FEATURE

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND
THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT
OF COLLEGE FACULTY

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between the spiritual experience and organizational commitment of faculty in Seventh-day Adventist tertiary educational institutions in north Philippines constituted the primary focus of this study. Instrumentation included the Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWBS), Thayer Long-form Faith Maturity Scale (TFS), and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). Results indicated high levels of spiritual experience and organizational commitment in this population. Each aspect of spiritual experience in the study was significantly and positively related to organizational commitment, with the highest correlation evidenced in the case of faith maturity. Further, the relationship between spiritual experience and organizational commitment was influenced by certain demographic variables. The correlation between existential well-being and organizational commitment was significantly higher in older faculty than in their middle-aged colleagues, in new faculty and long-serving faculty as compared to those who had served 2 to 9 years, and in faculty with doctoral degrees as compared with those lower academic degrees. Faculty who had served more than 10 years had a significantly higher correlation between faith maturity and organizational commitment than those who had served less than 10 years. Significant positive relationships were also found between organizational commitment and faculty age, years of service in the SDA educational system, and time lapse since baptism. The best model for predicting organizational commitment, accounting for 42% of the variance explained, was comprised of existential well-being, faith maturity, and time lapse since baptism

Employee commitment seems to be a crucial factor in achieving organizational success. Individuals with low levels of commitment will do only enough to get by. They do not put their hearts into the work and mission of the organization. They seem to be more concerned with personal success than with the success of the organization as a whole. People who are less committed are also more likely to look at themselves as outsiders and not as long-term members of the organization. An attractive job offer elsewhere is very likely to result in their departure.

By contrast, employees with high commitment to an organization see themselves as an integral part of the organization. Anything that threatens the organization is an imminent danger to them as well. Such employees become creatively involved in the organization's mission and values, and constantly think about ways to do their jobs better. In essence, committed employees work for the organization as if the organization belongs to them.

Educational leaders are often concerned about the effectiveness of educational institutions and programs. There are indications, however, that these are at times quite far from being as effective as they could be. Might leaders be overlooking an important ingredient of educational effectiveness?

It would appear that faculty commitment is essential to the success of any educational institution. Such commitment is especially needed since faculty are often called upon to perform additional duties that further the mission of the organization yet are unlikely to result in any additional remuneration. Furthermore, their actions and even motives are often acutely perceived by young people, who are themselves consequently influenced in their character development and growth towards maturity.

Numerous factors have been found to inspire commitment. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) point out, however, that "for any given individual within a specific organizational context, and at a particular point in time, some factors will be important and others will be relatively insignificant" (p. 204). A challenge for leaders of Christian educational institutions is to discover which factors tend to have the most consistent and greatest impact on the development of organizational commitment in their faculty.

This study was designed to explore one such relationship, namely the relation between spiritual experience and the organizational commitment of faculty in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) tertiary educational institutions.

RELATED LITERATURE

The theoretical framework employed in this study was derived from the conceptual model proposed by Mowday, et al., (1982) which portrays antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment. Antecedents are grouped into (1) personal characteristics, (2) role-related characteristics, (3) structural characteristics, and (4) work experiences. Outcomes of organization commitment include the intent and desire to remain with the organization,

attendance, retention, and job effort. Based on this model, the present study focused on personal attributes of college faculty as antecedents of organizational commitment, centering specifically on the spiritual experience of the faculty.

Spiritual Experience

Religious belief can be one of the most potent influences in one's life (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). It colors one's attitudes to every event experienced, including how one relates to others. Consequently, a teacher's basic Christian experience has been considered to be one of the most important criteria of an effective Christian educator (Moore, 1976).

The spiritual experience has been defined as "pertaining to the inner resources, especially the ultimate concern or basic value around which all other values are focused, the central philosophy of life which guides a person's conduct, and the supernatural and non-material dimensions of life" (Gray & Moberg, 1977, p. 72). The implication is that a person's spiritual experience is not a matter of disjointed events in one's life, but is rather a total involvement in something beyond oneself—an involvement which yields practical life consequences. Spiritual experience, a concept quite well defined both in fields of psychology and religion, was taken in this study to consist of two foundational aspects, namely spiritual well-being and faith maturity.

