged by many senior teachers as having an impact at several levels, one of which was providing a step towards improving their academic standing, broadening their professional skills, and boosting morale. In the early stages of the program there were mixed reactions from some of the 40 students enrolled due to its presentation by lecturers visiting from an American Adventist University. Nevertheless, the program continued and developed until its eventual relocation at Avondale.

Changes in Avondale's Academic Program

This series of changes in the education sector generally soon affected developments in the pre-service teacher education program at Avondale College. The decision had been made by the College Board to revise courses in all departments in keeping with the new demands, and to address several anomalies or issues that had emerged in the existing programs. This process was also important in view of the need to meet standards specified by the New South Wales government regulatory body. The ability to meet specific requirements of external authorities

also created more potential employment opportunities for graduates from public and private schools beyond Adventist education. The College's status was a significant factor especially because its public image was considered vital to potential growth in student enrolments. Although the prospect of Avondale achieving university status seemed distant at that time, it was a topic of informal conversation and speculation among faculty members. But in that context, serious questions were being raised about the concept of university status and its implications for a conservative religious tertiary institution.

In Avondale's secondary teacher education program, the 4-year undergraduate degree in a major and minor teaching field was updated to provide a better balance in the respective courses. The intention was to better meet needs arising due to changes in the secondary school curriculum, not only in New South Wales, but Australia-wide. But for primary teacher education, changes were even more substantial. The existing 3-year Diploma of Primary Teaching was replaced by a 4-year Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree. A special feature of both primary and secondary programs was the trial of a 12-week internship in the final semester involving classroom teachers as mentors in collaboration with college personnel. This innovation was of significant interest in the wider teacher education sector. In January 1992, I presented a paper describing Avondale's internship model at the National Practicum Conference held at Macquarie University.

Avondale's Relationship with Government Bodies

A significant influence on Avondale's developing teacher education program at that time, was its coincidental connection with several Government bodies. In 1992, the NSW Minister for Education established the Ministerial Advisory Council for Teacher Education and the Quality of Teaching (MACTEQT). The purpose of the Council was self-explanatory by virtue of its title. However, its primary focus was to seek uniformity in standards across the teacher education sector, not only for K-12 education, but also for pre-primary, or early childhood education which was beginning to grow in interest. Representatives from all teacher education service providers in the state were invited to be participating members of MACTEQT. I represented Avondale as one of the tertiary institutions operating in the private education sector.

In 1992, in the wake of MACTEQT and similar activity in other states, the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) was formed. All universities and tertiary institutions were represented, and again, I represented Avondale. Interest focused on strategic responses to the regulations and standards growing out of emerging government policies. Although all parties appeared to participate in a spirit of collaboration, several of the larger universities took the opportunity to "show and tell" about their own initiatives, especially some located in NSW, Victoria, and South Australia which were in the process of extending their post-graduate program by introducing a newly designed Doctor of Education degree. The presentations provided valuable insights, and the discussions stimulated an appreciable amount of creative brainstorming.

The activities associated with MACTEQT and ACDE were running concurrently, though unconnected directly to Avondale's course revision. But in the ferment associated with those activities came several unanticipated consequences, particularly with respect to the new primary B.Ed. program and its potential benefits especially for teachers who had graduated from Avondale in earlier years. Hitherto, primary teacher graduates from Avondale wishing to advance their personal academic standing were required to first complete 24 credit points of studies (equivalent to 8 full semester subjects) before progressing to their new course. This requirement did not add to the individual's credit, but simply qualified them to study further subjects and receive a 3-year Diploma of Teaching. Understandably, few teachers took this path, and as a result, many primary teachers in Australian Adventist schools were 2-year trained. This was a significant obstacle, particularly to senior primary teachers who had graduated from the old Theological Normal Certificate course.

Affirmation of the Life-Experience of Senior Adventist Teachers

At the same time, government policymakers in Australia were also recognising the growing concern felt by many senior teachers across the nation wishing to upgrade their qualifications to keep pace with the new teacher graduates. In response, National Education authorities introduced an innovative scheme to acknowledge the seniority of teachers demonstrating professional experience in schools, especially if they had served in an administrative role such as head teacher or principal. In such cases, advanced standing was offered in relevant university

studies. This meant that senior teachers holding teaching certificates were given an opportunity to upgrade their qualifications to diploma level, which in turn would open their access to the completion of a first degree, and if desired, to post-graduate studies. For some time, Avondale's Academic Dean resisted the proposal. However, the eventual decision to adopt the initiative was influenced heavily by the fact that many of the other tertiary institutions at the time had indicated their intention to seize the opportunity offered.

In response, Avondale designed a "conversion course" for the teachers concerned extending over several summer schools on campus. This initiative was approved by the SPD Executive Committee and subsidised financially by its Advanced Study Committee. By the end of the 1990s, more than 90 percent of Australian and New Zealand Adventist teachers had taken advantage of this opportunity to upgrade. Today, no teacher is employed on the basis of certificate qualifications alone. Without doubt, this sequence of events was set in motion by innovative ideas growing out of interaction with the ACDE.

Approaching the New Millennium

As the 1990s progressed, it was impossible to escape society-wide speculation in anticipation of the new millennium and its potential impact on education. The sociocultural climate at multiple levels and its impact on the identity and practice of teachers generally were changing. With the changes came increased demands and expectations of teachers and systems generally driven by state and federal government enactments to ensure compliance. Events at this time signalled renewed sensitivity, focus, and self-awareness to the identity, purpose, and strategic action. Of necessity, agencies associated with education, both public and private, did their best to take these developments into consideration in their own strategic planning.

The Ethos at SPD Headquarters in the Mid-1990s

The ethos at the SPD reflected a struggle for relevance, morale, and cohesion. The various departments appeared as a loosely coupled system directed by the "Admin" (Division President and administrative officers of the Church) located in what was irreverently referred to as "the power tower". Recently, a retired member of Administration (Informant G) told me of growing frustration among his fellow

officers at the time due to the President's ambivalence regarding statements of mission. My informant commented:

> We had struggled to get the President to express his clear vision for the Division and although a Mission Statement had come down to us from the GC. Even so, the President's assistant began working on strategic plans. (Informant G)

In the meantime, this event coincided with a trend at the time for organisations and businesses widely to provide a mission statement. Informal talk around the Division office suggested, "We need to move with the times and do likewise". The GC had made similar moves and expected a response from the World Divisions. An early suggestion of the SPD President was, "A healthy and growing church around the division" (Informant G).

Building Strategic Focus in the SPD

The difficulties experienced in reaching agreement on a mission statement appeared to be symptomatic of a lack of conceptual cohesion. Some years later, a retired church administrator commented informally that there were strong feelings among several colleagues concerning a lack of strategic focus at the time (Informant G). With such sentiments in mind, a plan was instigated to schedule a full-day staff meeting each half-year when every officer was expected to be present and participate. To make that possible, an embargo was imposed on all field engagements for the day.

Much effort was directed into preparations for the first meeting. The event which was conducted off-site at Crosslands Youth and Convention Centre involved team-building activities and presentations by several promotional speakers. One key presenter was a relatively young independent Adventist academic who had recently completed doctoral research focusing on organisational dynamics and culture. The presentation itself was a provocative critique, and some quipped with some amusement that, after all, she could "get away with it" because she was not an employee of the system. But despite the forthright critique, the day was generally positive with wide-ranging discussion. Out of that event grew a consensus that the focus of future strategic development should adopt a staff focus on building office culture and, in so doing, clarify the core business represented by the organisation.

Towards an SPD Mission Statement

Recurrent meetings sought to build on the goodwill generated by the activity in terms of its vision and mission. However, as another informant summed up the situation:

> Strategic plans [focusing on mission] never quite eventuated until after the changes in 2000, when the two Australian Unions amalgamated. (Informant C)

Nevertheless, ADCOM (Administration Committee) planned a full day of meetings devoted to the production of a mission statement for the SPD. It was believed that such a statement should be a product of collaborative thought and effort expressing the consensus of the group.

The morning session of the special meetings was spent attempting to familiarise attendees with what a mission statement was meant to express. As I recall, enthusiasm for the exercise was minimal and some were cynical about its potential. Later in the day, an attempt was made to reach an agreement on an appropriate statement. Despite several attempts, and the effort proving unsuccessful, one person remarked that this was a time-intensive task requiring realistically more than a day to complete satisfactorily. He then proposed, "Ask ADCOM to write one and then tell us what it is!"

Review of Adventist Education's Philosophical Underpinnings

Shortly afterwards, the SPD President requested a revision of the Education Department's Philosophy Statement. An earlier version of the philosophy statement published by the SPD Education Department had been in place since the mid-1980s. In essence, the statement was foundational to AE's mission, serving to delineate the theological and philosophical foundations of everything planned for the school's operation. It was mandatory for the statement to appear at the beginning of every school's official documentation, either as a copy, or a paraphrase developed locally. This occurred regularly as part of the school's normal four- or five-year accreditation cycle. However, Adventist teachers in the past have tended to be practitioners rather than philosophers. Here they were encouraged to accept assistance in maintaining their school's philosophy statement. It was an update of this core statement that was requested by the Division President. To achieve this, the Director entrusted the task to the Curriculum Unit officers. In due course, the new edition was prepared and

then shared between members of the Education Department for critique and comment.

The statement formed two major sections. The first outlined biblical, theological, and philosophical principles underpinning Adventist education. The second section explained the implications of these principles in terms of the following dimensions: the ultimate goal of Adventist education; a view of knowledge; a view of teaching and learning; a view of the student and the teacher; and viewing an Adventist school as a community of faith. The document was then submitted to the President's office. Shortly afterwards, it was returned with the comment, "It's too religious". After reviewing it, the Director returned it to the President on behalf of the Department with the response, "That's our philosophy. That's the way it is!" Subsequently, the document became the official Australian SDA educational philosophy statement. (Appendix C)

Strategic Planning in Education for the 1996–2000 Quinquennium

By contrast, the camaraderie and morale in the SPD Education Department at this time was positive and was the envy of Division officers elsewhere. The Education Department comprised the Director, and Associate Directors of Government Affairs, Secondary Curriculum, Primary Curriculum, and Administration. All were well qualified academically, holding doctoral or master's degrees backed by experience across the education spectrum. Collectively, the range of skillsets to meet the diversity of education and its needs was appreciable. When a major issue was being dealt with, it was not uncommon for collaborative informal discussion on a team level to take place to gain a refined perspective. However, efforts were limited by the extent of demands.

By the 1990s, it was customary for the SDA Church worldwide to follow a quinquennial timeframe. Accordingly, in December 1996, the Education Department of the SPD produced its *1996-2000 Quinquennial Goals Statement*. This marked the beginning of the regular strategic planning process at the beginning of each quinquennium. While this represented a typical administrative process, it was more than mere routine. Prevailing sociocultural and political conditions at the time justified its application. The document cited recent educational history in Australia when, in the space of a decade, education had been subjected to unprecedented

scrutiny and change. The impact of change due to government agenda and new initiatives posed fresh challenges. There were also systemic concerns emerging. With higher retention of secondary students through to year 12 came a complex raft of factors affecting student enrolment, retention, and student-teacher ratios. This placed increased pressure on relatively small SDA secondary schools and the risk of senior students seeking to enrol in other secondary schools.

While the document reiterated past events and conditions that motivated or impeded progress, the decision to engage in such a process was proactive and strategic in its intent. A prime purpose of the document was to provide an exemplary model and sharpen the conceptual focus of Union, Conference, and relevant others in establishing their own strategic plans for the quinquennium. Space here permits only the highlights and key elements of the full document:

A Revised Mission Statement for SPD Education

A revised mission statement entitled *Towards 2000 – Quinquennial Goals, 1996*, appeared at the head of the document consistently matching the strategies it contained. It read:

> The fundamental mission of Seventh-day Adventist Education is to promote a redemptive relationship between each student and Jesus Christ and facilitate spiritual growth through provision of an environment in which Christian nurture may take place. (Appendix D)

By comparison with the earlier statement of purpose cited in Chapter 5, there was a stark contrast between the doctrinaire, functionalist character of the purpose and aims of AE historically compared with the more relational orientation and tone of the updated statement. The revised mission statement represented an encapsulation of three underlying principles as follows:

1. Presenting students with a more attractive vision of what redemption is in practice in contrast to the immediacy of contemporary world views based on existential and self-operative principles.
2. Helping teachers improve relationships between themselves, their leadership, and their students, thereby ensuring the learning environment is truly a saving place.
3. Inspiring principals to accept their role as agents of change thereby ensuring that the vision of Adventist education is effectively transmitted to the several publics which form the school community. (Appendix D)

These elements translated into specific goals and anticipated outcomes as follows:

a) Promotion of the ethos experienced by all those associated with Adventist education, and "a strong fellowship of peers with whom they can find support and encouragement'. (By the end of the decade, the term "community" began to appear in the rhetoric of AE.)
b) The identity of Adventist education as an integral entity of the Church was affirmed.
c) The role of teachers as ministers, enhancing complementary rather than competing ministries between teachers and members of the Church's clergy was affirmed.
d) Professional development of principals was to promote "instructional leadership" rather than simply principals as managers.
e) A comprehensive, holistic view of human personhood and development was reaffirmed supporting the nurture of students, their development, and their needs.
f) The curriculum aimed to be philosophically and biblically grounded, meaningful, practical, and comprehensive.
g) Vigilance was to be maintained to ensure compliance without compromise in the character and values of AE.
h) Financial policies would monitor and manage the finances of AE and optimise its eligibility to receive government funding support.

Applying the Principles of the Education Goals Statement

The Goals Statement was produced by the three Associate-Directors of the SPD Department of Education in collaboration with the Director. Its purpose was to serve as an overarching policy for the work carried out by departmental branches such as General Administration, Government Affairs, and the Curriculum Unit. As such, the purpose of the statement was to represent and articulate Adventist education's mission — its raison d'être — in terms of its rationale, identity, structural elements, and strategic intent. To ensure the aspects of education represented by the departmental personnel were effectively addressed, the content of the statement was divided into annualised targets and responsibilities assigned to relevant officers. However, its effectiveness beyond this level was contingent on how efficiently it would be communicated, understood, and acted upon by its intended recipients. Any hope of the statement informing and motivating committed action depended on communicative ideals such as relevance, clarity, legitimate authority, and respect

between the respective parties. Thus, it was not merely a document to profile structural elements, but also to serve as a rubric to assess the quality of the interaction between the relevant agents.

Responsibilities and Procedures

Previous chapters have described the evolution of the organisational structure designed to better administer the Church's education system. However, it must be remembered that this process did not begin tabula rasa, but reflected characteristics of its organisational heritage, particularly its hierarchical structure. As I recall, the frustration caused by the convoluted route involved in the dissemination and implementation of policy was often expressed. Many believed that the church administration, including its departments, was top-heavy and prone to wasteful replication. There were inconsistencies as the structure evolved, and several sticking points frequently frustrated progress. One such problem was the number of levels and personnel involved in the top-down process. In this configuration, Unions could undercut the Division. But the challenge was how to maintain positive relationships between planners and policymakers, teachers, students, and others in each school community. Table 7.1 sets out the agents, roles, and responsibilities in relation to respective organisational levels, and the external entities that influenced their interaction. The following description further explains the working relationship between these agents and the various entities.

a) Union Education Directors were responsible for the oversight, administration, and staffing of schools in their region. A key responsibility was the administration of school accreditation. Accreditation was like the traditional school inspection focusing on teaching standards, student performance, compliance, and government relations affecting school registration. To streamline executive action, particularly in relation to staff appointments, the Inter-Union Board of Education had been recently established.

b) School principals and Conference Education Directors were expected to attend the annual Principals' Conference organised by the SPD Education Department, convened mid-year during a school vacation. While each year's conference program featured a central theme, it was also a suitable time for the

dissemination of relevant information and addressing current issues relating to policy. Union Education Directors also attended this event and thus were also

Table 7.1

Agents, Roles, and Responsibilities in Australian Adventist Education

Organisational Level	Agents	Roles and Responsibilities	External Authorities
SPD Education Department	Director & Associate-Directors - Admin - Government Affairs - Curriculum	Policies Governance Staffing & HR Curriculum	Government regulatory bodies - Funding - Curriculum - School - Compliance - School registration
Union	Directors	Implementation & management	
Conference	Conference Ed. Directors Principals Teachers	Accreditation Management & Governance Curriculum	

involved in collegial interaction. However, although expenses associated with travel and attendance of participants were met by the organisation, and the colleagues enjoyed the social interaction, they were forfeiting their vacation time and attended somewhat begrudgingly.

c) Resources produced by the curriculum unit were designed to align and promote the philosophy, ethos, practices, and goals of Adventist education that were current. The prime time to introduce and implement materials as they were produced such as key learning area (KLA) syllabi and religious education programs was at the annual CAPE/CASE program conducted by each Local Conference. Because CAPE and CASE were essentially grassroots entities, Curriculum Unit officers needed to be

allowed time each year by the Conference Education Director and his schools to fulfil this function.

d) The accreditation process carried out periodically in each school prior to this time had all the characteristics of the traditional school inspection. The process had a dual purpose. Firstly, it was administered by Union Conference Education Directors to ensure that the school truly represented Adventist culture, values, and maintained high standards of education. Secondly, the registration of each school within its respective state was conditional upon meeting such criteria. For that reason, the accreditation program carried out in Adventist schools was scrutinised and validated by representatives of each state's regulatory educational authority. Each year, these state representatives joined with the ASA accreditation team in visiting one of the scheduled schools. On that basis, the Adventist Education System was granted authority to conduct accreditation visits in the other schools on behalf of the state authorities during that period. Each accreditation, without exception, created tension and distraction for months as schools prepared for the event. For some time, the process was criticised as not truly representing what it was designed to demonstrate. Consequently, renovation of the accreditation process had begun in the 1990s as a more reliable exercise while also seeking to alleviate many of the existing pressures.

One of the problems with previous accreditation procedures was that the documentation for various aspects was compiled mainly by school administrators with minimal input from staff except for the personal schemes of work written by teachers. Thus, members of staff did not benefit from the collaboration phase of the process and thus, the final product was of limited practical value. The term "window dressing" was not uncommon. A missing component was the need to function as a collaborative team. This posed an endemic problem. Australian Adventist teachers were typically individualists and consequently, even the larger schools lacked coordination in this area, as I observed personally while serving in accreditation teams in each state and territory of Australia. It had become a common practice for schools to share copies of their accreditation documentation for use by other schools, often cutting and pasting extensively without close editing to suit the new location. But now, the revised accreditation procedures were more conducive to schools developing their own localised documents. A key feature of the revised process was

the intentional shift of focus from the traditional inspection-type event that occurred every five years to a cyclic self-study review process at the school level.

Key Agents

The effort behind the formation of the goals statement proved to be valuable, not only as a product and formulation of annualised plans, targets, and delegation of responsibility, but in the strong sense of collegiality, collaborative discussion, and support between members of the Education Department. Significant progress had also been made in the recent formation of the Inter-Union Board of Education and the positive working relationships between personnel involved. Similarly, the Curriculum Unit was steadily writing and publishing resources.

However, the effectiveness of the process was dependent on clear lines of communication based on respect, trust and goodwill between administrators and personnel in the AE system in Australia. Communication between SPD and Union officers, Conference Presidents, Education Directors, school principals, and teachers often proved to be contentious and disabling. A glaring weakness was that policies formed at an upper level of the system could be ignored with impunity. This anti-authoritarian spirit was legendary and disabling in Australian AE. The potential for positive development was contingent on the quality of relationships and interaction between the various parties.

Conference Presidents

By and large, Presidents appeared to have simplistic perceptions of Christian education, regarding it as serving a mainly utilitarian function to produce literacy, numeracy, socialisation, and the growth of the Church. However, a matter of concern in some conferences was that the total number of education employees began to exceed the number of ordained ministers in pastoral roles. Data indicates that some Presidents felt this situation limited the evangelistic potential of the Church because of the considerable costs associated with the church school system, despite the fact that school costs were largely funded from government sources and school fees.

An issue of major significance was the annual levy on each Conference for the ongoing support of the Curriculum Unit. In my own 10 years serving in the Curriculum Unit, this issue appears to have produced the greatest protest of all. One

Conference President voiced the opinion that production of curriculum resources simply involved writing and publishing a product, and not actively supporting the of implementation and in-servicing and provision of associated resources. One President remarked, “Just write the curriculum, distribute it, and tell the teachers to get on and teach it”.

Conference Education Directors

Conference Education Directors were voted to the position by a Nominating Committee appointed by each Conference for the forthcoming quinquennium. The nominees were typically male with previous experience at least as a school principal. Their location in the organisational hierarchy posed a challenge. For example, as Conference employees, they were directly answerable to the President, while at the same time being expected to support and activate Union and Division policies. As time passed, the complexity of education at the local executive level presented widening demands on Education Directors as regards expertise in personal relationships, management, and the capacity to deal with ongoing issues. Also, because their prior experience had been predominantly in a primary or secondary school setting, they were identified accordingly by their colleagues. Such perceptions posed a challenge for administrators involved in the system’s staffing process if a competent, experienced primary teacher was considered a suitable fit as a principal in a school with a secondary component. Also, directors sometimes were torn between loyalty to Division and Union administrators on one hand, and to the teachers in their Conference on the other. One such director who had previously served as a principal in the Conference felt somewhat hypocritical when he needed to give a directive or call teachers to account. He commented that he had been a prankster himself during professional in-service events such as CAPE and CASE meetings, with some embarrassment admitting, “I used to be one of them”.

School Principals

A steady increase in the complexity of education generally, with incessant demands from industry, commerce and compliance with government policies impacted principals at this time. Despite significant progress made in the way they perceived their roles and the character of AE, principals began to exercise their independence as to how they wanted their schools to appear to the public. Several

principals argued that the word Adventist in the school's name was a deterrent for many non-SDA parents from enrolling their children at the school. They believed this to be a critical factor, especially in regions with other private schools competing for student enrolments. In response, some schools began removing the word Adventist from their name, while some also replaced it with the word Christian, and others left out both. Another concern was a new emphasis on academic excellence in the promotion of the schools. For this reason, several Adventist schools named themselves as colleges instead of as schools. One such school, after its relocation and expansion on a prime site, was promoted in the media as. "The newest private school in the [region]", but not identified as Adventist. The trend posed a major concern for education administrators who viewed such action as indicative of an underlying cultural cringe towards an elitist private education stereotype. In promoting the schools, the term academic excellence was used heavily in promoting them.

Several of the principals of K-12 schools in Eastern Australia showed innovative flair in promoting their schools, causing their school enrolments to grow substantially. However, despite effort to build an Adventist education system, some principals still tended to promote the interests of their own school selfishly rather than to support their colleagues in the school system. As a result, these larger schools grew, as did also the proportion of non-Adventist students enrolled. This led to the unofficial establishment of several school-based churches and the appointment of chaplains operating within both school and church, despite the expressed concern of some Presidents. This trend was self-endorsing as it seemed to contribute to the sustainability and growth of AE in terms of student numbers and promoted a spiritual quality to the impact of the school.

But while this demonstrated creative leadership on the part of the principals concerned, there was also concern that they were acting independently, and without the approval of the Conference Executive Committee. Furthermore, while it was regarded as beneficial for the schools concerned, it fostered selfish rather than systemic interests. This provided potential employment incentives for teachers elsewhere, and it did not take long for them to be drawn to the schools, for both professional and personal reasons.

Teachers

While the main source of teachers had been Avondale graduates, strongly enculturated within Adventism, new circumstances affecting teacher supply and demand meant that teachers from other sources who were not conversant with the Goals Statement began to be employed. As schools grew, so did the need for specialist staff in subjects like Mathematics, and at one stage, senior English. The situation was exacerbated due to the relaxation of the 15 percent rule setting a cap on the intake of non-SDA students. The situation was strongly debated at the time. But eventually, changes were authorised subject to conditions. Such teachers were expected to be currently active in another Christian faith community and be supportive of the school. Non-SDA students were also permitted to enrol on condition of their willingness to participate and comply with the activities of the school without protest.

