

2025-26 APNTS Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

Buenaluz, Arthur Jan Digan. “The Level of Helpfulness of the Kabacan Wesleyan Bible College Curriculum in Training Ministers for the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines in Mindanao.” Master Of Arts In Religious Education Thesis, 2025.

In any vocation, preparation is essential; for the minister, theological institutions serve as the primary equipping agents to guide the church in fulfilling its mission. Recognizing that the curriculum is not merely content but a means to equip future ministers to respond faithfully to real-life demands, this study evaluates the curriculum of Kabacan Wesleyan Bible College (KWBC), the primary producer of workers for The Wesleyan Church of the Philippines (TWCP) in Mindanao. The purpose of this research was to determine the level of helpfulness of the KWBC curriculum regarding academic preparation, practical experience, and spiritual life as perceived by its alumni. By evaluating these three areas, the study aligns with international standards for training church leaders while providing a first-time curriculum evaluation tool for the institution.

The researcher employed a descriptive quantitative research design utilizing a survey questionnaire inspired by the work of Aileen Mamahit. Using purposive and criterion sampling, the study focused on 30 alumni who graduated between the academic years 2011–2015. Data analysis involved the use of Mean, Standard Deviation, and the T-test to identify relationships between respondent profiles and their perceptions of the curriculum.

The findings reveal that the KWBC curriculum is perceived as Satisfactory (Helpful) across all categories, with Spiritual Life receiving the highest mean of 3.95. Academic Preparation (3.83) and Practical Experience (3.84) were also rated as helpful, particularly in areas of Theology, Biblical Studies, and Pastoral Theology. Statistical analysis showed significant relationship between profile variables, the sex, degree earned, or current ministry status,

and the perception of helpfulness, leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses. However, qualitative data highlighted critical gaps, including the need for technological competence, vocational/livelihood training, and crisis counseling.

The researcher concludes that while KWBC successfully fulfills its mission of producing Bible-centered pastors, the curriculum maintains a "status quo" approach that is heavily optimized for traditional pulpits. The study implies that the institution must bridge the gap between traditional training and the bi-vocational and digital realities of the Mindanao context to ensure ministers remain effective "social engineers" (Kelly 1926, 502) in a rapidly changing society.

Cha, Duk Yong. "Study On Pastoral Spiritual Formation through Speech Camp Meetings Based on Ah~Speech Training." Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Ministry Project, 2026.

This study investigates the impact of the Speech Camp Meeting on pastoral spiritual formation and congregational transformation, with particular attention to the restoration of holistic holiness through preaching as an embodied and communal practice. While conventional homiletical approaches have tended to emphasize cognitive and technical competencies, this research reconceptualizes preaching as an integrative practice in which spirituality, embodiment, and relational dynamics are inseparably intertwined.

Employing a mixed-methods case study design, the research analyzes the experiences of pastors and congregants who participated in fifteen Speech Camp Meetings conducted across five churches following a twelve-week Ah~Speech training program. Quantitative data were derived from structured survey instruments based on Clinebell's seven dimensions of holistic care, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis and supplemented by discourse-informed interpretation of participant interactions and reflective narratives.

The findings demonstrate that the Speech Camp Meeting functions not merely as a technical training program but as an integrative and formative

ministry model that facilitates multidimensional transformation. Across the spiritual, psychological, physical, relational, vocational, and communal dimensions, participants reported significant changes, including renewed attentiveness to the presence of God, increased preaching confidence, enhanced embodied awareness, and strengthened inter-church relationships.

A central contribution of this study is the identification of speech as a mediating nexus through which spiritual formation, embodied practice, and ministerial transformation are dynamically interconnected. In this framework, speech is not treated as a neutral communicative tool but as an embodied and performative medium through which the Word of God is experienced, enacted, and communally negotiated. The Speech Camp Meeting should not be interpreted merely as a technique for sermon training, but rather as a practical-theological framework that integrates communicative formation and spiritual formation.

Furthermore, this study redefines holiness as an embodied, relational, and processual reality rather than a static or individualistic ideal. Holiness is understood as a dynamic and communal process of transformation that unfolds within a context of shared practice and continual renewal. In this sense, the Speech Camp Meeting is interpreted as a liminal and transformative space in which pastoral identity is reconfigured and ecclesial life is reoriented toward collaborative and missional engagement.