Spiritual Well-being

Spiritual well-being has been defined as "the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness" (Gray & Moberg, 1977, p. 202). Ellison and Smith (1991) have reiterated this concept of wholeness as the essence of spiritual well-being, equating it with the biblical term *shalom.*

Conceptually, spiritual well-being has been considered both as a psychological and religious phenomenon (Paloutzian, 1997). From the psychological perspective, spiritual well-being indicates the joy and contentment a person experiences from perceived meaning and purpose in life—in essence, something to live for that goes beyond oneself. This aspect is known as existential well-being. Spiritual well-being can also be regarded from a theological orientation to indicate the joy and contentment a person perceives or experiences in a relationship with God. This latter aspect is described as religious well-being. Thus, the term *spiritual well-being* refers to a subjective, perceptual phenomenon that provides some indication of a person's quality of life.

A large portion of the research conducted on spiritual well-being has been in the health care field. A number of studies, however, have also taken place in tertiary education and church settings.

Across studies, it appears that the demographic variables of age and gender are generally

not related to spiritual well-being nor to its subscores (Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991; Lee, 1991). In terms of psychological constructs, Ellison and Smith (1991) provide a summary of research which has focused on spiritual well-being. They report that spiritual well-being has been found to correlate positively with general assertiveness, self-confidence, and giving of praise. Negative correlations were reported with physical and passive forms of aggression, dependency, and orientation toward passivity or avoidance of conflict. Similarly, in two separate studies, spiritual well-being and its component existential well-being were found to be negatively correlated with depression and six other fluctuating negative mood states (Fehring, Brennan, & Keller, 1987). It also appears that spiritual well-being is directly related to resilience (Carson, 1991) and self-esteem (Mohler, 1996; Wong, 1990), and inversely related to stress (Ellison & Smith, 1991). Overall, prior research indicates that positive attitudinal consequences are associated with higher levels of spiritual well-being.

Although not necessarily related to an affiliation with an organized religion, spiritual well-being has been found to be positively correlated with an increased participation in spiritual activities and a heightened perception of self as a religious person (Carson, 1991). Similar relationships were also manifested with the length of time that an individual had been a Christian as well as with certain religious activities, such as frequency of church attendance, frequency of family devotions, and frequency and duration of personal devotions (Ellison & Smith, 1991). Even more important, perhaps, is the relationship between spiritual well-being and intrinsic religiosity (Graham, 1990). Those who espouse a personal religious commitment, as opposed to mere adherence to external religious forms, tend to score significantly higher in terms of spiritual well-being and its component subscores (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982).

Finally, spiritual well-being seems to be an important factor in the workplace. In health care-givers, for example, there was a positive relationship between spiritual well-being and the quality of care provided (Ellison & Smith, 1991). Furthermore, a caring leadership style in church groups has been found to be accompanied by an increased sense of spiritual well-being in group members, especially as this related to life purpose and satisfaction (Lee, 1991).

<div align="center">Faith Maturity</div>

Faith is an integral expression of religious experience. It affects the way a person views life and derives meaning, even to the extent of controlling ones values, perceptions and exercise of power (Downs, 1994). Although faith is not confined to specific religious affiliations, the present study considered faith in terms of the Christian experience.

Fowler (1981, 1986) recognized faith as a multi-dimensional and extremely complex phenomenon. He contributed to an understanding of faith development by moving the focus away from belief in a list of doctrines seen to embody the essence of truth and toward a

relational faith which still maintains the crucial role of doctrines and creeds in a person's religious life. Dykstra has also emphasized this relational perspective by defining faith as an "appropriate and intentional participation in the redemptive activity of God" (1986, p. 55). He notes, however, that faith maturity may not always be progressive. Rather, it may involve certain regressions when a person participates less appropriately or intentionally than at previous times. Gillespie (1998) adds a further perspective to the relational nature of the faith experience when he defines this as "a sense of the presence of God" encompassing one's relational commitments and values (p. 31). Gillespie thus, extends the faith relationship to acts of love that are expressed in service to God and fellow human beings.

In prior research, Boerio (1997) reported significant positive correlations between religious maturity and the self-esteem and achieved identity of college students. The relationship between religious maturity and self-esteem, however, was found to be significantly higher for females. In a group of volunteer religious workers, Tan (1995) found ministry satisfaction to be positively correlated with spiritual maturity.

