

## THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

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“The Doctrine of the Human Nature of Christ: Developments of the Views Regarding the Human Nature of Jesus Christ Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church Between 1957 and 1988”

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Advisor: Woodrow Whidden, Ph.D.

The main purpose of this study is to trace and describe the historical developments of the (three major) views regarding the human nature of Jesus Christ with the Seventh-day Adventist Church between 1957 and 1988. The subsequent purposes, which this study tries to pursue, are to identify major views, to define their main theological points, and to classify their respective proponents or advocates.

This study is structured to accomplish the purposes outlined above. Chapter 1 is devoted to an introduction to the dissertation.

Chapter 2 traces the developments of the views of the human nature of Jesus Christ prior to 1957. The “New Theology” View, which taught the sinless human nature of Jesus Christ, developed through certain preliminary, expansive, and decisive developments and events between 1949 and the release of *Questions on Doctrine* in November 1957. This period can be identified as the era of the debate between the sinful and sinless human nature views.

Chapter 3 focuses on the developments of the views from 1957 (after the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*) to 1971 (the year of the release of *Movement of Destiny*). This period can be identified as the era of the debate between the Traditional (“Post-Fall”) View, as thesis, and the “New Theology” (“Pre-Fall”) View, as antithesis.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the period from 1971 (after the publication of *Movement of Destiny*) to 1988 (the year of the publication of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*). This period can be identified as the era of the debate between the Alternative (“Uniqueness”) View, as thesis, and the Traditional (“Identical”) View, as antithesis.

Chapter 5 summarizes the development of the views regarding the human nature of Jesus Christ and provides clarification of the three major

views. This chapter presents the conclusions of the study and close with suggestions for further study.

“The Significance of Moses’ Staff Turning Into a Snake Before Pharaoh”

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Advisor: David R. Tasker, Ph.D.

The first miracle that God did before the ten plagues was to turn Moses’ (Aaron’s) staff into a snake and the staff swallowed the Egyptian magicians’ staffs (Exod 7:9-12). In connection with the ten plagues that happened in Egypt, this sign gives the setting to the plagues as judgment to Pharaoh and deliverance to the Israelites. Scholars have different views regarding the significance of Moses’ (Aaron’s) staff turning into a snake and swallowing the Egyptian magicians’ staffs. A question may be raised, “Why did God use a staff that turned into a snake to convince Pharaoh?” After investigation the study shows that

1. The word *!yNIT*; that is used in Exod 7:9-12 is also used in other texts in the OT to describe the life of nations, human beings, and kings, especially Pharaoh the king of Egypt. In addition, according to Egypt’s mythology, there were some of their gods who manifested themselves in the form of a snake. Furthermore, Egyptians believed that every Pharaoh in Egypt was a manifestation of those gods. Therefore, based on the use of the word *!yNIT*; in the OT and Egyptian belief toward snake, the snake in Exod 7:9-12 may symbolize Pharaoh the king of Egypt.
2. The immediate context of Exod 7 shows that at that time, God dealt with Israelite and Pharaoh through His servants, Moses and Aaron. The exegetical investigation found out that a situation of judgment is revealed in this prologue narrative. Furthermore, in this judgment, God is the subject who executes the judgment and Pharaoh is the object who receives the judgment. Thus, this miracle symbolically reveals that Pharaoh is under judgment and the subject executing judgment is the powerful God of Moses. Thus, the significance of Moses’ (Aaron’s) staff turning into snake in this context was to show the object of judgment whom God dealt with that was Pharaoh and all his power.

"Universality in the Book of Micah: An Exegetical-Thematic Study"

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Advisor: Carlos Mora, Ph.D.

This study investigates the theme of universality in the book of Micah through exegetical analyses. A review of pertinent literature has shown that in spite of the scholarly treatment on the theme of universality, the book of Micah receives little attention. Some scholars hold that the oracles for the nations were nationalistic and redactionally interpreted. No agreement exists as to how the concept of salvation for the nations is revealed in Micah. Because of these factors, it is the object of this dissertation to pursue its investigation.

