

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute
of Advanced Studies

"Sorcery in Modern Christianity: The Case of Rock Music"

Researcher: Teddy Grønbech, MA, November 2016

Advisor: Kyung Ho Song, PhD

Scholars provide evidence that the understanding of most Westerners on the subject of sorcery is that it died with the Enlightenment. Scholars, however, still write about sorcery but from an eastern religious and cultural viewpoint. That is, they leave out the biblical perspective of sorcery and, therefore, they seem to be in a limbo of whether sorcery is an imagination or a real thing.

The Bible provides a solid foundation for the understanding of sorcery. It shows that the foundation of sorcery is rebelliousness. Into the equation of rebellion comes the different entities of idolatry, adultery or fornication, and the attempt to commune with the dead. Furthermore, the Bible also provides evidence that a special kind of music was used during idol worships and that this music did not concur with the standard of music ordered by God for sacred worship. All these things are seen to be contrary to the law and character of God.

In modern Christianity, sorcery may exist through many different channels, but this paper is delimited only on sorcery through the musical channel. The principles of rock music and all its "sisters" are in opposition to the principles of sacred music outlined in the Bible. The biblical principles show that the order of music is melody, harmony, and rhythm. In fact, rhythm seem to have been of so little importance in Bible times that no word for it is found in biblical Hebrew.

Rock music, however, turns the order of things around so that rhythm becomes the most important entity of the music, then harmony, and the last is melody. This kind of music generates a powerful rhythm that creates abnormal body movements in the listeners. Rock music makes the listeners

addicted, encourages the use of drugs, fosters illicit sexual behavior, cultivates idolatry, makes the listener attempt to commune with the dead, and denies the existence of God. On top of these, rock music provides a subtle channel for the musicians to communicate with the listeners through sub-consciousness. Most rock musicians strive to combine their ability and effort with the powers of the occult, thereby fulfilling all the biblical objects of sorcery. The understanding of sorcery, therefore, needs to be widened to not only include the classical features but also the more subtle ones, such as rock music.

"Malsum Muksang (Bible Meditation) for Spiritual Growth: A Program on Bible Reading and Meditation for Bupyung Seventh-Day Adventist Church in South Korea"

Researcher: Yunki Heo, DMin, May 2016

Advisor: Reuel Almocera, DPS

Christians believe that Bible reading is essential for faith development and spiritual growth. It should then be a priority of those who minister to the churches to encourage members to practice the spiritual discipline of Bible reading. Yet, there is a need for concrete programs and strategies to promote Bible reading among the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in South Korea. The few existing programs lack structure and proper design.

This project introduces basic biblical and theoretical principles on leading church members to read the Bible. The principles and theories become the foundation for a practical strategy designed to give church members a meaningful reading of the Bible. This project produces a pilot training program for *malsum muksang* (Bible meditation) which is a meditative and responsive Bible reading activity.

The program basically employs *malsum muksang* as the main strategy for meaningful Bible reading. Particularly, the process employs seven guided, reflective questions to generate meaningful Bible reading. The principles and strategies introduced in this study may be adapted by other churches in South Korea and beyond to promote the spiritual discipline of Bible reading.

The Principle of Articulation in Adventist Theology: An Evaluation of Current Interpretations and Proposal

Researcher: Roy Graf, PhD, April 2017

Advisor: Remwil Tornalejo, DTheol

The principle of articulation is a basic type of presupposition of human reason that allows the systematization of knowledge in general and of theological knowledge in particular. It is the structuring element in any theological system. In Adventist theology, the identification of the principle has been problematic. Adventist theology has usually claimed to operate based on the *sola Scriptura* principle but this claim has not avoided multiple interpretations of the articulating principle, usually conceptualized as a *center*. Adventist theologians in recent times have proposed different interpretations of the principle of articulation, based on micro (exegetical) or meso (doctrinal-theological) hermeneutical approaches. This study, however, discusses the topic from the macro hermeneutical perspective that involves the ontological and epistemological presuppositions underlying the diverse interpretations of the principle in Adventism.

This study purposes to (1) explain phenomenologically the principle of articulation and its basic components in theology; (2) analyze and evaluate in the light of the *sola Scriptura* principle the various interpretations of the principle of articulation in current Adventist theology, considering their possible connections with Christian tradition; and (3) propose an interpretation of the principle of articulation for Adventist theology that aims to be more consistent with *sola Scriptura*.

