

## THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

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“The Semantic Use of the Aorist *Ebasileusen* in Revelation 19:6 in the Light  
of the Verbal Aspect Theory: An Exegetical Study”

Researcher: Jean Delaneau Antoine, PhD in Religion, 2018

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

The aim of this study is to find the semantic use of the aorist  $\epsilon\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\nu$  in Rev 19:6 in light of verbal aspect theory. Temporal models result in a variety of interpretations. Therefore, there is a need to call on aspect to fill this gap. The predominant theorists on aspect are divided on important issues. The main one is whether the Greek verbal system expresses time or not.

This dissertation is searching for the best theory that fits the data within the book of Revelation. The complexity of Greek verbal aspect shows both strengths and weaknesses in all theories. The mix temporal view searches to clear the complexity by dividing the tenses into different categories while keeping time in the indicative form and denying it in the imperative and subjunctive. The aspectual view tries to accomplish the same task by stating that Greek verbs do not express time but only aspect. It uses features such as remoteness and expectation to explain the time element respectively in the imperfect and in the future. The analysis of the data shows clearly that some categories of tense express time and others are timeless within the same tense form. It happens with the present tense form and the indicative aorist. Other tense forms like imperfect and future clearly indicate time.

A major interaction with David L. Mathewson shows that his interpretation of Rev 19:6 lacks meaning because of the emphasis on aspect and the lack of consideration of the context which clearly shows that a timeless truth is impossible if the events happen between the cross and the consummation. The chiasmic structure of Rev 19:1–8 shows its relevance to the right interpretation of the aorist. Since vv. 1 and 8 form an *inclusio* that denotes a climax

within the text. God acts in salvation and judgment and He continues to act until the marriage of the Lamb. The aorist covers a process which emphasizes judgment, salvation, acknowledgment of divine beings, and marriage to the Lamb. It is not a gnomic aorist but rather it describes a future event related to the kingdom of God in the context of the end-time.

“Exploring the Spiritual Commitment of International Students in a Selected Philippine Adventist Higher Education Institution”

Researcher: Elias Artur Chandala, MA in Religion, 2018

Advisor: Dioi Cruz, DMin

Today, spirituality is a concept that covers not only religious groups but also the world at large. However, small differences exist and for religious groups, spirituality is linked with faith in God; thus, shaping the beliefs of the members and becoming one of the reasons for membership growth. Spiritual commitment is the basis of spiritual growth among Christian denominations at large and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular. When church members move to foreign countries as students, they face many challenges which impact their spiritual commitment.

This research study explored the lived experiences of 9 international students from a selected Seventh-day Adventist higher education institution. This higher education institution was located in a highly urbanized setting in the Philippines. The purpose of this case study was to explore how international students maintain their spiritual commitment while studying at the selected higher education institution. The instruments for data collection included participant observation, semi-structured interview, and documentation. The major findings led to the conclusion that international students at the selected institution perceived spiritual commitment as being consistent with the relationship with God.

The findings also showed that culture shock and complacent attitudes were the main barriers to the spiritual growth of the selected participants. The institution in general helped students grow spiritually and remain spiritually committed. However, the participants mentioned that the integration of faith and learning was not so much visible in some of the classes they had attended. According to the participants, the fact that the integration of faith and learning was not so much visible in some of the classes discouraged them spiritually. This research study helped students and church leaders understand the experiences of the international students and help them nurture their faith.

**“The State of the Dead and Its Relationship to the Sanctuary Doctrine in Seventh-Day Adventist Theology (1844-1874): A Historical and Theological Study”**

Researcher: Donny Chrissutianto, PhD in Religion, 2018

Advisor: Michael W. Campbell, PhD

There is a need to provide a historical-theological development of the state of the dead doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist theology and how it relates to the doctrine of the sanctuary. This dissertation seeks to fill the lacuna by providing a chronological and historical-theological study in this denomination from 1844 to 1874. It examines the understanding of the Christian Connection group, Millerite movement, and Sabbatarian Adventists of the state of the dead based on primary and secondary documentary resources.

The result of this study shows eight important points. First, the doctrine of the state of the dead came to the Sabbatarian Adventist pioneers through the writings of George Storrs. The Christian Connection played a background role since this group provided “space” for conditionalism to exist even though this doctrine was not generally accepted among them. Second, the Sabbatarian Adventist pioneers unanimously believed conditionalism after the Great Disappointment in October 1844 and practiced it through their writings, especially when they expressed the hope of resurrection and immortality for the loss of their loved ones. Third, there was an increase influence of the state of the dead in the Seventh-day Adventist theology. It began as “truth” from 1840s to 1850s and became an “important truth” from 1851 to 1853. It turned as a present truth in 1854 and since 1872, the influence became greater since 9 of the 25 statements of belief related to the state of the dead. The increasing amount of literature devoted to this topic during 1844 to 1874 indicated the growing influence of this doctrine in this church theology.

The fourth result is that there were two external factors that led to the significance of the doctrine of the state of the dead in the Seventh-day Adventist theology. The rise of modern spiritualism and the inquiries of the uniqueness of this denomination were compared with other Adventists. Fifth, it showed the importance of Ellen White’s role in showing the significance of this doctrine against spiritualism. Sixth, Seventh-day Adventists evaluated Storrs’s idea and accepted only those that were in harmony with their biblical concept.

The seventh finding is the relation of the state of the dead with the sanctuary doctrine through the cleansing of the sanctuary, atonement for the blotting out of sin, and pre-advent investigative judgment. They are related through the decision of the fate of humanity. Eight, the Sabbatarian Adventist pioneers believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary, atonement for the blotting out of sins, and pre-advent investigative judgment were identical in work and time. Each are related to the state of the dead respectively as well as collectively.

