

## THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced  
Studies, PHILIPPINES

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

Researcher: Jazel May Martinez-Diaz, MA in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

Out of the 7.6 billion people in the world, according to the United Nations (2018), 55% (4.2 billion) live in urban areas. Almost half of that is in Asia. Asia’s urban population is 49.7% (2.2 billion). This is nearly a third of the world’s population. As the world is becoming more urbanized, there is a greater challenge for urban mission, more particularly for Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) mission. About 31% (2.4 billion) of the world’s population are Christians and out of that, only 0.9% (21 million) are SDAs. In the Philippines, with the population of 106.7 million, only 1% (1.1 million) are SDAs.

Tagaytay City is one of the urbanized areas in the Philippines which is home to only about 80,000 locals, yet a regular recipient of thousands of tourists from around the world during weekends and holidays because of the cool climate, food culture, and the scenery of Taal lake. Although Christianity is the major religion of the people in Tagaytay City, the SDAs are only 0.1% of the city’s population while 95% are Roman Catholics and the rest are Iglesia ni Cristo and others (Tagaytay City Ecological Profile, 2019, p. 22). The Cavite Adventist Mission (CDM), desiring to reach out to the people of Tagaytay City and aid the SDA Church growth, intends to establish centers of influence that will meet the needs of the people and will open opportunities of introducing Jesus to them and lead them to follow Him. Before the establishment of centers of influence, a needs assessment which has never been done before in Tagaytay City must be done.

This study used mixed methods of gathering quantitative and qualitative data with a non-probability cluster sampling approach to know the

needs of the people in Tagaytay City. For the quantitative data, a needs assessment survey questionnaire in establishing SDA centers of influence in Tagaytay City was used to survey 95 study samples from 3 selected urban barangays of Tagaytay City, namely: Kaybagal South, Silang Crossing East, and San Jose. The survey questionnaire includes demographic questions and questions on 4 areas of needs such as health, education, finance/employment, and emotional and spiritual well-being. There are 3 questions per area of need that are geared toward identifying the residents' needs, the accessibility of services that could suffice their needs, and their willingness to patronize the possible services to be offered. The services given as options are also the probable services that the SDA Church can offer in line with its beliefs and advocacies. There are 3 sets of semi-structured interviews done to collect the qualitative data: first, with some elderly inhabitants about the urbanization history of Tagaytay City; next, with some SDAs about past and present strategies of the Tagaytay Central SDA Church in reaching out to residents; and lastly, with key persons on centers of influence from nearby SDA conferences.

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This research study recommends to CDM the establishment of a center of influence with multiple functions. It should include a job listing service, program for skills training and certification, or vocational training courses

that will empower residents for their career and employment, along with business and entrepreneurship training and financial counseling. The residents will patronize a healthy food store and wellness restaurant with cooking classes should CDM choose to provide for health and wellness needs. They will also appreciate affordable medical consultation, medicine or natural alternatives, and wellness guidance. For emotional and spiritual needs, the residents will patronize church services, Bible studies, and stress management consultations/seminars. For educational needs, the CDM can try to offer scholarship programs. With regard to CDM's challenge on expensive lots and SDAs involvement in mission, CDM can utilize the existing company church building in barangay Kaybagal South and the SDA residents nearby.

"The Mission Motif of Selected Passages of the Book of Isaiah"

Researcher: Elisha Kwabena Marfo, PhD in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

This study was directed by two main purposes: (1) to investigate the motif of mission in selected passages in the Book of Isaiah and (2) to discover the theological significance of the motif of mission and how the mission motif contributes to the overall theology of the Book of Isaiah. The twofold task was undertaken through literary and linguistic analyses and theological synthesis. The methodology and its application to the biblical text may yield profitable results and may help espouse mission as a theology of Isaiah. A review of pertinent literature has shown that despite the volume of scholarly discourse to the theology of Isaiah, there remains a question on the motif of mission.

Guided by the criteria for the selection of passages in Isaiah, the linguistic analysis was carried out where the morpho-syntactic features of the passages in the Book of Isaiah were examined. The syntactic features and patterns were described as much as possible according to their exact attestation in the mission passages of Isaiah. Furthermore, an investigation of the literary issues was carried out which yielded some themes from the pericopes. Here, the structure and theme of the mission passages were investigated to help yield a better understanding of the context in relation to the mission motif in the selected passages in the Book of Isaiah. The mission motifs that emanate from the analyses were discussed.

