

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

"Developing a Worship Paradigm For First, Second, and Third Generation Samoan Seventh-Day Adventists in Melbourne, Australia: A Contextualized Approach"

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Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

The multi-generational Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Melbourne, Australia, have been challenged with issues revolving around traditional and contemporary worship which has stirred controversy within, and aroused tense personal emotions about the way the congregations are worshipping. The conflict between the 2 polarized opposing camps of traditional versus contemporary forms of worship relate to a division in attitude of how people conduct the primary service. Adding to the argument is the influence of diverse cultures experienced by the first, second, and third generation of Samoan worshippers which consequently has become a distraction from the real meaning of unity and worship.

The purpose of the study is to provide a regular nurturing environment for the 4 Samoan multi-generational churches in Melbourne, in order to facilitate various forms of worship leaders to address cultural issues such as language, family and corporate worship in areas of concern such as reverence, music, and unity. This has been based on personal observation, survey questionnaires and interviews, and documentary research.

In examining the biblical and cultural ways of worship, a feasible nurturing model is developed as follows: (1) nurturer, pastor and first generation; (2) mentor, second generation; and (3) trainees, third generation. The study concludes with a combined 4 day camp for the 4 Samoan churches designed for the nurturer, mentor, and the trainees to implement the recommended nurturing strategies: (1) participate as an assembly in a cultural ceremony and biblical ritual. As representations of worship, it was envisioned that contextualization of the 2 formal

procedures elicit an awareness of worship and cultural sacredness, honour, and respect; (2) 6 workshops based on family and corporate worship; and (3) 3 seminars on aspects of Samoan culture. Other relevant resources such as a contextualized Passover, seminars and workshop materials, and a camp evaluation sheet are sited in the appendixes. The camp endeavours not only to contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the worship unity amongst the Samoan Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Melbourne, Australia, but also towards the ongoing nurturing processes of worship leaders to perpetuate biblical worship and appropriate cultural forms within the churches.

"An Exegetical-Theological Study of the OU MH Passages in the Fourth Gospel"

Researcher: Hector Obed Martin Fuentes, Ph.D., 2012

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Although grammarians have noted the phenomenon of the emphatic denial *ouj mh*; (ED) in the Fourth Gospel, a survey of the standard critical commentaries on the Gospel of John reveals that there is scanty work about its theological function. The review also shows that there is a lack of treatment about the implications of the ED in the Fourth Gospel, in particular in the soteriological sayings of Jesus and other negative statements.

The subject of the theological function and the implications of the ED in the Fourth Gospel deserve attention because first, a soteriological theme is frequently associated with the construction; and second, at present, the few works that deal with the subject have done it in a general way. Therefore, a more systematic and comprehensive treatment is needed.

The exegesis of the 16 passages in the Fourth Gospel (John 4:14, 48; 6:35, 37; 8:12, 51, 52; 10:5, 28; 11:26; 13:8, 38; 18:11) reveals first, that the ED in the soteriological sayings of Jesus points to Him as the fulfillment of OT messianic expectations, His divine status, and the nature of His messiahship. The ED highlights the mission of Jesus as one of spiritual character. Second, in the soteriological sayings of Jesus it points to an emphasis on a present inaugurated eschatology in His person. In Jesus, the eschatological future is now present. He, in His ministry, inaugurates eternal life. Third, in the context of other negative statements, the ED would indicate the author's intention to highlight that humanity is in

need. The elements of obstinacy in accepting Jesus' status, false expectation regarding Him, the lack of understanding about His mission-service even at the point of death, and the human tendency to trust in a faith based on the perceptible rather than in God's Word, are parts of human nature. The human being is in need of spiritual discernment to appreciate heavenly perspectives. Fourth, the ED contributes to the overall purpose of the Fourth Gospel as stated in John 20:30, 31. The ED, used as a literary device in combination with other literary conventions, adds prominence to the authoritative pronouncements of Jesus, and calls the attention of the reader/hearer to the significance of Jesus' statements. In this sense, this is very much in keeping with John's purpose for writing his gospel as reflected in John 20:31.

"Miracles and Testimony in Relation to Faith in the Gospel of John:
A Study in the Text and its Contexts"

Researcher: Anton Petrishchev, Ph.D., 2012

Advisor: Richard Apelles Sabuin, Ph.D.

It is not easy to describe the relationships between miracles and faith in the Gospel of John. On the one hand, the Gospel emphasizes the extraordinary nature of miraculous signs and their importance for believing in Jesus; on the other, it seems that in some passages faith based on miracles is disparaged and faith based on testimony is favored. Scholarly opinion on the matter varies from some admitting the existence of inconsistencies and explaining them by the usage of a separate source—or sources—which John loosely incorporated into his Gospel to others rejecting any tension at all and arguing for a consistent optimistic view of miracle-based faith in the Fourth Gospel.

The purpose of the dissertation is to find out how John presents miracles and testimony in relation to faith in his Gospel and to explain, if possible, the origins of his view. In order to reach these objectives, it studies both the text of the Gospel and its contexts—theological and historical. In the text section, it analyzes all passages of the Fourth Gospel in which miracles and/or testimony are related to faith. In the context part, it surveys literature sources which might serve as background for the Gospel of John in its historical situation; these include the Old Testament, selected Second Temple literature, Greco-Roman literature, and rabbinic traditions.

The study concludes that John does not belittle the value of faith that comes from seeing miracles; neither does he state that miracles are indispensable for believing. The Gospel shows both miracles and testimony as a means (although not always effective) to produce and strengthen faith, with the former being a content as well as a substantiation for the latter. However, John does not justify the absence of faith by the absence of miracles; instead, he claims the necessity of faith grounded only in testimony, faith without seeing, in the situation of the second and third generations where those are scarce. Such a view is not an invention of the author of the Fourth Gospel; it can be found in some Jewish sources, and even more so in the Exodus narrative of the Old Testament.