In the later 1990s, the issue of teachers' wages arose. Traditionally, Adventist teachers had received a lower wage than their counterparts in public schools. Teachers had traditionally accepted this as a gesture of commitment. The basic reference point for the Wages Schedule of the Church was based on the salary paid to an ordained pastor. The Wages Schedule was constantly monitored to make sure that principals' and teachers' wages did not exceed the Wages Schedule for the ministry. The justification for the practice was that this was to maintain "a level playing field". However, when the Commonwealth Government introduced the Fringe Benefits Tax, the law allowed all ordained ministers exemption from this tax. The immediate effect was that the ministers' wages in each conference were adjusted within the law to minimise their income tax. However, teachers were excluded from these benefits and no similar consideration was given to the adjustment of the Teachers' Wage Schedule.

Since the beginning of the decade, informal banter among a small group of teachers had speculated on the possible association within the Independent Teachers' Union. While the majority felt it went against the spirit of the Adventist teaching ministry, the new circumstances were sufficient to tip the balance. A small, relatively militant group of teachers in one of the systems' largest schools contacted the state Teachers' Union representatives, suggesting they might consider recruiting SDA teachers as prospective members. For a short time, in a rush of enthusiasm, several teachers did become paid members of the union. Understandably, this was of serious

concern for Church administrators who at first resisted the pressure. But eventually, after protracted discussion, it was conceded that the Church should pay award wages, and it was now possible for principals and education administrators to receive a higher wage than an ordained pastor. At the same time, enthusiasm for affiliation with the union waned on the part of the disaffected teachers, and the relationship ended. Nevertheless, several important lessons had been learned.

Development of the Curriculum Unit

In this same period, progress was being made by the Curriculum Unit in producing resources as commissioned by the SPD Executive Committee. By 1993 progress had been made in several areas: a) the development of a comprehensive statement of philosophy and objectives for the school system in Australia and New Zealand; b) a full set of framework documents covering subjects taught in secondary schools, giving special attention to topics needing special attention to harmonise with SDA beliefs and values; c) literacy, numeracy and Bible resources and support materials for Pacific Island schools; and d) a comprehensive curriculum framework entitled *God Is Like This* for grades K-6 in Australia and New Zealand.

The Demise of the *God Is Like This* Curriculum

Directors of Education at both the General Conference (GC) and the North American Division (NAD) had been observing the GILT project, introduced by the SPD Curriculum Unit in 1987, with interest. In 1994, when GILT was finally published, an invitation was made by the GC Director, Dr Humberto Rasi, for a presentation at the Annual Meeting of Education Directors in Washington, D.C. Delegates from the thirteen World Divisions attending were each given a copy of the sizeable document. Reception by the Directors was cordial, but judging from the questions and comments, the experiment was seen to be over-ambitious conceptually and impractical pedagogically. Despite these reservations, interest in the SPD Curriculum Unit's work arising from the presentation led to invitations to make different presentations relating to faith-integration pedagogy internationally, or to engage in consultation in the development of a religious studies program for schools in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division based in the Philippines.

By the early 1990s back in Australia, however, it became apparent to most teachers that while the GILT program was innovative, it was not only too radically

different from traditional models of teaching and learning, but it proved to be daunting and impractical. The Curriculum Development Steering Committee that had been formed with representatives from each Australian state and New Zealand, had met every year with the Associate Director – Primary Curriculum (hereafter ADPC) to undertake development of the overall program. Most of the Steering Committee members were principals of Adventist primary schools, while one was an Avondale College lecturer in primary teacher education. This approach was intended to foster collegiality and a sense of ownership among the teachers of the system.

However, none of the team had had any prior experience in formal curriculum development. Despite being competent primary school practitioners, with most holding tertiary qualifications, they lacked theoretical understanding and experience in curriculum design and development. Although the ADPC himself was able to articulate a rationale and epistemological basis for the curriculum under construction, his committee lacked that ability. After five years of work, the ADPC reported in a letter to the Chairman of the Curriculum Development Steering Committee:

> Our committee has found this task to be particularly challenging as it required us to re-examine many aspects of our own educational philosophy and practice, and at times we had to except painful realities in terms of the effectiveness of much of what we had done in the past. (Howie Correspondence, 9 November 1992)

The author-designer of GILT explained to the Chairman that the production of the curriculum document itself, which had taken five years to complete, was only Stage 1 of the whole project. Furthermore, at the beginning of the implementation phase, only four or five of the initially proposed 24 action units had been prepared ready for use. The implementation of the document to all the schools in the system was yet to be attempted, and it became apparent that there was no systematic implementation strategy to follow.

Several teachers who trialled early draft units were able to produce some impressive results in their own classrooms. However, one creative senior teacher commented that while she enjoyed teaching that way, she only had the energy to do so occasionally, teaching perhaps 1 or 2 units a year rather than the 4 envisaged. Eventually, the GILT program was completed, and copies distributed to all Adventist

primary schools in Australia and New Zealand. Shortly after its release, this large, single volume document was facetiously described by one Conference Education Director as “the white brick”.

Towards the end of 1993, the author-designer of GILT resigned from his position suggesting the baton be passed on to another person. At the beginning of 1994, I was commissioned to explore what could be done to implement GILT. To assist in this task, the ad hoc Curriculum Advisory Committee was retained. During the whole of 1994, a concerted effort was made to keep the project alive by visiting meetings of groups of teachers in every state of Australia and also New Zealand in the annual CAPE meetings. Two regional workshops were convened during 1994 for groups of teachers to create action units. But the task was daunting and the output minimal. It also became increasingly evident how strongly the GILT project was associated with its author-designer personally, and on several occasions, emotive public expressions of loyalty distracted from implementation attempts.

Despite considerable effort and fair trial over the whole of 1994, it became clear that GILT in its intended format was impractical. Clearly, a new course of action was needed. At this point the Inter-Union Board of Education disbanded the GILT Curriculum Development Steering Committee, but no recommendations were made with respect to how the work of the Committee might proceed. That decision was left to the Curriculum Unit officers, who by the end of 1994 decided to abandon the GILT project.

Pressure to Discontinue the Curriculum Unit

The changing circumstances and the protracted development had not escaped the attention of Presidents who were concerned that despite the considerable financial investment, a complete curriculum had not materialised. They failed to appreciate the on-going nature of the curriculum development process. Their protest and opposition spread and reinforced opinions held by administrative personnel, including the SPD. But this was only the beginning of repeated assaults, particularly from at least two of the Local Conferences. However, the Curriculum Unit survived. This resistance was summarised later (Lloyd, 2006, p. 4) in a comprehensive Curriculum Review:

> At this same time, questions were being raised amongst church leadership regarding the continuation of the Curriculum Unit and this was followed by successive confirmations in the mid- and later-1990s. The Curriculum

> Development Steering Committee convened in 1994 and came to recommend that "the work of the Curriculum Unit be considered an ongoing process" and a permanent resource to the K-12 teaching ministry of the South Pacific Division, with its personnel "appointed quinquennially and holding associate director status".

This action not only confirmed the retention of the Curriculum Unit into the future, but by the mid-1990s both of its two appointees – Associate Director Curriculum (Primary) and Associate Director Curriculum (Secondary) – held PhDs majoring in theoretical and practical aspects of curriculum design and development. Each had also lectured in Curriculum Theory and Practice for several years at Avondale College, and one had also served as a sessional lecturer in the fields of curriculum design and development and sociology of education at the University of Newcastle.

The Strategic Direction of the Curriculum Unit

By the mid-1990s, a critical point had been reached concerning how the work of the CU should proceed. The subject frameworks were gaining acceptance by many Adventist secondary teachers in Australia as well as being promoted by Humberto Rasi to Adventist educators elsewhere in the world. The strategic plan was philosophically grounded in keeping with contemporary scholarship, while also being practical and straight-forward for teachers to apply in their planning and teaching. The term "user-friendly" was frequently used in dialogue with intended users. Scholarship of researchers representing both Adventist education and the broader academic community during the late 1970s to 1980s had produced a prolific literature base with the potential to transform educational thought and practice, as discussed in the next section. However, there were several other compelling factors arising from external sources that impacted the work of the CU, making the task of navigating through the maze and meeting the expectations of the respective parties formidable.

Notably, the productions of the CU represented a radically modified paradigm with regard to the ultimate goal of education, the nature of knowledge, the place of the curriculum, the view of the student, and relevant pedagogy. While the integrity of Ellen White's perspective of education was to be maintained, the style and rhetoric of the CU's products were transformed in keeping with contemporary scholarship. The approach also promoted a more relational and developmental

orientation not only for Religious Studies, but also towards a more faith-oriented transformation of all academic subjects and their presentation. The following section summarises sources, theoretical priorities, projects, considerations, and constraints that were considered at the time.

Impact of Evangelical Christian Scholarship

In the latter half of the 20th century, a burgeoning sea of literature was developing with a focus on the history and analysis of the concept of worldview (Anderson, 2012). This emerging genre reflected a fresh attempt to build a systematic theistic apologetic in the wake of the perceived impact of postmodernity and post-Enlightenment positivism. Many authors earned seminal status among Christian educators internationally, particularly at the tertiary level, such as George Knight, well-known Adventist educational philosopher. Groups of Adventist educators around the world at this time were becoming familiar with scholarship relating to worldview and faith integration through the medium of seminars conducted by Humberto Rasi, introduced in the previous chapter. Coincidentally, another influential literature source consistent with this scholarship was published by the Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity – a non-SDA source.

This body of literature figured prominently in the design and production of resources supporting the Religious Studies (Bible) curriculum, both primary and secondary. These resources were designed to be consistent with the Church's beliefs and values, but they departed from the heavily cognitive and doctrinaire character of the traditional Bible textbooks. In contrast to the acquisition of knowledge as information, the new resources were designed to encourage critical and reflective thinking, leading towards holistic academic development (Sutherland, 2018). This change of direction was consistent with Ellen White's (1903) principles that students should be "thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought" (p. 17) leading to the "restoration" of mental, physical, and spiritual capacities (p.15). Two key concepts in this vast literature had significant influence in the production process. First was the concept of faith and moral development (Fowler, 1981; Kohlberg, 1984). This interest was timely in view of the *Valuegenesis Project* in Adventist schools around the world instigated by V. Bailey Gillespie (Gane, 2012). This involved extensive research focusing on the nature of values-formation in Adventist students in Adventist secondary schools. A second key concept that followed shortly

after was the notion of "spiritual formation" or "personal transformation" as represented by Willard (2000). This concept was seen to correlate closely with concepts of faith development, thus strengthening the developing paradigm.

A notable factor was the forging of relationships between the CU personnel and their counterparts in other Christian education agencies through collaboration, where possible. Coincidentally during this period, other Christian education agencies were also in the process of reviewing what they considered to be their authenticity and identity.

Response to External Regulatory Government Bodies

Reference has been made to government initiatives that directly impacted education and the curriculum both at state and national levels. With the launch of the new Australian National Curriculum came the setting up of regulatory bodies in the form of Boards of Studies at state level to facilitate and oversee its implementation. Space does not permit an extensive discussion of the convoluted action, counteraction and resistance driven by traditional sentiment at the state-federal level, except to explain that the protracted debate and delay in finalising details made it difficult for the SDA CU personnel to make firm strategic decisions. This was made difficult by the fact that of the reconfiguration of the formal curriculum to "key learning areas" (KLAs) that were "outcomes-based". I personally observed the bewilderment and sense of overload experienced by many senior principals with whom I interacted as an Education Director. Most of these teachers were more familiar with traditional approaches to education and were resistant to change. A common response made to me was, "We've seen it all before. It's just another fad! It won't last long before something else comes along!".

Impact of the Curriculum Unit on AE Philosophy

As mentioned, work had commenced in the late 1990s to review Adventist Education's Philosophy Statement together with the continuing with production of curriculum resources. It was widely agreed that the task was onerous, especially for only two people. It was considerably more than just the preparation of subject outlines and resources for teaching. It was necessary to navigate through postmodern trends being overtly promoted at the time in public education while resisting compromise of the principles of a biblical, Christian philosophy. A clear relationship

between curriculum production to SDA standards and the extensive reforms being advocated by the National Curriculum in the Australian states and territories needed to be maintained (Watt, 1997).

By the end of the decade, a full suite of KLA frameworks (with the exception of Mathematics) had been produced in succession and distributed for implementation in primary grades. Subject frameworks for the secondary years (7-12) were also available as a second edition, together with a substantial body of secondary Religious Studies units. In addition, a newly designed K-6 Bible program, *Growing in Faith,* had been produced for use in Adventist Schools in Australia and New Zealand, replacing the outmoded international Bible program. Despite promotion internationally in *Journal of Adventist Education* (1998), and affirmation worldwide, it was difficult for the program to gain traction at home.

However, the viability of the CU ultimately depended on how well new resources were received by teachers in the schools. In many respects, Adventist teachers tended to be no different from their counterparts elsewhere as regards resistance to change, especially so-called veteran teachers, as reported in the literature (Snyder, 2017). While some of the reasons for the resistance appear to be commonly found in such teachers, there were also reasons unique in the Australian Adventist context. Fortunately, a critical mass of these teachers was supportive and began implementing the resources as they became available.

The establishment of the annual CAPE/CASE program in the local conferences during the 1980s provided an ideal opportunity for teachers to be apprised of the resources produced by the CU and in so doing, become compliant to the regulatory bodies involved. However, the potential weakness lay in the fact that CAPE/CASE was fundamentally a grassroots initiative and ultimately, the opportunity for the CU to introduce new materials was dependent on the goodwill of the managers of the 2-to-3-day program organised every year by the staff of one of the larger schools. However, such events were often crowded by private sales representatives from curriculum producers invited to attend. On other occasions, representatives from state curriculum authorities were invited to make presentations instead of CU representatives. To make up for the minimal opportunity provided for implementation of CU productions, alternatives had to be sought to visit schools individually to fulfil this function — an inefficient use of time, by comparison. On

one occasion an appeal was made to a Union Director. However, his response was, "You need to make your own presentations interesting so that the teachers will want to hear what is on offer!" The SPD Director of Education, who had appreciable experience prior to this as an education director in the United States, commented in his diary:

> Curriculum development in the South Pacific has never been easy. Apart from those who resented the funding arrangements that had been voted for, the two Union Conference Presidents made annual attempts to reduce or even eliminate the levy. The "down-under" teachers demanded curriculum support but unless they did it themselves, which they claimed they did not have time to do, tended to consider anything done by others as lacking credibility. It was this loose talk among teachers devaluing what was being done by the SPD Curriculum Unit generally and the new Bible materials specifically, which encouraged senior church leaders to make those annual attempts, like clockwork, to eliminate the Unit. (Devine notes, November 2020)

Reimagining Adventist Education in the Late 1990s

In the later 1990s, the effort to restructure the Australian SDA Church was gaining momentum. A significant part of the plan was to formally transfer direct responsibility for K-12 education to the Union Conferences – one layer down in the organisational hierarchy. As the implications of this proposed restructure and how it would function began to emerge, the SPD Director of Education took the opportunity to raise again the question of the actual status of Adventist education in the mission of the Church. At his request, SPD President agreed to convene an Education Summit to resolve what he perceived to be a major problem.

Education Summits I and II

Summit I involved 46 delegates meeting over two and a half days to address the series of propositions prepared for discussion by the Education Director. The first proposition was pivotal; it read:

> Adventist Education is a soul winning ministry rather than merely a service to the Church.

It is important to note that in that context, the term "service" had connotations that reduced education to a utilitarian function based on a paradigm that separated the sacred from the secular. It was that paradigm that the SPD Education Department stood resolutely against, especially in the productions of the Curriculum Unit.

The SPD Director recalled that he expected that discussion of this proposition "would take maybe 30 minutes to sort through but in reality, it became the key issue of the Summit and the first day and a half was spent debating that one proposition" (Director's personal diary). He described how the resistance generated by the proceedings produced increasing frustration and bewilderment among the education members of the delegation. Finally, when the vote was taken, the motion was passed by only one vote out of 46. Although it appeared to be a begrudging approval, the Director quipped, "It was a win after all." At least it enabled the plans to proceed to bolster education and its status.

But the issue was by no means totally resolved. At the conclusion of the summit after two and a half days, one of the delegates, a Local Conference President, stormed into the Division Director's office demanding:

> When are you arrogant teachers going to get the message? Reading, writing, and arithmetic belong to you, but religion belongs to us, the pastors. Stop trying to take over our role. (Informant C)

The Minister-Teacher Rift

In the meantime, in the Division office, some sympathy was extended to the Education Department by the departmental directors of other Church Ministries, particularly Youth Ministries and the Sabbath School Department. In a show of goodwill in 1998, one departmental director arranged an informal meeting in an attempt to develop better understanding of the role and aspirations of Adventist education, and to foster collegiality between the departments of the Church. The meeting began in a cordial manner until the status of Adventist teachers as "minister-teachers" was raised. Although the concept was acknowledged as being valid in principle, the connotations of ministry in the context of education caused difficulty. It was agreed that as minister-teachers, their "lifestyle" should be consistent with and representative of SDA cultural mores and values; it had become widely known in the Adventist community that several teachers from a large regional K-12 Adventist school spent the Sabbath surfing at the local beach. Due to the openness of this activity, it was assumed to be a common practice, despite substantial evidence that the lifestyle of most Adventist teachers elsewhere aligned with the Church's expectations. What began by calling the meeting in a gesture of goodwill and

support finished as an embarrassment, with the long-standing negativity towards teachers reinforced.

Despite such disappointing distractions, the slender win of Summit I boosted morale in the Education Department. Summit II followed shortly afterward to build on the principles developed in Summit I. But behind the scenes, some Conference Presidents and their Boards of Education expressed concern about who would be in control of Adventist education in the future. The major issue was the matter of control, with no consideration given to whether Presidents had sufficient experience and expertise in education to justify and legitimise that authority. However, the Division Director summed up the situation: "At the end of it all, Adventist Education in Australia had the structures in place where they were professionally trusted to essentially run the Education system themselves on behalf of the proprietary Church; a process the teachers had felt they needed for decades" (Informant C).

Special Character in the South Pacific Division

During the 1990s, the term "special character", had made an appearance in the discourse of Adventist educators in the SPD. The concept originated in New Zealand following the New Zealand Education Act 1989 which administered the registration of Integrated Schools. The New Zealand government authorities expected that religious schools would be different from their state counterparts. But for such private schools to qualify to receive government funding and the payment of teacher wages, they were required to articulate their identity clearly and demonstrate their special character in every aspect of their operation. The documentation and performance of each such registered school was regularly assessed by the Education Review Office (ERO) and the results of each review reported in the press. Failure to satisfy the expected standards would result in deregistration and the withdrawal of government funding until the deficiencies were rectified.

These funding opportunities for the New Zealand Adventist school system came at a critical time as they were experiencing significant hardship in their continued operation. As the New Zealand church authorities considered the implications of receiving government financial support, some SPD education officers in Australia expressed concern. They recalled experiences of governments paying SDA teacher wages in other countries in the past, and thus, this new prospect was viewed with

caution and some suspicion. However, in 1993, the church authorities decided to go ahead and became Integrated Schools of Special Character with the New Zealand Government. Weslake (2006, p. 6) commented, "principals, teachers and School Boards discovered that where they thought they were truly Seventh-day Adventist they had real difficultly in showing and outlining both in documentation and practice how that took place. However, that has all changed for the better today". In a short time, the schools were not only able to survive financially, but the rigorous process brought school communities together to review their identity and mission. As a result, the New Zealand SDA school systems was revitalised. Another New Zealand teacher said, "We were being paid by the government to be different!"

The Flow-on Effect of Special Character to Australia

In Australia, interest in the notion of special character following the New Zealand Adventist school system's experience was due initially to the enthusiasm of several Australian teachers who had been employed in New Zealand Adventist schools at that time and believed that the concept would revitalise the Australian system. However, the SPD Government Affairs Director was wary of the trend, not only for New Zealand Adventist schools, but also for the possibility of it gaining traction among Australian teachers. Despite the cautions raised, informal discussion served to build momentum that showed no sign of abating. It is fair to say that the appeal of special character was due predominantly to its potential to ensure the authenticity of each school and system that embraced it. The discussion surrounding it was perceived by the principals of several larger Australian Adventist schools as an opportunity to revitalise the Australian system. But for the time being, no formal action was taken.

The Curriculum Unit Under Increasing Scrutiny

Demands on the CU were onerous, not only with respect to the production of resources, but also implementation, especially when it involved teachers from the schools needing release time and expecting the CU budget to cover the relief teachers' wages. Some Presidents voiced the opinion that all that was needed was simply to publish and distribute the resources with the instruction that teachers should then "just do it!"

But beyond the SPD, the work of the CU was affirmed. General Conference Director of Education, Humberto Rasi, strongly supported the work being done and the lead being given to Adventist education worldwide by the Australian unit. On several occasions, Rasi invited each of the CU personnel to make presentations at international conferences and seminars. On one occasion, due to contacts made, education administrators located in the Philippines asked permission to model their new Religious Studies on principles underpinning the SPD program, *Growing in Faith* (Guptill, 1998), while the Director of CIRCLE (Curriculum and Instruction Resource Center Linking Educators) based in Andrew University (Michigan, USA) added it to its resources together with other productions of the CU (Roy, 1998/1999).

Contesting the Status of the Curriculum Unit

Over the last 3 years of the decade, the new Division President often engaged in robust conversations with the Director of Education on issues relating to the function and administration of AE in the South Pacific region. The convoluted administration hierarchy from Division to the school level was an ever-present obstacle to smooth communication and collaboration between the relevant parties. In the President's view, education was "a service", not "a ministry", and therefore should be located at Union level, rather than Division. In due course, a major review of the CU was convened in April 2000, several months before the quinquennial session of the SPD and the expected setting up of a new Australian Union Conference.

Curriculum Unit Review 2000

I recall vividly the apprehension of the two associate directors as the review meeting approached because of reported comments and concern for criticism in the past of some members of the Review Committee. The Committee was chaired by the Division General Secretary and the Division Director of Education serving as secretary. There were eight other members, including the two Union Directors and two teacher representatives, one primary and one secondary.
The terms of reference recorded in the minutes of the meeting were:

- a review of the 1987 set-up of Curriculum Unit;
- a summary of the curriculum material produced to date;
- a review of the performance and effectiveness of CU;
- a consideration of alternative methods for producing curriculum material;

- determination of CU's implementation and in-service roles;
- suggestions for an alternative name for the Curriculum Development Unit as it was titled at that time. (See Appendix E)

Survey of Principals and Teachers

In addition to the samples of materials produced by the unit, and a comprehensive report of work completed by the CU, or in progress, the Review Committee also considered the results of a field survey of principals and teachers in schools across Australia and New Zealand. In summary, the data from the survey focused on the following:

- a desire for continued and additional resources representing special character requirements of the Church;
- website access to resources;
- increased support from Education Directors in implementation and in-servicing;
- provide clearer communication; and
- provide assistance in the Accreditation process.

Recommendations of the Review

Despite earlier apprehension, the review process was thorough and constructive. The following observations and recommendations of the Review Committee Report were as follows:

- job descriptions should reflect the special character of Adventist education at all levels.
- a more realistic process for the regular communication, reporting and evaluating the work of the Curriculum Unit should be set in place noting that a website would contribute significantly to of those processes.
- insisting that school level curriculum documents demonstrate, at re-accreditation, that the special character requirements of the proprietor Church are being met individually by teachers and corporately by the school, with such documentation and practice, including regular use of denominationally prepared teaching resources expected.
- the Accreditation Self-Study documentation being surveyed, and if necessary revised by the SPD Education Department, to ensure that the distinctive Adventist curriculum of each school is firmly part of the heart and mind of every teacher.
- implementation being formally recognised as a major responsibility of the Local Conference Education Director to coordinate and facilitate the

curriculum development process in the schools, and

- further, that this aspect of the Education Director role be reviewed in the annual professional appraisal process.

