

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A STRATEGIC EVANGELISM PROJECT FOR THE YOUTH OF THE NEWLY FORMED
SOUTH BROOKLYN ACADEMY SPARKLERS: THE INDISCRIMINATE DISTRIBUTION
OF GOD'S FOUR EVERLASTING COVENANT PROVISIONS.

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BY
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ABSTRACT

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God's prophetic word to Jeremiah (31:31-34) echoes God's plan of redemption which was there, even before the foundation of the earth. In this prophecy, God declares that "He will write His law on the hearts of men". God's law is His Word, and this Word "became flesh and dwelt among men" (John 1:14). This Thesis Project focuses on the first stage of Evangelism, sowing. The membership of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, represent the youth arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are passionate about the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and the Three Angels Messages (Rev. 14:6-12). However, because they are driven by the desire to have new converts, their focus is on reaping more than sowing. This has resulted in a negative growth of the church.

This Thesis Project is designed to create a paradigm shift commencing at the youth level. It shifts from the human numbers-driven reaping to the Holy Spirit-led sowing. It is about the *Promised Seed* (Gen. 3:15). This promise is enveloped in God's Everlasting Covenant, and its inherent four provisions of sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy with God, and justification. The *Promised Seed* is the embodiment of these provisions, and God has bequeathed these provisions to all mankind – from "the least to the greatest of these" (Jer. 31:34).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The youthful membership of this newly formed South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club is mission-oriented. This group represents the youth arm of the Seventh-Day Adventist church, and as its name suggests, its mission is to direct all mankind to the “path to Jesus Christ” by spreading the “Good News.” This researcher was himself a member of a similar group during his youthful days and thus understands its dynamics. However, this researcher has discovered a fundamental flaw in the missional approach of the church. In the past, the general membership was driven by the high demand for reaping/harvesting at the expense of not fully embracing the joy of sowing. Indeed, the members profess having a passion for saving lost souls, and that is most commendable, but how would profession without effective and Holy Spirit-led delivery accomplish the mission? This church has made a fundamental error by displaying a passion to reap without sowing seeds in the context of the “Good News.” This thesis project is being undertaken to minimize and ultimately remove the spirit of ignorance in the context of God’s Everlasting Covenant i.e. God’s Everlasting Covenant and its inherent provisions are for all mankind It is designed to focus on indiscriminate Holy Spirit-directed sowing instead of human, egotistical selective reaping.

Due to varying hermeneutical approaches to understanding God’s intervention, even among pastors across all of Christendom, the “information delivery machinery” exhibits inconsistencies. With these inconsistencies, especially within congregations, soul-winning efforts have been and will continue to be hampered until a common approach to sowing the seeds of the gospel is pursued. It is also evident that some members of the church hesitate to sow seeds, which has been attributed to a weak and shaky biblical knowledge base. This problem gives the

researcher added impetus to humbly submit to the Eternal God and to work diligently and purposefully towards the ultimate elimination of this problem.

This is an ideal opportunity to introduce this focused approach to a new, young, vibrant, and organized group of people in the body of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers. The Everlasting Gospel is potent and remains the same as it was from Adam to Noah, to Abraham, to Israel at Sinai, to David, to Jesus Christ, and to all the inhabitants of earth until the end of earth's history. Therefore, it must be delivered through a well "oiled" machinery that would remove the mal-practice of perversion and externalization of the gospel (legalistic response) and replace it with a Holy Spirit-generated, loving response to the Good News and its irresistible grace-based provisions.

1.2 Statement of Limitations

In its four provisions of the Everlasting Covenant, God offers all this gift of redemption in Christ, made possible at Calvary. The offering of this gift, however, is neither a guarantee that all have already automatically accomplished eternal life; God's Everlasting Covenant offer is timeless, i.e it never changes, for God never changes. By accepting God's grace through Christ, one also accepts the Everlasting Covenant provisions Using the Jeremiah four-step model (31:31-34) the first step of the process, sanctification (33) is the work of a lifetime (John 17:19), engineered by Jesus Christ to a totally surrendered individual who would stand righteous before the Father at the final judgement.

This study does not seek to refute the organizing principle for Christian Theology, which is driven by the covenant concept. The history of redemption is viewed under the framework of three overarching theological covenants viz. the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. This study seeks neither to prove (through biblical study) the

existence of such covenants (also referred to as Theological Covenants), nor to disprove them. Although not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, these covenants are referenced throughout Scripture and are therefore under another order of classification.

The focus of this project will be on the uniformity of the covenants and the provisions assured by God to all those who accept his free offering of salvation. This project seeks to provide a basis for evangelistic outreach through the understanding that God made one covenant with all of nature before the foundation of the world – the Everlasting Covenant. Just as the provision of grace was available to Adam and successive generations, so it remains available to all mankind, until the second coming of Christ. It is through God’s grace, that the provisions of sanctification (God placing His law in His people’s hearts - Jer. 31:33), reconciliation (the relationship between God and His people – 33), personal intimacy (all will know God – 34), and justification (God will forgive the sins of His people and remember those sins no more – 34) are still available; this is Good News. In his book *The Irresistible Community*, author Bill Donahue posits, “we will stumble and fall more times than we can count. But there is grace and mercy every step of the way”.¹

The Bible in its entirety attests of one Everlasting Covenant, and by being one covenant means that nothing has changed or will ever change; the differentiation between the old covenant and new covenant addresses God’s renewed approach in writing His Law on the hearts of His people, instead of on tablets of stone (Jer. 31:33, 2 Cor. 3:3).. In fact, there is no old and new covenant, but rather the first and the renewed covenant. The writer of Hebrews, citing Jeremiah’s four step model (Heb. 8:7-13), implies that both the Everlasting Covenant and its provisions remain the same, although God referred to it as “new” (Heb. 8:8), but this “new” application

¹ Bill Donahue, *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, p. 224

points to the four provisions that were not explicitly offered by God in His first offering of the covenant. In the first offering, He had disregarded His Own people for their failure to continue in His covenant (9). This writer's project will not expend much time studying God's nature in addressing man's failure to honor His covenant, for man is incapable of perfect obedience. Rather, his project is designed to magnify God's agape love for all mankind despite man's sin nature. As expressions of His love, God's four provisions are personified through His son Jesus Christ the promised Seed, who came in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4).

1.3 Theoretical Basis

Many proponents of Protestant Theology hold that many of the precepts contained within the law of God were "nailed to the cross" in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. There is general agreement within this field in the understanding of the covenants of redemption, works, and grace, and this agreement serves as a potential point of reference for a critical examination of God's Everlasting Covenant, by way of the first and renewed covenants classification. Scholars must accept that God has established an Everlasting Covenant, and to hypothesize a change in God's law is paradoxical since God is His Everlasting Covenant, and God does not change (Mal. 3:6; John 1:1). This thesis project is undertaken to deliver the Good News in the same way it was delivered to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus (Who also ratified the Everlasting Covenant – Gal. 3:17), and all mankind until the eventual return of Jesus Christ. As this researcher shares this information, the Evangelistic Delivery Machinery of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers would receive the added impetus to lovingly responding to God's mission of sowing seeds.

