

AIAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DISSERTATION AND THESIS ABSTRACTS

RICHARD RICE'S ANTICIPATORY THEORY OF DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

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The purpose of this dissertation is to describe and evaluate Richard Rice's anticipatory theory of divine foreknowledge. It seeks to answer the question whether this theory is acceptable within the theological framework of the Seventh-day Adventist church to which he belongs. Rice, a proponent of free will theism, rejects the concept of absolute divine foreknowledge because it jeopardizes human freedom, deprives God of interaction with his creatures, and makes Him responsible for evil. To avoid these problems, Rice proposes that future events, especially those related to free human decisions and actions, must remain open or indefinite until they occur. Since they are indefinite, they do not exist and thus cannot be objects of divine foreknowledge. God can only anticipate perfectly from present factors.

The evaluation of Rice's theory compares Rice's open view of God with the view of God by other Seventh-day Adventist writers. It reveals that the main difference between them is Rice's belief in a "limited divine foreknowledge" to which his concept of divine perfection is tied. This limitation is rooted in philosophical presuppositions that confuse epistemological and ontological realms and in an inadequate biblical interpretation. Rice's anticipatory theory of divine foreknowledge relies on philosophy to the detriment of reliance upon scripture. It is highly speculative.

Since Rice's concept of perfect anticipation is speculative and not biblically based, the study concludes that it is unacceptable within the Adventist theological framework.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MINISTRIES TO DISTRESSED PEOPLES: NEHEMIAH TO POST-EXILIC JEWS AND NORTH CONGO MISSION TO PYGMIES

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From their ancestor's time, Pygmies have experienced hardship. Their life is characterized by physical, economical, socio-political, and spiritual crises. Since 1982, North Congo Mission (NCM) has attempted to minister to the Pygmies. Unfortunately, it appears that the NCM did not attain its desired goals.

The book of Nehemiah reports that the post-exilic Jewish community also experienced great distress and disgrace. In ministering to them, Nehemiah was effective. At the end of his ministry the precarious conditions of the people were replaced by honor and celebration.

This study describes and compares the contexts of the ministries to distressed people: by Nehemiah to the post-exilic Jews, and by the NCM to the Pygmies. Research affirms that spiritual and leadership qualities are important factors contributing to the success of ministry to distressed people.

A proposal for an approach to minister to Pygmies is suggested in the study. The statement of its philosophy affirms that the most effective way of helping the poor is to enable them to help themselves. By effecting their own change, Pygmies will be empowered to shift from dependency to self-reliance.

The strategy to effect empowerment requires that Pygmies express their felt needs, determine their own solutions, be encouraged to be financially self-sufficient, implement their own programs, and be trained for local leadership. Through the process of participation and community organization, leadership may be developed. This will foster self-reliance and wise management of local resources. This is true empowerment.

IMPRECATION IN PSALM 137:7-9: AN EXEGETICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY

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Readers are often disturbed by the repulsiveness of Ps 137. The need to resolve the issue and ascertain the meaning of the imprecatory prayer in Ps 137 provides a rationale for its investigation.

Chapter 1 presents the introductory matters of the paper. The focus of chapter 2 is to study the background of imprecatory concepts in the OT. The aim is to understand the role of imprecatory passages and in what context they function. The

results of the analysis reveal consistent traits shared in common by imprecatory prayers.

Chapter 3 is the heart of the paper. It presents the exegetical-theological study of Ps 137:7-9. It shows that those features found to be common in the study of the background are also present in Ps 137. A study of the passage demonstrates that the prayer is in no way an account of brutality or vindictiveness. The psalmist's rejoicing over the doom of his enemies is impelled not by a desire for revenge but by a longing for God's righteous judgment and intervention.

The presence of several terminological allusions, linguistic, and covenantal motifs in Ps 137 provides the context for explaining it. These components emerge from God's righteous actions against the wicked. Thus, the divine perspective of judgment, justice, and righteousness is the focus of Ps 137. Vengeance against enemies is an integral part of God's promise to Israel along with the promised blessings. The prayers of the psalmist issued from a rightful claim on the holy and just Being who promises to avenge His people. The psalmist cannot be denounced for claiming this promise. Imprecation, then, is a call to God to take action and intervene. In God's action, His righteous judgment, justice, and faithfulness are upheld, His honor magnified, and wickedness checked.

Chapter four provides the summary and conclusion of the work.