In the theological synthesis, the investigation established that there is a connection between YHWH, His attributes, mission, Israel, and the nations. The study revealed how YHWH relates to His mission and creation as well as to His redemptive purpose for all humanity. The study came up with 10 principles of mission as espoused from the selected passages in the Book of Isaiah. The principles postulate that mission is centered on God, requires the participation of all, and shows the response of God's people to their relationship with Him. The study also notes the theological synthesis that connects the mission motif in the selected passages with the theology of the Book of Isaiah. Attention was devoted to some Isaianic theology such as creation, covenant, salvation, judgment, and eschatology. The relationship of the mission motif of the selected passages in Isaiah to the theology of mission in the OT was investigated. The study noted the linguistic and the thematic connections and explored the contribution of the mission motif in selected passages in the Book of Isaiah to the theology of mission in the OT. In the end, some practical implications of mission that articulate the participation of YHWH's peoples in His mission today are outlined.

The study hopes that the motif of mission in Isaiah, along with the increasing number of scholarly contributions to the Isaianic literature and mission in the OT, will lead to a better appreciation and rediscovery of the relevance of what the HB says about mission. The study will achieve its goal if its readers are willing to navigate the corpus of Isaiah and, as they do, find that being aware of YHWH's mission motif enables them to traverse better and acknowledge the pointy, yet awe-inspiring, message of global, cross-cultural, and national mission aspects of the Book of Isaiah.

"The Development of a Distinctive Seventh-Day Adventist Hymnody: 1841–1886"

Researcher: Cédric Lachenal, PhD in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Kyungho Song, PhD

This dissertation studies early Adventist hymnody. A historical-theological study, it observes the propinquity between early Adventist hymns and theology. It describes the development of Adventist hymnody in the context of the Great Awakening. It observes how Evangelicalism and, more generally, how Protestantism impacted the newborn Adventist Church. Careful attention is given to the religious musical background during the

18th and 19th centuries, including the growing new genres of gospels and spirituals.

The second chapter studies the birth of Adventist hymnody. It surveys the revival background and observes how it impacted the Millerite movement. Insights on music publishing give a clearer picture of the challenges hymnbook compilers faced at the time. The chapter focuses on the leadership of Joshua V. Himes and his great influence on second advent hymnody. It shows how Himes particularly integrated the Protestant heritage and theology as the main ground for Adventist singing.

The third chapter is a historical-systematic study of the five Seventh-day Adventist pillar doctrines. The chapter shows how early Sabbatarians emphasized those five doctrines over the core doctrines they shared with other Evangelicals. Indeed, it was important for a growing movement to affirm their uniqueness. The chapter shows how hymnody helped the propagation of this identity. The chapter ends with a close look at the ministries of James and Ellen G. White. It demonstrates how J. S. White set a model of compiling, while Ellen G. White counseled the Seventh-day Adventist Church on proper singing.

The fourth chapter covers the rise of Adventist musicians and hymnbook compilers. It shows how this new generation of Adventist musicians succeeded in giving an identity to Seventh-day Adventist hymnody independently from J. S. White's strong views. The chapter showcases the compilation of the *Hymns and Tunes* (1886) as a balanced selection of Protestant, Evangelical, and Seventh-day Adventist hymns. It shows how Seventh-day Adventist hymnody perfectly reflects the Seventh-day Adventist theology.

The dissertation bases many of its assumptions on the study of the occurrence of hymns in early Adventist hymnbooks. Through Appendix B, this study gives important data on authorship, dates of composition, and origin of each hymn printed in Adventist hymnbooks. The data also include the "Protestant hymn canon" (Stephen A. Marini's list) as a strong tool of comparison. The conclusion of the dissertation gives some input for contemporary studies on Seventh-day Adventist hymnody.

"Towards a Christ-Centered Preaching Process Model: A Case Study"

Researcher: Dan Namanya, DMin, 2020

Advisor: Aivars Ozolins, PhD

Christ-centered preaching becoming a lost art in the 21st century poses an urgent need for equipping preachers for preaching more Christ-centered sermons. The damage caused by Christless preaching is the weakening of the authority of the Bible as a revelation of Jesus Christ. Moreover, Christless sermons have led to spiritual emptiness among church congregations. The purpose of this study was to create a Christ-centered preaching process model for preachers by establishing the definition of Christ-centered preaching, by uncovering the reasons why Christ-centered preaching is seldom heard in the pulpit, and by equipping preachers for presenting Christ-centered sermons every time they preach. To accomplish this purpose, a qualitative case study was conducted among selected preachers in an international church in the Philippines. Data were collected primarily through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, and documents. Triangulation of data that included a literature review was carried out. The findings of the study revealed that Christ-centered preaching is a biblical proclamation of Christ from Genesis to Revelation by one whose life has been transformed by Jesus Christ. The reasons why Christ-centered preaching is seldom heard in the pulpit were identified to be inadequacy, background orientation, wrong focus, and personal barriers. The ways by which preachers may be empowered to preach Christ-centered sermons were grouped into 2 categories: internal and external empowerment. Internal empowerment included personal preparation, focus on Jesus, and connection with people. External empowerment includes education and equipping.