God first presented His law to Adam in the Garden of Eden – the law of obedience (Gen. 2:16-17), and He explicitly warned that disobedience would result in death. Many biblical

scholars posit that God’s test was one of man’s being able to “do” and this defines the covenant of works, while others argue that love was the basis of the Everlasting Covenant. Hosea 6:7 confirms that “like Adam, Israel and Judah transgressed the covenant.” Covenants have signs, and the implied sign of this covenant is the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” (17). This tree was placed in the Garden as a reminder and as a test, and the sign was provided by God Himself. Within the covenant is the relationship with God and all of creation. As part of this covenant, God gave mankind dominion (Gen. 1:28) over the earth, but covenants are usually accompanied with stipulations of rewards and punishments. Unfortunately, as the narrative shows in Gen. 3, man was not capable of “doing the work.” What would be the results of man’s inherent inability? What were the divine provisions in the event of man’s failure?

The Covenant of Redemption was applied to the sin condition of man; God lost man to sin personified (Rev. 12:9), and this was due to man’s inability to “do the work” (Gen. 3:8-11), and death was the penalty for failing to do the work (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23a). Adam’s death represents death to all mankind (Rom. 5: 12; 1 Cor. 15:21a, 22a) since mankind cannot be saved by works (Eph. 2:9a). Indeed, death occurred immediately in the Garden, just as God declared (Gen. 2:17); mankind did not die physically in this instant, but his disobedience (failure to do the work) resulted in an inability to face God, hence his implicit separation or loss of relationship – spiritual death. The Covenant of Redemption was designed to recreate a pathway to restore that relationship of “oneness” or “onement.”² The implicit death of an animal (3:21) provided substitutionary atonement (restoration of relationship through blood sacrifice); God’s gift of grace (unmerited favor), personified by Jesus Christ—who was there even before the creation of

² Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained?* pp. 79

the world (2 Tim. 1:9)—was freely offered to man. The stipulation of the law is that transgressors will die (Rom. 6:23a) but grace offers life (Rom. 6:23b; Eph. 2:8-10).

While man continues to be unable “do the works”, God’s unchanging nature in His undying desire for a relationship with man recreated the earth through the historical phenomenal cleansing of the entire earth by way of the great mabbul/flood (Gen. 7:6). The universality of the Everlasting Covenant is seen in the physical/wide-spread nature of the mabbul/flood. The wickedness (implicit separation from God) of man was so great that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). God expressed His sorrow for “making man on the earth” (Gen. 6:6), but the precious grace of time was offered for man to make amends through the preaching of the righteous Noah (Gen.6:9) for almost one hundred years (Gen. 5:32; 7:6). God still extended His hand of grace to mankind by offering all a place of safety in the ark; unfortunately, only Noah, his wife, his three sons, and his sons’ wives entered the ark (Gen. 7:6). God opened “all the fountains of the great deep, as well as the floodgates of the sky. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights” (Gen. 7:11, 12).

God’s relational nature is exhibited as the righteous family exit the ark one hundred-fifty days later (Gen. 7:24). God, using creational language (Gen. 9:1), repeats the blessings He had bestowed upon Adam; now, Noah and his sons are told to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1). In Gen. 9:8-17, God explicitly speaks of His covenant with all mankind; the human representatives at this Everlasting Covenant renewal are Noah and his sons, and God offers the rainbow as a sign of His covenant to all mankind. In verse sixteen, God speaks of the same covenant as “the Everlasting Covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

With the call of Abram, God defines sanctification (setting apart); this Everlasting Covenant renewal required Abram to leave his home/human comfort zone to be made a great nation (Gen. 12). This narrative shows that at seventy-five years old, Abram, being promised a son, believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Many biblical scholars argue that the promise of the land literally refers to geographic Israel, but the Everlasting Covenant, restated by God to Abram, highlights God's deep relational desire towards all mankind. God changes the name of the sanctified one from Abram to Abraham – father of many nations (Gen. 17:5), and His wife's name from Sarai to Sarah – mother of nations (Gen. 17:16). The promised son is delivered to one hundred-year-old Abraham (Gen. 21:5) and ninety-year-old Sarah (Gen. 17:17) for the blessing of all mankind. The supreme test of the offering of Isaac and the provision of a lamb by God on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22) point to the universality of the faith-based covenant; the lamb represents the promised Messiah Who will one day give His Own life for the salvation of all mankind (Is. 53:7; John 1:29, 36). The only time man was required to provide a covenant sign was through the act of circumcision, which has continued through all generations.

Moses, the man chosen by God to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 3:10) is part of the biblical soteriological meta-narrative disputed by many biblical scholars, historians, and scientists, yet proven by many more. In this Mosaic narrative, God's Everlasting Covenant is most visibly displayed with all its provisions for humanity. Man's duty towards God is clearly defined in terms of worship to God the Creator. The jealous God (Ex. 20:5), through Moses, warned the Egyptian Pharaoh that the people must be allowed to leave so that they may "worship Him" (Ex. 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3). In Egypt, the Israelites were forced into idolatry; the Bible implicitly states that Pharaoh usurps the authority of God. A jealous God (Ex.

20:5) is always displeased when His people give worship to anyone but Him. God longs for a restoration of relationship with Israel; therefore, Moses is sent on mission to fulfill God's Everlasting Covenant, established more than four hundred years earlier with Abraham.

Archaeological exhibits attest to the historical accuracy of this narrative, especially regarding the Red Sea escape in the visible remains of Egyptian chariots. Through Moses, the human agent, God restates His Everlasting Covenant with man in the desert (Ex. 31:12-18) with the Sabbath as the sign thereof (Ex. 20:8,10,11; 16:23,25; Lev. 16-26; Acts 1:12; 13:14,27,42,44; 15:21;16:13;17:2; 18:4; Col. 2:16; Heb.4:9)

God restates His Everlasting Covenant in the Davidic narrative; With the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:8-16), God describes His kingdom as everlasting, just as He does in speaking to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 2:35b, 44). The last restatement of God's Everlasting Covenant occurs with the coming of Jesus Christ, the Chosen Messiah. Jesus is the One to Whom all these (restated) covenants point. In Matthew 26:28, Jesus declares, "This is My blood of the covenant." The law given to Moses is "holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12), and Jesus explicitly states that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17).

Covenant theology can be problematic when one employs the dual covenant approach. Gavin D'Costa argues that to understand God's covenant is to understand God, and because God never changes, there can be only one "normative covenant within which there are many further legitimate covenants, because there is only one God who is disclosed in many ways; however, for discerning these ways there is only one set of criteria available to Christians; an open form of

Christocentric trinitarianism.”³ The writer of this thesis argues that indeed one’s experience of God’s Everlasting Covenant and its inherent provisions is guaranteed through Jesus Christ.

1.4 Statement of Methodology

This Missional Outreach Machinery/Evangelistic Outreach Tool is being designed to differentiate between an outward or externalized response to the gospel (legalistic) and an inward or internalized Holy Spirit generated (loving) response. This project will provide a strategic evangelistic tool that will systematically deliver the four provisions of the Everlasting Covenant; comprehensive but simple studies on sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy with God, and justification through God’s redemptive grace will be conducted. One half-hour Power Point presentation will be delivered to thirteen primary participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, followed by four half-hour sessions on each provision. One half hour session will be conducted each week for four consecutive weeks. Each provision will be presented using Bible-based questionnaires (in-reach). The members will be allowed to participate freely, sharing their past experiences while recognizing their deficiencies and need for total surrender to the saving grace of Jesus, ideally resulting in a loving response to His call to “go.”

