

THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute
of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Toward a Contextualized Approach to Reaching the Bamar Buddhists in
Mandalay, Upper Myanmar

Researcher: Thang Kang Lo, PhD, 2025

Research advisor: Liang Chuanshan, PhD

Although Adventist mission work in Upper Myanmar Mission has been conducted for almost a hundred years, reaching the Bamar Buddhists has always been a massive challenge. The challenge for this ethnic majority group is that they put themselves above other ethnic groups as great nationalists and accept Buddhism as their state religion and national heritage. Moreover, it seems that the Adventist Church's past and current approaches of public evangelism and doctrinal preaching do not work effectively among the Bamar Buddhists. Thus, there is a need for a research-based mission approach to working with the Burmese Buddhists to build bridges and help deliver the gospel message in their cultural context.

Therefore, this study explored a contextualized approach to the mission work among the Bamar Buddhists, specifically in Mandalay City, Myanmar. It focused on the cultural, religious, and social-political factors that influence engagement strategies. As the heartland of Theravada Buddhism, Mandalay presents unique challenges and opportunities for Christian mission efforts.

Through a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design, this research examined the past and current missiological approaches, identified the barriers to effective outreach, and analyzed the contextual factors that shape receptivity among the Bamar Buddhists. By integrating mini-ethnographic insights and theological reflections, and conducting semi-structured interviews with both local practitioners and Adventist workers in Mandalay City, the study proposes a more effective mission framework that respects

Buddhist beliefs while fostering meaningful dialogue. The mini-ethnographic case study is a condensed form of ethnographic research that takes place over a shorter period (often weeks) due to time or resource constraints. The findings contribute to the development of steps for a contextualized approach to meet the needs of Adventists in Mandalay City, offering practical recommendations for church leaders and missionaries in Mandalay and similar settings.

The Usage of the Genesis Account of Sodom and Gomorrah in Jeremiah 23: An Intertextual Study

Researcher: Larry Windewani, PhD, 2025

Research advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

The Old Testament prophets reused Sodom and Gomorrah's narrative in their writings. In his writing, Prophet Jeremiah used Sodom and Gomorrah's expressions more than other prophets. Bible scholars discussed the theological connection between Sodom and Gomorrah's narrative and its usage in Jer 23. However, the literature review shows that the literary connection between Sodom and Gomorrah's narrative and its usage in Jer 23 needs to be investigated. It is needed to fill the literary connection gap between Sodom and Gomorrah's narrative (Gen 18:19–19:29) and its usage in Jer 23.

The purpose of this research is to find out the literary connection between Sodom and Gomorrah's narrative and its usage in Jer 23. Second, to uncover how prophet Jeremiah used Sodom and Gomorrah's account in Jer 23. Third, this research aims to discover the literary features that Jeremiah added to his writing (Jer 23) when he used the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative.

Intertextuality is utilized in this dissertation to solve the problem and achieve the purpose of the research. Four principles are employed in identifying and selecting the textual connection of Gen 18:19–19:29 and Jer 23. First, the phrases of the selected texts have similar meanings. Second, the two compared texts have similar names for unique historical events. Third, the compared texts have identical structures. Fourth, the compared texts have a semantic connection. The selected texts of Gen 18:19–19:29 and Jer 23 fulfill the four principles above. The literary aspects, such as morphology, syntax, structure, and semantics of the selected text, are analyzed.

Then, four intertextual steps are employed. The steps are, (a) to compare

morphological and syntactical aspects of the selected clause, (b) to compare the structure of the text where the selected clauses are found, (c) to compare the semantic meaning of the selected clauses, and (d) to discover the distinctive literary features that Jeremiah employed when he used Sodom and Gomorrah's narrative in Jer 23.

This study concludes that there is a literary connection between the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:19–19:29) and its usage in Jer 23. The literary features that connect the two units are morphological, syntactical, structural, and semantic aspects of those selected clauses. Additionally, Jeremiah uniquely employs the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah in Jer 23 to emphasize his message to the audience. Jeremiah uses several distinctive literary features to impose the message that he carries in the minds of his audience.