This study proposed a process model to empower preachers to preach Christ-centered sermons. The results of this study showed the need for emphasizing and strengthening the Christ-centered preaching ministry of preachers. This case study concluded with recommendations to the church, academic institutions, and preachers. The study also included suggestions for further research.

“An Analysis of the Theological Views of Baptism either as a Sacrament or an Ordinance”

Researcher: Michael Schambacher, MA in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Remwil Tornalejo, DTheol

This research analyzes and compares the scriptural-theological and historical views of baptism either as a sacrament or an ordinance by utilizing primary, unpublished, and secondary sources. Christian denominations since

earlier ages conflict with each other in their understanding and overemphasis of baptism as a means of God's grace, regeneration, the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. However, baptismal regeneration is in conflict with the biblical understanding of baptism as an outward sign of God's regenerative, transformative, and saving work as appearing in the conversion process and the life of baptismal candidates before baptism. Nevertheless, the conflict of baptism as an essential aspect of a believer's salvation experience without soteriological value relates to the biblical-theological concept of repentance, conversion, regeneration, and salvation. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church with its perspective of preparation and nurture before and after baptism rejects in its official fundamental belief on baptism as ordinance any sacramental view or notion of baptismal regeneration. However, some scholars, pastors, authors, and members within this church uphold baptismal regeneration as similar to Alexander Campbell's concept of baptism for the remission of sins. Such concept might be even his concept itself or one influenced by him or James White.

Chapter 1 introduces the conflict of baptism in Christianity by focusing on baptismal regeneration and the challenge of goal setting versus the high dropout rate of baptized members. Chapter 2 analyzes the biblical-theological understanding of baptism as related to regeneration, conversion, and repentance. Chapter 3 views the conflict of baptism as a sacrament or an ordinance within Christianity by comparing and analyzing baptism within Catholicism, Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, Anabaptism, and Adventism. Chapter 4 investigates the historical development of the fundamental beliefs and baptism within the SDA Church and Campbell's influential concept of baptism for the remission of sins as related to some of the members and pastors of the *Christian Connexion-Restoration Movement* and the SDA Church. Such shows the conflict of insufficient discussion and unified understanding on the practice and concept of baptism within Adventism by discussing its popular views by some scholars, pastors, authors, members, and literature within the SDA Church that promote baptismal regeneration. The summary of Chapter 5 can serve as the basis for future studies on the importance of developing a scriptural-theological understanding of conversion, regeneration, and salvation as prerequisite for baptism within Christianity.

“Bringing the Gospel to the Rastafarian Community of Shashemene, Ethiopia: A Case Study”

Researcher: Stkesworth Shadeed, DMin, 2020

Advisor: Olaotse Obed Gabasiane, PhD

Rastafari is an Afro-Caribbean socioreligious movement that began on the island of Jamaica in the 1930s. It is composed of a number of elements including rituals and practices from the Afro-Caribbean folk religions of Jamaica as well as ideologies and doctrines from Judeo-Christianity. Rastafarians see the Western world as Babylon and Africa as the “Promised Land,” from which they were taken as slaves.

The number of adherents of the movement is steadily increasing and Rastafari has spread to many countries of the world. Among the places to which the Rastafari movement has spread, perhaps none is as significant as Shashemene, Ethiopia. This is because Ras Tafari (emperor Haile Selassie I, the last king of Ethiopia) granted a portion of land to those in the Western world who wanted to return to Africa, and a number of Rastafarians from different countries have repatriated to Shashemene and formed a community there.

There have been a number of studies conducted on the Rastafari movement but mostly in terms of anthropology and culture. However, when one considers the Rastafari movement in the context of the Great Controversy and the mandate of fulfilling the great commission of making disciples of all nations, the Adventist Church must do something to minister to this people group for whom Christ has died. Regrettably, this has not been the case, especially in terms of missiological research seeking to reach Rastafarians.

To address this situation, this study presents the background, development, worldview, and religious ideologies of the Rastafari movement in order to (a) better understand Rastafarians and (b) suggest missiological strategies and methods of presenting the everlasting Gospel to them. It also presents a qualitative case study on Christian converts from the Rastafarian community of Shashemene, Ethiopia. Subsequent to that, the data acquired from literary sources and interviews were analyzed, and a systematic strategy is presented to bring the Gospel to the Rastafarians of Shashemene. This strategy highlights the bridges that can be used and the pitfalls to be avoided when ministering to the Rastafarians of Shashemene.