The members will be exposed to the concept of incarnational ministry, i.e., to have the living Christ come alive in them. Using the Matthew 6 formula, Hybels and Mittleberg present their own formula for becoming a “contagious” Christian.⁴ They argue that being the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13) means to have maximum impact on a specific target. However, one’s

³ D’Costa, Gavin, *One Covenant or Many Covenants? Toward a Theology of Christian-Jewish Relations*, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, ISSN 0022-0558, 07/1990, Volume 27, Issue 3, p. 441 (cited 01/25/2018)

⁴ Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, pp. 39

ministry can only impact his/her world by being in close proximity with the lost (Matt. 18:11; Luke 19:10) and communicating clearly in both words and loving deeds of kindness. The presented formula is HP (highly potent) +CP (close proximity) + CC (clear communication) = MI (maximum impact).⁵ In fact, the club's motto (Shine for Jesus) is also derived from the Matthew 5 discourse of Jesus' sermon on the mount. This writer hypothesizes that the members of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club are uniquely and strategically poised to re-enact the first century invasion of the early church by creating a paradigm shift from doing deeds for measured club rewards, to becoming like Christ and delivering the Good News.

The Sparklers Pathfinder Club is about outreach; this demonstrates incarnational ministry. When one understands and practices incarnational ministry, he/she is truly dispersing God's four Everlasting Covenant provisions. Issler argues that "if humankind is produced in the image of God then there is some of that image in God. Hence God can become incarnate."⁶ Recruitment of members into this club alone is a seed-sowing process. Although this club is the youth arm of the Seventh-day Adventist church, its members are diverse in nature: over fifty percent are unchurched. This project is designed to create an impact from within before attempting to create an impact on the lives of twenty-six secondary participants. This writer hypothesizes that once someone receives the Seed (Jesus), he/she would be uncontrollably driven to disperse God's Everlasting Covenant provisions. Therefore, after receiving, the thirteen primary participants will each share with two unchurched adult family members or close friends.

Chapter Two addresses God's Everlasting Covenant and its relevance at any given point and time in history. Biblical language and historical context will be diligently studied to capture

⁵ Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, pp. 40

⁶ Klaus Issler. *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character*, Kindle Location 1151

a clearer picture of God's unchanging and persistent involvement in the affairs of man. Jesus teaching His disciples to pray assures Christians that they are part of the "brotherhood." He permits, "When you pray, say our Father" (Matt. 6:9); all humanity are God's children. But the question becomes, "Can Jesus speak for all eternity?" The answer is a resounding yes. Is Jesus God? The answer is also a resounding yes. When Jesus speaks, He speaks as God. The Bible declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). John further declares, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came so that "all may have life, and have life more abundantly" (John 10:10). Paul affirms that "at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:10-11).

Not only does God proclaim the Good News to all mankind, He also *is* the Good News. Why, in a perfect world, was Good News necessary? The omniscient God knew that there was going to be bad news; this was seen in the fall of man. Yes, all seemed lost after the fall, but God appeared and said, "Where are you? (Gen. 3:9). Even after a substitutionary fix (Gen. 3:21), man (Israel) continued to be separated from God through continuous disobedience, but God continued to offer His provisions through the Everlasting Covenant – He changes not (Mal. 3:6). The Jewish law accepted the finality of sin and its consequential death, but God's grace existed through Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Having been empowered through the power point presentation, the thirteen primary participants will carefully review a ten-point questionnaire that will be used as an evangelistic outreach guide to seek and save the lost. The research project will consist of four phases, each of

which will magnify one of the four provisions (sequentially) afforded by God in the Jeremiah 31:31-34 model. The writer of this passage states,

Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

In the above passage, God gives four provisions: He will put His law in the hearts of His people – **sanctification** (31:33); He will be their God and they shall be His people – **reconciliation** (31:33); He will be known by everyone – **personal intimacy** (31:34), and He will forgive His people’s iniquities and remember their sins no more – **justification** (31:34). The workshops will correspond to the contents of Chapter Three. After each workshop, the members will voluntarily share the specific irresistible provision with their two unchurched adult family members or close friends for the next seven days before returning to the club. They will deliver the respective questionnaire (App. B1, C1, D1, or E1) and its corresponding answer sheet (App. B2, C2, D2, or E2). The secondary participants will be encouraged to attempt completing each questionnaire before looking at the answer sheet. This pattern will continue until all four irresistible provisions are indiscriminately dispersed and experiences shared among group members.

Throughout the dispensation of God’s Everlasting Covenant, grace and faith are the two components that serve as the driving forces behind each provision. Regardless of the covenant classification one chooses to adopt (old covenant, new covenant classification, first covenant renewed covenant, covenant of grace, redemption, or works), the existence of these prominent

features is undisputable. In chapter three, this researcher will therefore clearly define and demonstrate how grace and faith fit into each provision as well as in the overall dispensation of the Everlasting Covenant. Using the Jeremiah model, the aim of this project is for the participants to gain a clearer appreciation of the unchanging nature of God. It is God's unchanging nature, through the workings of the Holy Spirit, that gracefully guides man to salvation in Christ.

This researcher hypothesizes that God's covenant people are not confined within a specific group, but are all inclusive, i.e., "all will know (have personal intimacy) with God, from the least to the greatest" (Jer. 31:34). One of the attractions of being a member of the Pathfinder Club has always been the number of visibly displayed honors/awards members can achieve in a very short duration. At their induction, each member is awarded an empty sash about six inches wide. The goal is to have that sash filled with honors, represented by a motif for each skill learned. This researcher will be aware of that dynamic, and focus on the seed sowing aspect of outreach. Whether a member is churched or unchurched, he/she can potentially encounter Christ, and when that happens, he/she will by extension be driven by the Holy Spirit to sow the Seed.

The Pathfinder Club has been given the task of "Shining for Jesus" and "taking Jesus to a lost world," but through this project, this researcher will define encountering Jesus in a way that will create a spiritual awakening among the members. The unchurched will be especially encouraged, knowing they may have already encountered Jesus through loving acts of unmerited kindness they might have received from others. When one receives, he/she freely gives, and this flow of God's grace from person to person ought not to be a task, but a loving response to what God has done in the life of each person – "from the least to the greatest"⁷ on any continuum,

⁷ Jer. 31: 34b

whether economic, academic, physical, psychological, social, or spiritual. Rusaw and Swanson state, “It is not those to whom we minister who meet Jesus in a ministry encounter; it is the ones who are doing the ministering! We're not Jesus to them. They are Jesus to us!”⁸ The Bible aptly supports this line of thought; in Matt. 25: 35-46, Jesus describes His incarnation in those we meet or fail to meet; i.e. when one looks at the face of the poor, the lame, the blind, the homeless, the widow, or the orphan, one is looking at Jesus.

Chapter Four is the conclusion of this thesis; from the first encounter with their two unchurched adult family members or close friends of their respective families, the thirteen primary participants would have experienced the joys of working with the Holy Spirit in the dispersion of seeds without the burden of planning to reap what has not yet been sown and cultivated. Their experience will magnify and contrast the difference between sowing, cultivating, and reaping; they will experience the joy of sowing like never before. Participants will also gain a better understanding of man’s total dependence on God as well as God’s omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. However, one must conceptualize the dynamics of the divine human collaboration in the proclamation of the Good News for the achievement of the desired outcome of this project.

In this final chapter, this researcher will clearly and comprehensively differentiate between human-driven evangelism and Holy Spirit-driven evangelism. The Good News is Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is the One Who leads men to Jesus. Furthermore, this researcher will emphasize the point that encountering Jesus is always a two-way process. The one who carries the Good News through his/her God-given gift will also encounter Jesus in the personhood of the

⁸ Rick Rusaw; Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*, Kindle Location 683

one being evangelized. Jesus declared, “What you do to the least of these, you have done unto Me” (Matt. 25:40). Jesus is incarnate in the giver as well as the receiver.