The discussion on the backgrounds shows that in the narrative, writings, poetic, and prophetic literature of the OT, God makes redemptive benefits available for all. In the OT, God's relationship is open to the Gentiles and is demonstrably universal with regards to His unending love and intention for all His creation and He makes all human beings equal in dignity and worthy of His eternal care. The basis for the nations' inclusion in God's promised blessing is both textually and theologically linked to the motifs of covenant, election, mission, deliverance, worship, and prayers.

Chapter 3 analyzes the pertinent passages dealing on universality in the book of Micah (4:1-5; 5:7-8; 7:11-12,17-20). The findings reveal that these hopeful passages for the nations are set in the context of judgment and hope oracles. In Micah, the nations are included in judgment and most especially in the promised coming hope. Gentiles are objects of God's mercy rooted in His covenant promise to save humankind. It was found that the presence of several terminological citations, imageries, parallelisms, verbal analyses and other rhetorical features in Micah along with the inter-textual passages provide the background and avenue by which the promised transformation and redemption for the Gentiles can be elaborated and explained. This gives the integral setting to explain the promise hope made by God to the Gentiles in the book of Micah.

"The Justification Debate Between N. T. Wright and John Piper"

Researcher: Joseph Olstad, M.A. in Religion, 2011

Advisor: Woodrow Whidden, Ph.D.

Movements within Judaic studies over the past decades have spilled over to a number of reevaluations of Paul's historical context. As "legalistic" appraisals of Judaism became more and more unpopular, the traditional view of Paul's teaching on justification was called into question.

Among the many voices proffering their revised interpretations of Paul's theology in general and justification in particular, N.T. Wright emerged as an early advocate for a fresh appraisal of Paul. Capitalizing on what is now called the "new perspective on Paul," Wright has constructed a massive and intricate Pauline theology that redefines, shifts, and in some cases, dispenses with traditional concepts. Justification as a central Protestant teaching is redefined in the wake of some of these bold revisions. Though not denying the lawcourt metaphor, Wright subsequently has sought to ground justification in God's covenant with Abraham, Israel's purpose for the world, and Gentile inclusion into the Messianic Jewish community. Not to be out done, John Piper has risen to the occasion to defend the traditional view of justification against Wright's interpretations. He does not do so simply as an unreflective adherent to orthodoxy or tradition, but in the end, he and many others believe the traditional Reformation view aligns most closely with what Paul actually wrote in his epistles. So, despite the fascination with the narrative approach Wright brings to Paul, Piper is unconvinced that these new perspectives aid in a clearer understanding of the apostle.

Piper and Wright have written book length responses to each other over the subject of justification and therefore provide their readers with a debate format. The present paper seeks to compare and contrast their debated positions and to offer introductory analysis as to the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments.

"Critical Factors that Facilitated the Conversion of Muslims in the Garut District, West Java Province, Indonesia"

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Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

The central focus of the study is to determine the critical factors that facilitated the conversion of Muslims in the Garut District, West Java

Province, Indonesia. The study was conducted among 280 Garut Seventh-day Adventist church members. They were asked to respond to a self-constructed instrument validated within the context of Garut community. Descriptive statistics were used to find out the level of agreement to the factors such as barriers to their conversion, internal and external influences that led to their conversion, evangelism and contextualization, and church growth strategies used by pastors and church members to enhance and nurture the spiritual growth of the newly converted Garut SDA church members.

The study showed that Garut people give more emphasis on informality and openness. They are friendly, show a sense of respect to other people, very cooperative and accommodating. Although many obstacles impeded the path of evangelism concerning Garut people, however, it is evident that many open doors also existed for the Gospel. The study discovered that there are specific contributing factors and mission strategies which have contributed to the significant growth of SDA church in Garut. Of first importance is the role and work of the Holy Spirit as a driving force for Garut conversion and growth. Furthermore, cultural approach, community services such as charity clinic and micro-economic development, training for pastors and laymen, and contextualization strategies, were among the very effective and applicable strategies.