“A Biblical-Theological Evaluation of the Ideas on the Person of Christ in African Christology”

Researcher: Clifford Sibanda, PhD in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Kyung Ho Song, PhD

Christ is the foundation of all Christian doctrine. A proper understanding of His person and works is an essential component of a sustainable theology. African theologians have discussed the most relevant depiction of the person of Christ for Africa. This study is an exploration of the most proper contextualized idea of the person of Christ in African Christologies. Through a descriptive-cum analytical approach, this study traces the origin of African Christologies and, thereafter, analyzes and categorizes them. Therefrom, it evaluates these ideas of the person of Christ. After surveying and evaluating the ideas of the person of Christ issuing from the aforementioned Christologies, this study proposes the most proper contextualized idea of the person of Christ.

The study is a documentary research that is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction. It establishes the need for an African Christology. In doing so, it provides a literature review that summarizes the major contributions of scholars within and beyond Africa.

The second chapter traces the historical development of African Christologies. In the process of doing this, it pays attention to the context in which African Christologies emerged. This context includes the African worldview and the sociopolitical realities that prevailed in the continent. The third chapter describes and analyzes African Christologies. It defines some of their key terms before presenting their premises. The fourth chapter evaluates the ideas of the person of Christ in these categories. The basis of evaluation is Scripture. The fifth chapter proposes a new approach to African Christologies. The sixth chapter is the conclusion.

This paper concludes that the ideas on the person of Christ that have been suggested in African Christologies seem to have somewhat contributed to the formation of the global idea of the person of Christ. However, they have failed to make their ideas fully harmonize with Scripture. Therefore, this study submits Sanctuary Christology as the most proper idea. Also, this study encourages further inquiries on African Christology. This includes a qualitative study on how African congregants understand the person of Christ. In addition to a qualitative study, there is a need to investigate African translations of the Bible and their implications on Christology.

“Remembering God the Creator: A Cognitive Analysis and Theology of the Hebrew Metaphors of Qohelet 12:1–7”

Researcher: Henry Sitanggang, PhD in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Carlos E. Mora, ThD

The poetic discourse of Qoh 12:1–7 conveys a substantial divergence of unique images and elusive metaphors. The metaphorical language and distinctiveness in every imagery challenge its meaning, literary unity, and the *leitmotive* of the text as a whole. Many studies have approached the text with different methods of analysis to understand the relationship between one metaphor with another. However, a close and contextual reading of the metaphors (Qoh 12:1–7) and reading from the cognitive-linguistics perspective have not been done. This dissertation investigates the literary features of Qoh 12:1–7 in their metaphorical nature, features, and representations. The understanding of the metaphors develops the theological agenda as a result of biblical and contextual analysis of the metaphors.

Chapter 1 introduces the cognitive approach as part of the systematized and principal methodology of exegesis. This integrated methodology allows a close examination of the cognitive process and experience behind each metaphor in the text. Chapter 2 evaluates scholars’ interpretations of the metaphors. Scholars employing the allegorical and symbolical approaches have generally imposed anthropological imagination and spiritualization upon the text. To this type of interpretation, each image is associated with an internal part of human body which implies a person’s old age or a ruined house. This inference seemingly points to the eschatological arrival. Chapter 3 exegetes each metaphorical image within the specific units (Qoh 12:1a, 1b–2, 3–5, 6, and 7,) through the lens of a cognitive approach. Chapter 4 reflects this textual analysis and contributes to the understanding of the theological views of the metaphors.

Chapter 5 shows a summary of the findings. The literary structure of the text suggests that the imperative clause (זכר) of remembering the Creator (v. 1a) is the foreground of all the evocative metaphors beginning in v. 1b to v. 7. Governed by this conceptual metaphor (remembering the Creator), one metaphor after another reveals a dualistic orientation or character between youth days and with evil days, beginning and end, brightness and darkness, rain and dryness, delight and displeasure, strength and weakness, up and down, and life and death. These falling motions conceptually project the up-down orientation of psychological debilitation like agony, suffering, and

dread of death and unpleasant death in the coming of divine judgment by means of hostile incursion and calamity.

Most of the metaphors reflect these conditions and interestingly present a successive structure of the appalling episodes. They begin with the strength of youth (12:1a), threats of death from mental and physical weakening (vv. 1b–5b), old symptoms as a suffering phase (vv. 5c, 5d), death appearance (v. 5f), deteriorating process as destruction (v. 6), and turning to dust as nothingness (v. 7). This poetic flow adduces the literary coherence and continuity of the text. The debilitating conditions are antithetical to remembering God the Creator—between being neglectful and being mindful (of good and evil aspects). Such negative images convey Qohelet’s pedagogical and theological springboard to evoke one’s cognizance and sensibility of God’s sovereignty as Creator, Judge, and Source of life. Thus, the remembrance of God is a covenant of relationship and faithfulness to God the Creator whose desire is a gift of life for all humans.