Finally, this study proposes a Holistic Spiritual Formation Model that conceptualizes the dynamic interaction between spirituality, embodiment, and community within contemporary ministry contexts. By bridging homiletics, practical theology, and qualitative empirical research, this study contributes to the ongoing development of integrative ministry models capable of addressing the challenges of post-pandemic ecclesial realities, particularly within small-church contexts.

Chan Zami Shine. "Involvement of Selected Parents from the Church of Christ Congregations in Yangon, Myanmar, in the Spiritual Development of their Children." Master of Arts in Religious Education (Holistic

Child Development) Thesis, 2026.

This research investigates the involvement of selected parents from the Church of Christ congregations in Yangon, Myanmar, in the spiritual development of their children. Recognizing the critical role of parents in nurturing faith, this research explores parental ways of teaching, their home spiritual practices, the motivations of their involvement, and the observed outcomes of their engagement in their children's spiritual development. This research is guided by two theoretical frameworks: Horace Bushnell's Christian Nurture, mainly in reference to teaching methods for children, and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's motivational factors in parental involvement models.

For the methodology, this research used a qualitative multiple case study, and the sampling selected parents and children based on the criteria. The data was collected from five selected families, a total of ten participants (five parents and five children), using semi-structured interviews and spiritual journal notes written by the parents. The research used MAXQDA software to analyze the findings and interpret the data, and the Xmind Mind Mapping App was used to create figures.

The findings of the research demonstrated that parents' ways of teaching, spiritual practices at home, the motivations of the parents, and the observed results of their parental involvement empower parents in fostering a godly lifestyle within the family context and provide practical insights for building a godly home for the children's spiritual development. This research also provides understanding that, while spiritual development starts primarily from home, the church and faith community must walk alongside the parents. For the ways of teaching, parents used child-appropriate ways of teaching based on each home context, with simple methods like conversation, verbal teaching, etc. Every family interviewed maintained spiritual practices at home, such as prayer, Bible reading, and worship, that were enjoyable and memorable for the children. The motivations of the parents were strongly connected to their calling as parents and their responsibilities from God. Lastly, the involvement of the parents seemed important in their children's lives. The parents from the Church of Christ in Yangon affirmed

that their involvement was not wasted, and the results seen in the life of their children encompassed more than the spiritual aspect alone.

The study recommends that parents and the church and future researchers develop practical plans and work together in developing children's spirituality. Parents can ensure that their own spirituality is also related to and helpful to the development of their children.

Cing Sian Thawn. "The Influence of the Hidden Curriculum on Students' Christlike Formation in Theological Schools in Myanmar: A Qualitative Appreciative Inquiry." Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Learning Dissertation, 2026.

This qualitative appreciative inquiry study explores how the hidden curriculum influences Christlike formation among theological students in two seminaries in Myanmar using social learning theory, activity theory, and ecological systems theory as an integrated framework that provides a multi-layered lens for understanding this influence. Twenty-four participants were purposively selected, twelve from each school, comprising current students and alumni. Data were collected through focus group discussions, individual semi-structured interviews, and field observations conducted with the assistance of an observer. MAXQDA Analytics Pro was used to analyze the data thematically and to generate visual code clouds and thematic coding structures to support the presentation of the findings.

The findings indicate that the hidden curriculum of theological seminaries not only deeply influences students' Christlike formation but also serves as the main vehicle shaping them to be more like Christ, as participants consistently attribute their deepest spiritual and character formation more to the hidden curriculum of role models, relationships, community life, institutional structures, and campus culture than to formal classroom instruction. Faculty, peers, and mentors emerge as central agents of formation, as students closely observe their humility, compassion, resilience, and faith. Organizational structures and daily routines, such as interdenominational community, leadership roles, shared responsibilities, and systems

of discipline and accountability, function as a powerful hidden curriculum that either fosters Christlike virtues or, when marked by hierarchy and favoritism, hinders formation. Instructional models and assessment practices likewise communicate what is truly valued; participatory, embodied teaching and empathetic feedback support holistic growth, whereas grade-driven and harsh assessment cultures damage confidence and mutual love. The overall ethos of both seminaries, characterized by hospitality, “family-like” support, and faculty-modeled values of dependence on God, humility, simplicity, stewardship, and justice, profoundly shapes students’ identity and vocation. At the same time, participants identify inconsistencies—such as gossip and unfair treatment—and express hopes for more Christlike and committed faculty presence, institutional justice, structured spiritual practices, and support for ministry placements.

