

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

“Κτίσις in Romans 8:18–23”

Researcher: Sheralee Nadine Thomas, M.A. in Religion, 2006

Advisor: Aecio E. Cairus, Ph.D.

Three main possibilities have been suggested for the meaning of κτίσις “creation” in Romans 8:18–23: human only, non-human creation only or both human and non-human creation. This study highlights neglected evidence in the area of historical environmentalism that lends support to one of these possibilities.

Numerous environmental issues likely were known to Paul at the time of his writing Romans, including population increases, poor agricultural practices, deforestation, destruction of wildlife, increased farming of herd animals, air pollution, occupational disease, mining of metal, climate changes, and war. These factors may have influenced Paul in writing that “the creation itself [i.e., non-human creation] will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (NIV).

“Development of a Marriage Preparation Program for the Young People of the Korean Adventist Church at Adventist University of the Philippines”

Researcher: Lee Won Gi, D.Min., 2006

Advisor: Praban Saputro, Ph.D.

This project involved designing a premarital education program (PMEP), aimed primarily at the Korean Adventist Church (KAC) young people at Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) and, secondarily, for other Korean young people living abroad. It attempts to reclaim young people from secular influences in the areas of marriage and sex and to inform them about the biblical values of sex, marriage, and marriage life.

To achieve this purpose, chapters two through four serve as guidelines for designing a PMEP, laying the biblical-theological foundations, the theoretical foundations, and assessing the specific context (AUP), respec-

tively. Chapter 5 describes the design, implementation, and evaluation of the program, beginning with a "pretest" with the help of which the PMEP was developed and implemented on a short-term basis to KAC members. A follow-up then evaluated the effectiveness of the PMEP. The project concluded that there was an increased understanding by the KAC young people of the biblical values of marriage and made suggestions for future PMEPs with respect to the need and objective, participants, contents or curriculum, methods, and time and place.

"Early Davidian Seventh-day Adventist Apocalyptic Eschatology between 1929–1955: A Comparative, Historical, and Theological Investigation"

Researcher: Limoni Manu, Ph.D., 2006

Advisor: Aecio E. Cairus, Ph.D.

This dissertation evaluates the apocalypticism of the early Davidian Seventh-day Adventists (DSDA), a group commonly known as the Shepherd's Rod (SRod) which separated from the organized Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in 1929. The study explores relevant theological influences upon Victor T. Houteff, founder of the SRod, as well as his exegetical method and core eschatological views. Prior to this study, no comprehensive study of SRod apocalypticism had been done, hence a synchronic approach to analyzing Houteff's views was chosen.

Chapter 1 begins with a biographical sketch of Houteff and lays the foundational framework within which his apocalypticism is evaluated, including a brief historical survey of Davidianism and an assessment of possible influences on the SRod movement from British, Continental, and North-American expressions of premillennialism.

Chapter 2 describes Houteff's theoretical foundation in three general areas: (1) hermeneutics (view of Scripture, especially of classical prophetic literature, and exegetical method, understanding of the prophetic role of Ellen G. White and prophetic succession, handling of inspired sources); (2) ecclesiology (church identity and organizational structures; mission; the need for revival and reformation within Adventism); (3) eschatology (the identity of the 144,000; the sealing of Rev 7 and Ezek 9; the 144,000 as the remnant of Rev 12:17, Ezek 9, and Mic 4; the 144,000 and the latter rain of Joel 2:23, 28–32; the 144,000 and the loud cry of Rev 18:1–4).

Chapter 3, building upon the foundational principles discussed in chapter 2, analyzes three additional core views of Houteff: (1) the idea of a terrestrial kingdom, including the timing of the Kingdom of David (Isa 2:1–4; Mic 4), its location (Jer 30:3; Zech 14:4, 5), prophecies concerning its

establishment (Ezek 34:22–24), the throne of David (Hosea 3:4, 5), and expansion of the Kingdom (Dan 2:44); (2) sealing and slaughter of Ezek 9:1–11, the relation of Ezek 9 to Rev 7, conditions for the sealing (Ezek 9:4), and timing of the slaughter of sinners within Adventism (Ezek 9:6); (3) the harvest in the parable of Matt 13:24–30, 36–43.

Chapter 4 concludes that, while Houteff had a high view of Scripture and of Ellen G. White's work, some aspects of his core views are not in harmony with SDA understanding and beliefs. In addition to making a significant contribution toward the understanding of DSDAs, the study suggests points deserving further reflection by SDAs.

"Possible Causes for Christian Involvement in the Genocide in Rwanda"

Researcher: Phodidas Ndamyumugabe, Ph.D., 2006

Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

This study is an attempt to understand the possible causes for the participation of Rwandan Christians in the genocide that enveloped their country in 1994. A historical review of Christian missions in Rwanda suggests that many people joined the church without experiencing a profound biblical conversion. The first missionaries to Rwanda sometimes used colonial power to pressure the leaders of the people to accept the new religion. They also promoted a theory of the racial superiority of Tutsis over all other Rwandans. Later exploitation of the Hutu majority contributed to ethnic hatred and tensions in the country.