The Valuegenesis study, a major research endeavor in the area of faith maturity, focused on SDA members directly involved with Adventist education in North America. Respondents included teachers, students, parents, pastors and school administrators. The researchers found that pastors reported the highest level of faith maturity followed by school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, in descending order (Rice & Gillespie, 1992). An important conclusion was that the most integrated and mature faith was displayed among the older and/or most religiously involved persons (Dudley, 1992). Furthermore, it appeared that the amount of SDA education received was not related to "vertical faith" (Dudley, 1992, p. 55). Overall, faith maturity had a moderate positive correlation with favorable attitudes toward the SDA denomination and its schools and with an endorsement of church standards and altruism. Strong correlations were also reported with denominational loyalty, value of service, and frequency of devotional behaviors. The two most important predictors of faith maturity turned out to be "value of service" attitudes and "personal piety" practices (pp. 69-71).

Organizational Commitment

Linkages have become increasingly important in modern society. Mowday, et al.. (1982), pioneers in the field of employee-employer relationships, considered important social linkages to exist in the form of employee commitment to the organization. They maintained that the range and quality of these relationships lead not only to important consequences for the organization but also for the individual and for society as a whole. These consequences may include, on one hand, negative behaviors such as low productivity, turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, and theft; or the demonstration of positive behaviors that promote the organization's success (Newstrom & Davis, 1997). In essence, strong linkages normally manifest themselves in care for the well-being of another entity which goes beyond a mere calculation of the

expected benefits to be gained (Tyree, 1996). This orientation is particularly evident in the concept of organizational commitment, a key component of the present study.

As a construct, commitment itself was viewed by Buchanan" (cited in Salancik, 1977, p. 2), one of the early pioneers in the area of organizational commitment, as "an additive function of three things: organizational identification, job involvement, and organizational loyalty." Subsequently, many definitions have been proposed for the *commitment* concept, but a recurring strand seems to be the idea of a psychological bond—an intrinsic attachment or identification of a person with something outside of oneself (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

The present study used an operational definition of organizational commitment which incorporated "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 27). From this definition, organizational commitment can be characterized by at least three factors: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

While such commitment is a vital component in any effective organization (Brantley, 1993), it is particularly valuable in service organizations such as educational institutions. This is because close monitoring of employee performance is more difficult in these service organizations, yet small differences in performance can greatly influence customer perceptions. Firestone and Pennell (1993), for example, point out that the difficulty in inspecting and controlling the work of teachers, as well as disagreements regarding expected outcomes, make commitment crucial in educational institutions. Furthermore, it appears that organizational commitment is directly linked to educational success. In elementary schools, Hatton (1997) found a strong relationship between teacher commitment and student success; and at the tertiary level, Armon (1995) concluded that faculty commitment is one of the most important factors in the success of higher education.

Prior research also reveals that high levels of organizational commitment tend to be associated with positive personal attitudes, such as feelings of belonging, security, efficacy, purpose in life, and a positive self-image (Mowday et al., 1982). Similarly, Romzek (1989) examined the potential relationships between employees' commitment and their personal lives, concluding that people with the highest levels of organizational involvement also reported the most life satisfaction, as well as greater satisfaction in their careers. Such was also the case with teachers (Tarr, Ciriello, & Convey, 1993).

Across various settings, there appears to be a direct relationship between training received and the commitment of a workforce (Sonnenberg, 1994). Both in North America (Armon, 1995) and in Asia (Aquino, 1993), organizational commitment among university faculty was found to correlate positively with professional growth opportunities. This would seem to imply that when an institution and its leaders take a personal interest in faculty members, particularly in areas of growth needs, caring relationships develop and employees are likely to reciprocate with a growing commitment to the institution.

In educational settings, a number of institutional factors have been found to correspond with faculty commitment. Harshbarger (1989), for example, concluded that faculty-university value congruence was one of the principal factors affecting faculty commitment. Other studies (Allen, 1992; Armon, 1995; Graham, 1996; Kawakubo, 1988) have reported that communication satisfaction, a sense of autonomy, and an internal locus of control seem to contribute toward the organizational commitment of faculty, while external control is apparently a negative factor. These findings, it might be noted, are congruent with those from non-educational settings (Chalmers, 1997; Dale, 1997; Fiedler, 1993; Gunter, 1997; Guzley, 1992; Potvin, 1992).