The study concludes that the hidden curriculum is best understood as a pervasive formative force in which relationships, routines, structures, culture, and spaces play a decisive role in shaping who students become. This suggests that theological seminaries are most likely to effectively nurture students’ Christlike formation when they attend carefully to the hidden curriculum. Consequently, the study calls seminaries to intentionally align their hidden curriculum elements—such as organizational structure, interrelationships, pedagogical practices, and institutional cultures—with their stated commitment to Christlike formation, thereby cultivating an atmosphere in which God’s transforming work can be experienced by students. These insights contribute to scholarship on hidden curriculum and theological education and offer insights for seminaries seeking to nurture Christlike leaders for the church and society.

Ford, David D. “Contextualization In Theological Education: A Case-Study Inquiry into the Theological Curricula of North Indian Theological Schools.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Learning Dissertation, 2026.

An important concern confronting contemporary theological education in

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the Majority World is the need to make the curriculum and instruction in theological education more contextually significant. This study seeks to address this concern using historical, missiological, and educational perspectives. In addition, the specific context of North India was used as a field research case study to discover how theological schools are approaching this important concern.

Much attention has been given to the importance of the contextual nature of theology in recent times. Convincing arguments based on Biblical studies, historical theology, and the social sciences have been made to take seriously the influence that culture, society, and history have on how people think and, particularly, how Christians understand the Bible and the nature of their engagement in their local context.

An extension of the conversation around contextual theology applies to the content and teaching methodology that has traditionally characterized theological education around the world. A common observation is that theological education has not adapted well from its roots in Western Christendom to the wide variation of cultural and historical contexts in the non-Western world. This lament applies also to the West where contemporary cultural and social realities have moved on from the time when theological education became institutionalized. This leads to the conclusion that the theological curriculum, as it is typically conceptualized and developed, is in need of new theological and practical perspectives that inform its development.

In order to gain insight into the challenges and opportunities theological schools face in the non-Western world, this study focused on a sample of ATA-accredited schools in North India. The field research component of this dissertation features interviews with key stakeholders of the curriculum such as alumni and institutional leaders. Stakeholders such as these should have an influence on the development of the theological curriculum, which is why this study sought to discover their perceptions of what is working well in preparing students for effective ministry as well as what can be improved.

The results of the study show that there is a significant divergence between what alumni consider important concerns that arise in their vocational work and what the theological curriculum emphasises. An analysis of the required reading materials that inform the study of the various courses featured in theological curricula also indicates a prioritization of Western publications with very little representation of authors and publications representing theological scholarship from the non-Western world.

This study offers several major recommendations. First, schools are encouraged to broaden curriculum evaluation processes by engaging a wider range of stakeholders—including church leaders, laypersons, and community representatives—in addition to administrators and alumni, in order to ensure greater contextual relevance and accountability. Second, institutions should collaborate across a larger network of theological schools, including ATA-accredited institutions, to enable comparative evaluation and shared best practices. Third, schools are advised to move toward developing data-informed curriculum proposals that may serve as adaptable models for contextualized theological training. Finally, particular attention should be given to examining differences between English- and non-English-medium programs, as such comparisons may reveal important insights for strengthening theological education in India and other non-Western contexts.

Hollenberg, Stephen Michael. “Assessing the Long-Term Sustainability of the Church of the Nazarene’s World Evangelism Fund for Global Missions, 1961–2025.” Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies Thesis, 2026.

This study assesses the long-term sustainability of the Church of the Nazarene’s World Evangelism Fund (WEF) as a cooperative funding model for global missions. Using a quantitative, descriptive design, the study is guided by a conceptual framework informed by Wesleyan-Nazarene stewardship perspectives and by Resource Dependence Theory, which understands sustainability in relation to three interrelated elements: the financial strength of the fund, the denominational participation base from which it

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is supported, and the denomination's capacity to sustain missionary deployment over time. Within this framework, the study analyzes long-term trends in WEF giving, regional membership, worship attendance, number of active churches, and missionary deployment in order to evaluate whether the denomination's primary cooperative mission fund remains sustainable under changing demographic, ecclesial, and financial conditions. The study draws on institutional data obtained from multiple departments of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center, especially Nazarene Research Services, Nazarene Missions International, the Global Mission Department, and selected archival and historical sources. It focuses primarily on the period 1961–2025, the broadest span for which sufficiently consistent denomination-wide WEF data were available, while other variables are examined across the longest comparable periods allowed by the data.

