

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute
of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Doctrine of Imputation: A Biblical-Theological Evaluation of the Ideas of the Imputation Suggested by Calvinistic Federal Theology

Researcher: Sung-Hyun Yoon, PhD, 2024

Research advisor: Kyungho Song, PhD

When considering how Calvinistic Federal Theology's perspectives of original sin and unconditional justification are compatible with the Bible, there are questions about the theological concept of imputations of sin and righteousness. In order to answer these theological questions, this study evaluates the imputation ideas suggested by Calvinistic Federal Theology from a canonical view in relation to the historical-grammatical perspectives on the Bible. Chapter 1 introduces the background, problem, purpose, significance, scope, and delimitations of this research, together with a short review of related literature, which includes federal theologians' writings and non-federal theological views on imputation. Chapter 2 reviews the historical background of the doctrine of imputation in relation to sin and righteousness. It starts with the Greek Fathers and continues with the Latin Fathers, medieval, reformation, post-reformation, and modern periods.

Chapter 3 describes the three parts of the Calvinistic Federal theological view on imputation: the biblical and theological bases of the federal view (God's sovereignty, covenant works and grace, and parallelism between Adam and Christ), the imputation of sin, and the imputation of righteousness. Chapter 4 of this study overviews a biblical-theological concept of the imputations of sin and righteousness in the Bible through a canonical perspective, providing the tool to evaluate the original sin and unconditional justification. Chapter 5 evaluates and criticizes the Calvinistic Federal views on the imputations of sin and righteousness from a canonical perspective in three parts. First, God's sovereignty is compatible with human freedom of

choice from an indeterministic perspective. Two, the justice of God not only gives Adam and Eve the choice of life and death, but the entire of humans, as the descendants of Adam, also have the choice to follow or deny God. Third, divine righteousness is imputed or imparted by the grace of God in relation to the condition of human free will rather than unconditional salvation.

Chapter 6 summarizes the findings of this research and presents conclusions and recommendations. I address the canonically based theological approach that God's love-centered characteristics allow human freedom of choice, which is not punished by Adam's original guilt for his descendants. Likewise, the love of God allows conditionality of justification in the doctrine of imputation.

Towards a Framework for a Contextualized Muslim Ministry in Salamex:
A Case Study

Researcher: Juvenal Gomes V. Xirimimbi, PhD, 2024

Research advisor: Abner P. Dizon, DMiss

The Christian church exists for a mission. However, the attempts made by Christians and the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reach Muslims have not been relatively successful because of the historical, political, military, cultural, and doctrinal frictions between the two Abrahamic faiths across the centuries. There needs to be awareness and contextualization of these elements. Consequently, there are unentered Muslim territories because of hostility toward any open attempts to convert Muslims to Christianity. Further, literature shows a dearth of studies that have developed a framework for contextualized Adventist-Muslim ministry. Therefore, this study aimed to develop a distinctively Seventh-day Adventist framework for Muslim ministry as a guide for contextualized ministry in Salamex.

To address the research gap, a qualitative case study was conducted. A purposeful sample of 23 participants was selected. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. The transcribed interviews and focus group discussion served as valuable primary data for the study. In addition, relevant documents were examined for triangulation. To code and classify codes representing themes in the context, for data analysis, I worked with HyperResearch qualitative data analysis software. From the data analysis, 13 main themes emerged: change of heart, community relationship, methods of witnessing, Muslim behavior toward contextualized

members, Muslim-background Adventists' practices, global mission pioneers, discipleship, Muslim-background Adventists' fundamental knowledge, identity, worldview, administrative structure, challenges, and opportunities.

The outcomes of this study revealed that the context in Salamex presents a spectrum, from very conservative Muslim communities to open communities. Conversion or change of heart happens and different methods are applied. Furthermore, the participants' understandings of contextualized ministry were confused. However, the participants kept both Adventist and Islamic beliefs and practices. Moreover, the study revealed challenges and opportunities for contextualized Adventist-Muslim ministry in Salamex. Therefore, these findings supported strong recommendations to Seventh-day Adventist Church administrators and practitioners and for further research. This study's findings had several important implications for future contextualized Muslim practice.