Finally, on the key issue as to the future of the CU came the resolution as follows:

> VOTED—to acknowledge the value of the Curriculum Unit and the need for its continued contribution to the education system. (See Appendix E)

As for the broadening of responsibility and accountability, only the future would show whether those aspirations would materialise.

Analytical Reflections

Social Conditioning

By the beginning of the 1990s, the combined effect of events associated with Glacier View weighed heavily on morale in the SPD. The instability, stress, distrust, and the resulting schism that characterised Adventism widely at this time were symptomatic of normative ambiguity and tense relations. The impact of this ambiguity was felt at two levels. At structural and normative levels, the Church faced radical critique of the belief system on which its existence, identity, and mission depended. But second, the emotions emanating from the conflict had a disruptive and polarising effect on relationships, discourse, and any potential resolution. The complexity of the situation posed a critical challenge for the Church and its leaders at the General Conference through to the World Divisions.

Although the Education Department was nested within the SPD structure, they operated as two distinct entities held together by material, normative, and cultural linkages. While this relationship exerted direct downward causative pressure on AE, the added relationship of the AE system with the government agencies at several levels exerted strong downwards pressure, affecting its operation. First, this affected material structures, influencing resources and student enrolments, and second, it affected normative structures, with the potential to undermine philosophical and ethical principles underpinning the identity and mission of AE. This, in turn, predisposed AE agents to courses of action that could potentially compromise the distinctiveness of Adventist schools and their mission.

Social Interaction

The events recounted at this time represent social conditions that motivated Church administrators worldwide into action to minimise the debilitating impact of Glacier View. The restatement of the Church's belief system by the General Conference in the form of *27 Fundamentals* is an example of one such strategic response. In addition, by the mid-1990s in Australia, the proposal by several SPD administrators to review organisational purpose and mission, may be viewed as a tangible response.

At the same time, within the Education Department, systemic review and strategic planning by leaders continued to be influenced by a small number of reflexive agents attempting to revive mission as they saw it. This trajectory was maintained despite a change in the directorship and resistance at times from "the old guard". Nonetheless, appreciable progress was made in consolidating the emerging departmental structure with a regular strategic review enhanced by collegial relationships between its departmental agents. The micro-culture so represented was undergirded by a well-defined logic, considerate of AE's raison d'être.

Relationships between SPD administration extending down to the teachers in the schools suffered because of inequities in the salary structure and allowances affecting ministers and teachers, ultimately causing some militant teachers to become external union members.

Despite positive outcomes in the schools, the influence of some presidents on several SPD administrators fuelled festering opposition to some educational agencies, especially the Curriculum Unit. In many cases, these attitudes were motivated by an economic rationalist bias. Nevertheless, there were positive outcomes elsewhere with respect to relationships with government agencies and authorities, to which administrators appeared blind.

Elaboration

During this cycle, strategic propositions generated outcomes that were positive in some respects and obstructive in others. On one hand, attention was considerate of the conceptual underpinnings of AE's mission. On the other, there was a growing preoccupation with institutional interests, rather than with the personal formation of

the students. This trend was attributed to the growing scholarship of agents at school and tertiary levels, informed by both internal and external sources.

Although formal recognition of the status of AE as a ministry of the Church was thinly supported by the delegates attending Summit 1, it represented a symbolic victory in validating AE and its mission, which empowered AE leaders. On another front, however, complex discursive interaction continued to threaten the continuity of the Curriculum Unit, despite its productivity. This opposition was due, on one hand, to a lack of understanding of the role of the unit and its contribution to the total mission of AE, and resentment of some Local Conference Presidents and Secretary Treasurers to the annual levy on all conferences to support it, on the other. Again, however, the ultimate vote of approval of the Unit by the Curriculum Review Committee failed to dampen the resolve of some administrators to eventually relocate the SPD Education Department and scale back its operation.

CHAPTER 8: ADVENTIST EDUCATION 2000 TO 2009

This chapter opens with an account of radical change in 2000 in the organisational structure of the SDA Church in Australia. It explains how Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) was born in that context, and the impact of the change. In so doing, the chapter describes the strategic response of the new department as it addressed a raft of needs, issues, and challenges, both inherited and current, in an endeavour to ensure authenticity and viability. The chapter then recounts how the concept of "special character" was gaining traction in the minds and discourse of Adventist educators, and traces its tangible impact on strategic development and the promotion of AE. The chapter then focuses on several critical events, including the ultimate demise of both the Curriculum Unit and its role in meeting the needs of the school system with respect to the traditional curriculum and especially, the Religious Studies curriculum. The narrative then describes the introduction of a new religious studies programme and the emergence of chaplaincy as an attempt to increase the efficiency of each school in fulfilling its mission.

In the latter years of the decade, several trends and pressing issues demanded attention, and it was in that context that the chapter reports on a key event—Consultation 1—that was convened to reinforce the significance and effectiveness of the concept of special character and the enhancement of school standards. The chapter concludes with Analytical Reflections concerning the impact of the events of this decade on the morphogenesis of AE's mission.

Organisational Change in the SDA Church in Australia

The South Pacific Division Session was held in Canberra in 2000, from October 30 to November 4. Sessions such as this were convened every five years, at Division, Union, and Conference levels of the Church. The meetings were attended by people with an administrative role at the time together with delegates from churches in the regions concerned. At the meetings, reports were given by the various departments of their work over the previous quinquennium. Also at this time, personnel were elected to administrative positions for the next five years. It was also on such occasions that major issues affecting the management of the Church as an organisation were addressed. The deep structural changes made at the SPD 2000

Session proved to be a watershed moment in the governance of the Australian Church and its agencies, including education.

The South Pacific Division Session 2000

The major issue of the session was the merging of the two current Union Conferences — the Trans-Tasman Union Conference (TTUC) based in Sydney, NSW, and the Trans-Australian Union Conference (TAUC) based in Melbourne, Victoria. Plans to restructure the SDA Church in Australia were based on evidence of duplication of roles and responsibilities, unbalanced representation of the church body, inefficiency, and unreasonable expense. The restructuring was also significant because in achieving it, the SPD could be seen as devolving authority and rationalising responsibility. But in another sense, it created an anomaly by officially conferring authority to the Union, enabling it to act independently and, if it wished, counter to a higher level of governance. This apparent anomaly was not without precedent. Restructuring had occurred previously in 1900 with the establishment of the Australian Union Conference as a practical measure to offset the effects of distance and time between the GC in America and the growing Australian Church. But that anomaly, although pragmatically helpful, had complicated the administrative function of the Church.

This proposal meant more than simply blending two existing entities. For example, the New Zealand component of the Trans-Tasman Union was to be removed and combined with others to form a new Pacific-based union. The new Australian-based entity was to be called the Australian Union Conference (hereafter, AUC). The vote in favour of the formation of the new AUC was passed without opposition – a foregone conclusion.

However, the physical location of the future AUC headquarters was a different matter. Prior to the session, two *ad hoc* working parties had been appointed to represent the existing unions, with each party presenting a case to the session delegates to argue a case for the new union remaining in Sydney, or moving to Melbourne, or a different location. That included Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory. Informal speculation about the new union was overshadowed by personal and logistical concerns in view of the potential impact on personal lives and families. In due course, at the SPD session, each party presented its arguments, which was

followed by intense discussion. However, the discussion was driven by emotional sentiment and political pressure, rather than by rational critique and logic. Eventually, the vote narrowed to a choice between Sydney and Melbourne. In a close vote, Melbourne prevailed.

Adventist Education in Australia

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Union Conference began immediately after the close of the SPD session. It was attended by the new appointees to the various departments, including education. The first item on the agenda concerned the proposed location of the new Union administration offices. To an outsider, this change might appear uncomplicated. Although the Education Department was not the only department affected, it was the largest group, although its composition was momentarily in doubt. For example, during proceedings of the inaugural meeting it was discovered that in the structure of the new Union Education Department, the previous role of Associate Curriculum Director had been downgraded to an assistant of the department. However, this proposal was successfully challenged from the floor of the meeting by the newly appointed Union Director of Education, and as a result, the previous curriculum role of Associate Director Curriculum was to be retained.

The Birth of Adventist Schools Australia

Action to relocate the AUC to Melbourne in 2000, and with it, the headquarters of the Australian Adventist school system, was a critical turning point. Among the many reasons justifying the change, a prime justification was to optimise the efficiency, and thus, the image of the SDA Church in Australia as an organisational entity. The initiative was also a response to a growing perception among some SPD leaders that the administration of the Church was top-heavy, and that there was needless duplication of some functions. This action came with a resolution delegating administrative responsibility to several departmental entities. Notably, this was not the first time such a change had been made to the Church's hierarchical structure. A similar action had taken place in the late 1890s when the Australian Union Conference was formed to manage routine affairs more expeditiously due to distance and time constraints (See Chapter 4). In this case, the largest entity in the Church, Australian Adventist K–12 education, was reaffirmed and given a fresh

identity in the new Union hierarchy. This system was soon to become identified as Adventist Schools Australia (ASA).

However, whatever the motivation for the affirmation, time would reveal that the impact of the new initiatives on the school system and its relationship with the corporate church was underestimated. An immediate consequence was the changed role of the drastically reduced SPD Education Department, making it virtually an entity with limited input with respect to the Australian system, except by periodic invitation to participate in an event. With administration of the Australian education system delegated to the Union, the SPD Education Department was reduced to two appointees left to oversee Adventist tertiary institutions in the Pacific region and support education in the Island Unions. A new Director, with doctoral qualifications and appreciable experience, was appointed from the Pacific region, while the role of Associate Director was filled by the previous SPD Associate Director, Secondary Curriculum. But despite its location in the hierarchy, the SPD Department of Education now had little to do with the functioning of the new Union. As a result, the relocation of AE distanced the Division's administrators from the schools themselves.

Navigating the Way Forward

New expectations and responsibilities accompanied the shift. Operationally, routine matters involving AE and its existing relationships with other regulatory or advisory bodies, needed to be reviewed and acted upon. However, there were considerable challenges and costs. First, work previously undertaken by the SPD Education Department was now the responsibility of a scaled-down department consisting of a Director (general administration, government affairs, strategic planning), Associate Director (administration, legal matters, accreditation), and Associate Director–Curriculum (writing and production of curriculum material, implementation and supervision of curriculum, professional development of new staff). For the first year, the Curriculum Unit operated with a single officer (the author of the thesis) attending to K-12 curriculum needs, until another person was seconded for a year to assist by caring for the primary grades. Secondly, there was no physical office building to house the new Union and its constituent departments, including AE. As a stopgap, Union personnel involved shared half the facilities of the Victorian Conference headquarters in Melbourne, while the Associate Director

(Curriculum) had to operate from a home office in NSW, with scheduled periods spent in Victoria. It was not realised at the time that this situation would continue for almost three years until a permanent office for the Australian Union was procured, and with it, space for the National Office of Adventist Schools in Australia. Despite the multiple distractions and challenges, the organisational environment was more hospitable and conducive to positive morale.

Emerging Concerns

The 2001 National Office Report focused on what was described anecdotally as "a daunting list" of functions which had previously been the responsibility of the Division, but now passed on to the Union. These issues related to: teachers (general terms and conditions of employment, teacher relationships and responsibilities, code of ethics for teachers, and professional development); legal matters (occupational health and safety and monitoring incoming legislation in areas such as privacy, discrimination and sexual protection); government liaison (negotiations with the Commonwealth Government on relevant issues; school growth (the establishment and management of future school growth and development); cultural standards (setting and controlling guidelines in literature and music); and liaison with Adventist Support Services. In this context, the report announced the intention to begin compiling a new *Education Handbook* to address the needs of the school system in Australia. It was also stated that it was "not the intention to establish a top-heavy National office" in the form of additional personnel, but rather "that more responsibility will flow down to conference education offices" (J. G. Hammond, personal communication, November 30, 2001). Thus, while devolution was strategically intentional, the report acknowledged a risk of undermining the systemic advantages. The major concerns fell into several categories: teacher supply and employment; the infiltration of unionism and remuneration; institutional authenticity; and organisational coherence and integrity.

Teacher Supply and Employment. A national shortage was being experienced in the supply of teachers, especially in the areas of Mathematics, Science, and Senior English. Male primary teachers were also relatively few. The situation was exacerbated by the expansion of some schools into the secondary stages. As a result, some conferences were finding it necessary to employ non-Adventist teachers under short-term contract to fill the gap. But even though employment was conditional on

demonstrated involvement in another faith community, the capacity of such teachers to actively support the ethos of Adventist education raised concerns.

Unionism and Remuneration. Several militant Adventist teachers in NSW had become members of the Independent Teachers' Union and had launched a court case against the Church demanding that they be paid according to the Independent Teachers' Union schedule. This resulted in the setting up of the AUC Education Remuneration Advisory, with a large proportion of its membership elected by the teachers.

Institutional Authenticity. To avoid distraction caused by the erosion of Adventist education's progress, efforts were made to identify with its raison d'être. Although the morale of system administrators had been boosted somewhat by the Summits of the later 1990s, there was concern that there was considerable work to be done in the strengthening the identity of teachers. In some groups, the sense of mission was nebulous and shallow.

Incorporation of Adventist Schools Australia

Changes to the organisational structure in 2000 triggered discussion among Church administrators to begin reviewing the legal standing of the operations of the Church before ASIC (Australian Securities and Investments Commission). From a corporate perspective, this would help to protect the assets of the Church. After protracted consultation overseen by the SPD Church administration, the decision was made to incorporate the ministries and services of the Church as separate companies, and to register them formally with the relevant civil authorities. In this context, each company would function independently, complete with modes of governance, terminology, and practice common to the corporate world. Each would have its own board of directors and CEOs, and each would articulate a version of their respective statements of mission representative of their nature, role, and function. In this context, and after protracted deliberation, the new National Office of the Adventist School System became formally identified as Adventist Schools Australia. But while this action made sense from a legal and corporate perspective, the trend towards a business model of a church was an obvious consequence. Administration and governance signalled a power shift that tended to be divisive rather than unifying, and introduced nuances that were foreign to the traditional ethos.

While these issues were not new to Adventist education, the complex interplay between the various elements and the emerging consequences were becoming more clearly apparent and posing new challenges. With new power to act for entities within the Union, Conferences soon began appointing their own Boards of Directors and began forming detailed strategic management plans. In the North NSW Conference, a full-time time Associate Director was appointed. This kind of development had been anticipated in the SPD Strategic Plan for Education in 1996, but it would be naïve to imagine that the changed structure would not encourage power plays and independence within Conferences in relation to the Union. In this interplay, the Conferences appeared to have an advantage by virtue of their closer proximity to what was happening in the schools. At times, the principals of some larger schools attempted to bypass central staffing protocols by covertly attracting teachers from elsewhere. However, there were some functions that for the sake of the system needed to remain the legitimate responsibility of the Union.

In an interview, a retired Education Director offered an insightful summary of the impact of the change of union structure and incorporation of the Education Company.

> Now what that meant basically was that the traditional authority of the Union was, to a large degree divested to the companies, where they were required to stand on their own feet. They were answerable to ASIC, and expected to have their own policies and procedures, their own way of operating, and that was a significant departure from the way AE had worked up until that time. So there was a power shift. For example, central staffing was significantly eroded. Previously, the Union Director basically directed all the traffic in central staffing. Now, it was the school company that employed and controlled staffing. The formation of policies was no longer determined by the Union but by the school company. And I don't think that the leadership of AUC education at the time took kindly to this change of power relations and there was quite a lot of tension between the Union and the School Companies on the basis of authority. (Informant M)

AE was in an intense state of flux as it trended towards a technocratic business ethos. Schools were keen to create an image that was sensitive to the values of a changing clientele, many of which had no prior affiliation with the Adventist Church. One of the largest schools in New South Wales appointed a new marketing officer to manage public relations, promotion, and advertising to attract prospective students. Expressions like “marketing” and “the brand” were commonly used in the discourse

between educators. “Academic excellence” was typically cited as a primary drawcard. However, several schools did acknowledge the spiritual dimension of AE identity. For example, sensitivity was reflected in the actions of the principals of two large K-12 schools, one in Victoria and the other in NSW, where they began creating informal school-based church communities that met on school premises every Sabbath, a practice that expanded with the introduction of school chaplaincy discussed below. These initiatives were independent of the Local Conference and drew a quick response from one President with concerns for their relationship to the corporate church.

Significant Activities and Events

During the first five years, several entities developed with emergent potential for the way AE was administered and their effect on relationships associated with life in schools. Although the entities were apparently discrete, the shared assumption was that each played a part in the mission of AE. Each one represented an event or episode of transformative human action initiated by the Australian Union in the interests of legitimate order and efficiency. The initiatives of interest in this context were: school accreditation; teacher induction; information and communication technology; and marketing Adventist schools.

School Accreditation. The Union still maintained control over the accreditation of all schools. The changes to the process introduced in the previous decade were gaining acceptance at the school level. Early responses were encouraging, with greater collegiality becoming evident between the system administration and the schools in this aspect of management. The five-yearly accreditation cycle was retained, but assistance was offered to schools throughout the year leading up to the scheduled visit. School administrators and teachers began to acknowledge the benefits of the new self-study accreditation approach and cracks began to appear in the traditional “us and them” mentality. In this climate, ASA officers provided support for schools involved in the accreditation process, especially in aspects relating to school philosophy, aims and objectives, and the organisation of curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment.

A notable example of improvement was the case of a large K-6 school in Victoria where the principal and several senior teachers had grown up with the

system and were openly cynical about the relationship between the administrative "heavies" and the teachers. However, at the beginning of the year of their scheduled accreditation, the school's leaders sought help from the Curriculum Unit on how they might approach the task of organising the school's curriculum. This apparent change in attitude was significant because the principal had previously been uncooperative and had undermined attempts to implement recent syllabus documents. Now, in the months leading up to the accreditation visit, the gap was replaced by regular dialogue. Suggestions were offered regarding strategies based on the organisation of teams of teachers to collaborate and coordinate such aspects as: the allocation, scope and sequencing of curriculum content among the grades; choice of curriculum resources; special needs; and coordinated assessment and reporting procedures that were consistent with the school's philosophy and mission, and state compliant. These aspects could be regarded as standard considerations in the organisation of the learning environment of any school. However, in this case, the two-day accreditation visit proceeded smoothly and successfully with participants expressing the view that it was more a "signing off' in each aspect of the school's planning and operation. Efforts were affirmed, needs were identified and acknowledged, and ongoing strategic goals formulated for ongoing attention. I personally witnessed this event and the positive changes that occurred. News of the school's experience spread by word of mouth, and this had a strong effect on the accreditations of schools that followed.

A long-standing problem for Adventist primary K-6 schools was a lack of coordination in teachers' programs of work. Hitherto, teachers had been reluctant to share resources, and was evident that teachers tended to "do their own thing behind closed doors". At the time of accreditation, it was evident that scope and sequence planning of the curriculum at the whole school level was mostly non-existent, revealing needless repetition or gaps. To address the problem, ASA prepared a *Primary Curriculum Guidelines* booklet based on the design that had been developed in collaboration with the school described above in preparation of its accreditation. The potential success of that process in any such school was dependent on its teachers working together as teams with clearly defined responsibilities assigned to groups and their leaders. This principle was particularly important in the planning and coordination of the academic program. The motivation was the preparation for

accreditation. After one school's successful accreditation experience, a senior teacher commented, "Working in teams like this was one of the hardest things I've ever done as a teacher, but it worked!" (Informant N). The benefits became evident as one by one, conferences adopted the team approach and created curriculum committees to oversee it.

Interaction such as this between the various parties involved in the accreditation brought heightened awareness of how the process might be optimised, especially with respect to the implementation and development of curriculum, and strategic management practices at the school level. To ensure consistency and accountability, ASA began convening a forum for the Education Directors' Council, at least annually, to review, inform and develop appropriate policies. One result was that the concept of a School Curriculum Committee in every school was adopted to monitor and support the process systematically according to protocols set out in the guidelines provided by ASA, thus ratifying new practices that had developed in response to needs arising.

Teacher Induction. With few exceptions, teachers in Adventist schools had been required to be members of the Church. As such, they were formally classified as "minister-teachers". However, due to growth in schools and changing conditions, AE faced a dilemma. In meeting the demands on supply, non-Adventist teachers with specific skills and qualifications began to be appointed to difficult-to-fill positions, on condition they were actively associated with other faith communities. Administrators were ignorant of perceived risks to identity and school culture, but the policy was duly modified to ratify the action. Another trend, especially at secondary level, was that teaching was beginning to be seen as a profession rather than as a vocation.

Coursework in the teacher education program was designed to ensure a familiarity with the philosophical underpinnings of AE. Thus, suitability for employment in Adventist schools was based on the expectation that teachers who had come to the system via Avondale were likely to identify with the beliefs and culture of the Church. Because all other teachers employed, whether Adventist or not, had not had that pre-service experience, measures were adopted to compensate for the perceived deficiency. At first, this took the form of personal, written responses to an assigned set of readings focusing on a philosophy of Christian

education and its implications for practice. The readings were selected, and the responses evaluated by the Curriculum Unit. This continued for two years from 2001 until it was replaced by a more practical approach agreed to by several Conference Education Directors. This involved full-day seminars conducted by Curriculum Unit personnel and hosted by the respective Conferences (Winzenried, 2008). Responses to the more succinct and pragmatic innovations were more positive, although the depth of the process was problematic.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The imagined benefits and feasibility of the newly emerging field of information and communication technology (ICT) had become a topic of speculation between several SPD and Conference enthusiasts, leading into the new millennium. In that context, an unexpected initiative appeared from an external source. A news release from the National Office to all Adventist schools (25 October 2001) announced an offer from the Information and Communications Technologies in Schools Taskforce of the Commonwealth Government to be part of an Enhanced Online Communication System to assist the Union in communication and management of the various entities of the Adventist school system. Similar grants were made to other national peak bodies associated with Christian schooling in Australia, namely, the Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS), and Lutheran Education Australia (LEA). This initiative sought to provide efficient, discrete digital networks to assist in a wide range of services including: the delivery of teaching resources, student learning materials and professional materials; management systems to facilitate the operation and administration of schools with respect to policies, systems; and curriculum, assessment and reporting functions. While the setting up of the infrastructure was provided by an agency appointed by the government, each system needed to interact in the process of implementation and testing. This point of contact was the National Office, and in the formative stage of development of the infrastructure, this function was taken as part of the Curriculum Unit's role.

Marketing Adventist Education. A vital factor in ensuring the survival of Adventist schools in Australia was their capacity to attract students from what was being perceived to be a limited demographic. It was not uncommon in some regional areas for two or more Christian schools to compete for students from the same pool, regardless of the denominational identities of the prospective students. In Adventist

schools, expressions such as “marketing” and “strategic management” became slogans generating much discussion. One of the larger K-12 schools had independently appointed Public Relations Officers to organise advertising and the recruitment of students. As noted in Chapter 6, these schools followed a non-exclusive enrolment policy which in some schools resulted in the enrolment of more than 85 percent non-SDA students. In a small number of schools, the name “Adventist” was being removed and either replaced by the word “Christian” or omitted altogether. Also, the word “school” was being replaced with “college”. While schools generally acknowledged the view of “a balance between mental, social, physical, and spiritual capacities of students”, many emphasised academic excellence as the primary drawcard in their promotion efforts because this feature was perceived to be a priority in providing life-chances on the part of the potential students. In that climate, senior secondary Adventist schools vied for supremacy in gaining the highest scores in the Year 12 examinations and thus, bragging rights in promoting the school. Such information was often published in the *Adventist Record*, the Church’s official weekly news periodical.

A Marketing Summit was convened by ASA in 2003 at Lilydale in Victoria in response to a groundswell of interest and opinion on the matter. The event was attended by all Education Directors and interested parties from across Australia who spent three days exploring ways to make Adventist schools attractive to potential students and their parents. However, the dominant interest was in strategies and ideas for promotion and advertising of the school as an organisational entity rather than in the philosophical heart of Adventist education. Nevertheless, the question of the authenticity of Adventist education kept rising to the surface of discussion: What makes the difference between an Adventist school and the state school or other private schools down the road? In that context, it was concluded that care was needed not to lose sight of the core business of Adventist education.

