

Avondale College

ResearchOnline@Avondale

Theses Bachelor Honours

Theses

10-2012

The Impact of Avondale College's Ethos, Mission and Values on Six Students not of the Seventh-Day Adventist Faith

Elize Sophia Celic

Avondale College, elize.celic@ccs.act.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: https://research.avondale.edu.au/theses_bachelor_honours



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Celic, E. S. (2012). *The impact of Avondale College's ethos, mission and values on six students not of the Seventh-Day Adventist faith* (Bachelor's thesis, Avondale College, Australia). Retrieved from https://research.avondale.edu.au/theses_bachelor_honours/9

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses at ResearchOnline@Avondale. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Bachelor Honours by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@Avondale. For more information, please contact alicia.starr@avondale.edu.au.

THE IMPACT OF AVONDALE COLLEGE'S
ETHOS, MISSION AND VALUES ON SIX
STUDENTS NOT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST FAITH.

Elize Sophia Celic

A thesis submitted

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree
Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) (Honours)

School of Education
Avondale College of Higher Education

October 2012

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

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

Signed _____

Date _____

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

I grant Avondale College the rights to archive and to make available my thesis in whole or in part for study purposes in the College Library, now and in the future. I retain the rights to use in future works all or part of this thesis.

Signed _____

Date _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to greatly express my thanks to my supervisors and mentors Beverly Christian and Dr. Andrew Matthes for their constant support, guidance, patience and wisdom that I received over the time of this study. I would not have been able to do it without them, and I am so grateful for the shared passion we have for our educational institutions and our Lord.

I also would like to thank Dr. Phil Fitzsimmons for his professional help and encouragement throughout this study.

I would also like to greatly express my thanks to the six participants that willingly gave their time and shared their personal experiences for this research.

Also, I would like to thank my family and friends, especially my parents Chris and Elbie, and my friends Robbie and Rebeka, who showed their support and provided encouraging and affirming words throughout the writing process of this study.

I also want to thank my husband Rajko who gave me so much support and encouragement through the whole process, especially when I became scarce towards the end of writing the thesis. Thank you for your belief in me, and the happiness you bring to my life.

Above all I want to give thanks to my God and Saviour, Jesus Christ who I believe guided me to the thesis topic, as well as giving me the ability to complete this thesis by His grace and strength. Without Him I would not have had the inspiration and motivation for this study, and my prayer is that this paper is useful in His work for furthering Christian education. *“For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me and guide me”* (Psalms 31:3, NKJV).

DEDICATION

To my parents and grandparents who instilled the love for God and His mission in me from a young age.

ABSTRACT

The Christian tertiary institutions' ethos, mission and values impacts on students not of the particular faith of the Christian educational institution. This study investigated six fourth year education students' experiences at Avondale College during their time of study. A review of the literature reveals a strong focus on the role of education in a Christian university, the ethos, mission and values that govern the university, as well as the faculty that maintain the Christian ethos of the university. The literature also highlights the danger of Christian universities and colleges moving progressively towards secularization, and suggests corrective measures to reacquaint with the founding vision and mission of the Christian university. The process of emergent design within the use of the case study as a research method was used to gather data through the use of face-to-face interviews. The data revealed that the students were impacted by Avondale College's ethos, mission and values during their time of study, especially through the authentic relationships formed with lecturers. Furthermore, the results indicated that the authentic relationships with lecturers impacted students beyond their academic achievements. It also impacted them in their social, professional, spiritual and intra-personal connections with Avondale College. The study concluded that the ethos, mission and values of a Christian institution are most likely to have an impact on students' lives through the authentic relationships they form with their lecturers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP	ii
STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
OVERVIEW	1
CONTEXT	1
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	2
RATIONALE	3
The Current Situation	3
METHODOLOGY	5
ASSUMPTIONS	5
DEFINITION OF TERMS	6
OVERVIEW OF THESIS	7
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
THE ROLE OF EDUCATION	8
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND FAITH-BASED EDUCATION	8
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: THE SOCIAL CLIMATE	11
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES AND SECULARIZATION	12
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATION	19
CONCLUSION	30
CHAPTER THREE	31
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	31
INTRODUCTION	31
THE CHOICE OF THE TOPIC AND INITIAL QUESTION	32
CHOICE OF PARADIGM	34
CHOICE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	34
CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN	35
CHOICE OF DATA COLLECTION	38
CHOICE OF DATA ANALYSIS	42
INTERPRETING DATA	47
CONCLUSION	51
CHAPTER FOUR	52
‘MY STORY’	52
HARRY WATSON	55
CHARLIE BROWN	65

JIMI HENDRIX	83
ISABELLA SWAN.....	98
JAMES SMITH.....	110
DR GREENTHUMB	121
SUMMARY	134
CHAPTER FIVE.....	135
DISCUSSION	135
INTRODUCTION	135
So what do they have in common?.....	137
So what do they really think?.....	143
Conclusion	148
CHAPTER SIX.....	149
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	149
INTRODUCTION	149
RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS	149
Recommendations	150
Suggestions for further research	151
Relevance	151
Final comments.....	152
REFERENCES	154
APPENDICES	159
Appendix 2. 1 – Avondale College Aerial Photographs.....	159
Appendix 2. 2 – List of Avondale College Presidents	163
Appendix 2. 3 – Full Version of Avondale College’s Ethos, Mission and Values..	165
Appendix 3. 1 – Ethics Approval.....	168
Appendix 3. 2 – Information Letter.....	169
Appendix 3. 3 – Volunteer Consent Form.....	170
Appendix 3. 4 – Interview of Participant	171

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2. 1 Synopsis of theories of cultural development/dis-integration within organisations.	13
Table 2. 2 Seventh-day Adventist Tertiary Education Institutions	20
Table 2. 3 Avondale College of Higher Education's enrollment history.....	22
Table 2. 4 Avondale and 1 st Generation characteristics	26
Table 3. 1 Makeup of six participants	39
Table 4. 1 Ten most used words between characters	133

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2. 1 The ‘line of decline’ – the rationalisation of Christian institutions	15
Figure 3. 1 Steps in this research investigation.....	32
Figure 3. 2 Goal of research.....	33
Figure 3. 3 ‘Bricolage’ of tools for this research project.....	36
Figure 3. 4 Participant’s response	42
Figure 3. 5 Data collection and coding process of the participant interviews	44
Figure 3. 6 Examples of participant word cloud member checking and analysis.....	46
Figure 3. 7 Samples of coding and memoing of transcripts.....	48
Figure 4. 1 Avondale Impact Model	53
Figure 4. 2 Organization of chapter	54
Figure 4. 3 Harry Watson.....	62
Figure 4. 4 Harry Watson.....	63
Figure 4. 5 Charlie Brown.....	79
Figure 4. 6 Charlie Brown.....	80
Figure 4. 7 Jimi Hendrix	94
Figure 4. 8 Jimi Hendrix	95
Figure 4. 9 Isabella Swan	107
Figure 4. 10 Isabella Swan	108
Figure 4. 11 James Smith.....	118
Figure 4. 12 James Smith.....	119
Figure 4. 13 Dr. Greenthumb	130
Figure 4. 14 Dr. Greenthumb	131
Figure 5. 1 Model of the themes revealed through the data collected	137
Figure 6. 1 Perceptions of Avondale word cloud.....	153

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 2. 1 – Avondale College Aerial Photographs.....	159
Appendix 2. 2 – List of Avondale College Presidents	163
Appendix 2. 3 – Full Version of Avondale College’s Ethos, Mission and Values.....	165
Appendix 3. 1 – Ethics Approval.....	168
Appendix 3. 2 – Information Letter.....	169
Appendix 3. 3 – Volunteer Consent Form.....	170
Appendix 3. 4 – Interview of Participant	171

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Universities are places of learning. This is where individuals go to receive the necessary training and preparation for life as a professional in a career of their choice. There are however perhaps more subtle influences and experiences to which a higher education degree may expose its students. They perhaps include attitudes, life skills, values, and in some cases belief systems which may have a lasting impact on students during their time at the institution as well as after graduation.

While most institutions may place an emphasis on transferring things such as values to their students, faith-based colleges and universities may be more explicit in teaching values, attitudes and beliefs that can govern the individual's life and profession.

This research examines one such college: Avondale College of Higher Education, which will be referred to throughout this thesis as Avondale College.

The purpose and aim of this qualitative study is to explore the impact of Avondale College's ethos, mission and values on students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

CONTEXT

The question might be asked why this study is of importance to the researcher. To understand the context of this study one must first understand my background. I grew up as a fifth generation Seventh-day Adventist. Most of my Sabbath [Saturday] afternoons were filled with listening to my grandfather and father discussing the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and Bible prophecies. I grew up with the sense of the

urgency of the time we are living in – the prophetic end time. I was sixteen years old when my parents decided to become English-teacher missionaries in the Republic of South Korea. Finding myself on the ‘front lines’ of missionary work, I became more focused on having a positive Seventh-day Adventist Christian influence on the people with whom I came in contact. At age twenty I met and married my husband while he was in the last stages of completing his Masters in Theology. This meant that I soon found myself as a Pastor’s wife and I became more engrossed in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church and its institutions. In time, my husband and I both embarked on a study program at Avondale College and it was here that my life experiences influenced me to consider the impact of Avondale College’s ethos, mission and values on its students, and more specifically the students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith who choose to study here.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of six final year Education students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith regarding the impact of the ethos, mission and values of a Seventh-day Adventist College of Higher Education (Avondale College) on their lives.

The following research question has been used to guide the collection of data for this study:

How have Avondale College’s ethos, mission and values impacted six students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith?

Research sub-questions that add further detail to this focus question are:

- What are six students’ perceptions of Avondale in relationship to its mission?
- To what extent have students not of the Adventist faith interacted with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle during their time at Avondale?
- How evident are Avondale’s values to six students not of the Adventist faith who there?

RATIONALE

The significance of this investigative study lies in the expectation that faith-based institutions of learning will have a particular ethos that is explicitly and implicitly evident in the documents and practice. With this in mind, there are five groups to whom this study may be relevant. These are:

Avondale College of Higher Education faculty and administrators who may gain relevant insight into the impact of its ethos, mission and values on the personal and professional experiences of six participants;

The Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership which is a key stakeholder in Avondale College;

Other faith-based institutions that face a similar situation to Avondale, of an increasing student population representative of other faith systems or no faith system at all;

Future students, especially those not of the Adventist faith who wish to know what the experience of like others has been;

The students who participated in this study and were given the opportunity to make their thinking visible by responding to the interview questions.

The Current Situation

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates 102 universities and colleges of higher education world-wide. Avondale College of Higher Education (Avondale College), situated in Australia, is one of these. Established in 1897 as a school to train Christian workers, Avondale College now offers a range of study options in several disciplines, range from undergraduate studies to Doctor of Philosophy. Despite the full accreditation of all of its courses, it has not attained university status in Australia. The quest to become a university is ongoing at the present time.

Avondale College has a close affiliation with the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is the training ground for Seventh-day Adventist theologians and ministers. In addition, it is the main source of teachers to staff the 48 Seventh-day Adventist operated schools in Australia. Graduate nurses co-train in Sydney Adventist Hospital. More recently, degrees in International Development have been offered and graduates from this course have supported the Adventist Development and Relief Agency with their skills. In addition to staffing Adventist institutions, many Avondale graduates find employment within other Christian institution, the private sector and government sectors.

The 21st century has seen a change in the demographics of Avondale College's student population. Throughout the 20th Century, the student population was largely Seventh-day Adventist. With the introduction of Higher Education Contribution Schemes, Avondale College became an affordable option for students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith who chose to study there for a number of reasons, including reputation, location and accessibility. The College has also embarked on a vigorous marketing campaign to capture a slice of the Christian sector market. The outcome of these events means that Avondale is attracting increasing numbers of students not of the Adventist faith. While some of these students are Christian, others have no belief system. This has the potential to impact on Avondale's ethos.

At present there are several spiritual and lifestyle characteristics that give Avondale its distinctly Adventist ethos. In regards to its spirituality, Avondale College offers a choice of campus churches for worship, evening devotional times, a Friday evening worship program and a 'Festival of Faith' twice a year. Weekly chapel style programs, called 'Forum' are run weekly. None of the programs listed above are compulsory. What is compulsory are the Christian Studies subjects that are built into the courses.

Regarding Adventist lifestyle, the Avondale College Campus is a tobacco, alcohol and drug-free zone. There is no bar on campus and a number of sporting facilities encourage regular exercise.

Both Buckingham (2010) and Iselin (2009) have written about institutions such as Avondale. Buckingham (2010) highlights the limited research into the impact of religious schools on their students, while Iselin (2009, p.16) states his concern about many Christian educational organizations that “do not remain distinctively Christian in vision, ethos or identity beyond the second and third generations” and attributes this to the organizations struggle to attain and maintain a market share. It is within this educational context that this research investigation was undertaken.

Importance to Christian Education

Eaton (2011, p.13-4) believes that it is the Christian university’s responsibility to think about how Christians can make the world a better place, by equipping the next generation with the necessary tools when engaging in our culture and the cultures of the world, as well as to teach and to model “how we embrace our Christian story, even while our culture calls into question” the Christian story. Calvert (2007, p.70) adds that Christian education is meant to provide “solid, intellectual and spiritual grounding in the wisdom of the ages rather than upon the narrow and limited thoughts of the individual.”

METHODOLOGY

This research study is qualitative in nature and uses a grounded theory approach. This design is an investigation that is found in the data rather than borrowed “off the shelf” or forced into categories Creswell (2012). It involves six case studies of Education students in the final year of their course. The data was collected using one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The audio recordings were then transcribed and coded to discover the emerging themes (Creswell, 2012). After each case study was separately analyzed the themes that emerged were returned to the participants for member checking and later compared to the other case studies. A full description of the research methods employed will be discussed at length in Chapter Three.

ASSUMPTIONS

Two interview assumptions were made in the course of this study:

1. The students interviewed would be comfortable sharing their opinions;
2. The students interviewed would be mature in their responses to the interview questions.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A number of terms, some specific to Seventh-day Adventism, and others relating to this study have been included to assist in understanding this research.

Terms specific to Seventh-day Adventism:

Sabbath is the seventh-day of the week observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening as a day of rest and worship as found in the Bible, and is primarily kept by Jews and some Christians, including Seventh-day Adventist.

End-time relates to the time just before the second coming of Jesus Christ. This time is determined by studying the signs given in the Bible, such as Matthew 24, 2 Timothy 3, James 5 and the prophecies as contained primarily in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Front-lines within a Christian context relates to the missionaries who have been sent out to foreign countries to share the gospel about Jesus Christ.

Terms relating to this study:

The term *ethos* relates to the environment or atmosphere (physical, spiritual and social), which is derived from the guiding beliefs of Avondale College as a Seventh-day Adventist Tertiary institution. The term *mission* relates to the mission statement of Avondale College and its broader statement of purpose. *Values* in this study relates to the values which are listed in the Avondale handbook as those the College espouses.

Two further related terms are essential to an understanding of this study. The first is *spirituality* which relates specifically to the sensitivity or attachment to religious

values. The second is *religious* which means manifesting faithful devotion to and acknowledging God, as well as the devotion to religious beliefs or observances that form part of someone's faith in God.

OVERVIEW OF THESIS

Chapter One introduces the context, purpose and objectives of the study, methodology, definition of key terms, relevance to the study within the current situation as well as the importance to Christian education, background, assumptions, and gives direction for the following chapters.

Chapter Two explores the broad spectrum of literature on the chosen research topic in the form of a literature review. The chapter provides a framework for the specific research questions this study investigates.

Chapter Three outlines the choice of methodology utilized in this research project. The rationale is provided for the use of emergent design in the case study of Avondale College. Details concerning the choice of topic and initial question, choice of paradigm, choice of research questions, choice of research design, choice of data collection, choice of data analysis and interpretation of data are outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Four provides the rich overview of the data collection through the use of narrative. The experiences of each of the participants are provided in a narrative form, followed by a summary of the participant's experience and comparisons to previous participants.

Chapter Five discusses and analyses the results of the data with reference to the research sub-questions, the themes, and within the context of the literature. The focus question is examined, followed by a summary of the key findings of the study.

Chapter Six presents a conclusion to the research, response to the research questions, the recommendations arising from the study, suggested further research, relevance, and final comments.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

Education plays a major role in the effective progression of our society and is a lifelong process that takes place in various circumstances and contexts (Knight, 2006). Students of all ages are impacted not only by cognitive development but social, physical and spiritual development as well (Berk, 2009). In this process students gain insights and understandings that position them to manoeuvre adequately through the challenges that lie ahead of them.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND FAITH-BASED EDUCATION

Public Education

Public education prides itself on being inclusive and unbiased. It deals with the cognitive, social and physical areas of a child's growth and development but has endeavoured to remain neutral when it comes to spirituality. However, it should be noted that increasingly, educators believe that all education has a spiritual dimension. Kessler (2000, p.x) sees this dimension as "the depth dimension of human experience; of students' longings for something more than an ordinary, material, fragmented existence." It should also be noted that several educators are reiterating the point that education is a moral enterprise (Totterdell, 2010; Bullough, 2011) and that teachers are moral guides (Carr, 2011). The increase in values education in the public sector supports the notion that all schools have a moral obligation to their students. Despite this trend, there is a fundamental difference between public and faith-based schools and this, according to Symes and Gulson (2005, p.22) is that mainstream schools provide a "child-centred education" in contrast to the Christian schools which provide a "Jesus-centred education".

Faith-Based Education

If the role of Christian education is to provide a learning environment with Jesus at the centre, then one would presume that Christian parents would form the majority of clients for these schools. An anomaly exists here for although religious affiliation has been on a decline within Australia parent surveys revealed that faith-based schools are growing in popularity. The surveys highlight that the primary reason for committing to the ethos and values of a Christian school is not because of the school's religious affiliation but for other factors such as "better discipline, better education, and better teachers" (Buckingham 2010, p.9). Consequently, there has been growth in the non-government education sector, including faith-based schools. (Buckingham, 2010; Symes & Gulson, 2005,). A significant proportion of this growth appears to be coming from students with no affiliation to the faith of the school they attend.

Unarguably one would say that Christian education should be distinctly different from other forms of education (Roy, 2008). Calvert (2007, p.70) mentions that Christian education was meant to provide "solid, intellectual and spiritual grounding in the wisdom of the ages rather than upon the narrow and limited thoughts of the individual." Roy (2008) highlights that although there are obviously many expressions of faith within the Christian school sector one can find assumed commonalities. One of the several commonalities that Roy (p.39-40) highlights is that of a Christian worldview, which should be explicitly biblical, the "reformation principle of *sola scriptura*" in both character and authority. This view is then supported by our way of thinking. Roy highlights this as "thinking Christianly" by practicing the "presence of God". Christian educational institutions should therefore represent a "spontaneous expression of an internalized Kingdom awareness." He further highlights the importance of "thinking holistically", "appreciating what it means to be human" and "recognizing humanity's predicament" and need of a Saviour. Lastly he argues that a strong sense of culture is needed as the "overarching organizer for a model of an authentic Christian school." To summarize all the points above would be to conclude that a Christian school should be described as a "faith-oriented learning community" (Roy, 2008, p.40).

Fernando (1996) states that it would be better for Christian educational institutions to produce graduates who are committed to serve God in all areas of life rather than to seek the success the world demands. Dickens (2006) highlights that many people view Christian educational institutions and churches as one and the same and do not see any differences between them. He argues that although there are many similarities there are also notable differences and that Christian educational institutions have their own purpose for being. According to Dickens (2006), the basic task for Christian institutions is to assist students to understand the world and to find their place in it. Roy (2008, p.41) suggest that the Christian schools should seek to “truly emulate the redemptive, restorative ministry of Jesus himself” and also to provide a learning environment that is “rich, meaningful, and spiritually and culturally sensitive.” Dickens (2006, p.116) suggests that all Christian schools should strive to be a “covenant community” wherein everyone is committed to God, to one another and to the community, that results in respect for each other and the community.

As previously noted, parents are choosing faith-based schools to provide for their children’s education, yet there is limited research which points to the impact that Christian-ethos schooling has on students who are not adherents to the faith-belief system of the school. One exception is a study by Pike (2011), who identified the importance of Christian values that are transparent and modeled. In a study of three schools he noted that the character, values and ethos of the schools were positively adhered to by staff, promoted actively and presented in more than intellectual terms, but as outcomes of a living Christian faith. Students attending these institutions were impacted positively by the schools they attended without necessarily embracing the belief system. Does the school then impact the faith of the student? Although People are fundamentally social creatures and are influenced by the surrounding environment in which they find themselves (Noller & Feeney, 2006; Schein, 2004; Miedema, 2009), Jeynes and Martinez (2007, p.20) suggest that the influence of religious schools “on student behavior and school outcomes is greater for less religious students than for religious ones”. The assumption for this result has been that religious students are already more grounded in their faith and would thus receive less added benefit than the students who are less religious.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: THE SOCIAL CLIMATE

Regardless of whether a school is faith-based or not, research points to the impact that relationships within the educational environment have on learning and personal well-being. Richardson & Fallona (2001) highlight that teacher-student relationships lie at the heart of education, especially when it is a positive and caring relationship. Care by teachers enhances the educational experience of students as well as increasing their pro-social behaviour (Davis, 2003). Zakrzewski (2010, p.23) highlights that when an educational institution's "culture and community is rooted in its relationships" it affects both teachers and students and their relationships with each other.

The most suitable lecturer-student relationship is when the student perceives that the lecturer has his or her best interest in mind, which results in the student experiencing a positive feeling towards the campus (Chepcheing, Mbugua, & Kariuki, 2006). Previous studies on college impact demonstrated that the students' interactions with peers and lecturers have the biggest impact on the student's change in values, attitude, beliefs, aspirations and actions (Whitt et al., 2001). White, one of the founders of Avondale College is quoted as saying, "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian" (1942, p.470).

Chepcheing, Mbugua, & Kariuki (2006) highlight that one of the main factors that hinders positive lecturer-student relationships within both public and private universities are class sizes. Smaller class sizes provide opportunity for better interaction with peers and lecturers and students experience less isolation. Earlier studies (Standford, 1964; Knox, Kolb & Lindsay, 1992) indicate that students within smaller higher educational institutions felt more satisfied with lecturer-student relationships and lectures, as they were more likely to have contact with the lecturer outside the classroom. Chepcheing, Mbugua, & Kariuki (2006) support this by highlighting that student-lecture relationships are positively affected by the availability of lecturers for consultation.

Hartwick (2007, p.133) adds another dimension to the discussion. He believes that lecturers would be more successful in their careers if they practiced "incorporating

not only mental and emotional sensibilities, but also spiritual and religious facets”. Hartwick further adds that when this is observed it becomes evident that the academic community appreciates the importance of spirituality in education. The life of the teacher will demonstrate educational success when personal prayer is offered about their public professional lives, because they will receive “divine assistance along with inspired human effort” (p.133, 148).

CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES AND SECULARIZATION

Christian universities have also attracted students from a variety of belief systems. But of even greater significance, they have undergone more subtle changes.

By the close of the twentieth century it was apparent that the vast majority of mainstream Protestant and Catholic colleges and universities that were originally founded and funded by a parent denomination or order were no longer controlled by the founding parent denomination or order (Benne, 2001). Benne further adds that one of the most alarming trends among mainstream Protestant and Catholic universities has been the decreasing role of chapel. Once weekly chapel and worship attendance was deemed essential but this has progressively faded. Ream and Glanzer (2007, p.9) adds to Benne’s statement by highlighting that eventually the universities “no longer mandate attendance at chapel, drop religious requirements for entrance, and no longer required theological and theology courses.”

Burtchaell (1998) states that since the early nineties several authors including George Marsden, Phillip Gleason, and Douglas Sloan have expressed their concern with regard to preserving faith-based education in tertiary and school settings. The role of religion in higher education; however, became an increasingly important subject of wider public debate soon after Burtchaell’s book, *The Dying of the Light* was published (Benne, 2001). Burtchaell’s book provides extensive documentation of the secularization of much of Christian higher education in the United States of America (Burtchaell, 1998). Burtchaell focused his research on institutions with historic bonds to the Congregationalist; the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Lutherans, the Catholics, and the Evangelicals as they have sponsored most of the

colleges and universities within North America, but felt that he had to leave the “more interesting stories” aside, including the story of the Seventh-Day Adventists (1998, p.x), whose educational journey is not as strongly documented as some denominations.

In an Australian context, Iselin has summarized the ideas of leading writers regarding “the preservation and perpetuation of core institutional vision, values, ethos and identity” in religious educational institutions (2009, p.16). Iselin’s synthesis can be seen in Table 2.1. Iselin (2009, p.16, 17) highlights his concern that many Christian institutions of education do not remain “distinctively Christian in vision, ethos or identity beyond the second and third generations” due to the processes of “rationalisation and secularisation”. This has especially been evident with Christian universities and colleges in America such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia that began as Christian tertiary institutions, each affiliated with a denomination but over a period of time lost their Christian distinctiveness. As Holmes (1987, p.9) adds that they have changed from universities and became “multiversities, institutions without a unifying worldview and so without unifying educational goals”.

Table 2. 1 Synopsis of theories of cultural development/dis-integration within organisations.

Synopsis of theories of cultural development/dis-integration within organisations.				
Generation	Weber/Berger (1976)	Schein (2004)	Limerick et al. (2002)	Hirsch (2007)
1st generation Pioneer generation	Charisma	Founding/early growth	Founding phase	Movement ethos
2nd generation Prosperity generation	Routinisation	Mid life	Consolidation and continuity	Settling movement ethos
3rd generation Perishable generation	Rationalisation	Maturity and decline	Renewal phase: discontinuity and reconfiguration	Institutional ethos

As can be seen in Table 2.1, the first generation or stage identified by Iselin is what he calls the “pioneer generation” (Iselin, 2009, p.16). Schein (2004, p.15, 245)

identifies this “founding or pioneer phase” as the period which occurs with the vision of the founders and the distinctive culture they wish to embody in the institute of education. This is the time where the leader of the institution “embodies the vision” ensuring that “every point within the organization, the core ideology, values, vision, mission and purpose are seamlessly aligned with systems of action and organizational structures” (Collins & Porras, 1995, as cited in Iselin, p.16). Hirsch (2007, p.186-187) mentions that Christian institutions of education usually expand rapidly during the founding phase but then as institutionalism sets in, the focus shifts to “organizational and institutional survival” rather than extending and reigniting the founding vision and purpose.

Iselin’s (2009, p.17) second generation or “prosperity generation” (See Table 2.1) is characterized by a process of institutionalizing the founding vision and establishing policies and procedures to support that vision. Schein (2004, p.299) terms the second phase as the “midlife phase” of an organisation. Often this phase is marked by “leadership succession, a re-defining, and perhaps formal articulation of the core cultural elements that were taken for granted and assumed within the founding phase” (Iselin, 2009, p.17). Collins and Porras (1995, p.86, as cited by Iselin, 2009, p.17) mention that usually effective “tangible mechanisms” within the structure will be developed to ensure that the “core cultural values, vision and identity are not lost”. Iselin (2009, p.17) mentions that during this period the institution begins to use meaningful signs, artifacts, symbols and documentation that represents the “essence, identity or organizational self-concept” of the institution. Limerick, Cunningham and Crowther (2002, p.175) term this the “consolidation phase” where the “vital founding vision is forgotten and its configuration counterpart takes its place”. Willard’s (2003, p.1, 3) concern is that sometimes the mid-life leaders “do not carry the ‘fire’” that the founders had, and that soon the institute attracts many “who do not even want the fire of the founder” because they do not really understand it. Burtchaell (1998, p.828-9) came to the conclusion that often the decline of the distinctive Christian character of an institution is because the faculty lost interest in their college’s denominational heritage and became more focused on their own academic disciplines.

The third phase or generation highlighted by Iselin (2009, p.18) is the “perishable generation” (See Table 2.1). Limerick et al. (2002, p.175) propose that during this

phase organisations can become “locked into structured and deeply ingrained systems of action that make organisations ‘prisoners of the social system’”. Iselin (2009, p.19) depicts the flow within Christian institutions “from vision to rationalisation unless there is an intentional recasting and re-alignment to the core values and core ideology of the founding vision” as seen in Figure 2.1.

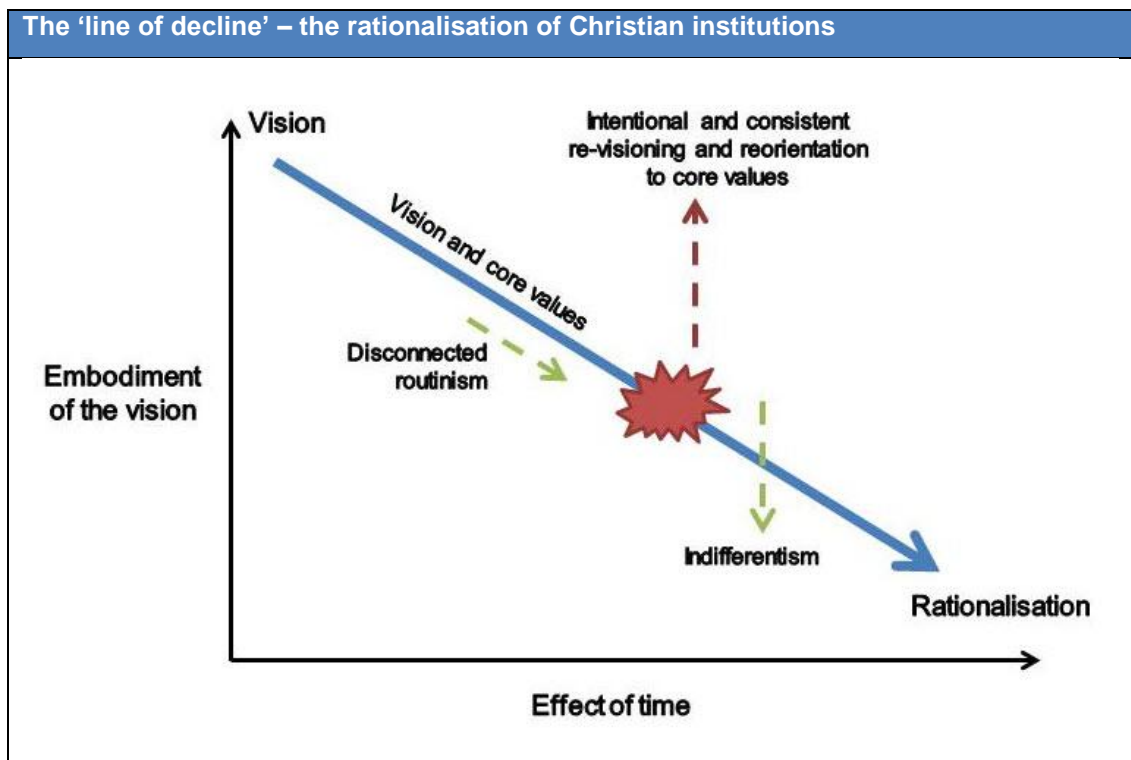


Figure 2. 1 The ‘line of decline’ – the rationalisation of Christian institutions

Marsden (1994) traces in his book how private and public colleges and universities were secularized within the United States of America. Benne (2001, p.4) summarizes the several phases that Marsden pointed out throughout his book, and Iselin (2009, p.20) created the Marsden’s three phases of secularisation model as seen in Figure 2.2.

Marsden's three phases of secularization within Christian educational institutions (Iselin, 2009, p.20)

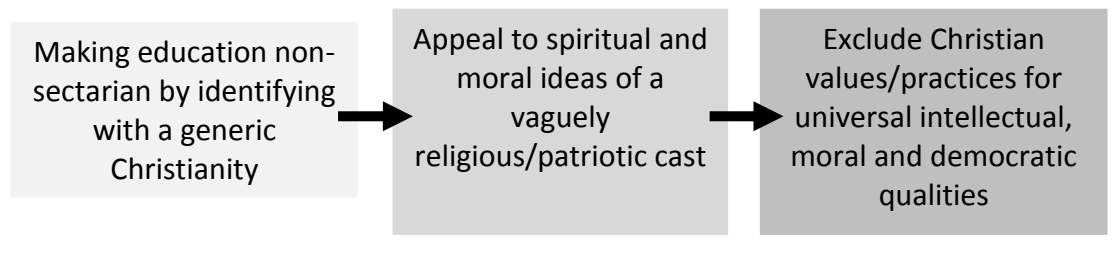


Figure 2.2: Marsden's three phases of secularization within Christian educational institutions

Both Burtchaell (1998) and Marsden (1994) have researched extensively the secularisation that occurs during the mid-life phase of Christian institutions of education and warn about how subtly secularisation can infiltrate an institution. Benne (2001) highlights the difference he has observed between the partially secularized and radically secularized institutions. Benne (2001) states that the partially secularized still maintain a president from the sponsoring or founding denomination, while the more radically secularized no longer even hold that requirement, with even more disturbing trends in the lower ranks.

Ringenberg (1984, p.122) identified many years ago trademarks of colleges caught in the transition to secularisation. Ringenberg noted that (1984, p.122):

1. The public statements about the Christian nature of the institution begin to include equivocal rather than explicit phrases; these statements often describe Christian goals in sociological but not theological terms.
2. The faculty hiring policy begins to place a reduced emphasis upon the importance of the scholar being a committed Christian, and subsequently fewer professors seek to relate their academic disciplines to the Christian faith.
3. The importance of the Bible and the Christian religion in the general education curriculum declines.

4. The previously strong official institutional support given to religious activities in general and the chapel service in particular declines.
5. The institution begins to reduce and then perhaps drop its church affiliation or, if it be an independent institution, it tends to reduce its interest in identifying with interdenominational and parachurch organizations.
6. Budget decisions begin to reflect a reduced emphasis on the essential nature of Christian programs.
7. An increasing number of students and faculty members join the college community in spite of rather than because of the remaining Christian influences, and the deeply committed Christian students begin to feel lonely.

The question might be asked what Christian institutions of higher education can do to prevent the decline into secularisation. Burtchaell (1998, p.847) proposes “authentic reform” and suggests to rediscover the “wholesome elements in a church’s past which have been lost” and to take them as cues for renewal. Dosen (2001, p.404) encourages the leaders and the boards as the keepers of the ethos, mission and values of an institute to “actively engage the college with the denomination’s tradition”. Iselin (2009) supports this view by encouraging Christian institutions to maintain a distinctively Christian educational culture by being true to the core cultural vision, values and identity of the institution. Holmes (1987) maintains that the distinctive ingredients and basis of Christian values should be evident in the college community as it is one of the most powerful influences in shaping a person’s values, hence the importance of shaping that community well.

Also writing from a North American higher education context is Zigarelli (2012), who identifies six conditions for pursuing student transformation in Christian universities. These include a mission statement that is focused on the institution’s *raison d’etre*, a curriculum that educates from a Christian worldview, committed, motivated and qualified faculty, and a coordinated program designed to build faith formation. Add to this a God-centred student culture that grows out of a critical mass of students whose “values and worldview tend to the ideal” (Zigarelli, 2012,

p.75.) and strong Christian leadership that visions, implements and evaluates, and you have what he calls a blueprint for a Christian university.

Holmes (1987, p.45, 81) further reminds us that a Christian college is not just simply a liberal arts institution, but it is also “an extended arm of the church”. It is a community of faith as well as learning and the two are integrated to give direction and meaning to learning and cannot be disconnected in a Christian tertiary environment. Jesus gave the command to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19 NKJV). As a Christian tertiary institution it is important not to lose sight of the command ‘to make disciples’ and to teach them to observe all the things that Jesus has commanded through the Bible. The idea of making disciples is expanded by Cann (1996, p.37-8), who argues that when Christian higher education is understood biblically, it is not only about informing heads, “but much more about transforming lives” by influencing young people in a way that they become wholehearted followers of Christ. He goes so far as to boldly state that “Christian education that does not aim to produce disciples of Christ is not Christian education at all” (p.38).

In support of Cann’s views about transforming lives Eaton (2011, p.15) believes that Christian universities have the ability to impact world change, and that world change begins in a place that is “intensely focused on shaping and influencing the younger generation in directions that are good and life-giving”. Benne (2001) believes that the persons of a Christian institution has the ability to form, strengthen and uphold the ethos of the institution, which will result in a Christian vision for the institution. Matthes (2010) supports this and states that the basis for all levels of change starts with individual, because no group or organization will change without individual change taking place first. Benne (2001, p.207) suggests that there needs to be “true believers” somewhere in the organization of an institution of education that are willing to act in agreement with change, and that often this needs to start with the presidents. Faculty members however can often be crucial in “getting initiatives off the ground” by initiating the move to reconnect to the founding vision and mission of the institution (p.208, 209).

The literature is both cautionary and evaluative in regards to the secularisation of Christian Institutions of higher learning. Badley (2010), in a review of six books dealing with the issue of secularisation, holds out hope for Christian universities, but cautions that decision making at all levels of operation needs to be aligned with the institutions' mission statements.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Global Seventh-day Adventist education began with the founding of the first denominational school in 1872 (Greenleaf, 2005). Knight (1973) states that Adventists began schools to “serve the advent by teaching its beliefs, and by training workers to carry its message to the world.” Presently there are more than 7,800 affiliated schools, colleges and universities worldwide, with over 87,000 teachers and 1,680,000 students within the 13 worldwide church divisions (Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist).

Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education

The Seventh-day Adventist education system has a broad network of Colleges and universities worldwide (See Table 2.2). Research relating to the higher education branch of Adventist education is scant, despite there being 102 institutions.

Table 2. 2 Seventh-day Adventist Tertiary Education Institutions

Seventh-day Adventist Tertiary Educational Institutions.	
Name of Divisions in Seventh-day Adventist Church	Universities, Colleges & Educational Institutions
East-Central Africa Division (ECD)	7
Euro-Africa Division (EUD)	8
Euro-Asia Division (ESD)	2
Inter-American Division (IAD)	13
North American Division (NAD)	14
Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)	5
South American Division (SAD)	12
South Pacific Division (SPD)	4
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)	4
Southern Asia Division (SUD)	7
Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)	16
Trans-European Division (TED)	7
West-Central Africa Division (WAD)	3

(Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: Seventh-day Adventist AAA Accredited Colleges and Universities)

One person to speak in this area is Obradovic. More than twenty years ago Obradovic (1986) commented on the growing trend of church-related colleges in the United States and other parts of the world to become secularized, but highlighted that the Adventist system was growing as they were establishing new institutions of higher education. Obradovic (1986, p.23) further stated that “in this one hundred and nine-year history of higher education no Seventh-day Adventist college has been secularized.”

Obradovic (1986) gives several reasons why he believes the Adventist education system has remained Christian. The indicators he found for this phenomenon include the enduring belief in holistic education; the individual care offered by smaller institutions; continued focused commitment to God and service to humanity; inclusive education regardless of sex, creed, culture or nationality ; encouragement of independent thinking ; rural locations and a student work program on campus; a

committed faculty who are supportive of whatever it is that makes it distinctive; facilitation of academic excellence; the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, including alcohol and drug-free campuses and wholesome cafeteria food; fostering of spirituality in both coursework and extra-curricular activities; and sensitivity to maintaining distinctive character while responding to cultural and academic change. While this is encouraging, it does not give a clear picture of Adventist higher education today.

Wood (1980, p.3) highlighted over thirty years ago that “it appears that Adventist colleges and universities are not exempt from the problems, dangers, and trends that affect other Christian colleges in the closing decades of the twentieth century”. He further mentioned that Adventist leaders were alarmed by the fact that some of the denomination’s institutions of higher education “seem to be drifting away from the standards and objectives established for them by their founders.” This concern still exists today.