“Church Growth Theory and the Development of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Mission in Georgia: A Case Study”

Researcher: Sergo Namoradze, PhD in Religion, 2018

Advisor: Abner Dizon, DMiss

The Seventh-day Adventist (Adventist) Church growth rate in the country of Georgia is remarkably low. It has only 368 members despite its long history in Georgia. Using a qualitative case study research design, this study aimed to (a) give a historical account of the Adventist Church in Georgia, (b) identify the barriers preventing the Adventist Church from growing, (c) trace the mission and ministry approaches that worked best in Georgia, and (d) develop a model for the enhancement of the Adventist mission and church growth in Georgia.

Using the purposive sampling technique, I selected 47 participants for in-depth face-to-face interviews along with 5 focus group discussions. Field notes, documents, artifacts, and the National Church Growth Development surveys were utilized as supplementary data, in which 150 Adventist Church members participated. Historical documentary analysis revealed that persecution and loneliness were constantly pressuring Adventists in Georgia. This study discovered unknown but important individuals who significantly contributed to the Adventist mission in Georgia. Through thematic data analysis, a total of 20 themes and 54 categories emerged in an attempt to answer the 3 research questions. The external and internal barriers such as (a) social pressure, (b) Georgianness, (c) modernization and progress, (d) occupational pressure, (e) organizational disconnection, (f) frustration, (g) use of effective methods of evangelism, (h) lack of discipleship, and (i) uninvolvement of the laity all present significant hindrances to the Adventist mission and church growth in Georgia.

Despite these barriers, this study has revealed that Adventists in Georgia are able to win souls when they are successfully led through the necessary stages. These stages are depicted in 6 emerging themes: (a) focusing on responsive groups, (b) employing attractive features, (c) expanding the network, (d) earning the right to share the Gospel, (e) using effective evangelistic methods, and (f) recognizing the work done by the Holy Spirit. As such, instead of a single-step strategy, a multiple-step mission strategy is proposed. Furthermore, the Natural Church Growth Development survey analysis and the participants' reports helped identify the areas for improvement. These are (a) enhancing church health, (b) developing the appropriate mission strategy, (c) acknowledging the role of a foreign missionary, (d) adapting meaningful communication and cultural appropriateness, and (e) addressing Georgian aesthetics and the culture of prestige.

"Verbal Aspect and Eschatology in John 5:19–30: A Systemic Functional Analysis"

Researcher: David Odhiambo Odhiambo, PhD in Religion, 2018

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

This dissertation carves a twofold stream: it seeks (a) to make fresh headways into the hermeneutic of John 5:19–30 and its eschatology and (b) to demonstrate the exegetical potency of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Cognitive Linguistics (CL). The methodological stream of this dissertation flows from the recent integration of modern linguistic approaches into the study of the biblical text and from the revitalization of verbal aspect as a grammatical and linguistic category. Verbal Aspect Theory (VAT) provides a needed corrective to the limited temporal view that standard grammars have imputed on the Greek verb in the last 200 years. This temporal view, equating tense-form with time, has constricted the otherwise full range of the semantic values of the Greek verb-form. This verbal description has thereby led to an inadequate appreciation of the verbal structure, semantics, and eschatology of John 5:19–30.

Besides the historical framework of Jewish apocalyptic, three perspectives on John's eschatology have been offered. Albert Schweitzer stressed future eschatology based on a temporal understanding of the Greek verb, drawing especially from the Synoptic Gospels. Charles H. Dodd and Rudolf K. Bultmann emphasized present eschatology. The majority of scholarship

has postulated present-and-future eschatology in John. All these are precarious offerings, however, being drawn from the inadequate appreciation of the Greek verb structure espoused by standard grammars.

This study offers an understanding of John 5:19–30 that better reflects the nuances of its eschatology and, through the insights of VAT, is more solidly grounded on the NT Greek verbal structure. Furthermore, SFL and CL keep the study of this exegesis sensitive to John’s use of language to embed and highlight contextual dimensions in the pericope’s linguistic units. Thus, the study shows how John linguistically portrays Jesus as the primary defining participant and conceptual foci of the pericope’s discourse and eschatology. Furthermore, the study shows how John linguistically presents Jesus’s self-understanding within the Father-Son relationship as shaping the thought world of the periscope. This study thereby demonstrates the exegetical potency of VAT, CL, and SFL offering, at the same time, a comprehensive and a minutely nuanced hermeneutic of the biblical text.

“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 in Religion, 2018  
 Advisor: Carlos Elías Mora, ThD

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 this, its eschatological content has also been pointed out; furthermore, its content reveals the use of the sanctuary motif along 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 are treated theologically and the sanctuary motifs as well. 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.

“Touch Ministry for Visitors in a Korean Adventist Church through Foot Massage: A Multiple Case Study”

Researcher: Park Sang He, DMin, 2018

Advisor: Cristian Dumitrescu, PhD

Many people believe that the significance of communication is like the importance of breathing. Delivering the Gospel happens through various forms of communication. Jesus met people and showed His love and compassion through verbal and nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication can be expressed in many forms and touch is one of the most effective means of communicating feelings and emotions. Haptic communication, which is communication by touch, is the most basic and integral component in creating intimate relationships and transferring meanings between the toucher and the person touched.

A number of studies in social science demonstrate the various effects of touch. However, there are challenges coming from high sensitivity to cultural factors and touch taboos. These challenges can lead to hesitation in

implementing a touch ministry program in a particular setting. Touch is not commonly used in the field of church mission. This qualitative multiple case study endeavored to analyze the meanings, challenges, and impact on decision making and behavior changes of the implementation of touch ministry through foot massage in Paju City Adventist Church in Korea. The participants were three visitors who started attending church worship as a result of the Foot Massage Touch Ministry (FMTM). Observation notes and semi-structured interviews for the participants, therapist, and foot massage assistant were used for data collection.