The findings show that the WEF remains a real and functioning cooperative mechanism, but its long-term sustainability as the denomination's primary funding model appears increasingly constrained. Nominal WEF giving rose strongly through 2007 and then plateaued, but inflation-adjusted WEF giving followed a much weaker long-term pattern and by 2025 had declined 51.0 percent from its 2002 peak. The WEF also occupied a progressively smaller share of total giving, declining from 7.65 percent in 1968 to 4.41 percent in 2025. At the same time, the denomination's participation base became much more globally distributed, especially in membership and number of active churches, while the strongest regional patterns of WEF support remained concentrated in USA/Canada. Missionary capacity also weakened over time in size, composition, and funding support. By 2025, total reported missionary deployment had fallen to 467, a decline of 41.7 percent from the 2004 peak, and only 344 of those missionaries were fully funded. Fully funded deployment in 2025 was also 44.5 percent below its 1985 peak.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the WEF has not collapsed, but its ability to sustain global missions with the same breadth, strength, and proportional support seen in earlier periods has weakened. The study contributes to denominational reflection and planning and to intercultural

studies by offering a descriptive case of how a global denomination sustains, strains, and reconfigures cross-cultural mission through shared patterns of funding, participation, and missionary deployment.

Jeong, Duyoung. “Developing a Church Growth Manual for the Lord’s Garden Church of the Nazarene: Ndi, Nmi, Nyi, And Ncm Applied To The Local Church.” Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Ministry Project, 2026.

The purpose of this study is to develop a church growth manual for the Lord’s Garden Church of the Nazarene, located in Seoul, and to evaluate its effectiveness in strengthening church growth and missional identity. The study aims to contextualize the ministry structures of the Church of the Nazarene within a local church context, examining their impact on ministry participation, spiritual growth, and missional identity. This research applies the ministry structure of the Church of the Nazarene—Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI), Nazarene Missions International (NMI), Nazarene Youth International (NYI), and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM)—to the local church in order to increase the members’ participation and improve their understanding of the church’s mission. The study was conducted in three stages. First, a church growth manual was developed based on a literature review and an analysis of the church’s context. Second, ministry teams were organized around the four ministry areas, and the ministry was implemented through these team-based structures. Third, pre- and post-surveys were conducted to analyze changes in members’ perceptions and ministry participation. The results showed that applying the Nazarene ministry structure had a positive effect on improving members’ understanding of the church’s mission. It also increased their willingness to participate in ministry and their expectations for the church community. In addition, the team-based ministry structure centered on the four ministry areas was found to be effective in strengthening the church’s missional identity. This research presents a practical church growth model that applies the theological identity and ministry structure of the Church of the

Nazarene to a local church. It also shows the potential of an integrated mission strategy for revitalizing the church.

Jeong, Hoom-manego. “The Integration of Children’s Ministry into Intergenerational Ministry in the Lord’s Garden Church of the Nazarene in Seoul, South Korea.” Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Ministry Project, 2026.

This study addresses the challenges of the small number of children in the Children’s Ministry and the wide generational gap within The Lord’s Garden Church of the Nazarene. While the church affirms the importance of Children’s Ministry, it acknowledges that the responsibility for spiritual formation should not rest solely within this ministry. Thus, the study explores the integration of Children’s Ministry into Intergenerational Ministry, emphasizing that the biblical call to teach, guide, and include children is a shared responsibility of the entire church community. Employing a qualitative research design, data were generated through KII, FGD, and surveys of church stakeholders. The study underwent four phases: program development, pilot implementation, assessment, and adoption. Guided by the Nazarene Discipleship International 5Es framework, a contextualized program was developed, pilot tested, and evaluated. Findings indicate positive perceptions of the program, strengthened relationships among children, youth, and adults, and increased awareness of shared responsibility in nurturing faith, fostering intentional engagement, and promoting a more inclusive and participatory church environment. While the program demonstrated numerous strengths, several challenges were also identified. The study recommends regular evaluation of the program to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

Jin, Encheng. “The Motivations and Learning Process Behind the Protest of the Korean-Chinese Community in Daerim-Dong Against the Midnight Runners in Light of Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Learning Dissertation, 2026.