“Leadership by Influence in Tribal Communities: A Case Study of the Iraya Mangyan in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines”

Researcher: Christian M. Stroeck, DMin, 2021

Advisor: Cristian Dumitrescu, PhD

The Iraya belongs to the 9 native tribes in Occidental Mindoro collectively known as *Mangyans* or *Katutubos*. Since the 15th century, Katutubos have been oppressed and exploited by Spaniards, Muslim rebels, Americans, Japanese, and lowlanders. The Katutubos lost their forest, forcing them to change their lifestyle from hunting to farming. Consequently, they developed a feeling of inferiority in addition to their fear of the spirits. Through the influence of Christianity and lowlanders, the Katutubo experienced changes in their culture. Many tried to adapt to or even imitate the lifestyle of the lowlanders.

Katutubo Excel Schools Inc. (KESI) is a Christian non-government organization with the mission to equip the marginalized Katutubos. KESI provides quality education based on spiritual, academic, and practical foundations. KESI envisions its students as educated Christian ambassadors in their tribal communities.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how KESI high school students can exert leadership in their tribal communities. Therefore, first this study analyzed the concept of leadership in the tribal context. Second, the study investigated possibilities for KESI graduates to exert influence.

This qualitative research used the exploratory case study design. Data were collected through individual and focus group interviews, observations, and available literature. The research participants included KESI high school students, parents, village leaders, a village judge, a KESI alumnus, and the KESI administrator.

The study revealed a coexistence of the traditional leadership through elders and formal leadership based on local government unit structure in the tribal villages. Important themes in tribal leadership are authority, personality, and knowledge. The research demonstrated that KESI graduates will probably neither become traditional nor formal leaders. Instead of leading through position, KESI graduates will exert their influence indirectly through example in personality and spirituality, lifestyle and performance, and knowledge and education.

A contextualized tribal leadership model was developed. It explains how tribal communities can be influenced for a positive change. At the end, specific recommendations for KESI are given to equip its high school students for the task ahead. This research may benefit not only KESI but also other projects helping the marginalized tribal people of Mindoro.

“A Study of the Hebrew and Aramaic Clauses Alluding to Temple Defilement in Daniel”

Researcher: Innocent Gwizo, PhD in Religion, 2020

Advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

This dissertation is a study undertaken to explore 44 selected Hebrew and Aramaic clauses that allude to temple defilement in the book of Daniel. Chapter 1 is introductory. Chapter 2 is focused on the exegesis of the selected clauses alluding to temple defilement in the book of Daniel. The analysis showed that the clauses convey distinctive syntagmatic nuances and provide a textual-linguistic phenomenon through defined linguistic-literary structures that allude to temple defilement.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that temple defilement is characterized by 5 distinct categories in the book of Daniel that include (a) holy city, (b) moral violation, (c) earthly cultic ritual defilement, (d) cosmic cultic ritual defilement, and (e) defilement through symbolism. It had been found that 3 agents are responsible for the earthly and cosmic temple defilement in the book of Daniel: (a) God’s people, (b) Babylon, and (c) the papacy. The analysis also made it apparent that the earthly or cosmic temple is defiled in 5

modes that parallel the temple defilement categories. Moreover, temple defilement is a depiction of the cosmic conflict between God and evil.

Regarding temple defilement reversal, the analysis revealed the earthly or cosmic temple defilement reversal in 4 ways: (a) YHWH's word, (b) YHWH's response to prayer, (c) dedication of the heavenly sanctuary which begins with the anointing of the Messiah, and (d) cleansing of the cosmic sanctuary. The cleansing of the cosmic sanctuary declares that YHWH has made a provision to reverse its defilement. The figurative cosmic temple defilement caused by the papacy (little horn) is reversed and the sanctuary's state of holiness is restored.

The exploration also revealed the cosmic sanctuary as YHWH's throne and place of divine judgment from where He rules the universe. The cosmic sanctuary declares YHWH's justice, righteousness, and mercy. Also, the cosmic sanctuary cleansing is antitypical to the earthly sanctuary Day of Atonement. The repentant sinner receives pardon for sin through the merit of Christ's sacrifice and priestly ministry.

Chapter 3 is a presentation of some theological implications from the above analysis regarding temple defilement. The implications include (a) divine judgment, (b) holiness, (c) the people of God, (d) eschatology, and (e) cosmic conflict. Chapter 4 is the summary and conclusion of the study. The analysis of the Hebrew and Aramaic clauses provided a theological base that contributes to the theology of the book of Daniel.

A Coaching Strategy for Sustainable Leadership Succession among Small Group Units in Korean Union Conference
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Researcher: Young Il Kwon, DMin, 2020

Advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

Leadership propels any church or institution to achieve its mission and goals. The sustainability of this leadership in terms of succession can determine how continuous this effectiveness is over time, irrespective of any leadership type. Small group units in different Adventist Churches in Korean Union Conference (KUC) face challenges in terms of finding a suitable strategy to help them (churches) sustain their leadership succession, specifically among small groups.