The major findings from this multi-case analysis revealed that FMTM, in a specially-designed church setting, with prayer, was effective and useful as an outreach church program. First, the findings of this study helped change the participants' social and faith-based behaviors along with their perceptions of FMTM. Second, the findings improved the understanding of haptic communication between the toucher and the person touched. Third, this study also showed that the results of FMTM helped in emotional, mental, and physical healing. Finally, the results helped each participant build a relationship not only with the therapists but also with God, helping them to attend church and experience God's love. The findings of this qualitative multiple case study were generally consistent with the existing studies relative to touch—mainly haptic communication and social behavior changes—and to the theoretical foundations of proxemics, social cognitive theory, and Simon's model of decision process. The study concludes with the importance of touch ministry and recommendations for massage therapists and church leaders who desire to implement this outreach program.

“A Survey of the Major Objections and Apologetic Responses to the Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrine of the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment”

Researcher: Mangara Juara Simanjuntak, MA in Religion, 2018

Advisor: Michael W. Campbell, PhD

A survey of major objections by challengers to the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) doctrine of the pre-Advent investigative judgment covers three main issues: biblical, theological, and historical. Opponents argue that the understanding of the pre-Advent Investigative Judgment is not supported by biblical passages. It then contrasts salvation by grace and the blotting out of sin of God's people. Objectors also add that early Adventist pioneers did not teach the doctrine of the pre-Advent investigative judgment. In response to those major critics, this thesis seeks to identify major objections



used by critics against the doctrine of the pre-Advent investigative judgment. It also examines apologetic responses used by SDA theologians.

The SDA Church asserts that the description of the pre-Advent investigative judgment is found throughout the Bible. The understanding of God's investigative judgment before granting either His reward or punishment is implicitly depicted in the Bible. The purpose of the judgment is to vindicate God's character and to affirm the salvation of true believers in front of the heavenly angels. Daniel 7:25 implies that the primary focus of the judgment is the true believers rather than the little horn.

Justification by faith is an important concept that gives believers assurance that they can confidently face God's final judgment. Judgment according to works will guard the believers to live by God's law. SDAs differentiate between the forgiveness of sin versus the blotting out of sin. This distinction can be seen between the typical daily ministry versus the yearly ministry in the earthly sanctuary, which is the typical cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. The early Sabbatarian Adventists addressed the teaching of the pre-Advent investigative judgment extensively in their writings.

"The Function of Analogy to Interpret the Biblical Records of the Person and Works of God: A Hermeneutic and Methodological Approach"

Researcher: Marcos Blanco, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Remwil Tornalejo, DTheol

The doctrine of God has been one of the most controversial topics in theology over the last two decades. The right way to interpret the language used in the Bible to describe God's being and attributes is at the center of the debate. Classical Theism (CT) has used analogy as a hermeneutical tool to interpret the biblical description of God, while Open Theism (OT) has led the opposition to analogy by replacing it with a univocal understanding of the language used in the Bible to describe God. Given this current controversy, the present research aimed to determine the function and value of analogy to interpret the biblical records concerning the person and works of God. Has analogy been used appropriately by Classical Theology? Is OT's univocity a better option? Can analogy be methodologically and hermeneutically redefined in the context of biblical canon?

In order to answer these questions, Chapter 2 analyzed and theologically evaluated the function of both analogy (CT) and univocity (OT) by high-

lighting their limitations; Chapter 3 advanced a new understanding of analogy by focusing on methodology and hermeneutics; and Chapter 4 showed how canonical analogy as a methodological and hermeneutical tool can be used to interpret the biblical descriptions of two of God’s attributes: eternity and impassibility. The aim of this study, then, was to present an alternative understanding of the function and value of analogy to interpret the biblical records concerning the person and works of God.

The methodological and hermeneutical steps proposed here include:

1. Determine that the Bible alone is the material and presuppositional source to interpret the biblical descriptions of God.
2. Perform a phenomenological exegesis in order to extract the main presuppositions that are operative in the biblical text and are necessary to elaborate the doctrine of God. Instead of borrowing these hermeneutical presuppositions from philosophy, phenomenological exegesis looks for the operative primordial presuppositions in the biblical text. Once the hermeneutical presuppositions have been drawn from the Bible, biblical theology initiates the task of biblical exegesis itself.
3. Find out the explicit equivocal and univocal sides of the canonical analogy.
4. Elaborate a basic model from the biblical data. The ultimate goal is to outline a pattern or model from the data by seeking to ensure that individual texts and isolated pericopes eventually build a broader concept about God. Thus, microhermeneutical exegesis informs macrohermeneutical presuppositions in an ongoing hermeneutical spiral.

“The Significance of the Inanna/Ishtar Myths to Revelation 17: A Comparative Approach”

Researcher: Maicol Cortes, MA in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

Three explanations have been offered to clarify the identity of the abyssal beast in Rev 17. The *Vorlage* text approach leads scholars to conclude that the sea beast in Rev 13:1 is the same with the abyssal beast in Rev 17:8; therefore, *abyss* means water or sea. The mythological approach associates the abyssal beast with Nero due to the connection between the beast and Nero’s

legend. Consequently, abyss is associated with death. Finally, scholars, using the word study approach, arrive at different conclusions regarding the meaning of abyss and the identity of the beast. Although scholars identify the great mother concept in Rev 17 as an element with Sumerian roots, no one has ever considered Sumerian myths in the evaluation of the biblical text.

This study focuses on comparing two Sumerian myths, particularly *Inanna's Descent into the Nether World* and *The Sacred Marriage Ceremony* with Rev 17 using the comparative approach. In comparing Rev 17 with the abovementioned myths, this thesis employs Shemaryahu Talmon's approach. Talmon presents four principles: namely, the proximity in time and place, correspondence of social function, priority of inner-biblical parallels, and holistic approach to text and comparisons.

This thesis concludes that Rev 17 and the Inanna/Ishtar myths have some similarities as well as differences. On the one hand, the similarities attest that John writes with the background of the Sumerian myths in Rev 17. On the other hand, the differences prove that the prophet employs the Sumerian ideas in Rev 17 to highlight the uniqueness of the biblical narrative. Although the primary source of Rev 17 is Dan 7, the composite symbol of the woman and the beast is unique to Rev 17. Perhaps in the description of the harlot riding the beast, John employs the Sumerian myths. The use of the Sumerian myths in Revelation could attest to the practice of a common worldview, the great mother goddess.