Another factor was the systematic abolition of the traditional institutions constituting the foundation of the Rwandan worldview and their social cohesiveness. The authority of the divine king was undermined and traditional religion supplanted with a new one. Without deep conviction, Rwandans were forced to part with their traditions, their religion, and their king, becoming Christians in name only.

Until 1994, most Rwandans were born into the church. Their spiritual life had not been nurtured by the word of God and, as a result, there had been no real turning to God. The average church member did not practice many of the spiritual disciplines. Subsequent field research confirmed that, during the 1994 genocide, churches had done little to nurture the disciple-making process—mostly because of immature leadership, which was often chosen on the basis of ethnicity rather than biblical factors.

Competition was high among the denominations to acquire as many followers as possible and this rivalry frequently led to a lowering of the

requirements for membership. At times the standards of a Christian life were not made clear. Some preached Christ in the context of cheap grace while others urged dependence on rituals apart from Christ. Respondents to this study indicated that these practices resulted in a high degree of nominalism and no real commitment to Christ or the church.

Politicians in Rwanda, taking advantage of this nominal state of the church for political interests, awakened dormant ethnic hatred through the media. One significant means of motivating the poor people to participate in the genocide was the offering of material rewards. Having no strong experience of a deep conversion, many nominal Christians in Rwanda thus became involved in the genocide.

"The Role of Dual Anthropology in Theistic Evolutionist Systems: An Analysis and Assessment"

Researcher: Gheorghe Razmerita, Ph.D., 2006

Advisor: Aecio E. Cairus, Ph.D.

Triggered by the insistence of some theistic evolutionist models on the indispensability for their systems of an anthropogenesis through the infusion of an immortal soul into an evolved pre-human body, this research focuses on identifying and assessing the role of dual anthropology in such systems. The study employs historical-theological and systematic-theological methods.

After distinguishing between theistic evolutionist systems which appeal to dual anthropology and those which do not, the study describes and analyzes both and finds them coexisting in all Christian confessions with notable Christian theologians and scientists supporting each.

The theistic evolutionist systems incorporating a dual anthropology appeal philosophically to the adoption historically by Christianity of the dualistic ontology found in Greek philosophy. They appeal also theologically to the need to salvage the core biblical narrative of salvation history and uphold the foundational doctrines of both the Creation of a perfectly moral and conditionally immortal man and of the Fall from that status. Dual anthropology "lifts" pre-humans to this absolute status through the idea of the infusion of the soul.

This appeal to a dual anthropology seemingly represents the best theological hope among the theistic evolutionist systems because it rejects alteration of the foundation of Christian theology as well as such threatening concepts as polygenism, which cannot be avoided by theistic evolu-

tionist systems not appealing to a dual anthropology. However, the appeal to dual anthropology does not actually serve the intended purpose. On the one hand, a dual anthropology has been rightly criticized as biblically and theologically unfounded. On the other hand, despite offering a form of pre-Fall man who is morally absolute, it fails to solve the problem of death as a consequence of the Fall.

This study concludes that theistic evolutionism suffers an irremediable internal incoherence: it must choose between keeping a biblical anthropology while abandoning essential Christian theology or appealing to a non-biblical anthropology in order to preserve the core of biblical theology while actually failing to do so. Therefore theistic evolutionist systems should be definitively rejected as a viable way to reconcile the evolutionary worldview with the biblical doctrine of creation.

"A Biblical and Contextual Study of the Viability of the Cell Church for the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Seoul, Korea"

Researcher: Joo Min Ho, Ph.D., 2006

Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

Christian denominations in Korea have introduced the concept of the cell church and used its formation as a new paradigm for the church. However, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Korea is still new to the cell church concept. Thus, this research aims at exploring the viability of the cell church as an alternative church model for the Korean SDA Church urban mission, especially in Seoul. The study is based principally on bibliographic and qualitative research.

The nature of God is communal. His nature is reflected in the creation of the first couple in community. The purpose of God's community is realized in relationships, equality, interdependence, and reproduction. For this purpose, God chose Abraham and made him the leader of a covenant community. This covenant community was based on the family and later developed into the nation of Israel.

By choosing the Twelve, Jesus restored the Old Testament community. This small group was the beginning of the cell church as a community. Jesus sent his community to houses in cities for urban ministry and this was followed by the founding of cell churches meeting in homes during the first century. The early Christian church reflected Jesus' community in its structure. Later, Paul followed Jesus' method by planting cell churches in cities during his missionary trips.

The cell church was in harmony with the Roman worldview and thus prospered. The Korean worldview is similar to the Roman worldview in that it is based on the family, collectivism, and hierarchy. This similarity between the Roman and Korean worldviews helps to explain the spread of the cell church movement in modern Korea.

An analysis of interviews with pastors shows that many of them see church planting and cell group meetings as important, while others oppose them fearing smaller churches and a lack of leaders. However, if lay members are educated and properly trained by the church pastor, the cell church can be an effective paradigm for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's urban mission in Seoul.