The study, therefore, developed a coaching strategy for sustainable leadership succession among small group units in KUC using a qualitative research approach, a well-structured in-depth interview method. From the

start, 9 participants were involved in the project. However, 2 of them left, so I interviewed 7 participants: 1 pastor, 2 coaches, and 4 small group leaders. These 7 included 1 male and 6 female participants from different churches in KUC.

The findings of this study indicate that most of the small groups in the churches within KUC do not have a proper strategy for sustainable leadership succession on the aspect of coaching. Some small groups used the FAST (Faithful, Available, Spiritual, and Teachable) training, JDTS (Jesus Disciples Training School) program, and GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, and Will) coaching strategies. Nevertheless, some still requested to receive more training to be equipped to adopt a systematic approach to help improve the leadership in their churches and in their small groups.

A total of 8 themes divided into 19 categories emerged based on the 3 research objectives developed for this study. These themes include community, coaching small group leadership, training as an instrument, small group leaders' achievements, connection, strategic planning for small group leaders, characteristics of succession planning, a plan for a coaching system, and a plan for small group leaders. The study combined all these to make a strategic recommendation in the light of sustainable succession through coaching in small groups as an urgent need for the spiritual growth of church members in KUC.

"A Program to Train Mentors for Literature Evangelists in North Philippine Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists"

Researcher: Abraham M. del Rosario, DMin, 2021

Advisor: Reuel Almocera, DPS

North Philippine Union Conference (NPUC) enlists big numbers of literature evangelist (LE) recruits each year but only a few remain committed and competent. New LEs lose interest and commitment in the literature ministry. This phenomenon could be attributed to the lack of training programs for LEs which enables them to be effective and competent in this ministry.

This study was designed to enhance the LE training programs in NPUC through the mentoring/discipling approach. This research involved 9 successful LE participants (3 publishing leaders or area publishing ministry leaders, 3 credentialed LEs, and 3 intern LEs under NPUC) to determine the common factors which make them successful and committed LEs. Moreover, the participants are all Seventh-day Adventist LEs of NPUC. From the

LE participants, I found 13 characteristics and practices which made their ministry a success: (a) personal qualities, (b) professional qualities, (c) missional duties, (d) relationship building, (e) discipleship, (f) mentoring, (g) motivation, (h) inspiration, (i) modeling, (j) enthusiasm, (k) encouragement, (l) qualities of LEs, and (m) qualities of mentors.

Based on the findings and recommendations, the ACHIEVE LE mentorship training program for NPUC was developed and introduced. The program was supported by and based on the scriptural principles of mentoring in the OT and the NT. The 13 characteristics and practices were included as guiding instructions in the administration of the program. The program consolidated all the findings of the study.

“Developing An Appropriate Contextualization Method Of Doing Mission among the Ozuzu and Isu Communities an Etche, Nigeria”

Researcher: Iheanyichukwu Samuel Nwogu, DMin, 2021

Advisor: Olaotse Obed Gabasiane, PhD

The cultural practices of *ituanya* in Isu and the worship of the god Amadi Oha in Ozuzu in the Mba Asa community in Etche have affected the mission growth in this area since 1928 when the Advent message came to Etche. These beliefs and ancestral heritage practices have resulted in a tremendous setback, despite several evangelistic efforts and methods adopted by the Adventist Church. The areas of Ozuzu and Isu remain behind compared with other communities in Etche because the people place much emphasis on sacrifices, the worship of gods, and initiation. Ozuzu and Isu consider their practices and worship instead of the supreme God as a protective defense for them.

The purpose of this study is to address this situation by developing an appropriate contextualization approach to use in the communities based on the participants' perception and the literature review. Thus, the aim is to develop a strategic method of doing effective missions in these communities. The findings suggest that an appropriate contextualization strategy can help lead these people to Christ, place Him in the center of their lives, and lead them to have an intimate relationship with Him. Christ is sympathetic to their conditions and problems. He sought to transform humanity, understand humanity, and attend to their needs. He showed love and faith and healed both the physical and spiritual needs of His hearers.

Ellen G. White advocates that Christ's method of contextualization is a useful strategy to reach people where they are. She further explains that humans differ in their ways and men and women must be wise to win them to Christ. The interest of the communities must be the priority of the church by providing services through community outreach. These communities' interests can be better accomplished by the church when outreach is combined with medical missionary approach, welfare services, and church building strategies before the church embarks on public evangelism. This approach will be sustained through small group formations and follow-up nurturing to retain the new converts.