It seems that John employs the Sumerian myths in juxtaposition to the biblical narrative. *The Sacred Marriage Ceremony* stresses the importance of the union of politics and religion, whereas the biblical account exposes the danger of this union. The myth *Inanna's Descent into the Nether World* declares that although the goddess and Dumuzi died, they resurrected according to the cyclical element that connects this myth with *The Sacred Marriage Ceremony*. Nonetheless, John comments that the beast/kings are resurrected to die forever.

"An Innerbiblical Study of 'Be Holy for I Am Holy' in 1 Peter 1:15, 16"

Researcher: Rafael Bampi de Oliveira, MA in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

Because of the word similarity and slight nuances among Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26, the attempt to identify the textual source for "be holy for I am holy"

in 1 Pet 1:15, 16 is a difficult task. The association between “be holy for I am holy” and the call to be distinct is perceivable in Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26. Thus, it makes sense that 1 Peter uses “be holy for I am holy” as a theme from Leviticus. The command to be holy that was addressed to the Israelites then is applied to Christian believers.

The use of the intertext “be holy for I am holy” is dynamic and broader than what biblical scholars suggest. In the OT, “be holy for I am holy” occurs 6 times (Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8). Every passage addresses several aspects of Israel’s social and religious lives. In Leviticus and 1 Peter, the authors use the intertext with similar wording. However, in 1 Pet 1:15, the author redesigns the intertext. Since each use of “be holy for I am holy” has distinctive features, every passage needs an individual study.

A study that considers options of source for the intertext “be holy for I am holy” in 1 Pet 1:15, 16 enables, to a certain extent, the understanding of 1 Peter’s argument. However, further contribution will be found by addressing the development of the intertext. The dynamic use of the “be holy for I am holy” should be addressed.

This research approached the text through innerbiblical exegesis which studies how a recent text reapplies or reinterprets an earlier one. Quotations are the most studied objects of this method. The method considers terminology, structure, and theme with a special emphasis on the historical and literary aspects of the text. Innerbiblical exegesis excels in appreciating the tradition and the divine revelation of the text.

To begin with, the nature of the study and the processes involved to solve the problem were presented. After that, common and distinctive features among the uses of “be holy for I am holy” were surveyed in Leviticus. Then, these features were assessed and the issues surrounding the uses of the intertext were categorized. At the end, the use of “be holy for I am holy” in 1 Pet 1:15, 16 was theorized.

This study presented an alternative theory on the use and the source of “be holy for I am holy” in 1 Pet 1:15, 16 based on the dynamics of common and distinctive features on the uses of the intertext in Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8. Peter uses the theme of holiness from Leviticus which is embedded in the words “be holy for I am holy.” In v. 15, “as the one who called you is holy, you also be holy” is an allusion to the adaptive refrain “be holy for I am holy” from Leviticus that empowers Peter’s argumentation on Christian behavior. In v. 15, the author uses the dynamics and patterns previously applied to the intertext in Leviticus. In v. 16, “be holy for I am holy” is the basic frequently used words in God’s refrain in Leviticus. In this last

verse, “be holy for I am holy” is a reduced quotation which conveys the theme of holiness with a generic ascent.

“Rebuking the Innocent: Challenge-Riposte Exchange in Luke 13:10–17”

Researcher: Judson Chhakchhuak, MA in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

Many studies have explored the dispute between Jesus and the synagogue ruler over the Sabbath healing of a bent woman in Luke 13:10–17 from form and redaction criticism, feminist/liberationist criticism, compositional criticism, intertextuality, and narrative criticism. The crux, meaning, and implication of the passage have been interpreted differently. The synagogue ruler in this passage rebukes the crowd instead of Jesus who, according to his point of view, is guilty. Although scholars have offered different suggestions as to why the synagogue ruler chooses to rebuke the crowd, there seems to be no satisfactory explanation on the motive of his rebuke.

Chapter 1 stated the problem, surveyed the previous studies on Luke 10:13–17, and explained the social-scientific methodology used in the subsequent chapters. The social-scientific methodology allows an analysis of the social and cultural aspects of the biblical passage by utilizing the viewpoints, concept, models, and data of the social sciences. So, this study employed the honor-shame model proposed by the social-scientific biblical scholars. To avoid the usual pitfalls of thought, namely, superficiality and inaccuracy, this study followed the general laws of scientific steps: (1) postulate a model; (2) test and modify, if necessary, the model; and (3) apply the model.

Chapter 2 merged and implemented the first and second steps of the scientific steps. It presented a definition and explanation of honor-shame and its components. It also analyzed the honor-shame phenomenon in the Lukan narrative to show that the honor-shame model was suitable for analyzing the text under consideration. Chapter 3 executed the third step of the scientific step. It examined the characters, events, settings, and interactions in Luke 13:10–17 in terms of honor and shame to address the problems of this study. It then presented the social-scientific perspective of Luke 13:10–17.

Chapter 4 was the summary and result of this study. The study concluded that Luke 13:10–17 displays a careful and meaningful composition. The honor-shame components influence how Luke retells and structures the

story. The social values and the nature of the challenge-riposte shed light on why the synagogue ruler rebukes the crowd instead of Jesus. Since the public opinion is the determiner of honor in a collectivistic society where this interaction takes place, the synagogue ruler challenges the claim of this honorable figure, Jesus, publicly. Therefore, by rebuking the crowd, he publicly challenges the honor of Jesus in aiming to enhance his honor.

"The Temple Scene in Revelation 7:9-17: Location and Temporality"

Researcher: Stanislav Kondrat, MA in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

This thesis attempts to identify the location and the time of the temple service in Rev 7:15. The text contains a textual problem which causes a difficulty in determining the spatial and the temporal loci of the scene. This study investigates Rev 7:15 by means of a thorough and meticulous text-oriented analysis that employs linguistic, literary, and intratextual procedures.