The dissertation examines the August 28, 2017, protest in Daerim-Dong organized by Korean-Chinese (Joseonjok) immigrants in response to the discriminatory portrayals in the Korean film *Midnight Runners*. The protest was the response to the false and discriminatory portrayal of Korean-Chinese immigrants as female egg traffickers. The Korean Chinese residing in Daerim-Dong (recognized as the center where Korean Chinese live in Seoul) had silently endured much unfair treatment in their life. However, in this historical context, Korean Chinese began forming their own organization to protect themselves and improve their reputation. The integration of these organizations not only provided a shelter but also actively contributed to changing stereotypes about Korean Chinese through community engagement and contributions. The protest led to a lawsuit, and committees formed by Korean-Chinese immigrants sued the film-making company, *Movie Rock*. They won in the second trial.

The study employs Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) to deliver the motivations behind the protest and the process of perspective transformation. Although the theory effectively explains the internal transformation, it has limitations in addressing the broader influences of family, community, and national context. To address this gap, the dissertation incorporates Robert Cox's emphasis on social support and integrates philosophical insights from the Confucian text *Great Learning*, which links internal cultivation with external social responsibility. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is used to bridge the conceptual gap by providing a structured framework for understanding familial, communal, and societal influences.

Chapter one outlines the research background, research question, and briefly illustrates the research design and theoretical foundations.

Chapter two presents the historical background of Korean Chinese immigration, identifies the challenges the Korean Chinese faced, reviews the development of the theory and its Biblical foundation related to transformation, and analyzes existing studies that have utilized the Transformative

Learning Theory in different contexts.

Chapter three describes the research methodology for a qualitative case study, including the strategies for data gathering and analysis.

Chapter four summarizes the key findings on motivations, the transformation process, and the perspective shift following the protest. The chapter follows the structure of the theory and research questions.

Chapter five serves as a conclusion, synthesizing the findings and outlining directions for the future study.

Lee, Yosub. “Holiness Theology in the Sermons of Rev. Robert Chung (Chung Nam-Soo): Historical Legacy And Future Direction For The Korean Church.” Master Of Science in Theology Thesis, 2026.

This study examines the holiness theology found in the sermons of Chung Nam-soo (Robert Chung) within the context of the Korean Holiness revival movement of the early 1930s. Chung graduated from Asbury College in the United States in 1926 and returned to Korea in 1927, where he began an itinerant evangelistic ministry, traveling throughout the country and preaching the message of holiness through the tent revival meetings. In particular, the tent revival meetings held between 1932 and 1935 played a decisive role in spreading the message of holiness, shaping the theological identity of the Korean Holiness Church, and expanding its public influence. After Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Chung encountered the Church of the Nazarene in 1948 and emphasized the necessity of entire salvation through the message of holiness. This encounter became an important turning point for the beginning of the Church of the Nazarene ministry in Korea and contributed to the formation and development of holiness theology within the Korean Church of the Nazarene.

This study focuses on four representative sermons preserved in *The Messenger of Flame*, a two-volume collection of Chung Nam-soo’s evangelistic sermons. The research analyzes how the core doctrines of Holiness theology—repentance, regeneration (new birth), and sanctification—are

articulated in Chung's preaching. Employing a historical–theological approach combined with sermon analysis, this study develops an analytical framework that examines theological themes, modes of definition, theological features, and practical orientation within the sermons.

The analysis demonstrates that Chung Nam-soo's preaching presents the Christian life within the order of salvation as a movement that calls believers to genuine repentance, regeneration, and the pursuit of sanctification. The findings reveal significant continuity with the Wesleyan–Holiness tradition while also reflecting the distinctive revivalistic spirituality of the early Korean Holiness movement that contributed to the formation and development of the Church of the Nazarene in Korea. By examining the theological structure and pastoral intention of Chung Nam-soo's sermons, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical development of Korean Holiness theology and highlights the continuing significance of holiness revival preaching for the contemporary Korean church.

Pau Lian Mung. "The Impact of Zomi Culture on the Transition from Animistic Beliefs to Christianity." Master of Science in Theology Thesis, 2026.

This thesis investigates the cultural and religious transformation of the Zomi people in Chin State, Myanmar, focusing on their transition from animistic beliefs to Christianity. Drawing on historical analysis, qualitative interviews, and community narratives, the study explores how missionary activity reshaped Zomi identity, education, and social structures while also generating conflict and syncretism. The research highlights both continuity and change: animistic practices that persist within Christian communities, values shared between the two traditions, and the ways Christianity introduced new forms of unity and social organization. Findings reveal that while Christianity brought literacy, health services, and communal cohesion, it also disrupted traditional customs and relationships. Ultimately, this study contributes to understanding how faith and culture interact in contexts of religious conversion, offering insights into identity, syncretism,

and cultural preservation within Christianity.