Implicit Leadership Traits of Millennial Pastors: A Case Study in Negros Occidental Conference

Researcher: Eldyn S. Toledo, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: Bryan Edward Sumendap, DMin

Millennial pastors' leadership development schema can be understood in terms of family dynamics, social and cultural contexts, exposure to friends and leaders, and social media. The main objective of this study was to explore the implicit leadership theories of millennial pastors working in Negros Occidental Conference (NOC). The qualitative case study research design was employed in this study. The participants of this study were 7 millennial pastors with the age range of 28 to 38 years old; they were employed in NOC in Negros Occidental, Philippines and assigned to different field districts within the territory of NOC. Purposive sampling method was used in selecting the participants.

All millennial pastors chose *pastor* as the leader's role. Among the pastors whom they identified as leaders were their administrators/department directors, college professors, district pastors, and international pastors/e-vangelists. This study revealed that most of the participants did not favor the ordination of women into the pastoral ministry. The least chosen leader's role included politician, religious leader, parent, and church elder. There were 26 leader's attributes that emerged from the findings of this

study, and they were categorized into factors or themes: (a) socio-cognitive, (b), spiritual-moral, (c), socio-emotional, and (d) cultural. The top-ranked attributes of a leader were (a) influential, (b) determined, (c) visionary, (d) good at delegating responsibilities, (e) good at discipling, (f) humble, (g) passionate in evangelism (media evangelism), (h) supportive, (i) fatherly, (j) compassionate, and (k) engaged in philanthropy. The low-ranked attributes of a leader included (a) exhibiting *pakikisama*, (b) not having *utak talangka*, (c) having *dangal*, and (d) having *hiya*. The findings of the study revealed that family dynamics, exposure to leaders, friends, culture, and technology shape the leadership development of millennial pastors.

A Strategy for Improving Membership Retention through an Income-Generating Program for the Sundanese Seventh-day Adventists in West Java Conference in Indonesia

Researcher: Rudi H. Situmorang, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

Poverty is a significant challenge for religious organizations, including the Sundanese Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) in the West Java Conference (WJC) in Indonesia. Economic hardship often leads individuals to prioritize basic needs over religious activities, resulting in decreased engagement and disconnection from the church. Thus, this study aimed to (a) examine how the demographics of the Sundanese SDAs influence their spiritual health, (b) examine how poverty influences membership retention, and (c) develop an appropriate income-generating program that would help the Sundanese SDAs in WJC elevate their socioeconomic status, grow spiritually, and retain in church.

Quantitative and qualitative designs were used in the study. One hundred six respondents were randomly selected for quantitative design and 7 respondents were selected based on their qualifications as members and leaders from the 3 main Sundanese SDA churches in WJC. The data were collected using validated questionnaires and interview guidelines and they were analyzed through SPSS 22.0 software for quantitative and HyperRESEARCH 4.0 for qualitative. Descriptive analysis with the elaboration of discussion was used to determine the demographic profile, the correlation between poverty and membership retention, and the strategy for membership retention.

The findings show that the Sundanese SDAs in WJC have faced unique challenges due to their low socioeconomic status. Many members come from low-income households with limited educational opportunities, which affects their membership retention. This lack of financial resources makes it difficult for members to participate in church activities, contribute financially, or access spiritual development resources. Additionally, limited access to quality education and vocational training hinders the Sundanese SDAs' ability to secure stable jobs, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Limited transportation options further exacerbate these challenges.

This study suggests a comprehensive approach that combines financial support, skills development programs, and spiritual guidance to uplift socioeconomic status and foster spiritual growth. The development of the Sundanese Adventist IGP considers the biblical-theological and theoretical foundations, context, and field needs. Implementing the Sundanese Adventist IGP tailored to the needs of the Sundanese SDAs in WJC could significantly improve membership retention, overall well-being, and sense of belonging and participation.