The indiscriminate sowing of seeds is the single most important component of this project. Cloud and Townsend differentiate between soil types in Jesus’ parable of the sower who sowed seeds on different soil types, and because some soil types do not yield the desired outcome, it is implied that soil selection is critical. This line of argument can cause the thirteen primary participants to be selective or discriminatory in their seed sowing project. This researcher hypothesizes that regardless of the soil type, the Holy Spirit has the ultimate authority in affecting fertilization and growth. Cloud and Townsend support the hypothesis that growth is entirely up to God. They posit, “God not only begins a process in us, wooing us to Him, but also pushes our growth to completion.”⁹

God is in control of man’s destiny, and His (God’s) concern for man is salvific in nature. This project will allow its participants to understand that all that God has made is very good, and despite man’s constant failures, God’s constant and never-changing intent is for mankind to live in a state where everything will be declared very good once more. The concept of Paradise would be more readily understood by both the primary and secondary participants along the continuum of creation, loss, and restoration of Paradise. God Himself has undertaken this restoration through the dispensation of the Everlasting Covenant. The restoration of Paradise is grace-based, so God is actively preparing humanity for the great reunion. As the participants engage in seed sowing, they will go with the eyes, ears, and heart of God, and better appreciate God’s agonizing question, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9).

⁹ Henry Cloud and John Townsend. *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*, pp. 95

“Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9) is laced with grace, for the Bible declares that “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom. 5:20). Ellen White declares, “Satan is determined that men shall not see the love of God, which led Him to give His only-begotten Son to save the lost race; for it is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance.”¹⁰ The events following that agonizing call of God offer hope for all generations—a hope that can be grasped by all who yearn for salvation. Like Adam, many are in hiding because of fear and shame, but Jesus, the promised Messiah and eschatological hope of all mankind, brings Good News to those who are lost.¹¹

1.5 Review of Literature

Books

Boesak, Allan, Curtiss Paul De Young, *Radical Reconciliation: Beyond political pietism and Christian quietism*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2012

Allan captures the heart and soul of the Gospel of Reconciliation. He examines the South African transformation from a racially divided country to one where every effort is made to completely break down those walls for the creation of a united South Africa where all peoples whether black or white may feast at the same table. He agrees that radical reconciliation comes with a risk, but it's necessary. This is the case of Christ, Who not only risked His life, but He gave His life for the propagation and perpetuation of humanity. This book speaks strongly to the Everlasting Covenant Provision where, although His people left Him (Jer. 31:32), God still promises to “be their God, and they shall be His people” (Jer. 31:33); this is the Good News of Reconciliation.

Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001.

This book defines the path to knowing Who God is. It fits directly into this researcher's working hypothesis that introduces God as creating the machinery so that “all may know Him.” The Hebrew word for “know” is *yada*, and in the context of the Everlasting Covenant, it means to have personal intimacy with God. The authors clearly define steps to know God. When one

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages book 1*, pp. 384

¹¹ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, pp. 552

knows God, he/she becomes a gardener by sowing seeds. The authors dedicate an entire chapter to sowing seeds. This researcher and the participants will garner much insight into the art of dispersing God's four Everlasting Covenant provisions.

Donahue, Bill. *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition. Grand Rapids, MI 2015

This book describes a community of which believers would enjoy being a part as well as how those within that community can open it up to the rest of the world. In his book, Donahue explicitly presents grace as the reason for God's desire for all to experience life in such a community. This thesis researcher finds that the four provisions of God's Everlasting Covenant are grace-based. Moreover, he hypothesizes that grace (unmerited favor) is irresistible. The personification of grace is Jesus Christ, the Creator of relationships. The irresistible community is one that fosters both horizontal (humanity level) relationships as well as vertical (humanity and God) relationships. The concepts from this book will help the thirteen primary participants develop a sense of accountability to each other and to God.

Ellisen, Stanley A, *Knowing God's Word*, T. Nelson, Nashville, TN, 1984

Stanley sheds light on what personal intimacy with God entails. God promises that "all will know Him, from the least to the greatest of these" (Jer. 31:34); the Hebrew *yada* is used for the English *know*. This is translated to personal intimacy, the issue addressed by Stanley. Stanley brings to light, the content and the themes of the first covenant book of the Holy Bible. There is a recurring theme of God's desire for personal intimacy with every single human being.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Third Edition. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2003.

This book offers a deep study of the political, historical, and theological perspectives of this thesis project. An understanding of God's Everlasting Covenant is paramount to the participants developing a passionate desire to become part of the covenant community. To understand that the covenant community is not exclusive to Jews but also welcoming to Gentiles through God's provisions in Jesus Christ will create a sense of ownership of the mission by the thirteen primary participants.

Hettinga, Jan David, *Follow Me: Experience the Loving Leadership of Jesus*, Colorado Springs, Colo. NavPress, 1996

Jan tactfully guides his readers towards a paradigm shift from religion to relationship with Jesus. This thesis project is all about a God Who desires relationship with every single human being, and this is expressed in Jesus Christ. Jan's argument is that Jesus is the sovereign leader of the cosmos, and His leadership is driven by love. He traces the journey to God's kingdom; the Good News is that Jesus Christ the Loving Leader is the Guide to the kingdom. In fact, Jesus Christ is the King, and when the King through humility guides His followers, this

Gospel becomes irresistible. This book is especially useful in this thesis project, as it illustrates the power of God as He offers His Everlasting Covenant Provision of Sanctification through Christ the Loving Leader.

Hull, Bill. *Jesus Christ Disciplemaker*. 20th Anniversary Edition. Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2004.

Empowering ordinary people to do extraordinary things is essentially what discipleship entails. The participants of this project are ordinary people, some of whom have never been actively involved in church life. Hull highlights the nature of God's call in the context of this ordinariness. The initial twelve disciples called by Jesus were ordinary men drawn from every walk of life. In fact, the call of Moses was a call made by Jesus thousands of years before the incarnation. Moses' response was, "Lord I am not capable." However, Jesus equips the called, transforming them from ordinary to extraordinary. This book will potentially create a fire within the hearts of the participants of this thesis project. A meeting with Jesus will expose the participants to the workings of the Holy Spirit Who will ignite a passion for them to not only do, but to be like Jesus.

Hybels, Bill, and Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994

This book presents a blueprint for initiating a spiritual breakthrough of hope in a seemingly hopeless world. It introduces its readers to concepts that allow for the discovery of one's natural evangelism style. Such a discovery can only augur well for the members of this youth group as they recognize the power that lies within themselves. They will be pleased that the contagious nature of their encounters can potentially lead others to Jesus Christ; this is the power of friendship evangelism. The irresistible distribution of the four provisions of the Everlasting Covenant rest upon the faith of the sowers. Together with the questionnaires, the nature of their conversations will determine how those seeds (provisions) will be received. In this book, the authors present a formula which will result in achieving the maximum impact.

Issler, Klaus, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* Kindle Edition, 2012

In this book, Issler tactfully articulates God's irresistible Everlasting Covenant provisions. The recurring theme of grace has made it explicitly clear that there is nothing that any human can do to earn himself/herself these provisions. Furthermore, he calls attention to the heralding of the angels in the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the coming seed and Messiah Who alone would save His people from their sin. In delivering the irresistible provisions of the Everlasting Covenant, every member of the South Brooklyn Sparklers Club will be expected to experience a new joy: by sharing the Good News, they allow Jesus to dwell within them. With such empowerment, they can, like the angels, sing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men."