Avondale College: A Seventh-day Adventist College of Higher Education

In the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church there are four higher education institutions, including Avondale College of Higher Education (Avondale College) which is located in Australia. It is this institution that will become the focus of this chapter.

Having explored what the literature has to say about Higher Christian Education and organizational change, the question remains whether Avondale College has remained distinctive and unique in character and whether the principles identified in the literature are currently observed on campus. In order to evaluate this, a brief history to provide a context is important.

Avondale College: Historical Context

The forerunner institution of Avondale College started in Melbourne in 1892 but later in 1894 moved to a 585-hectare estate near Cooranbong, found 125 kilometers

north of Sydney, which is known today as Avondale College of Higher Education (Greenleaf, 2005; Salom, 2002). In 1885 S.N. Haskell (1885) addressed his concern that public schools would not lead students to the knowledge of the truth or the mission work the church was eagerly engaged in. Thus the vision for early Adventist education was primarily to train workers for the church’s mission (Salom, 2002). Like most other Protestant denominations Seventh-day Adventists were primarily concerned with the education of church leaders, ministers, and school teachers (Obradovic, 1986).

Classes at Avondale School for Christian Workers officially began on the 28th April of 1897 with seven staff and ten students (Greenleaf, 2005; Salom, 2002). However six weeks later fifty more enrolled and the school continued to grow rapidly reaching one hundred students by 1900 (Greenleaf, 2005, p.130). Table 2.4 highlights the enrollment history growth spurts of Avondale College of Higher Education and demonstrates the early growth patterns identified by Iselin (2009).

Table 2. 3 Avondale College of Higher Education’s enrollment history

Avondale College of Higher Education’s enrollment history	
Years	Enrolments
1897	82 students
1898	104 students
1899	150 students
1900	140 students
2003	930 students
2012	1512 students

(From Avondale College Website: About Avondale, History, Early Years; Avondale College Handbooks 1897 - Present)

The original curriculum included Bible, domestic science, history, English, speech, penmanship, mathematics, physiology, geography, and music. Later the faculty added nature study, bookkeeping, Latin, Greek, science and pedagogic studies, as

well as sawmilling, brick making, beekeeping, blacksmithing, orcharding, cropping and dairying (Greenleaf, 2005; Salom, 2002). Avondale became a symbol of Adventist education and in some respects attracted more attention than any other Adventist College or school. (Greenleaf, 2005). Salom (2002, p.19) highlights that to a large degree “Avondale illustrates the way in which growth and change has impacted South Pacific Adventism”. By 1911 the institution became Australasian Missionary College with the vision of preparing workers for the South Pacific islands. All the students “exemplified the spirit of mission” and the college became the best source of missionaries to the South Pacific islands (Greenleaf, 2005, p.132). In 1918 the Australasian Missionary College received governmental recognition as a secondary school and by 1920 it enrolled more than 220 students (Greenleaf, 2005).

In 1963 the Australasian Missionary College was renamed and became known as Avondale College (Salom, 2002). The changing economic conditions made the early broad-based work-study curriculum of the 1890s no longer viable for students to both learn practical skills and earn money to pay college fees (Salom, 2002). The next change within the curriculum began with the twentieth century expectations within the Australian culture for Avondale to seek accreditation so that “its teachers and its schools could be certified by State authorities and its graduates could be employed in the public sector as well as by church entities” (Salom, 2002, p.19).

In the 1930s Avondale was inspected and its teacher-training program approved for accreditation. In the 1950s Avondale linked with the University of London which resulted in students receiving science degrees and from 1954 American-accredited degrees in theology and education were made available through a liaison with the Pacific Union College in California (Salom, 2002). During the 1980s Avondale liaised with Andrews University in Michigan, USA to have its Master of Arts degrees accredited in the United States (Salom, 2002). In 1973 however Avondale’s courses began to receive full recognition by the Government of New South Wales and the Commonwealth of Australia (Salom, 2002). Today Avondale offers not only fully-accredited bachelor degrees in the arts, sciences, education, business, nursing and theology, but it also awards Australian-accredited graduate diplomas, master-level degrees and more recently doctoral-level degrees. Hook (1998) considers Avondale as an appropriate candidate for university status and currently that is what

Avondale is aspiring to. According to Salom (2002), Avondale graduates not only continue to find employment within the Seventh-day Adventist church, but many of them also find employment in business and industry, as well as teaching positions in the government sector and other religious schools. This might be largely due to the fact that Avondale attracts both Seventh-day Adventists and non-Adventist students both nationally and internationally who opt for a tertiary education based on Christian values (Salom, 2002).

Other than just educational change Avondale also experienced physical change in response to growing numbers of students and changes in courses as can be seen in aerial photographs (Appendix 2.1.).

Avondale College: Mission and Purpose

A history of Avondale is incomplete without an understanding of its mission and purpose. Obradovic (1986, p.17) highlighted that the Seventh-day Adventist educational aim was first introduced “by one of the most prolific religious writers of the denominations” Ellen G. White. He further mentioned that White’s book Education has had “a significant influence on Seventh-day Adventist education and has served as a blueprint for the denomination’s educational system.”

According to Obradovic (p.17) the crux of the Seventh-day Adventist educational aim can be best summed up in the words of Ellen G. White (1903, p.13):

True education means more than the pursual 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 student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.

Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000) believe that Avondale College followed Ellen White’s philosophy of education more closely than any other denominational institution and

became a model for other Seventh-day Adventist education institutes. Schwarz and Greenleaf continue to list the reasons why Avondale was this model to admire. The main characteristics of the Avondale School for Christian Workers were:

1. The practicability and advantages of an ample campus located in a rural environment,
2. The feasibility of a strong work-study program,
3. The value of school industries both as a source of student labor and as a help to the school's operating budget,
4. The need for systematic "student aid" funds,
5. The success of student involvement in welfare and missionary activities in place of extensive recreational and sport programs, and
6. The practicability of Ellen White's counsels on education (p.196-197).

Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000, p.197) conclude by saying that "perhaps the strongest testimony to the value of the type of education pioneered at Avondale is that during the seven decades following its founding more than 80 percent of its graduates entered denominational service".

As noted earlier (Iselin, 2009: Greenleaf, 2005) Avondale College has progressed through several stages during its history. What follows is a juxtaposition of Avondale with the four theories of cultural development/dis-integration in organisations. Table 2.1 and Tables 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 each give some of the defining characteristics of Avondale in each era in regard to the perceived purpose of the era and the changing educational culture. It should be explained that the eras are only roughly defined for this purpose.

Table 2.4: Avondale and 1st Generation characteristics

DATES	1 ST GENERATION CHARACTERISTICS	AVONDALE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS PERIOD
1897-1930	<p>Strong founding vision</p> <p>Leader embodies the vision</p> <p>Decision and actions based on core ideology, values, vision, mission and purpose</p> <p>Rapid expansion</p>	<p>Purpose: To establish a school for Christian workers</p> <p>Leaders also the spiritual leaders</p> <p>Motto</p> <p>Subjects all focused on educating Christian workers</p> <p>Australasian Bible School 1897</p> <p>The Avondale School for Christian Workers 1899</p> <p>Australasian Missionary College in 1912</p> <p>0-140 students in 3 years</p>

Table 2.5: Avondale and the 2nd Generation characteristics

DATES	2 ND GENERATION CHARACTERISTICS	AVONDALE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS PERIOD
1931 - 1970	<p>Establishment of policies and procedures that support the vision</p> <p>Leadership succession</p> <p>Formal articulation of core cultural elements</p> <p>Development of meaningful signs, symbols and documentation</p> <p>Interest in academic disciplines supersedes interest in denominational heritage</p>	<p>College program becomes more academic</p> <p>Name change to Avondale College in 1963</p> <p>Affiliations with other institutions for degrees</p>

Table 2.6: Avondale and 3rd Generation characteristics

DATES	3RD GENERATION CHARACTERISTICS	AVONDALE CHARATERISTICS OF THIS PERIOD
1970-2012	Locked into systems of action President may or may not be from founding denomination Religious affiliation of crucial leaders overlooked Process or secularisation complete	Need to meet requirements of accrediting bodies. All presidents from founding denomination 1973 Full recognition of courses

Throughout its history Avondale College has continually adjusted to social, cultural, educational and demographic change. This can be seen in the varied offering of subjects and courses, the characteristics of the student body, the qualifications of faculty members, and the logo (See Figure 2.1).

One example of educational change is that all institutions of higher education in Australia are required to either satisfy internal or external accreditation processes which are designed as a quality control process for their educational standards. This kind of legislation demands change to meet requirements. On the other hand, Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institutions are also subject to accreditation by the Adventist world church education department. This body concerns itself more with preserving the distinctiveness of Adventist education. In some aspects, Avondale has remained constant. It has always been led by a Seventh-day Adventist, an important factor for maintaining distinctiveness noted by Benne (2001) (See Appendix 2.2). The motto has endured and many graduates still seek employment in Seventh-day Adventist institutions. Two important questions remain, the first being, How has Avondale College’s statements of purpose changed throughout its history? The second question is: What impact do the current statements of purpose have on the faculty and student body? Are they merely written documents or are they living statements, enacted out in the lives of the Avondale College community?

The College motto, “For a greater vision of world needs” (Avondale College of Higher Education handbook, 2011/2012, p.9) has remained unchanged. The same

cannot be said of the logo, which has changed from a definite representation of the purpose and motto to a more stylized logo, as seen in Figure 2.3.





Transition of Avondale College logos			
			
Original logo used from around 1940. Prior to this time the letters AMC were used. This logo contains the name, the motto and a world supported by a flame. Founding date included.	This logo was adopted with the name change to Avondale College. The shape and the world and flame remained the same. The motto was shortened to "A GREATER VISION" Founding date included.	Stylised version of logo which appeared on handbooks in the 1990s. Shape, world and shortened motto still evident. Founding date not evident	Current logo, adopted in 2008. World is implied in the negative space between the stylized flames. Current official name included. Motto not evident. Founding date not evident.

Figure 2.3: Transition of Avondale College logos

The mission statement has also undergone metamorphosis during Avondale’s 114 year history. It first appeared in publication under the heading ‘Object’ in 1901 and stated,

“It is the purpose of the institution to do more for its students than merely to make them proficient in some branches of study. The object sought will be to develop and train every part of the being – physical, mental and moral, the finished results being men and women of refinement, possessing true Christian character. Is it the purpose of the Managers that the work in various lines of study should be conducted with a view to inspire a reverence for God’s word, and inculcate confidence in its teaching, and lead as many as possible to a practical Christian experience. The study of the Holy Scriptures, and of history interpreted in the light of Scripture, will be made prominent features of the work.

(Fifth Annual Announcement of the Avondale School for Christian Workers, 1901, p.4)

The current mission statement reads, “To foster a Christian learning community that is founded on quality research-based higher education and prepares students for lives of service.” (Avondale College of Higher Education Handbook, 2011/2012, p.9).

In recent years, a list of values that Avondale explicitly espouses has been included in the handbooks. The values include:

Excellence with a focus on learning and discovery;

Spirituality with a focus on building a relationship with God, worship and discipleship;

Nurture through relationships with friends and family;

Service with a focus on responding to and meeting needs in society; and

Balance with a focus on responsible living through sustainability and lifestyle choices. (See Appendix 2.3 for a full version of the ethos, mission and values as stated in the current Avondale College Handbook.)

It is interesting to note that these values align quite closely with the 1901 ‘Object’, and fill in some of the gaps in the shortened mission statement. Again, it is admirable to have values on paper, but even more admirable if the values are expressed through the lives of the faculty, general staff and students. Any evidence of research pertaining to Avondale’s values could not be found.

Within the available literature, several educators and educational historians have examined Avondale’s educational history and commented on the perceived impact of Avondale College on its students and the Adventist church. There appears, however, to be a scarcity of literature that examines Avondale’s ethos, mission and values from the perspective of its students and nothing to this point in time that takes into

account the perceptions of students not of the Adventist faith who chose to study there.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the literature surrounding the purpose of Christian education in general, and the secularization process that has infiltrated several notable institutions of Christian origin. Avondale College has been juxtaposed with four theories of cultural development/dis-integration in organisations and the evidence of its faithfulness to original purpose explored. This has revealed the need for individual organisations to examine their own practice and impact to determine how they can best preserve their distinctiveness, and has identified a gap in knowledge regarding student perceptions.

The following chapter will provide a rationale and outline of the methodology used for this research project. It will discuss the qualitative methods employed for this investigation and describe the processes used to collect and analyse the data.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact that Avondale College's ethos, mission and values has had on students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The focus question which was developed to guide the investigation is;

How has Avondale's ethos, mission and values impacted six fourth year education students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith?

The following sub-questions were used to guide the data collected.

- What are students' perceptions of Avondale in relationship to its mission?
- To what extent have students not of the Adventist faith interacted with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle during their time at Avondale?
- How evident are Avondale's values to students who study there?

The aim of this chapter is to provide the rationale for the chosen research design, method and approaches used in this particular study. This study approaches the research from a qualitative perspective within a real-world context through the use of grounded theory approach incorporating the processes of emergent design and coding through systematic design (Creswell, 2012). Within the chosen design the case study as a research method is an important aspect (Yin, 2012; Yin, 2009), also known as the multiple instrumental case study (Creswell, 2012). The process of the narrative research design (Creswell, 2012) is also incorporated to document the individual experiences or "stories" of the participants (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2010).

Figure 3.1 reveals the logic flow and emergent design of the study and provides the overarching format for this entire chapter format.

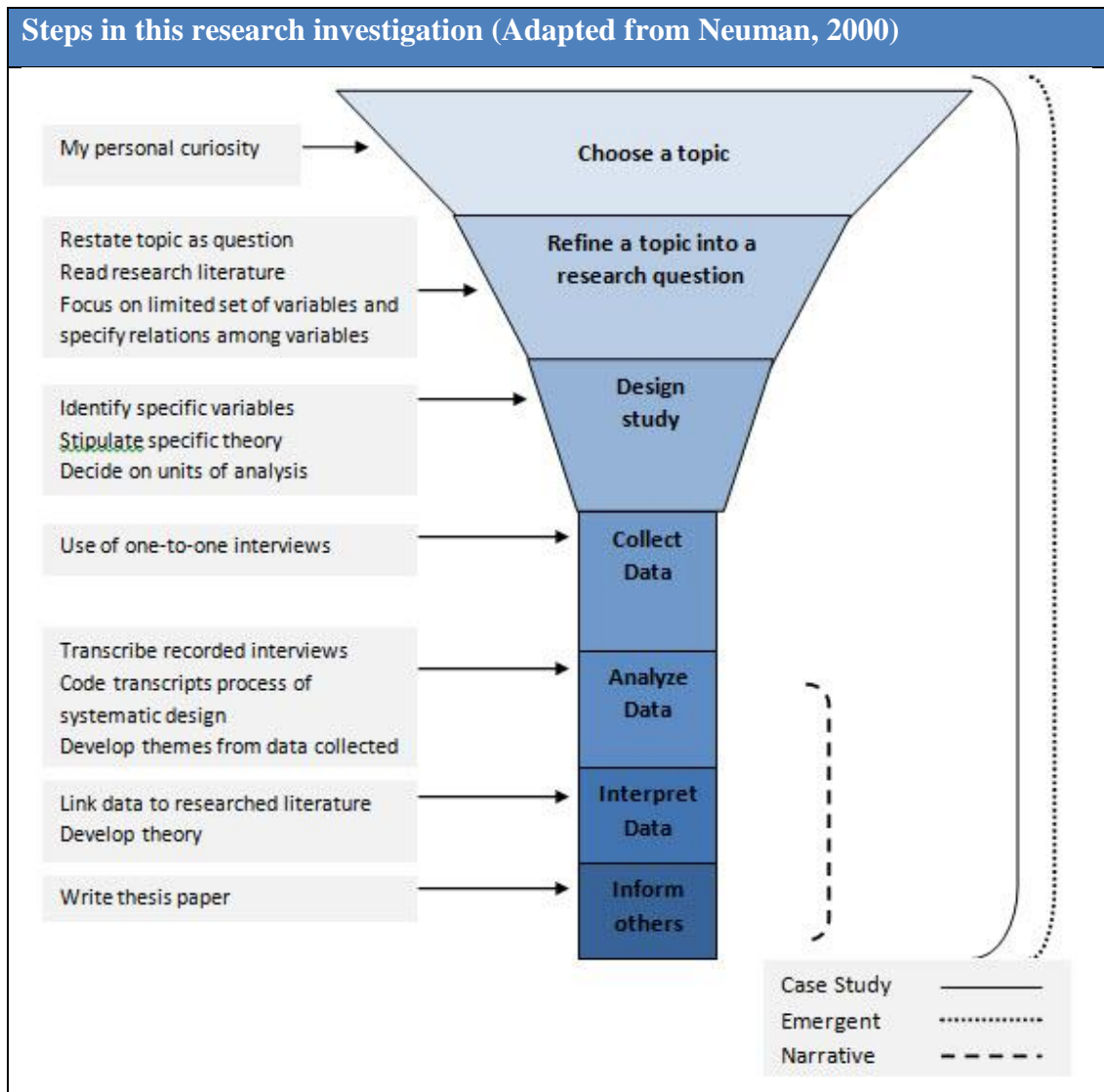


Figure 3. 1 Steps in this research investigation

THE CHOICE OF THE TOPIC AND INITIAL QUESTION

As mentioned in chapter one, the topic is of particular importance to the researcher because of my religious background and the missionary work that I have done with my family, especially with my husband. The commencement of our studies at Avondale College sparked the interest for this study to explore the impact that Avondale has on student’s academic careers but also on their personal lives. Most of all there is the personal and professional interest of the researcher to understand

whether Avondale has a spiritual impact on the student's not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. This research started with a research question and little else, and the remainder of the study grew during the data collection process (Neuman, 2000).

The "tacit knowledge" (Eraut, 2000, p.113) that influenced the choice of the topic question developed into "propositional knowledge" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.719). Smith (2001, p.314) states that tacit knowledge is the "knowledge or 'know-how' based on practice, acquired by personal experiences" and often "resembles intuition". Propositional knowledge according to Blumer (1940, p.719) on the other hand is the "slow and tedious manner of developing a rich and intimate familiarity" with the topic that is being studied and investigated through applying "whatever relevant imagination" one possesses.

As can be seen in Figure 3.2 the goal of this research is to investigate the question through the processes of exploration, description and explanation. The study attempts to explore whether Avondale does have an impact on student's lives, to then describe this impact through the means of data collection, which will then finally be investigated and elaborated on by explaining the data collected and linking it to the main question and to the literature, through the use of elements of a narrative research design. The data could in fact support or refute any previous held views found in the literature (Neuman, 2000).

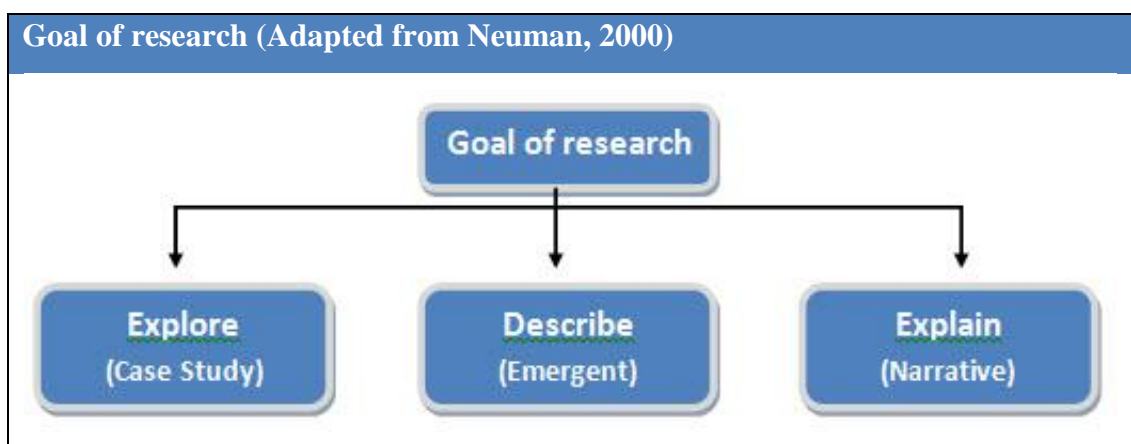


Figure 3. 2 Goal of research

It should be noted that through the process of emergent design the question was further developed and fine-tuned in response to reading the literature. Allowing the literature to inform the questions is a characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Neuman, 2000), and will be discussed further in ensuing paragraphs.

CHOICE OF PARADIGM

The qualitative research is one of “interpretation” (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008, 186; Neuman, 2000, p.144), which involves “collecting, interpreting and making judgments about data that cannot be measured” such as what people say and do and why they do it (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.28; Neuman, 2000, p.145). The use of grounded theory processes allows for the qualitative research to be flexible (Neuman, 2000). Qualitative research also emphasizes the importance of the “social context” as well as “understanding the social world”, and then places parts of the “social life into a larger whole” to create meaning (Neuman, 2000, p.146, 147). As this research is based on six sub-case studies within a case study, the qualitative paradigm was best suited for this research project.

CHOICE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The development of the research topic and sub-questions took place over the duration of the study. This study, therefore, has characteristics of “emergent design”, within the “narrative-based case study” approach [Creswell, 2012, p.130; O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.57; Neuman, 2000, p.148]. The research sub-questions thus evolved during the process of data analysis due to the responses of the participants and developing awareness of the literature (Creswell, 2012). The initial question aimed at evaluating the religious impact that Avondale College has on students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. After further investigation it became apparent that there lacked a criteria for measuring the impact. The literature review also revealed a metamorphous of Christian institutions based on their ethos, mission and values (Iselin, 2009; Eaton, 2011). The study therefore shifted slightly in direction by including Avondale College’s ethos, mission and values as a criterion for measuring the impact.

The semi-structured, open-ended sub-questions (Neuman, 2000) asked during the interviews were focused around why the participants decided to attend Avondale College. The interviews focused on what the students understood about Christianity and more specific Seventh-day Adventism while attending Avondale. Each of the interviews were then transcribed and analyzed through open coding (Creswell, 2012; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010) to form the next set of questions for the second interviews. The interviews, transcription, process of analysis and tools used will be further unpacked later in this chapter under the ‘choice of data collection’ heading.

CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

The term “bricolage” (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.172; Lichtman, 2010, p.35; Neuman, 2000, p.147) or “crystallisation” (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.172) comes to mind to best explain the synthesis of the tools for this study design. “Bricolage” is a French-term that is characterized by someone who is being creative to use a diverse range of tools available in order to accomplish a task often without planning for them in advance (Lichtman, 2010, p.35; Neuman, 2000, p.147). “Crystallisation”, being similar to “bricolage”, applies to the data analysis process “seeing the cognitive coherence emerging and growing like crystals from all the various data sources” (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.34, 172; Richardson, 2000, p.934). Figure 3.3 illustrates the use of the term ‘bricolage’ within this study.

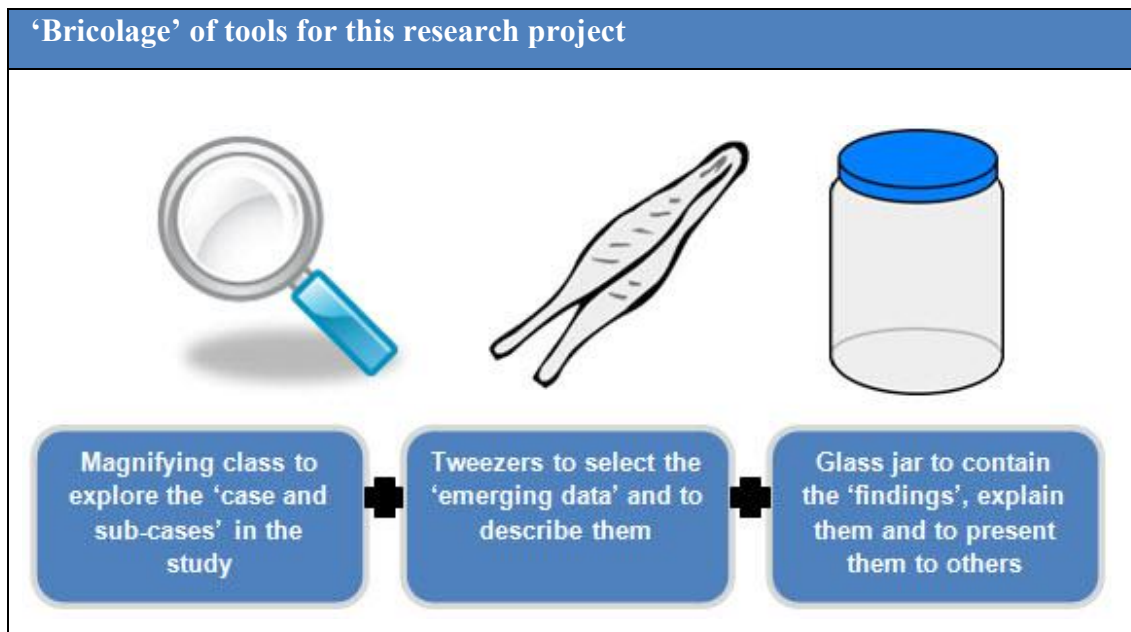


Figure 3. 3“Bricolage’ of tools for this research project

The magnifying glass represents the processes used to explore the case and sub-cases in the study. Face-to-face interviews and email interviews were used to investigate the impact that Avondale’s ethos, mission and vision has had on the six participants. The tweezers illustrate the process of selecting the emergent data through the use of open coding (Creswell, 2012; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010), memoing, word clouds and eventually themes. The emergent data is then analyzed before going into the ‘glass jar’, which represents the formulation of the findings through the process of narrative research design. All of these processes will be unpacked in more detail later in this chapter.

The study, however, is predominantly a case study with an ethnographic element to it (Creswell, 2012; O’Toole & Beckett, 2010). The ethnographic element of the study is the interviews of a “narrowly framed, culture-sharing group” (fourth year educational students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith) that represents a “larger issue” (religious influence) (Creswell, 2012, p.462; Lichtman, 2010, p.71). A case study focuses on a single or small number of ‘cases’, set in a real-world context (Yin, 2012, p.4). Yin (2012, p.6) explains that a ‘case’ is “generally a bounded entity” such as a person and organization, that is explored in-depth through the use of extensive data collection. Creswell (2012, p.465) explains that ‘bounded’ means the “case is separated” for research such as in “time, place, or some physical boundaries”. A case

study can also have cases within a case known as “embedded subcases” (Yin, 2012, p.7). In this case, the study was limited to a single tertiary educational organization namely Avondale College of Higher Education located in Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia (Yin, 2012). Six participants attending Avondale College were interviewed for this study and are thus “embedded subcases” (Yin, 2012, p.7).

The data collection process was mainly done through one-on-one interviews and the process of emergent design allowed for themes to emerge from the data rather than use preset categories (Creswell, 2012; O’Toole & Beckett, 2010). Methods of data collection and representation were changed and adapted throughout the study in order to “better represent the reality of the persons and setting studied” (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010, p.143).

The study also contains elements of a narrative-based case study (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010) and thus the element of narrative research design is used (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012, p.502) mentions that the element of narrative research design is displayed in the collection of the participants ‘stories’ of their experiences of Avondale College during their time of study. Creswell further adds that narrative research is used when you “have individuals willing to tell their stories and you want to report their stories” which is exactly what this study is doing (Creswell, 2012, p.502).

The reason the research study was designed this way is to create a study that is trustworthy and transparent (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2003; Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The concept of trustworthiness will be unpacked later in this chapter.

CHOICE OF DATA COLLECTION

Participants

This research study involved six fourth year education student participants therefore, ethics approval was necessary (Creswell, 2012; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). Ethics approval was received from the Avondale College's Human Research Ethics Committee in late 2011 (see Appendix 3.1), which also allowed the use of the name of Avondale college (Creswell, 2012; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010).

In the beginning of semester one of 2012 a public address was organized with the fourth year education students before their professional development class. The research topic was briefly explained and volunteers were sought to participate in the interviews. Information letters (see Appendix 3.2) were handed out as well as volunteer consent forms (see Appendix 3.3) (Creswell, 2012; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). All the students present were encouraged to complete the consent forms. The reason for this was two-fold. Firstly, it provided the opportunity for the researcher to view the religious make-up of the fourth-year educational students and secondly it assured that all of the fourth year education students present were given the opportunity to volunteer. Other helpful information was also gathered such as where students were living (on campus in the dormitories or off campus at private homes) as well as voluntary contact details.

From the returned consent forms six students volunteered and provided a variety to the interviews as can be observed in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1 Makeup of six participants

Make up of six participants							
	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Religion	Parental Status	On/Off Campus	Teaching Degree
Participant 1	Male	23	Australian	Christian	N/A	Off Campus	Primary
Participant 2	Male	28	Australian (Italian)	Catholic	N/A	Off Campus	Primary
Participant 3	Male	22	Australian	Former SDA	N/A	On Campus	Secondary
Participant 4	Female	22	Australian	Catholic	N/A	On Campus	Early Childhood
Participant 5	Female	29	Australian	Christian	1 child	Off Campus	Secondary
Participant 6	Female	22	Australian	Other	2 children	Off Campus	Primary

Interviews

All the participants were interviewed during first semester 2012. Face-to-face (Creswell, 2012; Mertens, 2010; Neuman, 2000), semi-structured (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010), interviews commenced as soon as the participants arranged a suitable time. Face-to-face interviews provided the opportunity for only one participant at a time to be personally questioned and audio recorded about his or her experience at Avondale College (Creswell, 2012). The semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity for the “unexpected insight to be collected” and for the researcher to seek “clarification, invite expansion, or explore” a further response (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.132). The semi-structured interviews were conducted using the semi-structured open-ended questions that allowed for the participants to freely respond to the questions by giving his or her own answers (Creswell, 2012, p.220; Neuman, 2000), and often resulted in lengthy ‘unstructured’ conversations (Yin, 2012, p.12). Yin (2009, p.107) highlights that this type of case study interview is known as a “focused interview”, where the interview still remains open-ended, but a certain set of questions are asked to the participant during a short period of time. This worked well with this study as each of the participants were interviewed twice on a

face-to-face basis, with semi-structured, open-ended questions for a time period of about forty minutes each.

The interviews took place in a neutral and comfortable setting that was private and quiet without being too secluded (Creswell, 2012; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). All the interviews were recorded (Creswell, 2012; Mertens, 2010; Drew, Hardman, Hosp, 2008) with two recording devices; an application 'Audio Note' on an iPad, as well as a small Philips recorder as backup security. Each participant's interview was unique as not only were the formulated questions used, but probing (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2009; Neuman, 2000) was also used to clarify points and elicit more information. Probes are questions to clarify whether participants understood the questions as a researcher intended (Neuman, 2000).

The second interview transcripts formulated the third interview semi-structured open-ended questions. Unique individual questions for each of the participants were also formulated to fill in the gaps of the participants transcripts. The third interview was sent by email (Creswell, 2012; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010) in the second semester 2012 to allow for the last member checking (Creswell, 2012) as well as to save time with the research. The e-mail interviews consisted of open-ended questions that provided "rich text data" for qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2012, p.219).

Trustworthiness

It is essential for researchers to ensure the 'trustworthiness' (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008, p.233; Graneheim & Lundman, 2003, p.109; Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.289) of a study in order to validate the findings and thus to provide more credibility to the data collected, especially with the use of qualitative instruments (Mertens, 2010; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). According the Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.290) the aim of trustworthiness is to support that the findings are "worth paying attention to". Credibility allows for the participants thoughts, feelings and actions to be accurately represented in the research report (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegte, 2010). According to O'Toole and Beckett (2010, p.34,

156) “credibility” is whether “your research outcome is believable in its context based on what you know or knew before”.

As the researcher aimed to ensure a trustworthy and credible research paper, the process of “member checking” was applied (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegte, 2010, p.171; Mertens, 2010, p.257; O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.156; Creswell, 2012, p.259). “Member checking” is the process in which the researcher asks each of the participants in writing or in the next interview to check the accuracy of their account (Creswell, 2012). “Member checking” can be useful in various aspects of the research study, such as whether the transcript is complete and accurate, and whether the themes and interpretations are fair and representative of the participant (Creswell, 2012).

According to Creswell (2012, p.259) the researcher should be “self-reflective about his or her role in the research”. After commencing with the first set of interviews I met with my supervisors to discuss the process. During the discussion I realized that I was not aware of what Avondale’s values and mission statements were, although I had looked at it the previous year when I was formulating my research topic. I decided, however, not to familiarize myself with it again so I could avoid asking leading questions in interviews to obtain the answers I most desired.

The participants were also fully informed and kept up to date with the progress of the study through emails and they were informed that they are allowed to review the notes of the study at any time as it is their ‘story’ that will be revealed (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p.100). At the end of the interviews one of the participants sent an email of thanks for the professionalism of the interviews as well as the opportunity for self-reflection (see Figure 3.4). However, analytical notes, hunches and inferences of the researcher have been kept confidential, and the evolving data was only discussed with the research team (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010). Participants have been kept anonymous by the use of creative pseudonyms that the participants chose which gave the research a human and authentic quality (Creswell, 2012; O’Toole & Beckett, 2010; Neuman, 2000). Participants chose pseudo names that have an emotional connection to them. As soon as the data was collected and member checking completed, the analysis of the data commenced.

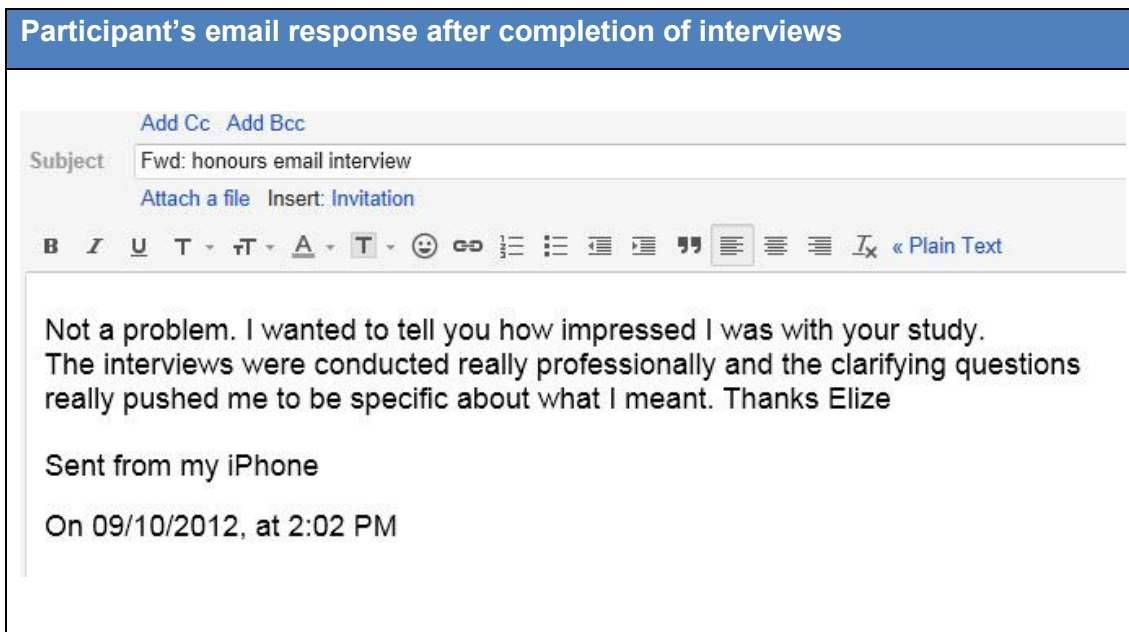


Figure 3. 4 Participant's response

CHOICE OF DATA ANALYSIS

In order for the analysis process to be enriched, each of the interviews audio recordings were 'transcribed' (Creswell, 2012, p.239; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p.481; Mertens, 2010, p.372). Transcribing is the process of converting recordings into text data wherein you type all the words spoken as well as the pauses and actions occurring during the interview (Creswell, 2012, p.239; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p.481), such as "stage directions" (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). O'Toole and Beckett (2010, p.161) encourages that you transcribe your own interviews because in listening to the recording you will be able to "recall the key pauses and the interviewee's changes of expression or intensity, the nervous fidget or unexpected gesture, and only you [the researcher] can properly interpret whether the giggle was amused or tense". O'Toole and Beckett (2010, p.161) further add that by transcribing the recorded interviews you are more likely to be accurate and it provides you with a far more intimate knowledge of your own data. Six participants were interviewed twice each, which gave a total of twelve interviews to transcribe. As transcribing is such a time consuming process, Creswell (2010, p.239) mentions the use of devices to help with the recording. The researcher used an application (Amazing Slow Downer) on the iPad to help slow down the recordings. This assisted with the

transcribing process which in turn allowed the analysis process to commence sooner. An example of a complete transcription can be viewed in Appendix 3.4.

The interview transcripts were analyzed through the use of ‘open coding’ (Creswell, 2012, p.243, 424; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p.464-5) to develop categories. Creswell (2012) mentions that the coding process enables the researcher to make sense of the data by dividing the text into segments, then labeling the segments with codes, and then to collapse the overlapping codes into broad categories. Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen (2010, p.464) highlight that open coding is used to develop “major or core categories with axial coding”. Axial coding develops categories around a core category or subcategories, by connecting the previous open ended codes, and can be best visualized as “spokes” in a wheel (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p.464-5).

‘Memoing’ (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2012) was also applied throughout the transcript analysis. Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen (2010, p.465; Creswell, 2012, p.438) mention that memoing is the process by which “the researcher writes down his or her ideas” about the emerging data and the coded categories throughout the coding process. The memoing process assisted with the formulating of the next set of open-ended questions for the second interviews. O’Toole and Beckett (2010, p.170) mention that often this qualitative analysis is known as “‘thick’ data because it is complex and textured”. Figure 3.5 highlights the detailed and repetitive data collecting and coding process of the research study.