Reaching Generation Z through Media Ministry at a Faith-Based University in Manado, Indonesia

Researcher: Douglas Edward Sepang, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

Media ministry plays a crucial role in engaging Generation Z (Gen Z) within faith-based educational institutions. This study investigates the strategies and implications of media ministry at Green University in Manado, Indonesia, aiming to enhance spiritual services and foster community engagement among Gen Z students. The main objectives of this study were to explore the effectiveness of media ministries at Green University in reaching Gen Z and to understand how these ministries cater to the learning and communication preferences of this demographic. A qualitative case study approach was utilized to conduct this research, involving interviews, observations, focus group discussion, and document analysis. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants, ensuring representation from students and experts. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the gathered data and identify key themes related to media ministry and Gen Z engagement. The findings highlight the importance of creating informative, engaging, and authentic content across different media formats to resonate with

Gen Z's preferences. This study underscores the significance of media ministry in reaching and engaging Gen Z within a faith-based educational setting. The findings contribute to the existing literature by providing insights into effective strategies for media ministry and their implications for Gen Z engagement.

Recommendations from this study emphasize Green University's media ministry team's need to adopt a media-centered approach. The findings also encourage active engagement from parents and church leaders in Gen Z's digital lives. Further research is suggested in areas such as comparative analysis, long-term impact assessment, media literacy studies, and innovative technology exploration to enhance media ministry's effectiveness.

A Contextualized Strategy in Communicating the Gospel to the Hindus in India: A Narrative Inquiry

Researcher: Prakash Jacob, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: Olaotse Obed Gabasiane, PhD

Reaching Hindu believers is a complex process. Despite the numerous efforts to bring the gospel message to the Hindus. The Adventist church records show declining baptismal rates over the past decades.

The research is anchored on a theoretical framework that emphasizes the Christ model of ministry—mingling, showing sympathy, ministering to needs, and winning confidence—as a blueprint for evangelism. This research used narrative inquiry to investigate the challenges and opportunities for reaching the Hindus in India. The study explored the narratives of selected former Hindus who became Adventists.

The study attempted to develop a contextualized strategy that communicates the gospel message more effectively to Hindus. A deeper understanding of Hindu culture, traditions, and belief is necessary to share the Gospel. The research resulted in six thematic sections (relational, cultural, spiritual, educational, evangelistic, and doctrinal) derived from the participants' narratives. Thus, the proposed missiological strategy suggests a culturally sensitive approach to sharing the Gospel within the Hindu context.

Adventist Social Media Initiatives and Their Impact on Evangelism During the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Philippines: A Case Study

Researcher: Mamerto M. Guinguing II, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

Social media has captured the world by storm because it is a modern technological communication advancement. It is an exciting world to explore. It connects people all over the world regardless of race and religion. It builds bridges of knowledge that foster learning on a massive scale. One social media post can generate millions of views online.

One area of social media worthy of study is its usage for evangelism, especially during crises of epic proportions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was undertaken to determine the impact of social media on evangelism based on the theoretical framework of deep mediatization, emphasizing the constructivist view, which espouses that media has become an inherent part of every social domain that shapes the world on all levels, including religion in general and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular. Related to this theory is the theory described as the socioreligious frame of technology by Campbell (2010), which highlights the church organization's use of media and communication technology. This theory considers the church's core values and practices, the church's evaluation of the technology used, and the adaptation of its design as the context demands and frames the technology through the church' discourse which sets its appropriate goals.

This particular research intended to discover the impact of social media on evangelism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology used in this research was qualitative approach, particularly the case study design. The participants of this study were 13 persons categorized into 3 distinct groups: Adventist leaders or social media movers, social media content makers/influencers, and social media consumers.