Chapter 1 points out to the multiple proposed centers in Adventist theology and suggests facing the issue from the epistemological perspective of the concept of principle of articulation. Chapter 2 works as a methodological chapter that offers a phenomenological description of the principle of articulation in theological systems and expands the methodological considerations of Chapter 1. Chapter 3 reviews the main models of interpretation of the principle of articulation in Christian tradition, and the interpretation of the principle among Adventist pioneers, providing a useful background to understand the plurality of interpretations in Adventist theology. Chapter 4 discusses the three main models of interpretation of the principle of articulation in Adventist theology: evangelical Adventist model, modern Adventist model, and Adventist theodicy model. The chapter offers a critical evaluation of each model at the level of the macro hermeneutical presuppositions, in light of the *sola Scriptura* principle. Chapter 5 proposes a

biblical systematic interpretation of the principle of articulation where Christ performs the articulating role between God and the world-humanity—the entire reality—through the sanctuary structural pattern of relationship. Chapter 6 summarizes the findings and offers general conclusions and recommendations.

“The Sanctuary Motif in the Context of the Day of YHWH in the Book of Zechariah with Special Emphasis on Chapter 14”

Researcher: Alvaro Fernando Rodríguez Luque, PhD, June 2017

Advisor: Carlos Mora, PhD

The study of the book of Zechariah has increased in the last 3 decades. In that scholarly attempt, redactional and critical perspectives have been followed including some exegetical analysis. Besides these, the book’s eschatological content has also been pointed out. Furthermore, its content reveals the use of the sanctuary motif throughout the book with an explicit mention of the Feast of the Tabernacles in Zech 14. This gap regarding the study of Zechariah is covered in Chapter 1, including a literature review about the understanding of Zech 14.

Chapter 2 deals with the literary analysis of Zech 14. The first issue discussed there is the genre of Zech 14, which is considered prophetic and eschatological in nature. Next, an analysis of the literary structure of the whole book is done in order to see the literary role of Zech 14 in its own literary context. Then, the literary structure of Zech 14 is developed in order to see its arrangement and literary connections to the whole book. Such analysis shows that the entire book of Zechariah intermingles eschatological events with sanctuary motifs.

Chapter 3 is focused on the syntactical analysis of Zech 14 and its contrast to the rest of the book. The first section of this chapter describes the day of YHWH in Zech 14 and how it is also reflected in the other chapters of Zechariah. The second section works with the eschatological events of Zech 14 and how they also appear in the whole book of Zechariah. Then, the last part of Chapter 3 considers the sanctuary motifs found in Zech 14 and their relationship with other sections of the book.

Chapter 4 deals with the theological analysis of the sanctuary motifs described in Chapter 3 and how they are related to the eschatological events of the day of YHWH. For that purpose, first, the day of YHWH events of Zech 14 and the sanctuary motifs are treated theologically. Then, the role of the sanctuary motifs of Zech 14 is described as part of the eschatological

events of the day of YHWH in three stages: (a) in Zech 14, (b) within the whole book of Zechariah, and (c) within the OT. Such analysis is done to describe the uniqueness of Zech 14 in the OT.

Finally, Chapter 5 gives a summary of the findings of this dissertation. After that, a set of conclusions based on the analysis of the role of the sanctuary motif as part of the eschatological events of the day of YHWH according to Zech 14 is given. Finally, some recommendations are provided for future research studies.

"Divine Governance and Judgment in History and in the Context of the Seventh-day Adventist Perspective of the Cosmic Conflict"

Researcher: Sergio Celis, PhD, July 2017

Advisor: Michael W. Campbell, PhD

This dissertation explores the concept of divine governance as related to the last judgment across Christian history and theology. It includes a description of the main views proposed, a theological construction of the topic of divine governance, and an interpretation of the last judgment according to the cosmic conflict worldview. It is a historical-theological study using the cosmic conflict framework as a hermeneutical tool in order to establish the proper interpretation of the biblical teaching of the last judgment.

This study describes the three main historical views about divine governance as presented in Christian thought. The monergist-voluntarist view stresses God's freedom and transcendence by setting His will as the ultimate determiner for everything that transpires in the universe. In contrast, the moral-synergistic view emphasizes the moral and relational character of God as the final explanation concerning divine governance. Interestingly, both views consider the judgment as only a revelation of God's will, which was determined or foreknown by Him from eternity. Finally, the natural-humanistic view gives preponderance to the laws of nature and human decisions to explain what happens in the world. There is no room for a last judgment from this perspective.

Seventh-day Adventists developed an understanding of the cosmic conflict worldview using a historical-literal interpretation of Scripture. Biblical motifs about divine governance include the kingdom of God, covenant, and heavenly council. Divine governance is Trinitarian and therefore, relational. God governs from the heavenly sanctuary according to His law of love, a reflection of His character, which provides a moral basis for His decisions. His governance is also synergistic. Creatures are free to act either according to or against God's will. They can participate and collaborate in

the decisions and activities of God's government. His purpose is to act in a concerted action with His creatures.