"Knowing God as an Evangelical: Towards a Canonical-Epistemological Model"

Researcher: Dan-Adrian Petre, PhD in Religion, 2021

Advisor: Gheorghe Răzmeriță, PhD

Theological knowledge formation occupies a central place in the evangelical theological pursuit. Three models represent the epistemological tendencies of contemporary evangelicalism: evidentialist foundationalism, proper functionalism, and postfoundationalism. While giving prominence to the Bible, all these models stop short of establishing a canonically-based theological epistemology, as the *sola scriptura* evangelical principle demands. To address this need, this research outlines a minimal, canonically-derived, theological epistemology that may foster a fuller understanding of theological knowledge formation within evangelicalism. Chapter 1 introduces the background, the problem, purpose, significance, and the scope and delimitations of this research, together with a short terminological clarification, the canonical-epistemological method used, the plan of research, and an overview of the previous research on evangelical epistemology.

Chapter 2 reviews the historical background of evangelical epistemology. It starts with the ancient Greek variants and continues with the patristic, medieval, Reformation, and incipient modern periods. To outline the contemporary epistemological variance, Chapter 3 analyzes three representative evangelical models through their highly regarded exemplars: Norman Geisler (evidentialist foundationalism), Alvin Plantinga (proper functionalism), and Stanley Grenz (postfoundationalism). Chapter 4 of this study uses cognitive analysis to explore the concept of KNOWING GOD in the Bible through the cognitive linguistic window provided by two prototypical terms,  $\gamma\iota\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$  and  $\gamma\iota\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$ . The cognitive analysis results in seven epistemological implications. Chapter 5 unpacks these implications, outlining a



minimal model, called relational-participative, which is then used to address the need of establishing a canonically-based theological epistemology.

Chapter 6 summarizes the findings of this research and presents seven conclusions. First, a modest form of foundationalism best answers the need of recognizing the primacy and normativity of Scripture. Second, theological knowledge formation is an embodied process. Third, theological knowledge formation has a participatory aspect mediated by human sensory experience which cannot be detached from cognitive processes. Fourth, theological knowledge formation takes place in history and connects the past to the future through the present covenantal obedience of the community of believers. Fifth, the proposed model emphasizes the communitarian and the individual character of theological knowledge formation and gives prominence to the need for canonical correspondence over any long-lasting tradition. Sixth, the symbols characterizing past covenantal obedience can foster present theological knowledge formation. Seventh, theological knowledge formation is also fostered by participating in the centripetal-centrifugal Christian mission framed by a cosmic conflict between good and evil. The chapter ends with recommendations for further study.

“Developing Strategies to Reach the Chinese-Filipinos in Mindanao”

Researcher: Carlito P. Quidet Jr., DMiss, 2021

Advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

For more than 100 years, there has only been one Chinese-Filipino Adventist Church in Mindanao. The church has not developed any methods to reach the Chinese-Filipinos. They are businessmen and very influential in the society. They own big malls, hotels, beach resorts, banks, hardware shops, and big companies. They are the richest group of people in the Philippines. Unfortunately, the Adventist Church has not developed strategies to reach them.

This study explored strategies to reach Chinese-Filipinos through missiological principles in the Bible. This applied research dissertation tried to uncover methods on how other denominations reach this ethnic group. This study sought possible avenues for the Adventist Church to reach them. Qualitative research was used to find how other denominations and the Adventist Church brought Chinese-Filipinos to their respective churches.

The introductory chapter outlines the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, justification, limitations, delimitations, methodology, interview procedure, selection criteria, research instruments, data collection process, data analysis procedure, assumptions, and ethical

considerations. Chapter 2 discusses the theological foundation of mission, missiological principles in the OT and the NT, and biblical paradigms about the needs of Chinese-Filipinos. Chapter 3 discusses the context of the study. It uncovers the history of Chinese-Filipinos in the Philippines. It elaborates the religious beliefs, cultural practices, and values of Chinese-Filipinos and concludes with the presentation of Adventist mission towards this group of influential people. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Chapter 5 presents the strategy to reach the Chinese-Filipinos in Mindanao developed based on the findings of this study, summarizes the findings, and presents the conclusion.

“Clothing Imageries of Salvation in the Book of Isaiah: An Exegetical Study”

Researcher: Tabua Kotobalavu, PhD in Religion, 2021

Advisor: Carlos Elias Mora, ThD

Recent publications on dress and clothing in the HB testify of growing scholarship in this area of study. The prophetic book of Isaiah in the HB is replete with clothing items and imageries. While scholars have interpreted each text on clothing in the book, a comprehensive examination of the usage of clothing imageries and how they communicate the salvation of YHWH is yet to be realized. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap in biblical scholarship.