Personal demographics play a role in organizational commitment. Age and length of service appear to have positive relationships with organizational commitment (Rivera, 1994; Salancik, 1977), while gender evidences a fairly consistent relationship to organizational commitment (Mowday et al., 1982), with women as a group being more committed than men. Although findings are at times inconsistent in the literature, it appears that there are significant relationships between organizational commitment and educational level achieved, as well as with employment status (Armon, 1995; Mottaz, 1986).

Relationship of Spiritual Experience and Organizational Commitment

Few research studies have directly examined the relationship between spiritual experience and organizational commitment. Professional experience and prior research, however, do indicate certain directions.

Based on his experience as principal urban transport specialist for the World Bank, Richard Barrett perceived that a spiritual perspective resulted in a shift in workplace values from fear to cooperation (Laabs, 1995). Furthermore, based on a survey of human resource managers, Laabs reported that most managers believe that spirituality does have a place at work. She then noted that the *World Vision* organization had recently appointed a "spiritual-formation manager" to nurture employees along a spiritual path. As a consequence of these efforts, *World Vision* reported tangible company benefits such as increased employee energy and creativity levels, more positive attitudes, and positive changes in employees' mental, emotional and physical health (Laabs, p. 76).

Conceptually, it appears that there could be a relationship between an individual's spiritual experience and organizational commitment. Gillespie (1988), for example, felt that it is because the "religious experience touches the larger self inside of us that commitments emerge as a product of encountering God holistically" (p. 48).

One of the few studies to have looked directly at the relationship between spiritual well-being and organizational commitment examined workers at an engineering-construction firm (Trott, 1997). Although the study found a significant positive relationship between spiritual well-being and organizational commitment, regression analysis revealed the extremely weak

effects of the spiritual experience as a moderating variable of organizational commitment. In the present study, however, it was held that the situation might be quite different in parochial educational institutions, which by their very nature and purpose tend to incorporate a spiritual dimension.

In this context, it may be helpful to consider Ciriello's (1987) study of teachers in Catholic elementary schools. Results indicated that teachers who chose to teach in Catholic schools primarily for organizationally related reasons were more strongly attached than those who taught primarily for professional reasons, despite there being no difference in the level of satisfaction between the two groups. Further, Ciriello identified the importance of religion in personal life as the most important predictor of organizational commitment. Similarly, Rice (1990) reported on a survey that sought to discover why teachers chose to work in Seventh-day Adventist schools. She found that over two-thirds either saw teaching in an SDA school as God's choice for their lives or viewed it as a ministry. The study seemed to indicate that individuals have chosen to teach in SDA schools primarily for spiritual/religious reasons and that linkages might be expected between such teachers and their educational system.

Based on these foregoing considerations, it was hypothesized in this study that the spiritual experience of faculty members in SDA educational institutions would be positively related to their commitment to the SDA educational system.

METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken in order to explore the potential relationships between the spiritual experience of faculty at church-related tertiary educational institutions and their commitment to the employing organization. The principal variables were spiritual experience and organizational commitment, although certain demographic variables were also considered; namely, gender, marital status, age, years of service in the SDA educational system, highest degree earned, years studied in the SDA educational system, and time lapse since baptism.

Spiritual experience was measured by means of spiritual well-being and faith maturity variables. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS), a widely utilized 20-item questionnaire developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982), assessed the construct of spiritual well-being by means of faculty self-perception. The SWBS has two subscales, one measuring religious well-being (RWB) and the other measuring existential well-being (EWB). Faith maturity was assessed by the Thayer Long-form Faith Maturity Scale (TFS), a 15-item self-administered questionnaire (Thayer, 1993). The TFS was considered to be an appropriate instrument for measuring faith maturity in this study since it was developed as a denomination-specific scale for SDA members and appeared to address a distinct dimension of the spiritual experience, measuring spirituality almost exclusively in terms of a vertical faith relationship with God. Lastly, organizational commitment was measured utilizing the Organizational

Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), a 15-item self-administered instrument developed by Porter and Smith (Mowday et al., 1982).

The population in this study consisted of all regularly employed faculty members at SDA tertiary educational institutions in north Philippines, specifically on the principal island of Luzon. There were six such institutions having a total of 204 faculty members. These institutions, all of which participated in the study, represented a fairly broad spectrum of SDA tertiary educational institutions—from junior colleges to post-graduate institutions; from small institutions where teachers' loads are shared with the high school on the same campus, to a large university where almost all faculty taught full time at the tertiary level; from institutions employing only nationals to an institution employing a multi-national faculty; from rural to urban institutions.