Data collection and coding process of the participant interviews (Adapted from Creswell, 2008, p.244)

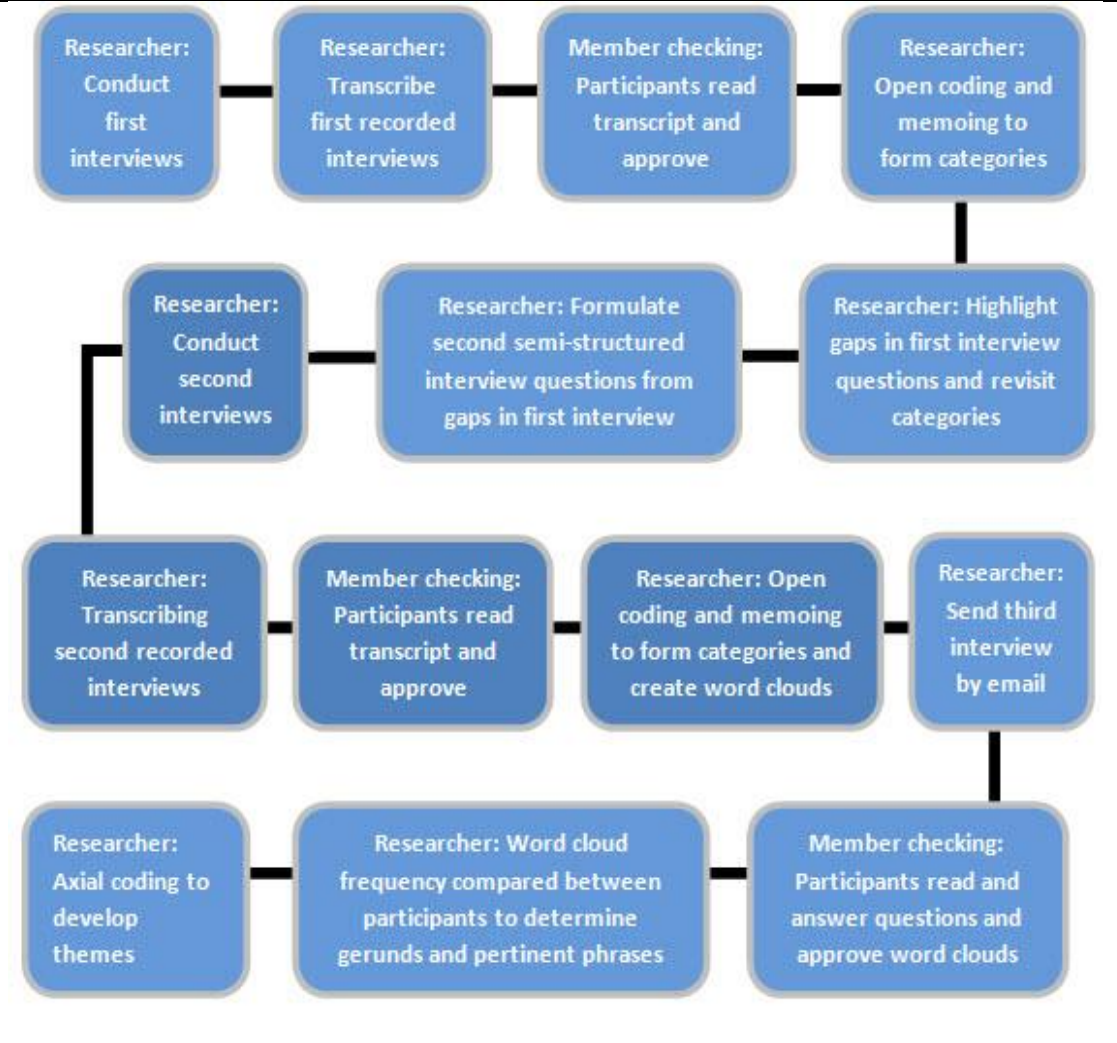


Figure 3. 5 Data collection and coding process of the participant interviews

During the transcribing, coding and memoing processes several key words and categories were noticed in each of the participant’s interviews. Word clouds were used to creatively highlight the repetitive words as well as the frequent use of these words. The frequency of the words will determine the size of the word within the word cloud. The word clouds highlight the participants unique experienced of Avondale College’s ethos, mission and vision during their time of study, as well as the unique experience that each participant also brought to Avondale. It was noticed that there were several words and themes that corresponded between the interview participants as can be observed in Appendix 3.4.

Each of the participants reviewed the word clouds from their own interviews for member checking. Figure 3.6 provides two examples of participant responses to the word cloud questions in the email.

Examples of participant word cloud member checking and analysis
<p>Example 1:</p> <p>While I went over your interviews I counted the words that I felt important and that were used the most. Carefully look at the word cloud at the top to make sure that it represents you and your time at Avondale the best.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would you agree with the importance of the words? (The biggest were used most frequently) <p>Yes I do agree with the words in the word cloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any words you would want to take out? (Meaning they do not relate to your experience at Avondale or your life during the time you were at Avondale.) <p>The only word I'm not sure about is "first year" as I feel that is not as significant as what the other words are to my time at Avondale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any words that you would like to add? <p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any words that you want smaller? Or bigger? (Less emphasis or more emphasis) <p>No I am happy with what has being done on this word cloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any other ideas or suggestions? <p>No, it's all good</p>
<p>Example 2:</p> <p>While I went over your interviews I counted the words that I felt important and that were used the most. Carefully look at the word cloud at the top to make sure that it represents you and your time at Avondale the best.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would you agree with the importance of the words? (The biggest were used most frequently)• Yes these seem fairly accurate• Are there any words you would want to take out? (Meaning they do not relate to your experience at Avondale or your life during the time you were at Avondale.)• I think the only one I would take out is bible, as much as it has been a part of my time at Avondale, for me it hasn't played a huge part of my time• Are there any words that you would like to add?• No

- Are there any words that you want smaller? Or bigger? (Less emphasis or more emphasis)
- Family could be bigger, Avondale feels like a huge family. Guidance could also be in larger font, I feel that I have received much guidance during my time at Avondale.
- Any other ideas or suggestions?
- no

Figure 3. 6 Examples of participant word cloud member checking and analysis

Table 3.2 illustrates the timeframe of the research project. The table highlights the estimated time of the identification of the first research question, until the time for the submission of the thesis.

Table 3.2: Timeframe of research study

Timeframe of research study	
DATE	PROGRESSION
September - October 2011	Question identified and literature review conducted
October 2011	Ethics approved
March 2012	Public address for volunteer participants
March – April 2012	First Interviews
April – May 2012	Transcribing, coding and member checking
June 2012	Second Interviews
June – September 2012	Transcribing, coding and member checking
September 2012	Third email interviews
September - October 2012	Writing of results and discussion
October 2012	Submission of thesis

INTERPRETING DATA

The narrative research design was used to represent the “thick descriptions”, allowing for the “divergence and richness” of the participants’ experiences to be maintained (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008, 185; Wildy, 2003, p.123). The ‘thick’ and ‘richness of that data required a more rigorous process of identifying themes.

The first level coding is when the transcripts were coded through the use of open coding (Creswell, 2012; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010) and memoing (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2012) to highlight repeated words and phrases as seen in Figure 3.7.

Gerunds were identified, and grouped together with other gerunds similar in meaning, intent or context. Context was felt to be important because several gerunds were used throughout the transcripts to refer to comparatively different aspects of life at Avondale. The words that made meaning were influenced by the literature and the research question, and the word clouds summarized the main categories within each transcript.

Samples of coding and memoing of transcripts

Sample 1:

waste of a thousand dollars or whatever it is. Uhm... but yeah I think... the-I think the lecturers are all really good here, uhm... well that probably could be a part of the whole Seventh-day Adventist thing like they really do care about, students kind of thing, they do want you to pass if you struggling, if uhm.. You know you're having trouble getting through the work and you go and speak to them they are willing to do like - you know try and get you across the line kind of thing. I think that's really good. Uhm... (3 sec pause) yeah so what do you mean like in relation to the whole uni as well, or?

Supportive.

Lecturers.

Pos. P-23

- * Lecturers - really care about students
- want you to pass if you're struggling
- freedom to approach & speak to them
- help and get you across the line.

(could be part of the whole SDA thing)

Sample 2:

I'd have to say it's been good. I've really liked the people here. Uhm... (2 sec pause) yeah of all the people I've met I-I would (chuckle)... I-I think that... overall the girls here tend to be nicer than the guys... I like - I-I found, and I think we all like with the group of friends that hang out with now, we all found that it was a lot easier to f-sort of fit in with the girls. And the girls... yeah, were more easy going than the guys. Whereas the guys sort of seemed to form their cliques kind of thing and were a bit... toolish or something but... uhm... Yeah, I've been - I've been

Positive experience.

nomi
peop
some
homi
to - I
away
So if.

Coming to Avondale.

- * It's been good.
- * I've really liked the people here.
- * The girls were more easy going than the guys. (guys cliques).
- * I've enjoyed it all.
- * Got used to the pleasantness and friendliness.
- * Enjoyed being with people that were sort of upbeat about

13

Figure 3. 7 Samples of coding and memoing of transcripts

The transcripts were examined for phrases that were making a particular point in relationship to Avondale, its people or its programs. These words and phrases, were noted, clustered and collapsed which provided the basis for the second level coding.

From the initial list of frequently used words, a list of gerunds and pertinent phrases were identified and through the use of axial coding (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010) themes began to emerge (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). (See Table 3.3) Initially, the themes of social, spiritual and academic areas were identified, but then a theme

relating to personal growth became evident. Also the double context in many of the words and phrases provided was very evident. The common theme in the double context was relationships with lecturers and to a lesser extent, peers. This emerged so strongly across all the transcripts that it was repositioned as an overarching theme. As seen in Table 3.3, the overarching theme was eventually renamed 'authentic relationships' and the secondary themes renamed 'social connections', 'spiritual connections', 'career connections' and 'intra-personal connections'. The word connections were chosen to reflect the idea of relationship within each of the themes.

Table 3.3: Sample tables of coding criteria

Sample table of coding criteria to develop themes			
AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS	HARRY WATSON		
	EMERGING THEMES	GERUNDS	PHRASES
	SOCIAL CONNECTIONS	Belonging Welcoming 2 Caring 2 Bullying (none)	“sense of belonging and calmness” “I was accepted and enrolled” “so friendly and welcoming” “general caring for other people”
	SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS	Praying Talking Accepting	“I feel like there was someone praying for me.” “I sort of fell to pieces at the end of that.” “There’s just so much grace.” “The whole thing that God has a plan” “I believe in God” “Going to church on Saturday” “Crying to Him (God) for help Of lecturers who care. “I think the Christian perspective has a major influence on that.” “I became a Christian “I look at everything... in a Christian perspective.”
	CAREER CONNECTIONS	Teaching Pushing (in the sense of to achieve) Training (to change lives)	“I’ve actually become close with a lot of my lecturers.” “I think it can make a big difference in students’ lives.” “Want to see you succeed – to be the best teacher – someone who can actually change students’ lives”
	INTRA-PERSONAL CONNECTIONS	Doing 2 Life changing Invigorating	I’m actually doing this “I think it’s made me realize that it’s possible to do those things.” “I think that should be more mandatory” (Outdoor education) “feel I’m helping” Have values Gained confidence within myself
OTHER		“This place has changed my life”	

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the rationale for the methodological approach and how the researcher ensured that the results were trustworthy. It has also outlined the emergent design process that was used with the case study approach, as well as the narrative account of data representation, and provided a description of how the data was analysed. Chapter four will provide the research findings from the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘MY STORY’

The aim of this chapter is to restate the purpose of the study and to provide the six narrative accounts of the participant interviews. Each of the three interviews and member checking are included in the individual stories of the participants.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact that Avondale College’s ethos, mission and values has had on students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The focus question which was developed to guide the research study is;

How have Avondale’s ethos, mission and values impacted six fourth year education students, not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith?

This chapter is organised in a case by case study using a narrative writing style to represent the personal stories of each of the participants. Each ‘character’ is introduced with personal details and a word cloud that summarises their personal and academic experience at Avondale College. A summary of each ‘character’s’ story is included with the main themes drawn from the “divergence and richness” of the participants’ experiences (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008; Wildy, 2003).

After the summary of each story, the ‘character’s’ story is compared to the stories of previous ‘characters’ and similarities and differences are highlighted. This organisation allows the reader to enter the world of each ‘character’ and journey with them as their story unfolds. Each story will reveal what the ‘characters’ bring to the setting of the story (Avondale College) as well as what Avondale brings to the characters. Pseudonyms chosen by the ‘characters’ also reveal something about each ‘character’. Figure 4.1 demonstrates the chapter structure as a story map and Figure 4.2 demonstrates the chapter organisation as a flow chart.

Avondale Impact Model

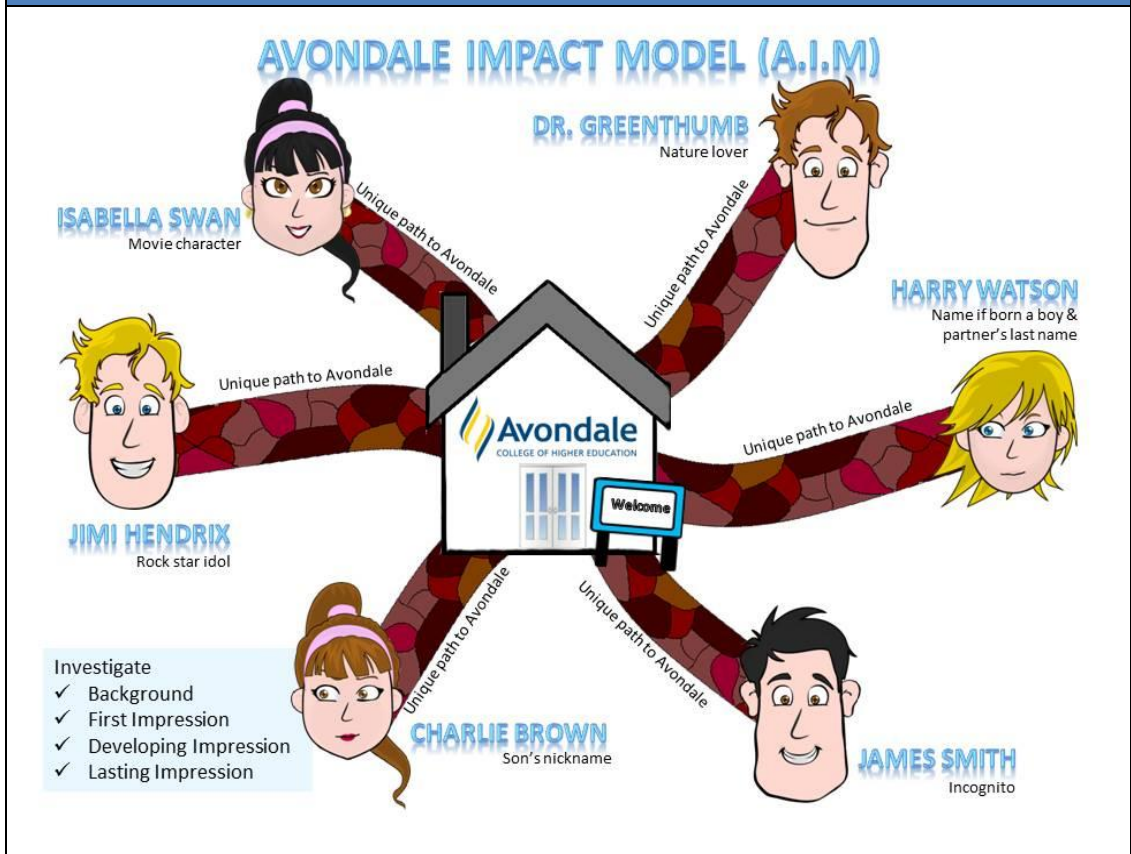


Figure 4. 1 Avondale Impact Model

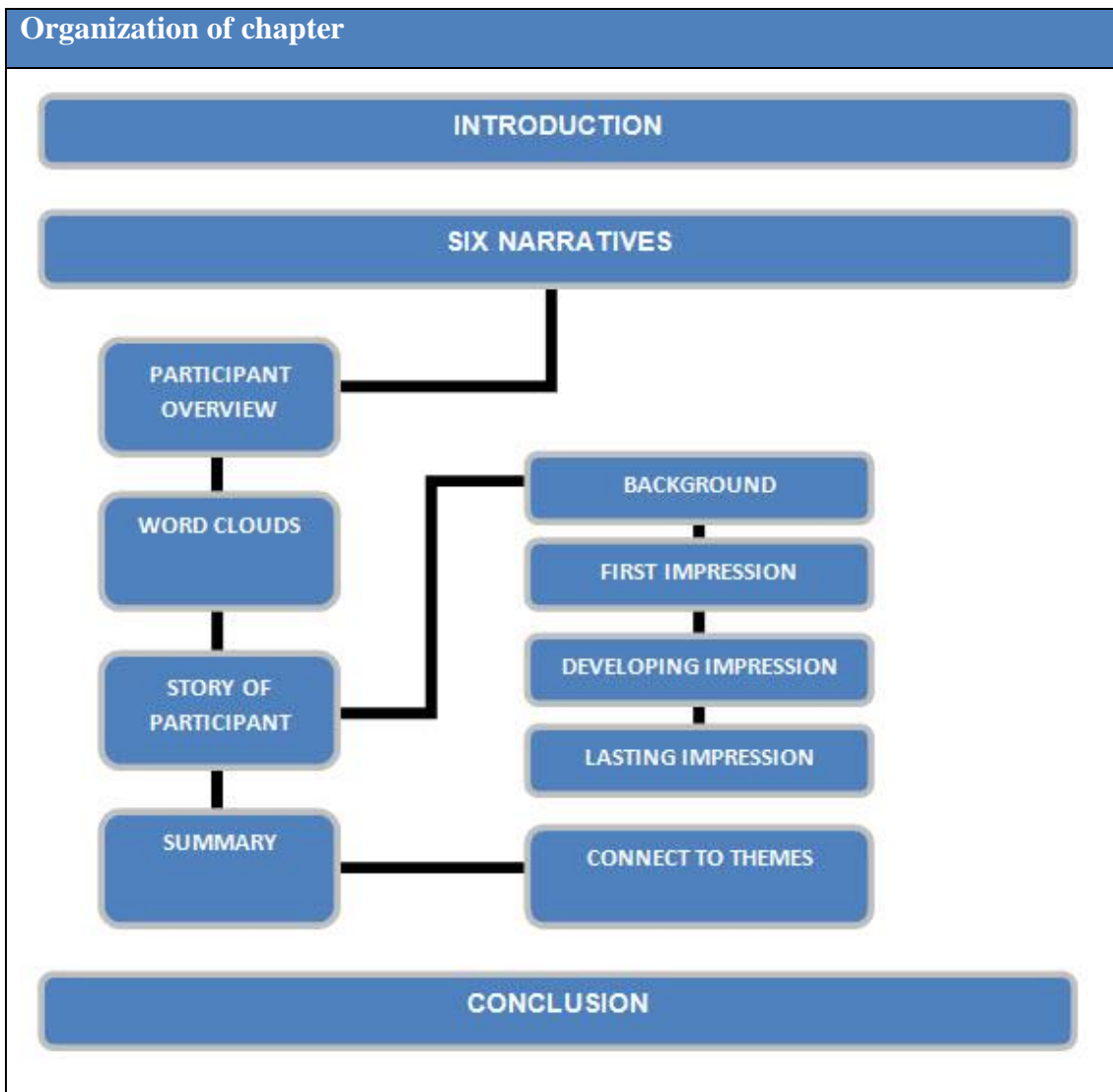


Figure 4. 2 Organization of chapter

Word clouds were used to creatively highlight the repetitive words as well as the frequent use of these words. The frequency of the words determines the size of the word within the word cloud. The word clouds highlight the ‘characters’ unique experiences of Avondale College’s ethos, mission and vision during their time of study, as well as the unique experience that each participant also brought to Avondale.

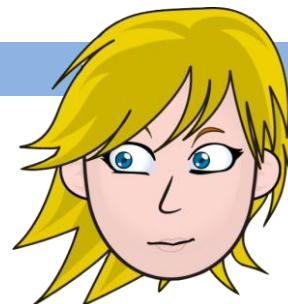
HARRY WATSON

[Name if born a boy and partner's last name]

Female

Age 29

Fourth Year Secondary Education



Background

Harry Watson heard about Avondale on a television advertisement, came straight to the campus and completed enrolment that same day. She had no prior knowledge of Avondale but stated, “For a long time it’s been in the back of my mind to become a history teacher.” She admitted that family pressure against the idea actually made it more attractive to her, so she grasped the opportunity when it came. Although she lived relatively close, only 30 minutes from Avondale, she stated, “I didn’t know it existed.” She claims she was not a Christian at that point in her life, and her attraction to Avondale was based solely on opportunity and timing.

First Impression

Harry Watson's first impressions of Avondale as she drove in, included a "real sense of belonging and calmness and stuff like that", even though she was "pretty skeptical, I guess, about it all." As registration progressed, the helpfulness of everyone in assisting a young mother with a pram impressed her, as did the faculty advisors, who helped her enroll. She stated, "People just helped me like the whole day and I was actually fairly stunned." By the end of the day she had enrolled in a teaching degree with a major in home education, as she was already a qualified chef. She expressed feeling a sense of initial accomplishment, seen through this statement, "I was like 'wow, I'm actually doing this - starting college and I'm like 'oh my god!'. I managed and I feel like I'm a heaps better person for it." Looking back on that first day, Harry Watson feels it was meant to be. "I guess even before I even sort of really thought about the whole God-thing like I just feel it was very clean cut. Like this is what I'm doing. I feel like there was someone praying for me."

Developing Impression

During her time at Avondale she went through a few changes in her personal life and stated that "before I came I wasn't a Christian, and then I became a Christian. Before I came I was married, I'm now divorced. This place has changed my life". She felt grateful that she found the necessary support at Avondale during the most trying time in her life while going through a divorce.

Although she felt supported at Avondale, her time here was not without its disagreement of opinions with lecturers. This however seems small, compared to the positive changes she experienced while at Avondale. Harry Watson states, "I still remember the moment that changed everything." During the most personally trying time of her life, she was deeply impressed by a video clip shown in one of her classes at Avondale. She relates that the characters in the video were acting out the "bad things that people do, and Jesus sort of still forgave them and stuff like that. I sort of fell to pieces at the end of that." During this difficult period in her life, Harry Watson also found that she could confide in some of her lecturers about the things she was going through, especially the issues "beyond my control". She felt greatly

supported as she “should have failed so many times. I still have like so many incompletes I’ve got to do by the end of the year, but there’s just so much grace.”

In contrast, she relates her experience while visiting another university campus for a subject that she had to complete there and how she felt that “you’re just a number’, nobody knows your name, you know you can’t just go and speak to a lecturer about getting an extension there’s like hoops and everything. It just made me realize how lucky I am to be here.” She enjoys the familiarity between lecturers and students at Avondale and finds it especially touching how she is greeted by name and asked about the wellbeing of her daughter. Harry Watson feels that the lecturers at Avondale show this kind of interest in their students, because they actually care. She states that “you’re not just a number like you are at another university”, but that the “lecturers here care what happens to you and they care about what happens outside of the classroom”. She feels that the lecturers at Avondale want to see students succeed, and they want them to become the best teachers they possibly can be. Teachers that can “actually change students’ lives as well”. She further states that, “by them [lecturers] changing your life, you can change others.” The living examples that she witnessed in the actions of her lecturers on campus have been positive. She feels that the lecturers here care, because “it will be more satisfying to see the change in their students, because it would be for me. To have a closer relationship with them rather than just ‘this number here failed that subject’ or they failed. Whereas they don’t like you to fail, they want you to succeed”. Harry Watson adds that she believes “the Christian perspective has a major influence on that.”

When Harry Watson was asked what she would consider spirituality to be, she gave a long reflective pause. She then stated that she believes it is that “God has a plan, and sometimes things can go either wrong, but I’m learning that it’s actually for a particular reason. I’ve sort of learned that things get pointed in different directions”. She also felt that spirituality is the ability to sit anywhere to talk to God and have a relationship with Him without being in a church. She states that “I’m not Seventh-day Adventist. Like I don’t know what I am. I don’t go to church, but I believe in God. I still pray and casually pick up the Bible.” She related that she often neglects to read the Bible but when she does, she will read small parts of it. She recalls how she’ll often “just sort of flip it open and whatever is there in front of me I’ll read it

and its like that's very relevant today, like right now". She felt that to be classed as a good Christian you should "memorize bits" of the Bible and that is something she feels she is not good at.

During her time at Avondale she has come to some understanding about what Seventh-day Adventists believe, such as "that Jesus is going to come back". Christian studies especially, played an important part in her understanding about what Seventh-day Adventists believe and she recalls being upset on one occasion, about what was taught. She states that she remembered "being fairly gutted about that when you die you just die". Although she did not grow up in a Christian home, she still remembers being taught that "Nana's up there in heaven, looking down on us", sort of thing. Like it was fairly shocking and it hurt a lot to hear that." She also recalls that Seventh-day Adventists have the "whole looking after yourself, you know with your diet and the things you don't eat or drink and stuff like that", as well as "going to church on Saturday or something like that". Harry Watson has noticed that within the Seventh-day Adventist population you find the "really conservative people and then there are those relaxed people". She relates how she tends to get along better with the "relaxed people" as she often finds herself arguing a bit with some of the views of the "conservative people", and states that "I'm sure He doesn't hate me because I drank a bottle of coke this morning." Harry Watson added that if "it is shown from the Bible I'll accept it but whether I do it is another thing."

Harry Watson shares that during her first year at Avondale College, she attended a church service of another denomination with her auntie and uncle, who are the only church-going members of her family. She attended the church with her family as it provided her with the necessary support and fellowship she craved while going through her divorce. She felt that she started to "be myself again" until an unfortunate change in events. She was asked by her family to transfer to another university "because of the Seventh-day Adventist thing, but I wanted to stay here." She felt torn but she relates that she soon found that "things didn't quite make sense to me". She mentions how she was told that Christians are to love everybody but then she found "they were very judgmental" and "I hate to judge people". Harry Watson states that she feels that a good Christian is "a person that is accepting and sees the best in every person and does not judge, no matter that person's past, present

or future life.” As a result, she stopped attending her family’s church, which resulted in another broken relationship between her and her family. Fortunately, this was short lived as she now again has a positive relationship with them, and enjoys talking to them about the Bible “because I like what they have to say, but I don’t like their whole closed in wall you know.” She felt that Avondale is “more relaxed to a certain extent, with some things”.

Harry Watson recalls another video clip that was shown during one of her classes, describing it as “you know one of these that stir the heart kind of things and that bring you to tears and that sort of stuff”. She felt quite upset about it as the words “hell and pornography, and divorce” was shown together. “That was like a slap in the face to me” she adds. She feels that as a divorced women she did it for the “safety and for just a happy life for my daughter and myself”, and she feels that she did nothing wrong by getting divorced. She states that “I feel like people only think that I should. You know there’s comments made and there’s things like that, that you get shown here that upsets me.” Harry Watson relates that “occasionally, comments were made that were hurtful and judgmental about my past. But there was a general acceptance of me by most people”.

Harry Watson relates that she also felt that “you do get a sense of separation with indoor [dormitory living] and outdoor [off campus living] students. You really do get a sense that there’s a bit of a clique.” This does not bother her that much as she has her friends at Avondale and she is content to sit by herself. She does feel however, that when it comes to planned events and activities on campus that there “was a bit of a gap for parents or single parents with kids who study” that “there’s sort of nothing really at the college” planned to include them. She states that while “you see all the signs up there that they’re having a party or something going on and I think someone did say that outdoors [off campus living] are welcome to come, but you don’t get that sense whatsoever.” However, this slight social isolation she felt on campus was lessened through the great support from her new partner to keep on studying. She states that, “I want to quit every day, but he won’t let me”. He also gives her the necessary support with her daughter and she states that “he’s not a Christian but, he has so many values and respect and honesty that I feel is all fairly, like it’s Christian.”

Harry Watson mentions that the lecturers at Avondale have definitely brought out the best in her, especially when it comes to the responsibility of handing assignments in on time. She states that the lecturers “have pushed me to learn more instead of just taking the easy options. Like I’m learning things that I thought I wouldn’t be able to do. Things like electronics, welding and stuff like that.” She felt that her confidence has especially grown in art and that she is “able to look at things differently and from an artistic perspective” which has “been amazing”. Harry Watson also added that she finds herself “more open with a lot of things” and “a lot of people I know”.

Harry Watson has felt that Avondale has encouraged her to reach her full potential as a professional. She adds however, that “nothing’s really easy. You have to work hard in order to achieve things”. In relation to this, she believes that the “support that you get is good” and in turn enables you to become all that you can be. She feels that a being a good teacher encompasses the “role that you have in student’s lives” and she never thought before coming to Avondale, that “you could be that one stability in that child’s life”. Before, she thought it was mainly about teaching subject content, but now she feels that “you need to teach values” as well.

Harry Watson was interested in going on one of the Ministry of Teaching Overseas trips that the education department organizes. She however did not have the opportunity to go as her daughter was only three at the time and she did not feel that she could leave her for three to four weeks. Yet, she did participate in two outdoor education hiking and canyoning trips. She relates that these experiences were “life changing” and that she “gained so much self-confidence” by standing on top of a mountain or hiking through snow with a full backpack and to “just enjoy what seemed so extreme, cold and wet.” She was overjoyed to be able to “stand on top of that mountain and just throw your arms up in the air and just look down and see what you’ve achieved” and to just “push myself to jump off those big drops into the water in a wetsuit, like I never thought I’d be able to do that”. Harry Watson felt that somehow “being out there and being pushed to those extremes where you just want to give up and cry, kind of felt a bit closer to God as well. You just sort of felt like you’d be crying to Him for help and you’d somehow get one foot in front of another and you’d keep going and you’d finish it - you’d get to the end. It’s amazing.” Harry

Watson feels that these experiences were greatly life changing and that it made her realize that it is possible to accomplish things not thought possible before. She mentioned that she thinks Avondale runs these trips as “part of the service” and “for ministry as well”.

Harry Watson feels that by doing the outdoor education classes her experience at Avondale has been more holistic in nature. She recommends that “every student that comes here should so do something like that, or the Cambodian or one of those trips. I think that should be more mandatory”.

Harry Watson feels that friendliness, support and helpfulness is experienced at Avondale mainly because “they do want as many students here as possible”, but also adds that “I think it’s just a general caring for other people even if they don’t know you”. She adds that she believes “it’s coming from the Christian perspective you know to accept everyone and not to judge people.” Although this is not such “big shock” to her now as she might have become used to it, she does notice the impact of the ethos of Avondale most clearly when she has visited another university campus. She states that “you definitely notice it then, that it’s not really there. It is a little bit, but nothing like it’s here.”

During the interview Harry Watson related the two main ways by which she could tell that Avondale is a Christian tertiary institution. She felt that it is visible first through “the posters that are around school” as well as the “overall welcome – well it’s very welcoming” which adds to the Christian atmosphere.

During the interview Harry Watson was asked to review Avondale College’s motto and mission statement. She was asked to rank it from one to ten; ten being the strongest and one being the weakest. She mentioned that Avondale definitely places a “big perspective on the mission work that people do here and all over the world, but even just form the small things like training the teachers to change the students’ lives”. She therefore felt that Avondale lives up to its motto and mission statements and scored Avondale quite highly on the card.

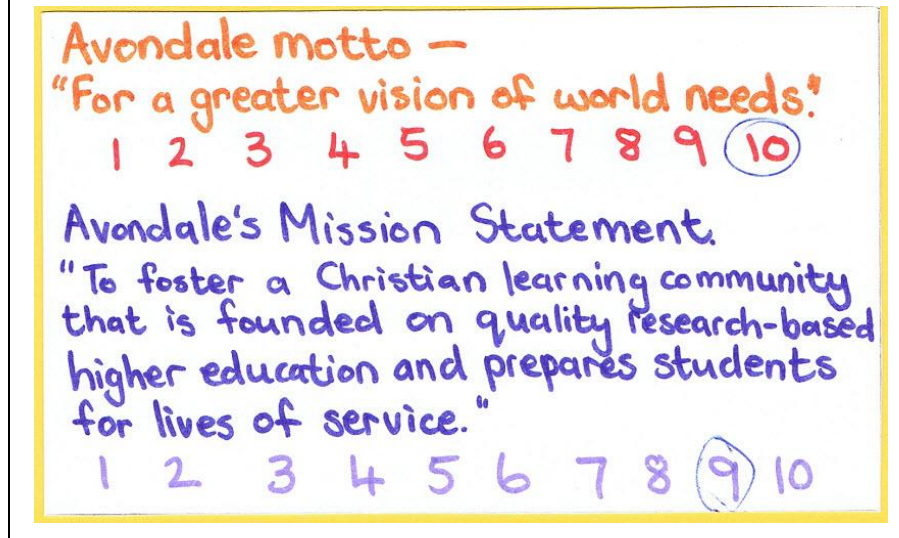


Figure 4. 3 Harry Watson

Harry Watson was asked to write down the three words that she considered best described Avondale for her. She chose "safe", as she feels Avondale is an "environment that is safe, meaning that there are no threats of physical attacks or bullying, and your property will not get stolen." She chose the word "friendly" as she feels that "everybody is friendly and nice to you and you always feel welcome". She also added that she feels that "nobody tries to put you down and make you feel inferior". The word "peaceful" was chosen as Avondale is located in a rural country area on farm land and she felt at peace while attending Avondale.

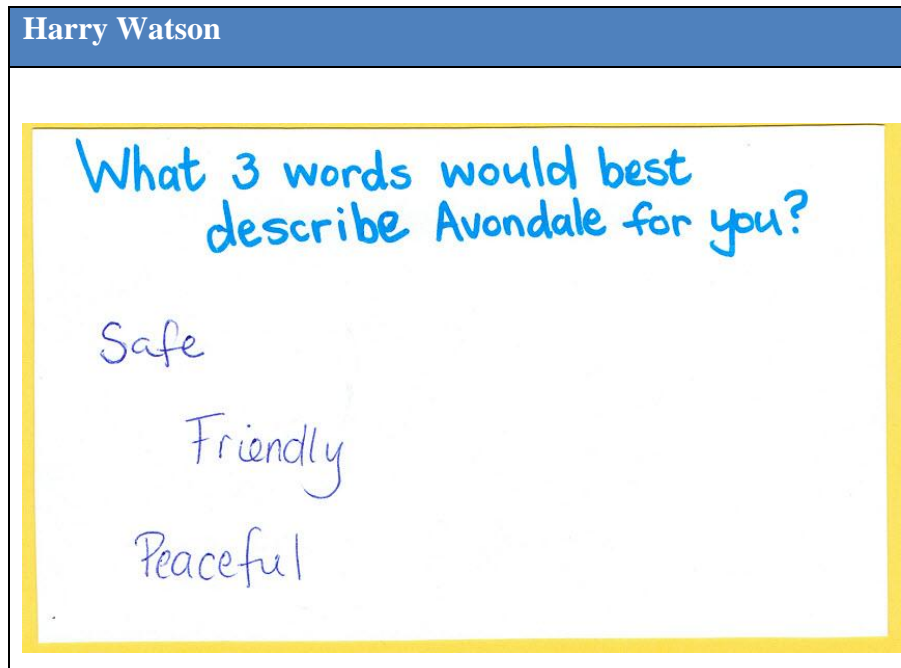


Figure 4. 4 Harry Watson

Lasting impression

Harry Watson was asked whether she would consider doing a mission trip in the future if the opportunity arises. She responded with a “definitely” and added that she “probably would like the fly and building trips” as she likes to “teach practical subjects”. She added that she would enjoy the opportunity to “feel like I’m helping in some way”, and that she would like to take her daughter and step daughter along as well so that “they can see what the world is like”.

Harry Watson mentioned that she does feel like Avondale College and the people here have influenced “the way I think”, especially with regard to nutrition. She added that “I guess I look at everything now in I guess a Christian perspective. I’ll stop myself from doing something or saying something that I think isn’t right.” She added that she feels she will pass on some of the Christian values in her classroom “without being too forceful”. She added that “students should have confidence in themselves to do what’s right”, and that she will help them to “believe in themselves” to do what is right. She also wants to encourage her students “to try even if you know they find something hard” and that it is okay to ask for help. She added that “I know of students at the school I’m going to, that have really bad home lives, but just because

of that it doesn't mean they have to follow in the same track. They can make something of themselves." She concluded that "I am now very passionate about teaching and especially the difference I could make to young people's lives."

Summary of Harry Watson's Experience

Harry Watson revealed that her journey at Avondale had been life changing. Although her decision to come was based on a whim, after seeing a television advertisement, and without any prior knowledge of Avondale or its religious alignment, she immediately picked up on care and belonging as two identifying characteristics of Avondale's ethos. After three and a half years, her overall impression of Avondale's ethos remains the same, despite some minor individual incidents that did not fit this impression. She was able to build strong relationships with her lecturers and related that they have guided her in both her personal life and professional journey. She views Avondale as a community of grace and support, both academically and personally, which became even more evident when her marriage came to an end.

Although she has not embraced distinctive Seventh-day Adventist beliefs (Sabbath-keeping, state of the dead, health message), and feels some tension in these areas, she has developed a relationship with God while at Avondale and considers herself a Christian, but she acknowledges that her Christian experience is atypical to that of most people.

Relating to her experiences as a pre-service teacher, Harry Watson perceives Avondale has achieved excellence in pushing her to learn, to challenge her through outdoor education, to reflect on the impact teachers have in the lives of children, and to embrace the teaching of values. She also feels her experience at Avondale helped her to gain confidence, and near the end of her course feels she is "very passionate about teaching, and especially the difference I could make to young people's lives."

Along with the many new experiences of her course, came a burgeoning confidence in her own ability to achieve and therefore in her belief that she would be able to make a difference in the lives of her students.

Has Avondale had a positive impact on Harry Watson? In her own words, “This place has changed my life.”

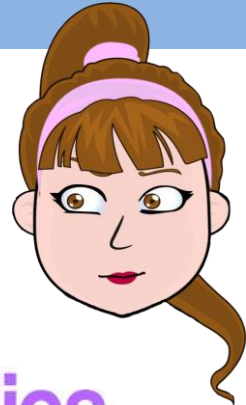
CHARLIE BROWN

[Son’s nickname]

Female

Age 22

Fourth Year Primary Education



Background

Charlie Brown found out about Avondale College through one of her mother’s work colleagues. The colleague’s daughter was attending Avondale College and she related how happy she was and how well she was doing in her studies. Charlie Brown has always “wanted to be a teacher so there was no way in my mind that I was never going to study to be a teacher”. The main question was as to where she would study. She added that she grew up in the public school system, and that “I’ve never known what it’s like in a Christian school or anything like that.”

Family life is important to Charlie Brown and she proudly explained the makeup of her family which included her partner, her son, and other immediate family such as

her parents, her partner's mom, her two sisters, her brother and then her grandparents. She adds that "they're the people I grew up with, and they are the people who have stayed really close in my life."

First Impression

Charlie Brown mentioned that her first impression was a big factor contributing to her decision to attend Avondale. She enthusiastically recalled the first day she stepped onto Avondale soil. She had a horrible morning trying to get to Avondale as she had to catch a train and a bus up to Avondale. She had no idea where Avondale was prior to coming for the enrolment day. She recalls missing the first train so she had to catch a later train, which in turn made her miss all the Avondale busses that shuttled the students from Morisset train station to Avondale. She ended up catching a public bus that did not end up going straight to Avondale, but dropped her off at the end of the long driveway, so she had to walk all the way down. She remembers it being a really hot summer's day and by the time she reached Avondale she just felt flustered and didn't really know what she was doing. "I was having a real panic, 'this is my first time, you know exploring the big wide world without mummy there holding my hand'. It was just overwhelming, absolutely overwhelming." She relates how one of the lecturers found her amid all the other people and asked "are you okay? It's okay. Just go get a drink, have a sit down for a little bit, and it's okay we'll sort it out. Okay?" Charlie Brown mentions that she just felt so flustered, and so disorganized. She adds that "I didn't know what was going on, didn't know what to expect." It was only when Lecturer B noticed her and said "look it is okay. We're here to help you" that she came to the decision that even though there was another university closer to home, that they did not provide her with this support when she visited. She thought to herself that "if I ever find myself overwhelmed at [that university], then what am I going to do? I'm going to break down. I had so much support here at Avondale."

Charlie Brown then starts to reflect and mentions that she felt she "had support through my beginning year, getting through it, and just learning how to do college, because it's a big step up from high school." Later, in her first year she also found out that she was three months pregnant. She recalls how she "freaked out big time because obviously it was unplanned, and I had been on contraception. I freaked out

about it. I even thought ‘ooh my god, what are they going to say at Uni because you know I’m not married, I’m not anything like that.’ Even though she had all these fears she felt really supported through her whole pregnancy, and even after her son was born the college allowed her to bring him to class. She adds that the lecturers didn’t mind a few squawks here or there as long as it wasn’t too much for the other students. Charlie Brown states that the people at Avondale were “really, really supportive, and I don’t think I would have found that anywhere else but Avondale.”

Charlie Brown further describes her first day at Avondale and mentions that she sat down and had a chat to someone about general studies. She had to start her studies as a diploma of general studies, but Avondale gave her opportunity to study in classes that would lead into teaching, so that she didn’t have to do an extra semester. She remembers “looking at the course and everything and thinking, I guess that’s kind of what I expected.”