Renovation of the Philosophy of Adventist Education

Further afield, the General Conference Education Department sought to revive the focus on the philosophical foundations of Adventist Education. On April 7-9, 2001, the International Conference on the Adventist Philosophy of Education convened at Andrews University, Michigan. The aim was to review the philosophical and theological underpinnings of Adventist education, its mission and

identity, and the implications for curriculum, pedagogy, and school management. The previous official statement of educational philosophy had been drafted during the 1950s, and because of dramatic expansion over the last two decades of the 20th century it was deemed important to review that statement. The Philosophy Conference, the first of its kind, was the brainchild of Dr Humberto Rasi in his capacity as Education Director for the General Conference, assisted by academics George Akers and George Knight. More than 250 scholars, researchers, teachers, and administrators from Adventist universities, tertiary institutions and education departments from around the world attended to hear papers presented and to participate in focus groups (Rasi, 2001). I was invited to represent ASA and speak as a respondent to a key presentation. Two other Australian representatives also attended. In many respects, the event was an extension of the series of Faith and Learning Seminars that Rasi had been conducting around the world. The unanimous response from attendees to the Philosophy Conference was a wish for it to be a repeated in the future. Following the conference, an updated Statement of Adventist Philosophy of Education was published in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education* (Special Edition, v10, 2001). Pertinent to this thesis is the Aim and Mission Statement in the report.

> Adventist education prepares students for a useful and joy-filled life, fostering friendship with God, whole-person development, Bible-based values, and selfless service in accordance with the Seventh-day Adventist mission to the world. (Rasi, 2001, p. 173)

Growing Interest in Special Character

Following the restructuring of the Australian SDA Church and the establishment of ASA, conversation among some groups of teachers frequently turned to the notion of special character. The positive impact of that initiative in New Zealand Adventist schools continued to impress observers. Contrary to predictions, schools appeared to have benefitted from the process in which they were required to articulate and demonstrate the consistency of their identity, sense of purpose, and performance. Interest was building to adopt a version of the concept in Australia.

However, much of the discussion was informal between teachers and school principals. Several of them wrote position papers and gathered other supporting material, but the efforts lacked focus and coordination. In 2002, ASA invited a

representative of the NZ Catholic Education Office was to make a presentation to Australian and New Zealand principals and education directors attending the annual Principals' Conference, held at Longburn Adventist College. The NZ Catholic system had invested considerable effort and expertise into the development of its Special Character Review and Development program to guide and support Catholic schools in implementing the initiative. On this occasion, the Adventist educators were open to advice and documentation that the presenter was generous in sharing. Although the funding aspect in NZ was not relevant to the Australian situation, the potential benefits of focused engagement in a local context was appealing.

The Publication of Towards Wholeness

Renewed discussions surrounding special character also followed shortly after the Philosophy Conference at Andrews University. That event was the prime motivation for producing a monograph for the Australian system under the auspices of the Curriculum Unit titled *Towards Wholeness: The Special Character of Seventh-Day Adventist Education 2003).* The 16-page document first set out the biblical principles and worldview underpinning Adventist education, and then explored the implications of its dimensions: its ultimate goal and mission; its view of knowledge and the curriculum; its view of the student and the role of the teacher; and its view of the Adventist school as a community of faith. The title of the publication itself, conveniently abbreviated to *Towards Wholeness*, was also intentionally reminiscent of the notion of formative restoration that was central to the traditional aim of an earlier era, the restoration of imago Dei in humanity.

Shortly after its publication, much of the *Towards Wholeness* document was pasted into the new ASA Education handbook. But also at this time, the Australian Union Conference hosted its inaugural ministers' convention at Avondale College in early 2003, attended by every Adventist employee serving in a ministerial role in the Union. Notably, no teacher delegates were invited to attend. In the wake of progress made from the Education Summits in 2000, every opportunity was being sought by ASA to build bridges between the clergy and the teachers. A request was made to the AUC organisers for copies of *Towards Wholeness* to be placed in the satchels of delegates to the conference. Permission was also given for ASA to set up a display booth in the foyer of the convention venue. This was done, and I personally manned the display through every intermission in proceedings. However, there was no

response to the copies in their satchels, and nobody visited the display. This reaction was perplexing as many of the delegates were personal friends or acquaintances within the SDA community. However, on this occasion, they identified with their peer group.

Promoting Adventist Education

The generic aims of education with respect to knowledge, attitudes, and basic skills for personal and social life can be presumed to apply to AE. However, it is the essence or character of the context of AE that defines its particular distinctiveness and validation. Research and commentary from several Adventist scholars attest to the fact that the majority of Adventist educators they studied concurred with this conviction (Carter, 2002; Hill, 2006, July 15; McIver & Kilgour, 2017). But while this aspect was fundamental to the practice of Christian education, the teachers tended to see spending time in philosophical reflection as wasteful. Nevertheless, AE administrators considered it vital to justify Adventist Education to state and federal regulatory bodies on the grounds of its distinctive characteristics. The implications for school registration were significant. For the previous decade, the work of these external bodies created an environment that was volatile, confusing, and daunting.

As described previously, the first of two most opportune points of contact for dissemination to the Conference Directors of Education and their schools was via accreditation. Accountability in each case focused primarily on the School Principal and how responsibilities for compiling relevant data were delegated to the staff. But while this process occurred once 5 years, and since the registration of the school was at stake, it was in the interests of the school to be pragmatic and comply with procedures and address the philosophical aspects, albeit reluctantly. The second point of contact as described in Chapter 8, was CAPE/CASE. But a determining factor in this relationship was its grassroots identity, duly endorsed by the SPD Inter-Union Board. Thus, while CAPE/CASE was considered to be the primary channel of communication, the structural configuration produced the greatest resistance.

Teacher Resistance to Philosophy and Change

In doctoral research at the time focusing on a group of Adventist primary teachers, Carter (2002) showed that while the teachers were committed to what they presumed to be AE's identity and purpose, many of them were sceptical and resistant

to change. This was a major factor affecting the level of success or failure of curriculum initiatives. Although, the study focused on a select cohort of Adventist teachers, the data derived from the study correlated strongly with my own personal observation and experience.

While teaching resources produced by the CU had been grounded in a philosophical rationale, as reported in Chapter 7, open-ended responses from participants in Carter's research into teachers' attitudes to curriculum changes in Seventh-day Adventist schools in 2002 included more pragmatic concerns. Carter reported:

> Most teachers recognised the need for a unique SDA curriculum that would enhance the philosophy of the school and make each Adventist school different from any other Christian school, while maintaining the integrity of the National Curriculum Standards of Australia. One teacher said: "There is really no other basis than the curriculum that we can stand on our own two feet as an Adventist Christian school and offer something different to what a state curriculum offers, with Bible tacked on." It was perceived that the curriculum was one of the most influential ways of assisting schools to be accountable and unique at the same time. (Carter, 2002, pp. 174-5)

However, teachers typically saw the relationship between theory and practice in conflicting terms. Attempts to explain the philosophy behind the new curriculum and why it had to change caused resistance rather than providing support and clarity. Among teachers interviewed by Carter (2002), one teacher commented:

> Longer in-servicing — I do not think is a good idea — it only confuses me. I don't need to hear more about the philosophy, I just want more information about how I am expected to use the new curriculum! (p. 162)

Another remarked:

> We don't really know what to do or how to do it. I would like to be told what I am specifically meant to be doing. (p. 186)

In the intensity of the socio-political interplay, teachers responded pragmatically to wide-ranging demands to which they were exposed. To them, the principle of practicality was the ultimate decider.

By the middle of the decade, curriculum development and management lagged, to the point where questions were being raised about implementation and in-servicing. CAPE and CASE were also in decline. Instead of providing opportunity

for dissemination and in-servicing by the CU personnel, CAPE/CASE convenors in some conferences began inviting commercial representatives to promote their wares. Because many Adventist teachers believed external bodies had superior expertise in their respective key learning area (KLA) and other school management issues, in-service support was often sought from State Boards of Studies and the Association of Independent Schools. Consequently, this posed a significant challenge for the implementation of the KLA documents and Religious Studies curriculum. Another contributing factor for the CU and its viability was the imminent retirement of the Associate Director, and the difficulty in finding personnel with expertise in curriculum theory and practice.

Some of the most open resistance had been shown in New South Wales, with questions raised about the standard of these productions. The CU's original commission was to contextualise the curriculum for Adventist schools to ensure that all KLAs were adapted to reflect an SDA worldview consistently. In response, a set of K-6 documents was submitted to the NSW Board of Studies (BOS) for critical assessment. In a reply letter, a BOS inspector confirmed that the documents met both the SDA Education's ethos and the BOS K-6 requirements. She stated, "I understand that schools within your registration system will now use these documents as the basis of their programming" (Personal communication, February 10, 2004). However, despite the documents themselves passing the scrutiny of an external assessor, pockets of resistance among Adventist primary teachers remained.

Curriculum Unit Review – 2006

Between 20 December 2005 and 22 February 2006, the Administrative Committee of the AUC commissioned a major curriculum review to address the situation and make recommendations regarding its future. The general objectives of the process stated in the report, entitled *Curriculum Unit Review—AUC/ASA-2006*, were:

> …to examine the practice of curriculum in Adventist schools throughout the various conferences and schools within the Union and to make related recommendations for the future as detailed in the *Terms of Reference (TOR)…* A major, but not the sole, focus of the *Review* was to be the performance of the Curriculum Unit (CU) operating with a permanent staff of two and situated within Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) at AUC headquarters in Ringwood, Victoria. (See Appendix F)

The Terms of Reference of the document are listed in full in Appendix C. In summary, they sought to: a) evaluate responses to previous reviews and recommendations; b) evaluate curriculum products; c) the extent to which all parties concerned had put into practice resources of the CU; d) ascertain levels of acceptance through survey and interview of relevant personnel; and e) determine future role definition and division of responsibility.

Discussions at AUC headquarters began on April 3, 2006, followed by visits to Local Conference administrators, Directors of Education, Adventist schools, and officers in state departments and state and independent schools. Over the next few months, these visits covered the conferences of Victoria, Tasmania, South New South Wales, South Queensland, Northern Australia, and Greater Sydney. A key task of the review was the creation and administration of questionnaires for Adventist school instructors, principals, and heads of the elementary and secondary divisions, as well as for non-Adventist teachers now employed in Adventist schools. The majority of these teachers' questionnaires were distributed in three, previously scheduled CAPE-CASE meetings. The extensive report of more than 120 pages was presented to the AUC in March 2007.

The review reported that according to the data, the CU had made a positive contribution to that date, and its continuing function was deemed necessary by most of the respondents. However, the review also identified major problems and the limitations posed by the extensive roles and expectations imposed on its operation and productivity. It recommended the most radical changes to its composition and function since its inception in 1987/1988. The recommendations included the decentralising of responsibility to other parties, thus drawing on wider input and decision-making. Consequently, the CU's responsibilities were reduced to the development and implementation of a new K-10 Religious Studies syllabus alone. Responsibility for contextualising the regular KLAs consistent with an SDA worldview was passed on to the schools, and the monitoring process entrusted to Conference Directors of Education and their respective company delegates.

The Launching of the Encounter Curriculum

In 1998, the CU had produced and launched a religious studies programme for primary grades called *Growing in Faith*, while the needs of students in the secondary

stages to Year 10 were met with a series of Bible Modules, also locally produced. However, despite support from an appreciable number of teachers, their full acceptance continued to be undermined by growing perceptions of their impracticality as discussed above. A trend had also developed in some of the larger secondary schools where they began adopting Religious Studies syllabi such as Comparative Religion (NSW) written by state Board of Studies (or equivalent) for Years 11 and 12. ASA leaders concluded that a more contemporary and appropriate Bible curriculum was required to meet the spiritual and academic needs of a changing group of students. Further, it was believed that teachers needed more resources as well as current theoretical and practical support (Hill et al., 2020). Consequently, in 2008, ASA launched the *Adventist Encounter Bible Curriculum*. A steering committee was established to oversee its design, writing, and implementation for use in both Australia and New Zealand. The first units were written by committee members, but soon after that, teachers who had taken part in writers' workshops took on the task, while also developing a sense of ownership. This time, substantial finance and human resources were invested in the project, with extensive commitment to its implementation.

The Emergence of School Chaplaincy

As part of this new development, interest in chaplaincy resurfaced. Although considerable informal discussion was taking place at many levels of the church, no formal action was taken by ASA. Nevertheless, the concept of chaplaincy was gaining traction.

Following the establishment of ASA, the increasing powers of principals and Local Conference Education Companies allowed some of them, especially in the case of larger schools, to unofficially appoint chaplains in a full-time capacity with a locally created role description. This initiative did not set out to undermine the role of Bible teaching in its traditional form, although dissatisfaction with the current situation fed the need for a more appropriate alternative. In the main, this view of chaplaincy focused on the spiritual formation and wellbeing of the students, while ensuring a link between the ministry of the Church and its visible presence in the ethos of the school. In a short time, religious activity increased, and school churches were established in several large schools, with worship activities held on the school grounds each Sabbath to cater especially for students who were either unchurched or

of different faiths but had developed a strong emotional bond with the school. The first of these establishments opened in Melbourne's north-west outskirts, and another opened on the New South Wales Central Coast. These entities still operate as active faith-communities or "school churches", while several others have also formed since then. While these school churches were relatively informal, vibrant entities that were expanding steadily, several Presidents were uneasy about the spirit of spontaneous independence that was developing and were anxious about issues of structural accountability in relation to authority, doctrinal integrity, and monetary stewardship (tithes and offerings). From a church administration point of view, questions were raised about the official status of such chaplains in the eyes of the Church, the implications for their potential ordination in the future, and how they might be perceived by their clerical colleagues.

The evolution of the role of chaplaincy proceeded relatively informally for the first decade of the century. But this eventually changed as part of the evolution of the function, governance, and the refinement of terms of reference for newly formed regional Boards of Directors in education, especially in North New South Wales. But a clear role description was needed. In 2003, a draft role description and tentative terms of reference statement had been prepared under the auspices of the Curriculum Unit. Nonetheless, interest in the further development of the chaplaincy concept was overshadowed by a plethora of chronic issues associated with the relocation of the AUC headquarters, as discussed previously.

Other Pressing Issues

Despite the dramatic turn in AE during this period, ASA Administration were aware of a series of trends impacting the system and the fulfilment of its mission. These included:

- the effect of an increasing population of non-Adventist students on Adventist identity;
- pluralistic and liberal trends among Adventist clientele affecting beliefs and practice;
- the effects of employing non-Adventist teachers to meet the needs of growing student enrolment;
- changing attitudes of Adventist teachers due apparently to the effect of wider societal trends and other ideologies; and

- Biblical Studies, chaplaincy programs, and pastoral care to nurture and enhance worldview awareness.

(after Murdoch, 2017, p. 38)

Consultation 1 — A Key Event

Much had transpired in AE in Australia in the new millennium to support or constrain its development and in so doing, to produce outcomes that exerted a significant generative effect. In 2008, a transition of directorship at ASA was imminent due to the retirement of the incumbent. To ensure a relatively smooth transition, a new Associate Director was appointed in 2008, with the goal of his eventually taking over as Director.

In an interview, the new Director-elect (now also retired) spoke of the emerging issues at the time, two of which were critical — special character and educational standards. The first pertained to the perceived mission of AE. The second was important in view of the evidence of independence being shown by some Conference Education Directors and the risk of disunity and inconsistency across the system.

Special Character

As a defined starting point for Consultation 1, the nature of special character was re-stated in preliminary material provided to delegates as follows:

> Adventist education is Bible-based, Christ-centred, service-oriented, and Kingdom-directed. It aims for a balanced development in the lives of students, encouraging them to choose a personal relationship with Jesus, serving Him in this world until He comes again. These features, infused through the schools' policies, procedures and practices provide the Special Character of Adventist Education, based on the fundamental beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (See Appendix G)

Over the two-day conference, the issues listed above were addressed. A summary of recommendations listed in the conference brochure entitled *Reviewing the Journey: 2009-2019* were as follows:

- to endorse the ASA Statement of Special Character and note that we welcome students of all backgrounds that are willing to support the school ethos;
- to form a working party to monitor the maintenance of special character in Adventist schools;
- to review teacher induction procedures to ensure that special character dimensions are identified and implemented;

- to develop and implement programs of strategies to assist teachers in gaining knowledge and understanding of the spiritual development and support for the mission of the church;
- to develop a set of guidelines and practical suggestions to enhance the Adventist special character in schools;
- to review and refine staffing policies and procedures, towards the goal of employing committed Adventist teachers. (See Appendix G)

These recommendations were formally endorsed by the Australian Union Conference Executive Committee. This action marked the beginning of another episode to the narrative of Adventist education in Australia and its expressed support for the mission of the Church.

Educational Standards

Further to these concerns, in a broader Australian context, debate over the professional standards of teachers intensified, with implications for all educational jurisdictions, public and private. (Walkington, 2009, p. 2) argued:

> The Commonwealth agreement with State and Territory governments, the *National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality*, provides a positive direction for the future practice.

This affected all education providers in Australia from entry to graduate levels with respect to policies, curriculum, and practice. Addressing the situation in AE to ensure professional standards was both prudent and necessary. The focus of interest in the discussion was predominantly on the quality of teaching and learning with an emphasis on professional skills and understandings related to pedagogy and the intellectual excellence. But for AE, an added necessity was the recontextualisation of the curriculum with respect to the ethos and belief system of the SDA Church and its view of education. However, knowing what that means to teachers in Adventist schools and being able to articulate that distinctiveness appears to have been a persistent challenge. ASA's response to these issues came in the form of Consultation 1 and its effort to enhance the understanding of special character and ramifications of its infusion in every level of the system, and to provide strategic direction for the forthcoming decade.

Analytical Reflections

Social Conditioning

The narrative provided in this chapter demonstrates the nature of the interplay between structural and cultural forces affecting agents who represented Adventist Education, and shows how those agents responded under the circumstances, sometimes with unexpected consequences.

The landmark initiative in 2000 to reconfigure the organisational structure of Australian Adventism had substantial impact on agents personally and on group relationships, particularly in the case where individuals were displaced in the process of relocating, both physically and psychologically. Despite the memory of the recent affirmation of AE as a ministry at Summit 1, and the boost to morale it provided, the structural change posed a challenge with respect to material resources and reduced personnel. Nonetheless, the mandate to take responsibility for an increasingly complex Australian school system was an exciting prospect for the newly formed Adventist Schools Australia, though the constraints were substantial. At the same time, changes in the composition of student numbers and a shrinking pool of potential students had an upward causative impact on priorities driving responses to the emerging problems and the viability of the system.

It is also notable that AE's configurational change was indicative of a new organisational context with new causative potential for the strategic operation of the new entity. But on the other hand, the intellectual turn cited in Chapter 7 had already identified substantial refinement of AE's philosophical identity and, in due course, was articulated as representing special character. There was an implicit need to maintain momentum.

Social Interaction

While interest in special character and mission carried over into the new era, the raft of needs to be addressed by the new ASA took precedence, particularly in issues relative to the viability of the schools in the current circumstances. This preoccupation exerted downward normative causal pressure on potential mechanisms including distraction from philosophical development and the discussion surrounding special character. However, interest in special character remained alive among principals and school leaders, due particularly to expectations

of schools when preparing for cyclic review and self-evaluation associated with accreditation. In due course, the publication of *Towards Wholeness* by ASA was a response to provide focus and support. However, school viability was a priority measured in terms of enrolments drawn from a shrinking pool of potential students. Consequently, marketing in a competitive environment dominated interests, so that discussion focused on academic achievement rather than on spiritual development. The appointment of marketing officers in some larger schools was a significant indicator of this trend in allocation of priorities.

Because of church administrators' expectations, ASA was motivated to undertake detailed strategic planning as evidence of efficiency and staff competence. A working association with external bodies such as ICT provides was based on close detail and reporting. Also, ASA's response to the difficulty of replacing Curriculum Unit staff with personnel with appropriate expertise led to another wide-ranging review process.

Later in the decade, in the transition to a new Director of ASA, strategic activity led to a series of micro-level institutional normative actions in the attempt to set the direction of development over the future decade.

Elaboration

Significant developments flowed directly from social interaction during the decade as cited above, adding to a deeper understanding of how the mission was changing within Adventist education in Australia. First, the closure of the Curriculum Unit and the reassignment of its various functions was a boldly pragmatic decision that would have unexpected consequences which did not appear until years later. Second, a sophisticated information communication network funded by Government streamlined operations and provided considerable resources to schools and teachers. Third, with the transition in directorship of ASA, the establishment of working parties focusing on a mode of development encouraged collaboration and participation of groups culminating in Consultation I.

CHAPTER 9: ADVENTIST EDUCATION 2010 TO 2022

This chapter provides a historical account of the development of Adventist Education in Australia in the second decade of the 21st century, and explores unfolding events following the changes initiated in 2000. The narrative represents the final phase of the 55-year period of interest to the thesis. It begins by focusing on the tangible evidence of strategic thinking and planning, and the subsequent policies and initiatives flowing out of successive key events such as Consultation 1, the ASA Leadership Conference, and ultimately Consultation 2. As it continues, the narrative highlights key features of AE's missional response in the form of The Encounter Project, and the emerging role of chaplaincy.

While the narrative identifies a range of initiatives, it contextualises them in conditions caused by organisational structures, corporate regulations, and external relations. Several other agencies or important contextual factors at different levels are also identified: first, the General Conference's attitude to education and its fundamental status; and second, attempts by the Australian Union conference to restructure the Australian Church to facilitate mission. However, as it draws towards its conclusion, the narrative notes the emergence of disparate paradigms of mission and considers the problems and dilemmas posed. The narrative is followed by Analytical Reflections of the events of this final period of the targeted 55-year period covering the morphogenesis of AE's mission.

Implications of Consultation 1

The recent convening of Consultation 1 marked a distinct waypoint in AE's journey. While it had been concerned with professional educational standards, it had been based on the conviction that "the bedrock of SDA education is its mission, vision, and values', while its focus on the special character of Adventist schools was held to be central to defining the mission of the Church (Murdoch, 2017, p. 41).

However, Consultation 1 had not materialised without precedent. A complex array of social, structural, and cultural conditions in the form of public policy, cultural trends, economic forces, and heightened parental expectations of schools, created a complex matrix with potential for change towards the end of the decade. Previous chapters of the thesis have identified similar trends, but these new changes were of compounded proportions, triggering further significant change.

The inauguration of Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) within the Australian Union Conference in 2000 had provided a more congenial environment in the pursuit of the school system's perceived mission. Nonetheless, it was still difficult for ASA administrators to focus interest on the philosophical underpinnings of AE, given the distractions, physical demands, scarcity of human resources, limited skills, and their lack of experience, all of which were overshadowed by the resistance to change, previously discussed. The Curriculum Unit, which had evolved as a centre for philosophical visioning, was now officially closed, with all its associated energies and resources redirected solely to the development of the new religious studies curriculum, the Encounter Project.

Without doubt, the receipt of government funds by Adventist schools since the late 1960s had been a major cause of growth in physical facilities and student numbers. By 2010, in the case of some schools, 85 percent of students were not of SDA faith. The flow-on effect of such growth led to a severe shortage of teachers, particularly in secondary schools and in certain fields of study, making it necessary to employ non-Adventist teachers to fill the gap. Such action was seen by many experienced administrators as a potential threat to the system's capacity to remain authentic to AE's mission, and its expressed support of the mission of the Church as a corporate body. However, the perceived necessity to fill the available spaces in schools and justify the investment in the system prevailed. Growth was seen in a positive light, albeit in the naïve hope that strategic planning would avert or at least minimise the normative effect of a larger proportion of non-Adventist students. The recommendations made during Consultation 1 represented a strategic response to these elements.