Chapter 1 presents a survey of previous studies on Rev 7. It gives an overview of the methods utilized in studying Rev 7. In addition, it summarizes scholarly views on the time and the space of the temple scene. These two overviews pave the way for the methodology of the current research, that is, the text-oriented approach which combines linguistic (morphology, syntax, semantics, and text-linguistics), literary (style, structure, and thematic arrangement), and intratextual analyses.

Chapter 2 contains the linguistic analysis and the literary analysis in the context of Rev 7:15. The linguistic study consists of the grammatical-syntactic and the semantic analyses of key words and phrases in each clause in Rev 7:14d–17. The text-linguistic analysis determines the interclausal relations in the passage. The literary study analyzes the genre of Rev 7, determines and develops various structures, and investigates the distribution of semantic fields in the chapter. Both linguistic and literary analyses complement one another and together provide adequate answers to the formulated questions of the research.

Chapter 3 builds on the findings of the linguistic and the literary studies. It explores the overall spatial-temporal coherence between the temple scene in Rev 7 and other similar scenes in the Book of Revelation. To establish intratextuality, the chapter examines lexical, thematic, and structural correspondences between Rev 7 and other texts in Revelation. Then, the spatial

and the temporal loci of the parallel texts are independently analyzed and compared with the time and space of the temple scene in Rev 7.

Chapter 4 presents the summary and conclusions of the research. It highlights the findings in linguistic, literary, and intratextual studies. The chapter underlines main contributions and outlines the areas for future research.

The studied passage, Rev 7:14b–17, is a well-crafted literary piece, which implements a wide array of linguistic features which clarify the temple scene in 7:15. Contrary to the general opinion, the speech describes not one but three scenes. While the tribulation and the eternal consummation take place on earth, the temple service, which is the main scene, occurs in the heavenly realm during the millennium.

“Towards a Missiological Framework for Responding to Chinese Folk Beliefs and Practices: An Ethnographic Case Study”

Researcher: Liang Chuanshan, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Abner Dizon, DMiss

This study aimed to find a solution to the missiological problem caused by the reality that the Chinese Adventist Church lacks effective ways to respond to folk beliefs and practices which have extensively affected Adventist members. It explored a great deal of literature regarding Chinese folk belief, its interaction with Christianity, and gospel communication within cultural contexts. In order to reach the research goal, this study adopted a research design called ethnographic case study, focusing on a coastal town, Xiangning, in southeastern China.

The findings of the fieldwork indicate that people’s material lives are highly intertwined with the spiritual world. Asking protection and blessings, fearing ghosts, and seeking assurance for the future are the main purposes of folk beliefs and practices. At the same time, there is a generally harmonious relationship between Xiangning Adventists and folk beliefs and practices, and this harmony frequently leads to syncretism. Furthermore, the fieldwork also demonstrates that the local Adventist Church’s missional efforts still lag far behind the real needs of mission reality and there is significant room for the church to improve in promoting its gospel communication.

The interpretation of the fieldwork shows that Chinese folk beliefs and practices are undergirded by at least 6 values which extend to the cognitive,

affective, and evaluative dimensions of Chinese culture. Supported by missiological and biblical principles, this study eventually proposes a missiological framework for gospel communication as a response to Chinese folk beliefs and practices. This framework is a contour consisting of 5 main points: (1) Countercultural contextualization provides a general principle for framework construction. (2) Bidirectional construction from above and below provides a general methodology for framework construction. (3) Worldview transformation is the core and purpose of gospel communication. (4) Critical contextualization is a concrete method in choosing among accepting, rejecting, or modifying old customs. (5) The 3 dimensions of Chinese folk beliefs and practices indicate the depth in which the Gospel can penetrate a society. All these 5 points correlate with each other and form a basic framework upon which further mission studies, evangelism, and pastoral counseling may be conducted.

"The Significance of Yhwh's *'ehyeh 'immaḵ* in the Covenant Context of the Pentateuch"

Researcher: Mang Hup Luai, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Carlos Elías Mora, ThD

This dissertation attempted to establish a perspective that takes the divine covenant renewal or reconfirmation as foundational to interpreting YHWH's אהיה עמך in the literary contexts of Gen 26:1-6; 28:10-15; 31:1-3; Exod 3:1-12; and Deut 31:23. Hence, this study used an exegetical method that focuses on the context and co-text of the texts. The study aimed to discover the significance of the formula in the Pentateuch.

Scholars advance an argument that does not consider the divine-human covenant as a point of departure for discussing and ascertaining the significance of the formula. Hence, they observe that YHWH's אהיה עמך is an assistant formula or a formula of aid offered as an ad hoc assistance for the people of Israel in times of crisis. The formula's validity is also confined within the patriarchal period, especially in the wake of Israel's search for national identity. There is a clear indication that these scholars do not take the literary contexts of the formula seriously in their approach which, therefore, signals the need for another study that takes the contexts analytically.

In order to bridge the hermeneutical gap, this research analyzed each literary context of the selected texts and established that YHWH's אהיה עמך is a formula of the divine covenant promise. This promise particularly deals



with the renewal or reconfirmation of the previously established divine-human covenants to the succeeding generation of the original divine covenant recipients. The Abrahamic covenant was renewed to Isaac, Jacob, and the Israelites, and the Sinaitic covenant to the second generation of the Sinaitic covenant at the plain of Moab.

In the divine-human covenants, the promise of YHWH's presence initiates and institutes the covenant relationship in the Pentateuch. The study of the grammar, syntax, and semantics has confirmed that YHWH's אהיה עמך is the divine volitional asseveration that expresses the divine self-determination in making sure that the fulfillment of the covenant promises is fulfilled for the descendants of Abraham.

In addition to renewing and reconfirming the divine-human covenants, YHWH's אהיה עמך also initiates the covenant relationship. Although God's love is central, the formula has a relational significance in which human obligation and obedience are anticipated to maintain such a covenant relationship. Through the formula, YHWH reveals who He is and what He will do as the covenant God. At the same time, the contexts clarify that human response to YHWH's אהיה עמך in faith, obedience, and worship is vital to the covenant relationship in the Pentateuch.