THE LOCUS OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST AND THE SAINTS IN REV 20:1-10

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Aside from the controversial issue on the temporal aspect of the millennium, the locus of the millennial reign of Christ and His saints in Rev 20:1-10 is an issue on which biblical scholars have not reached a consensus. The majority argues for an earthly locus of the millennial reign of Christ and His saints, but there is a minority that still adheres to a heavenly locus of this reign.

This research analyzes Rev 20:1-10 and the immediate and wider contexts in order to determine whether the millennial reign of Christ and His saints will take place on earth or in heaven. This also helps to answer the question about the temporal aspect of the millennium.

This study analyzes Rev 20, beginning with a structural analysis of chaps. 19-22, which shows a chronological progression between chaps. 19 and 20. This indicates that the millennium follows the Parousia.

A lexical-grammatical, literary and contextual analysis of Rev 20 is presented. Rev 20:1-10, especially the unit vv. 4-6, does not speak explicitly about the locus of the millennial reign of Christ and His saints. The analysis of the literary pattern

shows that 20:1-10 has an earth-heaven-earth pattern. This suggests that 20:4-6 is located in heaven. An analysis of the occurrences of *thronous* (thrones) in Revelation indicates a heavenly locus for this reign. A survey of the passages parallel to 20:4-6 shows a heavenly reign. This is supported by other NT passages.

This research surveys the broader context in the biblical and extrabiblical literature. It considers the verbal, thematic, and structural parallels of Rev 19-22 in some OT, NT, and extrabiblical passages. There are parallels to some OT passages in Rev 19-22, but there are also significant differences between them.

The conclusion of this study is that the locus of the millennial reign of Christ and His saints is in heaven after the Parousia.

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AND THE LIFESTYLE BELIEFS OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH: SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE FOR THE NORTH PHILIPPINE UNION MISSION

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This project focuses on a guide of instruction for the lay leaders in the North Philippine Union Mission (NPUM) to rightly present the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) in the context of righteousness by faith. This study shows that although church members adequately understand justification by grace through faith, the relationship between faith and works in receiving salvation is not clear to many of them. Church members perceive that the observance of doctrines (especially those that are behavioral in nature) constitutes the basis of salvation and assurance. Perhaps many understand sin mainly as wrong behavior.

Data were collected and analyzed concerning the perception of members with regard to righteousness by faith and the need for integration (through questionnaires answered by a representative group of SDAs in NPUM). A brief and descriptive study of the biblical principles of righteousness by faith is presented, as well as an instructional guide designed for teaching the fundamental doctrines of SDAs in the context of righteousness by faith.

By embracing this instructional guide, the NPUM hopefully will gain much in integrating righteousness by faith in presenting the fundamental beliefs as an effective approach to church growth. By placing Jesus Christ at the center of every doctrinal presentation, the presenter should experience increased power, more conversions, more active participation of lay members in evangelism, and greater spiritual enrichment.

A LAY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM
CONDUCTED BY THE PERSONAL MINISTRY DEPARTMENT,
JAKARTA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
JANUARY 1997–JUNE 1999: AN EVALUATION

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The church will not grow or even survive without lay members actively involved in ministry and evangelism. Since most lay members are not professionally trained as ministers and evangelists, lay training programs are necessary in every church. However lay training programs should be fruitful and effective.

This study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the lay training program for personal evangelism conducted by the Personal Ministry Department of the Jakarta Conference (JC) of Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) during the period from January 1997 to June 1999. The significance of the study is based on the fact that it provides recommendations for future lay training programs in JC and a model for other conferences or missions in the West Indonesia Union Mission of SDAs which may undertake similar lay training programs.

The study begins with an analysis of selected records of Christ's and Paul's ministries found in the NT. This was done to determine basic principles by which a lay training program could be evaluated. This portion of the study reveals that the effectiveness of a training program should be judged based on biblical-theological principles of (1) recruitment procedures, (2) curriculum content, (3) process and methods of teaching, and (4) organizational structure.

The study also reports the result of a survey conducted among randomly selected participants of the aforementioned lay training program. The areas evaluated are the effectiveness of recruitment in motivating involvement in personal evangelism, curriculum content, training in teaching procedures, and structure.

The study concludes that the program was generally effective. The concluding chapter also presents suggestions or recommendations for those who plan to conduct lay training programs in Indonesia and elsewhere.