Strategic Leadership and Management Plan 2011-2015

In March 2011, ASA released a report entitled *Strategic Leadership and Management Plan* tying these mechanisms together in a focused, coordinated approach towards improvement in SDA schools in Australia. The robust plan provided an overview that also considered the contextual constraints of the time in the form of public policy, expectations, and goals for education at the national level. In so doing, the plan described the Adventist school system as being a culture committed to continual organisational improvement. The report began with a clear restatement of mission and vision:

Mission:
To develop Seventh-day Adventist educational communities of faith that promote holistic student development expressed in academic excellence, Christ-centred worship, loving relationships, and practical concern for others.

Vision:
Authentic Adventist education through quality, sustainable schools supported by appropriate systemic governance structures. (Appendix H)

The broad framework for the leadership and management plan that followed identified strategic intent statements with key performance indicators (KPIs) spread across key areas, including:

- Adventist Special Character;
- the improvement of student learning and outcomes through the quality of teaching;
- organisational culture and capability;
- resources, finance, and facilities;
- information and communication technologies; and
- governance, strategic leadership, and management.

The strategic plan led to the development of a suite of innovations as described below. These initiatives were more than a mere collection of strategies. Rather, they represented an ecological model based on interrelated elements of the social environment.

The Encounter Project

The first of those innovations was the Encounter Project launched in 2008, focussing on an SDA worldview in an Australian SDA school context (Murdoch, 2020). The initiative was considered necessary due to the increasing population of non-Adventist and unchurched students. Furthermore, levels of biblical literacy in students from Adventist families were also perceived to be in decline, along with pluralistic and liberal trends among Adventist clientele, affecting beliefs and practice. The Encounter Project was considered the heart of the religious studies curriculum as a resource for sharing a more relational Christianity with students (Murdoch, 2020). The project was an expensive undertaking, both in terms of finance and time. Over the decade, this resulted in 98 primary and 34 secondary, fully resourced units. The programme also depended on a strict pedagogical approach requiring mandatory in-servicing as a condition for its use.

The Community of Faith and Learning Model

In 2012, the SDA Identity Working Party was appointed to design a *Community of Faith and Learning* model. The purpose of the model was to facilitate transformational personal growth in what was envisaged as "a Christ-centred, Bible-based, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed learning environment" (Murdoch, 2020, p. 100). A core graphic in the model bore the caption, "Belonging, Believing, Becoming" (p. 100).

The Quality Adventist Schools Framework

In 2012, ASA formed a working group and appointed a leader to head the development of a school improvement program. As a result, in 2013, the Quality Adventist Schools Framework (QASF) was introduced at the Educational Leaders Conference as a first step in aligning Adventist identity with a complex array of elements implicated in strategic school improvement. This was also intended to replace the existing accreditation framework.

The SDA Distinctives Program

This program was motivated by a concern for AE administrators regarding the employment of teachers who had not engaged in pre-service teacher education at Avondale or other Adventist institutions. To begin offsetting this perceived situation, ASA continued conducting one-day professional development seminars for the induction of new employees falling into this category. This provided an opportunity to familiarise these teachers with the Adventist worldview and its historical background, appropriate curriculum and pedagogy approaches, and the practicalities of teaching in an Adventist school setting. On reflection, this process was predominantly cognitive and based on a naïve assumption that the personal identity of the individuals concerned might adapt to the new sociocultural milieu in which they expected to interact in the space of one day.

Leadership Programs

With the turn of the century, a broadening of expectations of principals as caretakers and managers had emerged, as mentioned, with an increased emphasis on principals as both spiritual leaders and leaders of teaching and learning. This trend continued, with heightened awareness of the critical role played by school leaders as

spiritual leaders led to a series of strategic activities. These included such events as biennial Leaders' Conferences to promote leadership skills, alternating with the Aspiring Leaders Program that also provided an opportunity to gain academic credit for an Avondale Masters' degree.

The Impact of Incorporation

Chapter 8 described a growing tendency for local conference education companies to act independently of ASA. I personally experienced such resistance while serving at the SPD and later in ASA, mostly associated with curriculum development. In 2013, I was appointed to the Board of Directors of the North New South Wales Education Company (NNSW EC), thus providing an opportunity to experience and observe the organisational dynamics from a local conference vantage point. While each conference is unique in many respects, there are many sociocultural similarities among them. Traditionally, the mobility of personnel between conferences and different levels of the organisation over time has been common.

With the gradual adoption of the Incorporation Policy by the Australian SDA Church during the previous decade, conferences were expected to take direct responsibility for their management and governance. A few senior Adventist employees felt this was creating a silo mentality, thus widening the legendary union/conference divide. The traditional school board, made up of representatives from churches sponsoring the respective schools, was now superseded by a Board of Directors with members appointed based on special expertise rather than representation of churches feeding into a particular school. The new nomenclature associated with what was being openly acknowledged by church and education leaders as a business model was having a profound effect on the emerging organisational ethos of the respective companies.

With incorporation had come increased levels of responsibility, accountability, scrutiny, and compliance within each discrete company according to company law. This development created an unintended consequence for the ASA at the national level by reducing its direct influence on the schools. It was not uncommon for informal questions as to who administered the school system. The situation was exacerbated when, in New South Wales, the state Board of Studies advised that it

wished to communicate with a single representative from the NSW Adventist school system, rather than with three entities that, together, were smaller by comparison with state entities. Such action effectively bypassed ASA, thus diminishing its administrative scope and reach.

The full impact of that eventuality was yet to take effect. However, further tangible evidence indicative of a corporate turn was emerging. Traditional approaches to the management of finances were considered inadequate as more complex demands led to more sophisticated, contemporary practices. This trend required specialists able to facilitate the transition. Similarly, an increasing need for management of human resources was beginning to place a strain on administration. As a result, an Associate Director with the appropriate expertise was appointed in NNSW EC to care for such contingencies. On many occasions, advice was also sought from and given by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS). This practice was also repeated in school companies in other conference. It is noteworthy, first, that this trend caused education companies to go outside traditional sources of support and advice found within the corporate Church and, second, to focus their energies predominantly on governance and management with little time devoted to philosophical concerns.

Further unintended consequences occurred with respect to the management of the curriculum. Prior to Lloyd's review of the Curriculum Unit in 2006, the recontextualisation of state curricula for use in Adventist schools had been a service provided by the CU. However, with the exception of the new *Encounter Project*, oversight of the curriculum, particularly with regard to perceived conflicting ideologies, was delegated to the teachers. But in response, teachers responsible for organising the annual CAPE/CASE programmes sought outside support for managing curriculum planning by continuing to invite representatives from the Board of Studies or AIS, with little or no consideration given to the philosophical foundations of AE or their implications.

The increasing complexity of the administration of AE, particularly with respect to compliance and reporting to external bodies, forced the need for new, specialised roles. Incorporation brought a heightened awareness of responsibility and accountability; the evolving trend towards a dominant business paradigm and its perceived risks did not go unnoticed. Concern was expressed for the apparent

tendency for the corporate mindset to overwhelm the identity, integrity, and purpose of the system. The growing confusion over each party's roles, responsibilities, and right to act was a catalyst for taking responsive action at the conference company level.

Transforming a Local Conference Education Company

The NNSW EC Board acted in 2013 to review the organisational structure of the company to clarify and improve the situation. This resulted in the production of a comprehensive table titled *Identity and Purpose of Seventh-day Adventist Schools (North NSW) Limited*, specifying the following facets of governance and administration:

- Identity and purpose;
- Mission and vision;
- Finance activities;
- Employment; and
- Operations.

These were then mapped against the following roles:

- Board of Directors;
- Education Company Head Office;
- Principals;
- School Advisory Committees;
- Teachers and ancillary staff.

My personal experience through participation in the process was positive in terms of the perceived benefits both corporately and personally. This led to a complete review and rewrite of the governance manual for the company. It was notable that the development of the company along these lines was approved and encouraged by a succession of two Conference Presidents, each of whom continued to serve as chairman of the board. It was also significant that the experience of the NNSW EC attracted strong interest from other conference administrators.

Engagement of External Consultancy

While there had been significant progress in the renovation of the NNSW EC, the Board then took the step of commissioning an external consultant to engage directors in a critical review of the company's mission. The consultant was not of

Adventist faith but was an active Christian who had demonstrated sensitivity to the ethos of independent religious schooling. The consultant began by testing the Directors and their perceptions of the identity, purpose, and work of the board with a series of probing questions. However, the difficulties experienced in answering the questions justified the review. The unanimous resolution of the board members was that consideration of the missional focus represented in the Statement of Special Character and its explicit relationship with the mission of the Church was of vital importance. After much thought, the decision was made to appoint a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a position that was unprecedented in the Adventist organisation hierarchy given the scope of responsibilities and power to act. In this new role, the CEO would be accountable to the Conference Executive Committee via the Conference President. It should be noted, however, that this bold initiative was unique within the church structure and watched with interest by administrators in other conferences.

The action taken in this case served to bring greater clarity to the complexity of contributing factors and to offer a more balanced realignment of strategic elements, all held together by a robust rationale for AE's mission. In that environment, the business model approach appeared to provide an appropriate structure to achieve these aims while its members needed to remain alert to the risk of becoming obsessed with strategies.

It should also be noted that this pattern of activity took place in one local conference, albeit the largest. Nevertheless, the initiatives attracted the interest of personnel in another conference, especially in light of the prospect of being able to share specialist expertise in an increasingly complex domain of operation. Government affairs, financial management, infrastructure management, human resource management, and legal issues were all areas that could benefit from shared support. This was especially true of conferences with their sole Education Director who found it difficult to manage all contingencies adequately, both in terms of expertise and time.

Redistribution of Power to Local Conference

Regarding the organisational structure of the Church in the state of New South Wales, some level of amalgamation was necessary as the NSW Board of Studies

(BOS) was unwilling to deal with three discrete, relatively small entities when it could interact with AE in New South Wales through a single representative. Consequently, the three Conference Boards of Education concurred, and because of his proximity to NSW BOS, the Greater Sydney Director of Education was nominated to represent the three companies. This action posed no difficulty for them individually and was viewed as a sensible solution. Furthermore, the stated long-term goal of the Australian Union Conference was for all Conference Companies to eventually become a single entity. In the meantime, there had been effort to improve the lines of communication between AE and external regulatory bodies and government funding sources in the other states.

However, this was potentially divisive with regard to the working relationship between education companies at local conference level, and ASA at the union level. This tended to increase power and control at the local conference level. The relative closeness of conference administration to the practicalities of schooling compared to ASA, worked in favour of the conference, and weakened the grasp of ASA on the system. The ASA director expressed his frustration with the situation during an interview, saying, “Sometimes I think I’m more of a suggester than a director!” (Personal communication, October 10, 2022).

Changes in the Adventist Climate in 2016

By 2016, the term mission had become a cliche cemented in Adventist discourse and publications on an international scale. For example, GC Education Director, Lisa Beardsley-Hardy (2017, p. 24), advocated the need to *rediscover* the mission of Adventist education’, while in the title of a paper in *Journal of Adventist Education*, George Knight posed the question, *Education for What? Thoughts on the Purpose and Identity of Adventist Education* (2016a). Knight had earned a reputation as a philosopher, historian, and critic, and had received invitations from around the world to speak at major church and education events. His popularity grew in the 21st century as he tapped into historic issues fermenting in the Church in the second decade of the millennium. Knight's work not only exemplifies Adventism's restlessness at the time, but the dissemination of his ideas and his thorough, insightful, and frank critiques were widely read and influential in a substantial proportion of the church constituency worldwide. It was no surprise that his work

was seen by many church members as provocative, earning him a reputation as reflected in the title of a book written by church historians Valentine and Whidden, *Adventist Maverick: A Celebration of George R. Knight's Contribution to Adventist Thought* (2014, July 14).

While Knight was undoubtedly an influential figure in the recent discourse within Adventism, he was not a lone voice. The vast corpus of research by both Adventist and non-Adventist scholars has continued to grow. In the space available in this thesis, it is impossible to do sufficient justice to the situation. However, some appreciation of the scope of such scholarship may be gained from Patrick's (2010) encyclopaedic paper, *Contextualising Recent Tensions in Seventh-day Adventism*, which he graphically subtitled, *A Constant Process of Struggle and Rebirth?* At this time, official periodicals of the Church, such as *Adventist Review*, *Ministry*, and *Adventist News Network were* providing a running commentary on events and issues for the constituency of the church. Communication via the Internet and social media accelerated dissemination and debate. Journals like *Spectrum* continued to provide scholarly critique of issues as they arose, while the readership of *Adventist Today* has grown rapidly. Desmond Ford's death on March 11, 2016, brought back memories of Glacier View with its ramifications and after-effects, particularly for many relatively senior members of the Australian Church, and the seemingly unresolved issues that remained. These issues were compounded by what was interpreted as an increasingly secular trend in how the Church viewed contemporary social issues, for example, in relation to gender and sexuality.

Renewed Focus on Education by the General Conference

A declaration made at the first of a series of so-called Regional LEAD Summits on Adventist Education mounted by the General Conference in October 2016 in the United States was indicative of the climate in global Adventism affecting its education system. It was asserted that Adventist Education deserved to become Fundamental Belief No. 29 (ANN, 2016, October 6). In a pre-conference meeting, the General Vice President of the Adventist Church argued:

> We don't have a fundamental belief on education…It is central [to Adventist mission], but we don't have one. (ANN, 2016, October 6)

However, despite the interest generated and a report of the proposal published in Adventist News Network, the initiative did not come to fruition.

Despite affirmation by leaders of the Church, the status and legitimacy of AE were explicitly conditional on alignment with the Church's identity, mission, beliefs, and practices. This was made clear during the Business Session of the 2021 Annual Council of the General Conference on October 12, 2021 (The Adventist Church (2021, October 12). An article in the journal *Adventist Today* reported on the session (Adventist Today, 2021, October 13). The article reports one delegate as saying, "There is a tendency of schools [i.e., tertiary institutions] to drift apart from the church's moorings", particularly with respect to creation/evolution and gender issues. To reduce the risk of drift, it was proposed that the union president/board chair should "vet and handpick all board members". Ultimately, such comments and the proposed action raises the question as to whether they were motivated by a desire to enhance the quality and integrity of Adventist Education as a ministry of the church, or to ensure control over potential change.

Mission of the Church and Adventist Education in Australia

Church Structure Review

In 2017, a lack of growth in the Church in Australia was raising concern among church administrators. This concern motivated the AUC Executive Committee to appoint a Church Structure Review Team to the situation and make recommendations for restructuring for mission in the future. The team consisted of the AUC executive officers, all local conference presidents, and a number of lay members. In a summary report (Australian Union Conference, 2017, December), it was claimed that "some genuine questions have been asked by members and employees as to whether the current church structure and operation are applicable and/or efficient in the current changing world."

The process began by asking Australian stakeholders how they believed the Church could operate more effectively and efficiently. In the early stages of gathering data, comments and reactions were invited via social media which yielded more than 21,000 posts together with a succession of more than 70 workshops conducted by AUC officers around Australia. The findings of the survey and the AUC Executive Committee's responses were disseminated in the summary report

(AUC, 2017). In the 10-page summary of the review published in December 2017, the word mission appeared 34 times, either alone or linked with other entities or conditions such as mission of the Church, vision and mission, mission-critical, and mission excellence. The report concluded that mission must be the driver of decisions about church organisation. The techniques proposed included: the creation of accountability procedures throughout the system; the system-wide mentoring and coaching of leaders; the improvement of internal and external communication; the creation of a system of specialists as opposed to generalists; streamlining the procedures for strategy planning and implementation; and utilising technology for internal effectiveness and mission.

In fairness, the summary report should be read in its entirety. However, several issues stand out. The report assumed that its readers understood what mission meant in every instance where the term was used. However, such usage was clichéd and focused on strategies, efficiency, and KPIs. Mission was reified as an objective, fixed point, or a benchmark against which the organisation's actions could be measured. A significant concern about the report was the failure to recognise that only rational beings, not organisations, have a mission.

Perceptions of Mission in Australian Teachers Survey

During the same period, the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR)) at the GC commissioned Avondale University College to lead a research project to explore "the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions held by employees at the Adventist Church's many institutions worldwide" (Trim, 2020, p. 5). One of the research team members explained in the *Adventist Record*:

> The survey sought to find out what teachers believed should be the priorities of Adventist schools and asked them about their own spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible study, faith sharing and meditation. It also asked questions that would discover teachers' understanding of salvation, the Scriptures, last-day events and the creation story. It was also designed to discover teachers' relationship to each of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (Kilgour, 2021)

Findings of the research were published first under the title, *Perceptions of Mission Held by Teachers in Seventh-day Adventist Schools in Australia and the Solomon Islands* (McIver & Kilgour, 2017). A second edition of 568 pages following titled *Education as Preparation for Eternity* (McIver, Hattingh & Kilgour, 2020). Of the

teachers surveyed, 519 (approximately 70 percent) were from the Australian system. The survey instrument was detailed and extensive, including a substantial number of open-ended questions, the responses to which were most informative to this thesis. Based on the mass of data and the report offered, several conclusions may be drawn pertinent to the research question, and what mission appeared to mean for both the teachers surveyed, and the designers of the instrument in the first place. It was claimed that 90 percent of respondents expressed agreement and commitment to the mission of the Church as represented by the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, in particular: the Trinity, creation, the nature of man and state of the dead, the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the resurrection of Jesus, the experience of salvation, the gift of prophecy, the Sabbath as the seventh day, the second coming of Christ, the millennium, and the new earth. For the majority of the remaining Fundamental Beliefs, 80 percent expressed agreement. In addition, it was reported that in ranking a list of 15 suggested aims, the priorities were: "physical, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing of students; quality education; and an environment where students are more likely to accept Jesus" (Kilgour, 2021, December 17). Aims relative to AE as a corporate system competing for students in the Independent Schools sector and "making money to support activities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" were ranked lowest. Similarly, a different member of the research team commented in an interview that it was strongly apparent that teachers were not interested in institutional promotion and competition but instead were committed to creating a more personal and relational social environment conducive to deep nurturing and holistic flourishing.

The published interpretation of the data saw teachers' perceptions of mission as predominantly positive. However, a CR interpretation would regard this conclusion as being based mainly on empirical data and, as such, only a partial reflection of reality in this context. However, there are no compelling suggestions offered as to why some teachers in the sample responded negatively to some items or how they were distributed regionally. It is relevant to also inquire into the reasons behind their reluctance to be supportive of the Church as an organisation. Furthermore, the concept of mission and its relationship to the 28 Fundamental Beliefs as inferred by the survey instrument is contestable.

Addressing Implementation and Development

As part of the implementation and development of programs and initiatives introduced over the previous decade, ASA addressed several priorities that arose. The first of these responses focused on difficulties confronting the implementation and development of the Encounter Project. The second concern was the support and nurture of school and system leadership at every level in the form of a national conference.

Difficulties Confronting the Encounter Project

The Encounter Project had commenced in 2009 with high levels of confidence in the expectation that it would serve as the basis of the Religious Studies program in the future. Large sums of money and countless hours of human input had been invested in its production and implementation. It also caught the interest of educators in the North American Division of the Church, who ultimately purchased copies of the material and funded the secondment of two of the program's developers to introduce the program to American teachers and provide instruction as to how to use it. However, in Australia, the level of acceptance of the programme was varied. Ten years after its inception, some schools had begun implementing the Encounter Project and reported positive effects on the ethos of their schools. However, in other schools, it had not been fully accepted in both primary and secondary grades, and other unofficial material had been substituted. Efforts to cater for the needs of senior students in Years 11 and 12 in several of the larger schools in New South Wales also led to the adoption the state Religious Studies syllabus instead of the Encounter Project. In 2019, ASA commissioned a skilled and experienced four-person team from Avondale to evaluate the response nation-wide. The team's review was robust and thorough, and while affirming strengths, also highlighted several weaknesses hitherto unrecognised and requiring attention (Hill et al., 2020). But after some intense reaction and discussion, ASA acknowledged the validity of the report and committed to reviewing the Encounter Project in the 2020s.

The 2019 ASA Educational Leadership Conference

The ASA Educational Leadership Conference took place in Sydney on 19-21 May 2019, hosted by ASA. This major event drew 160 delegates from regional Australia representing educational leaders, administrators, chaplains, experts, and

academics with the purpose of setting the course for Adventist education over the following 10 years (Bridcutt, 2019, May 29). I also attended as a participant and researcher. Coincidentally, a concern was looming in the context of the federal government election in Australia at the time, and open attacks were being made by a senator against religious freedom of independent education agencies. This was seen as a serious threat to the mission of Adventist Education (Bridcutt, 2019). Attempts had been made to remove AE's freedom to employ teachers and staff who would be diligent in upholding the beliefs, values, and ethos of the SDA Church. It is also significant that several keynote speakers and informants from non-SDA organisations with similar interests and concerns were invited to assist in the program.

To set the context for the business of the conference, ASA published a document titled *Reviewing the Journey: 2009 to 2019*. (Appendix I) The report reiterated the broad categories that strategic action was based on and gave examples of how they had been implemented, such as: special character and its dimensions and mechanisms for nurturing and supporting it; teacher supply and induction; pastoral care and support for all participants and clients; financial management; and systemic governance. The dominant theme throughout the proceedings was an emphasis on special character, and it was clearly evident especially to senior educators attending the conference of new energy and sense of purpose and intention was being generated. This was not to be just another conference. This development appears to have been associated with several innovations with emergent potential, as follows.

From Special Character to Identity

By the time the Leadership Conference was convened, ASA administration believed the term special character had become a cliché and was losing significance. As a result, it was proposed that the term was replaced with the term identity in the hope of revitalising its conceptual potential (Informant F). To complement this action, an Identity Officer was also appointed for ASA to take responsibility for its development and application of the concept of identity. George Knight's assertion that an apocalyptic focus was necessary to justify AE's existence was beginning to catch attention, and his book, *Educating for Eternity*, was being promoted (2016b).

The ABIDE Spiritual Masterplan

The appointee to the new role of Identity Officer had recently returned from a short secondment to the Education Department of the North American Division of the Church assisting with the implementation of the Australian Encounter Bible program they had purchased for use in Adventist schools in the USA. While there, she had initiated a spiritual masterplan entitled ABIDE based on biblical, relational mission in the consciousness of the system's educators (Adventist Educators, 2020, December 3). In this context, emphasis was given to the concept of spirituality. One retired Education Administrator summed up its significance.

> Spirituality is vital. It represents a mindset and an attitude or disposition. It is part of a formation process. That's why we speak of "spiritual formation". But it is also rational. While it is associated with feeling, spirituality is not limited to feeling alone. It needs to be supported with a statement of what we believe to be true. (Informant M)

Revision of the Quality Adventist Schools Framework (QASF2)

The Quality Assurance revision was described as "a comprehensive school improvement tool to assist in meeting General Conference requirements in relation to fidelity to Adventist identity" (ASA, 2019, p. 7). The framework was designed to be the support framework for schools to use during the cyclic review process traditionally known as accreditation. QASF2 was also introduced at the Leadership Conference.

Conflicting Concepts of Mission

Entering the third decade of the 21st century, a conflict of paradigms was becoming increasingly evident, suggesting that mission is perceived differently by different social entities associated with the Australian AE network. Nuances of contrast are apparent between mission as perceived by the Church as an entity and mission in the eyes of the Australian school system. While it stands to reason that the discourse, conventions, and terminology typical of an ecclesiastical organisation and culture will be different from those of educational institutions, evidence points to a wide diversity in identity and sense of mission among contemporary Adventists, ranging from strong conservatism to creative transformation. At this time, a Last Day Theology movement with fundamentalist characteristics created tensions in the Church and became a polarising issue. As reiterated elsewhere, this is pertinent to

the thesis because of the repeated assurance by ASA leaders of the education system's support of the Church's mission.

