THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

"Toward a Theology of Inclusive Relationships Between Jews and Gentiles in Rome as Applied to Adventist Mission Among Muslim Immigrants in Moscow: A Prejudice Reduction Model"

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Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

The growing number of Muslim immigrants from post-Soviet Republics to Moscow presents significant challenge for the Adventist mission. Along with Muscovites, the Seventh-day Adventists appear to share a common prejudice toward Muslim immigrants. This study seeks to determine factors that influence negative attitudes of the church members toward the immigrants and build a model for prejudice reduction.

In the Epistle to the Romans Paul addresses the issue of prejudice between Jews and Gentiles from pastoral, missionary, and theological perspective. The creation, judgment, and salvation themes dismiss any ethnocentric attitudes and prejudice by submitting both Jews and Gentiles as one body in Christ, thereby providing a basis for inclusive relationships and further cross-cultural endeavor to Spain.

The proposed model for prejudice reduction included two dependent variables, social distance and prejudice, five moderating variables, symbolic threat, realistic threat, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and intergroup anxiety, and three independent variables, intergroup contact, in-group identity, and spirituality. Data collected from 16 churches and 200 respondents were analyzed using AMOS version 17 and structural equation modeling software package.

The study found that spirituality, realistic threat, and intergroup anxiety have a direct effect on prejudice and explain 72% of its variance. Realistic threat and prejudice have a direct effect on social distance and explain 41% of its variance. Further, the study found that spirituality, realistic threat, and stereotypes have a direct effect on intergroup anxiety and

explain 31% of its variance. It was also found that realistic threat had a direct effect on stereotypes and explain 28% of its variance.

The findings of this study suggest spirituality to be the primary means in reducing prejudice toward Muslim immigrants. It also suggests realistic threat to have more significant effect on attitudes of church members than symbolic threat. Likewise, the moderating effect of emotional factor (intergroup anxiety) has far greater influence on prejudice and social distance than that of cognitive (stereotypes).

This study may be useful for pastors, church leaders, and church members who seek to eliminate cross-cultural barriers between the church and Muslim immigrants in Moscow. It is recommended that pastors and church leaders enhance the community element in Moscow churches by generating the practice of fellowship and hospitality among church members. Proper attention should be given to improving quality of relationships with God and other people, especially with regards to the young adults 20-29 years old who appeared to be the most prejudiced group in the church. Likewise, the church needs to be more educated in cross-cultural communication and cultural diversity; furthermore, it should be involved in ministry and witnessing to Muslim immigrants, who yet remain unreached by the Adventist mission in Moscow.

"The Heavenly Sanctuary in the Thessalonians Apocalypse (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), Its Innertextuality and Intertextuality Within the Pauline Corpus"

Researcher: Mario Nabitney Phillip, Ph.D., March 2013
Advisor: Richard Sabuin, Ph.D.

This dissertation sought to demonstrate exegetically and contextually the prevalence of the heavenly sanctuary motif in the epistles of Paul, notwithstanding Hebrews. Using 2 Thess 2:1-12 as the major text under consideration this study proposed that the heavenly sanctuary motif in 2 Thess 2:1-12, and Scripture by extension, exist in a dynamic functional correspondence with its varied dimensions, namely, the earthly, metaphorical, eschatological dimensions, as well as, the sanctuary as a sphere of divine activities, and the center of cosmic conflict. While the sanctuary motif has been shown to be ubiquitous to the context of 2 Thess 2, specific exegetical emphasis was given to the appellations τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Thess 2:4), τὸ κατέχον / ὁ κατέχων, and ἐκ μέσου γένηται (2 Thess 2:6, 7). It also showed that the usage of ναὸς in the Epistles (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:18-19; 2 Cor

6:16; 5:1-5, 10; Eph 1:20; 2:6, 19-22) has an innertextual and intertextual relationship to each other within their immediate context and the broader context of Scripture.

In Chapter 1 it was shown that while much has been written on the heavenly sanctuary motif in Scripture, the focus has been mostly on the Old Testament, and in the case of the New Testament, Hebrews and Revelation. While there is a dearth of work available on the heavenly sanctuary motif in the Pauline Epistles, those that deal with the sanctuary motifs emphasize the metaphorical aspects of the sanctuary as the dominant thrust.