Kuhn, Wagner. *Redemption's Transformation through Relief and Development: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives of God's Holistic Gospel*. Patterson Printing, Benton Harbor, MI, 2013.

When someone is in desperate need, he/she becomes Jesus. The question becomes, "Why should people be in need when God owns everything including the cattle on a thousand hills?" In this book, Kuhn argues that "the poor are people just like all other people on this earth. They were made in the image of God and are equally in need of redemption"¹² " Quoting from Jesus' discourse, he reminds that the poor will always be among us (Matt. 26:11). The gift of redemption is one that transforms, and being part of God's plan is more that a privilege; it is being "part of God's divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). This book will be useful to this researcher in defining the dispersion of God's four Everlasting Covenant provisions and providing an understanding of the grace-based nature of God's deliverance of mankind from sin and its effects.

Kung, Hans, *On Being A Christian*, Bantam Doubleday Publishing Group, Inc. NY, 1984

Hans critiques the various faces of Christianity as is expressed through the respective religions. He argues for each individual, whether Christian, atheist, Gnostic, agnostic, pietist, positivist, lukewarm and zealous Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox to personally encounter the risen Christ, who stands at the door and knock (this researcher's translation). Hans hypothesizes that when one allows Christ to enter, He/she although still a human, becomes a Christian. A Christian is one who receives the Good News, and this is what this thesis projects represents. The path to transformation commences when Christ writes His law on the heart of the believer. With this change, the recipient becomes completely dependent on Christ for sustenance, as human rationalization exits. Hans echoes God's promise to provide for His people throughout all generations, once they accept His Son Jesus Christ. This book offers a historical and theological perspective of God's divine intervention in the affairs of man from creation to restoration.

MacCarty, Skip, *In Granite or Ingrained? What the Old and New Covenants Reveal about the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath*, Andrews University Press, 8360 West Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, MI. 49104, 2007

The author of this book offers a comprehensive study that magnifies the fundamental unity of the Scriptures. The unchanging nature of God's character is seen in the DNA of the new and old covenants, as outlined by the prophet Jeremiah (31). MacCarty distinguishes between the historical and experiential old and new covenants, discovering in the process that in both covenants, God offers man a grace-based, gospel-bearing, faith-inducing, and mission-directed covenant relationship with Him. My use of this book is intended to highlight the unchanging nature of God Who continues to intervene in the affairs of man for his salvation.

¹² Wagner Kuhn, *Redemption and Transformation Through Relief and Development*, pp. 194

Myers, Ched and Elaine Enns, *Ambassadors of Reconciliation Vol. I: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2009

The authors examine the story of the Brazilian human rights activist, writer, and archbishop of Recife during the twentieth century, Dom Helder Camara. He served during the challenging years of military dictatorship. Dom dedicated his life in service to the poor denouncing oppression. He was driven in his effort by making a link between the Gospel and liberation, the core of this thesis project revolving around God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions. He authors note that in his many books, Dom communicated a joy-filled, mystical love of God and creation. They particularly extract these selections from his writings, highlighting his distinctive blend of spirituality and social vision. Within this hostile climate of exploitation, God's Everlasting Covenant Provision of Reconciliation comes alive through the human agent.

Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, IL, 1993

In this book, Packer offers a comprehensive study of God's salvific work through His Son Jesus Christ. He magnifies God's timeless existence and His intervention in the affairs of mankind despite man's failures. He notices that the governing principle behind God's work is and will always be love. This writer's use of this book is relevant to the thesis project, since the author focuses on God's divine will for man. He argues that God's twofold will is one, and He constantly shows His presence and power. The participants from the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, in "shining for Jesus" will hopefully be able to differentiate between doing and being. This writer's primary objective is for the participants to yearn to "be like Jesus".

Peterson, David G, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry*, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2012

Peterson offers a close look at the way God transforms through covenant. In the opening chapter, he examines the *New Covenant in Jeremiah*. In this thesis project, this researcher critiques the Word *New* as it's used in the Hebrew and finds that it means *fresh, new thing or something new* among other short definitions. Additionally, the author hones in on the meaning of the word *testament*. He points out that the English *testament* derives from Latin *testamentum* which translates to Hebrew *berit* and Greek *diatheke*. (pp. 14). This book is critical to this researcher's thesis project, as it magnifies the consistency in God's consistent intervention in time in the context of His Everlasting Covenant with all of creation. The title of this book, *Transformed by God*, speaks quiet audibly and testifies that man's transformation is a passive act. Man cannot transform himself, but this process is divinely orchestrated through God's Holy Spirit.

Piper, John, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N.T. Wright*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2007

John examines the relationship between Covenant and law. This thesis project hypothesizes that Jesus is both the covenant and the law. In fact, these two are inseparably linked to each other, that is, God's Word is His Law and His Word is His Covenant. His Covenant is Jesus, and Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. In Jesus, all can find justification or righteousness, and this was available even before the foundation of the earth began. John argues throughout his book, that there is nothing that anyone can do to appear righteous before God, but it is by being in Christ that the sinner (every single human being) stands justified before God the Father. The Good News is that justification is one of God's bequeathed four Everlasting Covenant Provisions as per the Jeremiah 31:31-34 model. This book will be useful to the researcher, as it offers a sound theological and historical perspective on the doctrine of justification.

Reynolds, James J, *A critical analysis of the interpretation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone by the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, Gongola Diocese*, Peter Lang, NY, 2015

Reynolds conducts a critical analysis of the doctrine of *justification by faith alone*. In this thesis project, this researcher hypothesizes that God's Everlasting Covenant is faith-based, and one can only experience the blessing of justification through faith in Jesus Christ. As a member of the Lutheran church in Nigeria, and a senior professor at Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Reynolds has an interest in the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as it is viewed through the lenses of the Lutheran church and most protestant denominations. This book examines the issues of interpretation, transmission, and appropriation of the doctrine of *justification by faith alone*. He uses contextualization as his main tool and argues that intercultural communication holds the key to unlocking how effectively and appropriately these three engagements with theology are executed. This book is useful for this thesis project, as it demonstrates that God's Everlasting Covenant Provision of Justification knows no boundary, that is it is available to all, hence the mission of the church in the transmission of this Good News.

Rusaw, Rick, and Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*, Loveland, CO, 2004

This researcher finds in this book a clear and concise definition of incarnational ministry. The authors present the Good News in a unique and simple way that lends to an uncomplicated delivery of God's four Everlasting Covenant provisions. The opening words of the dedication of this book are profound: "To all those who have picked up a towel and basin and made a difference in their communities."¹³ This is exactly what this project is all about; it's about the members of the Sparkers Pathfinder Club taking up their metaphorical towel and basin and making a difference in their world.

¹³ Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Church*, pp. kind, loc. 14 of 2552

Stearns, Richard. *What does God Expect of us? The Hole in our Gospel: The Answer that Changed my Life and might just Change the World*. Thomas Nelson Publishing, Nashville TN, 2010.

This book defines true religion in a practical way; it addresses the very core of the gospel, which is sharing the Good News. Stearns' personal examples of reaching people where they're at attest to his quest to meet Jesus and to be like Jesus in the context of His (Jesus') mission to "preach the gospel to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recover sight to the blind, free the oppressed, and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18). When one's ministry focuses on the wholistic nature of man he/she actively becomes the incarnate Christ.