Charlie Brown however did mention that the only thing she wasn’t overly keen on was the requirement to attend the forums (chapel programs) that during her first year. She added that “it felt too much like going to church and I didn’t feel like I really belonged in church. I have faith in some areas of Christianity but not in others.”

Developing Impression

Charlie Brown describes herself as being religious, sort of on an off. She remembers that when she was quite young she enjoyed scripture and recalls joining a “little youth group down where I live, and they did all religiously sort of things” and the activities they had were fun. She adds that she has been exposed to religion, to some extent throughout her life. She states that her parents had always been very open about religion and told her that it was her decision as to what she believes in and that they were not going to force her into anything. She states “that’s how I was raised, and that’s how I hope to raise my kids.” She acknowledges that her parents have allowed her to have an open mind for both people who are religious and who aren’t by not being controlling. “I have faith in some areas of Christianity but not in others. So, I’m not a hundred percent certain whether or not the Bible is real.” Charlie Brown holds to the idea that history is made and recorded by whoever won the each war. Thus, whoever won the religious war was the one who claimed to have the truth and she doesn’t know whether to believe it or not. “I don’t know whether to believe

the stories of people being eaten by whales and then they are still alive and about massive floods flooding the earth. I'm not sure. I don't know." Charlie Brown however does believe that they are great stories to teach morals, and that these morals "are where my morals are based." She doesn't hold anything against any denominations. She states that "I actually find that Seventh-day Adventist people tend to be much less pushy than a lot of other churches."

Charlie Brown reveals that she doesn't feel like she belongs in a church and that she feels that "if I'm to have a personal relationship with God, or Jesus or Holy Spirit, whatever you want to call it, I feel it need[s] to be personal, and on a one-to-one basis. When I'm developing relationships I like one-to-one." She further continues to say that she does not like social gatherings, but rather prefers to have a few personal friends. She adds that she feels that if you are really going to get to know someone and for them to get to know you, and to develop love for each other, it should be on a close one-to-one basis. Thus when she looks at church, she views it as "a great big peer pressure" environment where you have to look like and do things in a specific way. Whereas, when it's one-to-one she feels that it's more of a "well what do you think is right? Is it really right, do you really think that? It's not this is right because we're telling you."

Charlie Brown traces her views back to her grandparents and some of the beliefs they instilled in her. Her grandparents were with a religious church group, who were very supportive and treated them well. Her grandparents later moved to a different town and joined a new fellowship of the same denomination. The people of that church group came around to her grandparent's house without invitation, looked around their house and according to Charlie Brown said "well you have this kind of job, and you seem to have nice things. You'll be able to contribute this much to the church." This particular experience that her grandparents went through, made Charlie Brown reflect and she decided that "I don't really want to be pushed around by those sorts of people'. I know not every church is like that but I guess it's a protecting myself sort of thing."

Charlie Brown relates that when she was a small child, even though she did not go to church or talk to her parents about religion, she did believe that there was a God. She further adds that "almost every night of my childhood I remember talking to

God, and feeling like He was talking back to me. As I got older it kind of happened a little less frequently.” Charlie Brown still finds it strange that she classes herself as non-religious but that “I have Christian values as a basis to my values” and that “I kind of feel protected”. She adds that she doesn’t know if that makes sense but states that “I guess I am Christian but in my own way.” She continues to say that she feels convinced that “there’s something out there, there’s definitely something out there.” Charlie Brown continues by relating that “there’s been times where I’ve just had this nagging feeling in the back of my head, and I turned around done something different to what I had planned, and it turns out that if I had continued with what I was going to do, then I would have been seriously injured, you know.” She also explains it as having a “feeling of okay I need to pull over now, like right now. I just really need to pull over and just stop for a moment” only to realize that there was an accident five seconds ahead of where she was. Why she pulled over she cannot explain but describes it best as “I just had a feeling that I had to.” Charlie Brown adds that “it’s not really a voice, because it’s not. It’s just this feeling; a feeling that I just need to do it now.”

When Charlie Brown was asked whether she felt that this feeling came from God, she responded that she felt it might, although she wasn’t sure. “I believe there’s something out there. I don’t know what. I don’t know if you can call it God, if you can call it Zeus, or whatever you want to call it. There’s just something out there.” She feels that there has to be, because if there isn’t then “what is the point of us evolving and, being human and the way we are. Why do we have this conscience that we have, you know.” In Charlie Brown wittily questions why did people learn to put on clothes to keep warm rather than grow fur. She further reasons by asking “how did we know all of this, how did we develop to be like this without at least guidance. Whether or not we were created by the hand of God as we are, or if we evolved from monkeys it doesn’t really matter, we were guided this way, somehow”. Her only remaining question is “but by what?”

Overall, Charlie Brown states that her belief in God has not changed since her childhood; however her views on churches and Christianity have changed. The only difference that she notices with her views on God is that now she chooses not to name Him as such. The reason for this is because “I am unsure if His name is God, or if ‘He’ even has a name.” Charlie Brown however has felt that “during my time at

Avondale I have felt at peace, however whether this is the work of God or simply the people around, I do not know.”

Charlie Brown thought that the word spiritual is quite a loose term, as she feels you could be spiritual in different ways. She mainly feels that you could be “spiritual in terms of a religious spiritual or you can be spiritual like naturalistic ways”. Charlie Brown relates her experience of being out in nature and “this feeling of just wholeness and magic. I guess it’s like magic around you.” She feels that this could also be described as spirituality. She further adds that it’s “like there’s music everywhere if you listen for it, there’s beauty everywhere if you look for it, and I think that being able to see that is spiritual.”

Charlie Brown admits that she likes to be outdoors and it doesn’t matter where she is outdoors, as long she is outdoors. She shares that she enjoys the beauty of the outdoor world as well as the indoors. For example, “it’s looking at the sparkle of the waves and at the beach looking out at the ocean and it’s a feeling that you know everything around you is just beautiful”. She further adds that it is like looking at a room and saying “we’ll look at all the patterns on the bricks’, you know every single one of them is individual, they’re all different, they all got something different about them and they’re all beautiful.” Charlie Brown perceives that when you have that feeling that everything is beautiful, like “the sparkle in my son’s eyes, the cheeky little laughter you hear across the room. It’s feeling that way I feel is what is spiritual in my life.” Charlie Brown shares that having a child has impacted the way she views spirituality. She reasons that when she was younger she probably didn’t have a clue about spirituality and most probably didn’t really care about it much. She believes since having her son she’s noticed that there are a lot more beautiful things out there than what she’s been able to see. She concludes that “yes I would say that having my son has changed it [spirituality] a bit.” Charlie Brown also adds that “I suppose that Avondale has helped me to develop my spirituality to what it is now and to develop my understanding of I guess the Christian worldview and all that sort of thing along my journey.” She feels that if she didn’t come to Avondale then she would still be “stuck in similar sort of views as I was five years ago.” She adds that even though she feels Avondale has impacted her developing spirituality, she is not entirely sure to what extent.

Charlie Brown was asked what she understood about Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. She started to explain that Seventh-day Adventists keep Saturday as the Sabbath, and adds that the idea of Sabbath is not too clear to her. She states that “in the Bible is the Sabbath because it’s a day of rest, but really it’s the day I guess for religious people more, a day of worship and service to others rather than a day of rest.” She further adds that it’s not really a day “where you lay on the couch and go to sleep. It’s a day of, I guess making sure that at least once a week you’re in touch with God.” Charlie Brown thinks that the people who live on campus have to attend the church ceremonies or the forums. She adds that “most Adventists I know are just, really good people that believe” and that since being at Avondale and getting to know Adventists she felt that they “have just been really kind people and like really happy to help.” She goes on to say that the Seventh-day Adventist church is very different to some of the other churches she knows.

Charlie Brown feels that if she lived closer to campus she might have attended more of the social programs that Avondale offers throughout the year. On average it takes her about forty-five minutes to get to Avondale from where she currently lives, and during her first year she lived further away and had to travel over an hour and ten minutes to get here. She adds that “the religious sides of things haven’t been the deterrent, it’s more the time.”

Charlie Brown feels that the people at Avondale have positively influenced her. She reminisces back to the time when she left high school and started to attend Avondale and lost contact with some of her old friends. Charlie Brown surmises that a main reason for this might be due to “realizing that perhaps what they do is not really in my best interest and not really what I want to be a part of”. She explains that her old high school friends are a bit selfish and that if she went to the university that is closer to her home she might have been surrounded by more people like that. She adds that most probably she would have never been able to move away from that influence but would have ended up just dealing with it. Charlie Brown realizes that through her association with people at Avondale her mind was opened up to see that you can “choose a new type of people to be with.” She explains that for while now, whenever she has met new people that she would consider to be her friends that they are more the “new type of person rather than whom I used to hang out with in high school.”

Charlie Brown values people who do not just care about themselves, but who are willing to realize that friendship is a give and take. She appreciates the thoughtfulness of people that include you in plans and decisions that need to be made. She adds that she has looked up on a social networking site many of the people that she used to know found that “well some of them currently do drugs, and some of them currently go out during the weekend and you can see the lovely photos that they have on [social networking site] and it’s just... Why? Why? I’m glad I got away from all that, really for myself.” Charlie Brown admits that she was never really like that but she guesses that she was still under the influence of it.

Charlie Brown also shares that by coming to Avondale it has helped her to see the better qualities of other people as well. She remembers always getting into fights with her grandmother when she was in high school. Most of the arguments were because of misunderstandings or due to jumping to conclusions. Later Charlie Brown realized that her grandmother was not meaning harm but that she was trying to restore order with some of her brothers. She recalls that “I used to get into quite a lot of fights with her because we had different views” and she just felt that the way her grandmother spoke was so boring. Since her experience at Avondale she has learned to look past some of the differences between her and her grandmother and actually found that she does have some interesting things to say. Charlie Brown jokingly adds that her grandmother probably still doesn’t say them in the most interesting way; but that if you do listen she has quite a bit of knowledge and that she’s funny in her own way. She reflects that “it’s just funny how my relationships with my family members have grown and I think that’s been due to being able to see different sides of people, which I think has really grown from being here [Avondale].”

Charlie Brown expresses that the thing about Avondale that has most appealed to her is that “it is really a big family.” She adds that the lectures have been her teachers and mentors, and that they have been very honest in their dealings. She feels that they “tell you what’s what and what’s not.” Charlie Brown goes on to say that the lectures really care for their students. She has experienced that “they’ll laugh at your little quirks and let you see theirs, and they’re not all formal and horrible and just keep standing at the front of the room. You look at some movies and you think ‘good, I’m glad that Avondale is not anything like that!’ Really glad! So it’s more of a family sort of thing.”

Charlie Brown voiced that she really liked that Avondale's education program requires students go out into the schools more often and get practical experience. She felt that it was really interesting to observe Avondale primary school and see what a Christian school was like, as she grew up going to public schools. Charlie Brown expresses that "Seventh-day Adventist teachers seem to be really caring" and she believes that these practical observational experiences will help her with her future approach when she starts working in the public system. She goes on to explain that she is a little bit "here, there and everywhere with what I believe. So I don't think it's fair for me to be working in the Adventist system or even in a Christian setting at this point in my life."

Charlie Brown however does feel that it is beneficial to experience all that she can so that when she starts working within the public school system she can say "okay, I can't teach them about God, but I can be there for them and care for my students, and be a positive role-model and show them good sides in everyone, and that sort of thing that I feel that teachers here have shown me. So I feel that it's been a really good experience."

The areas that Charlie Brown found that she disagreed with were in regards to assignments that she felt were very religiously based. She mentioned that outcomes for the assignments had to have religious content, which she could understand being a Seventh-day Adventist college. However, she points out that these same assignments could have been done with the use of NSW board of studies values, which would have had similar outcomes. Charlie Brown mentions that one of the lecturers she has is "fantastic and yes we have prayer at the beginning of every session and all of that and that's fine, like I'm respectful of that." Charlie Brown especially appreciates that this lecturer would generally provide a choice to do an assignment with the NSW board of studies values or with the Christian values system. She has however experienced that not all the lecturers are so flexible and relates how during a creative arts subject all three of the assignments had to be related to Christianity. Charlie Brown expresses that she would have preferred to have a choice, even if it was just for one of the assignments. She found that by having to do everything in relation to Christian values resulted in her having to do twice as much work as she had to keep looking up the Christian content. She remembers having to do an interpretive dance that depicted something from the Bible

in creative arts and she had to put more effort into finding content from the Bible. She recalls that even though she did have a fair bit of experience with the Bible, she still found it a bit difficult. Charlie Brown remembers that “I got quite a low mark and I love creative arts. I would say I’m quite a creative person, but I didn’t go as well in creative arts as I thought I could have if there wasn’t that much emphasis on Christian values. If one of them had been a choice it might have made, you know, my credit a distinction.” Even though Charlie Brown knows that she didn’t do too badly with her grades, she felt she would have been able to do so much better, especially in a subject area that is a favourite of hers, if she was given the opportunity to choose the topic for the assignment.

Charlie Brown feels that Christian studies were really interesting. She has only just passed her first Christian studies subject and is experiencing some difficulty with doing the third Christian studies subject by distance. She relates that after reading some of the literature she feels that she can’t stand the kind of language used. “It just goes so deep into it, and I just think ‘okay that’s fine if you have that view’, and I can understand that, and I can say ‘from a Christian perspective’ which is how I’ve had to start almost every reflection that I’ve done.” She adds that she just found the readings confusing and a little bit straining to her mind. At times Charlie Brown feels torn in two because she expresses feeling like “I don’t know if I can agree with that and I can’t write that in my paper” as she expects it would cause her to receive a low mark. She mainly feels that “it’s been very conflictive on my point of view I guess.” Despite this, Charlie Brown explains that the experience has made her understand a little bit more and it has kind of opened her mind up a little bit. She also relates feeling slight frustration about how some of the conclusions came to be, and asks; “How do you really come to that conclusion? Like how do you come to the conclusion that, it is only so because God made it so?” Charlie Brown adds that she doesn’t understand how these Christian authors reason. She further shares her frustration by asking, “Didn’t God give us choice? Isn’t that one of the natural flaws of humans was having the choice and choosing perhaps not necessarily the best way? We had the choice whether or not to believe in God. We have the choice of everything that we do. So how can everything that we do be predetermined because God made it so if we have choice.” She expresses that this just doesn’t make sense to her.

Although there definitely have been some frustrating moments during Christian studies, Charlie Brown had found that “just some of the views are very interesting and very in-depth, and like some points of view seem to make sense.” Charlie Brown states that when she is usually confused about a reading “I will ask my partner, because he was raised as a Jehovah’s Witness since he was two. He very much believes in a lot of their views, some of them I kind of disagree on, but I figured well, it doesn’t affect how I love him really. He was Bible raised so he tends to know quite a bit about it, and he’s able to develop my thinking on it.” After this if she still feels confused she will seek input from her grandmother, before going back to research more literature on the subject. Her main concern is that it takes a lot of her time and then doesn’t leave her with enough time to do the assignments. Charlie Brown believes that “one of the things that Christian studies really need to have more of is time, especially for someone like me who was not raised that way.” She surmises that people who were raised in Christian homes might find the readings and assignments easier. After some reflection Charlie Brown adds that “I wish that I was doing Christian studies III on campus. I really wish that I was, because then I could find someone to talk to about it, have my lecturer to talk to about it, sit with somebody who’s doing it.”

Charlie Brown had to change her study plans this year as she found out in the beginning of the year that she was pregnant again. “The baby is expected around mid-semester break around the 29th of September!” She added that she was hoping to have distance education almost finished by then so that she could be ready for graduation.

Charlie Brown feels that Avondale has provided her with quality coursework stating that “I’ve learned so much and it’s amazing. I really feel that in learning so much I have matured and it enabled me to be a better teacher.” She feels that with Avondale there are so many opportunities for professional development and going out on practical experiences. Charlie Brown feels that she really grew during those experiences and it helped her to develop her skills. In the end she really feels that “it helped me to I guess grow more professionally because of it and I think that was really positive.” Charlie Brown also feels that these experiences helped her to work towards reaching her full potential as a professional. She recalls that while she was out there on the practical experiences that the student teacher is expected to meet the

“graduate professional teaching standards”, which she feels is really positive. Charlie Brown experienced not only professional growth during her time with the children but also through her dealings with colleagues. She feels that “working with colleagues was a bit nerve wracking for me because I feel like ‘I’m still a student myself so what can I possibly say to those people who’ve been out there so long” but that she has learned to deal with that.

Charlie Brown was very familiar with the public school as she went to public schools all her life. She mentions that Avondale opened up her view on Christian teachers and their worldview. “I suppose Avondale has expanded my views on what a teacher is. Like it’s not just somebody that teaches you your Mathematics and your English but you know there’s also values, there’s morals. That a teacher is a role model for their students and I feel that Avondale has really shown me that.”

Charlie Brown was asked if she has ever used any of the support services on campus to which she replied that she has visited the library and had some support from them. She believes that she has good support from home but that she thinks it’s a good idea for the library to have tutors. She concluded that she couldn’t say that she knew much about the support systems as such but added “that just everyone that I know here is very supportive with the studies.”

After some reflection Charlie Brown states that “I suppose I’ve been supported with my decisions beginning from when I first had my first child.” She felt that she was supported to go through with the pregnancy. She then was supported with her decision not to be with the father because at that time she felt it wasn’t working. She then relates how she was supported in her decision to give the relationship another try. Charlie Brown then shared how she feels that Lecturer Y is fantastic because even though she hasn’t had a class with him since her first year at Avondale, he would always “ask me how my son is doing and will compliment me on how good I am as a parent and how proud he is that I’ve continued on, and that I should be proud of myself for continuing on even though I had a child, and was a single mom for a while and all of that. So I do feel really supported.”

Charlie Brown believes that the lecturers at Avondale show this kind of interest in their students possibly because “they’re Christians and they were brought up that way. It could be because they’re just really nice people and they’re just fantastic, but

I guess I want to say on average Christian people tend to think about other people more than non-Christian people do.”

She further adds that the lecturers feel good about helping someone and that this motivates them. She feels that “you get that from being a good Christian you know, a good Christian will help others and they get this feeling of good”. She guesses that perhaps this is how most of the motivation started and now the lecturers just enjoy it.

When asked if Charlie Brown ever considered going on one of the Ministry of Teaching Overseas (MOTO) trips that the education department organizes, she answered that she has always been interested to go. She further added that she would have liked to go anywhere and that it would have been amazing to see how other people live, how they learn and how teachers are over there. She mentioned that she would have enjoyed having the opportunity to help in the community, and that it is an experience that she would love to go on when her kids are older. Currently circumstances prevented her from attending any of the MOTO trips, but she has only heard good things about these trips. She shares how she knows students who graduated last year who went and “they found it a really amazing experience. They found it really fantastic.” Charlie Brown feels that when you go and visit another country and culture “it really opens your eyes up to how someone else on the other side of the world lives and it really points out the great things that you have and makes you appreciate it better.” She adds that she has never had the opportunity yet to go overseas and that she is planning a trip with her family for next year.

Charlie Brown feels that Avondale organizes these trips to allow students the experience of another culture and how people live. She adds “to give them inspiration and to make them appreciate what they do have, and to grow positively.” She feels that if she would have gone on one of these trips that it would have changed her worldview. Charlie Brown relates again that she has always been interested in going and found that everyone else that has gone, came back with so many amazing experiences that she would love to experience it for herself.

Charlie Brown especially feels that Avondale has been a “facilitator for my maturing as a stubborn teenager.” After leaving high school she felt she wasn’t as open to different views and that by coming to Avondale is opened up her views. Charlie Brown feels that Avondale helped her to mature and it changed her attitudes a bit.

She also felt that she was encouraged “to be myself”. She relates how she has noticed that several of her old high school friends were not living lifestyles that she would enjoy living. She wonders about what would have happened if perhaps she did not come to Avondale and realized that there are people who have similar views to her. She mentioned that “I don’t like to drink, I don’t smoke, that sort of thing. I don’t take drugs and I know people, like my old high school friends who do and I know that they do all of that and they’re happy with their life like that and I know that offends me.”

Charlie Brown feels that Avondale is “very relaxed and very peaceful and it’s very spiritual and I think that everybody that comes here just gets that and just absorbs it all and people just react.” She tries to explain this by stating that when you go into a stressful situation you are likely to be stressed, as opposed to going into a nice and calm situation. She further adds that she really feels “that the atmosphere of Avondale is just really calm and collected and caring.”

During the interview Charlie Brown related the two main ways by which she could tell Avondale is a Christian tertiary institution. She felt that it is visible first through “the multitude of churches on campus” and that secondly most of her “lecturers begin every session with prayer and usually end every semester with prayer.” She further added that “they incorporate the teachings of God into what they do and relate everything to it”. Charlie Brown then gave the example of kids with disabilities still being called the children of God. She added that you can tell just by the way that the lecturers teach, and how they do it that it’s a Christian school, as well as the “big posters everywhere.”

During the interview, Charlie Brown was asked to review Avondale College’s motto and mission statement. She was asked to rank it from one to ten; ten being the strongest and one being the weakest.

She felt she was not entirely sure about Avondale’s motto. She felt that Avondale does incorporate the motto and that it is evident through the overseas mission trips. With regard to Avondale’s Mission Statement she said that “I’m going to give them a nine because you know as a teacher you never give everyone a hundred percent because that means they can’t improve.”

Charlie Brown

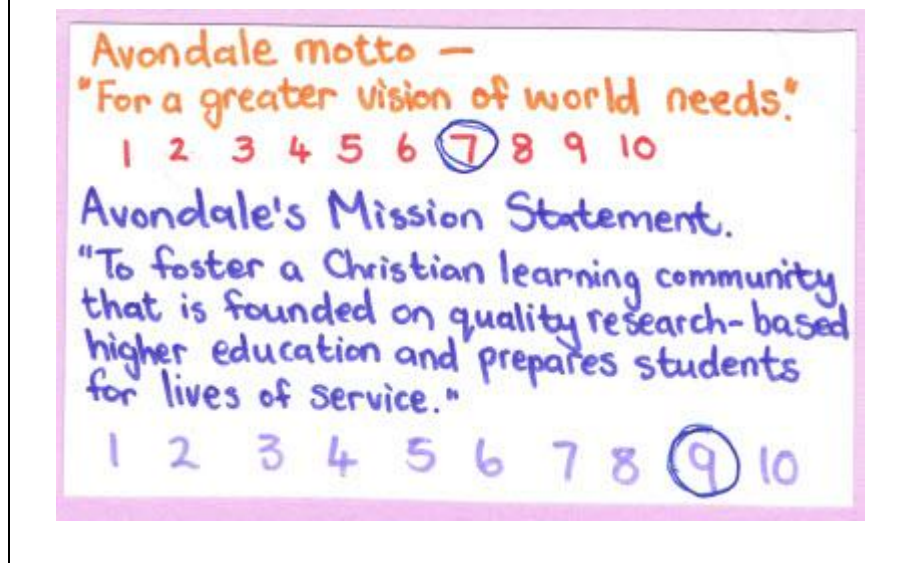


Figure 4. 5 Charlie Brown

Charlie Brown was asked to write down the three words that she felt best described Avondale for her. She mentioned that there are so many words to choose from. She soon decided on the words "caring" and "professional". After some quiet reflection she wrote down the word "understanding" although she had some reservations about whether it is entirely satisfied her.

Charlie Brown

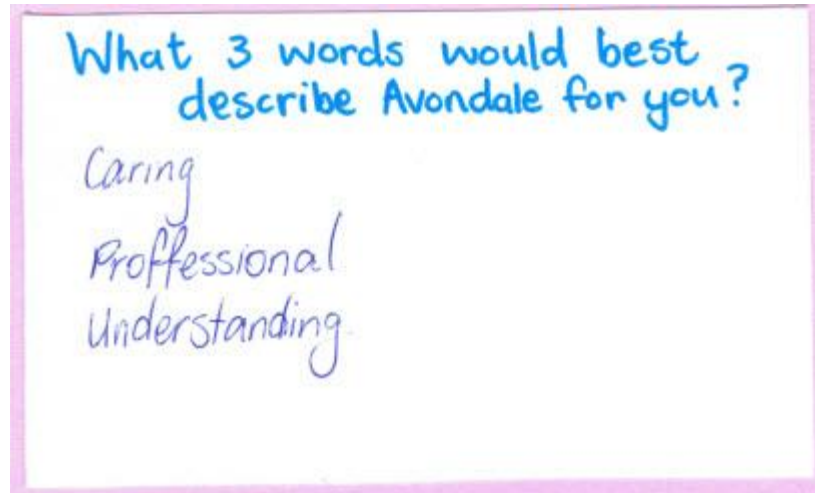


Figure 4. 6 Charlie Brown

Charlie Brown decided to write down “caring” because “every person I have met at Avondale, whether it is a lecturer, administrator, or student has been caring in everything they do.” She has felt that this might be the general nature of people that Avondale attracts.

The word “professional” was written down “for the fact that as students we are made to feel like professionals and encouraged to behave as such.” Charlie Brown further explains that at Avondale it is expected of the education students to undertake professional experiences, and that the lecturers are professional in their teachings.

Charlie Brown chose “understanding” because it was due to Lecturer B’s understanding that she decided to attend Avondale. She adds that “every lecturer I have met has understood my differing circumstance, and staff that I have not met in person are also understanding of unique circumstances.” She states that her “time at Avondale has been askew of the norm, but I have found that the staff at Avondale are understanding or at least appear so, of my circumstances that have made this so. I have not been judged but I have been given opportunity to prove myself because of the understanding of others at Avondale.”

Lasting impression

Charlie Brown was asked whether there is anything she learnt from Avondale that she will continue to use in her future teaching career, to which she replied “everything. The way the lecturers are. How they talk to us and how they teach us. I’ll definitely be taking that along with me into my classroom and how I interact with other people, that sort of thing.” She then added that “I think Seventh-day Adventist teachers seem really caring.” She believes that this will help her in the future as she is to work in the public system. She feels that although she can’t teach children in a public school system about God that she will be there for them and care for them. She will aim to be a positive role-model and show them the good in everyone. She feels that the teachers here have shown her that. Charlie Brown then states that “even though I’ll be working in a public school I feel that I’m going to hopefully be able to instill some values into my students and have a positive classroom that isn’t stressful like I remember my school being.”

Charlie Brown was asked whether she would consider sending her child to a Christian school, to which she replied that she would. However, her partner and she came to a decision that for primary school they are going to send their child to a public school, as they feel that you can find teachers in the public system that provide caring environments. The main reason is due to the fact that she wants to raise her son the same way she was raised. She states that “we’ve decided that our son will go to a public or private school that has no religious affiliations simply for the fact that we want him to make his own mind up, and have I guess a bit of influence from everything so that he can understand it. He can make his own worldview and he can develop I guess the same kind of mindset that I have, like it doesn’t matter what your religion, it doesn’t matter what your race, it doesn’t matter your culture it’s the person that matters. I think that being in a public school you kind of see more of the variety. I mean not necessarily but I guess I want him to experience that as well.”

Summary of Charlie Brown's Experience

Charlie Brown revealed that her journey at Avondale has been one of support and care. After hearing a good report about Avondale and deciding to brave the big wide world on her own she attended Avondale's open-day and found support and care. She felt that as a mother she did miss out on some of the social meetings at Avondale College but still felt that she had met people with values that she can relate to. Her good relationship with lecturers was very evident throughout and left a positive impression on her.

Charlie Brown felt that although she doesn't classify herself as a Christian that she definitely lives a life guided by Christian principles and values. She felt that although she hasn't decided to become a Christian during her time at Avondale that she still felt a spiritual impact especially in relation to her relationships with others.

Charlie Brown felt that she has grown professionally during her time at Avondale. She particularly enjoyed the experience of observing Christian education, as she only had prior knowledge of public school education. She felt that the teachers are all very caring, and that in her future classroom she would instill Christian values without becoming religious.

During her time at Avondale, Charlie Brown has grown in confidence, as well social and emotional maturity.

Has Avondale had an impact on Charlie Brown? In her own words, "I found that the people at Avondale were, really, really supportive, and I don't think I would have found that anywhere else but Avondale."

Comparisons

There are several commonalities between Charlie Brown and Harry Watson's experiences. Neither of them had prior knowledge about Avondale nor about Seventh-day Adventists. Both are mothers and both have felt the support in their studies, with regard to being parents, as well as emotionally when they went through events and circumstances related to their personal family relationships. Charlie Brown and Harry Watson also both felt that Avondale College's Seventh-day Adventist environment is relaxing and that the people are caring.

kind of thought the people that I spoke to on the phone were really friendly and everything. I sort of thought ‘been good to me so far, I’ll give it a whirl and see how it goes’.” Jimi Hendrix knew that he wanted to do primary school teaching, and felt that this choice to do primary teaching was just always there in the back of his mind even though he couldn’t explain why. No one in his family is a teacher and he is one of few within the family that decided to do university studies.

Jimi Hendrix comes from a family home where his mom believes in God but does not attend a church, whereas his dad not only believes in God but also attends an Evangelical church regularly. For Jimi Hendrix however, the thought of church has always made him “a bit uncomfortable really”. He reveals that he does not precisely know why but that “there’s something about it when people are like too nice or something.” He further states that “I’m just not used to being around people who, I don’t know are polite to each other and it’s kind of like walking into ‘Pleasantville’ or something like that. I find it a bit unnerving.” He especially dislikes the people who “hunt you down” to enquire whether it is your first time at church, or why you haven’t attended lately. He adds that “I don’t really feel like I need to go to make me okay with what I believe.”

On further reflection Jimi Hendrix adds that he feels uncomfortable around people who are too friendly because he does not know whether they are genuine or not and feels that people have a hidden agenda for religious reasons. He amusingly recalls the relationship he has with his friends and reveals that even though he loves his friends to death that they are “horrible to each other” as they will speak their minds openly towards one another without the worry of losing a friendship. Jimi Hendrix then also gives the example of his relationship with children and states that he works in a before and after school care center with five to twelve year olds, and that “I don’t want to allow them hugging me, because it just makes me uncomfortable” unless it is for a more legitimate reason such as serious injury or hurt.

First Impression

Jimi Hendrix lives about forty minutes away from Avondale College, and once he received acceptance to enroll in the primary teaching course, he drove up a few times just to check whether his enrolment was done. He humorously recalls that “I hated

the telemarketing job and I was freaking out that I would go to turn up at uni and they'd say I wasn't enrolled".

Jimi Hendrix recalls that on the first occasion he drove onto Avondale estate he was a bit "freaked out at first". Avondale did not suit the generalized university campus image that he had in his head. He adds that it might just be that Avondale is an older university and that "layout wise" it is different from any other university he has seen before. He relates one occasion in the beginning of his first year when he had to catch the train and bus to get to Avondale and states that "I remember walking down like the main road and there was all this grass and cows, and this funny looking little brick university. I didn't know anything about Seventh-day Adventists or anything. I'd no idea about any of that before I started." He further adds with humour in his voice that he remembers "walking down one day and thinking 'I've joined a cult' or something like that".

Developing Impression

Although Jimi Hendrix had a slightly unsettling start to his time at Avondale he states that "I absolutely loved the place and like I just wanted to be like a perpetual student because I thought this is just the life." He has admitted though that he has recently "hit that fourth year wall" where he has become tired of studies. His recent holiday trip overseas also made the last year of studies seem like "death".

Jimi Hendrix recalls some of his Christian studies classes that left a lasting impression on him. He felt that some of the lecturers in that particular class were "open to people who possible aren't sure about Christianity". He recalls trying to figure out one lecturer from the Christian studies classes as to "whether he was Christian or not because the way he discussed things was really like he could have been on either side of the fence" and relates that he appreciated that it felt unbiased. He further added that this lecturer did not "impress his beliefs on you" and he "never made you feel like you weren't part of the same religion as him or the rest of the uni".

Jimi Hendrix has heard stories from his friends studying at other universities that complain about their class sizes, and how they met people at their graduation that they've been studying with at the university for four years, but only met face to face

then. He also added that he feels Avondale has “good lecturers” when he compares it further to the stories of his friends and their university experiences. He recalls that it is more personal at Avondale and that if you are missing a few days “like lecturers will ask how everything is going and they want to know you and help you get through, kind of thing” which he feels is good. He adds that it “probably could be a part of the whole Seventh-day Adventist thing, like they really do care about students and they do want you to pass if you are struggling”. He has experienced that when he has had trouble completing study work that he could “go and speak to them and they are willing to try and get you across the line, kind of thing.”

Although he has attended Avondale for four years Jimi Hendrix admits that “the whole atmosphere and vibe here; the whole Seventh-day Adventist thing is something that I’m just not used to at all.” The cafeteria not selling meat and the campus not having a campus bar to socialize in still surprises him. “I think the idea that I originally had of what uni was going to be like isn’t like that here.”

Although there has been some out of the ordinary aspects to Avondale, Jimi Hendrix feels that “primary teaching is run really, really well”. He once again compares Avondale to the stories his friends shared with him from the universities they attended. He recalls a conversation where his friends and he discussed their primary courses and remembers his friends saying that they left their university “feeling unprepared”, and how he feels the professional development classes in the final year at Avondale prepared students “for interviews and all that kind of things”. Jimi Hendrix also recalls a “horrible” assignment that he had to do in his third year where he had to “plan a term plan of work”, but that he is happy now that he knows how to do it. Once again his friends related that they never did an assignment like that and that they “were impressed that now I have like a year’s worth of work to go out with”. Overall he feels that the “assignments are run really well” most of the time, except for the odd assignment here and there which he refers to by saying, “I don’t feel any better equipped to teach than I did at the beginning of the semester”. One assignment that he was doing was to help apply for accreditation to teaching in New South Wales. At the after school care center where Jimi Hendrix works, he mentioned to one of his friends what he was doing for this assignment, only to hear that this friend has “never been helped with any of that” at the university he attended.

He states that he feels that these types of assignments, dealing with accreditation and resumé writing are very “practical”.

As Jimi Hendrix does not live on campus in the dormitories, he has only attended one of the social activities organized. He adds however that “I’ve grown up in a whole different social setting to a lot of people here” and that some of the “extracurricular stuff” is very different to what he is used to. He adds that he has also never attended forum and that feels that partly “its laziness because it is an hour off that I wouldn’t have then”. He again mentioned that even though “I believe in God and consider myself a Christian and all that. I don’t go to church and a lot of that kind of stuff that makes me feel uncomfortable”. Jimi Hendrix reflects on how he finds it “really unusual to come to a place where everybody is so nice to each other and supportive”, as he and his friends “don’t really say nice things to each other or about each other or anything like that, and to come to a place where everybody is really nice to each other, like really pleasant and everything again felt a bit cultish.” He further adds that he does not understand why everybody was behaving so happy and that probably this is the reason why he hasn’t participated in a lot of the extracurricular activities on campus as it “makes me feel a bit uncomfortable, to be honest”.

Jimi Hendrix did not know anybody when he started his studies at Avondale. He soon however found friends in his classes that also came from public schools. They soon formed a big group to socialize in and even after four years they still “hang out together”. Other than the commonality of coming from public schools, they all partake of behaviour that “some people here wouldn’t approve of” such as “binge drinking” and “other lifestyle things”. His friends are similar to him in that they “believe in God and everything but never gone to church”. Jimi Hendrix feels that a lot of the people that he is surrounded with on campus have grown up going through the Seventh-day Adventist system and has been surrounded by people with the same values, which is different to his experience growing up in the public system. For instance one big difference is “Saturday being your Sabbath kind of thing, and like Saturday when I was in high school was your day to recover after a big Friday night before starting again on Saturday night”.

Jimi Hendrix pauses for a few seconds when asked what he considers to be spiritual in his life. He then stated that maybe it is “believing in something other than what you can see or what you can feel”. Although he feels the term ‘spiritual’ can be used by people who do not believe in God, and he explains it has mostly been associated with religion in his life, it does not have to be associated with religion or denomination. After further reflection he adds that “I do believe in God and occasionally pray, and like I hope there’s something after all this” and he sort of believes in the soul and “like karma, what goes around comes around sort of thing.” He feels that people should just try and be a good person and that the way you tread others “reflects on what kind of soul you have”. He further adds that you should also not “judged on what you believe, the kind of soul you have and the kind of person you were and why you were that person sort of thing.” Jimi Hendrix admits that for a while “I started to think about going to church and things like that and thought about maybe coming to that “Regen One thing” (college church service) but then after some reflection it started to “freak me out a bit and like now at the moment I’m pretty far from that”.

When asked what he understood about Seventh-day Adventism he stated that church was on Saturdays from “sundown on Friday to sun down” Saturday. He recalls some of the “extremes like there’s no TV or anything like that during that time” and that most people are pretty relaxed about that. He sees Saturdays as a day to “sort of relax and not have to do uni work”. He also recalls hearing that some Seventh-day Adventists “don’t eat meat” that doesn’t “chews its cud and have split hoofs or something like that”. Another Seventh-day Adventist belief that he became aware of is that “when you die, you don’t go straight to heaven you’re basically just asleep or something like in limbo in the ground” and that “when Jesus comes back then He takes you with Him”. Jimi Hendrix feels that the “afterlife thing” hasn’t really made a difference to his life. The thing that did annoy him however was that the cafeteria did not sell meat, and that he felt even though they have their reasons for not selling meat that they need to understand that there are “Christians and non-Christians here”. Jimi Hendrix did state that he understood that Avondale has its “special character and I suppose their ethos and their Seventh-day Adventist beliefs” and that it has the right to adhere to it. He then remembered another occasion that annoyed him and went on to tell about a Friday afternoon that he rushed over to Avondale to hand in an

assignment before five o'clock only to find that everything was locked up. He adds that "this annoyed me about the Saturday thing" as he then only handed the assignment in on the Monday and lost a few marks because of late submission. Jimi Hendrix also questioned the closing of the library during forum and festival of faith. He feels that "it's silly that the library closes" and feels that he could spend that time on studies or assignments. On reflection he adds "it almost seems like it's their way trying to forcibly persuade you into going to that or something".

Other than these few instances Jimi Hendrix feels nothing else at Avondale annoyed him during his time of study. "I'd have to say it's been good. I've really liked the people here." In his experience at Avondale he feels that the girls tended to be nicer and sort of a lot easier to get along with than the guys that "seemed to form their cliques". Jimi Hendrix adds that he has become used to the friendliness experienced at Avondale and that he enjoyed coming to Avondale "to be with a whole bunch of people what were sort of upbeat about it [studies]". He really likes the Avondale environment and adds that it is "kinda nice to be out of the way a bit and it's kinda cool in the mornings to be able to like drive down. It's in a nice place, and I think it's good where it is". He does add however that the distance he travels does have its advantages and disadvantages depending on how you look at it. Closer to home would have been nice for the fact that between classes you could go home, but the upside of being further away is that "I get to hang out with a bunch of people and sort of relax".

One of the areas where Jimi Hendrix feels Avondale brought out the best in him has to do with holding presentation. He feels that he has presented a lot during his time at Avondale, that it's been good for him and helped him to be more "comfortable in front of people". He feels that the course material has helped him to work towards reaching his full potential. He also found the information that is taught to prepare students for their practicums to be useful, such as "appropriate behaviour not just in the class but also in the staff room and with your teacher and things like that". Jimi Hendrix states that he feels this has "improved my professionalism kind of thing". He feels that the studies at Avondale have also maintained a balance between "gaining knowledge" on campus and then experiencing the practical side of things "out in prac". He added that you couldn't say that the one is more important than the other because if "you haven't got the knowledge then you can't teach." Jimi Hendrix

recalls his time at Avondale during the beginning of his studies and states “I spent the first six months thinking that it wasn’t for me. I didn’t like Avondale. I didn’t like the course” but then “when I did my first prac, and after like a day in classroom I saw that this was for me.”