Chapter 2 sought to show the continuity with which the heavenly sanctuary motif was conceived both in the extra-biblical and biblical literature, particularly, the Ancient Near East, Old Testament, Second Temple Literature, and the New Testament. It was revealed that 5 dominant trends of the heavenly sanctuary suffuse these writings, namely, the sanctuary as a heavenly, an earthly, a metaphorical, and an eschatological reality, and also a sphere of divine function, and the center of cosmic conflict. These trends though given varying emphasis, have an overarching awareness of the dynamic correspondence and the intertextual and innertextual relationship of the heavenly sanctuary motif that exist both in the biblical and extra-biblical sources.

Chapter 3 demonstrated exegetically the existence of the heavenly sanctuary motif in 2 Thess 2:1-12. It was demonstrated that 2 Thess 2 followed a vertical-horizontal typology where events in one sphere affected the other. The allusion to the temple of God in 2 Thess 2:4 was shown to primarily point to the heavenly prototypical sanctuary.

Chapter 4 showed how the sanctuary motif in 2 Thess 2:1-12 shares an intertextual and innertextual relationship with other similar motifs in 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:18-19; 2 Cor 6:16; 5:1-5, 10; and Eph 1:20; 2:6, 19-22. It adduced that the heavenly sanctuary existence formed the basis upon which the Epistles promulgated other dimensions of the sanctuary. Thus in referring of the sanctuary in any of its aspects, it presupposed the prototypical heavenly sanctuary upon which the profundity and efficacy of its counterparts depended.

"Contextualized Seventh-day Adventist Church Growth Strategies for Postmodern Culture in Japan"

Researcher: Geun Sik Lim, D.Min., April 2013
Advisor: Cristian Dumitrescu, Ph.D.

The primary purpose of the study is to identify the best contextualized strategies for church growth in Japanese postmodern society. This project attempts a comparison between the current situation of the Japanese Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church and the characteristics of the postmodern context of Japan. A survey done in the Japanese SDA Church, current literature about church and postmodernism, and my personal experience during the 6 years spent in ministry in Japan are the basis for the conclusions.

Two hundred and one respondents from 2 conferences and a mission contributed to the survey used in the study. The results indicate that the SDA Church in Japan has both strong points and weak points. Spiritual ministry is strong, whereas the desire or will for church growth and nurture programs are weak areas. There is a desire for outreach evangelism and communication with society. Currently, Japan SDA Church has hopes for growth based on healthy relationships, Bible study, significant presence of children and youth, small groups, good pastoral leadership, and good church image. Most respondents indicated their awareness about postmodern behaviour and an understanding of the postmodern characteristics challenging the SDA Church in Japan, such as globalization/internationalization, particularism/universalism, self-divination, democratization, consumerism, therapy, and spiritualism.

The conclusion of the study recommends that the SDA Church in Japan becomes a postmodern-sensitive church/community as one of the keys to church growth in a postmodern context. In order to establish an effective ministry in a culture of postmodernity, strategies were suggested as follows: religious (transforming into biblical worldview, storytelling, modelling of lifestyle, experiential principle, proper using the concept of God), cultural (media/internet, multi-worship, customizing evangelism, SDA calendar-evangelism, image-driven church), social (globalization cooperation, glocality principle, *oikos*, urban centered mission), anthropological (cell ministry, friendship, partnership, healthy ministry), and changing paradigm (cultivating professional lay ministry, youth evangelism).

Moreover, an all-encompassing model that includes both the personal and public dimensions of inreach and outreach are required in order to propagate a genuine Christian character to postmoderns *via* the models of

incarnated truth, unaffected friendship, and individual experience of the Gospel.

"External and Internal Factors Contributing to the Church Well-Being of the East Bangladesh Mission"

Researcher: Wiley Gamaliel Falia, Ph.D., May 2013
Advisor: James H. Park, Ph.D.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, which began its ministry in Bangladesh in 1906, has grown at a slow pace. Although the lay people and workers want the church to grow, the membership is only 33,837 in a nation of more than 150 million. This study seeks to identify the external and internal factors that affect the well-being of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Bangladesh Mission (EBM) and sets forth a possible model for quality growth.

This study discusses how Israelites' resistance near the border of the Promised Land and the narratives of the church in Acts reveal both external and internal factors which hindered the well-being of both groups. Their resistance affected them in the social, cultural, political, and theological dimensions.