Stefanovic, Ranko, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation, 2nd Edition*. Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, MI 49104, 2009.

Evangelism is a biblical term, and the Bible is written in several genres, prophecy being one of them. Prophecy is of divine origin, and every prophetic word spoken is the foretelling or prediction of coming events. In the first prophetic word, God speaks of the "seed of the woman" that will bruise the devil's head. An understanding of this prophecy is crucial in the context of evangelism, and therefore the identification of the seed is necessary as it directly impacts this project. In this book, Stefanovic offers a scholarly commentary on the book of Revelation. He identifies Jesus Christ as the seed using, for example old testament symbolism and Jewish apocalypticism. In this thesis project, this writer's applied research focuses on the "seed".

Webber, Robert, *Worship Is A Verb: Celebrating God's Mighty Deeds of Salvation, Second Edition*, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.

The author highlights the spirit of community as an important pre-requisite for the movement of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers. When this process is initiated, the believer becomes empowered, and responds by going out with the gospel message to the world. In worship, the believer experiences the celebration of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This writer uses this book because it magnifies the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This thesis project is designed to indiscriminately deliver the four Everlasting Covenant provisions to undeserving humanity. The motivating factor is love, and therefore, as the participants experience God through worship, they also encounter grace.

Wesley, John, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation*, Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980

Wesley offers his personal experience as he compares two theological interpretations on the doctrine of sanctification; a Reformed interpretation, and an Arminian Anglican interpretation. In this book, Wesley shows highlights the act of justification as the primacy of sanctification. With this interconnection, the work of salvation in Jesus Christ becomes more visible. The work of God in Christ helps every sinner to approach the altar of repentance, and thus receive God's Everlasting Covenant provisions, readily available in Jesus Christ. This book

is particularly useful as the researcher offers the best theological practices in Evangelistic Outreach.

White, E.G., *Evangelism*, Review and Herold Publishing Assoc., 55 W. Oak Ridge Drive Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, 2002

Evangelism is proclaiming the Good News, offering all the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their friend and Savior. It is disheartening to note that many in poor health are easily neglected by their church and society, but Jesus wants them, too, to be evangelized. White states that “nothing will open doors for the truth like evangelistic medical missionary work. This will find access to hearts, and will be a means of converting many to the truth.” Jesus is present in sickness, and when the sick or even those ministering to the sick meets Jesus, his/her own life is transformed. This writer hypothesizes that the sower beholds Jesus as much as the recipient of the Good News. In the context of God’s Everlasting Covenant, evangelism presents Jesus Christ within an eschatological framework; with the coming of Jesus into the life of the receiver, the hope of Paradise restored comes alive.

White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages book 1*, Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 55 W Oak Ridge Dr. Hagerstown, MD 21740, 2010

White states that “reconciliation means that every barrier between the soul and God is removed, and that the sinner realizes what the pardoning love of God means.”¹⁴ This book is used to demonstrate the human effort necessary for redemptive grace to be claimed. The sinner, by faith, garners the strength to humbly remove the barrier of pride and other walls for God’s love in Christ to “reconcile” the sinner to Himself. The participants of this project will gain an understanding of the faith component of life in Christ. By believing, the sinner totally relies on Jesus and His redemptive work; in doing so, he/she surrenders all to Christ, allowing the Holy Spirit to disperse God’s Everlasting Covenant provisions. God invites human agents to work with Him in this business of sowing the precious seeds.

White, Ellen G, *Steps to Christ*, Revell Printing, Chicago IL, 1892

White writes thirteen chapters that testify of God’s love for mankind. In this book, she reflects on the story of creation, the fall, and redemption. For this thesis project, the researcher is particularly interested in chapter 10, *A Knowledge of God*. The third given provision by God in His renewed covenant in Jeremiah is that “all will know Him” (31:34). White lists the ways God makes Himself known to man; God’s Word, nature, and providence speak to each human being on a private and personal level. The participants of this thesis project will encounter God through His Word in a simplified but comprehensive method. A knowledge of God hypothetically creates faith in God, and with that faith, one can potentially receive His Everlasting Covenant Provisions.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Book 1*, pp. 396

White, Ellen G, *The Story of Redemption*, Ellen G. White Estate Inc, 2010

In this exclusive book on redemption, White offers a comprehensive study of God's intervention in the affairs of men. God's Everlasting Covenant is about man's salvation, made available through God's redemptive act in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The book highlights man's inability to save himself from the captivity of sin and Satan. White elaborates on God's act of casting Satan to earth after his rebellion against the government of God, but as Satan comes to earth, he has man in his sights, and lures him into the act of disobeying God. However, a loving God offers man a second chance through the atoning death of His "only begotten Son" (John 3:16) Jesus Christ. In this book, White views man's illusion of self-sufficiency to the detriment of losing his soul. She opines that God has given all the power to choose between good and evil; the former resulting in eternal life. This book is useful to this researcher because it magnifies the provisions that are rooted God's Everlasting Covenant.

Journals and Articles

D'Costa, Gavin, "One Covenant or Many Covenants? Toward a Theology of Christian-Jewish Relations," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, ISSN 0022-0558, 07/1990, Volume 27, Issue 3, p. 441

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the various biblical covenants; quite fittingly, the focus is on Jesus Christ the Messiah, to Whom all covenants are directed. The study examines the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. The author posits that Christianity cannot love Jesus without loving the Jews; this insight is correct since it affirms the covenant's purpose. This is the reason the mission to preach the Good News to all is so important. In fact, it is one of the inherent provisions of the Everlasting Covenant. This article will be helpful in examining the concept of philo-Semitism (love of Jewish traditions) or Judaeophilia in the context of God's Everlasting Covenant. The author offers a better understanding of the land promises to Abraham and its effect on Jewish-Christian relations. The relational nature of God will also become clearer as one also grasps the universality and timeless nature of the Everlasting Covenant.

Pretorius, Mark, "Justification as it relates to Adam and Christ within the New Covenant," *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary*, ISSN 1996-8167, 03/2006, Volume 1, pp. 43 – 64

Pretorius traces the horrible path of man, who was created perfectly after God's Own image and likeness but fell into sin, which was then transmitted to all. Pretorius argues that it is impossible to understand the depth of God's redemptive act in Christ without first understanding the depth of sin within man. Pretorius examines the covenants of creation and redemption, supporting the reconciliatory act of the omniscient and omnipotent God who knew how to redeem man and restore him into a loving relationship as a Father to a son.

Rossie de Gasperis, Francesco, “Two Testaments One Covenant,” *The Month*, ISSN 0027-0172, 02/2000, Volume 33, Issue 2, p. 45

In this article, the author argue that the New Covenant is sister to the Old Covenant; therefore, one cannot suppress the other. Christ, Who is present in both, is the harmony of the Bible. In fact, Christ’s unchanging nature—the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8)—attests to the everlasting nature of the covenant. This article further clarifies the missional nature of God in Christ, as the ten-point fact sheet for personal intimacy with God is prepared.

Royster, Michael, D., “That All May Believe: A Theology of the Gospel and Mission of the Church,” *Religious Studies Review*, ISSN 0319-485X, 12/2009, Volume 35, Issue 4, pp. 237 – 238

The contents of this article enhance the command for God’s people to lovingly respond to His command (rooted in the Everlasting Covenant) to go on mission so that all may know that God is love. The author establishes that Jesus and God are One and that Jesus Christ was to become sin (not a sinner) so that all may believe and come to know Him. This is Good News, and God calls for men and women to go into the mission field. This call is an absolute imperative for the imminent return of Christ, Who is eager to complete the mission for God and man to be reunited in Paradise (Rev. 21:1-7).