Furthermore, based on the finding of the research, the Garut conversion and growth model is proposed as effective factors and mission strategy for winning the Garut people for Christ and how they can be nurtured in their new found faith.

The recommendations of the study include the equipping and training pastors from other ethnic groups before deploying them into the mission field. Community services like charity clinics, health programs, nutrition seminars including micro-economic development program can be integrated with other mission strategies. Increased contextualization and more nurturing strategies should be employed to ensure authentic conversion and spiritual growth.

"Utilizing the Internet as a Potential Tool to Spiritually Nurture  
Christian Young Adults in Hyderabad, India"

Researcher: Jesin Israel Kollabathula, Ph.D. in Religion, 2011

Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

In the New Testament, Paul's missionary commitment for nurturing the believers is directly demonstrated by the existence of the letters that he wrote. Paul's ministry was significant because he ministered to his congregations both when he was present with them as well as when physically separated from them. When present, he personally nurtured their faith but when separated, he wrote letters and sent them through his messengers. As Paul exerted his spiritual influence through his written Epistles delivered over the Roman road system of the 1st century, youth leaders and church administrators can exert similar spiritual influence bi-directionally using the Internet in the 21st century.

Exploring the history of the Christian church in general, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular, reveal the use of media-based communication through the printing press, radio, television, and satellite to fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ. It also revealed that the ministry through the old and traditional means always continued while new means and methods were added. This shows that using the Internet for spiritual purposes in the 21st century is acceptable, legitimate, and necessary.

This research examined the perceptions of 263 young adults, 6 youth leaders, and 15 church administrators in Hyderabad, India. The results of the survey showed that 95 percent of the respondents were using the Internet. The pattern of Internet use per day showed that more than 50 percent of their time spent online was for email, social networking and chatting which indicated that the Internet is being used as a good tool for building relationships regardless of educational attainment, gender, age, and marital status.

The older and married respondents showed higher perceptions than the young and the single about the use of Internet for personal spiritual growth and as a tool to share their faith with others. This study recommends that seminars and workshops be conducted to create awareness, clear misconceptions, and to furnish ideas about the responsible use of the Internet as one of the potential tools for nurturing the spirituality of the young adults.

"Basic Components of a Training Program on Biblical Preaching for Young Seventh-Day Adventist Pastors of Korean Union Conference"

Researcher: Chang Jong You, D.Min., 2010

Advisor: Reuel Almocera, D.P.S.

Seventh-day Adventist churches in South Korea are demanding better quality of biblical preaching in their pulpits. The demand is far greater than the current ministerial workforce can supply. This crisis comes about because there seems to be a lack of a consistent Homiletical Training Program (HTP) for young pastors in the Korean Union Conference (KUC).

This study aims to provide a systematic and regular HTP for nonordained pastors in KUC. Particularly, the study identifies the basic components and a training model for the nonordained (unordained) ministers on biblical preaching. Examination of this study was based on documentary research and field research methods which involved the interviews with church administrators and survey questionnaires with 138 nonordained pastors. This study uncovered three basic areas that the HTP addressed. These were (1) spiritual training, (2) skill training (homiletic), and (3) evangelistic preaching training.

This study also designed a training model, which integrated classroom teaching (trainer's role) and field mentoring (field supervisor's role). It was envisioned that a 3-way partnership of trainers, field supervisors, and trainees be developed.

The study culminates with a curriculum designed for the classroom teaching components utilizing the suggested training strategies: (1) 6 lectures on spiritual training, (2) 7 lectures on preaching skills training, and (3) 5 lectures on evangelistic preaching training. Other useful tools such as the sheet of preaching evaluation, the trainee's learning covenant, and the field supervisor's learning covenant are listed in the appendixes. As a result, this HTP will help to increase the effectiveness of young pastors' preaching ministry in KUC.