All faculty were baptized members of the SDA church and were fluent in the English language even though, in most instances, it was not their mother tongue. Data were received from 180 teachers. Employing the Onate and Bader (1989) method for determining the representativeness of a non-random sample and allowing for a maximum error rate of 3%, 172 respondents (84%) were required to ensure that the sample was representative of the population. Thus, with 180 respondents in this study representing a return rate of 88%, there was less than a 3% probability that the non-random sample that was employed in this study was not representative of the entire population. An alpha level of .05 was also set for all hypothesis testing.

REPORT OF FINDINGS

In demographic terms, the faculty were predominantly married and between the ages of 30 and 49, had studied 6 years or more in the SDA educational system, had been baptized for 25 years or more, and had served for 10 years or more in SDA schools (see Table 1). Furthermore, the sample was quite evenly divided by gender and nearly two-thirds held a graduate degree.

Regarding instrumentation, the reliability for the SWBS was .85, much in line with values obtained in prior studies (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). The reliability of the RWB subscale was .67 as compared with previous reports of .87 (Oaloutzian & Ellison); and the EWB subscale had a reliability of .80, quite similar to previously reported figures of .77 and .78 (Paloutzian & Ellison). The reliability of the TFS was .92, in line with prior research results of .93 (Thayer, 1993) and .92 (Dudley, 1994). Reliability of the OCQ was .82, comparable to previously reported coefficients of .82 to .93 (Mowday et al., 1982).

Data from the SWBS revealed a high level of spiritual well-being, with a sample mean of 107.0 out of a possible total of 120 on the 20-item scale (see Table 2). The mode was 114, indicating that results on the SWBS were negatively skewed. On the SWBS subscales with possible total scores of 60, the RWB subscore had a mean of 55.8 while the EWB subscore

had a mean of 51.20. Thus, the horizontal dimension of the SWBS was at a lower level for this sample than the vertical dimension of spirituality.

Table 1
Description of Faculty by Selected Demographic Variables   *N* = 180

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	90	50
	Female	89	49
	Missing	1	1
Marital Status	Married	147	82
	Unmarried	33	18
Age (in yrs)	Below 30	16	9
	30 to 49	119	66
	50 and over	45	25
Service in SDA Ed.	Less than 2	7	4
System (Yrs.)	2 to 9	51	28
	10 to 24	89	49
	25 or more	32	18
	Missing 7	1	1
Highest Degree	Bachelor's or below	62	34
Earned	Master's	79	44
	Doctorate	39	22
Yrs Studied in SDA	Less than 1	5	3
Ed. System	1 to 5	36	20
	6 to 11	84	47
	12 or more	53	29
	Missing 5	2	1
Time Lapse since	Less than 2	0	0
Baptism (in yrs)	2 to 9	7	4
	10 to 24	68	38
	25 or more	105	58

    Data from the TFS, a measure of faith maturity with a strong emphasis on the relationship with God, also revealed a high spiritual experience. The scale mean of 93.6 out of a possible

total of 105 corresponded quite closely to that of the SWBS (see Table 2). There was, in fact, a 29% shared variance between the SWBS and the TFS.

Data from the OCQ revealed a moderately high level of organizational commitment, with the sample obtaining a scale mean of 84.7 out of a possible total of 105 (see Table 2). This level of organizational commitment obtained corresponded with the lower portion of the *moderately agree* interval on the Likert scale.

Table 2
Measured Levels of the Scales

Scale	Mean	SD	Scale Total
SWBS			
RWB subscale	55.8	5.1	60
EWB subscale	51.2	6.9	60
Total scale	107.0	11.1	120
TFS	93.6	9.4	105
OCQ	84.7	11.3	105

Regarding demographic variables, there was a significant relationship between marital status and the existential well-being component of spiritual experience, favoring unmarried individuals. There was also a small but statistically significant relationship between marital status and organizational commitment favoring those who were unmarried. Significant positive relationships were found between organizational commitment and respondent age, years of service in the SDA education system, and time lapse since baptism (see Table 3).

Based on regression analysis, the study revealed significant positive relationships between each component of spiritual experience and organizational commitment (see Table 4). The highest correlation ($r = .56$) was in the case of faith maturity, although correlations for other spiritual experience components were in close proximity. When demographic variables were taken into account, however, certain relationships between spiritual experience and organizational commitment differed significantly.