Shenk, David, W., “The Gospel of Reconciliation within the Wrath of Nations,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, ISSN 0272-6122, 01/2008, Volume 32, Issue 1, p. 3

Although there are diverse responses to Christ’s offer of the Everlasting Covenant—demonstrated by an interview between a North American Christian radio speaker and Indonesian Muslim militants—there are still communities of believers who confess that God and His kingdom are most fully revealed in a vulnerable baby in a manger in Bethlehem. Jesus was a refugee in Egypt, a carpenter from Nazareth, and the man who, when he was crucified, cried out for God to forgive his enemies. Somehow, the name “Jesus” still causes the “whole world to go after Him” (John 12:19). This article suggests that the potency of the name of Jesus outweighs the timidity of the human agent in the proclamation of the good news. One must therefore remember the promise of Jesus: “He will always be with those who lovingly respond to the mission call, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

Skevington, Wood A., “Walter Marshall and ‘The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification,’” *Evangelical Quarterly*, ISSN 0014-3367, 01/1958, Volume 30, p. 18

Claiming the promise of “putting on the new self through Christ”¹⁵ (Col. 3:10, 11), the author rekindles a possibility of oneness with Christ that is most reassuring to the believer. The author further reminds believers that “the end of Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection was

¹⁵ Skevington and Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, pp. 18

to prepare and form a holy nature and frame for man in Himself, to be communicated to man by union and fellowship with Him; and not to enable man to produce in himself the first original of such a holy nature by his own endeavors. This oneness or atonement has and will forever be God's purpose for creating man, and although separated by sin, God still through Christ provided for restoration of that relationship; like Abraham, all believers must lovingly accept that setting apart. This article will assist in preparing the members of the church to fully recommit themselves through prayer and fasting for a life of service to Christ.

Steinmann, Andrew E, *What Did David Understand About The Promises In The Davidic Covenant?* Bibliotheca Sacra, Volume BSAC 171:681, Jan. 2014

Steinmann points out the biblical and historical evidence that there is at least one certainty about the identity of the Messiah in the New Testament: He is a royal descendant of David (Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9, 15; Mark 10:47,48; Luke 18:38,39). These verses are historical New Testament evidence, and the Old Testament prophetic proclamations of Isa. 9:6, 7 and 16:3-5 all attest to the accuracy of the biblical narrative and the implicit Everlasting Covenant. This article supports the universality and historicity of the covenants; whether old or new, God's Everlasting Covenant is still the same. The thirteen primary participants as well as the secondary participants will be humbly blessed to accept their status of being a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's Own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Electronic Sources

Phipps, Wintley, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPMbiEkLK7E> (accessed 08/30/2018)

Phipps visited the Library of Congress, and researched the history of the Christian Hymn *Amazing Grace*. He speaks of the conversion of John Newton from a slave trader to a herald of the Good News. Newton's conversion story is represented in his (Newton's) composition of the well-known Christian Hymn "Amazing Grace". This documentary is readily accessible to the world, and that's why this researcher seeks to highlight its availability. The story of John Newton's conversion attests to the power of God Everlasting Covenant and its inherent provisions to everyone, through Jesus Christ the personification of grace.

Steinmann, Andrew E, <http://www.galaxie.com/article/bsac171-681-02> (accesses 08/30/2018)

Steinmann examines God's renewal of His Everlasting Covenant with David. In this renewal, Jesus' royal ancestral origin is highlighted. The prophetic declaration (Is. 9:6,7; 16:3-5) points to the Messianic link to the house of David. In the synoptic Gospels, Jesus is confirmed as the son of David (Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 18:38-39) In these verses, God's kingdom is described as one that "has no end". This article is useful to as it supports this researcher's thesis of the uniformity of every covenant restatement made by God. The thirteen participants can access this information freely, for further study.

Sullivan, Mark, <https://www.xenos.org/essays/five-views-sanctification> (accessed 08/30/2018)

In this compilation, Sullivan offers five different perspectives on the Everlasting Covenant provision of sanctification. He solicits the views of Protestant theologians who respond to questions pertaining to this provision; they freely share their understanding of how sanctification occurs. In the end, Sullivan summarizes and reacts to each contributor's view of sanctification. This is particularly useful to this researcher, as it offers a definition of sanctification in a way that every primary participant can understand and share. The participants can also access this information freely. for further study.

<https://www.pathfindersonline.org/aim-and-motto> (accessed 08/30/2018)

This is the official site of the Pathfinder Club worldwide; it offers a historical background of the Club, from its formation to its evolution to what it is today. It shows one constant, and that lies in its only purpose which is to lead all to a loving relationship with Jesus. As members of the Pathfinder Club, the thirteen primary participants will see a magnification of their vision and mission in this thesis project. The researcher designs this project with the core values of the Pathfinder Club in mind. As these participants begin to engage their twenty-six secondary participants (each will engage two adult unchurched family members), they will appreciate the needed paradigm shift from one of human-driven premature reaping to a Holy Spirit-led sowing of seeds. They will also be able to gain ready access to this site in continuing education.

Biblical Passages

Jer. 31:31-34:

This passage defines the Everlasting Covenant in a provisional way; it is God's direct response to His people's unfaithfulness. The words of God magnify man's inability to procure his own salvation and God's relentless pursuit for relationship. In this passage, God outlines the four provisions that will allow for this salvific relationship with man. The provisions are sanctification, by way of God placing His law on the hearts of men (31:33); reconciliation in that He will still be God to us and we shall be His people (33); personal intimacy in that everyone will know Him (34), and justification in that He will forgive man's iniquity, and their sin He will remember no more (34). This passage establishes that God never changes His law, for all that God has done is very good; the renewed covenant is relative to the response by the forefathers. Before this statement by God, man's response to God's Law/the Gospel was legalistic, perverted, and externalized. Being written on the heart, denotes an internalization of the gospel, and a loving, Holy Spirit driven response.

Psalms 90:2:

Our Covenant God is from "everlasting to everlasting." This passage shows that God's recorded appearance signaled His relational intent with all of creation. The Hebrew name is "E1," which carries many translations, suggests plurality which indicates perfect

togetherness/relationship. This relational God, Who existed before man's time began, saw mankind in all its failures. In His divinity and also His humanity, God mysteriously secured man's dwelling place in Christ Jesus, even from everlasting.

1 John 4:8:

True relationships are built on agape (unconditional) love. One's knowledge of God ought to be expressed in our relationship with each other and that is to love even if we are not loved. In Peter's restoration at the breakfast by the sea (John 21:15-17), Jesus asked Peter if his love for Him was agape (unconditional); Peter's triple response was that his love for Jesus was phileo (fondness, brotherly). Though this can be interpreted different ways, John admonishes that anyone who knows (have relationship with) God, reflects Him by way of DNA; all that God does is driven by the perfect relational agape love.

2 Timothy 1:9:

The grace offered by God is not a new concept, it was not just a last-minute application to a crisis. Paul tells us that "God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" In this passage, one sees three major components of the Everlasting Covenant; grace existed from all eternity, grace existed in the person of Jesus Christ Who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), and grace being Jesus is also being God (Ps. 90:2). This passage underscores that all covenants being grace-based point to the "once for all" expression in Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:12).