When considering the role of a teacher Jimi Hendrix believes it is more than just teaching, but rather that it is just the basics of it. He states that “it’s not a point of being miserable and smart, I’d rather be dumb and happy”, and that it’s about giving kids tools for “living life, knowledge and social skills” as well as to be happy. He further adds that kids can go through a lot of things in their lives and that teachers should be there for them. Jimi Hendrix admits that he likes “working with naughty kids” and that he thinks they are funny. He believes that you need to have a sense of humour to work with these sort of kids and that they are not “bad just because they’re bad kids” but rather victims of circumstances.

Jimi Hendrix has noticed with the lecturers at Avondale that most of them care about the work you are turning in as well as how you are doing. When he has passed lecturers in the corridors they’ll greet and ask him how he is doing and how his studies are going. He feels that this is partly due to the “class sizes” as the lecturers can keep on top of just how everything is going with the students in general. Jimi Hendrix remembers when he had a big weekend out and that the following Monday he felt “pretty rough and ended up having to go and sleep it off on the couch outside the class”. After class the lecturer came out and “wanted to know if everything was okay. I was shocked by that like you wouldn’t get that at another uni.” When asked whether he used any of the support services on campus he responded that he never really needed them, and that he usually completes his essays the day before submission so he never used the tutor in the library either.

When asked why Jimi Hendrix thought the lecturers at Avondale show this kind of interest in you he felt that it had to do with “their worldview” and “being Seventh-day Adventist”. He states that “I can tell that they really do live their lives in a certain way” and many are “good people and they do care about others”. He does however feel that “at the same time I’m sure that if they were of some other denomination or even no religion that they could still be nice people. I don’t think you have to have a religion to be a person like that” although he does feel that

Seventh-day Adventist beliefs play a big part in the worldview of the lecturers at Avondale. Jimi Hendrix also strongly believes that most of the lecturers just “love teaching”. During his studies at Avondale he noticed that the lecturers have a love for teaching and a passion for what they teach. He adds that he believes the lecturers’ motivation for teaching also has to do with “caring about the children out there and giving us the tools to be able to work with them the best sort of way, not necessarily just for being a Christian.”

The education department runs yearly Ministry of Teaching Overseas trips, and Jimi Hendrix mentioned that he wanted to go on one of the trips to India, and that he felt that he was really done by as he missed the opportunity to go through lack of information and missed communication. He does know of a girl who attended Avondale College a few years before he came that went on one of these trips and really enjoyed it. He feels that these experiences would change you as “we think we’ve got it rough here but then if you’re teaching in a third world country I think it’s going to wake you up.” Jimi Hendrix has a “positive view” as well as a “cynical view” as to why Avondale College runs these trips. He feels that first of all it is “aimed at like opening students minds” and to “offer them an opportunity” that they might not get otherwise. He also feels that it is a big benefit to be able to claim these trips on your HECS and to deal with the payments once you start to work. He adds that these experiences could also “probably broaden your mind a bit when it comes to teaching and where you consider teaching”. The other view that Jimi Hendrix wonders about has something to do with these trips is that of evangelizing the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, and that it is a bit of “propaganda”, but that he doesn’t hold this view too strongly.

With regard to Avondale having an impact on his worldview, Jimi Hendrix believes that it didn’t have a big impact on him but that he feels he is still the same person he was when he started studies at Avondale College. He feels that the personal overseas trip he had the year before probably “changed my worldview a bit more than Avondale” has. He believes that travel impacted him most as it took some of the “travel fear away” and he is now ready to go anywhere and is considering teaching in England for a year once he graduates. After England he feels he would love to go to places like Nepal and experience diverse places and cultures.

The only impact that Jimi Hendrix thought Avondale had on him was during the time he considered going to church, that he “tried to drink a bit less” and “sort of behaved a bit more Christianly” but adds that he is not living that way anymore. He admits that he is a bit sporadic when it comes to religion and is usually guided by his conscience rather than what people say. He states that “after a few months or something I’d be like ‘I think I’ve had enough of that, it’s time to sort of you know be good again [chuckle].” Jimi Hendrix unpacks further why he doesn’t like going to churches and reveals that he has attended a church once and never again. “I don’t even like the idea of denominations. Like you believe in God, why can’t you just do that and people leave it at that kind of thing.” Some of the things Jimi Hendrix’s dad shares with him from the church he attends annoys him. He feels that he is not at the point in his life where he feels ready to go to church and that not going to church doesn’t impact his belief in God. Jimi Hendrix then compared church attendance to the way he currently feels about Avondale. “I didn’t exactly feel comfortable when I was at the church, and yeah, I didn’t really feel comfortable here.” He however relates this again to the fourth year wall that he spoke about earlier.

Other than this frustration with the final year studies Jimi Hendrix does feel that students are provided for holistically if they would allow it. He feels that subjects like “Christian studies where you have to discuss like your beliefs” allow you to let go of your inhibitions a little. With regard to your physical wellbeing Jimi Hendrix feels that the PE subject at Avondale addresses the physical and social aspects of life. He states though that not all students may be provided for holistically.

Jimi Hendrix has enjoyed the experience of meeting people that come from other countries and interstate to study at Avondale. He remembers when he first started studying at Avondale and he had people coming up to him who he has never met to have a conversation with him and how that was scary. He now feels however that it was good and that these experiences “probably change us” starting from nothing and then learning to put yourself out there a little bit to meet new people. He further adds that it helped him to become more confident and taught him not to be too “choosy with who to talk to, based on their looks and things like that”.

When it came to the staff at Avondale College, Jimi Hendrix felt that they were “good all-round friendly people”, and that he was especially impressed when a first

year lecturer actually remembered his name three years later, and asked him how he was doing.

Jimi Hendrix felt that the two main ways he could tell that Avondale was a Christian tertiary institution was that Christian Key Learning Areas (KLAs) were presented in the subjects and in the way that the lecturers deliver lessons. He did however express slight annoyance when a lecturer went on for too long about “their journey to Christ or something”. The other way he could tell Avondale is a Christian institution is from the different lifestyle on campus to what he is used to, such as not seeing people smoke out the front of the school and not having a bar on campus. He did add however that “I really don’t need another place to party”. Overall Jimi Hendrix feels that Avondale provided him with an overall positive experience as he was not “immersed in the same thing all the time. It’s good to have somewhere else to go where the focus is on something else.”

Lasting impression

During the interview Jimi Hendrix was asked to review Avondale College’s motto and mission statement. He was asked to rank it from one to ten; ten being the strongest and one being the weakest. He felt that when the “opportunities are taken its [Avondale] doing a pretty good job” with regard to the motto, and that with regard to the mission statement Jimi Hendrix scored them higher. He felt that Avondale was overall doing a “pretty good job”.

Jimi Hendrix

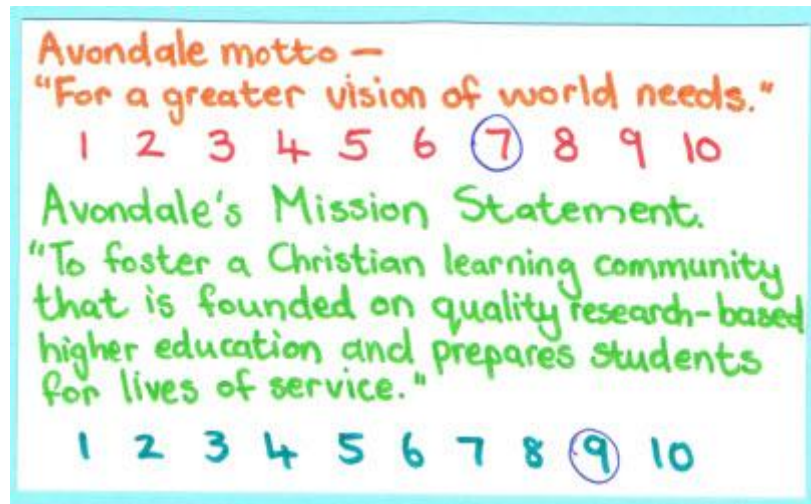


Figure 4. 7 Jimi Hendrix

Jimi Hendrix was asked to write down the three words that he felt best described Avondale. He found it difficult to think of words and after a long period of silent reflection stated that he found it hard to find a word that would sum up the classes and the lecturers. He felt that some of the lecturers were “really accommodating and things like that and really helpful and everything but then you’ve got lecturers that aren’t. So the word doesn’t sum up both sides of it.” After another long silent reflection period Jimi Hendrix decided to use the word ‘accommodating’ as he felt that would perhaps sum it up the best. When Jimi Hendrix was asked why he chose accommodating he mentioned that he felt the staff at Avondale, both admin and lecturers did their best to make the students feel comfortable and that they were cared for both in their course work as well as their personal lives.

The next word Jimi Hendrix considered had to do with all of Avondale and he wanted to use the word “cult-like but I don’t mean it in such an offensive way” and only found that it was hard to describe what he meant. He then settled on the hyphenated word ‘closed-off’. When asked why he used this word he explained that he feels that the “Seventh day Adventist community is like a whole world of its own”. He adds that some of the behaviour of Seventh day Adventists showed that

they know little about what he considers to be the ‘real world’. He felt that “they had easy, privileged and sheltered lives and some aspects of life were watered down for them”, as well as not having experienced some of the things which he feels are the most enjoyable things in his life and from which he learnt a lot.

The third word Jimi Hendrix chose was ‘comfortable’. He stated that he used comfortable because “it’s the way I have felt through most of my time at Avondale, with the exception of some lecturers and peers, I’ve always felt comfortable to be myself, hold my own beliefs, and haven’t felt as though I need to change this to suit Avondale.” He adds that this is however his personal view as he has friends who feel very differently about this than he does. He concluded that these word “best sum up my time at Avondale”.

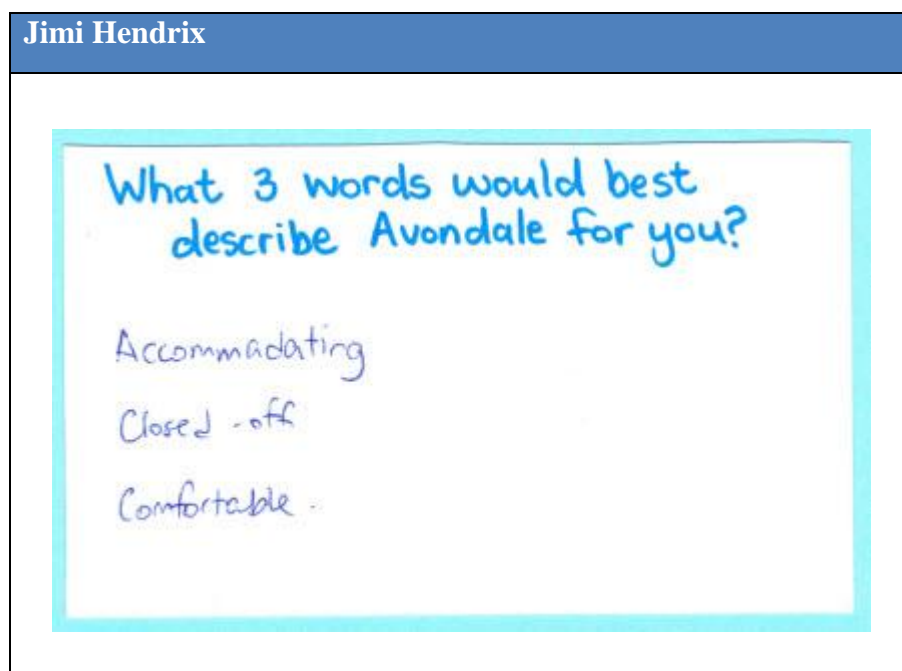


Figure 4. 8 Jimi Hendrix

Jimi Hendrix was asked whether there are any values that he has learned in class or from lecturers at Avondale that he would implement in his classroom as a teacher. On the topic of religion he feels that he will only discuss that with a student if the student asks him about it. He believes that everybody has to choose for themselves. With regard to service he doesn’t feel that you have to do it in a “Christian way, like I don’t think you have to be going out to some outback town and be reading the Bible

to kids.” Jimi Hendrix does however like the idea of helping other people and would consider having a “‘running in their shoes’ program at school where you take kids down to nursing homes and things like that.” Jimi Hendrix also feels that if he would have gone on the India Ministry of Teaching Overseas trip, he would have used those photos to show that “before we got there this is what they had, this is what they had when we left. Look how happy the kids are and everything like that”. He would then discuss about how good it felt to help and to then encourage his students that “giving” is a good thing. Jimi Hendrix concludes that this focus on service would most probably have come up on its own, but that he does feel that “there is such an emphasis on that here, that I think it’s an idea that’s grown on me a lot”.

Overall, Jimi Hendrix feels that he “had a good time here” and that probably he will “look back a few years later and think ‘that was really good’ and I think I’ll do that”. Personally, he feels that he hasn’t changed much during his time at Avondale. “I don’t feel that I was horrible before and now that I’ve come here it’s opened up my eyes and everything like that, and I realized I have to turn my life around. I just don’t really feel like I’ve ever been that horrible in the first place.”

Jimi Hendrix does feel however that it was a good experience to meet people from “all over Australia” as well as New Zealand and the Polynesian islands. His whole life he has lived in the same town and at home with his parents and he feels he is still “attached to everything at home”. He admires the people that have moved away from home and are living in the dormitories. “I don’t know if I would have been able to live on campus and I don’t think I would have been able to move interstate to go to uni, and I think it’s really good that the people here do.”

Something that Jimi Hendrix has considered that he would like to do in the future is to do some kind of volunteer work “without the religious aspect to it, because I don’t feel like I’m in a place to be teaching it, and I don’t really think I’d be comfortable if it had such a focus on that.” He expressed that he would be interested in a ‘fly and build’ project, but then stated that if at the end of the project he was asked to share his favourite Bible story he wouldn’t know what to do. “I suppose if I call myself a Christian then I probably should”.

Summary of Jimi Hendrix's Experience

Jimi Hendrix's journey to Avondale started by pure coincidence when a friend casually spoke about Avondale to him. His experience at Avondale has however been one of some discomfort when it came to relating to Seventh-day Adventists, but soon found a group of friends he could relate to. He felt that the lecturers were particularly caring and supportive and that they cared about their students beyond the academics.

Although Jimi Hendrix classes himself as a Christian, he feels very uncomfortable within Christian social and religious settings. For most of his time at Avondale, he felt that his lifestyle different to that of Avondale. He had a near encounter of attending church on campus but this feeling was short lived. During his time at Avondale he did learn about Seventh-day Adventist beliefs (Sabbath, Nutrition, State of the Dead) and reflected on things he never thought about before.

Jimi Hendrix was especially impressed with the guidance and support he received throughout his studies. He feels that he is better equipped to start his teaching career than some of his friends from surrounding universities.

Jimi Hendrix has felt that he grew in confidence and in his empathy with others. He often displayed scepticism and distrust in peoples' motives, but has learned over the time at Avondale that not all people have a hidden agenda.

Has Avondale had an impact on Jimi Hendrix? In his own words, "I've always felt comfortable to be myself, hold my own beliefs, and haven't felt as though I need to change this to suit Avondale."

Comparisons

Jimi Hendrix agrees with Charlie Brown and Henry Watson about the lecturers being very supportive and caring at Avondale. Jimi Hendrix however revealed a different kind of relationship with the lecturers as compared to Harry Watson and Charlie Brown. Harry Watson and Charlie Brown both seemed to have confided in the lecturers about some of their personal struggles, whereas it seems that Jimi Hendrix's relationship was more limited at the study level. Jimi Hendrix however still appreciated the caring attitudes of the lecturers.

The impact that Avondale had on Jimi Hendrix also does not seem to be nearly as great as the experiences of Harry Watson and Charlie Brown. Jimi Hendrix grew in confidence, knowledge and experience; whereas Harry Watson and Charlie Brown expressed that their experiences were life changing.

ISABELLA SWAN

[Favourite movie character]

Female

Age 22

Fourth Year Early Childhood Education



Background

Isabella Swan heard about Avondale from a mother of a student that attended Avondale. He was a non-Adventist, living in the dormitories whose mother told Isabella Swan about how involved her son was in things “like sport and the community” and that living in the dormitories was “very welcoming and happy and fun environment to be in.” Isabella Swan ironically remembers that the mother also told her about the cafeteria and the kind of food they served. She adds that “there wasn’t a negative thing for the person to say, like they couldn’t fault Avondale in any way”.

Isabella Swan decided to also come to Avondale because “it was small” and “it was Christian”. She adds that she knew before coming that it was Seventh-day Adventist but states that “I didn’t know much about what that held”. The main deciding factor for her however was that it was small. The reason for this is that she had an experience in high school where she transferred from a bigger high school to a smaller Christian high school and she states that “I much preferred the smaller school where you had two year twelve classes instead of seven.” She adds that her brother goes to a bigger university but she much prefers Avondale for its community feeling. At high school Isabella Swan remembers that there was “sort of a community feel, but I do think it’s more so here because as a live in student you’re really in each other’s faces, I guess all the time. So you really have that community sort of feeling”.

Isabella Swan was born in Sydney and was raised as a Catholic but lived in Port Stephens since she was ten. Most weekends she travels about an hour and a half to visit her family. Before settling in her decision to come to Avondale Isabella Swan considered other universities that are closer to her home as she was not too interested in living away from home. She mentions that she did not get the mark in her HSC that she hoped for but applied to attend Avondale nonetheless. She decided to start a diploma course in childcare based in Newcastle when she received the acceptance letter from Avondale in March 2009. She decided to defer the studies at Avondale for a year to complete her diploma. Once the diploma course was completed the thought came to her, to perhaps apply at another university. Isabella Swan states however, that she decided that “no, I want to go to Avondale, I know it is small, I’ve heard good things from other people about it, and I can live in” which started to appeal to her a bit more.

First Impression

Isabella Swan moved into the women’s dormitories on Avondale College campus and realized that some of the people she met were surprised that she is a Catholic attending a Seventh-day Adventist university. She adds that people tried to find out “what being a Catholic is all about” and they asked questions so that “we can relate to each other a bit more”. Some of her other friends not of the Seventh-day Adventist church related to her that they went through the same questioning. Although everyone in the dormitories now know and accept that Isabella Swan is a Catholic

and that she knows who the Seventh-day Adventists are, she does admit that in the beginning the questioning was “a bit off-putting because it was like, well, why can’t I be here? I’m still a Christian. I just don’t have the same beliefs as you.” Isabella Swan states however that it’s not “such a terrible thing” not being a Seventh-day Adventist at Avondale College and that apart from this the experience at Avondale has been fine. She adds that she is respectful of all the Seventh-day Adventist views and states that she is not one of these people that say “oh, I’m Catholic so I can’t have anything to do with Seventh-day Adventist. I’m just here because it’s Christian, if that makes sense.”

Isabella Swan mentions that because she came from a small Christian high school “I wanted to continue being in that environment”. She adds that she knows not all Christian institutions would be like her high school or Avondale college, but from experience she is “just more aware that people are going to be friendlier” and that they have the same values or beliefs such as “everyone believing in God and things like that, or like the fact that being a live in student that boys and girls are separate.” Isabella Swan adds that she does not like the idea of boys and girls sharing dormitories and sharing the same bathroom as you find at some universities, and would not want to go there.

Isabella Swan ironically remembers her experience with the cafeteria food and states that “I guess my first year I hated it, it was all new food and I wasn’t used to having to be vegetarian.” She adds that she was experiencing foods and other things on campus that she may not have necessarily experienced in the past. Isabella Swan states that “I’ve still got my foods even now that I refuse to go near, but I’m definitely enjoying the food a lot more and this year it’s just gone from you know being down here (laughing) to up here, and I don’t know why but the food is just amazing at the moment (laughing).”

Developing Impression

Isabella Swan especially enjoys being on a small campus because as she states “I love the fact that my lecturer *knows* who I am, and knows where I am in my studies. It’s more personal I guess, more one-on-one as appose to just being another number, if that makes sense (laughing).” She adds that she has been especially happy that most people on campus have Christian values and that she is free to talk about being

a Christian. Isabella Swan feels that the environment at Avondale is “just a happy, welcoming place to be I guess, and you don’t feel like you can’t be yourself.”

Isabella Swan considers “having something to believe in” as spiritual. She adds that not just believing in something but also to be proud of it and not “hiding the fact that you are a spiritual person, or that you pray” or any other religious activities. Isabella Swan feels that she connects her spirituality to her religion as being a Catholic rather than just the “inner being or whatever”. In her own life she considers spirituality to be that “faith and belief in God, and knowing that He’s always there, along with the Holy Spirit and Jesus”. She adds that “being able to pray and just being aware of that other Being I guess, and feeling safe within Him”. After reflecting more, Isabella Swan adds that she shows spirituality through her personality in a way because “I’m one of these I don’t like to do anything wrong, I like to be respectful of other people, and also that I’m not ashamed that I’m Catholic and that I’m a Christian”. She adds that she feels reassured that she knows she has that Someone she “can turn to, who may not necessarily be like physically there, but is Someone I can quietly talk to in my room”. During her time at Avondale, Isabella Swan states that she has felt that Avondale has encouraged her spirituality especially through worships. She adds that although these worships have been “more Seventh-day Adventist based, I am like a Christian that is open to all Christian faith, like it doesn’t bother me” but suggests that the Seventh-day Adventists might relate more to the worships at times than she has. When Isabella Swan was asked about her prayer life she commented that “I don’t think my prayer life has really increased. I’ve probably found a better understanding as to why I pray and things I can actually pray about, but I don’t think yeah its’ really changed the amount of praying or anything I do.”

When asked what she understood about Seventh-day Adventism, Isabella Swan jokingly replied that she knows more now than what she did. She feels that she learned most of the things that she was never aware of before while taking Christian studies II. Isabella Swan admits however, that in the beginning she did not enjoy this class, and felt that it was pointless and that there was nothing that she could relate to. She adds that after she started to get more into it she started to enjoy it and found that “this is really so interesting. I’m going to go back and talk to my Seventh-day Adventist friends now and see what their opinion is.” Isabella Swan feels that she can relate a lot more now to her Seventh-day Adventist friends as she is more aware of

the “the differences I guess between being Catholic and Seventh-day Adventist and I respect the Sabbath a lot more”. Other Seventh-day Adventist beliefs that stood out for her was “the state of the dead where I think you guys believe that you’re sort of just in the ground and you don’t go anywhere until Jesus returns. That you go to sleep, as in I’m more you go straight to heaven. So I found that really, really interesting.” Isabella Swan adds that until learning about these Adventist beliefs she was under the impression that all Christians believed the way she did about just going straight to heaven. Isabella Swan never thought of looking into the different beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist and just accepted what she has been told about Adventists. She feels that if she was asked to do an assignment on it that she would get into studying it completely. She states that “I’m really interested and it’s really opened up my eyes, because I’ve only known one other Seventh-day Adventist previous to coming here. And he wasn’t so aware I guess even of what it really means. It’s really interesting.”

Isabella Swan remembers that there was an assignment in Christian studies where they wanted the student to articulate their worldview. She added that her worldview of course is different than that of a Seventh-day Adventist and that she found it challenging to then switch from “thinking Seventh-day Adventist to thinking back to Catholic and I found that assignment a bit hard to then complete because it had been so all about Seventh-day Adventist, I guess and then having to do that assignment about being Catholic was just a bit tricky for me.” Isabella Swan also feels that the lecturers were another positive experience during Christian studies. “One of them took a real interest in the fact that I was Catholic and he once had an interview with me to discuss all the different things and why I chose Avondale, what appealed to me, things like that, and I found that really was nice, because it’s nice to see that the lecturer was taking an interest in it me as a student and me as a non-Seventh-day Adventist.”

The areas that Isabella Swan feels have positively influenced here at Avondale has definitely been the feeling of community that is perhaps experienced more by students who live in the dormitories as opposed to off-campus students. She also feels that the “worships whether its floor combined, on weekends, or ladies worships, anything like that I think they definitely have an influence depending on topics and things”. She also enjoys the “sisterhood and the brotherhood” and feels that “things

like that definitely play a major role in being part of Avondale, for me anyway”. Isabella Swan relates how she has experienced that she could be walking through the dorm and that it doesn’t matter who she meets “someone will say hallo and I just *love* that it’s so nice and friendly (laugh). You have familiar like faces and people, and it doesn’t matter whether you’re a teacher, a scientist, or a theology student everyone’s friends and it’s really good.” Isabella Swan adds that even though she experienced a similar community environment in high school, she feels that it is a different kind of community feel to living in dormitories. She recalls that the environment of her high school was one where the teachers knew their students and those they felt part of the school. She also remembers that the school environment was “small and easy to navigate” and that there “was a strong emphasis on Christianity and you were an individual, not just another student. Avondale definitely met those expectations and more.”

Although Isabella Swan enjoyed the worship services she admits that when it comes to forum the “topic of forum has to sort of grab my attention before I’ll go.” She adds that during her first and second years at Avondale that there were “a lot more interesting speakers coming and more interesting topics, so I attended them a lot more than what I have been recently.” She feels that the recent topics haven’t been as interesting or haven’t appealed to her as much. Isabella Swan explained the that topics she related to were when Avondale invited guest speakers like “Angry Anderson and an Australian cricketer Brett Lee that may not necessarily be Seventh-day Adventist or even Christians early on in life, but they came in and spoke about becoming Christian or just the values of life.” She adds that these kinds of topics appealed to her more than when it is “just about Seventh-day Adventism or about being Christian. It was off the topic as well as being on the topic, if that makes sense”.

Isabella Swan was asked whether she enjoyed the vegetarian food that is being served in the cafeteria. She states that “I’ve found now that if I’m at home or even during break or whatever and I’ll go to a restaurant I’ll often choose a vegetarian meal now over a meat meal, and it’s not even so much I guess because of being at Avondale but I just like the appeal of it more I guess.” Isabella Swan mentions that she has a couple of vegetarian friends as well now so it makes it easier when she goes out with them. She does recall however, that there was a time when she

couldn't get over the fact of not having meat in her meals, but that it doesn't bother her anymore although some of her friends still complain. She adds that she used to hate "nut meat" (wheat protein and nut product) and now she actually enjoys it and that she would "rather eat nut meat bolognaise over meat bolognaise now."

Isabella Swan feels that Avondale has provided her with quality coursework although she can't really compare it to anything else except maybe a bit to the Certificate III Diploma she did before coming to Avondale. She adds however that Avondale has been everything that she has expected it to be, except perhaps for Christian studies, but that she understands that "being at a Christian university that that's what we need to do."

Isabella Swan expresses that the teaching practicals are an especially positive aspect of Avondale's curriculum. She has heard that Avondale has more practicals than other universities and that the practicals are more spread out and provides a greater variety of hands on experiences in real school environments. Isabella Swan also feels that being away from her family and going on these practicals have help her mature as an individual and made her more confident. Prior to this she felt that she would be embarrassed to ring people up on the phone and now it is has become second nature to her to talk to adults. Isabella Swan definitely feels that Avondale has encouraged her to reach her full potential. She adds that "I don't know whether it's because it is a small uni that you have that encouragement all the time from the lecturers like 'you can do it' and again living in the dorms if you go and see a friend about an assignment or whatever and it's like 'Ah you know you can do it' or 'you can pass that test' or 'this is what you do' and they're really encouraging you and help you out and things." She feels that although it could be all these various factors she mostly feels that the "lecturers you know take the time encourage you and help you out when you need it and to motivate and encourage you to just do your best."

Isabella Swan's view on what a teacher should be is "To be a facilitator, to encourage growth and development. Care and to be kind and all that to the children, and to just be there for them no matter what the issues or the questions or whatever." She feels that her view of the responsibilities of teachers has changed from the "the typical view of teachers are, they work for ten weeks and then they have two weeks holiday and then they don't have to do anything. That's kind of changed a little bit

since seeing all the behind the scenes work. But it's not a bad change, it's just a 'wow teacher's do have a lot more than what you think'. It's a reality check."

Isabella Swan feels that she has definitely been supported personally and professionally at Avondale. She adds that living in dorms and having deans is definitely a good support system as she feels she can go to them about anything. She also felt that her friendships in the dorms have been a big support to her.

When asked whether she went on any of the Ministry of Teaching Overseas trips she stated that she wanted to but that early childhood students don't qualify. She has decided however, to go on the One Mission Fiji trip during the mid-semester break of the second semester. She told me that on this Mission trip she was told that they'll be putting gutters on roofs and helping construct or fix up a water tank and build a toilet in a Fijian Village. Isabella Swan does feel that these trips have an impact on the students taking part. "I don't know so much like personality but I know one of the girls is just India obsessed." She relates how this friend of hers is fundraising for schools in India and that these experiences opened up her eyes more to the reality of what some people actually are living like. Isabella Swan also mentioned that "as I am Catholic not many opportunities really come up through my church to attend mission trips" and she always felt that "if I had the opportunity through another church or friend and it was somewhere I wanted to go, I felt that I would definitely take the opportunity to do so."

Isabella Swan feels that Avondale runs these trips because it's a Christian college. She also thinks that "it's really good for life experiences and it does help, like us opening our eyes to the world outside of us, I guess. " She also feels that it is a "good opportunity for those who can go and teach to go and experience teaching in another country."

Isabella Swan feels that the lecturers at Avondale show an interest in the students because "we are such a small community in a way that they can, it's not even so much maybe that they want to but they can do it" She also feels that the lecturers from the early childhood department take the responsibility to get to know you". She explains that with "early childhood we're all such a great group of girls and we all really are there and we want to do what we're learning. We want be there to learn and we want to get to know the lecturers I guess as well, we want to like hear what

they're saying, we're not just sitting around here because we've been told we have to be here like we want to be here so."

Isabella Swan feels that she has definitely experienced friendliness and care from the staff at Avondale. She goes on to relate "like last night we had the security lady walk through the dorms and she's like 'hey girls, how ya going' and you know you rarely see her but she's still nice enough to talk to you. So and that's the same with the other staff. It doesn't matter who you are they'll make sure they say hallo." Isabella Swan feels that this sort of ethos exists at Avondale because it's part of the philosophy of Avondale. She doesn't feel that it is a requirement but rather "what you need to be when you're on Avondale kind of thing." She also feels that "the majority of people here being Christian, everyone has their values and beliefs that they want to instill from them to other people. I think it's not a place where you're kind of scared to come to."

The two main ways that Isabella Swan feels Avondale is a Christian institution is through things like "the worships and the level worships and things like that, because if it wasn't Christian you probably wouldn't do that." She also feels that in the dorms you will see "posters and things talking about God and things like that which is a very obvious sort of one." Another way that she knows Avondale is a Christian institution is that "some of the lecturers like to pray before they begin their lectures." She also feels that Avondale does not have the drama of other universities where "you might hear on the news that a girl has been raped or I know one of my friends were saying she's got a rape whistle that she has to carry around with her and these are things you never ever hear about having here." She feels that this is not an issue at Avondale because "it is Christian and you'd think that the majority of people here have values." She adds that she really feels safe here at Avondale and mentions that "I don't lock my door or anything in the dorms because you just have that feeling of 'ah everyone's friendly' and trustworthy.

Lasting impression

Isabella Swan was asked to write down the three words that she felt best described Avondale for her. She felt that this was slightly tricky but decided to write from her experience of living in the dorms. She chose the word 'family' because living in the dorm "feels like you're a part of one big happy family, lots of friendly faces and

people to visit. We're a community." Isabella Swan also chose "relaxed" as she feels that "Avondale is an easy going place, with a very calm and happy environment." Lastly she chose "experience" as she feels that living in dorms have "definitely opened up my eyes. I have gained many new life experiences since being here at Avondale."

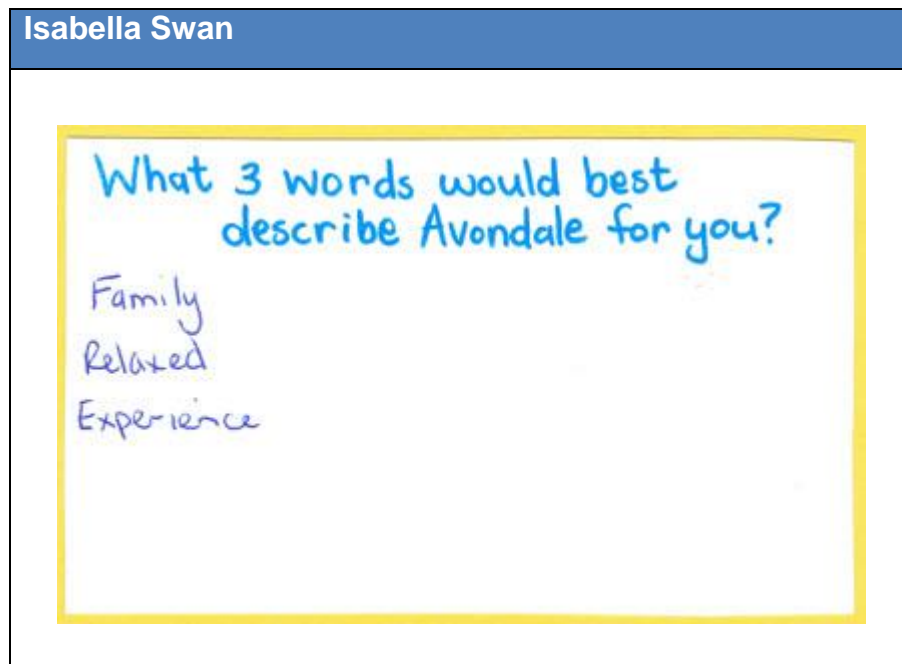


Figure 4. 9 Isabella Swan

Isabella Swan feels that she will definitely leave Avondale with "a better spiritual understanding." She feels that other than the content and the life lessons that she has learned at Avondale that there is just "something about Avondale. It's just so nice and you'd want to sort of go to a school where it's all kind of a bit like the atmosphere that we have here if that makes sense." Isabella Swan feels that she would like to recreate the same atmosphere that she has experienced at Avondale in her classroom. She also wants to be understanding, friendly and calm like she experienced the lecturers at Avondale to be when they deal with her and the rest of their students.

During the interview Isabella Swan was asked to review Avondale College's motto and mission statement. She was asked to rank it from one to ten; ten being the strongest and one being the weakest. She stated that "I didn't actually know that was

Avondale's motto (laughing). That's good." She decided to give them an eight because not only are they helping "Australia with teachers and pastors and all that but we also go out on the mission trips and things. So we're not just thinking of ourselves. We're expanding our horizons so to speak."

For the mission statement Isabella Swan felt that she would give them a nine because it "still has the Christian focus. I think like I can't be better prepared for being a teacher than what they're doing for me."

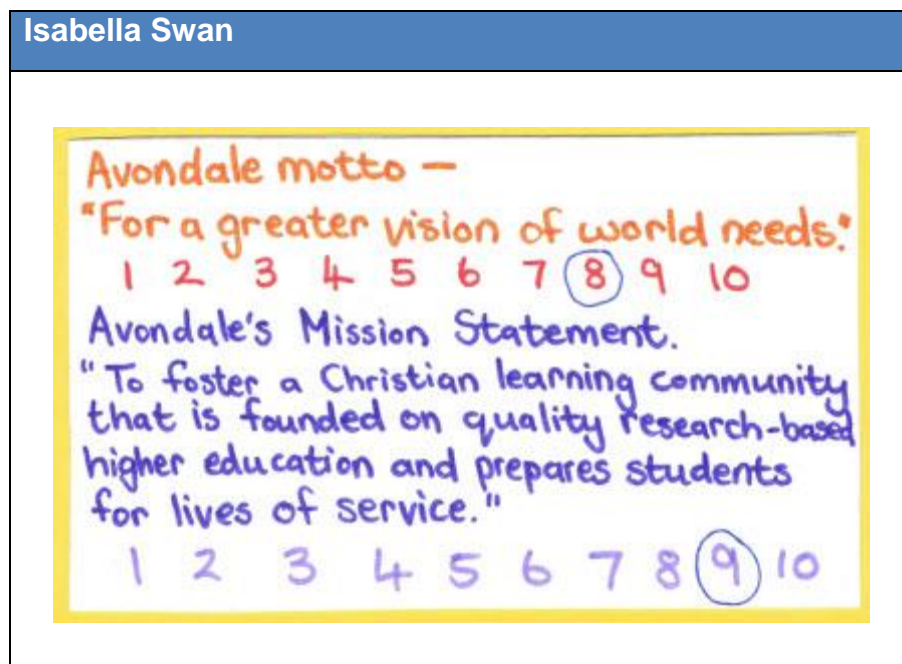


Figure 4. 10 Isabella Swan

Summary of Isabella Swan's Experience

Isabella Swan found out about Avondale through a social connection and decided to live on campus while completing her studies. Living in the dormitories provided her with many social connections and relationships with students and staff from different religious and national backgrounds. She also found that her relationships with lecturers have been overall positive and that they are really caring and supportive. She stated that she loved how Avondale is like a family.

Isabella Swan comes from a Catholic background and although she had some challenges initially during her time at Avondale, the remainder of the religious

experiences have been positive. She stated how she enjoyed learning about Seventh-day Adventist beliefs so that she could relate more to them.

Isabella Swan felt that she had a well-balanced and quality academic experience and that it has helped her develop into a more professional teacher. She also felt that the experiences and lessons she gained through Avondale could be adapted into an Early Childhood classroom setting, and that she would most of all love to recreate the Avondale atmosphere within her future classrooms.

Isabella Swan feels that she has grown more confident while being at Avondale, especially when dealing with other people. She has also discovered new qualities about herself when it came to her relationships with others.

Did Avondale have an impact on Isabella Swan? In her own words, “I just *love* that it’s so nice and friendly (laugh). You have familiar like faces and people, and it doesn’t matter whether you’re a teacher, a scientist, or a theology student everyone’s friends and it’s really good.”

Comparisons

Isabella Swan and Charlie Brown both value Avondale for its Christian atmosphere and values, and both agreed that Avondale felt like a family community. Isabella Swan, Jimi Hendrix, Charlie Brown and Harry Watson all agree that the lecturers at Avondale are very supportive and encouraging throughout their time of studies.

Isabella Swan however found Christian studies classes to be of more value in relating to Seventh-day Adventist students, and didn’t seem to find the topics to be as confusing and difficult in comparison to Charlie Brown, even though Isabella Swan’s religious background holds different views on the content taught. Perhaps this is due to her Christian upbringing as well as her developing relationships with Seventh-day Adventist in her dormitory.

JAMES SMITH

[Incognito]

Male

Age 28

Fourth Year Primary Education



Background

James Smith stumbled upon Avondale purely by coincidence. He states that “I wanted to work at Sanitarium, and I also wanted to go to university.” His father told him about the “biscuit factory” that was in Cooranbong and until then James Smith has never heard of the place. His father suggested to him to try and see if he can get a job at the factory. James Smith lives about forty or so minutes away from Avondale and decided to go for a drive. He relates that “we drove down here and I saw its Sanitarium, ah cool. So I applied and I noticed this campus here, and I said ‘I wonder if that’s a university, I’ll find out. And yeah just came and asked some question, and yeah went from there.” Until then James Smith didn’t know about the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. He states that “I’m Catholic, I have my Catholic way.”

James Smith grew up in a public school system which he described as being different to the Seventh-day Adventist school system. He considers himself to be Catholic

although his Father is not religious and his Mother who is Italian is quite a strong Catholic.

First Impression

As James Smith mentioned before, he came to Avondale to first apply for work at the Sanitarium factory and that he didn't mind traveling for work the forty minutes or so. Once he drove into Cooranbong he saw a sign that said 'Avondale College' and he decided to talk to them as well and though it would get great to get "two birds with one stone (chuckle)."