Rocha, Carissa Leanne. “Evaluating Meaningful Outcomes and Children’s Sense of Being Heard: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Study Addressing Community Risk in Co-Production With Children from Two Communities in Bolivia and Ecuador.” Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development Dissertation, 2026.

This study explored how methodologies guided by meaningful participation principles affect meaningful outcomes and children’s sense of being heard in child protection efforts. Honoring children’s rights to a voice and participation in their protection is challenging, particularly in contexts affected by poverty. Designing effective methodologies that balance protection and participation, address practical and ethical considerations, and create a meaningful experience from the children’s perspectives remains an understudied area. Several studies have shown that children aged nine years and older have some understanding of digital risks, including strategies and awareness of safety and potential harm. Also, children this age could benefit from discussing and addressing risk, as they should be developmentally capable, and fears about risks in their environment are of particular concern. Therefore, twenty-two children aged nine to twelve participated in this exploratory mixed-methods study at Unbound projects in Bolivia and Ecuador to test such a methodology.

Supported by Unbound leadership, children from each group identified risks in their communities, prioritized one, and developed a plan to address it. Adult participants evaluated and supported the children’s plans and committed to following up on the other identified risks. Children, adult participants, and facilitators then completed Likert-scale surveys with open-ended questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology and assess the extent to which meaningful outcomes and children’s sense of being heard were evident after participation. They also provided recommendations for future implementations.

The methodology was grounded in a child-participation framework that

builds on Lundy's Model of Participation (2007), incorporating emphases on safety, context, and children's sense of being heard from The Student Voice (2025), Henze-Pedersen and Bengtsson's CPC Model (2024), and Olsen's Empowerment Model (2023). This framework was supported by meaningful participation principles drawn from theology, child participation, trauma-informed care, and decolonizing research, and implemented through resilience theory and asset-based community development. A holistic child development lens guided assessment of the children's welfare throughout participation.

The findings suggest that the methodology largely balanced protection and participation and produced positive effects. The children demonstrated a level of analytical ability and community awareness that exceeded adult expectations. They identified risks and produced tangible, feasible projects to increase community safety, learned strategies within their capacity to protect themselves, and were not harmed in the process. Adults gained new insight into children's perceptions of risk and their own ability to support children's participation. The data also suggest that the methodology largely produced Lansdown's four meaningful outcomes of child participation, and most children reported feeling heard across all components of the Feeling Heard Scale.

This exploratory study lays a foundation for child-participation researchers, NGOs, and faith communities seeking to prioritize children's voices in addressing community risk. It also offers an initial evidence base for methodologies that honor both children's right to participate and their right to be safe. A final toolkit will be shared with Unbound based on the study results for use by other interested projects. It has the potential to be adapted for other age groups or other vulnerable groups.

Slabospitskaia, Ekaterina. "Life among the Dead: Factors Behind Settlement and Survival in the Manila North Cemetery, Philippines." Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies Thesis, 2026.

This study explores the factors behind settlement and survival strategies of families living in the Manila North Cemetery (MNC), Philippines. While cemeteries are traditionally spaces for the dead, MNC has become home to thousands of informal settlers who live among tombs due to extreme poverty, lack of housing, and social exclusion. The research seeks to understand why people choose or are forced to live in this environment, how they sustain daily life under such conditions, and how different organizations, including NGOs, government agencies, and churches, interact with and support this marginalized community.

The study is based on integrated approach combining urban poverty theory, social marginalization, and anthropological perspectives on slum communities. It also integrates a theological perspective emphasizing human dignity, compassion, and incarnational ministry. Using these frameworks, the research examines both structural causes of poverty and the internal resilience of the community. The concept of “quiet encroachment” helps explain how residents gradually occupy and adapt cemetery space for survival, while community participation highlights their agency in coping with hardship.

Findings reveal that settlement in the cemetery is primarily driven by economic necessity, migration, and lack of access to affordable housing. Residents rely on informal livelihoods such as grave caretaking, small-scale vending, and manual labor. Despite severe limitations in access to education, healthcare, and government services, the community demonstrates strong social networks, mutual support systems, and adaptive coping mechanisms. Faith plays a significant role as a source of emotional strength, meaning-making, and resilience.