The study attempted to identify the external and internal factors by employing 6 independent variables: (a) the Muslim community, (b) economic factors, (c) political pressure, (d) lack of commitment, (e) lack of the knowledge of God, and (f) presence of nominality in the churches. It employed 10 moderating variables: (a) gender, (b) age, (c) civil status, (d) former religion, (e) position in the church, (f) Muslim friends, (g) highest degree, (h) occupation, (i) years of service, and (j) salary.

The study also employed 7 dimensions of church well-being: (a) passionate spirituality, (b) fruitful evangelism, (c) high impact worship, (d) mission and vision, (e) leadership development, (f) church planting, and (g) financial stewardship. Data was collected from the EBM churches. The perception of 380 respondents was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science.

The study reveals that 1 external factor (political pressure), 3 internal factors (lack of commitment, lack of the knowledge of God, and the presence of nominality), and 3 moderating factors (gender, former religion, and salary) are significant in explaining the 32% of variance that influence the church well-being of the EBM. This indicates that the internal factors

in the churches influence the well-being much more than the external factors in EBM.

The findings of the study suggest a fundamental need of spiritual maturity through personal devotion and regular Bible reading among church members' well-being. It also suggests that church members should devote themselves more to prayer, commit their lives to God, and become faithful in Christian lifestyle. The study recommends that the EBM church members long for the gift of the Holy Spirit in humility and prayer before God for a dynamic and rapid church growth.

"The Doctrine Of Atonement as it Relates to the Humanity of Christ: A Comparative Study and Analysis of the Views of Irving, Barth, and Sequeira"

Researcher: Remwil R. Tornalejo, Th.D., May 2013
Advisor: Woodrow Whidden II, Ph.D.

This comparative study on the views of Edward Irving, Karl Bath, and Jack Sequeira on the doctrine of atonement seeks to answer the following questions: What could be the rationale of Irving, Barth, and Sequeira in their respective theories of atonement? Moreover, how do they correlate their understanding of the doctrine of atonement to the humanity of Christ?

In addition, this research considers the correlation of the views of Irving, Barth, and Sequeira on the atonement to the humanity of Christ. Furthermore, this study seeks to determine the similarities and dissimilarities of their respective views on the doctrine.

Notable similarities can be found in the atonement theology of Irving, Barth, and Sequeira. For Irving, the scope of atonement embraces the entire human race. This idea is supported by Barth, and Sequeira. The idea of universal atonement they adhere to moves beyond the understanding that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is merely provisional but rather objectively realized in Christ.

Irving, Barth, and Sequeira all reject the Penal-Substitutionary model of atonement. They share a common reason that guilt could not be transferred and that the innocent could not suffer for the guilty. They propose that the atonement was accomplished in actuality through Christ's assumption of sinful human nature.

"The Influences of Roman Catholic Church and World Council of Churches' Social Action Toward the Pursuit of Ecumenism in the 21st Century"

Researcher: Christopher Verian Luaya, M.A., June 2013
Advisor: Remwil R. Tornalejo, D.Th.

Central to the venture of this thesis is to see the influence of social action to the search of unity in the 21st century. Chapter 1 presents the introduction of the paper. The focus of Chapter 2 is to describe the social condition of the World Council of Churches while Chapter 3 presents the Catholic's ecumenical agenda motivated with social involvement.

Chapter 4 is the heart of the paper. The second document confirms that social action predominantly occupied every aspect of the whole ecumenical movement. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have commonalities on poverty, climate change, human rights, peace, and justice issues. In the analysis, using the themes and issues method, it is found that there are 4 topmost influences of social action to ecumenism. First, social action dominates the whole ecumenical movement. Polemical issues are waived and the ecumenical movement today focuses on more agreeable social concerns. Second, the dominance of social action leads to doctrinal tolerance and compromise. The over-emphasis to serving together (*diakonia*) will inevitably lead the movement into a one-sided ecumenism. Third, social action adds to the optimism that someday Christians will celebrate the same eucharist together. The theological accent of the eucharist is forgotten and ecumenists are shifting into its social expression. And fourth, due to the rampant tolerance and compromise, the Roman Catholic Church advances its distinctive and matchless eschatological mission. The Roman Catholic Church's unmatched advocacy to social issues may serve as a good example and encouragement for Protestants. The Protestants' de-emphasis of doctrines may contribute to Catholic control.

Chapter 5 deals with the summary and conclusion of the work. When social action is the basic and common denominator of every ecumenical endeavor—where doctrines are only secondary matters—there will be no fruitful results. The usual consequence is today's ecumenical movement, whose enduring advocacy is the incessant calling for ecumenical unity.