Chapter 1 of this study introduces the investigation and explains the problem it undertakes to resolve. The research approach utilized in the study is also presented in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a review of the literature that deals with clothing and salvation in the book of Isaiah. In Chapter 2, a survey of the historical, political, and socioreligious backgrounds relating to the imageries of Israel’s clothing and dress found in the MT is conducted. Here, the distinct types, meanings, and functions of dress and clothing prevalent in the tenth to the eighth-century ancient Israel is gleaned.

Based on the preceding 2 chapters, Chapter 3 utilizes the grammatical-historical research approach to examine each clothing text of Isaiah in which the motif of salvation is explicitly inherent. The 5 exegetical steps of analysis are (1) identification of image, (2) establishment of image, (3) semantic and other exegetical considerations, (4) contextual situation, and (5) interpretation. Theological implications of the exegetical analysis are the focus and content of Chapter 4. The conclusion of the study, a summary of its findings, and recommendations for further studies are rendered in the final chapter.

The study concludes that clothing imageries embedded in the texts of Isaiah have an enhancing and intensifying effect on YHWH's message of salvation to His people. This conclusion affirms the intrinsic communicative properties of clothing imageries in conveying intended messages. Isaiah's pervasive use of clothing imageries demonstrates literary skill and devotion to the communication of the divine message. Through the thread of clothing imagery, the message of YHWH's work of salvation is to reach the ends of the earth.

Toward a Biblical Theology of Homosexuality: Old Testament Contributions
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Researcher: Jae Young Sim, PhD in Religion, 2021

Advisor: Carlos Elias Mora, ThD

The two primary objectives of this research are (a) to solve several interpretive problems presented by various OT interpreters over prohibition texts and their challenging passages, which seem to discuss homosexuality directly or indirectly and (b) to construct a biblical-theological grid on the issue of homosexuality within the OT. This dissertation attempted to fill the gap between these two objectives using a biblical-theological perspective with the selected exegetical works suggested by Gerhard F. Hasel and Walter C. Kaiser. A review of pertinent literature had shown that despite the volume of scholarly discourse on the interpretation of the cited OT texts on homosexuality, there remains a question on how to interpret them correctly.

Guided by the criteria for the selection of passages in the suggested OT texts on homosexuality, I analyzed the texts through the following steps: (a) arrangement of OT suggested references on homosexuality in chronological order, (b) preliminary considerations, (c) cultural and contextual analyses, (d) literary consideration (literary context and analysis), (e) semantic and other exegetical considerations, (f) theological consideration (theological analysis), and (g) summary.

After the examination of the relevant passages dealing with same-sex relations throughout the entire HB, the following conclusion were presented: (a) heterosexual relations between a man and a woman are the only divinely designed form of human sexuality (Gen 1 and 2) and (b) homosexual practice is depicted and described as "a wicked thing" (Gen 19:6) and "an abominable thing" (Lev 18:22). The earnings of male prostitution could not be brought to the house of the Lord because it is regarded as "the price of [a] dog" (Deut 23:18). It is an "evil act" and a "shameful thing" to the Israelites

(Judg 19:23). Israel's righteous kings endeavored to drive out anyone engaged in this sexual relationship (1 Kgs 14:24, 15:12, 22:47, and 2 Kgs 23:7). The biblical writer of the Kings does not recommend such a sexual life because it could shorten one's life (Job 36:14). Prophets constantly gave an example of Sodom's great sins, including this homosexual activity, but the sins of Israel surpass the wicked city; it is compared to a whore (Ezek 16:48–50).

Furthermore, same-sex relations are explicitly defined by the HB as one of the seriously illicit sexual sins among the people of God (Lev 18 and 20). Historically, no form of homosexuality has ever been accepted in the community of Israel from the creation: homosexual rape (Gen 19 and Judg 19), consented same-sex relations (Lev 18 and 20), male cult prostitution (Deut 23:18; four Kings' references [1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; and 2 Kgs 23:7]), and even a homosexual lifestyle itself (Job 36:14). The HB has a strong, unequivocal, and consistent rejection of same-sex relations, including consensual homosexual relationships. Though only a few OT passages speak of same-sex relations and their practice, all of them do clearly show unqualified disapproval. There is no exception at all in the OT.

The theological synthesis presents that homosexuality is discussed from various theological angles. The discussions on the triangle of the relationship of theology to homosexuality (God, humanity, and community) explain how the HB depicts the issue of homosexuality in the different theological frames. Homosexuality in the OT is a multi-faceted theological issue in the relation of God, humanity, and the community. It cannot be understood in a single theological frame.

It is appropriate to say that the biblical-theological discussion of homosexuality in the OT leads to a better appreciation and rediscovery of the relevance of what the HB states about the issue of homosexuality. More importantly, it should be stated that the homosexual has hope in God because the only sin that God cannot forgive is the sin that is not confessed and repented. Forgiveness and reconciliation have always been open to every sinner.