James Smith remembers going along the drive way towards the factory when he saw the sign and at first though it was more like a TAFE. "I didn't realize it was a university. I thought ah it must be like a TAFE. And then I asked, I said, Could I do degrees here? And they said 'yeah, yeah, you can do a degree'." James Smith was so pleased to hear that because he had never heard of Avondale before. He started off with a Bachelor's of Arts in Psychology but then after a year swapped over to Education. James Smith previously worked at the University of Sydney as an AV-tech and he wasn't sure whether he wanted to go there because of the travel.

James Smith concluded that he likes that Avondale is in a beautiful location, and that not knowing this area too well and then sort of stumbling on it "I thought wow, it's a beautiful area, and the campus is ideally situated – it's tranquil, it's very nice, so that's always good too."

James Smith recalls the friendliness and helpfulness from the staff when he just started, as he didn't know his way around campus. He mentioned that "it's been many years since I've had this like study this sort of thing, so it was very foreign and very new in some ways." He felt that when he needed help he received it, but that the students stood out more. James Smith remembers when he "met a couple of students on my first day and we became friends straight away and having them, especially first semester when everything is brand new, I thought that was really, really good having them to bounce off. But I mean the lecturers were there if I needed help from them sort of thing."

Developing Impression

James Smith experienced Avondale to be quite different to what he was used to, especially when it came to spirituality. “I must admit it’s a lot different than the Catholic way. We’re sort of a bit different in our beliefs and how we practice them and that kind of stuff.” Something that stood out to him immediately is the different worship day. He mentions that he has never delved too much into Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, stating that “I respect it because obviously I’m at a Seventh-day Adventist campus, but I’ve never gone too much in to it, I’ve never really looked into it too much.” James Smith considers spirituality to be about believing in God, the Holy Spirit and in Christ, and “understanding the sacrifices that were made from Christ and that kind of stuff” from the Catholic upbringing that he has had. He also feels that it is about “being a good person, and believing like in the Christian ways, like treating others the way I wish to be treated sort of thing.” He strongly feels that the kind of person you are represents what you believe in.

James Smith feels that there are a few upsetting areas of Avondale’s curriculum. “Their basically Seventh-day Adventist subjects, and it is part of Avondale’s beliefs but we have to do it.” He feels that because he is going to teach in a public school that these subjects are not relevant to him and he will never use them. He feels more upset about having to pay for them than having to study them. “I’ll study it but why do I have to pay for it? There’s a few of Avondale’s subjects that it’s basically Seventh-day Adventist subjects, they want us to do it but we also have to pay for it.” James Smith felt discouraged by that and refused to do those subjects. He also felt that Avondale is “a little bit too pushy, in the sense where I’m Catholic and I’ve told them from the get-go I was Catholic” and that he asked whether it would be okay for him to study here and they response was yes. He felt that it is disheartening to him that these Seventh-day Adventist subjects or content were pushed onto him.

James Smith felt that he actually enjoyed the Christian studies classes as it explored philosophies within Christianity itself and looking at the various avenues within Christianity. He was more upset with “the subjects that were more *just* on Seventh-day Adventism. Like, Seventh-day Adventist schools and all that kind of stuff, and I didn’t really want to do it sort of thing.” He remembers one class that he did in his first year of education that dealt with Seventh-day Adventist schools and their

statistics. These are the kind of things that James Smith feels are irrelevant as he is never going to teach in a Seventh-day Adventist school.

James Smith would like to one day teach in the public school system and “maybe Catholic, later on down the track. But for right now I’ve done all my pracs, my internship all that kind of stuff in public schools, and I really want to become a principal one day in the public school systems sort of thing.”

Although James Smith has experienced some annoyance with the subjects at Avondale, he has had some positive experiences as well. He feels that some of the lecturers are fantastic and that “they’re just brilliant. They go above and beyond I think what most lecturers have to do, and they just excel you know.” He shared that most of the lecturers have always gone that extra mile even when their own work load is huge that they’ve still would make time for you to sit down and help you out and that is something he has a lot of respect for. James Smith adds that “makes coming to Avondale really, really enjoyable sort of thing.”

James Smith also enjoys the Avondale environment and atmosphere and states that “it’s quite relaxing - it’s nice.” He also made some good friends that he can rely on. James Smith states though that the Avondale atmosphere is “much different my normal life and my upbringing. It is two totally different worlds.” He has found it difficult to “gel with some of the students, because I’m from a totally different world than them.”

James Smith at times feels that there is a sort of ‘cliquey-ness’ at Avondale. He states that “the feeling you sort of get coming from being a non-Seventh-day Adventist and I mean never going to Avondale school, never being in that clique sort of thing. A lot of these people went to primary school together, probably like even preschool together; primary school together, high school and you know they’re at Avondale College together.” He feels that a lot of them have their Seventh-day Adventist cliques and because he is coming from a different religious background he feels that “they don’t really allow other people to enter their cliques and they don’t really understand that there is a bigger world out there than just their upbringing sort of thing.” James Smith feels that because of this he has found it really difficult to get along with certain social groups at Avondale. Fortunately he has friends who like him, are not Seventh-day Adventists and he feels that he has more in common with

them. He states that “it’s some of the best friends I’ve made, who were non-Seventh-day Adventist here, and they felt the same way I did.”

When James Smith was asked what he knows about Seventh-day Adventism he admitted that “the five years I’ve been here I still don’t know too much about it.” He knows that they worship on Saturday rather than Sunday and that they “don’t believe in eating meat, or drink any alcohols, they don’t smoke, or any of that kind of jazz. That they treat their body like a temple because it’s the shell or something - I’m not sure. That’s sort of my understanding about that.” James Smith does remember that during a Christian studies class that global Christianity was discussed along with statistics on the global impact of Catholicism and Seventh-day Adventism, and he stated that he found this really interesting.

When James Smith was asked about forum he recalls that he only attended it when he had to. During his second year one of the lecturers gave an assignment where he had to go and listen to two or three forum presentations and record what he heard to discuss later in class. He admits that he only did this to get a pass and that normally he would not go. The reason why James Smith does not care to attend forum is because “I’m not a Seventh-day Adventist, and I don’t have any intentions of becoming one or whatever.” He added that he would rather use that time to study.

Overall, James Smith feels that his positive experiences have mainly been with his relationships with the lecturers. He recalls how “they’ll always go a-above and beyond the call of duty sort of thing. Like whatever lecturers supposed to do they always go a little bit further for you.” He compares his experience with lecturers at Avondale to that of another university, and he states that “It’s a bit different. It’s very much sink or swim, like you’ve just got to do it, so off you go sort of thing. And lecturers get a bit upset if you’re always asking them questions there, whereas here it is a bit different.” James Smith however does feel that “maybe because we live in the twenty-first century, the times are changing I think the beauty here is still too presto. Avondale is not adapting to the time and some of the beliefs aren’t really suited for these times, and I find it they’ve got to understand that there are different circumstances and different things in people’s lives that you know, but they don’t seem to accommodate for that sort of thing.” James Smith gave the example of attendance as something that he feels Avondale could improve on. He adds that “a lot

of universities don't have that, like you don't have to attend. If you're passing all your subjects there's no real reason to attend all the classes." James Smith feels quite passionate about this as there have been times that he has lost marks for absences because he was running late due to unforeseen circumstances such as a train or bus running late. He states that he was "devastated by it" as it wasn't because of academic reasons. James Smith adds that he understands that for "the immigration reasons those students who are foreign students have to attend" but that Australian students should be shown some leniency.

Although he has experienced these annoyances James Smith does feel that Avondale has provided him with quality coursework and that "I guess they're at where a university level should be. Like comparing it to other unis it would be with them. I don't think it's been exceptional but I think it's been where it should be at sort of thing."

James Smith feels that Avondale hasn't necessarily brought out the best in him. He feels he has been mainly driven because of his love for teaching and that it is his passion and something he has always wanted to do. To some extent James Smith does feel that Avondale has helped him towards reaching his full potential as a professional. He feels however that "if I was probably a Seventh-day Adventist I'd probably want to push myself a bit harder towards the Avondale philosophy or ethos or whatever." With regard to becoming a teacher he feels that he has learned through his professional practicals "what a teacher has to go through work load wise and dealing with students and the fact that the public school is just so multicultural and so diverse in every way. So that has definitely opened my eyes to what a teacher goes through." James Smith feels that overall he learned more about what a teacher really goes through on the job than at Avondale. He adds that "I've learned the textbook side of it here, but what a teacher goes through I've picked up more being in the school."

James Smith believes that the role of a teacher is "to educate, it's to inspire. It's to bring the best out of the students. It's to – you have to go and give a hundred and ten percent because those thirty however many children depend on you sort of thing. It's their future in your hands, so you want to be at your best all the time." He also adds that "I don't believe in second best or being a mediocre teacher. I think you have to

be a great teacher if you truly want to inspire the kids. So greatness I think is needed to be a good professional teacher.”

James Smith feels that the lecturers at Avondale show interest in you “not just like they have to do it, you can tell that they want to do it. Like some people you around they do it because it is a part of their job, not that they want to but they just have to and as other people you’re around they’re happy to go that extra mile because that’s just their personality.” James Smith feels that “their faith would probably motivate them. I guess teaching here they have to be that way, driven you know like, their faith sort of drives them; they want to go the extra mile. Otherwise I don’t think they’d survive as lecturers probably.” He adds that he appreciates that the lecturers here do put in the extra effort and that it is something he practices in the classroom when he is teaching kids. He adds that “I really appreciate people taking the extra moment or extra time to spend with you sort of thing. It makes you feel welcome, it makes you want to learn, it makes you proud of the fact that you’ve come to that place sort of thing.”

James Smith was asked whether Avondale has had any spiritual impact on his life to which he responded “probably not so much my Catholic journey, but I remember when I started here in my first year 2008, I did a subject like contemporary life and worldviews or Christian worldviews or whatever it was, and I never really realized that we all have a worldview sort of thing, whether you’re Christian or non-Christian you have a worldview sort of thing. I guess that impacted me in a sense where I sort of now realized I do have a worldview and it is a Christian perspective.”

During his first year at Avondale College James Smith used the support services of the library tutor a couple of times. He recalls that “I went and saw him a few times. He showed me how to write essays because it was many years before I ever had to write an essay and I wasn’t a hundred percent sure on APA referencing and all that.” Outside of the support that the lecturers gave him, this was the only support services on campus that he used and knew of. For James Smith, Avondale’s support has remained at study level. He states that “my private life is very private from here sort of thing. I’m more just focused on just getting through this and getting my degree. So in that sense, the support you know in getting the degree has been there but personal life I’ve really just kept out of Avondale sort of thing.” James Smith feels determined

to get his degree but sees his personal life as his escape. He adds that “I come to Avondale, I get my degree but then I’ve got my outside life as well to look forward to.” As James Smith has mentioned before that his personal life is a whole different world to what Avondale is used to. He states that “I mean I have a lot of friends you know we like to party, drink all that kind of stuff. I race motocross, I have a very sort of adrenalin charged sort of lifestyle like that and then here it’s just totally different. Here I just don’t even bring up what I did – get up to on the weekends sort of thing.”

James Smith has also not gone on any of the Ministry of Teaching Overseas trips and states that neither he nor his friends have gone on any of these trips. He did mention however that would have liked to have gone on the history tour as an extension to his degree but never got around to it. James Smith feels that Avondale runs these kind of trips because “it’s like ministry sort of thing well that’s like that’s religious and I guess being it’s a religious campus and I guess it goes part and part sort of thing you know. The ministry tour they want to spread the word or whatever it is, I guess that would be their philosophy maybe.” With regard to the history tours James Smith thinks that “it’s awesome especially because I’m into more sort of modern history and Europe is pretty awesome.” He feels that when you go on these tours “you learn firsthand sort of thing which is really good.” James Smith feels when you’ve been brought up in Australia you are used to first world standards and that you basically live a life of luxury. He feels that when you compare this life with “countries and then when you go over and see countries that live you know with less standards it’ll have to change your way of thinking.”

James Smith does feel that Avondale has impacted his worldview in some way. He states that “it’s definitely opened my eyes in a sense. Like I’ve been around all different types of people like you know all different socio-economic types of people in my life and gel pretty well with all those types of people. But coming here was a totally different world. I’ve never really been around Seventh-day Adventists and their lifestyle or knowing that they exist altogether, and it’s definitely opened my eyes in that sense.”

James Smith believes that the ethos of Avondale exists because they are Christian and they want to help. He adds that they “always go above and beyond. So I guess that Christian philosophy is what they try to live and work by here sort of thing.”

James Smith felt that the two main ways he could tell that Avondale was a Christian tertiary institution was that at times the lecturers start the lecture or the tutorial off with prayer. The second area by which he can tell its Christian institution is the “fact they call themselves a Christian tertiary institution... something like excellence in Christian educations since 1897 or whatever. So even or their signage an all that kind of stuff it actually states that they’re a Christian campus.”

Lasting impression

James Smith was asked to write down the three words that he felt best described Avondale. After some quiet reflection he wrote down the words “Seventh-Day-Adventist”, “old” and “learning”. When he was asked why he chose old, he stated that it is historically old.

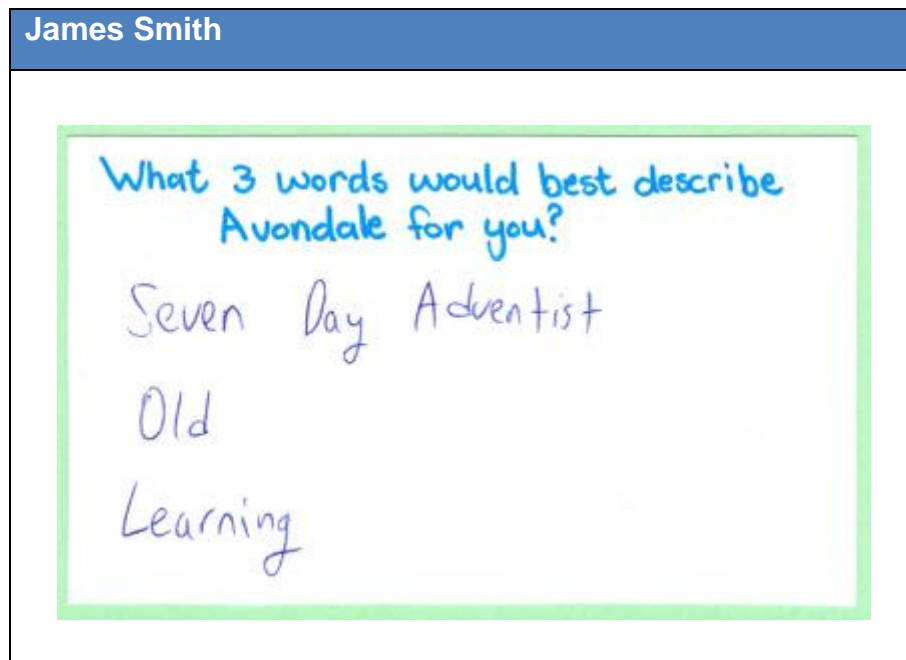


Figure 4. 11 James Smith

James Smith feels that when he graduates there are a few things from Avondale that he will take with him. He states that “Avondale’s got pretty high standards of professionalism and I really appreciate that”. He states that “I really do believe the teacher needs to look the part as well as actually be the part, so you’ve got to look professional, and Avondale’s high standards of professionalism I definitely feel I’ve used that and I take them onboard every prac. Even if I go to the school and the

teachers are dressing down a bit I still believe that you know you got to set the benchmark sort of thing.” Other than that, James Smith feels that he will apply the different teaching styles that he has learned through his studies, especially discussion lessons, and object lessons.

James Smith was asked to review Avondale College’s motto and mission statement. He was asked to rank it from one to ten; ten being the strongest and one being the weakest. He quietly reflected on them while reading through, before he graded them. For the Avondale Motto he gave a seven, but he felt that with regard to their mission statement they were somewhere between a five and a six.

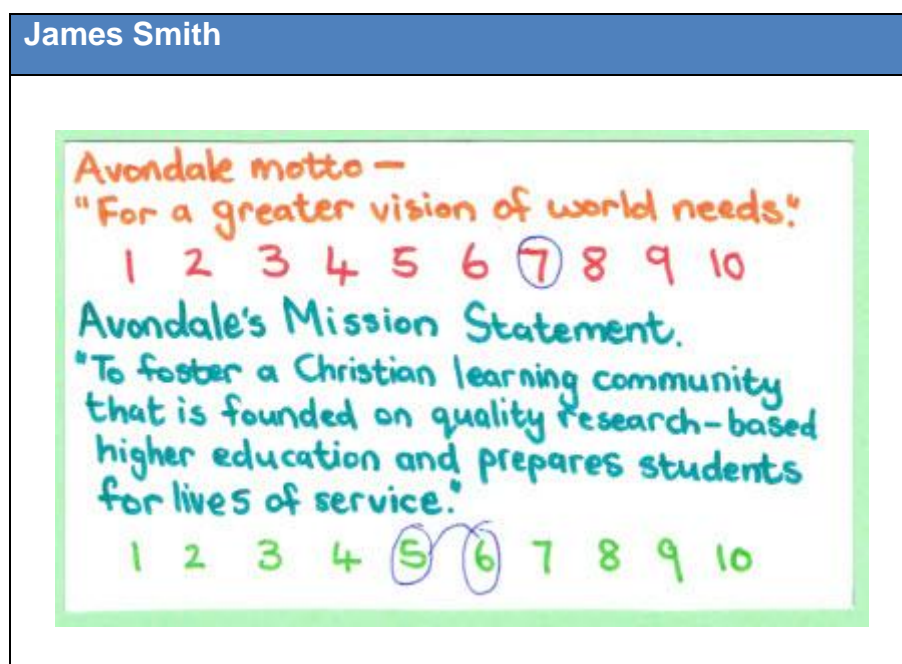


Figure 4. 12 James Smith

Summary of James Smith’s Experience

James Smith happened by chance to come upon Avondale when he went for a job interview in Cooranbong, and decided that it is a suitable arrangement to study while working at the factory which is located on the same campus. He felt that the people at Avondale were very welcoming and friendly and that the lecturers really care and showed their support throughout his studies. He did however express feeling uncomfortable socializing with most of the students on campus as he felt his lifestyle

was very different to Seventh-day Adventists'. However, he did make some really good friends that he feels he'll have for life.

James Smith comes from a Catholic background and felt that some of the Seventh-day Adventists beliefs contradicted that of his own. During his time at Avondale he enjoyed some discussions on spirituality but felt that he will keep his personal and study life separate.

Except for a few annoyances James Smith feels that he had an overall good study experience. He pointed out that a lot of the Seventh-day Adventist Christian topics or subjects were irrelevant as he plans on teaching in the public system.

James Smith feels that his worldview has not been significantly impacted at Avondale but he does feel that he grew into a more professional person.

Has Avondale had an impact on James Smith? In his own words, "I really appreciate people taking the extra moment or extra time to spend with you sort of thing. It makes you feel welcome, it makes you want to learn, it makes you proud of the fact that you've come to that place."

Comparisons

Both James Smith and Isabella Swan come from a Catholic background. However, each one experienced Avondale very differently. Isabella Swan's open and engaging attitude contrasts that of James Smith's reserved response to Avondale and Seventh-day Adventism. James Smith also felt that Seventh-day Adventists are pushy people whereas Charlie Brown felt they were the least pushy Christians she has met.

James Smith, Isabella Swan, Jimi Hendrix, Charlie Brown and Harry Watson all agree however that the lecturers at Avondale are really supportive and encouraging. All of them also maintain positive relationships with the lecturers and established long lasting friendships with people they met during their studies.

It also seems that James Smith's general outlook on spirituality and the relevance of Christian values in relation to his life and future teaching career had the least impact on him compared to Isabella Swan, Harry Watson and Charlie Brown.

He states however, that just because he comes from an Adventist family doesn't mean that he had to come to Avondale. He says that his parents "never assumed that I was going to come here, because I applied for Bachelors in journalism at another university and they were very supportive of that."

First Impression

Dr Greenthumb was drawn to Avondale for "the atmosphere. It's the whole lifestyle, like a whole community which I, which I just wanted to be a part of. It's just exciting to be a part of it". When he arrived here he did know "a few boys from my home town that came up here." There was a big group of about ten of his friends from his home town and himself that decided to come to Avondale. Dr Greenthumb adds that "it is exciting being in such close quarters with so many of your peers. You are able to meet like-minded people and form new friendships with so many different people." He adds that he feels this is an exciting stepping stone in the transition from adolescence years into adult life, while having the unique opportunity to network.

Developing Impression

Dr Greenthumb views spirituality as "being aware that there is something beyond yourself. Being aware like, your own mind and the way you think." He further adds that it is to have something that you are accountable for and that "there is something that governs you and everyone else." Dr Greenthumb add that although he believes in a Higher-Being that he is not sure what it is but that "there is something above you, which you need to be aware of and like constantly like pushing towards understanding that, understanding that yourself and your place in it all." He adds that spirituality is about realizing your "place as far like your humanity towards other people, your obligations to nature and to the existence of others." Dr Greenthumb considers himself to be "quite spiritual in the sense that I'm very self-reflective and I try and be very aware of my relationships." With regard to his relationships, he believes that "you can always be a positive experience to other people". He emphasized the importance of giving of your time to others so that you might make their day better. Dr Greenthumb believes that he has "the responsibility to the people in my life. To the people I'm in contact with. So my spirituality is to like constantly evaluate myself and to evaluate myself towards what the ideals I set myself to. And the ideal I suppose is me being responsible to that Higher-Being." Dr Greenthumb

adds that he connects more with spirituality as opposed to religion as “there seems to be a more order of things, there seems to be more sense to it, where like with religion like there is a lot of just, it seems just for the sake of it, which I don’t agree with.” He adds that he feels “spirituality is the emotional, relational side of a connection with God and religion is the liturgical, law-based side that dictates how you live your life in accordance with your denominational beliefs.” Dr Greenthumb added that he hasn’t felt that he was spiritually challenged at Avondale. He states that “I would have liked to have seen the fruits of my pursuits into spirituality more divinely rewarded. With the time I did put into fostering that closer relationship with God, I did not see my understanding of who He is, improve. I wanted more from my attempts at a relationship.”

Dr Greenthumb disassociated from the church during his first year of studies at Avondale College. He states that “I stayed at church a long time because I play guitar and I sing a little bit” but adds that “without that there was just no connection”. Dr Greenthumb states that he has “gone away from it [church]. I was able to see how other people talked about it and it didn’t appeal to me.” He feels that most of the messages were not relevant and that they spoke about “these useless ideals like it was just these really intangible things.” Dr Greenthumb believes that “I know enough of the Bible, like and I’ve heard like enough things that I kind of know where they are coming from when they say certain things, but I believe they are out of touch.” He further add that he feels the Bible is all good and well but that the people hold on to too many ideals and are not just satisfied to live by the ‘golden rule’. Dr Greenthumb feels that if the people would just live by that one rule that “they would be better people. But they have taken that, cool, that’s one, I also want this, this, this, in the Bible and these are the rules that I want to live my life by. And they are constantly trying to achieve all these things, but if they would just try to achieve the first one then a lot of them will fall into place.” He concludes that he feels frustrated that the Seventh-day Adventist people “have by and large missed the point. So I’m not associating with the Seventh day Adventist church anymore, but there, there are bits still ingrained in me and there are bits that I still hold true.” He further adds that the bits he holds true is the values; the value of community and his understanding of empathy, as well as the “values I learned through growing up in the Church and I find these very applicable in my current day-to-day interactions.”

Dr Greenthumb feels that Seventh-day Adventists have missed “the point” which he expounds on by saying that “the point is to strip away what you need from God and what you need from others and to see where and who God needs you to be in this world.” He further adds that he feels at times people tend to construct their ideas around what they believe God must have meant in their lives or in Scripture and that they “forget to see the needs that are clearly apparent in this previously perfect world that God has created and to attend to those needs.” He feels that people are too focused on self which makes them miss the point. Dr Greenthumb however does feel that “Avondale creates opportunities for its students to foster personal growth and to contribute to a wider and international community, and that the students sway largely towards self-growth.” He concludes that in his opinion that Avondale has not missed the point, but he feels the students who represent Avondale have.

The question was asked whether anything at Avondale caused Dr Greenthumb to disassociate from the Seventh-day Adventist church and he humorously responded that he feels “they have more options”. What he meant by this is that by coming to Avondale he has “met people more similar to myself, the way I thought and stuff like that” and that “a lot of them were Adventist when they came as well.” Dr Greenthumb feels that by coming to Avondale he “found another community to be a part of, and one that made more sense with what I believe.” He concludes that there are “so many people and so many different things” at Avondale and he feel that “while you’re here you should spent your time getting to know different people and not just hang out with your own friends, because there is such a wealth of opinions and life experiences too.”

Dr Greenthumb admits that to a certain degree he is influenced by what other people say, just like everyone else is. He states that if you are not influenced by others then “you’re stuck in a spot, you don’t think it’s important to be influenced by what other people say, because you need to take on and absorb and adjust it.” Dr Greenthumb feels that he was more impressionable at a time than what he is at present. He feels that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has “a whole bunch of rules which dictate your whole life and you don’t understand these rules but to be part of this, you need to be a part of these rules, so you just kind of do it because you’re supposed to. Instead of cool I get this rule, I understand it, I believe in it, and then you go to the next step, and I think that is the more healthier way.” Dr Greenthumb believes that

“we’re all on a journey and struggling and stuff like that but I just feel like I think with Bible studies I was a bit young.” He add that he believes there are “too many holes in it [Bible studies] and I think people notice that and so ideally Bible studies should be very stabilized and have a good foundation.”

Dr Greenthumb appreciates how the deans are in the dormitories. Dr Greenthumb mentions that during the first year that he lived in the dorm “they changed worships to be non-compulsory. They used to have weekly worships with the boys and if you didn’t go or you missed three you got fined or something like that. Like nah, people should choose to come to things if they want to.” He further adds that he got excited when he did go to something like that and there were a lot of people there because it felt that they were passionate to be there. Dr Greenthumb thought that it “was quite exciting how they made it like a voluntary community.” He also appreciates how the student chaplain is really approachable and that “they’re really open minded which is really important being in a place like this, so they can sort of, get where people are coming from and sort of discuss it with them.” He states again that he appreciates “the options and just how open and sort of free it is” at Avondale.

Dr Greenthumb however does feel that there is a “large decline in on campus interaction”. He feels that this has to do with the “prominence of the Internet, personal laptops or computers, and social networking sites such as Facebook.” He adds that he feels that “people do not need to leave their rooms to satisfy their social needs” and that this has had a massive influence on his experience at Avondale.

Dr Greenthumb admits that he doesn’t go to forum a lot and that it is probably a habit now. He states that he has “been to a few like in the last year, and I was like ‘it’s really good, maybe I should come more often’ (laugh). Ever since Brett Lee came I’ve gone to most of them, but like in my first it was just habit.” Dr Greenthumb expresses his frustration with some of the forums. He feels that Avondale could get people with better testimonies as often the testimonies feel empty although “it’s important to them because it is their story, but you want people who have liked you know have gone away and have become drug addicts or something.” He feels he will associate more with individuals such as “this person has been in the opposite direction and they actually felt a need for God. Not just a need to feel saved again,

you know.” Dr Greenthumb admits that everyone can have a testimony, but they don’t have to share it.

Dr Greenthumb feels that “Christian studies is a mistake.” He strongly expresses that these subjects shouldn’t be a compulsory part of the course as there are many people in his class that are “not Adventist and they don’t care about the history of the Adventist church. So I think Christian studies should be more of a choice because it frustrates people and I think it’s showing people like a frustrating part of the church. It’s showing the very liturgical the very organized side of it, but I don’t think that’s how you’re going to get them.” Dr Greenthumb admits however that he needs to take in consideration more that when people come to Avondale that they are making a choice to attend a Christian college and that there will be certain things expected of them. At the same time though, he feels that Avondale “has to be aware that I’m coming to their institution and I have to start to study things I don’t want to study.” Dr Greenthumb feels that they (Avondale) are “under-cutting themselves because they want people that are like, they want people to will come to God, like they are trying to do that as well, but also I think they are pushing people away by like making it compulsory for them.” He feels that as just as he could craft his English teaching degree by choosing majors, Avondale should give people the opportunity to decide whether they want to ‘craft’ in Christian studies or not.

Dr Greenthumb feels that he started to question religion when his dog died. “It might sound a bit stupid but it’s more when my dog died. I had this puppy, it was an Australian shepherd, it was like a border collie but nicer. It was a gorgeous dog and I was given it as a gift. Her name was Jade, but she died around nine months because with that breed sometimes they have this like disease within their livers and we had to put her down. I was furious, I was so angry, I was like she’s a puppy, she’s done nothing wrong. She’s just been like a blessing to my family, I’m like there’s nothing she did wrong, and like that’s when I started to question.” Dr Greenthumb mentions that he was about fifteen-sixteen years old when this incident happened. He then started to question God. “How the hell can you justify killing my puppy?” Like, you know like that’s when I started questioning like people’s testimonies where they go ‘yeah, I was on the edge, I nearly fell off and then I felt a hand pull me back, turn around and there was no one there’. I was like why the hell did he save you? And like why did he save these people? I was like it’s not enough for them to say it’s

God's will. It's not enough because it's pushing people away when they can't see God's love in these things." Dr Greenthumb expressed his confusion surrounding these topics.

About two years ago, Dr Greenthumb was updating his social networking profile when he decided remove his stated religious affiliation to Adventism. He states that "I don't want that to be on my profile. I was at a stage where I was like I don't want – 'cause like I think it's - there's enough Adventists out there that's being hypocrites and I don't want people to think that I'm an Adventist – like I don't want them to think I'm a hypocrite." Dr Greenthumb wants people to know that he lives his life on purpose and that he isn't just going to follow tradition.

Dr Greenthumb does feel however, that "church is really, really important for families. Like I think, I don't want to start a family until I'm part of, an organized community. I don't know if I'll ever go back to organized religion, but like I still want to be a part of a community that will support my child as they grow up." Dr Greenthumb states that he loves the support structure, the shared consciousness and the empathy shown by people within a community, but "as my focus is not on God but rather on people, it seems pointless for me to be a part of a community that focuses on Him." He adds that communities that he would be interested in are like a good neighborhood where people know each other, or like a non-denominational gathering of people such as a school community. Dr Greenthumb feels that people who grow up in the church should at "some point" feel the need "to question that."

Dr Greenthumb admits that he still goes to church on "Friday nights to see his friends and when they ask me to sing. I like to sing even when – like I always play guitar so my friends asked 'would you sing', and I was like 'sure'. I need to be aware of how people see me and my position as a worship leader, because I think it's important that these people are choosing to be here, then they need to have an effective thing, but like if somewhat they're confused while I'm at the front, then I think I'm disrupting their worship, like I'm failing as a worship leader because I'm disrupting like their hearts to hear a message."

Dr Greenthumb does however feel that Avondale has provided him with quality opportunities during his studies. He states however that "it's always been up to my own initiative to take advantage of those opportunities". He also shared that

Avondale has given him opportunities to be responsible “or to take charge of my situation and improve my environment for the better.” He feels that he has really grown in this area and that he gained a lot of confidence. Dr Greenthumb also “really appreciate the emphasis that they put on the practical aspect. Like other universities you only have to do prac in like your final year but here you have to do it every semester.” He feels that by doing more professional teaching practicals, Avondale’s reputation has been benefitted. He recalls hearing that about “eighty five percent of teachers get picked up from Avondale whereas like other universities gets thirty percent or so.”

Dr Greenthumb explains that to a certain extent Avondale has helped him to grow professionally. He feels however that there is also “a lot of stuff that they’ve taught me but I haven’t sort of like needed to bring up again.” Dr Greenthumb states that he has matured in his view of a teacher’s role as his initial view “was a lot less involved. It was a lot less planning”, whereas now “you’re actually teaching people – individual kids. And like they can tell if you’re being sincere; they can tell if you’re not really caring about what you’re doing.”

During his time at Avondale College, Dr Greenthumb has used the support services and is currently seeing the counselor which has been “really awesome.” Dr Greenthumb also felt supported in his studies while at Avondale. He also feels that the “deans especially, have supported me. Like, they don’t want to take a fatherly role in the dorms. They want to be like mentors, they want to be like you know deans.” He adds that “they give me opportunities, or like they give me second chances and stuff like that, and I’ve really appreciated the support they’ve given me as far as that.”

Dr Greenthumb has gone on the Ministry of Teaching Overseas trips and felt that it was “it was a bit of an awakening.” In his own words he feels that “this really harsh light was upon it.” He feels that when he came home there was the initial care and responsibility that he felt for the people he met in Cambodia, but then “the second I got back I forgot about it, you know. And I started replying to a few of their emails but like it’s just a harsh life. It’s not enough to just go over there. It’s like the experience is more for you to go over there and be changed, but it’s like an active thing you know it’s an everyday sort of thing.” Dr Greenthumb feels that he was

“really passionate about the school but then it kind of faded off since.” He almost feels like it is just a “cool anecdote that you can bring out of this rather than people seeing that change in your lifestyle.”

Dr Greenthumb however does feel that he became more aware of the needs over in Cambodia following the trip in contrast to his prior knowledge. He would have liked to have seen more of the rural areas and relates how they “were given an opportunity like a couple of kids invited us to their house and we had dinner with their family, and I did that. That was a cool experience than what we actually did like actually going out of the school gate where we were to the actually homes of these kids and seeing like yeah like there’s ten of them sleeping in one room and stuff like that. It comes down to the other opportunities you kind of take.”

Dr Greenthumb feels that Avondale runs these trips because “Avondale’s always put an emphasis on community service. Like I think it’s necessary for them to sort of exhibit that ethos, and they do see the value in it. It is really important for some people to have that practical aspect to their faith like it’s not enough for them just to go to church every week and pray and have Bible study and stuff like that so I think it is really important in consistency with their ethos to have the community service opportunities.”

Dr Greenthumb also enjoyed the opportunities to meet international students from America and to learn what “their experience is with their like Adventist education over there and the differences here. Like I’m seeing the American way of doing things and the Australian ways of doing things and just yeah you like go over to like in Cambodia and see the church over there and stuff like that and see ADRA [Adventist Disaster Relief Agency]. It is kind of cool to see that, like that was probably the most world changing view I had.” Dr Greenthumb feels that he couldn’t put a price on the value of the experiences he has had at Avondale. He feels the experiences with meeting friends and going to Cambodia has helped him to change a lot especially with regard to maturity with decisions that he makes.

When Dr Greenthumb was asked why he thinks the lecturers show an interest in the students he stated that he feels for one, they can afford to as “they have enough time and like it’s more likely they can know your name.” He further adds that it comes down to the people themselves and that “it is a reflection of their own character that

they care so much.” He then recalls how one lecturer is “like a mother figure to us and she has been the whole time I’ve been here.”

With regard to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere at Avondale Dr Greenthumb feels that “it’s a requirement. It feels like a requirement when you hire them. Like Avondale is trying to project a certain image and that’s why they hire people that are friendly, welcoming people and that like intimately care about the students.”

Dr Greenthumb felt that the two main ways he could tell that Avondale was a Christian tertiary institution was that he feels you find the word Christian within their slogans and statements, and that there is a church on campus.

Lasting impression

Dr Greenthumb was asked to write down the three words that he felt best described Avondale. He chose the word “community” and after some quiet reflection he added the word “separate”. He gave is some more quiet reflection and added ‘fun’.

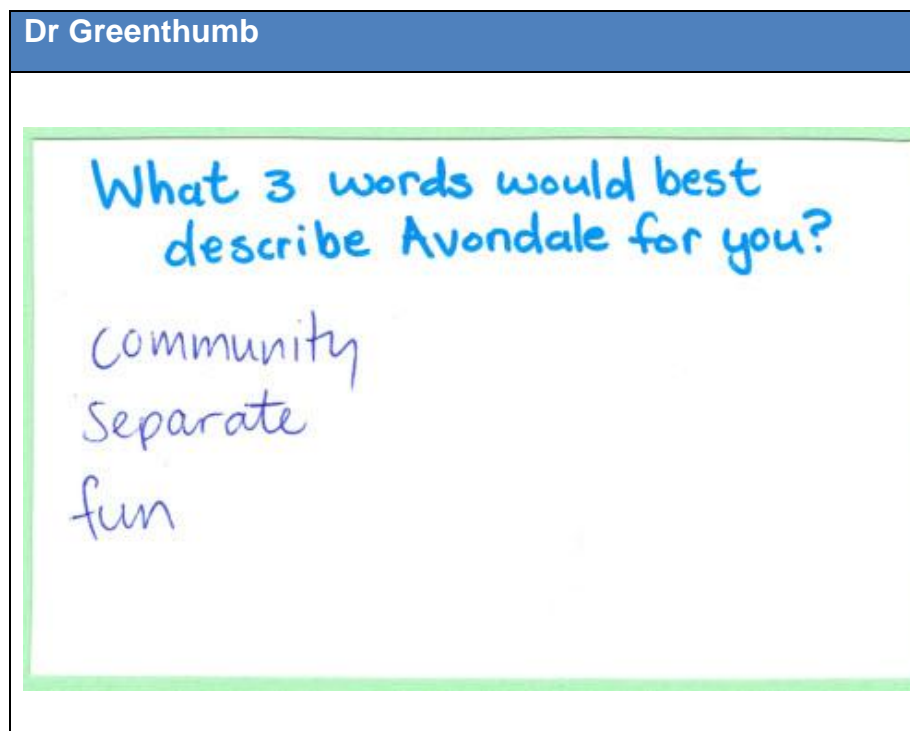


Figure 4. 13 Dr. Greenthumb

Dr Greenthumb was asked what he meant by separate, and he stated that “well to me it’s quite obvious that Avondale is not like a part of the rest of the world. Like I feel

that maybe it's not just Avondale. Maybe it's the Seventh-day Adventist church, but I feel that like there is almost like a passive effort to make us separate. Like we try to stand apart but that makes us apart." Dr Greenthumb further adds that "I view it as very positive though. As a religious institution it needs to have its standards and remain true to these for it to be seen as something different in the community. It needs to show the benefits of its lifestyle choices and exhibit these to the community as an example that they can choose for themselves."

Dr Greenthumb chose 'fun' because "Avondale's been a lot more fun and a less hard than I thought it would be" and "community" is something he expressed throughout his interview.

Dr Greenthumb feels that when he starts his teaching career he will implement the teaching techniques that he was taught at Avondale especially with regard to "like behavioural management and special needs kids, as well as planning lessons and the professional aspect of my teaching has been fantastic."

Dr Greenthumb was asked to review Avondale College's motto and mission statement. He was asked to rank it from one to ten; ten being the strongest and one being the weakest.