The correlations between EWB and OCQ scores, for example, were significantly higher for respondents who were aged 50 and above as compared to those aged 30 to 49; for respondents who had served in the SDA educational system for less than 2 years or for 25 years or more, as compared to those who had served 2 to 9 years; and for respondents who

were holders of doctoral degrees, as compared to those who had lower degrees. Results also indicated that the faith maturity of respondents who had served in the SDA educational system for 10 years or more explained a significantly greater variance in their organizational commitment than in the case of those who had served less than 10 years.

Finally, based on stepwise multiple regression, the best predictive model of organizational commitment was comprised of existential well-being, faith maturity, and time lapse since baptism, accounting together for 42 % of the variance in organizational commitment (see Table 5).

Table 3
Correlations of Demographic Variables with Organizational Commitment

Predictor Variable	Criterion Variable	r	r^2	p
Age	OCQ score	.21	.05	< .01**
Yrs of Service in SDA Ed. System	OCQ score	.21	.04	< .01**
Time Lapse since Baptism	OCQ score	.20	.04	< .01**
Marital Status	OCQ score	.17	.03	.02*
Highest Degree Earned	OCQ score	.11	.01	.16
Yrs Studied in SDA Ed. System	OCQ score	.10	.01	.17
Gender	OCQ score	.05	.00	.55

$* p < .05, \quad ** p < .01$

Table 4
Correlations Between Scales

Scale 1	Scale 2	R	r^2	p
SWBS	OCQ	.53	.28	< .01**
RWB subscale	OCQ	.40	.16	< .01**
EWB subscale	OCQ	.54	.29	< .01**
TFS	OCQ	.56	.32	< .01**
SWBS	TFS	.54	.29	< .01**
RWB subscale	TFS	.43	.18	< .01**
EWB subscale	TFS	.54	.29	< .01**

$* p < .05, \quad ** p < .01$

Table 5
Predictive Model of Organizational Commitment using Spiritual Experience
Variables and Demographic Variables as Predictors

Variable	B	Beta	p
EWB score	.55	.35	<.01**
TFS score	.43	.36	<.01**
Time lapse since baptism	3.71	.19	<.01**
Constant	2.74		.74

Total Variance = .42

$* p < .05,   ** p < .01$

DISCUSSION

Results from this study lead to certain implications for Christian educators. Of particular interest were the mean levels obtained for the principal constructs of spiritual experience and organizational commitment, the relationships revealed among the variables, and the predictive model of organizational commitment.

Spiritual Experience Levels

Respondent demographics in this study revealed that the faculty, in general, had been baptized Christians for sufficient time that one could expect them to have developed a certain maturity in their spiritual experience. Consequently, the attainment of high scores on the scales measuring spiritual experience was not a surprising finding.

On the SWBS, the sample mean of 107.0 compared well with previously reported means of 82.8 to 109.9 for other religious groups (Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991). Only 3% of the individuals in this study revealed a score below this previously reported range while 55% attained a SWB level of 110 or above. The "ceiling effect," also experienced with other conservative Christian groups in the prior research, was quite evident for the scores obtained and resulted in a negative skew. This implies that many respondents might have obtained higher scores had the scale allowed it. Such a restricted range also had a lowering effect on the reliability coefficient, especially in the case of the RWB subscale.

The high level of spiritual well-being was supported by above-average mean scores on both subscales of the SWBS. The mean value of 55.8 obtained for the RWB subscale was

well above average compared to other religious groups, whose means had ranged from 34.1 to 56.7 in prior studies (Bufford et al., 1991). In these prior studies, it was noted that conservative Christian groups tended to yield higher RWB scores. On the EWB subscale, the resultant mean of 51.2 was also above average when compared to previously reported means of 46.7 to 53.2 for various religious groups (Bufford et al., 1991). It was interesting to note, however, that the existential well-being of the faculty in this study was not as high as their religious well-being. This would suggest that the horizontal dimension of spiritual well-being (i.e., one's purpose and meaning in life) was not as prominent as the vertical dimension (i.e., one's personal relationship with God).

In the Valuegensis study, an instrument similar to the TFS was used to measure faith maturity. For that study Dudley (1992) interpreted scores of 5.0 to 7.0 as being high in faith maturity. Thayer (1993), using the TFS with adults, reported mean scores between 5.6 and 6.3 for adults. Thayer further noted that teachers at SDA schools had a mean of 5.9, while pastors, the group with the highest mean score, had an average score of 6.3. Consequently, the mean of 6.2 obtained for faculty in the present study ranked with the highest reported group scores for the TFS.