Two events that epitomise this contrast transpired in 2022. The first example was the 61st General Conference Session of the SDA Church held in St. Louis, Missouri, from June 6-11, 2022, while the second was Consultation 2, an event convened on August 29-31 by Adventist Schools Australia in Melbourne, Victoria.

GC Session 2022 – Mission through the Eyes of the Church

Located at the top of the SDA Church's hierarchy, the General Conference's role includes maintaining order, stability, and resisting change in the Church by virtue of its presumed authority worldwide in terms of its beliefs, *mores,* structure, governance, and practice. Although AE in Australia is relatively remote from the GC structurally and actively, its leaders participate and are conversant with the discourse associated with the governance of the corporate church. Historically, at the quinquennial General Conference Sessions, reports are presented to delegates from around the world by the various ministries and departments of the Church, and issues affecting the conduct of the Church are discussed and debated towards their placement in policy. The associated business and interactions are a vivid representation of the current pulse of the Church.

Typically, the GC President's Sabbath sermon is regarded as a keynote event attracting close scrutiny and speculation. Accordingly, the sermon that was delivered by the President on the final day of the 61st Conference Session in Missouri proved to be a "state of the nation" type address. On this occasion, the size of its potential audience was exceptional, as the event was live streamed to a worldwide audience on social media (Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2022, May 11).

The title of the sermon, *Hold Fast What You Have*, was an unambiguous bid for conservatism and revival. This was understandable, given the instability and festering dissent following contentious episodes at the previous GC Session in 2016, when sessions regarding headship, ordination of women, gender sexuality, and other social issues caused inappropriate reactions. At that time, overt threats of sanctions against sub-entities of the Church for acting independently and disobeying edicts demanding compliance triggered protest and dissent. However, a notable feature of the discourse generated was the rapidity of its impact. In earlier years dissemination

of information relating to doctrinal and organisational issues was dependent on printed publications, audio cassette tapes, and personal presentations to interested groups. The coming of the Internet and social media enabled rapid and extensive comment to be made available to a vast audience, with significant impact on the church constituency. Lack of church growth and loss of membership, particularly among younger generations, added to the undercurrent of restlessness. In the face of such a climate, the GC President's exhortation in his sermon, in its content, style, imagery, and delivery, was a stark reminder of recurring fundamentalist episodes in the past (Campbell, 2022).

The first section of the sermon prepared the ground for what was to follow. The rhetoric then took on an authoritarian tone punctuated by citations from Ellen G. White and the Bible. He challenged the audience, "Don't let any person tell you otherwise…anyone who dares to stand up and question is a dissident" (Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2022, May 11). Then followed the repetition of each of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs in succession, with associated commentary. The recitation of each fundamental was followed by the refrain, "Hold fast what you have." Despite denial of charges of creedal orthodoxy in Adventism at the time of their introduction the emphatic highlighting each of the fundamentals was clearly an exercise in the management and control that obstructed personal reflexivity, and thus, was ultimately dehumanising. In its rhetoric, the presentation was typically sectarian as claimed by Bryan Wilson (1975).

Audience responses to the sermon were mixed. Judging from the livestream presentation, many delegates in the physical audience appeared to approve of the speaker's comments. This was also echoed in comments published in Adventist periodicals. For example, the AUC President commented in *Australian Record,* July 2, 2022:

> Being a Seventh-day Adventist is easy to quantify. Undeniably, it's our 28 fundamental doctrines and historical prophetic interpretation and understanding that unites us even though we may not practice our faith in the same manner from country to country or even church to church within the same conference. We are united by a proclamation of the 3 Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 and the Angel of Revelation 18 and the promise, by faith, of Jesus's soon return. (Johnston, 2022, July 2, p. 12)

However, the response was not one-sided. In contrast, a groundswell of concern was also evident in comments by members of the online audience. In a lead article in *Adventist Today (Online) (*November 17, 2022), an Adventist church member lamented:

> It seems to me that Adventists are turning back the clock and becoming sectarian again… Now the *movement* that became the Seventh-day Adventist Church has entered a phase in which nothing moves. Everything is hewn in stone. The persons at the top of the church administration, probably influenced and pressured by far-right groups that want to impose their interpretation of the Bible on others, are cementing in place an immovable church. (Emphasis in original)

Consultation 2 – Mission of Adventist Education in Australia

On August 29-31 in Australia, ASA hosted another major event labelled Consultation 2. A report of the event appeared in *Adventist Record* entitled, *Education leaders plan for the next 10 years* (McMurray, 2022, September 20). The aim of the event was to review progress in the Australian system since Consultation 1 in 2009, focusing on key questions relating to Adventist identity, purpose, vision, and systemic support. The questions asked were: where do we want Adventist Education to be by 2030; what is working and what is getting in the way; what are the options moving forward; and what are the next steps and agreed actions? The event represented focused, reflexive critique and strategic planning based on a developing rationale refined from previous efforts. Approximately one hundred representatives from the SPD, AUC, local conferences, and the school system participated in the three-day event. Attendees included presidents, general secretaries, financial officers, ministerial association secretaries, education directors, school principals, chaplains, school entities, and board directors. The program was based on a series of keynote presentations focusing on issues developing since Consultation 1, followed by breakout sessions responding to matters raised. By the end of the conference, seventeen recommendations had been made. (See Appendix J). A report of the event by McMurray (2022, September 20) in the *Australian Record*, cited the ASA Director, Murdoch, as stating:

> Consultation 2 affirms *the role of Adventist education as an integral ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. Further, we acknowledge that the focus of Adventist education must remain clearly set on Adventist identity, mission and

> quality student outcomes… We look forward to deepening the partnership between our churches and schools. (Emphasis mine)

From ASA's perspective, mission was outlined in the Consultation 2 support material under the heading, *Our Purpose: Adventist Schools Australia*. In the opening pages, under the subheading, *Our Reason*, the publication articulated facets of its mission that together summarised a coherent worldview and philosophy, as follows:

> Our Purpose: to reveal Jesus
>
> Our Vision: to be a thriving Christ-centred learning community
>
> Our Mission: to enable every student to flourish
>
> Our Identity: Christ-centred, Bible-based and underpinned by the fundamental beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

These elements are expanded in greater detail in Appendix K.

The Expansion of Chaplaincy

The endorsement of chaplaincy in Consultation 2 was also a significant acknowledgement of its perceived role and function. AE has always asserted that teaching is a ministry, an assertion duly endorsed by Summits 1 and 2 in the 1990s. However, chaplaincy had emerged as a vibrant agency within the AE system, deemed able to engage students at a different level from the teachers. Immediately following Consultation 2, a conference involving 100 school chaplains was conducted on the Gold Coast in Queensland to collaborate first and foremost in meeting the perceived needs of a dramatically diverse student constituency. The focus on personal development including unchurched students was indicative of a changing relational approach and the way success might be viewed. Furthermore, the status of chaplaincy as a distinct career role was enhanced. On the program for Consultation 2 chaplaincy was affirmed as

> ... a ministerial calling and providing chaplains with a clear pathway to ordination; the establishment of a national office which will oversee Adventist Education across Australia; a focus on teaching students skills that are transferrable; and creating a community where students, parents, teachers and leaders encapsulate the love of Jesus. (McMurray, 2020, September 20)

The perceived effectiveness of chaplaincy was most evident in the larger schools where the chaplain's responsibilities were clearly defined within the organisational structure of the school, with attention to procedures, management protocols and maintaining records. Teachers who traditionally filled the role of minister-teacher were now relieved of the responsibilities associated with the spiritual development aspect of their work, such as school worship programs and special events on top of their academic roles. However, unexpected consequences were inevitable although not surprising. Structural changes in the form of tighter role expectations were seen as erode the traditional teacher-minister role. It was feared that the spiritual nurture of students in larger schools would be left to chaplains. Furthermore, as chaplaincy became more formalised, the involvement of Presidents in convocations for chaplains was apparent.

Of significance at this point also was the interest building in what constituted success in the work of chaplaincy. Several voices among the chaplains have argued for a more appropriate way of gauging success than simply the total number of baptisms of students who have attended the optional Bible study groups conducted outside the regular classroom. At the close of the research (2022) a fresh perspective was being promoted by the Ministerial Secretary of the Australian Union Conference at the Chaplains' Summit following Consultation 2. This view was based on criteria that were considerate of spiritual growth of any student regardless of religious persuasion.

Staffing Challenges

One of the major challenges to the ongoing viability of AE and its mission is the supply of Adventist teachers. McIver (2022) suggests this challenge stems from success on two counts: in securing a sound financial base for the system assisted by government grants and funding; and in attracting a growing number of students. There appears to be no alternative to the adoption of a pragmatic response of employing non-Adventist teachers subject to some pre-requisites with respect to their identity and affiliation with another church agency.

The Dilemma of Freedom in Conference Education Companies

Mention has been made previously of innovations initiated by Conference Education Companies (ECs) and the inclination to plan and act independently of

ASA. The development of a New South Wales Adventist education entity incorporating three conference companies to represent the system as a single entity to government regulatory authorities effectively marginalises ASA from the interaction. In the case of the NNSW EC, as discussed earlier, there remains a reluctance to collaborate regularly with ASA. The company, with the approval of the conference executive, has developed its own logo and signage — the Bridge — as a brand. On reflection, this pattern may be viewed from two angles. On one hand, it indicates an attitude of independence, but on the other, while it serves the needs of the schools it represents, it does so at the expense of cohesive systemic development and support. The issue is where to draw the line between freedom and conforming to a legitimate organisational entity without stifling agency. The current relationship between ASA and the respective conference companies represents a long-standing, unresolved, organisational tension.

An example of how this tension played out concerns the application of principles articulated through due process at the level of ASA, and how such application informed the processes of curriculum, teaching and learning. Responsibility for this stage is clearly delegated to the ECs and their schools. As these processes tend to become more complex and regulated by external bodies, the demands on responsibility and expertise increase at the school level. To address that need, the larger ECs have appointed specialists, with a representative appointed to represent the sector to the state regulatory body. This function falls outside the direct jurisdiction of ASA at the union level and tends to marginalise the impact of ASA. Practically, this is designed to meet a need systemically and personally for teachers. Consequently, larger ECs since circa 2020 have appointed personnel with the necessary skills to lead out, first in contextualising the state curricula as appropriate, and second, in developing resources and professional support for teachers. In several ECs, innovations are the product of advanced higher education studies undertaken. In some instances, for example, South Queensland and Victorian ECs, such middle-management personnel have collaborated informally in evaluating their products. However, in feedback obtained from another large conference, the need was expressed for greater support for teachers in contextualising state curricula. As an unexpected consequence, it is ironic that such a service that was terminated in 2007 with the closure of the Curriculum Unit.

Analytical Reflections

Social Conditioning

From a morphogenetic perspective, the character of AE in Australia in 2010 represented the combined effect of structural and cultural emergent properties. In the first decade of its establishment under an ASA banner, the school system had matured into a durable network of material, normative, cultural, and relational structures with emergent potential. The transition in ASA directorship towards the end of the decade had proceeded smoothly, albeit with different personal leadership styles. Material resources had been utilised with respect to ASA's physical location, with communication systems enabling improved modes of coordination. ASA administrators also collaborated with commissioned working parties. Relationally, these conditions enabled a transforming dynamic in a more congenial social environment with freedom to operate under the auspices of the Australian Union. This network was complemented by newly constituted education boards on account of incorporation across the regions of the Australian Church.

Despite an emphasis on marketing during the first decade, by 2010, attention to perceived ideals of AE had been revived. Innovations such as the Encounter Project and the emerging chaplaincy program were expected to augment the potential of ASA's mission. This pattern of strategic intent as clearly defined by Consultation 1, exerted direct downward causative pressure on ASA's future operation.

Social Interaction

The *Strategic Leadership and Management Plan 2011-2015* was indicative of the continuing transformation motivated by Consultation 1. In its scope and detail, the plan presented a balanced view of ASA's role and mission. However, several factors added a challenge for ASA administrators: first, the wider input into the process it represented; second, the devolution of new organisational prerogatives to make strategic decisions further down the hierarchy; and third, the delegation of responsibility to local conference school companies and principals. In addition, resistance to the Encounter Project in some schools added to the tension between ASA and the companies. While structurally, ASA had legitimate authority by virtue of its location in the hierarchy, it only acted in an advisory capacity limited to the development and promotion of policies and initiatives, while the local conference

authorities took executive responsibility for implementation in schools. An added layer of difficulty for ASA was the formulation of policies to meet government requirements in all the Australian states while remaining sensitive to each state's unique conditions.

Toward the end of the period at General Conference level, the renewed emphasis on mission in Adventist education appeared to be politically motivated. An uneasy tension in some quarters was due to increasing conservatism in the Church reflected in fundamentalist discourse based on a traditional Adventist doctrinal perspective.

Elaboration

The examples of social interaction described above grew from structural and cultural conditions evident at the beginning of the cycle. Consultation 1 was a formal response to such concerns setting the course of ASA's vision and planning in its missional context. The relatively sophisticated strategic plans emerged because of agential collaboration at key conferences together with reports from appointed working groups. At the same time, however, similar development at local conference level under the auspices of their respective Education Boards appeared more attractive to principals and teachers due to their relative closeness and what was perceived to be practical in what had been offered by way of support. Similarly, resources provided by local state authorities were seen by the teachers as more relevant to student and parental expectations. In this way, loyalties were divided between ASA and state authority.

While the potential normative impact of the increasing proportion of non-Adventist students and teachers was not unexpected, pressure towards the end of the period was symptomatic of growing concerns among some Adventist parents in Australia about the authenticity of Adventist education's mission.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis aims to explain *how* the mission of Adventist education in Australia has changed between 1967 and 2022. In the research, mission was viewed at a basic level as a phenomenon, as representing AE's raison d'être. However, viewing mission subsequently from a CR perspective enabled it to be explained at a deeper level according to a "transformative model of social activity" (TMSA) conceived by Roy Bhaskar (1979). From that perspective, mission is seen as a complex, stratified social phenomenon consisting of social structures with material, relational, normative, and cultural properties that exert pressure directly or intertwined with others to emerge as new entities with further causative potential. In this context, change is a dynamic process conceptualised as a succession of morphogenic cycles in the tradition of Margaret Archer, with each cycle initiated by structural conditions that trigger responsive interaction between human agents, producing structural elaboration or reproduction. At one level, data represents concrete evidence located in the actual and empirical domains. However, by the application of analytic dualism and retroductive inference, potentially effective mechanisms and connections existing in the real domain can also be identified. In the thesis, those data have been organised in the form of analytic narrative, presented and explained in Chapters 5 to 9 of the thesis. Further analysis and explanation of the respective cycles has been based on the analytic model cited in Chapter 3, Figure 3.2.

Themes of Change

When the cycles representing the 55-year span are viewed collectively, several further nuances become apparent. Although many causal links have been identified between structural, agential, and cultural mechanisms relevant to each cycle in Chapters 5 to 9, the consequences of their interrelatedness over the complete span are clarified in the following summary of the themes associated with such change.

Structural Change

At the beginning of the period in 1967, administrative structures affecting Adventist education appeared to have been inherited, ad hoc, hegemonic, and explicitly intended to serve institutional interests. As such, roles lacked definition, affecting relationships between the various parties, while many individuals were pawns in the system. An unwitting catalyst for change came from an external

source—the Australian Federal Government. This led to a pragmatic decision by the church, despite opposition by some leaders, to accept the funding offered to help alleviate financial needs and the flow-on effect of falling student numbers. Undoubtedly, this was one of the most significant decisions affecting AE structurally and culturally in Australia over its entire history. Yet, without this external support, it is unlikely that Adventist schools would have survived. The subsequent appointment of an SPD Education Director to oversee the funding and represent the Church had a dual effect. The restructuring of the Church's education department produced more clearly defined roles and protocols that paved the way for future systemic development. In addition, the appointment of a Government Affairs Officer and the setting up of the Curriculum Unit enhanced the viability and quality of important facets of AE's function strategically and philosophically. The actions also established new patterns of fundamental human relations in the form of newly defined roles and purpose.

The Intellectual Turn

Intellectually, the changes representing this development followed in the form of a complex set of scholarly developments with compound effect. Essentially, the turn began at the GC Education level with several reflexively motivated leaders influenced by the emerging genre of literature at the time. This emerging literature focused on a philosophy of Christian education and resonated with the traditional Whitean educational paradigm. A visible product of this scholarship were the publications in in the form of books, journals, together with convocations and intensive seminars for teachers to incorporate the new concepts to their academic and administrative fields. Implementation followed in the form of curriculum development models initiated by the GC Education Department in which the SPD became a contributing participant.

These initiatives began the transformation of concepts inherited by Adventist education. In addition, new advanced academic study initiatives by the SPD for teachers and leaders had similar effect. The trend was also complemented by the upgraded tertiary programs for pre-service and post-graduate teachers and leaders. But while elements of this complex milieu had a profound influence on ways of viewing education and practice in Adventist schools and institutions. On another front, the impact of *Spectrum* was also indicative of a profound influence on

Adventism at large, represented by what was described as “a new class of intellectuals”. Together, these initiatives were substantial causes of change in which traditional sectarian boundaries were being eroded, highlighting a renewed phase of tension between fundamentalists and progressives. The dynamics demonstrated the potential power of ideas and their normative potential. Intense sanctioning measures by church authorities against agents such as Desmond Ford, who was expressing views considered to be deviant, were indicative of a recurring surfacing of a simmering tension in management and control of knowledge typical of Adventism’s history. However, consequences proved threatening and conducive to chronic tension affecting both the church administrators and their relationship with educators.

The Effect of Contentious Relationships

A significant contentious issue was the status of Adventist teachers compared with their ministerial counterparts. However, Summit 1 was a momentous milestone in officially confirming AE as a ministry of the Church, despite the opposition of some ministers. This, and the series of events and interaction at several levels approaching the new millennium, represented a complex combination of downward configurational and normative powers and potentials that impacted and reshaped traditional institutional structures, although with outcomes unanticipated by SPD administrators.

The Impact of the Relocation of AE in Australia

Australian Union Conference in Melbourne, Victoria, had a profound defining effect on structural patterns, human relationships, organisational culture, and strategic choices. Following a period of settling into a new location and a transformed entity to be known as Adventist Schools Australia, new patterns of strategic action emerged. This change explicitly emphasised special character in spite of reduced material and personal resources and occasional resistance. However, new information technology resources mobilised by the federal government for private school systems added new potential for communication. In addition, the move by the Australian church administration towards incorporation had a flow-on effect at the local conference level with new authority conferred on the respective Conference School Companies following incorporation. This action introduced new

institutional mechanisms of change that effectively decentralised authority, but in so doing, undermined the power of ASA.

Changing Leadership and Modes of Operation

New leadership in ASA approaching the end of the decade brought change in modes of administration and strategic planning based explicitly on the emerging paradigm representing special character. However, conceptual models developed to articulate the relevant theoretical foundations and transform them into practical resources were produced collaboratively by teams of teachers in lieu of material produced in the past by curriculum Unit. Thus, responsibility for compliance of teaching resources required by state authorities lay squarely with the schools, outside the jurisdiction of ASA, further weakening its status in relationship to the schools.

The Morphogenesis of AE's Purpose

As the thesis explains, structural reconfiguration and change had been initiated substantially in the 1970s and 80s under the influence of Clifford, steadily gaining traction through the efforts of a sequence of leaders to follow. By the second decade of the 21st century, mediated by supportive or repressive interaction, this development reached a new level of sophistication, bringing significant agents together to collaborate and generate strategic plans with an explicit focus on mission as they saw it. However, the influence of external causes should be acknowledged. Just as scholarship outside Adventism has motivated an intellectual turn, as previously discussed, the effect of seeking expertise not currently at hand within the organisation on its culture was potentially normative.

Nevertheless, progress has been appreciable, despite several dilemmas that have emerged, especially due to increasing proportions of non-Adventist students and teachers affecting relationships and affecting culture and norms. However, while these constitute a significant challenge to AE's strategic operation, it has forced greater focus on identity and intention on the part of the collective administration and leadership of the Adventist school system and how those understandings can be tailored to attract and communicate with families of prospective students. In the process, while the term mission is still part of common rhetoric in this environment, in recent proportional material, *Our Purpose* (Appendix J), the concept is transformed and expressed as purpose, vision, philosophy, and identity, as well as

mission. This represents a significant elaboration of the sense of mission traditionally held, and indicative of a transformed paradigm that resonates with a TMSA. However, this transformation appears to be more than a concept in theory alone, as indicated in the forging of new structures, roles and relationships that embody the new sense of mission.

Concluding Comments

In the 1960s, the sociocultural milieu of Adventism appears to have been relatively homogenous and more uniform than at present. However, by the final years of the period, the perceived raison d'être was considerably more complex and diverse in terms of the structural, agential, and cultural properties. The thesis has demonstrated the centrality and prominence of the notion of mission in the psyche and interaction of participants comprising the social milieu represented by Seventh-day Adventist Church and its agencies, in this case especially, the Adventist education system in Australia. Three things are immediately evident: first, the strength of the symbiotic relationship between the school system and the Church; second, a growing sensitivity and focus on mission in the discourse, promotion, and strategic planning associated with each organisational entity; and third, the persistence and resilience of something assumed to be mission. Typically, in Adventism, such mission has been cliched reified, and perceived as a monolithic phenomenon grounded and perpetuated in a sociocultural myth fortified with institutional mechanisms. However, while evidence shows increasing acknowledgement by church and education leaders of what they assume to be mission, its meaning remains ambiguous, making it difficult to comprehend apparent change or shift, and ultimately, how to proceed as a corporation. This is further compounded by the emergence of contrasted missional paradigms from different sectors, such as the view of mission promoted by the General Conference and the Australian Union on one hand, and Adventist Schools Australia on the other. Consequently, apparent conflict is obscured, conflated, or disregarded, thus requiring a suitable approach to penetrate the nexus to enlighten, identify, and address the apparent differences. However, by 2022, as a discrete entity of the Church, AE in Australia has demonstrated a capacity to transcend institutional impediments and to articulate a transformed raison d'être compared with its character 55 years hence.

Recommendations

Because of the ambiguity and conflated meanings of the term mission in Adventist discourse, it is recommended that serious systematic review be arranged to clarify and reconceptualise mission and its implications for each of the church agencies represented. Several conditions applicable to such a process are posited, as follows:

- Mission needs to be reconceptualised as a multifaceted social phenomenon that represents an entity's raison d'être. Rather than seeing mission as an objective goal, it is proposed that it be seen as emergent and dynamic. It is proposed that it is seen as embodied in the people who represent it, Also, the clientele who, through their personal and interactive perceptions and responses, have a capacity to reshape the original phenomenon. In the case of Adventism and its agencies the process could potentially shift focus from institutional interests to meeting human needs and holistic personhood.
- Such review needs to be open, unprejudiced, discerning, empathetic, respectful, and inclusive across the Adventist social spectrum. Conversation should take into consideration the historical commentary and critique coming from a spate of recent and current publications, especially with respect to the antecedents of Adventism, its belief system, and the formation of its institutional culture.
- At a church level, discussion might potentially demystify and clarify the meaning of mission across the Church and its agencies, having respect for their distinctive contributions. Of critical importance is acknowledgement of the essentially different, but complementary character, role and function of the school and the church.
- The inclination to utilise concentrated quantitative surveys based heavily on statistical data, needs to be broadened to include qualitative methodologies.