The study concludes that life in Manila North Cemetery represents both extreme marginalization and remarkable human resilience. While structural inequalities continue to trap residents in poverty, the presence of NGOs, churches, and informal community systems provides partial support. The research highlights the need for inclusive policies, community-based interventions, and holistic approaches that address both material and spiritual

needs. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of urban poverty and offers practical insights for ministries, policymakers, and organizations working with marginalized populations.

This study uses a qualitative case study research design to provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of families residing in Manila North Cemetery. The research focuses on a small, purposefully selected sample to allow for detailed exploration rather than statistical generalization. Participants include selected families living in the cemetery, as well as key informants such as community leaders and officials.

Data collection was conducted using multiple methods to ensure triangulation and credibility. These methods include semi-structured interviews, participant observation, informal conversations, and key informant interviews. Interviews were designed to explore personal histories, livelihood strategies, access to resources, and social and spiritual experiences. Observations were conducted during multiple field visits, documenting daily activities, living conditions, and community interactions. Field notes were systematically recorded to capture contextual and behavioral data.

The adequacy of the data gathering instruments was ensured through careful alignment with the research questions. Interview guides were structured to allow both consistency and flexibility, enabling participants to share detailed narratives. Language considerations were addressed through translation and interpretation when necessary, ensuring accurate communication with participants. Ethical procedures were strictly followed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, selecting participants who are directly involved in or knowledgeable about life in the cemetery. This approach allows the researcher to gather rich, relevant, and context-specific data.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. Transcribed interviews and field notes were coded and categorized into themes. Cross-case analysis was applied to identify patterns, similarities, and differences among participants. The analysis focused on identifying key themes such

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as poverty, survival strategies, social networks, faith, and external support systems.

The findings show that settlement in Manila North Cemetery is primarily driven by poverty, lack of affordable housing, and rural-to-urban migration. Families enter the cemetery through informal networks and opportunities such as grave caretaking. Residents rely on informal livelihoods and shared resources to survive daily life. Access to basic services such as water, electricity, healthcare, and education is severely limited. Social stigma and lack of legal recognition further marginalize the community.

Despite these challenges, strong social networks and mutual support systems exist among residents. Faith plays a central role in providing emotional coping, resilience, and a sense of hope. NGOs and churches contribute to meeting both practical and spiritual needs, although their support is limited. Government presence is weak, resulting in gaps in service delivery and protection.

The study concludes that the cemetery community reflects a complex reality of both structural marginalization and human resilience. Poverty is not only economic but also social and institutional. However, the presence of community solidarity and faith demonstrates potential for transformation.

The study recommends increased collaboration between government, NGOs, and faith-based organizations to provide integrated support. It also suggests the development of inclusive housing policies and improved access to basic services.

The implications of this research highlight the importance of community-based and participatory approaches in addressing urban poverty. It also emphasizes the role of faith and incarnational ministry in marginalized contexts. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of informal settlements and offers practical insights for policy, ministry, and social development initiatives.

Thang Hli Pai. “Diasporic Women in the New Testament: An Exploration of Encounters in the Book of Acts During Paul’s Second Missionary Journey.” Master of Science in Theology Thesis, 2026.

This thesis examines the experiences of diasporic women in the New Testament, particularly in Acts 16–18 during Paul’s second missionary journey, focusing on Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman; the slave woman in Philippi; and Priscilla in Corinth. It explores their experiences, challenges, identities, and roles in the early church, utilizing social-scientific criticism and a diaspora framework. The findings reveal that these women, while facing displacement and oppression, demonstrated strength, faith, and active participation in God’s mission. The narrative of Lydia highlights the importance of hospitality and from liminality to fruitfulness. The slave woman’s story emphasizes exploitation and lack of community support but also hope amidst suffering. Priscilla’s involvement showcases ministry partnership and displacement as an opportunity for leadership. The research asserts that diaspora can foster new relationships and faith communities. Ultimately, it illustrates how God transforms the pain of diaspora into a mission of hope, affirming that challenging journeys can fulfill a divine purpose. By valuing the voices of diasporic women, both ancient and modern, we recognize God’s redemptive work in our broken world. This research encourages the church and readers today to value marginalized women, listen to their stories, and create places of care, belonging, and hope.