

THESIS ABSTRACT

TITLE: EXPLORING THE SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN A SELECTED PHILIPPINE
ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Today, spirituality is a concept that covers not only religious groups but also the world at large. However, small differences exist and for religious groups, spirituality is linked with faith in God; thus, shaping the beliefs of the members and becoming one of the reasons for membership growth. Spiritual commitment is the basis of spiritual growth among Christian denominations at large and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular. When church members move to foreign countries as students, they face many challenges which impact their spiritual commitment.

This research study explored the lived experiences of 9 international students from a selected Seventh-day Adventist higher education institution. This higher education institution was located in a highly urbanized setting in the Philippines. The purpose of this case study was to explore how international students maintain their spiritual commitment while studying at the selected higher education institution. The instruments for data collection included participant observation, semi-structured interview, and documentation. The major findings led to the conclusion that international students at the selected institution perceived spiritual commitment as being consistent with the relationship with God.

The findings also showed that culture shock and complacent attitudes were the main barriers to the spiritual growth of the selected participants. The institution in general helped students grow spiritually and remain spiritually committed. However, the participants mentioned that the integration of faith and learning was not so much visible in some of the classes they had attended. According to the participants, the fact that the integration of faith and learning was not so much visible in some of the classes discouraged them spiritually. This research study helped students and church leaders understand the experiences of the international students and help them nurture their faith.