The research highlighted 12 themes and 45 categories, leading to the identification of 5 components that make up a successful social media evangelism initiative in proclaiming the gospel message and making disciples of people: transformational leadership, choice of social media platform, quality social media content, branding, and consistent online pastoral care.

Developing an Effective Health Ministry Strategy in Reaching Out to the Tionghoa in Bandung, Indonesia

Researcher: Nofri Zarial Fattah, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: James Park, PhD

Chinese Indonesians are courteously called Tionghoa, an upper-class and urbanized community in Indonesia where the majority are engaged in the economic sector (Indonesia, 2010). Recently their population has gone up to about 10 million (Suryadinata, Arifin, & Ananti, 2003). Religiously, they respect all deities, worship the ancestors, and believe in life after death (Ro & Albrect, 1988; Thompson, 1979).

In 2017, a health ministry called Klub Hidup Sehat Bandung (KHSB) was established (KHSB, 2017, p. 1). The aim of this ministry was to reach the Tionghoa in Bandung. Although Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) missions have been operating in Bandung since 1916, only 2 Tionghoa SDA Churches were established with a meager membership of approximately 150 people (Hua An SDA Church, 2016; Sinaga, Yonathan, & Reinaldi, 2016).

To address this challenge, this study aims to describe the health ministry of Elisha to Naaman and the writings of Ellen G. White regarding health ministry in order to explore how to evangelize the affluent society. It also seeks to define the context of the Tionghoa, investigate the effectiveness of the KHSB in reaching out to the Tionghoa, and recommend effective principles in evangelizing them.

Based on the outcomes of this research, there are 6 major factors that effectively contributed to the KHSB ministry. These are healthy grocery shops, Saturday completely healthy lifestyle program, health seminar, health check-up, cooking class, and health expo. The result is about 1000 Tionghoas attended the program, and in 2019 there are 15 of them attended Sabbath worship program.

Filipino Christological Views in Relation to Salvation: A Biblical-Theological Evaluation and Proposal

Researcher: Lowel J. Domocmat, PhD, 2023

Research advisor: Remwil R. Tornalejo, DTheol

Jesus Christ is the foundation of Filipino Christianity. One evidence is the prevalence of christological understandings espoused by Filipino thinkers.

This study evaluates the prevalent Filipino christological views and then proposes a Filipino contextual understanding of Christ by employing the biblical-theological-dialogical approach. Chapter 1 introduces the background, problem, purpose, significance, delimitation, and methodology. Chapter 2 presents the development of Filipino christological views, which were shaped by the Philippines' religious, socio-economic, and political conditions.

Chapter 3 describes and analyzes the five prevalent christological views espoused by Filipino theologians. These christological views are termed Popular, Adult-Christ, Christology of Struggle, Third Look, and Experiential Christology. Chapter 4 evaluates the five christological views in relation to salvation, employing the Scripture as the basis of evaluation. Chapter 5 proposes a biblical christological view through the Filipino honor and shame cultural elements—Honor-Shame Christology. Chapter 6 provides the summary and conclusions of this study.

This study concludes that Filipino christological views are shaped by the religious, socio-economic, and political situations in the Philippines. These conditions influenced these views to equate salvation with social equality and economic wellbeing. Despite the evident strengths of these views, they appear to lack support from the biblical teachings on Christ and his salvation on certain significant factors. Thus, this study proposes a biblical and contextual understanding of Christ—Honor-Shame Christology—as an alternative view for making Christ and his salvation relevant and intelligible to Filipino audiences. Lastly, this study recommends the continual theological task of making Christ rooted in Filipino minds, employing contextual elements that are faithful to the biblical Christ, so the Filipinos better understand him.