"The Newness of the New Covenant: An Exegetical-Intertextual Study of Hebrews 8:7-13"

Researcher: Glenn Jade V. Mariano, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Eike A. Mueller, ThD

This study deals with the newness of the new covenant in Heb 8:7-13. Scholarship is divided over the interpretation and implications of the first and the new covenants and the author's use of Jer 31:31-34 in Heb 8:7-13. Its purpose then is to resolve the issues on the meaning of the newness of the new covenant in connection to the faultiness and obsolescence of the first covenant through a detailed investigation of the prologue (vv. 7-8a) and the epilogue (v. 13) as literary devices and the author's use of Jer 31:31-34 (vv. 8b-12) within the literary context of Heb 8 and against its intertextual backdrop. This study tackles the topic in five chapters, utilizing the exegetical-intertextual analysis in the light of the historical-biblical method of exegesis. Chapter 1 introduces the background, statement of the problem, purpose, justification and significance, methodology, and literature review on the newness of the new covenant.

Chapter 2 surveys and examines the historical-literary context of Heb 8:7–13. As an epistolary sermon, the twofold purpose of Hebrews is to exhort Christian readers to remain faithful to their Christian faith and warn them of the danger of apostasy, namely, returning to the first covenant ritual system. Its main theme deals with the reality and superiority of the new covenant based on Jesus's supremacy in Heb 8:1–10:18, the central covenant section of Hebrews. Hebrews 8:7–13 is the main introduction of the covenant section that consists of the prologue, OT quotation, and epilogue. As literary devices, the prologue and the epilogue are used to indicate the purpose and the knowledge of the author in citing and interpreting the OT quotation.

Chapter 3 deals with the exegetical analysis of the newness of the new covenant in Heb 8:7–13. It investigates the use and the meaning of the term *διαθήκη* in Hebrews. It discusses the two main dimensions of the covenant (moral and ritual) and the newness of the new covenant in relation to the faultiness and obsolescence of the first covenant in its cultic setting. It also discusses the concept of the continuity and discontinuity as well as the similarities and the dissimilarities between the first and the new covenants.

Chapter 4 deals with the intertextual analysis of the newness of the new covenant in Jer 31:31–34 in Heb 8:8–12. It clarifies and defines the term *intertextuality* in relation to the biblical hermeneutics that was utilized in this study. It discusses the original context and meaning of Jer 31:31–34, some textual differences, and the intertextual connections between Jer 31:31–34 and Heb 8:8b–12.

Chapter 5 concludes the study on the newness of the new covenant. It presents the chapter summary and some reflections on scholarship. It also provides some implications and recommendations for further study.

The newness of the new covenant refers to the continuity of the moral dimension of the first covenant and the discontinuity of its ritual dimension. The first covenant becomes obsolete due to its faultiness in the sense of the unfaithfulness of Israel to God's covenant and its ritual inadequacy in solving the sin problem. Its moral dimension (the unchanging moral principles and promises) is renewed, continuing its function in the new covenant. Its ritual dimension (the provisional ritual system) ceases its typological function when the new covenant is established with a better quality and excellent type of ritual system in providing perfection and restoring the perfect relationship between God and His people in a Christological perspective. In a nutshell, the new covenant is the renewal of God's original covenant relationship, promises, and precepts intended for His people for eternity which

are being facilitated by the new and perfect ritual system of Jesus Christ the high priest, sacrifice, and mediator of the new covenant.

**“A Study of the Development of Seventh-Day Adventist Historiography”**

Researcher: Gabriel Masfa, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Michael W. Campbell, PhD

Even though Adventist history is a vital part of Seventh-day Adventist identity, comparatively very little reflection has been done to analyze what this history means or how it has been written. A lacuna exists to comprehensively and systematically examine Adventist historiography. In addition, a further need exists to chart the development of Adventist historiography from its earliest beginnings to the present. Exploration needs to be done as to the manner in which historical writing impacts Seventh-day Adventist theology, history, and philosophy. How and why have Adventist historians interpreted and written about the past? To what extent have Adventist historians incorporated social, political, and secular approaches to their historical narratives? This dissertation charts the growth and development of Adventist historical consciousness and thus reflects on how Adventist historians describe the past.

This dissertation describes three major trends within the development of Seventh-day Adventist historiography. First, the writing of history began as an extension of an interest in Bible prophecy and a conviction about God’s providential leading in the rise of Adventism (theological-fideist history). Second, Adventist history remained important in order to do successful apologetics, affirm the faith of church members, and provide new resources such as textbooks and affirmations of the prophetic gift through the life and writings of Ellen G. White. Third, more critical methods were gradually incorporated that challenged traditional narratives of Adventist history. These methods incorporated new and more objective ways that considered natural causation in history. Historians following this school began to look for more credible evidence to support earlier claims about Adventist history. These new critical approaches generated a wide range of responses, all of which continue to be promulgated within Adventism up to the present day.

Adventist historiography is complex. A recognition of this complexity makes it obvious that it is impossible to have a single narrative within Adventist historiography, nor should there be merely one. A wide range of

methods exists that allows for an even wider variety of historical narratives about the Adventist past. Most of these approaches serve some valuable purpose so long as there is a consistent methodology and honesty about sources. In addition, a wide variety of personalities have each brought unique perspectives and idiosyncrasies about how such narratives are told. Each approach here analyzed has contributed to the development of an acceptable methodology for interpreting history from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.

“Jonah’s Disobedience and Elijah’s Comparable Non-Compliance: An Analog Analytical Approach”

Researcher: Watson Mbiriri, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

This dissertation focuses on the theologically disconcerting phenomenon of prophetic disobedience as manifested in the cases of two OT prophets, Jonah and Elijah. The cause, meaning, significance, and implications of Jonah’s disobedience in particular has been a subject of much scholarly reflection for centuries and yet answers remain elusive and interpretations are widely divergent. A new methodological approach (analog analysis) to the problem of Jonah’s disobedience is introduced in this dissertation. Instead of considering Jonah’s case in isolation as most studies have done in the past, this study considers Jonah’s disobedience (Jonah 1:1–3) alongside the case of Elijah’s comparable non-compliance to a divine commission (1 Kgs 19:15–21).