An Assessment of Church Planting and Church Planters in the Context of Cavite Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Philippines
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Researcher: Reynaldo L. Maglipas, DMin, 2025

Research advisor: Chuan Shan Liang, PhD

Cavite Mission has been actively involved in dynamic church planting initiatives, like other missions and conferences. However, it has lacked a regular assessment program for these efforts. This study utilized a quantitative descriptive research design to evaluate the comprehensive structure of church planting in Cavite Mission, aiming to address its weaknesses and enhance the strengths of its stakeholders.

The primary objective was to explore the biblical principles of church planting, insights from the Spirit of Prophecy, and relevant literature. Additionally, it aimed to assess the current state of church planting within the Cavite Mission, identifying strengths and weaknesses to propose potential areas for improvement. The study included 164 male and female respondents. The participants were primarily married or single, with high school and college education levels. Most respondents were Tagalog and Visayan, and their employment status ranged from self-employed and unemployed to regular workers.

The findings revealed a generally positive perception of support from both Cavite Mission and local churches for church planting efforts. Respondents valued structured programs, monthly reporting, and financial assistance but highlighted the need for improved stipend provision, coaching,

strategic planning, and training. Addressing these areas could enhance support frameworks, empowering church planters to achieve greater effectiveness and sustainability in their ministry endeavors.

Moreover, the study underscored the importance of a mission-wide comprehensive assessment program to address the evolving needs of church planting efforts. Scriptural principles from the OT and NT support Adventist church planting programs, particularly the ongoing initiatives of Cavite Mission.

The Beginnings and Later Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in North Celebes between 1918 and 1942
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Researcher: Glenn Jonathan Jerome Latuni, MA, 2025

Research advisor: Donny Chrissutianto, PhD

This study traces the beginnings and subsequent development of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in North Celebes between 1918 and 1942. It investigates the cause behind the delayed advancement of mission work in North Celebes, as they had entered other regions decades earlier. The methods used to spread the Adventist message, the key factors contributing to successful growth in terms of church and membership, and the contributions of foreign and local missionaries are also examined. Using a historical approach, this research examines the early development of mission work in North Celebes through documentary study from periodicals, church archives, and secondary literature.

The findings indicate that the lack of capable local missionaries, the lack of foreign missionaries, the distance issue, and health concerns contributed to the delayed advancement of mission work in North Celebes. Moreover, despite a late start, membership grew from 49 to 2,360 by 1941, accounting for 42% of Adventist members in the Dutch East Indies (5,608 total), who were in North Celebes in 1941. This successful mission in North Celebes was achieved through collaboration among foreign missionaries, local workers, and members. They opened new areas through literature evangelism, led bible studies and evangelistic meetings, planted churches, and encouraged lay participation through home missionary work. These efforts resulted in increased baptisms and the establishment of new churches. The foreign missionaries played essential leadership roles and supervised the mission work, although only one was sent at a time. At the same time, the local workers and members, through tireless efforts, carried out the mission

work, contributing significantly to the total number. These findings underscore the importance of collaborative mission work and provide valuable insights into sustaining an evangelistic spirit and promoting unity in mission efforts.

Involving the Adventist Laity in Evangelizing Hindus in Hyderabad: A Case Study

Researcher: Ashok Kumar Narasaiah, PhD, 2025

Research advisor: Chuanshan Liang, PhD

The Adventist Church believes in the priesthood of all believers, which encourages the active involvement of the laity in evangelism. The involvement of the laity in Hindu evangelism is lacking in the Hyderabad Metro Section (HMS), India. There are several reasons for the lack of lay involvement in Hindu evangelism in HMS. The first reason is that the laity are unaware of their role, responsibility, and accountability in Hindu evangelism. The second reason is that the laity lacks an understanding of the Hindu worldview and culture. The third and foremost reason is that the laity assumes that evangelizing Hindus is not the priority of the Adventist church in HMS. This study presents the problem of handling the laity in the territory of HMS.

The study analyzes the concept of laity from a biblical and theological perspective. A methodological structure is provided to study the laity as a case; it includes the local church and clergy, and the local context of the study is presented in the study. The empirical research is conducted to gather the various views and opinions of the HMS laity, clergy, and leaders. Finally, the theoretical framework is designed to develop a missiological model to effectively involve the laity in Hindu evangelism. The model is developed on the principles of LOVE (Lead, Organize, Venture new initiatives, and Evaluate), the acronym of which is the foundation on which the model is built.