Considerations for Further Research

Based on this research, several proposals are offered with respect to the theoretical and methodological implications of a morphogenetic approach. While this thesis addresses the research question, several possibilities have emerged that could enhance the morphogenetic model's theoretical and practical potential for

application in other organisational contexts. These proposals are summarised as follows:

Integration of Aspects of Bourdieu's Theory into the Archer's Theory

Archer's critique of Bourdieu's habitus is well known and consistent with her morphogenetic model. However, while the contrast is clearly argued theoretically, I would argue that it may inadvertently conflate the complexity of the dynamic interaction affecting agency, and the impact of personal dispositions associated with habitus on the "inner conversation" of the participants. I contend that it is possible to integrate aspects of habitus to advantage while still maintaining the integrity of the morphogenetic model and enhancing the capacity to identify significant nuances associated with agency. This would contextualise reflexivity as a key aspect of human capacity, as individuals reflect on their habitus, a product of their historical and social context. Examining the interplay between habitus and inner conversation would enable a deeper, nuanced understanding of how individuals navigate and negotiate their agency within larger social structures, particularly organisations with religious affiliation, and the generation of associated ideologies and cultural myth. In similar vein, there is potential for further research to explore the significance of pretheoretically assumptions of participants and how individuals become implicated in the formations of perceived and shared reality relative to a transcendent layer.

The Transformation of Religious Organisations

Research and publications in the context of the SDA Church viewed as a religious organisation have tended to reference typologies constructed by Moberg and especially by Wilson. That work is highly informative to this research in view of the alleged trend from a sectarian to a more denominational form. While such analysis has relevance and value for research such as this, it has limitations, inasmuch as it merely offers a series of static snapshots that leaves the dynamics of causative and emergence to speculation. I posit a view that engagement of a morphogenetic approach has the potential to penetrate the conflated interaction and reveal the contributing mechanisms involved in a form that would enable a reasoned response.

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APPENDIX A

Extract from:

SUMMATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE IN THE AUSTRALASIAN DIVISION

(Circa 1967 – the commencement of the primary research period)
(Note: The Australasian Division was renamed South Pacific Division in 1985.)

PHILOSOPHY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that God, the Creator and Sustainer of the earth and the entire universe is the Source of knowledge and wisdom. In His image God created man perfect. Because of sin, man lost his original estate, and Christian education, by perfecting faith in Christ, helps to restore in man the image of his maker, nurtures intelligent dedication to the work of God on earth, and prepares him for conscientious service to his fellow men.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that a knowledge of God can never by derived by human reason alone, but that God has communicated His nature, purposes, and plans through divine revelation. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God and contain a revelation of His will to men, and as such constitute for the Church the only unerring rule of faith and practice. The Church also accepts the counsel given through special revelation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the writings and ministry of Ellen G. White. In this respect Seventh-day Adventists accept her writings as a guiding principle in their philosophy of education.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates a school system to ensure that its youth receive an education in harmony with the Church's Christian standards and ideals and at the same time incorporating an appropriate balance between the academic, social, vocational and spiritual needs of the individual. Seventh-day Adventists believe that there is peculiar to the church, a body of knowledge with its values, beliefs, attitudes and habits that must be transmitted to each succeeding generation in order that the church may continue to exist.

The educational programme of the Church gives primary emphasis to character building and to providing a spiritual foundation in the life of its children and youth. Moreover, it makes abundant provision for the acquisition and interpretation of that which is appropriate from the store of secular knowledge and skills. The Church recognises that governments maintain efficient and effective public school systems that are designed to produce good citizens and to promote the general well-being of the individual, therefore the Seventh-day Adventist Church generally follows the basic curriculum devised by secular authorities as us ed in public school systems. Courses of study prepare students for the various state public examinations while textbooks and other instructional materials are generally those recommended by state authorities. Time allocations to subjects

meet or exceed minimum state requirements. The Church further seeks to maintain in its schools a standard of excellence in the academic field through close liaison with local education authorities.

To fulfil the Church's concept of a balanced education a spiritual dimension permeates the secular educational programme in each school. Religious instruction is accorded the same time allocation in the curriculum as other major subjects. In addition, and as appropriate, the political, social, scientific and economic forces which shape contemporary life and culture are viewed from a scriptural standpoint. As with the secular subjects in the school programme, students are required to attend classes in religious instruction and are invited to participate in the various co-curricular religious activities of the school. No student, however, is required to subscribe to a particular point of view or belief as a condition of entry to continued attendance. The school system sponsored and operated under the aegis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is designed to enable the child to achieve optimal development in the areas touched by life here and now as well as in the life hereafter.

(Selected and adapted from Education Leaflet No. 47 Department of Education General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1952.)

APPENDIX B

Extract from:

THE RECENT SHIFT FROM GENERALISED TO SPECIALISED LEADERSHIP IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION AND THE ATTENDANT IMPLICATIONS

Director
Department of Education
South Pacific Division
April, 1992

OVERVIEW

Twenty years ago the SPD Director of Education, through the inspection process, directly supervised a small and loose collection of free standing schools. He had a total and all-encompassing spread of control. Over a decade, beginning in the mid-seventies, the schools of the Church were organised into a highly centralised system. During this time the number of schools, students and teachers employed essentially doubled. The growth of the school system created such an impossibly broad spread of control for the Division Director of Education that authority for the supervision of the primary schools in the system was delegated to the Union Conferences and from 1979 an Associate Director was appointed to the SPD Department of Education to assist with that task and also assume some of the supervisory workload for the education program in the Union Missions. This released the SPD Director of Education to address more of the needs of the tertiary program across the Division, especially involving himself with the establishment of Pacific Adventist College in Papua New Guinea. It should be noted these two Division men still had direct administrative control of all secondary education in the homeland, chairing the annual inspection visits of the high schools and they were directly and intimately involved with the detail of staffing the K-12 schools.

From the mid-eighties there was a deliberate and distinct shift, by the SPD Director of Education, to devolve the administration of the secondary program from the Division to the Union Conferences, a process essentially completed by the end of the decade. The Union Conference directors of education, as part of that process, came to function more as Associates of the SPD Department of Education, from their regional offices, than as workers at a subordinate level in the denominational structure. The Division Department of Education then began to re-direct its administrative energies from secondary to tertiary education following the establishment of the Tertiary Education Board. During this time the Inter-union Mission Board of Education was established to address concerns common to the three Union Missions. In addition, the SPD Department of Education established the Commission of Accreditation to give direction and supervision to that program in the primary and secondary schools in all five Unions of the Division. While the Central

Staffing process continued under the leadership of the Division Director of Education, the Union Conference directors in practice began to assume more of the responsibility for the staffing of their schools. The Division Director and his associate, while still co-ordinating the staffing process, in time, became directly involved in staffing specific Union and Local Conference positions only when there was a need to place an expatriate worker on permanent return, or arbitrate when the two Union Conferences wished to call the same teacher to their respective fields.

With the establishment in early 1988 of the Curriculum Unit and the full-time office of Government Education Affairs the transition of the SPD Department of Education from an administrative office, with an unlimited spread of control of the Director across the secondary and tertiary levels, to a resource unit with the spread of control to just the five Union directors and the tertiary principals was well under way. The final step in this process, with the Union Conferences, was the mandate of the Division administration in 1990 to down-size all Division committees and strengthen the role of the Union Conferences. To that end the SPD Board of Education K-12 was down-sized with the removal of all but two of the local conference education directors. This change of emphasis was intended to strengthen the Union Conference Boards of Education which previously tended to be by-passed with agenda items proceeding directly to the SPD Board of Education K-12. This devolvement of authority, to the other Unions, will be completed as and when the education directors in the Union Missions are able to assume the responsibilities already devolved to their homeland counterparts.

Whenever there is change there is also a certain degree of unease and certainly this has been the case in this instance. While accepting the principle of delegation of authority there has been unease among senior educators that responsibility may have been devolved as well. The local conference education directors enjoyed the fellowship of meeting with their Antipodean counterparts twice annually at the SPD Board of Education. The Educators Professional Workshop and adjacent Directors Council, while appreciated, still leave the local conference directors, in their view, disenfranchised from the level of the system where educational guidelines and policy are developed and recommended to the Division Executive Committee — the SPD Board of Education K-12. Then too, the Associates in the SPD Department of Education have consistently held the view this quinquennium that the re-organisation of the Department from an administrative body to largely a resource to the field has stripped them of much of their authority and position power. As a group they struggle with the notion that influence based on knowledge and quality supersedes position power in an effective modern organisation.

The present proposal of the Trans-Australian and Trans-Tasman Union Conferences, endorsed by the SPD Board of Education K-12, to combine their respective Boards of Education into a national Australian or Inter-union Board of Education has revived earlier concerns about the relative status of the Division and Union Boards of Education. Concerns have been expressed within the SPD Department of Education that the initiative for setting professional direction in the homeland is

shifting from the SPD to the Union Conferences. That the present SPD Director of Education does not agree with this assessment and sees, by contrast, an Australian or Inter-union Board of Education as parallel to the Inter-union Mission Board and considers such a readjustment as putting the homeland Union and local Conferences on a par with the local and Union Missions in their relationship to the SPD Board of Education K-12 adds to the level of concern.

Thus it is suggested the concerns expressed about the proposed Inter-union Conference Board of Education in reality are the immediate focus of a much larger issue — the appropriateness of the realignment of responsibilities as a consequence of the advanced training held by the current educational leadership at all levels, coupled with the adjustment of some in leadership from line to staff responsibilities as a consequence of that process.

This position paper has been written to address those concerns and attempts to give some focus to the issues under discussion.

APPENDIX C

Statement of Philosophy of Adventist Education

South Pacific Division

1997

Seventh-day Adventist education is based upon a world view derived from the Christian faith. This view begins with an eternal, loving and personal God who has always existed, is all-powerful and is the source of all life, truth, beauty and Christian values.

God, through Christ the Son, created this world as a part of His perfect universe. Furthermore, He sustains His creation by His power and through the natural laws He instituted. Although created perfect, this planet has been corrupted by sin, resulting in a world that is out of harmony with the rest of creation. However, God has instituted plans to restore this world to its original perfection.

Man was originally created in God's image: a unity of body mind and spirit; endowed with intellect, emotion, and the power of choice. Sin, however, has not only corrupted man's environment, but man himself. God's image has been marred, yet may be restored through a personal response to the initiative of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Man's meaning, therefore, is found not in himself but in his relationship to his Creator.

All truth finds its centre and unity in God. God communicates truth to man in a general way through the natural world and His providential acts and, more specifically, through Jesus Christ, and His inspired word. Man comprehends truth through observation and reason, but these avenues to understanding require faith and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Since all truth is God's truth there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. Rather, Christian faith pervades all of life and every activity has spiritual significance.

God, through His moral laws, has outlined standards of ethical behaviour based on His own character of love. When adopted by man these laws develop a commitment to selfless service and a personal and loving concern for all.
Man's appreciation of beauty and his innate creativity, although marred by sin, still reflect God's image. Without the direction of the Holy Spirit these capacities may be used for evil instead of good. Appreciation of beauty and creativity extend to all man's cultural activities and involve relationships with God, other people, and the natural world.

APPENDIX D

Extract from:

South Pacific Division Department of Education
TOWARDS 2000 STRATEGIC PLAN
EXTRACT

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Seventh-day Adventist education is based upon a world view derived from the Christian faith. This view begins with an eternal, loving and personal God who has always existed, is all powerful and is the source of all life, truth, beauty and Christian values.

While God, through Christ the Son, created a perfect universe, this planet, and man himself, has been corrupted by sin resulting in a world out of harmony with the rest of creation. However, our gracious Christ through His Life, death and resurrection will soon restore this world and its inhabitants to their original perfection.

God's image in man has been marred by sin yet may be restored through a personal response to Jesus Christ through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Man's meaning, therefore, is found not in himself but in his relationship to His Creator. As a consequence, the Christian looks about him and sees God at work in God's world. By contrast the humanist, who glorifies man and his achievements, looks about him and sees man at work in man's world. Seventh-day Adventist education is therefore unashamedly theistic in its world view.

MISSION STATEMENT

The fundamental mission of Seventh-day Adventist Education is to promote a redemptive relationship between each student and Jesus Christ and facilitate spiritual growth through provision of an environment in which Christian nurture may take place.

QUINQUENNIAL GOALS

During the quinquennial period the major goals which follow will provide the link between the preceding Mission and the specific outcomes which constitute the remainder of the document. Objectives and strategies in italic script originated with the SPD Strategic Planning Document.

The South Pacific Division Department of Education, with the active support of Union and local conference/mission Education Directors, will develop and implement strategies to renew the vision of Adventist education, highlight its distinctives, improve its overall quality and bring it closer to God's ideal setting for the children entrusted to its care through:--

1. Presenting students with a more attractive vision of what redemption is in practice in contrast to the immediacy of contemporary world views based on existential and self-operative principles.

2. Helping teachers improve relationships between themselves, their leadership and their students, thereby ensuring the learning environment is truly a saving place.

3. Inspiring principals to accept their role as agents of change thereby ensuring that the vision of Adventist education is effectively transmitted to the several publics which form the school community.

CONTENTS

This document sets goals and objectives for the Department of Education of the South Pacific Division to give focus to Union, Conference and Mission departments of education as they establish their own plans for the quinquennium.

A. Facing Educational Change in Australian SDA Schools

Rationale

Seventh-day Adventist schools in Australia have reached a plateau in enrolments. The churches and parents are struggling under the burden of fees and allocations to keep our schools open. While other Christian schools are thriving and expanding we are struggling to maintain a steady state enrolment.

There has not been a time in recent educational history in Australia when education has been subject to so much scrutiny and change as the present decade. The late 80's saw the Commonwealth government take over the restructuring of tertiary education and then set their sights on "vocational" education. The next stage is inevitably "school" education. Even though initial forays into school education by the Commonwealth have been strongly resisted by State governments who fear loss of control, there are unmistakable trends moving towards a greater degree of national conformity in school education.

With a Commonwealth government committed to its own agenda for school education and prepared to use its economic leverage to achieve its goals, what impact is that going to have on Seventh-day Adventist schools across the nation?

Where we have been

Australian SDA schools have been through a series of phases in development in the last fifty years. In the early post war years there was an initial period of slow growth due to limited funds. Schools that had been established in the thirties began to aspire to improved standards of output. More students were being encouraged to complete

secondary education and this demanded more qualified teachers. In the fifties Avondale College offered, for the first time, a degree course in secondary education by affiliation with Pacific Union College in California.

In the sixties the Commonwealth government began to offer direct financial assistance to secondary education in the form of science labs and libraries. SDA schools were eager to keep up with these developments and stay competitive and demanded that the Church permit acceptance of this help. The seventies saw the establishment of the Schools Commission with direct recurrent funding to schools from the Commonwealth. The Church was restrained from acceptance of this form of funding in view of its long-standing position of the "total separation of Church and State". However, it did agree to accept the funds if it was free to use them for building purposes.

In the early eighties the Church was faced with a dilemma. The Commonwealth funds had provided for rapid growth of school buildings and equipment, but we now faced heavy costs of operation and staffing. Pressure from Canberra under a new Labor government accented the problem. In 1983, a decision was taken to accept government recurrent grants for regular operating and the payment of teachers' wages. Fear of being swallowed up in the national scene and loss of identity promoted a number of initiatives by the Church:

> advanced study programs to SDA universities in USA for teachers,
> a curriculum development program,
> buffer funds to protect the schools in the event of having to refuse government funding,
> the retention of high fees and Church allocations,
> were all measures designed to maintain the integrity of the system.

Where we are at

The last decade of the twentieth century has brought with it economic instability, and a slowly increased dependency on government funding to sustain our education program. Financial pressures have caused the closure of a number of small country schools where the church could no longer carry the load. The "New Schools Policy" of the Commonwealth has virtually ruled out any new schools because of the minimum numbers required to get government funding.

The SDA Church has not grown in recent years and schools have adjusted their enrolment policies to accept a greater number of children from non-Adventist homes. The philosophy that prevailed in the sixties, that SDA schools were for SDA children as a "refuge from the influences of the world", has given way to more pragmatic practices of accepting any who wish to have our kind of education program. This change in direction and financial factors have alienated some elements of the Church membership, to the point where they have chosen to take their children to other "Christian schools" which charge lower fees. The perceived

distinctives that make Adventist education different have not been sufficient to deter these choices.
The socio-political developments in Australian society have encouraged retention of secondary students at school through to year 12. In the relatively small SDA secondary schools this has brought with it particular challenges. Attempts to provide a widely comprehensive choice of subjects to cater for the range of interests and abilities have added financial strains. Failure to offer a sufficiently wide curriculum discourages enrolments, but uneconomic class sizes jeopardise the viability of the school.

Government initiatives to introduce:

compulsory foreign language study,
vocational courses and the Australian Vocational Training Scheme,
key competency teaching,
national curriculum statements and profiles with outcomes-based assessment,
linkages with TAFE colleges in joint courses,
information technology innovations,
national equity programs,
national professional development programs,

have all challenged and harassed a struggling teacher force. We can take heart from the knowledge that all schools are struggling with the same challenges, but to have these added to the already heavy burden of survival in a more competitive education market is adding stress to stress. Access to professional development in some areas is restricted by programs being run over Friday night and Sabbath.

Where to from here?

The list of challenges seems unending for SDA schools in Australia, but they appear to be able to categorised in the following areas:

1.1 Identity

SDA schools must be able to project a distinctive image to our constituency focused on the imperatives of salvation as the core of all education programs and courses. Failure to clearly identify the difference of an Adventist education will only lead to further decline in support and enrolments. The Curriculum Development Unit has a vital role to play in this area, but it must be supported by all teachers, school boards and Church administration. Adventist education is not just secular education provided by Adventist teachers in a Christian environment. Every aspect from curriculum, teaching style to administration must be in harmony with the faith, belief, values and lifestyle that we recognise as distinctively Christian and Adventist. Without these distinctives we have no real reason to continue to exist as a system.

1.2 Finance

SDA schools are faced with the challenge of being disadvantaged in the competition for government funding due to the historical position of the Church and a fear of loss of control if we become too dependent on the government. We find ourselves in direct competition with other "Christian schools" in the market place with the disadvantage of a higher fees scale. Whereas, most of the other Christian schools have unashamedly sought to maximise their need to attract government funding, we have been at pains to protect our independence. Hence the government policies of funding according to need have worked against us.

It appears that we have two alternatives. One is to seek changes in policy by the government to allow us to qualify for a higher level of support from the government, the other is to change our internal financial policies to bring some relief to parents and Churches groaning under the load. The former seems just as easily achieved as the latter.

1.3 Organisation

Australian school education is still State orientated in spite of the level of Commonwealth intrusion. The Australian Constitution must be changed to transfer this responsibility to the Commonwealth; such change is not readily foreseeable. Therefore, it makes sense to acknowledge State boundaries in the organisation of Australian SDA schools. The only States where this is a problem are NSW and Qld. Some progress has been made in Qld with one Education Director serving both Conferences. In NSW all SDA schools in the State are registered in the one system. It seems organisationally appropriate for the three Conferences to establish one education administration to cover all NSW SDA schools in a Statewide coordination. Some Conference regional responsibility may continue but the whole State should be treated as a cohesive entity.

1.4. The ethos of Adventist education

It is necessary to enhance the collegiality of Adventist educators so that they do not feel that they are lone rangers working in solo in a community but have a strong fellowship of peers with whom they can find support and encouragement seems a great need. The CASE and CAPE programs have contributed strongly to this goal. Sadly, not all SDA teachers have access to the support of CASE and CAPE. It seems that renewed promotion of the original purposes of these structures could do much to build the ethos of SDA education in Australia.

The ethos of "ministry" needs to be enhanced. Teachers' self-image as "minister-teachers" must transcend the mere formality of a credential. It must be translated into a real sense of mission. It is only when all teachers in SDA schools assume this role will SDA schools achieve the purposes for which they have been established.

APPENDIX E

Extract from:

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

May 19, 2000 at 0830
148 Fox Valley Road Wahroonga NSW 2076

1.00 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION & RESOURCING

Following a review of the original brief of the Curriculum Development Unit and the 1997 Division Executive Committee (action 94.23) shifting Curriculum development from product to process, it was:

VOTED, to recommend that the Curriculum Development Unit, in addition to the traditional development role, also be responsible for the dissemination of the SDA curriculum and act as a resource for its implementation.

1.01. CURRICULUM MATERIALS REVIEW

Following a review of the materials produced to date, and noting the challenges encountered in their implementation, the Committee moved into break-out mode in order to enable each member to personally survey the range of materials developed thus far.

1.02 CURRICULUM UNIT FIELD SURVEY/QUESTIONNAIRE

VOTED, to receive both the teacher survey result summaries and the original documents/survey responses and to note the needs of the teachers for:

a) continued and additional resources

b) website access to resources

c) more frequent and longer school visits to facilitate curriculum implementation

d) published lists of unit objectives and appropriate resources

e) more in-servicing at the school/conference level

1.03 STRUCTURAL METHODOLOGY

VOTED, that a structural methodology, external to the Curriculum Unit, be developed by the SPD Education Department to ensure the implementation of SPD developed curriculum materials through:—

a) job descriptions which reflect the special character of Adventist education at all levels.

b) setting in place a more realistic process for the regular communication, reporting and evaluating the work of the Curriculum Unit noting that a website would contribute significantly to of those processes.

c) insisting that school level curriculum documents demonstrate, at re-accreditation, that the special character requirements of the proprietor Church are being met individually by teachers and corporately by the school — with such documentation and practice including regular use of denominationally prepared teaching resources.

d) the Accreditation Self-study documentation being surveyed, and if necessary revised by the SPD Education Department, to ensure that the distinctive Adventist curriculum of each school is firmly part of the heart and mind of each and every teacher.

e) implementation being formally recognised as a major responsibility of the local conference Education Director to coordinate and facilitate the curriculum development process in the schools and

FURTHER, that this aspect of the Education Director role be reviewed in the annual professional appraisal process.

1.04 FUTURE OF THE CURRICULUM UNIT

VOTED: to acknowledge the value of the Curriculum Unit and the need for its continued contribution to the education system.

1.05 APPRECIATION

VOTED: that this Review Committee acknowledge the commitment, professionalism and productivity of Associate Directors — Drs Hill and Rod

1.06 NOMENCLATURE

VOTED, to recommend that the Curriculum *Development* Unit be renamed the Curriculum Unit and in so doing recognise the de facto larger role of the Unit to include such activities such as implementation, in-service and facilitation.