The study found many significant hitherto unconsidered parallels between the given cases of Elijah and Jonah. The two are the only prophets from Israel ever sent to function in their official capacity as prophets to nations outside of Israel. Intriguingly, both prophets disobeyed the commissions as given. There are many comparable exigencies in the two prophets’ rhetorical contexts. Notable among the comparable exigencies is the fact that both Elijah and Jonah were commissioned to nations that posed the greatest military threats to Israel’s existence in their respective times, Aram-Damascus and Assyria. Significant similarities in plot and verbal elements are discussed in the study along with notable dissimilarities. Most notable is the fact that this study proffers a new genre category for the Book of Jonah by identifying it as an enacted nation oracle. Although Jonah and Elijah did not initially comply with the divine commissions respectively given to them,

the commissions were eventually fulfilled. A sense of consternation accompanied both instances of the eventual fulfillment of the commissions initially given to Jonah and Elijah.

In light of all the comparative and the contrastive analyses of the different aspects of Jonah and Elijah's cases, the study concludes that Jonah's disobedience was more likely than not an expression of his sense of trepidation at his prophetic foreknowledge of the indirect implications of his commission to Nineveh upon his nation, Israel. His should be read, not as petty insubordination, but rather a case of prophetic resistance in a given revelatory context, thus an expression of his sincere but futile remonstrance against the commission given to him. For this reason, neither Elijah nor Jonah were punished as others who disobeyed God were in the OT. Jonah's actions were underpinned by his understanding, on the very least, of the commission given to him as an enacted oracle. The findings and conclusions of this study have implications on readers' understanding of nation oracles and the nature and function of the prophetic office.

*"Tsaraat and Its Regulation of Purification According to Leviticus 13 and 14"*

Researcher: Kim Chai Ngo, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

Leviticus 13–14 record a legislation, namely, the **צָרַע** regulation, which deals with the affliction of *tsaraat*. *Tsaraat* has been called the "Father of Uncleaness" and is traditionally associated with personal sin. Moreover, there are two problems that arise. (1) "What kind of uncleaness does the regulation deal with?" (2) "Are the more complex purification procedures of the regulation other than the diseases listed in Lev 11–15 an indication that **צָרַע** carries a moral guilt connotation and an accusation that **צָרַע** is a result of a sinful act?" These are taken into consideration in this study, aiming to determine the nature and the rationale behind the regulation and enrich the discussion of the topic on current opinions.

Few steps are taken in response to the questions for exploring the true intent and purpose of the regulation. The framework of the study and relevant scholarly explanations are provided and reviewed in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 presents a brief examination of the cases of **צָרַע** in the ANE texts and in non-Levitical narratives to grasp the significant connection between those documents with the Levitical **צָרַע**. The exegetical analysis of the regulation

of *עָרַע* in Chapter 3 expresses literary analysis of the regulation and the contextual meaning of several words which are considered traditional sin-related terms. However, *נִגְעַת עָרַעַת* denotes a generic name for various skin diseases in the regulation, which can be cleaned and are not associated with sin; the sacrificial offerings *תִּשְׂאֵת* and *שֶׁטָאָ* can be purificatory in the ceremonial ritual that functions to cleanse or to wipe off uncleanness. At the same time, the intention and motif to remove the uncleanness of the *עָרַע* are attested to by each step of the purification ritual.

Based on the close study of the relation between sin and disease in the context of Lev 13 and 14, chap. 4 reveals that *עָרַע* is a disease like the other diseases in the OT. It lies not only among the sick but also in their social environments and in the larger universe. *עָרַע* makes people ceremonially unclean; consequently, it causes alienation from God and fellow humans. As a result, God establishes a cleansing procedure so that those who are cleansed are reinstated and can come near and approach Him. The complex decontamination procedures are simply steps to remove the uncleanness and can only be accomplished by God alone who knows the solution of this design to provide a complete procedure. Through the *עָרַע* regulation, the interplay of God's holiness, ceremonial cleanliness, and didactic nature are revealed. Lastly, the summary of the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations are given in Chapter 5.

"Sapiential Echoes of the Newness Motif in 2 Corinthians 5:11–21"

Researcher: Oswell Dzvairo, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Eike Mueller, ThD

This dissertation examines the newness motif in 2 Cor 5:11–21 by taking into consideration some sapiential notions in the text. Most studies on this subject limit their interpretation of the passage to the newness terminology in 2 Cor 5:17 and neglect other newness allusions in the passage. In addition, studies also miss sapiential notions in the text. Thus, newness allusions and sapiential notions are not accounted for. Due to such gaps, the meaning of the passage is not yet fully explored. This study attempts to attend to all the newness elements and wisdom notions in the passage.

This study employs inner-biblical analysis in cross-examining the newness motif in 2 Cor 5:11–21. Chapter 1 reviews the related literature on the subject under study, establishes the research gap, and formulates the methodology for this study. The majority of scholarship understand the newness

motif in 2 Cor 5:11–21 along three views: (a) new anthropology, (b) new cosmology, and (c) new exodus. Chapter 2 traces the conceptual background of the sapiential newness in 2 Cor 5:11–21. It establishes that OT wisdom thinking as reflected in the Wisdom Literature and some apocalyptic texts form the fundamental backdrop of Paul’s newness motif. Chapter 3 presents an inner-biblical analysis of the sapiential newness in 2 Cor 5:11–21. Chapter 4 presents some theological implications of the sapiential newness motif. It also presents a summary and conclusion of the study.