It should be noted that the SWBS and the TFS do not measure the same construct. Although there was a significant positive correlation between them, the relatively small proportion of shared variance ($r^2 = .29$) indicates that the two instruments did, in fact, measure different aspects of the spiritual experience. Perhaps this lends credence to Ellison's belief (1983) that spiritual well-being is only an indirect by-product of the development of spiritual maturity. This study, of course, does suggest that a faculty member's level of spiritual well-being can be predicted, at least in part, by their faith maturity.

Organizational Commitment Levels

The commitment level of faculty to the SDA educational system was fairly high. Mowday et al. (1982) had administered the OCQ to 2,563 employees working in a variety of jobs and obtained means ranging from 4.0 to 6.1. In particular, a sample of classified university employees yielded a mean of 4.6. In another study, the organizational commitment of faculty in a private college system was found to be at a mean level of 5.2 (Armon, 1995). Frost (1992), studying the organizational commitment of faculty in two American universities, obtained commitment levels in the 3.5 to 4.5 range. Considering these results, the OCQ mean of 5.6 in this study indicated a relatively high level of organizational commitment among the respondents.

Such levels of commitment could theoretically correspond with high levels of job satisfaction and morale, and a moderately low rate of employee turnover. Referring to the SDA educational system in North America, Dudley (1992) reported that in the Valuegenesis study 76% of the teachers responded that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their

current teaching jobs. In the Philippines, a study of SDA employees (Ciron, 1978), of which 26% were teachers, found a high level of employee morale. Furthermore, personal factors were found to contribute most to the state of morale, followed by external factors and then by administrative/supervisory factors.

In north Philippines, Wong (1971) studied the teacher turnover in SDA educational institutions and found an average annual turnover rate of 22% at tertiary level. Penola (1972) studied the SDA teacher turnover in Central Philippines and found that the schools had a 38% turnover rate, while 74% of the administrators indicated that this turnover disrupted the continuity of the work. These studies, showing a fairly high turnover rate, might seem at odds with the moderately high levels of organizational commitment reported in this study. It should be noted, however, that in both of these studies turnover was assessed at an institutional level, while organizational commitment in the present study was measured in terms of the SDA educational system. It is the personal observation of the researchers that much of this turnover occurs within the educational system at an inter-institutional level. In harmony with this line of reasoning, a prior study conducted among SDA employees in north Philippines reported very strong linkages to the global SDA organization, but much weaker attachments to local SDA institutions (Ciron, 1978).

Of course, there is another side to the question of faculty turnover. While a low turnover might be desirable, particularly for SDA institutions in the Philippines (Penola, 1972), it is also possible that a turnover level that is too low could lead to stagnation and a consequent reduction in an institution's effectiveness (Mowday et al., 1982). Certain turnover seems necessary to inject new energy and fresh ideas into a program. Thus, the high level of commitment found in this study might make one wonder if these employee-organization linkages were perhaps so strong as to impede sufficient faculty turnover. Interestingly, the only item on the OCQ yielding a mean score corresponding to the response *neither agree nor disagree* was the question "It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization." Since this item contributed least to the overall high level of organizational commitment, it would appear that the commitment of faculty in tertiary SDA institutions in north Philippines is not so elevated that some turnover cannot occur, yet it seems to be sufficiently high that employees are loyal and can identify strongly with the organization and its values. Such a level of loyalty and identification, of course, is important in an educational program. A faculty who supports and believes in the values and goals of Christian education is more likely to be effective in reaching such goals.

Relationships Among Variables

This study discovered significant positive relationships between spiritual experience and organizational commitment, much in line with findings in industry (Trott, 1997). Such a relationship indicates that faculty with the highest spiritual experience also tend to be the

ones who identify best with the organization's goals and its values, remain most loyal to the organization, and are most eager to continue in the organization.

Spiritual experience is thus an important predictor of the organizational commitment of faculty in the SDA tertiary institutions of north Philippines. However, the existential well-being of faculty accounted for a greater proportion of variance ($r^2 = .29$) in their commitment than did their religious well-being ($r^2 = .16$). Possibly Rice's (1990) conclusion that most SDA teachers see their work as a ministry applies in this regard. It could be that faculty who see their work as a ministry have a greater sense of purpose and meaning in life, consequently attaching themselves voluntarily and to a greater extent to an organization which can provide an avenue for such ministry.