The Bible contains ample evidences for a judgment at the end of the time. According to the cosmic conflict worldview, this judgment not only decides the final destiny of all creatures but also vindicates God's character and the decisions of His government. The judgment is moral and synergistic in nature because the moral law of God is the basis for all decisions and includes creatures who actively participate in this process. God postpones the final decision about the destiny of people until the end of the time with the purpose of taking these decisions together with His creatures. The judgment is a real, historical verdict resulting from a process of investigation done between both God and His creatures.

"Understanding God's Wrath in the Perspective of the Universal Great Controversy"

Researcher: Panglianhlenga Chhakchhuak, PhD, August 2017

Advisor: Kyung Ho Song, PhD

Moral conflict brings out the necessity of God's wrath. This wrath is an integral part of the cosmic problem. It is inseparable from the great controversy theme. In order to have a proper picture of God's wrath, it is crucial to examine it from the context of the cosmic conflict theme. Thus, this study seeks to find the proper understanding of God's wrath in the perspective of the universal great controversy theme.

This study employs the historical-theological approach. It gives an overview and evaluates the existing major views of God's wrath in Christian theology. It then presents biblical references and the theological concept of the great controversy theme. This study also provides biblical references to God's wrath. Finally, this study analyzes God's wrath in the setting of the cosmic conflict.

The following conclusions are drawn from this study. First, the proper understanding of God's wrath is possible only when this subject is examined in the context of the cosmic great controversy. Second, the wrath of God is an expression of His holiness. One of the functions of God's wrath in setting the cosmic conflict is to show the detestable nature of breaking the law and the immutability of God's law. Third, the cross manifests the terribleness of God's wrath and His deep love for sinners as well. Fourth, God's wrath functions as an instrument of His justice. God's wrath vindicates His justice. Fifth, the fairness of God's sovereignty is expressed in His

wrath. One function of God's wrath is to vindicate the supremacy and the sovereignty of God.

Sixth, in the context of the universal cosmic conflict, every battle of God's people is considered His battle. The main enemies of God are not human beings but the demonic powers that work behind them. So the ultimate objects of God's wrath are not human beings but Satan and his angels. It aims to eradicate sin and its cohorts from the universe. Finally, this research concludes that in the setting of the universal great controversy, the most proper way to view God's wrath is to look at it as the expression of His love. Total eradication of sin through God's wrath is the manifestation of His love for the universe.

"The Origin and Development of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in India (1895-1947)"

Researcher: Koberson Langhu, PhD, September 2017

Advisor: Michael W. Campbell, PhD

A real need to provide a historical overview of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in India exists because no substantial or comprehensive research study on this subject is presently available. This dissertation seeks to fill the void by providing a chronological historical overview of the SDA Church from 1895 to 1947. It traces the major branches of the church organization including evangelism, education, publishing, medical, and relief and welfare work based on existing primary and secondary documentary sources.

During the earliest formative period (1895-1909), the church began to establish a foothold in India through literature. After dispatching shipments of literature and sending church officials to survey the country, colporteurs arrived to disseminate literature and pave the way for permanent missionary work. A few years later, regular missionaries arrived and set up mission outposts. Most of these early efforts were conducted among Westerners and Indian Christians. Thus, the earliest converts were already Christian. In the closing stage of this period, missionaries began to focus on reaching more Indians.

During the next phase (1910 to 1930), the denomination experienced significant growth, which caused the church to adjust its structure. The India Mission developed into a union, and then later into a division. The church gradually branched out from Calcutta to other parts of the country, particularly to south India. Missions moved away from rental properties to permanent facilities with their own buildings. This provided stability and a

base for growth for the church. The publishing work expanded through scholarships and new colporteur system. These years were foundational for the educational work of the church as several union training schools were established. Church growth occurred primarily among low- and out-caste Indians, which resembled other Christian missions.

The final period under consideration occurred from 1931 until 1947 when India achieved political freedom from British rule. Evangelism brought further membership growth and expansion. More religious literature became available in an even wider array of language groups. Mission schools became co-educational. Toward the close of this period, the church decided to introduce systematic medical training. By 1947, there was a continuity of leadership in the denomination as increasing numbers of indigenous leaders took the reins of leadership.

The early history of the SDA Church in India is an excellent case study in the development of early Adventist missions. The church followed a missiological pattern similar to that in other parts of the world in which the church, as it faced setbacks along with advances, established a permanent presence through an organized structure.