

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

"Predestination According to the View of James Arminius and John Wesley"

Researcher: Lowel J. Domocmat, M.A. in Religion, 2010

Advisor: Woodrow W. Whidden II, Ph.D.

This study employed the historical and theological method of investigation, which is geared to ascertain the predestination views of James Arminius and John Wesley and their similarities and differences toward postulating an Arminian-Wesleyan doctrine of predestination.

Wesley scholars asserted that the Arminianism of Wesley did not come from Arminius; it was mainly the result of his readings of Anglican divines. However, in the course of this investigation, it became plain that Wesley had striking similarities with Arminius on predestination. They both held predestination as Christ-centered, based on divine foreknowledge, founded on grace, and consistent with free will.

The theological developments of Arminius and Wesley were presented in Chapters 2 and 3, with particular emphases on the circumstances that ushered in the formulation of their understandings on predestination. Arminius and Wesley lived during two different periods, places, and situations in history. But they had commonly formed their doctrines of predestination as the outcome of their intense study of the Scriptures and contests against their foes.

Arminius and Wesley both argued that the predestination doctrine must be in harmony with all the attributes of God manifested in the Scriptures. The mistake of the Calvinists, according to them, was their insistence on the sovereignty of God at the expense of His moral attributes of love, justice, and mercy.

In Chapter 4, the similarities and differences of Arminius and Wesley were examined. In spite of their apparent similarities they had disagreements, particularly on their views of unconditional election and irresistible grace. Wesley reasoned that unconditional election is also evident in the choosing of some men for distinct functions in the world and that preventive grace works irresistibly at some point in the awakening and empowering of the human will. Arminius did not adopt these views.

There are several conclusions stipulated as the result of the examination of the views of Arminius and Wesley on predestination: (1) Arminius and Wesley held apparently identical doctrines of predestination. (2) Predestination is the conditional election of classes of people—the believers and unbelievers. (3) Christ is the cause and not the result of predestination. (4) The act of predestination is based on God’s foreknowledge of the belief and unbelief of people. (5) The doctrine of unconditional election and unconditional damnation is contrary to God’s moral attributes of love, justice, and mercy. (6) The predestination views of Arminius and Wesley are consistent with the exercise of free will. And (7) there is an aspect of grace that is irresistible; it is wrought by prevenient grace in awakening and empowering one’s sensitivity and will to be able to respond to God’s salvation.

“A Divine Call to Relationship and a Covenantal Renewal in Deut 28:69-30:20: A Syntagmatic, Syntactic, and Textlinguistic Analysis”

Researcher: Emmer Chacon, Ph.D. in Religion, 2010

Advisor: David Tasker, Ph.D.

This study uses a linguistic approach and applies syntagmatics, syntax and textlinguistics procedures to the Hebrew text of Deut 28:69-30:20 in order to assess what the linguistic information thus obtained might contribute for the understanding of the literary, structural and theological aspects portrayed in this passage.

Chapter 1 surveys the methodology that is applied to the text in Chapters 2 and 3 generating structural and theological information that Chapters 4 and 5 analyze. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a general summary, methodological evaluation, conclusions, and recommendations.

This investigation has demonstrated that in Deut 28:69-30:20 vocabulary, grammar, micro and macrosyntax, rhetoric and pragmalinguistic are highly crafted with literary cohesion and coherence to convey the theology of the text. Textlinguistics allowed identifying rhetorical strategies in Deut 28:69-30:20. These strategies seek to provide a speech that combines a high level of organization and art while conveying a message. These strategies enhance persuasion and memory. Repetition carries on motifs through the speech and portrays more than one aspect of the issue or even return to the topic after a digression. The changes in personal pronouns display harmonic patterns that allow the speaker to argue with the individual while addressing the multitude. Temporal patterns provide the presentation of a comprehensive covenantal programmatic offer for the future of the audience. This offer implies a program and a history of the

conditional program of what the Lord intends to fulfill in behalf of the audience and their descendants and the certain prophetic portrayal of what the near and future history of the people will be. The audience has the key, the final answer that the text does not register. Although the prophetic portrayal of the text shows us what their answer in the future will be. Therefore, textlinguistics has proved to be efficient in elucidating the way rhetoric, structure and theology function in the text.

“Developing a Need-Based and Wholistic Contextualized Family Ministry: The Adventist Family and Community Center of Reinach/AG (Switzerland)”

Researcher: Arnold Zwahlen, D.Min., 2010

Advisor: Carol M. Tasker, Ph.D.

How can the local Adventist Church of Reinach (Switzerland) successfully meet the needs of families of its secular community through the development of a Family and Community Center (FCC) and share the holistic message and lifestyle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through an ongoing contextualized social service? The study explores the theological, theoretical, and organizational base for the successful development of a Family and Community Center of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Reinach (Switzerland).

A biblical and literary study of family ministry and family center work was done and theories, insights, and models for a contemporary family ministry and family center work were collected. The study also documented the local social and demographic context and evaluated its relevance for the project development. The development process was documented from January 2009 to January 2010 by chronological journaling of the records, meetings, events, and observations. Goals and objectives were set and a qualitative survey with church members and guests provided a basis for an intermediate evaluation of the Family and Community Center and its ministries.

The study of the prophetic message of Mal 4:4-6 showed that there is a strong biblical foundation for a church-based family ministry. Literary research also demonstrated that since the 1990s, a strong government-supported secular family-center movement, particularly in Germany, has developed, which provides a model for an institutional Adventist family center ministry.

The contextualized, lay-led, community-oriented, and church-based family ministry of a Family and Community Center is meeting

needs of the secular families of the community of Reinach/AG (Switzerland). A family oriented proclamation of the biblical message by Seventh-day Adventists will provide balance, strength, and increased attraction to the church and its message in a secular society.

"An Assesment of the Ecclesiology Suggested by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches from the Conservative Christian Viewpoint"

Researcher: Suryanica Aristas Pasuhuk, Ph.D. in Religion, 2010

Advisor: Kyung Ho Song, Ph.D.

The purpose of this research is to assess the ecclesiology of the FOC. It seeks to answer the question, what are the similarities and differences between the FOC's ecclesiology and that of conservative Christians?

The study reveals some similarities as well as differences between FOC's ecclesiology and that of conservative Christians. Regarding the nature and mission of the church, both hold that the church is a community called by God for a purpose; the church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; the visible and the invisible churches are not identical to each other; mission cannot be separated from the church; and the purpose of mission is to help individual sinners to repent. But they differ on the following: nature of the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic church; the church as sacramental; the function of the church metaphors in the Bible; the visible and invisible churches; and the purpose of mission.

In relation to the ministry of the church, the FOC and conservative Christians have a common understanding on the calling of the whole people of God, on the view of the ordained minister, and on the succession in the apostolic tradition. But they differ on the following: the roles, pattern of ordained ministry, and on ordination as a sacramental sign. Regarding the authority of the church, they have the same view on the head and the source of authority in the church. But there are disagreements regarding the sources of church authority besides the Bible.

In relation to the ordinances of the church, both believe that baptism is a symbol, and that immersion is the most vivid expression of the meaning of baptism. But they differ on the interpretation of the symbolism of baptism, infant baptism, and rebaptism. In relation to the Lord's Supper, both agree that the Lord's Supper is a memorial and a fellowship of the faithful. But they differ on the meaning of the Lord's Supper, on the understanding of the context of Exod 24, on the practice of the ordinance of foot washing, and on Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. Regarding church

unity, both believe that the unity of the church is important, but differ on the understanding of unity.