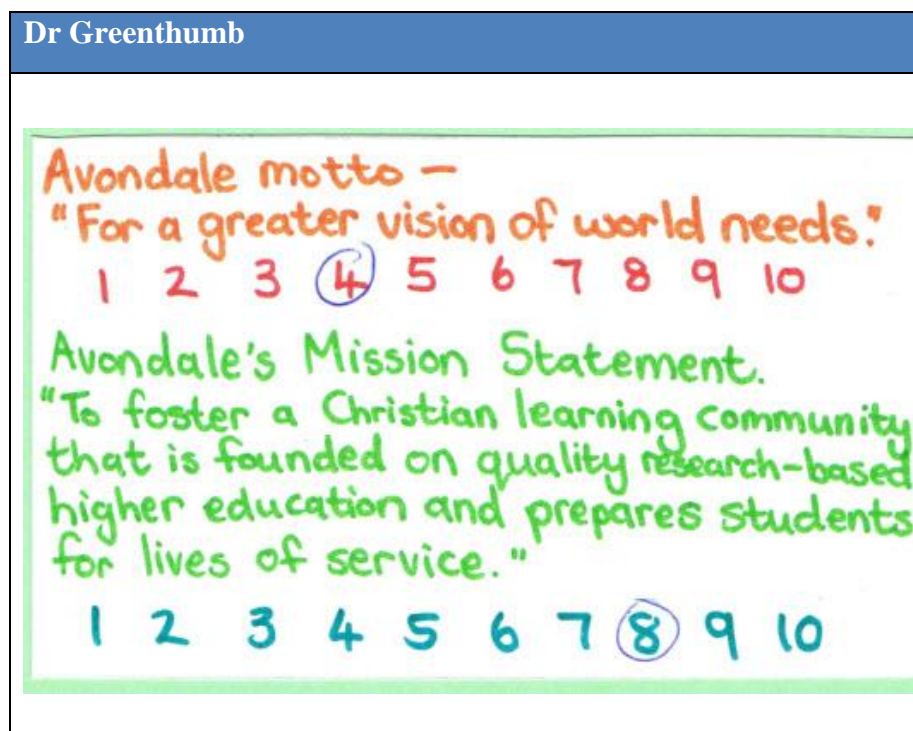


Figure 4. 14 Dr. Greenthumb

Dr Greenthumb was asked why he ranked Avondale's motto at 4 to which he replied that "I gave it those 4 points for all the work at One Mission does and the Pick-A-Street groups. These people are aware of the world outside. The Avondale Bubble exists in a very real and tangible way. I do not feel, however, that the classes have a large influence on world issues. More local – sometimes even limited just to the Adventist world."

Summary of Dr Greenthumb's Experience

Dr Greenthumb had a unique journey from growing up in a Seventh-day Adventist family, deciding to attend Avondale College only to then renounce his beliefs in Seventh-day Adventism during his first year of studies. The importance of his relationships with people was evident throughout and took preference to the relationships with lecturers. He does feel however, that the lecturers are caring and supportive, but expressed stronger connections with the deans in his dormitory.

Dr Greenthumb sees himself as a very spiritual person as opposed to a religious person. He felt that Avondale's ethos has encouraged the spiritual side but that most of the people have misrepresented this. He feels that he believes in a Higher-Being but is currently on a spiritual pursuit.

Dr Greenthumb feels that Avondale has provided him with quality education but still felt that there were some areas of study that were irrelevant. His view on a teacher's role did change while being at Avondale and he feels he has a more realistic view on this.

Dr Greenthumb started to investigate his belief system and values while at Avondale College and he shared that he has also grown in maturity and responsibility when it came to the life decisions.

Has Avondale impacted Dr Greenthumb? In his words, "it is exciting being in such close quarters with so many of your peers. You are able to meet like-minded people and form new friendships with so many different people."

Comparisons

Dr Greenthumb is the only former Seventh-day Adventist that was interviewed and thus brought a unique perspective to the research. He had some commonalities with the previous characters in that he felt Avondale is a community, and that it portrays good values. He also felt that he established positive relationships with lecturers and especially made really supportive and like-minded friends during his time at Avondale.

It seems however that Christian values seemed to be of less importance to him than it's been to Harry Watson, Charlie Brown, and Isabella Swan, even though he came from a Christian background.

There were also several words that all of the characters had in common. The top ten words were chosen as a comparison as seen in Table 4.2.

The top ten most common used words between the characters can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 1 Ten most used words between characters

Ten most used words between characters						
Names	Harry	Charlie	Jimi	Isabella	James	Dr
Words	Watson	Brown	Hendrix	Swan	Smith	Greenthumb
God	x	x	x	x	x	x
Friends	x	x	x	x	x	x
Christian	x	x	x	x	x	
Values	x	x	x	x	x	
Practical	x		x	x	x	x
Believes		x	x	x	x	x
Experiences	x		x	x		x
Support	x	x			x	x
Relaxing/ Peaceful	x	x	x		x	
Care	x		x			x

SUMMARY

The researcher found that there were many commonalities as well as contradictions between the characters' accounts of their experiences of Avondale College and Seventh-day Adventism. This suggests that every individual has their unique and personal perspective in life and that their personal backgrounds to a great extent influence and shape their experience and view of Avondale.

It was noted that all of the characters agreed on the care and support shown they received from lecturers at Avondale College. All of the characters enjoyed Avondale's environment and felt that it was relaxing, peaceful and aesthetically pleasing. They also all felt that Avondale portrayed a Christian atmosphere and this was especially evident through the lecturers. Most of them agreed on the high quality of coursework and professionalism displayed by the faculty, except for a few disagreements here and there.

With regard to spiritual matters there was great variance in experience and view among the characters. Some felt that their religious or spiritual values were supported and their spirituality has grown at Avondale whereas others felt reserved and uncomfortable with the content or activities, or disagreed with the belief system presented, all together. Most of them enjoyed Christian studies and felt that they learned more about other denominations and that they could relate better to Seventh-day Adventists.

These findings will be further developed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will present an interpretation of the results of this study, providing connections to the literature provided in Chapter 2. The interpretation will contextualise the study and demonstrate how this research project fills the research gap. In doing this, the chapter will respond to the original research investigation.

The six participants in this study were able to explore their experience at Avondale along with the researcher while conducting the interviews. The purpose of the interviews were to examine the personal impact that Avondale's ethos, mission and vision has had on the participants while attending Avondale College.

The purpose of this investigation is to examine the perceptions of six final year education students who do not act in accordance to Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. I sought to explore the participant's individual stories within the context of Avondale's ethos, mission and values. It was from these statements of purpose that the research questions that guided this investigation were formed. The focus question that will be answered in this chapter is:

How have Avondale's ethos, mission and values impacted six fourth year education students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith?

The following sub-questions were used to guide the data collected and will also be addressed.

- What are students' perceptions of Avondale in relationship to its mission?
- To what extent have students not of the Adventist faith interacted with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle during their time at Avondale?
- How evident are Avondale's values to students who study there?

An analysis of the data revealed an overarching theme and four sub-themes that will be discussed throughout this chapter unfolds:

Overarching theme: Authentic relationships

Social connections

Spiritual connections

Career connections

Intra-personal connections

The model in Figure 5.1 demonstrates the structure of the themes. At the centre is the overarching theme labelled authentic relationships. These relationships deal primarily with the relationships between students and lecturers or other staff or personnel employed at Avondale College. The four sub-themes are all directly influenced to some degree by the overarching theme and can also be develop and experienced at Avondale College. Social connections deal with the social relationships that the participants developed with peers and friends. Spiritual connections reveal the relationship that the participants developed with God, as well as with the Seventh-day Adventist church. This will also include the participants' overall understanding of Seventh-day Adventists beliefs and doctrines. Career connections have to do with the professional growth that participants experienced through the relationships with the lecturers. Lastly, some of the relationships that the participants experienced over the time while attending Avondale has resulted in a better innate understanding or development, labelled as intra-personal connections.

Model of the themes revealed through the data collected

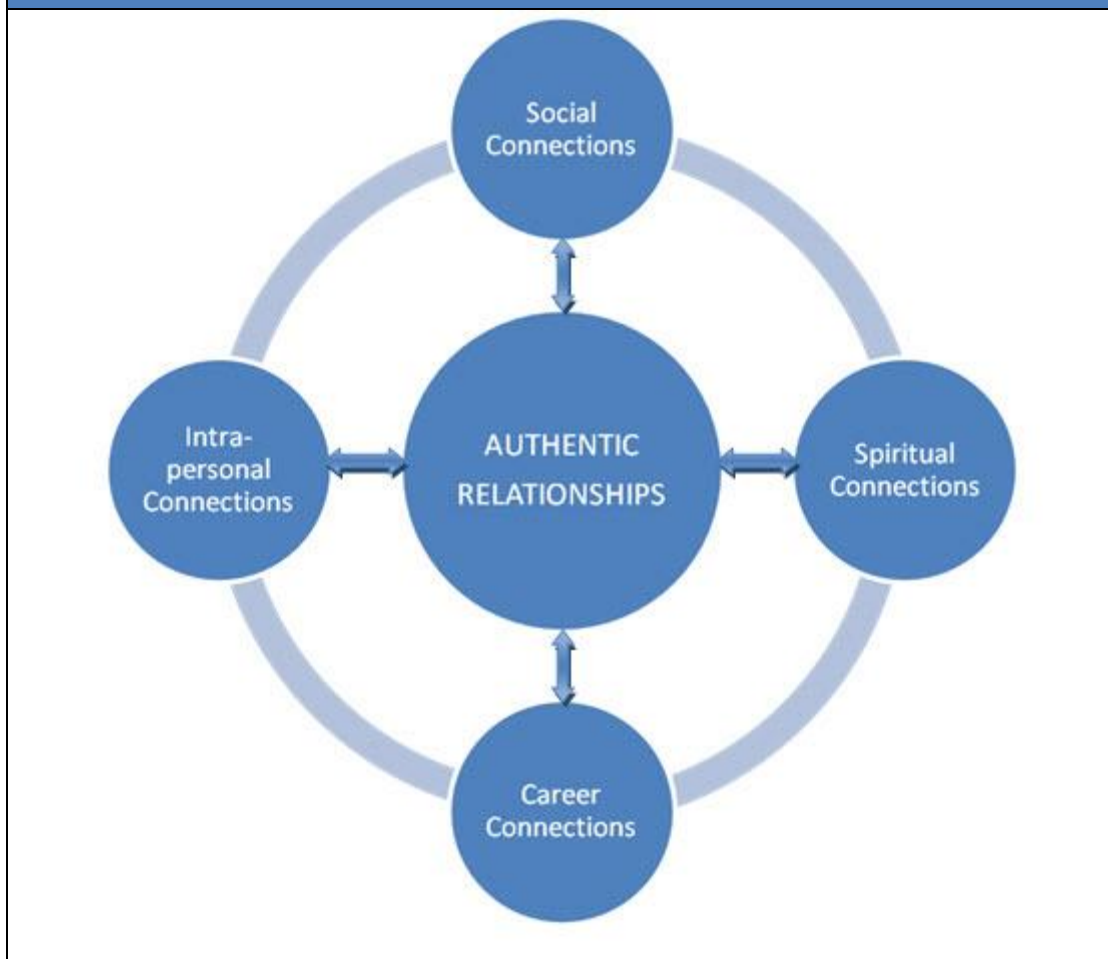


Figure 5. 1 Model of the themes revealed through the data collected

So what do they have in common?

Authentic relationship is the overarching theme between the other four themes, social connections, spiritual connections, career connections, and intra-personal connections. All of these themes are in various ways influenced and affected by the participants' authentic relationship with the lecturers. The results will now be discussed underneath the themes with reference to the literature.

Authentic Relationships

Authentic relationship is the parallel theme that emerged from the data along with each of the other four themes. It was clearly evident in each of the interview transcripts that it was positioned as an overarching theme. The adjective 'authentic' was used because of comments such as "really care", "really, really supportive", "they go above and beyond I think what most lecturers have to do." Authenticity denotes qualities of being genuine and trustworthy. Both these qualities were reiterated several times over as each 'character' told his or her story. This theme relates predominantly to the relationship the students had with their lecturers.

White, the founder of Avondale College is quoted as saying, "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian" (1942, p.470). The argument there is that the lecturers were living out this statement, although the participants did not necessarily recognize this. Dr. Greenthumb felt "Avondale is trying to project a certain image and that's why they hire people that are friendly, welcoming people and that, like, intimately care about the students." Charlie Brown did not identify a perceived reason for her impression that lecturers are "really, really supportive, and I don't think that I would have found that anywhere else but Avondale."

Isabella Swan thought it was perhaps to do with the size of Avondale. "I don't know whether it's because it is a small uni that you have that encouragement all the time from the lecturers... lecturers you know take the time to encourage you and help you out when you need it and to motivate and encourage you to just do your best." Chepcheing, Mbugua & Kariuki (2006) mentioned that one of the main factors that hinders positive lecturer-student relationships are class sizes, and added that students within smaller higher educational institutions felt more satisfied with lecturer-student relationships. Jimi Hendrix acknowledged that it "could be a part of the whole Seventh-day Adventist thing, like they really do care about students and they do want you to pass if you are struggling." This concurs with Pike (2001) who raised the importance of staff transparently modeling Christian values. Chepcheing, Mbugua & Kariuki (2006) highlights that it is important for a student to perceive that the lecturer has his or her best interest in mind, which will result in the students experiencing positive emotions towards the campus.

It is undeniable that the effectiveness of any institution is impacted by the individuals who work there. As noted, the theme of ‘care’ or ‘caring’ in association with the lecturers and staff of Avondale is found throughout all of the six participants’ stories. It was expressed that “lecturers here care what happens to you and they care about what happens outside of the classroom” (Harry Watson), and it was suggested that it “could be a part of the whole Seventh-day Adventist thing, like they really do care about students and they do want you to pass if you are struggling” (Jimi Hendrix). Richardson & Fallona (2001) highlight that teacher-student relationships lay at the heart of education, especially when it is a positive and caring relationship.

As it was noted through the above discussions, the authentic and personal relationships with the lecturers is the underlying theme to the connected social, spiritual, career, and intra-personal themes.

Social Connections

Social connections mainly deal with the relationships made with peers or people on campus other than faculty or lecturers. It was noted that “everybody is friendly and nice to you and you always feel welcome...nobody tries to put you down and make you feel inferior” (Harry Watson, see figure 4.4), and that “most Adventist I know are just really good people that belief... [and] have just been really kind people and like really happy to help” (Charlie Brown). These statements are in harmony with that of Iselin (2009) of preserving the core vision, values and identity of a Christian institution.

For the participants that live on campus in the dormitories they felt that the “sisterhood and brotherhood... things like that definitely play a major role in being part of Avondale for me” (Isabella Swan) and that “it is exciting to be in such close quarters with so many of your peers. You are able to meet likeminded people and form new friendships with so many different people” (Dr Greenthumb). Davis (2003) highlights that care by teachers enhances the educational experiences of students as well as increasing their pro-social behaviour.

It was also noted that for some of the participants there was “a sense of separation with indoor and outdoor students...a sense that there’s a bit of a clique” (Harry

Watson), and that there was an expression of difficulty to “jell with some of the students, because I’m from a totally different world than them...they don’t really allow other people to enter their cliques” (James Smith).

Spiritual Connections

With regard to spiritual connections the participants have varying views when it comes to their spiritual experiences at Avondale and how they felt it impacted them. Some of the spiritual impact has been positive in that “God has a plan, and sometimes things can go either wrong, but I’m learning that it’s actually for a particular reason” (Harry Watson). It was also noted that “Avondale has helped me to develop my spirituality to what it is now and to develop my understanding of I guess the Christian worldview and all that sort of thing along my journey” (Charlie Brown). Interestingly Roy (2008) states that the Christian worldview should be explicitly biblical on the principle of ‘sola scriptura’, and it was not evident within Charlie Browns interview that she received any biblical instruction while at Avondale. Ringenberg (1984) stated that one of the warning marks of colleges becoming secular is that they lose the importance of the Bible and that the Christian religion in the general education curriculum starts to decline.

It was also noted that “I don’t think my prayer life has really increased. I’ve probably found a better understanding as to why I pray and things I can actually pray about...[and that] worships whether its floor combined, on weekends or ladies worships, anything like that I think they definitely have and influence depending on the topics and things” (Isabella Swan). It is encouraging to notice that the above mentioned participants had a positive spiritual encounter at Avondale. Calvert (2007) highlights that Christian education is meant to provide a firm intellectual and spiritual understanding of Christianity rather than the narrow and restricted thoughts of humanity.

Some of the participants however expressed differently to Avondale’s encouragement of spirituality as observed in “I believe in God and consider myself a Christian and all that, I don’t go to church and a lot of that kind of stuff that makes

me feel uncomfortable” (Jimi Hendrix). When it comes to attending forum on campus it was noted that “I’m not a Seventh-day Adventist, and I don’t have any intentions of becoming one or whatever” (James Smith). “My focus is not on God but rather on people, [thus] it seems pointless for me to be a part of a community that focuses on Him” (Dr Greenthumb). It is unfortunate that these three participants have reservations about worshipping God collectively at church or at a campus service for students (forum). Although there is a concern about students not attending church services, a larger concern was discussed by Benne (2001) wherein he highlights that the role of chapel has been in the decrease among Protestant universities, and that the weekly chapel and worship services are progressively fading away. Ream and Glanzer (2007) reveals that eventually weekly attendance at chapel is no longer mandate, and will risk becoming a hindrance before it is done away with.

One of the participants however suggests that “Avondale is trying to project a certain image and that’s why they hire people that are friendly, welcoming people and that like intimately care about the students” (Dr Greenthumb). Dr Greenthumb also mentioned the least about his relationship with lecturers and he is the only one with a Seventh-day Adventist background. According to Jeynes and Martinez (2007) the religious influence often is greater for the less religious students than for the religious ones that are more grounded in the faith.

The discussion above brings to light the spiritual connection that the students experience through Avondale College and through the relationships with lecturers has either been positive or at a ‘skin deep’ level. Cann (1996) urges the Christians and the Christian institutions to heed the responsibility to produce disciples for Jesus Christ. Burtchaell (1998) highlights the importance of faculty remaining interested in their college’s denominational heritage for it to remain distinctly Christian, rather than just focusing on their own academic disciplines. Benne (2001) believes that the persons of a Christian institution needs to be “true believers” who have the ability to form, strengthen and uphold the ethos of the institution, which will result in a Christian vision for the institution, and that this often needs to start with the leaders.

Intra-personal Connections

Intra-personal connections has to do with the innate experiences and development that the participants experienced through their relationships and experiences during the time at Avondale college. It was noted that “during my time at Avondale I have felt at peace, however whether this is the work of God or simply the people around, I do not know” (Charlie Brown). It was also noted that experiences and relationships with people that were “life changing...[and wherein] I gained so much self-confidence” (Harry Watson) as well as expressed “I’ve always felt comfortable to be myself, hold my own beliefs, and haven’t felt as though I need to change this to suit Avondale” (Jimi Hendrix), and that of reflection about being “quite spiritual in the sense that I’m very self-reflective and I try and be very aware of my relationships” (Dr Greenthumb).

Career Connections

This has mainly to do with the professional development in relation to the relationships with lecturers while attending Avondale. It was noted that “I am now very passionate about teaching and especially the difference I could make to young people’s lives” (Harry Watson), as well as that “I can be there and care for my students, and be a positive role-model and show them good sides in everyone and that sort of thing that I feel that teachers here have shown me” (Charlie Brown). Relating to the atmosphere at Avondale it was noted that “something about Avondale it’s just so nice and you’d want to sort of go to a school where it’s all kind of a bit like the atmosphere that we have here if that makes sense” (Isabella Swan).

With regard to the participants implementing theoretical content in the future it was noted that content “like behavioural management and special needs kids, as well as planning lessons and the professional aspect of my teaching has been fantastic” (Dr Greenthumb), and that most probably “[I’ll] look back a few years later and think ‘that was really good’ and ‘I think I’ll do that’” (Jimi Hendrix).

So what do they really think?

Pike (2011) believes that Christian values should be transparent and he noted that the values, along with the character and ethos, of the school needs to be positively adhered to by staff, and actively promoted through a living Christian faith. The sub-questions will now be answered through the use of the data and the literature review.

Mission

- What are students' perceptions of Avondale in relationship to mission?

During the interviews the participants were asked to rank Avondale College's mission statement on a scale from one to ten; ten being the highest and one being the weakest. Between all the participants most of them agreed on the level of Avondale's success in regard to living up to its mission statement. Avondale College's mission was ranked highly at a nine by Harry Watson (see Figure 4.3) as she felt that Avondale places a "big perspective on the mission work that people do here and all over the world, but even just from the small things like training the teachers to change the student's lives." Charlie Brown (see Figure 4.5) agreed with this as she also ranked the mission statement at a nine but cheekily added that "I'm going to give them a nine because you know as a teacher you never give everyone a hundred percent because that means they can't improve." Interestingly enough Jimi Hendrix (see Figure 4.7) also ranked the mission statement at a nine as he felt that when "opportunities are taken its [Avondale] doing a pretty good job", as well as Isabella Swan (see Figure 4.10) as she felt that Avondale "still has the Christian focus [and] I think like I can't be better prepared for being a teacher than what they're doing for me." Dr Greenthumb (see Figure 4.14) ranked Avondale only one level lower at an eight.

Contrary to the above believes are that of James Smith (see Figure 4.12) in that he only felt that Avondale is somewhere between a five and a six out of ten with regard to living up to their mission statement.

From the above statements it is evident that the majority of students feel that Avondale is living up to its mission statement.

During the interviews the participants were also asked to rank Avondale College's motto which appeared on the same card as Avondale's mission statement, on a scale from one to ten; ten being the highest and one being the weakest. Between all the participants most of them agreed on the level of Avondale's success in regard to living up to its mission statement. Harry Watson awarded Avondale with a ten as she feels that Avondale is having a big focus on mission work (see Figure 4.3). Charlie Brown gave the motto a seven, and she stated that she was not entirely sure about Avondale's motto. She however did feel that the motto is evident through the overseas mission trips that they plan (see Figure 4.5). Jimi Hendrix also gave Avondale a seven for its motto and stated that he feels if the "opportunities are taken its [Avondale] doing a pretty good job" (see Figure 4.7). Isabella Swan gave Avondale an eight because she feels that not only is Avondale helping "Australia with teachers and pastors and all that but we also go out on the mission trips and things. So we're not just thinking of ourselves. We're expanding our horizons so to speak" (See Figure 4.10). James Smith settled on a seven without explanation (see Figure 4.12). Dr Greenthumb, ranked Avondale's motto at a four. His reason for this is that he feels that One Mission and the Pick-A-Street group fulfills that four, but that he doesn't feel that "the classes have a large influence on world issues. More local – sometimes even limited just to the Adventist world" (see Figure 4.14).

It is interesting to note that everyone associated 'service' or 'mission' work or trips with the motto "for a greater vision of world needs." One could interpret this as humanitarian, but what about the Gospel? Is the interpretation true to the initial intent of the motto?

Ethos

- To what extent have students not of the Adventist faith interacted with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle during their time at Avondale?

Most of the students became aware of some of the Seventh-day Adventists beliefs at Avondale and that some of the topics stood out more than others, as noted in “that Jesus is going to come back” (Harry Watson), that Adventist “don’t eat meat [that doesn’t] chews its cud and have split hoofs or something like that. Or that when you die, you don’t go straight to heaven you’re basically just asleep or something like in limbo in the ground and when Jesus comes back then He takes you with Him” (Jimi Hendrix). As well as that Adventists “don’t believe in eating meat, or drink any alcohols, they don’t smoke, or any of that kind of jazz.” (James Smith), and that Adventist do believe in “the state of the dead where I think you guys believe that you’re sort of just in the ground and you don’t go straight to heaven” (Isabella Swan). Isabella Swan feels however that she can relate a lot more now to her Seventh-day Adventist friends as she is more aware of the “the differences I guess between being Catholic and Seventh-day Adventist and I respect the Sabbath a lot more”.

It is quite evident that the topics of ‘what happens when you die’ and health and diet laws stood out most for these participants, although not always clearly understood.

Values

- How evident are Avondale’s values to the students who study there?

All of the participants responded differently with regard to values and some felt that it was more important to them than others. With regard to becoming a teacher and the content that needs to be taught Isabella Swan felt that “there’s also values, there’s morals, that a teacher is a role model for their students and I feel that Avondale has shown me that.” Avondale College’s values highlight excellence, spirituality, nurture, service and balance. This will briefly be examined in light of the participants’ answers and responses.

Excellence

Avondale emphasises excellence through learning and discovery, and by fostering creativity that will blend the individuality, wisdom and healthy self-evolution of a person. Avondale is also focused on excellence in higher education and strives to provide quality infrastructure in its various departments and services. Although Jimi Hendrix felt slightly unsettled when he started studies at Avondale, he states that “I absolutely loved the place and like I just wanted to be like a perpetual student because I thought this is just the life.” James Smith felt that “Avondale’s got pretty high standards of professionalism” and that he really appreciates that as he feels that “teachers need to look the part as well as actually be the part, so you’ve got to look professional, and Avondale’s high standards of professionalism I definitely feel I’ve used and that I take them on-board every prac.” It was also stated by Dr Greenthumb that he “really appreciate the emphasis that they put on the practical aspect. Like other universities you only have to do prac in like your final year but here you have to do it every semester.” Jimi Hendrix became convinced to become a teacher “when I did my first prac and after like a day in the classroom I saw that this was for me.” If Jimi Hendrix had to wait till the final year for his teaching practical, as Dr Greenthumb pointed out, he might not have completed his educational degree. With regard to Avondale’s value of ‘excellence’ in your profession, James Smith felt that he has learned “you have to be a great teacher if you truly want to inspire the kids. So greatness I think is needed to be a good professional teacher”.

Spirituality

Avondale believes that there is nothing of greater significance than a person’s relationship with God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Avondale encourages prayer, worship, meditation, fellowship, study of the Bible, and Sabbath rest. As a student not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, Jimi Hendrix felt that some of the lecturers were “open to people who possibly aren’t sure about Christianity” and this made him more comfortable to sit through the lecture. Through Christian Studies classes, Isabella Swan feels that she became “really interested and it’s really opened up my eyes, because I’ve only known one other Seventh-day Adventist previous to

coming here. And he wasn't so aware I guess even of what it really means. It's really interesting."

Nurture

Avondale here tries to encourage members of its learning community to realise their full potential, and to live full and joyful lives. Avondale wants to achieve this goal through enhancing friendships, family support, and by enabling students to respond intelligently to their own needs and to the needs of others. Charlie Brown recalls changing in her relationship with her grandmother and she feels that "it's funny how my relationships with my families have grown and I think that's been due to being able to see different sides of people, which I think has really grown from being here [Avondale]." She also felt that when she became pregnant she was supported during and after pregnancy and states that "I've continued on and that I should be proud of myself for continuing on even though I had a child, and was a single mom for a while." She relates later on how she became pregnant in her final year of studies and how the lecturers have been helping her to finish assignments before her baby is due, so that she can graduate.

Service

Avondale believes that its motto "For a Greater Vision of World Needs" challenges its learning community to a more informed understanding of humanitarian needs and responses both within Australia and overseas. Avondale's value of service was a reoccurring theme throughout the interviews. It was visible in the service you give as a teacher to students through the "role that you have in student's lives" and that "you could be that one stability in that child's life" (Harry Watson). There was also the focus of service through mission trips and that Avondale runs these trips as "part of service" and "for ministry as well" (Harry Watson), as well as "aimed at like opening students minds" and to "offer them an opportunity" that they might not get otherwise" (Jimi Hendrix). It is also believed that Avondale organises mission trips because "Avondale's always put an emphasis on community service. Like I think it's necessary for them to sort of exhibit that ethos, and they do see the value in it" (Dr Greenthumb).

Balance

Avondale emphasises living a balanced lifestyle, with temperance, and believes that this is encouraged through providing a balanced program of spiritual growth, intellectual development, cultural enrichment, physical activity, relaxation and recreation. With regards to the environment Charlie Brown feels that “the atmosphere of Avondale is just really calm and collected and caring.” With regard to temperance, Jimi Hendrix at a time attempted to “[try] to drink a bit less” and “sort of behave a bit more Christianly” but this was unfortunately short lived. Isabella Swan highlighted that she will “often choose a vegetarian meal now over a meat meal”. Dr Greenthumb does feel that Avondale provided him with opportunities but that “it’s always been up to my own initiative to take advantage of those opportunities” and that those opportunities were to be responsible “or to take charge of my situation and improve my environment for the better.”

Conclusion

Through observing all the varied responses when it came to how the participants view Avondale’s ethos, mission and values, it is very evident that their personal background and relationships also shape and impact their experience at Avondale. The participants are also unique in their circumstances and that they not only are influenced by the lecturers, experiences and ethos of Avondale but that they also bring their unique circumstances to Avondale. The impact of Avondale’s ethos, mission and vision was experienced at a deeper level for the students that had a personal connection with lecturers, especially for those who also lived on campus in the dormitories, as they had more exposure to the environment at Avondale College.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This research project aimed to look at the impact that Avondale's ethos, mission and values had on six fourth year education students during their time of study. It also explored the participants' interviewed experiences and allowed one overarching and four parallel themes to emerge from the data in regards to the impact that Avondale had on them as students during their enrolment. Previous chapters provided a context and framework for the study, information from the literature, a description of the research design and instruments, the data from the participants' experiences, an analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings within the context of the research questions and emerging themes. This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, recommendations and possible areas for further study, as well as evaluating the relevance of this research project.

RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following question guided the research.

How have Avondale College's ethos, mission and values impacted six students not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith?

Research sub-questions that add further detail to this focus question are:

1. What are students' perceptions of Avondale in relationship to its mission?

The data revealed that the students had an overall positive response to the mission statement of Avondale College and felt that if the opportunities are taken then most of the students can participate in service as well as quality education. Students were however more divided on Avondale's motto and most of them only connected the motto to humanitarian services. Avondale

College however places a strong humanitarian focus in its values under service and thus directly connects its motto with a strong humanitarian focus.

2. To what extent have students not of the Adventist faith interacted with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle during their time at Avondale?

The participants interacted with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle to differing extents. All had basic interaction through the mandatory Christian Studies Subjects, with varying levels of dissatisfaction with this requirement, although most could understand the rationale behind this requirement. One residential student participated in worship events, but most never attended Forums. One became a Christian during her time at Avondale and one decided he no longer wanted to be a Seventh-day Adventist. One was interested in knowing more at one point, but then moved on. Regarding lifestyle, prayer was mentioned and one person considers herself mostly vegetarian due to the influence of Avondale.

3. How evident are Avondale's values to students who study there?

None of the students knew what the Avondale values were but their responses yielded some interesting results. Each of the five values: excellence, spirituality, service, balance and nurture emerged in the interview process. The only element listed under balance that was not mentioned by any of the participants during their interviews was with regard to sustaining Avondale's physical and environmental resources. Perhaps this is an area for further consideration on the Avondale College campus.

Recommendations

There are two recommendations that emerge from this investigation.

1. That Avondale College create further opportunities for the student 'voice' to be heard when examining its distinctiveness as an Adventist College of higher learning.

2. That Avondale College continues to foster a Christian ethos of authentic relationships through employment practices and professional, spiritual and personal nurture of staff.

Suggestions for further research

Possible areas for further study were identified from the gaps in the literature, and the findings from this investigation. These are;

1. Research to explore the perceptions and impact of Avondale's ethos, mission and values on Seventh-day Adventist students.
2. Research to investigate the impact of Avondale's ethos, mission and values on students not of the Adventist faith five to ten years after they have graduated.
3. Research that compares and contrasts the missional journey of several Adventist Universities in a variety of settings.

Relevance

This study has the potential to provide information to Avondale College in terms of the impact of its ethos, mission and values on students not of the Adventist faith. Therefore, it provides a new perspective for the College through which to examine its distinctiveness. The study also provides a strong focus from the literature review on the Christian ethos within a Christian tertiary institution, which also provides the opportunity for self-evaluation of Avondale College's Christian ethos, and examination of its alignment to its founding vision and mission.

This research also has relevance for the Seventh-day Adventist church in Australia, which operates Avondale College, and is a key stakeholder in the institution.

Although this research project relates to Avondale College and therefore is not transferable, readers may choose to use their discretion in applying it to other institutions. Therefore the relevance of this study may be broader than just Avondale College and its sponsoring denomination.

The findings may also be of interest to the wider Seventh-day Adventist higher education system, and in particular to institutions that are similarly placed to Avondale College in terms of their educational history. More recently established institutions may also find some relevance in the study. Furthermore the study may provide a useful perspective to other Christian tertiary institutions, as well as other Christian organizations that are guided by a founding ethos, mission and vision. As many non-Christian tertiary institutions are also guided by a founding ethos, mission and vision, this study could be of interest to them also.

Final comments

This investigation shows that overall Avondale College's ethos, mission and values have impacted positively on the six participating students, who were not of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. It does, however, reveal a healthy tension between 'belief' and inclusivity, demonstrating that inclusivity has not been achieved to the detriment of distinctiveness. Rather, inclusivity has been achieved through authentic relationships offered by the faculty and staff.

The final statement of this thesis is a visual one. The ten top common words of each participant's word cloud as well as each of the participant's three words they chose to describe Avondale were combined to create a Perceptions of Avondale word cloud (see Figure 6.1).

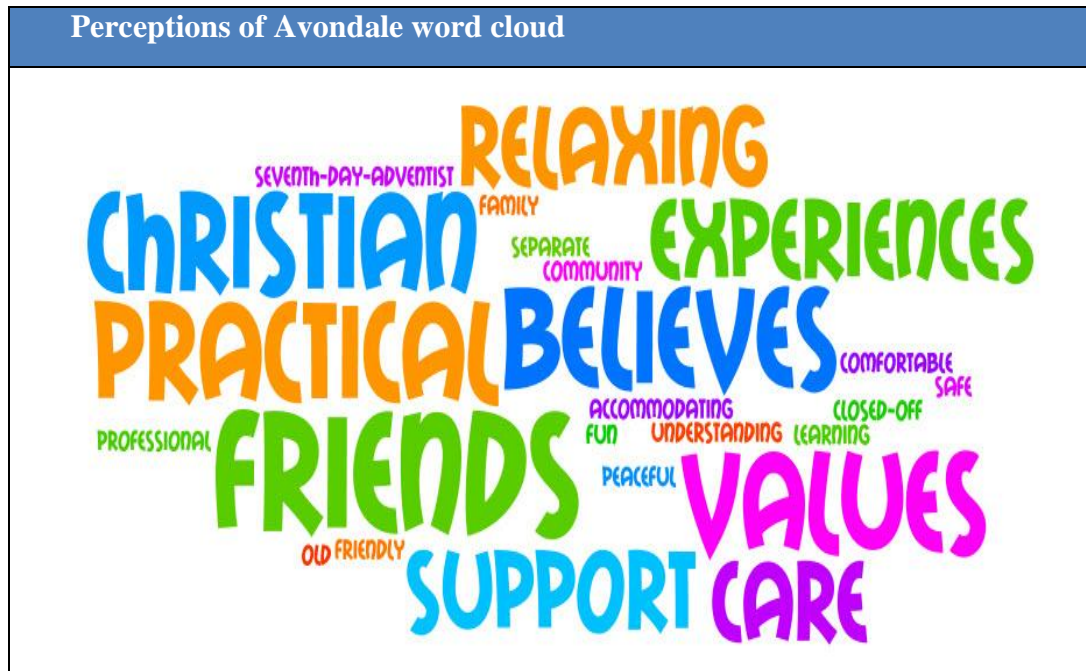


Figure 6. 1 Perceptions of Avondale word cloud.

This visual representation of the six students' collective voices indicates by word choice defining characteristics of Avondale College, and by word size, the commonality and diversity of their perceptions. What each 'character' brings to the story of Avondale College determines the direction of their own personal story. Likewise, what the reader brings, determines what he/she takes away. What have you seen?

REFERENCES

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C. & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education*. (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Avondale College Handbooks. (1897-2010). Avondale Heritage Centre.
- Avondale College Handbook. (1901). *Fifth annual announcement of the Avondale school for Christian workers*. p.4.
- Avondale College Website. (2011/2012). Downloaded from http://www.avondale.edu.au/Main::Information::handbook::2011::undergraduate::1_UG_General_Information.pdf
- Badley, K. (2010). Whither church-related education now? A review essay of six recent titles. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*. 19(3). 338-344.
- Benne, Robert. (2001). *Quality with soul: How six premier colleges and universities keep faith with their religious traditions*. Grand Rapids, Michigan USA: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Berk, L.E. (2009). *Child Development*. (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Blumer, H. (1940). The problem of concept in social psychology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 45, 707-719.
- Buckingham, J. (2010). *The Rise of Religious Schools in Australia*. Australia: The National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication.
- Bullough Jr., R.V. (2001). Ethical and moral matters in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 27. 21-28.
- Burtchaell, J.T. (1998). *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches*. Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Calvert, K.R. (2007). "Why Educate?": A return to the Classical Christian Model. In W.
- Cann, G. (1996). Is Your Teaching for Better or for Worse? In I. Lambert & S Mitchell (Eds.). *Reclaiming the Future: Australian Perspectives on Christian Schooling* (pp. 37-41). NSW: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity.
- Carr, D. (2011). Values, virtues and professional development in education and teaching. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 50. 171-176.
- Chepcheng, M.C., Mbugua, S.N. & Kariuki, M.W. (2006). University students' perception of lecturer-student relationships: a comparative study of Public

- and Private Universities in Kenya. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 1(3),80-84.
- Creswell, W.C. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Davis, H. A. (2003). Conceptualizing the role and influence of student-teacher relationships on children's social and cognitive development. *Educational Psychologist*, 38(4), 207-234.
- Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. (2008). Mission and Scope. Retrieved October 4, 2012, from <http://education.gc.adventist.org/>
- Dickens, K. (2006). Church and the Christian School. In R. Eddin & J. Ireland (Eds.), *Engaging the Culture: Christians at work in education* (pp. 109-122). NSW: National Institute for Christian Education.
- Dosen, A. (2001). The intentional secularization of a denominational college: The case of Webster College. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 10(2), 379-408..
- Drew, J.C., Hardman, M.L. & Hosp, J.L. (2008). *Designing and conducting research in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Eraut, M. (2000). 'Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work'. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*. 70(1), 113-121.
- Fernando, R. (1996). Switching Kids Onto the Kingdom. In I. Lambert & S Mitchell (Eds.). *Reclaiming the Future: Australian Perspectives on Christian Schooling* (pp. 161-167). NSW: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity.
- Graneheim, U.H. & Lundman, B. (2003). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness [Electronic version]. *Nurse Education Today*, (2004) 24, 105-112.
- Greenleaf, F. (2005). *In Passion For The World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*. USA: Pacific Press Publishing Association.
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Harrison J., MacGibbon, L. & Morton, M. (2001). Regimes of trustworthiness in qualitative research: The Rigors of Reciprocity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(3), 323-345.
- Hartwick, J.M.M. (2007). The religious and prayer lives of public school teachers. In W. Jaynes & E. Martinez (Ed.), *Christianity, Education, & Modern Society* (pp.129-160). United States of America: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

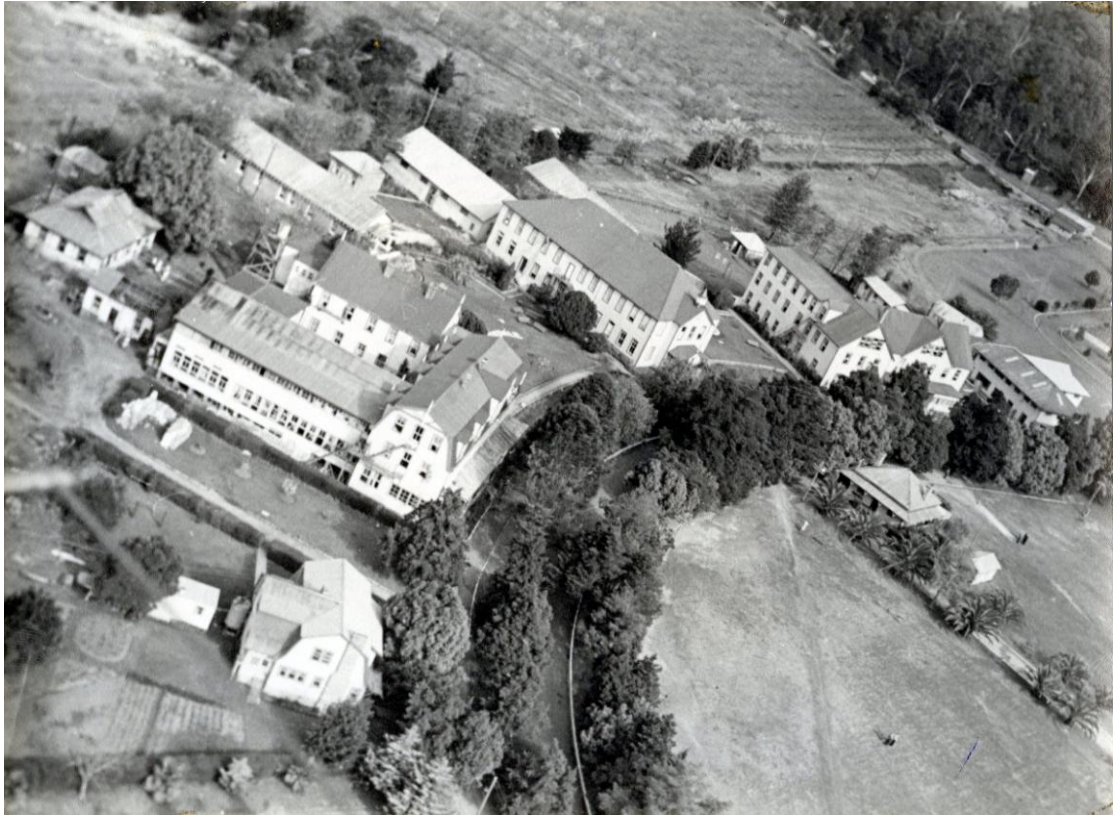
- Haskell, S.N. (1885). Church Schools. Review and Herald. April 14, p.233. Retrieved on October 4, 2012, from http://www.adventistarchives.org/doc_info.asp?DocID=88742
- Hirsch, A. (2007). *The forgotten ways*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
- Holmes, A.F. (1987). *The Idea of a Christian College*. (Revised Ed.). United States of America: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Hook, M (1998). *Experiment on the Dora*. Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press.
- Iselin, D. (2009). There arose a generation that did not remember. *Teach Journal of Christian Education*.3(2), 16-23.
- Jaynes & E. Martinez (Ed.), *Christianity, Education, & Modern Society* (pp.67-89). United States of America: Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Jeynes, W. & Martinez, E. (2007). *Christianity, Education, & Modern Society*. USA: Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Knight, G.R. (2006). *Philosophy & Education: an introduction in Christian perspective*. (4th ed.). Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Knight, J. W. (1973). *Religious Belief and the establishment and Maintenance of Seventh-day Adventist Tertiary Education*. Honours Thesis, University of Queensland.
- Knox, W.E, Kolb, M.R & Lindsay, P (1992). Higher Education, College Characteristics Student Experiences: Long-term Effects on Educational Satisfaction and Perceptions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 63 (3), 296-310.
- Koenig, H.G., McCullough, M.E., & Larson, D.B. (2001). *Handbook of religion and health*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lichtman, M. (2010). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Limerick, D., Cunnington, B., & Crowther, F. (2002). *Managing the new organization: Collaboration and sustainability in the post-corporate world* (2nd ed.). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lodico, M.G., Spaulding, D.T. & Voegtler, K.H. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Marsden, G. (1994). *The soul of an American university: From protestant establishment to establish nonbelief*. New York: Oxford University press.