It was noted in the results of this study that certain demographic variables impinged on the relationships between spiritual experience and organizational commitment. First of all, the existential well-being of those who had served the organization for less than two years accounted for a significantly higher variance in their commitment (93%) than in those who had served for two to nine years (8%). It seems that the experiences of employees shortly after joining the organization are particularly crucial (Mowday et al., 1982). Unless these members experience meaning and purpose in their present work they are unlikely to be committed and may soon leave the organization. This highlights the importance for the organization to develop an induction program that can serve to foster an understanding of the purpose and meaning of a faculty member's work in order to help these new faculty develop greater existential well-being.

Secondly, the existential well-being of doctoral degree holders accounted for a significantly higher variance of their organizational commitment (60%) than in those with lower degrees (25% for master's degree holders and 19% for a bachelor's degree or less). It appears particularly important that these highly qualified faculty members find a sense of purpose and meaning in their work if they are to be committed to the SDA educational system. As it could well be in the best interests of the institution to retain these faculty, educational leaders may want to formulate ways to enhance the existential well-being of those faculty holding doctoral degrees.

Finally, the existential well-being of those age 50 and over, as well as those who had served the organization for 25 years or more, was more highly correlated with organizational commitment than for other groups of colleagues. Although this may be due to a certain attrition factor in which less committed members leave the organization over time, it may also indicate the importance for these groups to find a renewed sense of purpose and meaning in their work. The organization may also want to seek ways of enhancing the existential well-being of the older and longer serving faculty members.

Although existential well-being has been considered up to this point, it seems that the relationship between faith maturity and organizational commitment is also significantly stronger for certain demographic categories of faculty members. Particularly, the faith maturity

of those who had served 10 years or more explained a significantly greater proportion of variance (r^2 as great as .78) in their commitment than in those who had served the organization for less than 10 years (r^2 as low as .19). Though this, too, may be due in part to attrition, the main point seems to be that a high level of faith maturity becomes more important for organizational commitment the longer a faculty member has served in the educational system.

Four of the demographic variables in this study—namely, age, years of service in the SDA educational system, time lapse since baptism, and marital status—had significant correlations with organizational commitment, in and of themselves. The relationship involving age agreed with the findings reported by Salancik (1977), while that involving length of service agreed with the research conducted by Rivera (1994). Specifically, the correlations between organizational commitment and age, years of service in the SDA educational system, and time lapse since baptism were greater than the minimum effect size ($r^2 = .04$). It can thus be concluded that these three demographic variables are significant and important predictors of faculty organizational commitment in this study. It could be, however, that these relationships might be accounted for, at least in part, through the process of attrition—that is, by discontented employees opting out of an educational system. Further research along these lines seems warranted.

Predictive Model for Organizational Commitment

Although various predictive models were explored, the strongest model accounted for 42% of the variance in organizational commitment. This model was comprised of existential well-being, faith maturity, and time lapse since baptism. Although it is clear that there are other factors which predict organizational commitment, this relatively large proportion of variance explained emphasizes the importance of this set of variables in the organizational commitment of college faculty members. In essence, faculty with the highest existential well-being, greatest faith maturity, and longest time lapse since baptism are the most likely to be committed to the SDA educational system. Perhaps, Christian educational institutions might do well to consider these factors in the hiring process of prospective faculty. Evidence of these areas could be ascertained through pertinent interview questions and by contact references. In addition, tertiary educational institutions should actively seek to discover means by which they can foster faith maturity and existential well-being among their present faculty.

Concluding Remarks

When theory and empirical data are linked, it seems that the spiritual experience of faculty members does play a vital role in their commitment to the organization. If this is indeed the case, educational leaders should prioritize programs which can serve to foster

personal faith and deepen a sense of the meaning and purpose of the teaching ministry. Perhaps this will be one of the most important ways in which faculty loyalty and devotion to the organization can be strengthened.

Further research, of course, needs to be done in this area. As has been pointed out in the discussion of findings, there are still many questions to be answered. Furthermore, this study was performed on a limited population in a particular geographical region. It is recommended that researchers replicate this study in other cultures, regions, religious groups, and educational levels and systems in order to better determine the generalizability of the findings of this study.

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