This study offers a unique understanding of 2 Cor 5:11–21 that better reflects Paul’s usage of sapiential notions to convey the newness motif. Such approach is more consistent with the paraenetic style of writing that Paul utilized in most of his writings. The study discovers that the newness motif in 2 Cor 5:11–21 is Christ-centered. In the Corinthian Epistles, Christ is wisdom personified. In that capacity, Christ is the agent of new creation as also reflected in Prov 8:22–31. He is also the agent of reconciliation and righteousness as reflected in Isa 11:1-10. Thus, the new creation in 2 Cor 5:17 denotes renewed mindset that lead believers to reflect Christlikeness in all conduct.

“Paradox and Passivity: Gaps as a Rhetorical Device in Genesis 22:1–19”

Researcher: David Vanlalnghaka Sailo, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Carlos Elías Mora, ThD

The difficulties of the narrative of Gen 22:1–19 comprises paradox and passivity. These difficulties elicit interpretative issues with the characters of the narrative. The text had been approached using different methodologies, but only few studies attempted to look at the narrative features comprehensively, especially with a specific purpose of understanding its paradox and passivity. This study attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the difficulties of the narrative using the narrative analysis method.

In Chapter 1, an overview of the literature on Gen 22:1–19 introduces the topic and describes the methodology of the study. Chapter 2 describes various narrative poetics such as the closure and scene, the plot, the narrator, the point of view, the time and action, the character, the characterization, the settings, the prop, and the gaps. Each narrative poetic description is immediately followed by the application of the poetics in the narrative of Gen 22:1–19. Chapter 3 presents the understanding of the paradox and the passivity based on the narrative analysis in Chapter 2. Brief theological insights

that emerge from the study follow. Chapter 4 presents the summary and the conclusions of the study.

The study concludes that paradox and passivity are an integral part of the storytelling technique. The paradox of the promise of progeny with the test is part of the complication of the plot that builds tension in the narrative. After Abraham's words and actions in the transforming action of the plot remove the tension, the promise of progeny is reaffirmed in the final situation of the plot. The paradox of the enigmatic words of Abraham are subtle revelations of the motive for his obedience. The unprotested obedience of Abraham is the key to removing the tension of the plot which is inspired by his belief that God will provide. The silent submission of Isaac is part of the rhetoric device that demonstrates the main plot of the narrative—Abraham's obedience to God. Since Abraham is tasked to remove the tension of the plot, other details that do not contribute to it are left out of the narrative. Thus, paradox and passivity are parts of the narrative convention that contribute to the plot of the narrative: Abraham obeys God because he believes that God will provide, and God did provide.

“Metaphors of Forgiveness in the Book of Isaiah”

Researcher: Rudi Sánchez García, PhD in Religion, 2019

Advisor: Carlos Elías Mora, ThD

The Book of Isaiah offers a variety of metaphors for forgiveness. Biblical scholars have taken into consideration these different metaphors; however, they do not evidence the methodological procedure in their analysis. Furthermore, rarely have they been studied as *metaphor* and no one has accomplished a comprehensive analysis of the entire inventory of metaphors for forgiveness in this prophetic book. Consequently, this study seeks to fill this gap by undertaking metaphorical analysis of metaphors related to forgiveness in the Book of Isaiah. The figurative language of forgiveness includes the lexemes רָחַן, דָּוָה, סוּר, לָבֵן, נָשָׂא, שָׁלַךְ, רָצָה, מָחָה, and רָפָא.

A number of these metaphorical descriptions of forgiveness are not novel in the Book of Isaiah, that is, they occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Despite this, the prophet Isaiah adds a completely different nuance to some of these metaphors. A brief survey of these metaphors is undertaken in Chapter 1. This study utilizes Eva F. Kittay's perspectival theory of metaphor to analyze the multifaceted metaphors of forgiveness in the Isaianic passages. Kittay provides the methodological basis on how to identify a



metaphor. One of the fundamental tenets of this approach is the analysis of the semantic incongruity that helps to detect if a grammatical utterance is a metaphorical utterance. The semantic incongruity or the anomalous nature of the sentence results from the association of terms from different semantic fields (for example, animate being with an inanimate object). Moreover, Kit-tay's terminologies, the vehicle and the topic, that constitute a metaphor are integrated in this study. This theoretical framework is posited in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 offers the metaphorical analysis of the metaphors. First, the identification of the metaphor is considered. Second, textual-critical issues are carried out in order to locate the presence or absence of the metaphor in ancient versions. Third, a poetic analysis to examine the different kinds of parallelism (grammatical, semantical, lexical, and phonological). Fourth, the discussion of the metaphor offers valuable analysis of each metaphor outside and inside of Isaiah.

The previous chapter paves the theological implications that are presented in Chapter 4. Mainly, it considers the metaphorical theology of the seven metaphors. Lastly, Chapter 5 offers the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

"Development of an Enhanced Bible Study Program for the Spiritual Nurturing of the Youth in Korean Union Conference"

Researcher: Hyun Jun Woo, DMin, 2019

Advisor: Prema Gaikwad, PhD

Contextualized Bible study is one of the most effective ways for spiritual nurturing, especially among the youth. However, many Christian churches continue giving traditional and not contextualized Bible study programs. Consequently, the youth lose interest, faith, and connection and finally drop out from church. In an attempt to find a solution to this negative phenomenon, a qualitative action research was conducted using a Bible study program for Korean teenagers.

The pilot study conducted in the Philippines with Korean teenagers resulted in an enhanced Bible study curriculum. This curriculum integrates Bible knowledge with professional learning theories and research-based teaching processes. This enhanced Bible study curriculum was later implemented in Korea. The data were collected from 12 participants using interviews and 10 instructors using focus group discussion.

The findings showed that the teenagers like well-prepared Bible study programs which matched well with learning strategies such as cooperative learning and practical evangelistic activities. During the implementation of this program, the participants demonstrated spiritual growth in five dimensions: (a) experience, (b) Bible knowledge, (c) faith, (d) lifestyle, and (e) witnessing. This study has implications for the development of contextualized Bible study programs that take into consideration the teenagers' qualities, and culture, appropriate teaching strategies, and interesting Bible study materials.