APPENDIX F

Extract from:

CURRICULUM UNIT REVIEW REPORT —AUC/ASA-2006

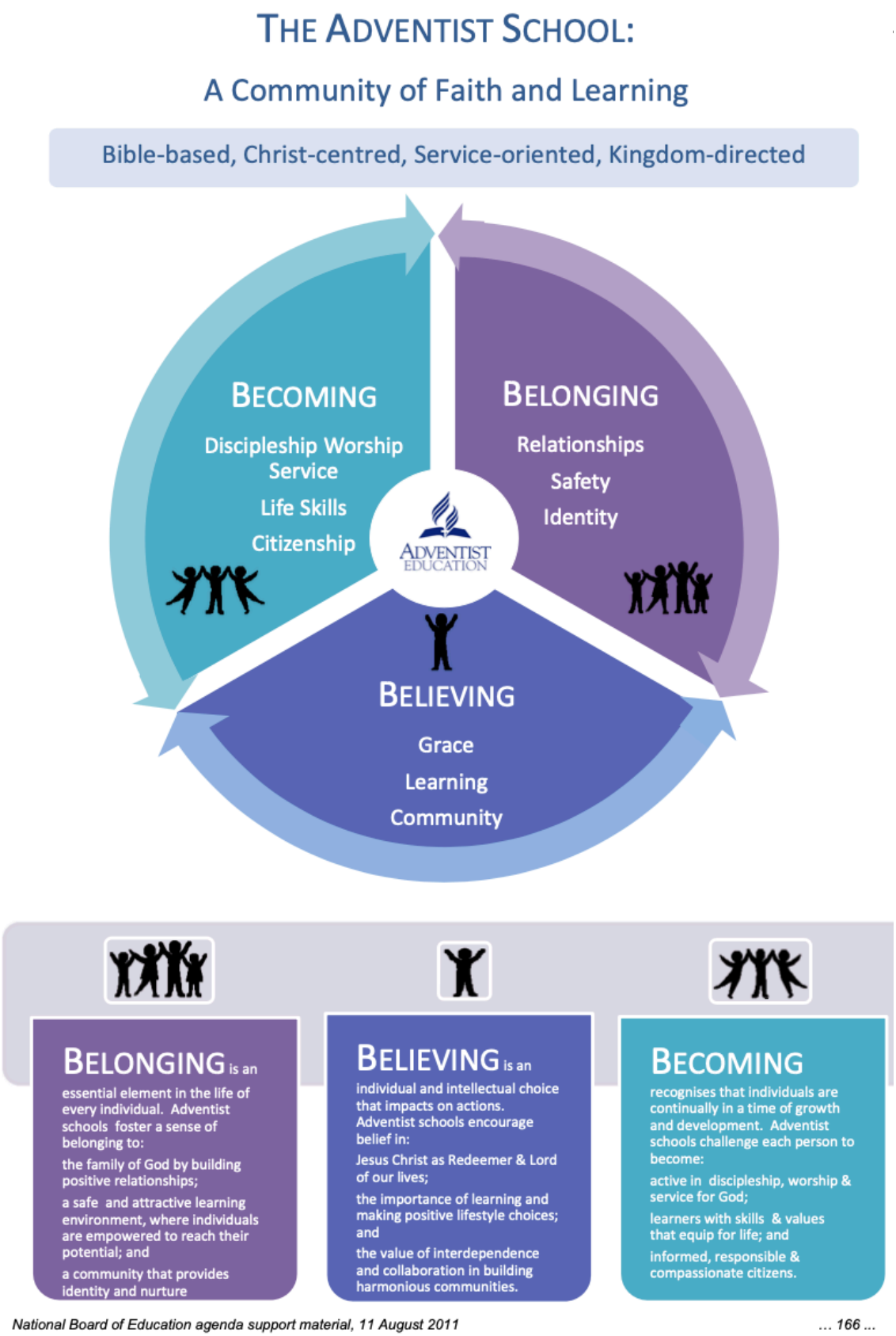
Terms of Reference

1. Evaluate documentation relating to previous curriculum reviews to determine:
   a) the effectiveness of these reviews, and;
   b) the extent to which the recommendations coming from these reviews have been put into practice.
2. Evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the AUC Curriculum Unit by:
   a) interviewing selected primary and secondary teachers to ascertain their evaluation of the curriculum material produced including perceived strengths and weaknesses;
   b) interviewing other interested stakeholders as deemed appropriate;
   c) interviewing selected principals to ascertain their evaluation of the curriculum material produced including perceived strengths and weaknesses and to determine reasons for any resistance to the use of such material;
   d) seeking an assessment from staff, principals and education directors of the value and relevance of the AUC Curriculum Unit;
   e) developing a standardised interview form to ensure a consistent approach in all schools.
4. Evaluate the performance and effectiveness of local conference education departments in the curriculum domain by:
   a) interviewing directors to ascertain their level of commitment to an Adventist curriculum;
   b) assessing the extent to which education directors take responsibility for the practice of Adventist curriculum within their schools;
   c) interviewing directors and school principals to review appropriate protocols for the personnel within the AUC Curriculum unit to work within schools;
   d) interviewing selected teachers and principals to identify the extent to which the work of the AUC Curriculum Unit is supported by the local conference education office;
   e) interviewing selected non-SDA teachers within our schools to ascertain their views on the Adventist approach to curriculum.
5. Selectively evaluate the performance and effectiveness of schools in the curriculum domain by:
   a) evaluating the extent to which curriculum planning within schools reflects current best practice;
   b) evaluating the extent to which teachers' programs accurately put into practice the special character of the Adventist curriculum.

6. Determine the extent to which the work of the AUC Curriculum unit should be divided between the production and implementation of curriculum material.
7. Interview union and division education directors and selected conference officers and school principals *where appropriate* to ascertain their perspectives on:
    a) the funding of the curriculum unit;
    b) the roles of education directors at all levels, in facilitating the practice of Adventist curriculum;
    c) appropriate protocols for personnel from the AUC Curriculum unit when working with the schools.
8. Interview AUC Curriculum personnel to ascertain their perspectives on:
    a) the level of support they receive at union and conference level;
    b) the level of accessibility they have to schools;
    c) the level of acceptance of Adventist curriculum within Adventist schools.
9. Interact with state government departments of school education to:
    a) confirm the relationship by law which Adventist schools have with those departments by comparison with the relationship to the various levels of Adventist church organisation;
    b) indicate the curriculum implications of those relationships; and, where possible,
    c) indicate the nature of best curriculum practice in the various state school systems.
10. Provide a written report for the SDA Church (AUC) Ltd containing:
    a) observations;
    b) findings and;
    c) recommendations.

APPENDIX G

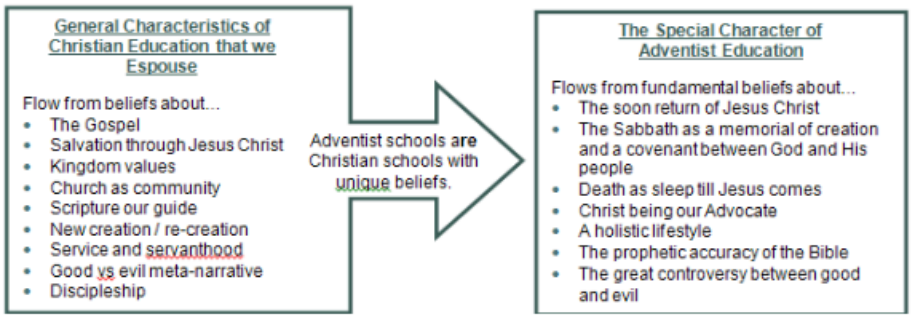
THE BELONGING, BELIEVING, BECOMING MODEL



National Board of Education agenda support material, 11 August 2011 ... 166 ...

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL

Adventist Education is a unique education system. Holistic in nature, it draws its special character from biblical beliefs.



As illustrated below,



ADVENTIST EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

Adventist education is Bible-based, Christ-centred, Service-oriented and Kingdom-directed. It aims for a balanced development in the lives of students, encouraging them to choose a personal relationship with Jesus, serving Him in this world until He comes again. These features, infused through the schools' policies, procedures and practices provide the Special Character of Adventist Education, based on the fundamental beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

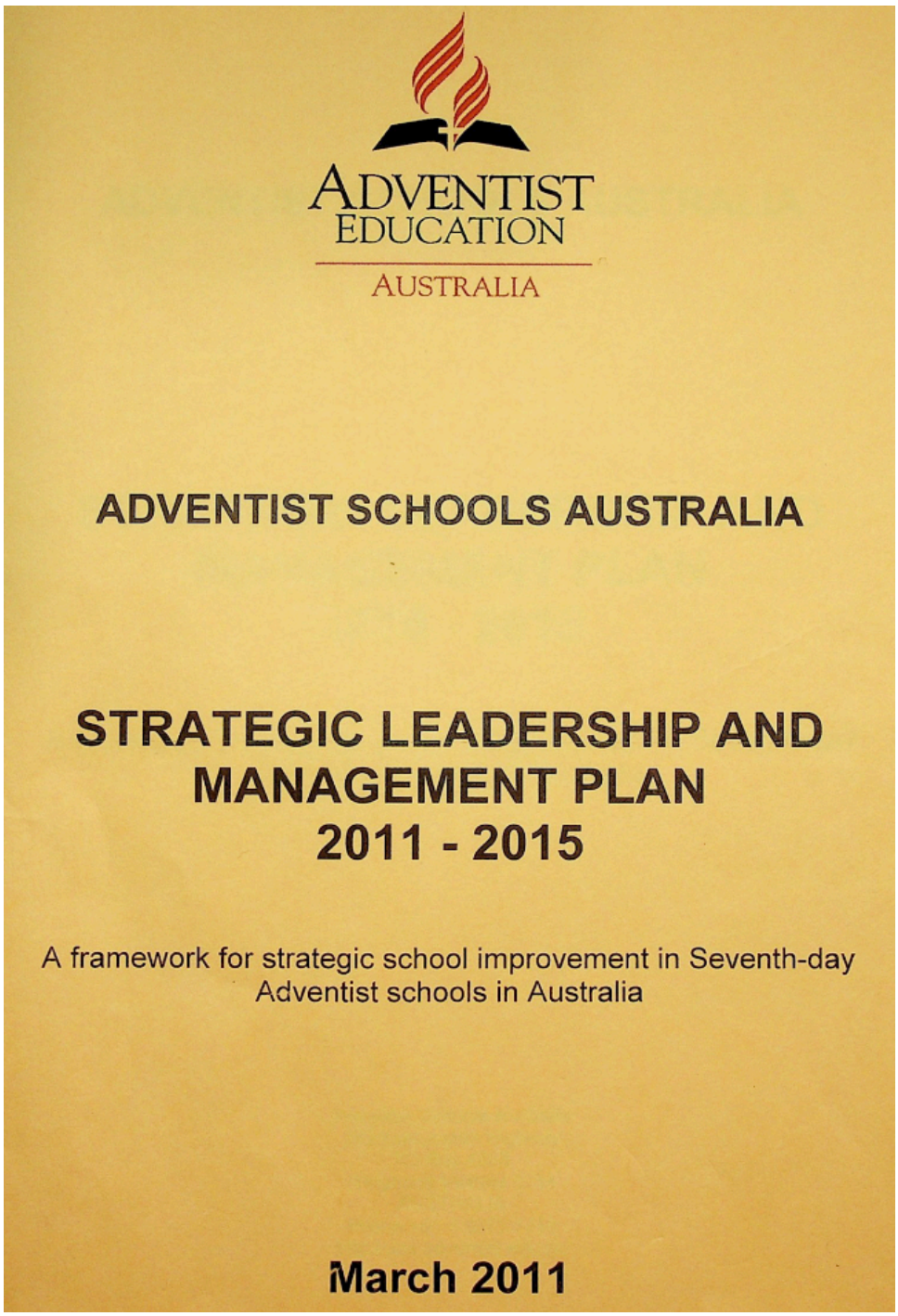
The Adventist Education logo is central to the model. Within the model, the circle contains three equal sectors indicating that no sector is more important than another. The arrows going in both directions indicate that there is no fixed order in which the various components occur, but that they are intertwined. In keeping with earlier models of the school as a community of faith and learning, the key words BELONGING, BELIEVING and BECOMING embrace the Social, Intellectual, Physical and Spiritual domains and reflect the concept of Head, Heart and Hands.

Under each of the three key words in each sector are three more words/groups of words. The top word/s links to the spiritual domain, the second word to the intellectual and physical domains and the third word to the social domain. Each of these words is expanded in the relevant section under the circle.

APPENDIX H

Extracts (pages 4-6) from:

ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
2011–2015



ADVENTIST STATEMENT OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

Adventist education is Bible-based, Christ-centred, service-oriented and Kingdom-directed. It aims for a balanced development in the lives of students, encouraging them to choose a personal relationship with Jesus, serving him in this world until he comes again. These features, infused through the school's policies, procedures and practices provide Special Character of Adventist education, based on the fundamental beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

MISSION STATEMENT

To develop Seventh-day Adventists educational communities of faith that promote holistic student development expressed in academic excellence, Christ centred worship, loving relationships and practical concern for others.

VISION STATEMENT

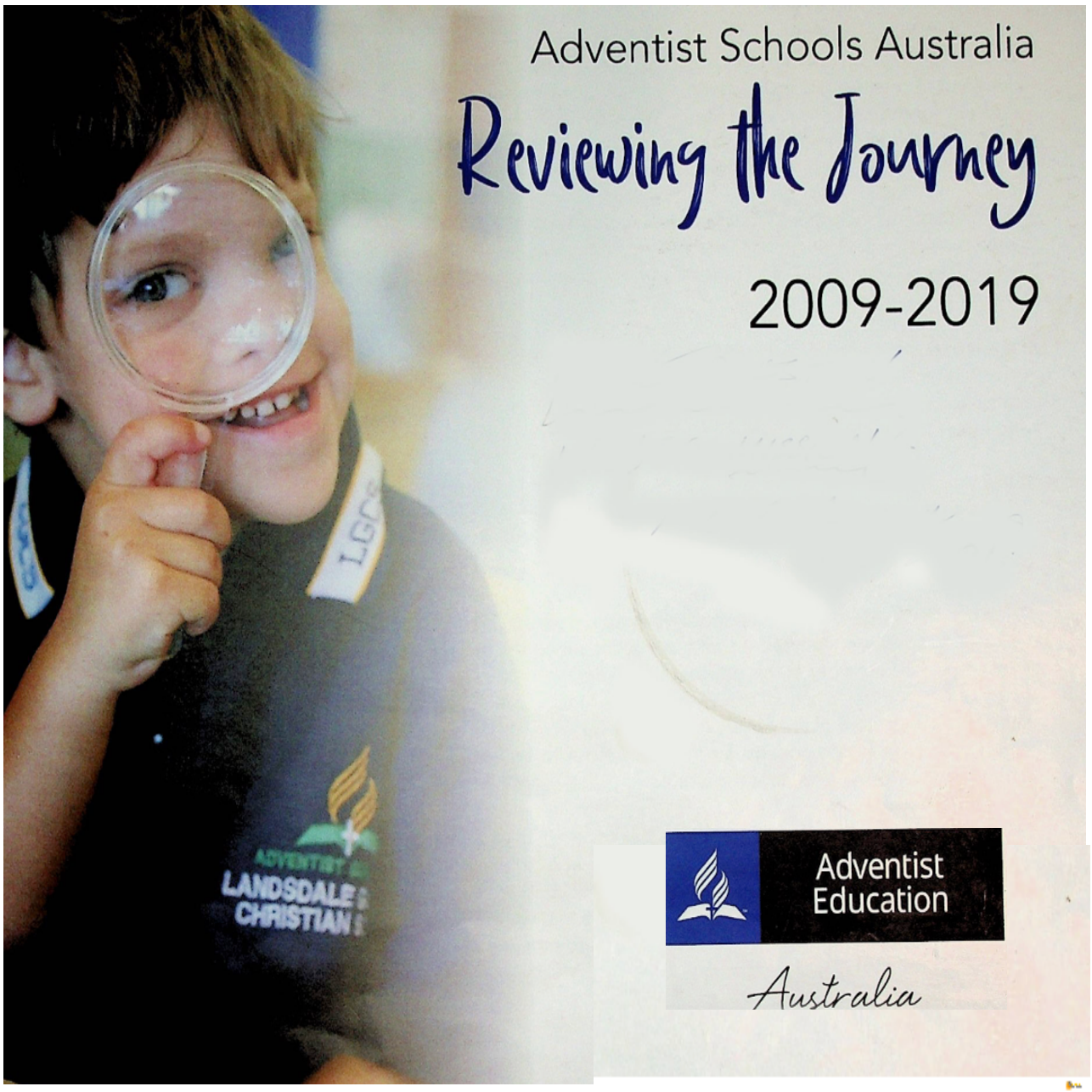
Authentic Adventist education through quality, sustainable schools supported by appropriate systemic governance structures.

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APPENDIX I

Extract from:

ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA
REVIEWING THE JOURNEY - 2009 TO 2019





Review of AUC Education Consultation Recommendations

Following are the recommendations carried at the AUC Education Consultation held at the
Australian Union Conference
18 and 19 March 2009

The actions have been categorised but are unchanged other than to effect minor editorial work to make a coherent document.

The recommendations were carried by the full delegation and were subsequently endorsed by the Australian Union Conference Executive Committee.

These recommendations have given focus to the work of Adventist Schools Australia over the past decade.



Special Character

The major focus of Adventist Schools Australia is to support school leaders and staff in relation to advancing the mission of the Church. This priority was reflected in the significant number of recommendations relating to special character. The term 'special character' had its genesis in New Zealand where our schools were called upon to demonstrate what was unique and special about their school and what it offered to the community. With the development of the Quality Adventist Schools Framework (QASF), the term special character was replaced with the term 'Adventist Identity'. Following is an overview of resources and programs developed to support school leaders and staff to enhance out Adventist Identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommended: To endorse the ASA Statement of Special Character and note that we welcome students of all backgrounds that are willing to support the school ethos; therefore, to protect the special character of our schools we recommend that:

   a. ASA policies be reviewed to strengthen the school's ability to implement special character;
   b. Each school develop a strategic plan with KPI's that incorporate special character and that structures be put into place to monitor progress; the process to encompass school councils, conference board of directors and the ASA audit process;
   c. A set of guidelines and practical suggestions be developed to help schools enhance their special character;
   d. School enrolment policies and procedures for both Adventist and non-Adventist families be reviewed to ensure that school ethos is understood and supported;
   e. Staffing policies and procedures be reviewed and refined to reflect our commitment to employing dedicated Adventist teachers;
   f. Administration identify and promote success stories to the clientele and wider church;
   g. A strong chaplaincy program be implemented in each school;
   h. All school functions support the beliefs and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church;
   i. A DVD providing effective information about SDA beliefs be available to schools for dissemination to applicants.

2. Recommended: To form a working party to monitor the maintenance of special character in Adventist schools.

   Further: That the working party consider a range of strategies to enhance the maintenance of the special character in Adventist schools.

   Further: To include individuals on the working party such as principals, chaplains and directors of education, who have the responsibility of maintaining special character in Adventist schools.

3. Recommended: To review teacher induction procedures to ensure that special character dimensions are identified and implemented.

4. Recommended: To develop and implement programs and strategies that will assist teachers' knowledge and understanding of their spiritual development and support for the mission of the church.

5. Recommended: To develop a set of guidelines and practical suggestions to enhance the Adventist special character in schools.

APPENDIX J

Adventist Education Australia

EDUCATION CONSULTATION 2
Report and Recommendations

29-31st August 2022

Preamble

Education Consultations have occurred at the South Pacific Division (1997) and Australian Union Conference (2009) levels approximately every decade. The intent of such consultations has been to ensure that the missional intent of Adventist education is being safeguarded and expanded.

At the SPD Education Summit in 1997 two key decisions were made. The first was to acknowledge that Adventist education was evangelistic, resulting in the lifting of the 15% cap on non-SDA students in our schools. The second was to fully embrace government funding. These decisions had a far-reaching impact on the shape of Adventist education in Australia.

In 2009 the AUC conducted Education Consultation 1. Some 28 recommendations were formulated with a major focus on: Adventist Identity; Bible curriculum; chaplaincy; structure review; government liaison and teacher supply. A document, *Reviewing the Journey,* highlighted the progress made in relation to the achievement of recommendations set in 2009.

In the interim, Adventist education has continued to expand both in terms of infrastructure and enrolments. Of note is the increasing proportion of non-SDA students and staff in our schools. These factors, along with a desire to maximise the outreach opportunities in Australian Adventist schools, set the scene for Education Consultation 2.

The follow declaration and recommendations arising from Education Consultation 2 provide a roadmap for deepening the partnership between churches and schools and maximising opportunities to *Reveal Jesus* to students and their families.

Declaration

Consultation 2 affirms the role of Adventist Education as an integral ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Further, we acknowledge that the focus of Adventist Education must remain clearly set on Adventist identity, mission and quality student outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Establish a new Chaplaincy Working Party, ensuring a wide range of invested people are represented, to progress ongoing issues such as ordination, role clarity, lines of accountability, chaplaincy training etc. and to develop a national Chaplaincy framework.
2. Request the ASA Well-being Reference group to review and adjust the ASA Well-being framework to address emerging complexities of interrelated services (chaplains, counsellors, wellbeing officers, outdoor educators etc.) and to determine the best way to care for the wellbeing of staff and students.

3. That strategic focus be given by the Church Limited Board and School Boards of Directors to create vibrant partnership between schools and their campus-based and/or local churches.
4. Due to the changing demographics of the schools, and the growing spiritual and well-being needs amongst students and staff, we recommend that an aspirational target chaplaincy ratio be set at a minimum of 1:200.
5. That ASA, in collaboration with each school entity develop an ongoing program of support for non-Adventist staff to be implemented after their initial on-boarding.
6. That the conference pastoral staffing committee be encouraged to work in close consultation with education leaders when school chaplains are being appointed or where schools are closely connected to a local church.
7. That each conference executive committee appoint an associate ministerial association secretary for school chaplaincy.
8. Encourage conference executive committees to develop strategies that ensure churches and schools work closely together to nourish the continuing faith journey of students and their families.
9. That the AUC give priority on the restructure of Adventist Education rather than trying to tackle church, school and aged care re-structures all at the same time.
10. That information from previous structure review reports be collated and distributed to conference executive committees and school boards of directors to ensure the purpose for the restructure has been identified and clearly articulated, and further, that if there are any ambiguities in the information, that further professional advice will be obtained.
11. Due to the fast-changing face of Education, it is recommended that an Education Consultation will occur every five years. Further, engage young teachers and students in the process, and other representatives of our church community.
12. That Adventist Schools Australia work with Avondale University to investigate and implement innovative and effective ways to promote teaching as a career to the students in Adventist schools and to church members and their families.
13. That a Government Liaison Officer be appointed for Adventist Schools Australia.
14. That Adventist Schools Australia work with the Australian Education entities to investigate a remote learning program for Adventist children who do not have access to Adventist education.
15. Recommend that FIN30.05 Section 5b be amended to remove specific reference to a tithe percentage for entities under the AUC to contribute to education, but rather to recognise the strategic importance of, and opportunities offered, by Adventist education. Further, that the conferences acknowledge the importance of these strategic opportunities and agree to fund such in a holistic manner.
16. That Adventist Schools Australia work with Avondale University to develop a Bachelor of Education/Master of Teaching program that incorporates an effective teacher apprenticeship model.
17. That Adventist Schools Australia work with Avondale University to investigate the feasibility of offering a specific Birth -5, Bachelor of Education course.

APPENDIX K

ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA
PHILOSOPHY, IDENTITY, VISION, AND PURPOSE
2022

Our PHILOSOPHY

The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is Christ-centred. We believe that Jesus is the ultimate example of "love in action" and He wants us to do likewise. As such, Adventist Education is a vital ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is committed to sharing God's life-transforming love.

We believe that Jesus relates to us on a personal level, presenting His character as the ultimate example. His love and grace are the foundation of our relationship with Him. Therefore, Adventist Education seeks to reveal Jesus and nurture all "… to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8 CSB). We are children of Christ and He says to us all, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." (John 15:4 ESV).

By daily abiding in Jesus, we can find purpose, hope, and joy, even during difficult times.

As such, Adventist Education strives to be transformative. It seeks to impart more than academic knowledge through the balanced development of the whole person: spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically. It seeks to develop a life of faith in God and a respect for the dignity of all people. It seeks to guide students "to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other people's thoughts" (White, E. Education, 1903). It promotes loving service rather than selfish ambition; and it embraces all that is true and good.

Our schools and early learning services seek to be thriving, nurturing, learning communities where Jesus is central, and where our students and young children may become all that God intends them to be.

Our PURPOSE: to reveal Jesus.

Adventist Education exists because we believe in the profound love of Jesus and the hope, peace and joy that comes from knowing Him, and living with Him and for Him. We want to share this good news in our early learning services and school communities. We are intentional in everything we do – from our attitudes, words, and actions to reflect Jesus to our students, young children, families, and wider community.

Our VISION: to be a thriving Christ-centred Learning Community.

Our desire is to build a dynamic, nurturing inclusive community so that each Adventist school and early learning service will be a lighthouse in their community – shining for Jesus, serving with care and excellence. Every level of our organisation is committed to working in harmony to build a vibrant culture of excellence.

Our MISSION: to enable every student to flourish.

Our belief is that students and young children will truly flourish when their spiritual, mental, physical, and social needs are met. We want to inspire and care holistically for each person –equipping them with the beliefs, values, and skills to live a life of purpose, hope, joy, and peace as a global citizen for Christ.

Our ADVENTIST IDENTITY

Every Adventist school and early learning service is unique by virtue of its location and circumstance, yet all share distinctive qualities. These qualities create an atmosphere and ethos which can be experienced and observed. “Adventist Identity” is used to describe these distinctive qualities.

Our identity is Christ-centred, Bible-based and underpinned by the fundamental beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.