- Matthes, A.C. (2010). *The relationship between the principal's leadership characteristics and the ability of Primary Teachers to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change: A teacher's perspective*. PhD Thesis.
- Mertens, D.M. (2010). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Miedema, S. (2009). Nicholas P. Wolterstorff's Philosophy of Education: Christian, Open and Critically Committed. *Journal of Christian Education*, 52(1), 23-32.
- Neuman, W.L. (2000). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative Approaches*. (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Noller, P. & Feeney, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Close relationships: functions, forms and processes*. New York: Psychology Press.
- O'Toole, J. & Beckett, D. (2010). *Educational research: Creative thinking and doing*. Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press Australia & New Zealand.
- Obradovic, R. (1986). *Adventist Colleges in Canada: 1916-1982*. Toronto, Canada: Granice Press.
- Pike, M.A. (2011). The value of Christian-ethos schooling for secular students. *Journal of Christian Education*. 20(2). 138-154.
- Ream, T.C. & Glanzer, P.L. (2007). *Christian faith and scholarship: An exploration of contemporary developments*. ASHE Higher Education Report 33(2). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley Periodicals, Inc., A Wiley Company.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing, a method of enquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (2nd ed.). (p.934). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Richardson, V., & Fallona, C. (2001). Classroom management as method and manner. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 33(6), 705-728.
- Ringenberg, W.C. (1984). *The Christian College: A history of protestant higher education in America*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Salom, A.P. (2002). *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia*. Kew, VIC: Christian Research Association.
- Sandford, W. (1964). *College and Character*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Schein, E.H. (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Schwarz, R.W., & Greenleaf, F. (Ed.). (2000). *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. United States of America: Pacific Press.

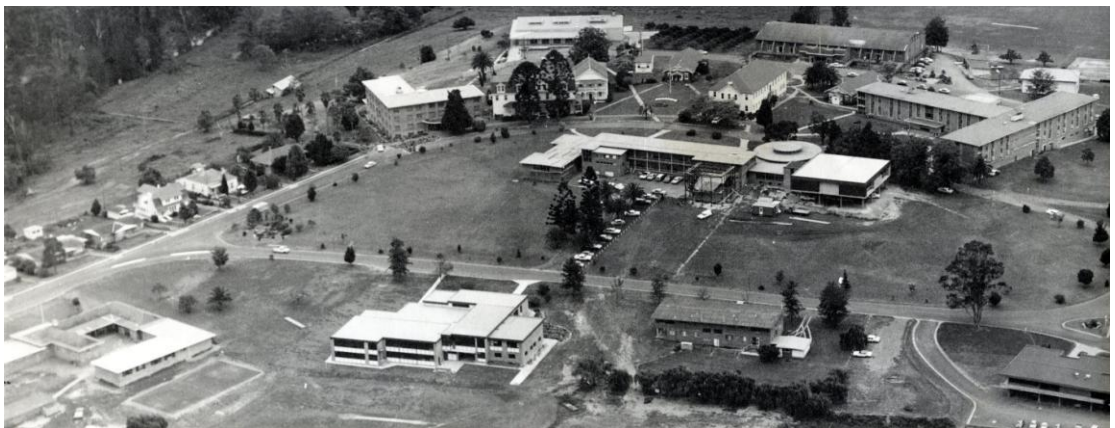
- Smith, E. (2001). The role of tacit and explicit knowledge in the workplace. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 5(4), 311-321.
- Symes, C. & Gulson, K. (2005). Crucifying Education: The Rise and Rise of New Christian Schooling in Australia. *Social Alternatives*, 24(4), 19-24.
- Totterdell, M. (2000). The moralization of teaching: a relational approach as an ethical framework in the professional preparation and formation of teachers. In Gardiner, R., Cairns, J., & Lawton, D. (eds.). *Education for values: Morals, ethics and citizenship in contemporary teaching*. (pp.127-146). London and Sterling VA: Kogan Page Limited.
- White, E.G. (1952). *Education*. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association.
- Whitt, E., Edison, M.I., Pascarella, E.T., Terenzini, P.T., & Nora, M. (2001). Impact of College on Students. *Journal of Higher Education*, 12(2), 172-204.
- Wildy, H. (2003). Meaning and method: Using metaphors in qualitative research. In T. O'Donoghue & K. Punch (Ed.), *Qualitative Educational Research in Action* (pp.111-125). New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer Publishers.
- Willard, D. (n.d.). *Living in the vision of God*. Retrieved September 26, 2012, from <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=96>
- Wood, K. H. (1980). *Colleges in Trouble*. Adventist Review, February 21, 1980, p.3. Retrieved September 26, 2012, from http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH19800221-V157-08__B.pdf
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Yin, R.K. (2012). *Applications of case study research*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Zigarelli, M. (2012). Training, transforming and transitioning: A blueprint for the Christian university. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 21(1). 62-79.
- Zakrzewski, V.S. (2010). *Developing Teachers' Capacities to Create Caring Relationships with Student: A Case Study of a Gandhi-Inspired Private School in India*. CGU Theses & Dissertations, Paper 41. http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_etd/41

APPENDICES

Appendix 2. 1 – Avondale College Aerial Photographs



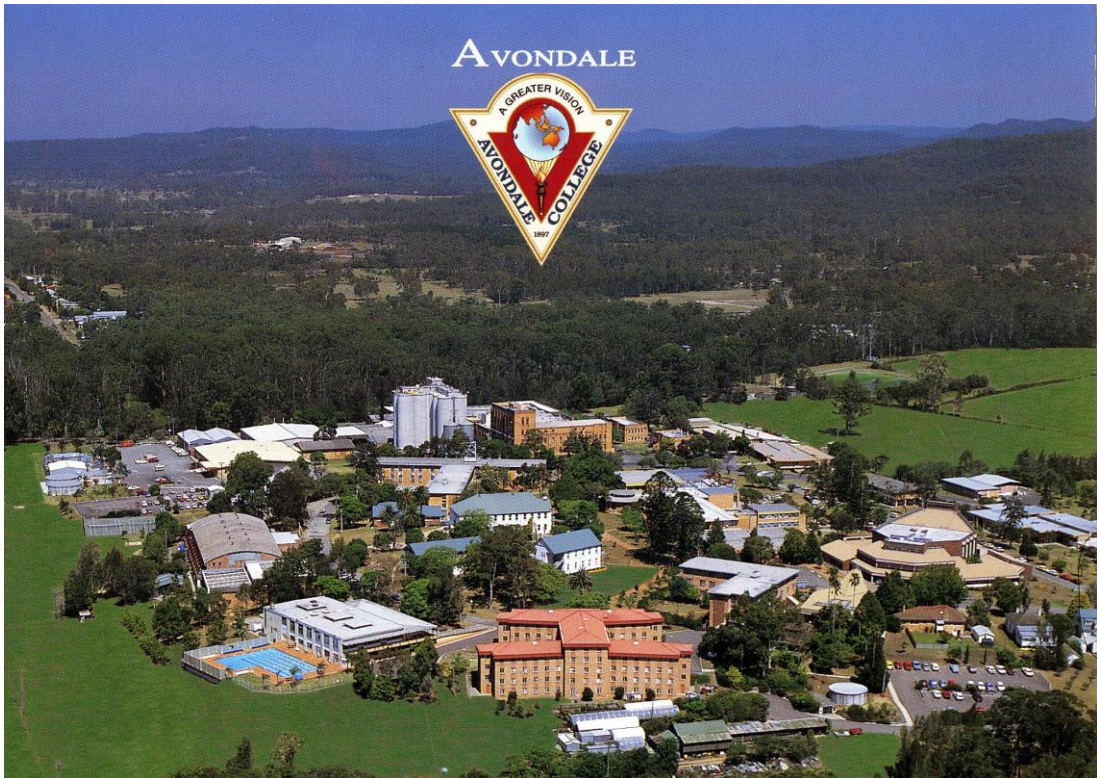
Avondale College – 1949, courtesy of Avondale College, Heritage Centre



Avondale College – 1973, courtesy of Avondale College, Heritage Centre



Avondale College – 1986, courtesy of Avondale College, Heritage Centre



Avondale College – 1998, *courtesy of Avondale College, Heritage Centre*



Avondale College – 2005 (a) *by Maurice Ashton, courtesy of Avondale College, Heritage Centre*



Avondale College – 2005 (b) by *Maurice Ashton*, courtesy of *Avondale College, Heritage Centre*

Appendix 2. 2 – List of Avondale College Presidents

List of Avondale Presidents form 1892 till present.		
YEARS	PRINCIPALS	Affiliation
1892 (Aug) – 1896 (Jun)	L.J. Rousseau	SDA
1896 (Jul) – 1897 (May)	H.C. Lacey	SDA
1897 (May) – 1898	C.B. Hughes	SDA
1899	A.G. Daniells, E.R. Palmer, C.B. Hughes	SDA
1900-1902	C.B. Hughes	SDA
1903 – 1910 (Jan)	C.W. Irwin, BA	SDA
1910 (Feb) – 1910 (Sep)	J.H. Paap (acting)	SDA
1910 (Oct) – 1912	B.F. Machlan	SDA
1913 – 1914	G. Teasdale	SDA
1915	J. Mills	SDA
1916	J.M. Johanson and F.L. Chaney	SDA
1917	J.M. Johanson	SDA
1918 – 1920	L.D.A. Lemke	SDA
1920	H. Kirk	SDA
1922	W.W. Prescott	SDA
1923 – 1928 (May)	L.H. Wood	SDA
1929 (May) – 1929	E.E. Cossentine	SDA
1930 – 1931	H.K. Martin, A.F.J. Kranz (acting, 1 st term)	SDA
1933 – 1935	A.E. Speck	SDA
1936 – 1938	C.S. Palmer	SDA
1939	A.H. Piper	SDA
1940 – 1943	T.C. Lawson	SDA
1944	B.H. McMahon, BA	SDA
1945 – 1946	E. Rosendahl	SDA
1947 – 1952	W.G.C. Murdoch, BD, MA, PhD	SDA
1953 – 1958	E.E. White, BA, DipEd, MSc, PhD	SDA

1956 (Jan – Aug)	E.G. McDowell (acting)	SDA
1959 – 1970	E.G. McDowell, DipSocSc, Bed, MA, EdD	SDA
1971 – 1980	E.A. Magnusson, BSc, PhD(NSW), PhD (Lon)	SDA
1981 – 1984 (Jun)	J.J.C. Cox, MA, PhD	SDA
1984 (Jul) - 1990	B.W. Ball, MA, PhD	SDA
1990 – 2003	G.A. Madigan	SDA
2003	J.F. Cox (Acting)	SDA
2003 – 2008	J.F. Cox	SDA
2009 – Present	R. Roennfeldt	SDA

(Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific; Avondale College website)

Appendix 2. 3 – Full Version of Avondale College’s Ethos, Mission and Values

MISSION

To foster a Christian learning community that is founded on quality research-based higher education and prepares students for lives of service.

VALUES

Excellence – Avondale accepts the challenge of learning and discovery, of striving for excellence, and of fostering creativity that blends individuality, wisdom and healthy self-evaluation. It promotes excellence in the higher education that it offers, in the quality of infrastructure it develops, and in the spiritual and academic support service it provides.

Spirituality – Avondale values spirituality and believes that nothing is of greater significance than each person’s relationship to God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Avondale invites all its staff and students to respond positively to God’s invitation to commune with him in prayer, worship, meditation, fellowship, study of the Bible, and Sabbath rest.

Nurture – Avondale seeks to encourage members of its learning community to realise their full potential, and to live full and joyful lives. In achieving this goal, Avondale enhances social skills, values friendships and supports family relationships. It seeks to provide the guidance and nurture that will enable its students to respond intelligently to their own needs and to the needs of others.

Service – Avondale’s motto, “For a Greater Vision of World Needs” challenges its learning community to a more informed understanding of humanitarian needs and responses. And to a greater commitment to fulfilling the needs of those less fortunate and in want of human care and support both in Australia and overseas.

Balance – Avondale values the sustainability of the earth and its peoples and believes that this can be achieved through balance. Learning how to live a balanced life is based on living temperately and Avondale encourages this by providing a balanced program of spiritual growth, intellectual development, cultural enrichment, physical activity, relaxation and recreation. This program sustains Avondale’s physical resources and the environment.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

1. Are equipped to reflect creatively on the interface between Adventist Christian values and home, workplace, and community

2. Possess high ethical standards including an orientation to service
3. Are committed to human and environmental sustainability
4. Possess excellent and relevant professional employability skills
5. Enjoy a sense of individual worth
6. Lead confidently in their communities and workplaces
7. Possess relevant technology skills
8. Possess scholarly qualities and enthusiasm for their future lives and learning
9. Understand and respect cultural differences in people
10. Transfer their acquired knowledge to a variety of contexts

ETHOS

Philosophy

Avondale's philosophy of education is based on a Christian view of life, which affirms that true education has to do with the development of the whole person. This occurs best as people come to know God, understand themselves, empathise with others and interact harmoniously with their environment. Believing that nothing is of greater significance than a person's relationship to God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, the College invites its staff and students to respond positively to God's invitation to commune with Him in prayer, worship, meditation, fellowship and study of the Bible. Through this communion and worship, staff and students seek God's will and purpose, so as to appreciate and pursue a life-style influenced by Christian values and characterised by spontaneous, selfless service. The College motto, For a Greater Vision of World Needs, challenges this community to a more informed understanding and a greater commitment to fulfilling these needs.

Education involves the harmonious development of those human characteristics that are a reflection of the 'Image of God'. God's image is seen in the unity of body, mind and spirit; in human intelligence and creativity; in the capacity to choose; in the expression of human love and in the capacity to worship.

Avondale accepts the challenge of discovering and sharing truth, of striving for excellence, and of fostering a creativity that blends individuality, wisdom and healthy self-evaluation. Small class sizes allow individuals to be recognised and ensure all students have opportunity to participate and be actively involved. Avondale believes that the quality of learning experienced depends on the professionalism of lecturers and the quality of their interaction with students in collaborative learning.

Avondale sees as rewards of this common pursuit of truth: greater self-awareness and poise; an understanding of the past and present; a developed sense of value; a love of learning where eagerness is tempered by humility; respect for other points of view; and the ability to communicate effectively. The challenge to unite knowledge and understanding with appropriate and responsible action is constantly upheld.

Further, Avondale seeks to encourage members of its community to realise the full potential of their talents and to live full and joyful lives. Avondale enhances social skills, values friendship and supports family relationships. It seeks to provide the guidance and nurture that will enable its students to respond intelligently to their own needs and the needs of others. Further, it attempts to provide an environment that encourages emotional and social maturity.

Avondale desires that all members of its community enjoy the best in art, literature, drama, film, music and recreation and respond positively to the richness of contemporary, multi-cultural Australian society.

Learning to live successfully is based on living temperately. Avondale encourages this by providing a balanced program of spiritual growth, intellectual development, cultural enrichment, physical activity, relaxation and recreation.

Appendix 3. 1 – Ethics Approval



Human Research Ethics Committee
Telephone: 02 4980 2121
Fax: 02 4980 2117
Email: research.ethics@avondale.edu.au

9 November 2011

Elize Celic
c/- School of Education
Avondale College
PO Box 19
COORANBONG NSW 2265

Dear Elize,

Thank you for submitting the revised application and supporting documentation for ethical clearance of your project *The impact that Seventh-day Adventism has on non-Adventist attending Avondale College*, as requested by the Avondale College of Higher Education Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), at its 29 September 2011 meeting.

After reviewing the revised documentation, I am pleased to advise that final approval is granted for your project *The impact that Seventh-day Adventism has on non-Adventist attending Avondale College* for the duration of your project till 31 December 2012, (project number [2011:39]).

The following additional standard conditions apply:

1. That you notify the committee of any changes to circumstances or research design, which might require a review of the ethics approval.
2. That you provide an annual interim report of your progress to the committee, and a final report once this project is completed. The first report will be due twelve months from the date you commence the research.

We wish you well in this valuable research endeavour.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phil Fitzsimmons', with a small 'P' written below the first letter.

A/Prof Phil Fitzsimmons
Chair
Avondale Human Research Ethics Committee

Excellence in Christian Higher Education since 1897
582 Freemans Drive (PO Box 19), Cooranbong, NSW, Australia, 2265
Telephone: +61 2 4980 2222 Fax: +61 2 4980 2118
Avondale College Limited ACN: 108 186 401 ABN 53 108 186 401
A member of the worldwide Adventist system of universities and colleges

Appendix 3. 2 – Information Letter

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

I am interested in the impact that Seventh-day Adventism has had on the non-Adventist students attending Avondale College of Higher Education. I am particularly interested in students that have spent the majority of their course at Avondale College.

To partake of this research will require three one hour interviews to discuss your experience at Avondale College.

You are free to refuse to participate and even if you do agree to be interviewed, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time. Refusal or withdrawing will not in any way disadvantage you.

All information will be confidential. Interviews will be recorded, coded and transcribed, and no names will be used in any written report. Audio recordings will be kept locked in the researcher's office and destroyed after five years. The data collected from your participation will be used for the preparation of a report and possible journal publications. You will have the opportunity to review the interview transcript prior to any publication.

If you are willing to participate, please complete the attached consent form.

For further information please contact me at the following information:

Elize Celic
Email: elizeserf@gmail.com
Phone: 0421 874 637

<p>This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2121 or fax (02) 4980 2117 or email: research.ethics@avondale.edu.au.</p>
--

Appendix 3.3 – Volunteer Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

‘How has Seventh-day Adventist beliefs impacted non-Adventist attending Avondale College?’

I have been given information about the above research inquiry and have been provided with the opportunity to discuss this project with the researcher who is conducting this research.

I understand that if I consent to participate in this project I will be asked to be interviewed for approximately three one hour sessions the researcher about my experience at Avondale College and how Seventh-day Adventism has impacted my life. I understand that the interview will be recorded and transcribed and that every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

I have been advised of the potential issues associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my relationship with the Avondale College of Higher Education.

If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted I am aware I can contact the researcher in the first instance, and if unresolved the Avondale’s HREC secretary as detailed below.

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College’s HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2121 or fax (02) 4980 2117 or email: research.ethics@avondale.edu.au.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to participate in the research entitled ‘How has Seventh-day Adventist beliefs impacted non-Adventist attending Avondale College?’ as it has been described to me in the information sheet. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for the preparation of a report and possible journal publications and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

Date

.....

...../...../.....

Name (please print)

Contact Details

.....

.....

Appendix 3. 4 – Interview of Participant

Isabella Swan

First Interview

4 April 2012

11:00am

My study is going to be about uhm, how Avondale's ethos - you know what is ethos?

Basically...

Okay, what do you understand about it?

Just like uhm...the...the ethical sort of... Like equal for everyone sort of thing. I don't know how to explain it, but...

Okay, it includes that, but it also includes like the beliefs system. So that like includes the Adventist beliefs, it also includes the general Christian beliefs, because you know all Christians have things in common because they go by the Bible. So, Ethos includes all those kind of things, and also their mission and their values that they have for, for the school. How has this impacted you, because you're not of the Adventist faith.

Uhum.

Okay, so that's the main study. It's to see all of the beliefs, the mission and the values have impacted you, uhm your time here at Avondale. So, okay the first question is uhm, why did you choose to come to Avondale?

Uhm, I think what first attracted me would have been that it was small uhm and the second was probably is that it was Christian but I wasn't – I was aware that it was Seventh-day Adventist, but I did not know much ABOUT what that held, I guess. Uhm, but the main factor was that it was a small Uni.

Okay, so what about it being small attracts you?

Uhm, I guess I had an experience in high school where I went to one high school where I was one of, say a hundred students. And then I went to another high school where I was one of fifty, if not less, and I much preferred the smaller school were you had to two year twelve's instead of seven year twelve's, and uhm classes. Things like that, so. That was probably, yeah, the thing...

So you at least had that background to fall on

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, okay. Because I do know that other Uni's are so big, uhm that I've heard I think one of our other uhm classmates have mentioned before she went to New Castle Uni...

Yeah, my brother goes there.

Okay, yeah (Laughter)Yeah, and she said that you feel a bit like it's in a town

Yeah (laughing)

Yeah, okay. So that's nice to know that.

Yeah.

Is there anything else about the small campus that you like in particular?

Uhm well, now that I've been here, I love the fact that my lecturer KNOWS who I am, knows where I am in my studies...just...its mo-more personal I guess, more one on one as appose to just being another number. If that makes sense (laughing)

No definitely. And uhm what about the Adventist uhm environment here? Is there anything - because you said that before you came you didn't really know much about Seventh-day Adventism

Yeah

And I mean you've been here now for four years?

Three

Three, going on four?

Yeah, but getting to four

Yeah, kind of in between

Yeah (laughing).

And uhm, so is there anything in the meantime that have uhm caused you to be more happy to be here or

Uhm, I don't think so much...Seventh-day Adventist related. Just that everyone uhm I guess uhm... holds Christian values and it's-you're oaky to talk about being a Chrisitan and uhm things like that more than...specifically Seventh-day Adventist.

Okay, so its-there's a kind of feeling here that you like?

Yeah. It's just a happy, welcoming...uhm place to be I guess. And it's, it's-you don't feel like you can't... be yourself. In a sense of a way (laughing)

Okay, that's good (laughing). Okay what do you consider being spiritual?

Uhm, having something to believe in. Uhm (4sec pause) basically being proud of it as well, not just hiding the fact that you are a spiritual person, uhm praying, just the sort of (2sec pause) yeah, general religious sort of things. Yeah.

Mmm, Okay. So you connect spirituality to religion?

Yes.

Okay. Uhm, I guess cause you are – what's your background, uhm religious background?

I'm Catholic.

You're Catholic, okay. So because of that you connect spirituality more with religion?

I think so yeah, as suppose to just an inner being or whatever.

Okay. And uhm, so what do you consider being spiritual in your own life?

Uhm, definitely (1sec pause) having that faith and believe in God, uhm and (2sec pause) knowing that He's always there, wi-along with the Holy Spirit and Jesus, and all of that. Uhm (1sec pause) being able to pray (1sec pause) and just...and just being aware of that uhm other Being I guess... And feeling safe within Him and... Yeah

And how, how do you feel you lived that every day? (5:44)

I think...reflecting my(3 sec pause)my personality in a way, because I'm, I'm one of these I don't like to do anything wrong, I like to be respectful of other people, and uhm, also that I'm not ashamed that I'm uhm Catholic and that I'm a Christian and uhm...that (4 sec pause) Yeah, I'm just trying to think how to word it, uhm that...(3 sec pause) that I just know that I guess I've got that, that person I can turn to who may not necessarily be, like physically there, but is someone I can quietly talk to in my room, or...that yeah, that there's someone there I can turn to.

Having a relationship with?

Yeah, yeah.

And do you feel at Avondale you are allowed that kind of experience?

Definitely, although... I, I guess in like uhm (3 sec pause) worship and things like that it is more Seventh-day Adventist based, but, uhm being like a Christian that is open to all Christian faith, like it doesn't bother me but more so if I was Seventh-day Adventist it would be more relatable I guess than suppose to be Catholic, but... Yeah.

Okay, good to know...So uhm what do you understand about Seventh-day Adventism?

Uhm, a lot more than what I did (laugh). Especially after taking Christian studies two. There's a lot of stuff I learned in that that I was not aware of...uhm

So did you enjoy Christian studies two?

In the beginning I didn't. I thought aah this is so pointless for me to be taking it, it doesn't relate to me at all, but after we sort of got more into it I was like, aah this is really so interesting I'm going to go back and talk to my Seventh-day Adventist friends now and see what their opinion is and yeah so..

So do you see it as a bit of historical, in a way?

No, not necessarily historical, but just that I can sort of... I can relate a lot more now and I'm more aware of uhm... the differences I guess between being Catholic and Seventh-day Adventist and respect the Sabbath a lot more and just things like that. (7:52)

Is there any other differences or things that you've really learned...that stood out or that you understand...?

Yeah, uhm...I can't think what it was called now though...the (3 sec pause) uhm, the state of the dead? Where uhm I think you guys believe that you're sort of just in the ground and you don't go anywhere until Jesus returns, is that correct?

Yeah, yeah...you go to sleep.

Yeah, you go to sleep that's it, uhm as in I'm more you go straight to heaven. So I found that really, really interesting. Because I wasn't – I thought that it was just sort of a Christian thing that you went straight to heaven...I didn't yeah know that other Christians had (inaudible) (8:27)

Okay, so you've heard that. Have you ever felt that uhm, while being here that you would like to look more into certain things, and-and study it out for yourself?

Uhm (3 sec pause) I guess in a way things like that did, but I never really went and pursued it more... I just sort of accepted what I was told and left it at that. But I mean if someone said to me aah we've got to do an assignment on these, I'll totally get into it (laugh) and I'm like, I'm really interested – it's really opened up my eyes, 'cause I've only know one other Seventh-day Adventist previous to coming here. And he wasn't ... I guess, so... uhm (3 sec pause) not strict but ... so aware I guess even of what it really means. It's really interesting.

So, okay. That's interesting (laugh). What uhm things here at Avondale have positively influenced you?

Definitely being a community, uhm, living in dorms more so I guess than being an outdoor student. But, uhm, definitely that and then there is the worships whether its floor combined uhm... weekend uhm...ladies worship. Anything like that I think they definitely have an influence depending on topics and things, but they definitely come into it. The sisterhood and the brotherhood and things like that definitely play a major role in... In being part of Avondale for me anyway, they do.

Yeah. So you feel there is a very community kind of feeling?

Yeah, definitely. I mean, I can be walking through the dorm and it doesn't matter who they are or who you are, you know, someone will say hallo and I just love that it's so nice and

friendly (laugh). You have familiar like faces and people, and it doesn't matter whether you're a teacher, a scientist, or a theology student ... yeah, everyone's friends and...And it's really good. (10:18)

And have you experienced like that kind of community feeling anywhere else?

(2 sec pause) Uhm (4 sec pause) I guess not as, as great. I mean, when you're at school you kind of have it but not as... ah, maybe it's more so that you don't understand it as much when you're at school because that's all you've really known. So looking back you kinda aah yeah you did have that sort of community feel, but I-I do think it's more so here as well because as a live in student...you're really in each other's faces I guess all the time (laugh). So you really have to have that community sort of feeling. Yeah, it's really good.

Okay. Uhm, is there anything uhm that have influenced you negatively as a student here?

I guess to begin with when I first started Avondale I did find that – that when people found out that I was a Catholic and not a Seventh-day Adventist they were more like ooh, what are you doing here? Why did you come to this Uni? You're not Seventh-day Adventist and...so that was a bit-to begin with, it's not like now, I'm just... Everyone knows that I'm Catholic and you know whose Seventh-day Adventist and things like that, but yeah to begin with, that was a bit off-putting because it was like, well why can't I be here? I'm still a Christian I just don't have the same believes as you but... Uhm... I think apart from that (2 sec pause) everyone – like – yeah (laugh) Everyone else and everything that goes with being at Avondale has been fine.

So you've enjoyed the services that they've been providing? Like you've mentioned the uhm was is the uhm meetings uh, the little worships that they have?

The floor worships?

Yeah, like floor worships – Okay, you mentioned like that kind of things you appreciate, right?

Yeah I do.

Okay, and what about like forum?...or other things?

Uhm, I think (2 sec pause) like the topic of forum has to...sort of grab my attention before I'll go... Uhm (2 sec pause) definitely in my first, even second year there was a lot more interesting speakers coming and more interesting topics, so I attended them a lot more as what I have been - recently I don't think they're (3 sec pause) as ... as interesting I guess. Like they still got their own topics in their own way but the things maybe aren't necessarily interesting me as much as...

Or relating to?

Yeah or even relating – yeah that's probably true.

Okay so what kind of topics were in your first two years that you really enjoyed?

I guess like, we had speakers like Andrew Anderson and Bratt Lee and people like that, that uhm...may not necessarily-were Seventh-day Adventist or even were Christians early on in their life whatever, but they came in and had-they spoke about becoming Christian or just the values of life. Like we had that sky-not sky-diver, what was she? A base jumper lady come in and she wasn't specifically talking Christian but she was talking about you know living your life to the full and I find that really appealing because it wasn'tjust about Seventh-day Adventist...or uhm about being Christian. It was off the topic as well as being on the topic... If that makes sense?

Yeah.

(laughing)

Okay. And which kind of things are least appealing to you? Like? (13:36)

(3 sec pause) Uhm... that's a tricky one. (4 sec pause) I guess (2 sec pause) if it was to purely just be (2 sec pause) preaching maybe... Then that-not that I find it boring or anything but sometimes you just don't want to go and listen to that – you wanna hear more about ... life or yeah. So probably if it was just a service purely on preaching more so than anything...

Okay...and it's not that it's the actually message that...

Ah, no, no, no.

Appeal to you, it's more the thought of having to sit and...

Yeah, especially when it's not a ... like you have to go – it's a choice thing. So, Yeah.

So it's kind of like uhm... the one's more entertaining and the other one seems to be less?

Yeah (laughing). Yeah, that's a good way to put it.

Okay, so it's just the– that's interesting because you're still willing to go if you- if it was more compulsory you said?

Well, I don't guess you have a choice do you (laughing). You kinda have to go then (laughing).

Yeah, but it's just about making the choice beforehand?

Yeah.

Okay I understand what you're saying.

(Giggles)

Okay, uhm...I was just thinking about something else (3 sec pause) so... during your time here at Avondale, you mentioned in the beginning that people were a little bit surprised with you being, uhm Catholic...And now they're fine with it. What do you think has changed that? (15:12).

(2 sec pause) I guess with my friends, they sort of – Like I've-I've got other friends as well that aren't Seventh-day Adventist, and it's the same for them as well. People sort of uhm, tried to find out more... I guess about... what being a Catholic is all about and they asked questions and... I think they've learned from that so they know what I'm all about and I know what they're all about so we can relate to each other a bit more... If that makes sense. And it's not such a... a 'terrible' thing I guess (laughing) that you know, you're not Seventh-day Adventist but you're in that environment, and – I mean I withhold why I'm here - sorry if that's the right word – but, like the Seventh-day Adventist views and the uhm... I'm respectful to them all and I'm not one of these Cath- like people as well that - Oh, I'm Catholic so I can't have anything to do with Seventh-day Adventist, I'm just here because it's Christian...if that... Yeah.

So that's another thing that appealed to you coming here is that it is Christian? (16:10)

Yeah, definitely. Definitely.

So, what kind of values from that is it that uhm particularly was attractive to you?

I guess been – I've come - like I was in a Christian school uhm in a Christian high school ... So...

So is that the big one or the little one?

The little one (giggles)

The little one, okay.

(laughing)So I guess, I'd- from being in that environment I wanted to continue being in that environment... Uhm, and I know it...I know not all institutions I guess that are Christian are like...like Avondale or like what my high school was like, but I'm just more aware that people are going to be friendlier, they have the same values or beliefs as you... Look, beliefs to like, everyone believing in God and things like that as you and uhm...or like the fact that being a live in student that boys and girls are separate and things like that more than oppose to other Unis were the boys and girls are together and they share the same bathroom and that just (laughing) I wouldn't want to go there so... that was yeah... It's just...I guess they have the good values.

The good values...

Yeah. (17:15)

So did you uhm, 'cause where do you live originally?

I was born in Sydney and then I moved to Port Stephens when I was ten.

Okay, so do you still return to Port Stephens on some of the weekends?

Most weekends I do.

Most weekends. How far is it that from here?

Mmm...it depends what part of Port Stephens I'm going to, but yeah, my family is in **Kolat** which is an hour and a half.

Uhm, were there other places you were considering before coming to Avondale or...

There were... Uhm, obviously New Castle Uni, because New Castle is only an hour away from Port Stephens, and Australian Catholic Uni for obvious reasons (giggles). Yeah, so they were probably the only – 'cause at the time I wasn't thinking about living away...it was more....

Traveling?

Traveling and I still wanted to be close to home, so... Yeah.

So, uhm was the Catholic Uni just a bit bigger than Avondale, or what made it more appealing to come here then?

(2 sec pause) I guess as horrible as it is, I didn't get that mark in the HSE so I, I already applied for Avondale and I got uhm accepted... in 2009 but in March, and I already started my Diploma course uhm, so I deferred it, but...ultimately once I-you know thought about it, it came to that, going to another-going to Uni after getting my diploma it was like NO I want to go to Avondale, I know it is small, I've heard good things from other people about it, I can live in which started to appeal to me a bit more. I guess I'm an older age and uhm... the question thing again?

Okay, so you did the diploma...

Yeah.

How long was that?

A year.

A year. Where did you that one?

Uhm, Atkinson Training and Development, which is a small uhm childcare college in New Castle.

In New Castle, okay. And so you said you heard good things from other people about Avondale while you were doing your diploma?

Yes.

So what kind of things did you hear that convinced you a bit more?

Uhm while the things that I heard came from a mother of a student at Avondale who lived in, and she was just saying that he was just so involved in things like sport and community and uhm...the...like the living in was very, uhm...I'm trying to think of the word...very welcoming and happy and fun environment to be in and uhm... they even told me about the caff and the kind of food that the caff had (giggles) and uhm...yeah it was just, there

was-there wasn't a negative thing for the person to say like they couldn't fault Avondale in any way, so...

And is this parent or this family also a non-Adventist family?

Yes.

Okay, I was assuming. And so mentioning the caff, how have you experienced that, because that's quite different, isn't it?

It is (laughing). Uhm, I guess my first year I hated it, it was all new food I wasn't used to having to be vegetarian and... I was experiencing things that I may not have necessarily experienced in the past – mostly with the food. Uhm...yeah I've still got my foods even now that I refuse to go near, but I'm definitely enjoying the food a lot more and this year it's just gone from you know being down here (laughing) to up here, and I don't know why but the food is just amazing at the moment (laughing).

Maybe they got better chefs...

Maybe, I don't know what it is, but yeah...

But do you enjoy having a bit of a vegetarian life style? (20:54)

I do. I've found now that if I'm at home or even during break or whatever and I'll go to a restaurant I'll often choose a vegetarian meal now over a meat meal... And it's not even so much I guess...because of being at Avondale but I just like the-the appeal of it more I guess... Yeah.

So you've seen the benefits perhaps more of it in a way?

Yeah. And I have a couple of vegetarian friends as well now, so...

It makes it easier...

It makes it easier as well (laugh).

Have you found it a hassle because you obviously say you go out and you would order it in the vegetarian things, so has-has it been like a hassle giving up the choice of eating the meat then, or not so much?

Not now... But again when I first started it was like 'no meat seriously' like, but yeah now it's...its I guess just a part of my life now... So it's not something that bothers as in it still does bother a few of my friends so... So it's interesting to see ...

How everyone is different?

Yeah, and I mean, I started off hating nut meat and now I quite enjoy it so (laughing) it's very- it's very interesting.

I guess the taste has grown on you?

Yeah, it has. I would rather eat nut meat bolognaise over meat bolognaise now, so... It's really, you know, interesting... (laughing).

So have you ever uhm like because of the health reasons that Avondale is promoting the vegetarian uhm diet... Have you ever looked into it why they say, or why Avondale is trying to promote it?

Only through, like Christian studies. Otherwise I haven't really gone too far into it.

And then coming-just coming back to Christian studies... Uhm because you said you started off kind of thinking 'aw, what's this really going to help me?', but then going into it you started to enjoy it... because you could relate to your Adventist friends. Is there anything else from the Christian studies that were negative or positive for you?

I guess there was an assignment (2 sec pause) where they wanted uhm your world view. And if you are not Seventh-day Adventist obviously your world view is going to be different to a Seventh-day Adventist, so...From that particular class you had to go from thinking Seventh-day Adventist to thinking back to Catholic and I found that assignment a bit hard to then complete because I had been so like...all about Seventh-day Adventist I guess and then having to do that assignment about being Catholic was just a bit tricky for me... But, yeah another positive thing I guess was the lecturers. Uhm, one of them took a real interest in the fact that I was Catholic and he once had an interview with me to discuss all the different uhm things and you know the same kind of like what you are doing now - why I chose Avondale, what appealed to me, things like that, and I found that really uhm...It's really nice, because it's nice to see that the lecturer was taking an interest in...

You as a student.

Yeah, in me as a student and me as a non-Seventh-day Adventist so they're still getting those other religious opinions I guess... Yeah, so that was definitely a positive.

Is there anything else you would like to add? We've answered all the questions for today, so that's good.

Okay. Uhm...no I think you've actually done well in covering everything I was hoping you were going to talk about today (laughing).

Okay. Is there anything else you hoped to talk about today that we didn't?

No, I'm sort of... Yeah what you sort of asked me was what I was expecting, so.

Okay. Thank you for your time today.

No worries.