The Tithe-Returning and Offering-Giving Practices of Seventh-day Adventist Church Members in Southern Mindanao Misson, Philippines
--

Researcher: Dante A. Dabucol, DMin, 2024

Research advisor: Reuel Almocera, DPS

Within Christian spiritual discipline, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, tithing and offerings hold dual significance as financial support for churches and expressions of faith. However, in the Southern Mindanao Misson (SMM) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there is a notable disparity between membership numbers and financial contributions. This study

aims to investigate and understand tithe and offering-giving practices within the context of the SMM in the Philippines. Employing a quantitative method, this research addresses three key research questions: Who are the givers, how do they give, and why do they give? Analysis of demographic profiles reveals that SMM primary givers (age group of 25 to 54) have occupations with irregular below-average income. This can explain the disparity between tithe and offering figures and the number of members in SMM. This study finds a commendable commitment to tithing and offerings among SMM members. Reasons for giving include personal connections with pastors, church programs, and communication strategies. This study also finds that the members would like to see transparency from church leadership.

While tithing and offerings remain foundational within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, their practical application within the SMM requires understanding demographic dynamics, economic challenges, and spiritual motivations. By addressing these factors and implementing targeted strategies, the SMM can strengthen its stewardship culture, enhance community relationships, and advance its mission effectively.

The Use and Meaning of the Hebrew Verb בָּרָא (*Bārā*) in the Niphal Binyan of the Hebrew Bible

Researcher: Kenroy R. Campbell, PhD, 2024

Research advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

The study of the vb. בָּרָא, in the secondary literature, combining the G and N *binyanim* has shown that the major arguments on the uses of בָּרָא are that (1) it takes Israel's God as the subject/agent; and (2) it denotes creation from nothing or from material. On the meaning of בָּרָא, the major interpretations by scholars are that (1) the vb. בָּרָא means "to create" (*creatio ex nihilo*, novelty, etc.) and (2) "to separate." The approaches taken by most scholars are contextual, theological, etymological, comparative, and source critical. Against this background, this study identified two main areas of concern: (1) complexity of usage in which the study showed that the Hebrew *binyamin* (G, N, D, and H) have different syntactical and morphological values and therefore N-בָּרָא (like G-בָּרָא, D-בָּרָא, and H-בָּרָא) should be studied separately; and (2) the complexity of meaning of which the vb. בָּרָא appears in clauses and *binyanim* that affect how it functions—thus impacts its meaning.

Consequently, the study set out to answer three questions: (1) What are the uses of N-ברא in the HB? (2) What is the prototypical meaning of N-ברא in the HB? (3) What are the similarities and differences between the uses of N-ברא and the uses of G-ברא, D-ברא, and H-ברא in the HB? These questions were answered by using syntagmatic analysis (that focuses on relations between items that “co-occur” within clauses, sentences, pericopes, etc.) for the uses of the vb. ברא and Cognitive Linguistics (that focuses on clausal and N *binyan* constructions) for the prototypical meaning of the vb. ברא in the N *binyan* of the HB.

Among the uses of N-ברא, the study showed that N-ברא does not always take God as its agent; and neither does it take Him as the subject. The subject is always the patient in N-ברא. Also, the study showed emphatically that N-ברא never brings an object into being from material. The emphasis is always on the final/current state of the patient of N-ברא.

Regarding the meaning, the prototypical meaning does not emphasize *creatio ex nihilo*, new things, creation from something, or separation. Instead, it emphasizes the *bringing into being of something at a point in time*. Whether creation from nothing/material is intended by the authors, it is not emphasized—at least not in the use of N-ברא.

Regarding the similarities and differences between N-ברא and G-ברא, D-ברא, and H-ברא, the study showed that there are strong similarities and differences among the *binyanim*. Two of the differences are the syntactic functions of ברא and the focus of the act/state of the patient of ברא. Consequently, N-ברא is the only *binyan* that syntactically focuses on the act/state that the patients undergo. N-ברא is the only *binyan* that has the act/state of the vb. ברא as a basis for another action to be carried out. In addition, the study showed that H-ברא and D-ברא are the only two *binyanim* that identified material as one of the linguistic uses of the patient.