Revelation 21:1-7:

In John's vision, this section has been widely regarded as the eschatological section. The passage itself points to a restoration of Eden; John uses the phrase "new heaven and new earth" which echoes "new covenant." This passage is relevant to the topic in that it points to the ultimate fulfillment of God's Everlasting Covenant, in the total eradication of sin and the restoration of man to his original state of (once again), everything will be very good (Gen. 1:31) (since heaven and earth will be new). God will be our Father and we will be His sons and daughters (reconciliation – Jer. 31:33; Rev. 21:7); one of the provisions of the Everlasting Covenant.

Genesis 1:26-31:

After the sixth day of creation, God declared everything "very good." Everything (including man) was in complete relational harmony with God; man and all of nature. It is implied that God's grace of provision for humanity, even without man's direct involvement, was applied; this is characteristic of the agape love of God. This passage is relevant to the topic as it points to God's love for man by allowing him to partake in the maintenance of the earth, through the "dominion" (Gen. 1:26) given him. In a perfect relationship, responsibility is shared; thus

God chose to partner with man, by allowing him to be in charge of His (God's) "very good" creation.

Genesis 3:15:

The Gen. 3 narrative of the fall initially paints a picture of "doom and gloom." The perfect God Who made a perfect world (including man) turned up one day for His regular fellowship with man. On that day of seeming "doom and gloom", the once perfect man realized he was no longer perfect, and in response to God's "where are you?" (Gen. 3:9), man, now imperfect (naked by their/his own submission – Gen. 3:10), hid from God. An implicitly broken-hearted God felt the separation caused by disobedience to His Command; man was incapable of keeping the Command of God. Man yielded to the devil (who was and always be at war with God – Isa. 14:14). This selected passage clearly points to the grace-based nature of God's Everlasting Covenant. The first good news (protoevangelium), was uttered by God as He accursed the devil, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He (Jesus Christ) will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel." In other words, through this utterance, God clearly states that He was going to redeem man through the all atoning blood of Jesus.

Genesis 9:8-16:

When God looked at the wickedness of man and the continual evil intent of his heart (Gen. 6:5), it was time for a recreation. The narrative of the flood, is another way God expressed His agonizing pain for not being able to fellowship with man. In restating His Everlasting Covenant, God destroyed all those who rejected His offer for relationship. Through the prophet Noah, God spoke to His people for over one hundred years, appealing for relationship; in the end only eight people, through faith accepted God's grace were saved. After the waters had abated, God spoke to mankind through the human representative Noah, and restated His Everlasting Covenant; God promised relationship with mankind and "every living thing that creeps on the earth." This passage clearly states that God's quest for human perfection is relational, and He will never cease until the end of the ages. As a sign of the Everlasting Covenant, God offers the rainbow.

Genesis 17:6-8:

The Abraham narrative points to God's joy and delight in righteousness. God's act of sanctification (setting apart) is the first step of the redemptive process, where the response to God's offering comes from the heart (Jer. 31:33). When Abram (as he was known before the call to leave his land) by faith responded to God's call, it was accounted to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). This passage would be applied to demonstrate, the almost "euphoric" delight of God when He can come near to man; righteous, which is offered through the ultimate sacrifice in Jesus Christ, (to which each covenant consistently points) allows God and man to be together. God asked the human agent (the only time a human sign was required in the restatement of the Everlasting Covenant) to provide the sign of circumcision. God required that

every male eight days and older to be circumcised (Gen. 17:12); Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised (Gen. 17:24). Through Abraham's righteousness by faith, God allowed him to ratify the Everlasting Covenant. God said to Abraham, "Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an Everlasting Covenant for his descendants after him" (Gen. 17:19).

Exodus 31:13:

Moses is undoubtedly one of the greatest (if not the greatest) leaders of men, into the mission of God. God instructs him every step of the way after the eventual promised deliverance of the Israelites (Gen. 15:16) from Egyptian bondage. Having crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21-30), Moses (under God's Command) continually communicated with God, even on Mount Sinai where he received the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17). In delivering the Ten Commandments, God identified Himself as the "One Who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." This implies a "separation from or a setting apart" as in sanctification. This passage is used to illustrate God's nature of calling a people to Himself, by sanctification (consecration or setting apart); the first usage of this word occurs in Gen. 2:3 when God at creation "sanctified" the Seventh-day as the "Sabbath." Now in Ex. 31:13, God gives His people the sign of His Everlasting Covenant as His Sabbath, for they have been "sanctified" by God.

2 Samuel 7:8-16:

Through the prophet Nathan, God restates His Everlasting Covenant even to an adulterous murderer David, emphasizing the fact that despite human failures, God still yearns for relationship, and He just cannot renege on His promises. The sign would be a kingdom that will stand forever (2 Sam. 7:16; Dan. 2:35b, 44). The permanence of God's Everlasting Covenant hinges not on any human effort as is noted in King Nebuchadnezzar's vision, or even in King David's Military might, but rather in the surety of the gospel-bearing Everlasting Covenant.

Isaiah 42:1-7:

In this prophecy, God delivers a profound message/promise of deliverance that is rooted in the coming of the "Chosen One" Jesus Christ. Through His law, Jesus Who is grace, will also execute justice. Even more mysterious, Jesus' righteousness which is offered freely to all allows for the experience of life alone; God says that "He will not give His glory to any other" (8).

Daniel 9:27:

This prophecy (now fulfilled) establishes that Jesus will make a "firm covenant with many" and He will put an end to sacrifice and grain offering. At Calvary, Jesus cried "it is finished" (John 19:30); there was no further need for the blood of animals or grain offerings; this was the atoning sacrifice (Rom. 3:25). This passage is used to demonstrate the reliability of God in completing His mission; this phase of the mission to redeem man through the shed blood of Jesus Christ fulfills the promise made way back in Eden (Gen. 3:15).

Matt. 26:28:

Jesus Himself speaks of the Everlasting Covenant; “this is My blood of **the** covenant which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” What was the sign? Even at His coming, the angel declared, “This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a ^lmanger” (Luke 2:12). The eventual first advent of Jesus was the “coming to life/flesh” of the Old Testament (John 1:14). The mission continued with a faithful, Holy Spirit driven Jesus Christ lovingly responding, even unto the cross.

Hos. 6:7:

Sometimes Christians are tempted to question the existence of God’s Everlasting Covenant, and by extension, its provisions (sanctification, reconciliation, mission, and justification) at creation (in the Garden of Eden). In this passage, as the author writes, God’s rebuke to Israel eliminates those uncertainties; Hosea, under divine guidance writes, “But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; there they have dealt treacherously against Me. God’s response to man’s sin in the garden was a redemptive act, offering substitutionary atonement (Gen. 3:21) by way of the slaying of an animal; this was only a type as God had earlier stated that the “seed” (3:15) would crush the head of the serpent who has been identified as the devil (Rev. 12:9). This passage would reassure the members of the church that the power of Christ over sin and Satan is what empowers them all to proclaim the gospel of Jesus the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).

Chapter 2

God's Everlasting Covenant to All Generations

The Pathfinder Club is the official youth arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its motto is “The love of Christ compels me.”¹ The organization explains the motto thus, “I am drawn to Him by His exemplary life, the symbolic act of His crucifixion, His conquering resurrection, and His promise of an earth made new in the pattern of the original creation. The closer I find myself to Him, the closer I find myself identifying with the needs of my fellow human beings.”² The first Pathfinder Club on record was in Anaheim, California directed by John McKim and Willa Steen. This club began in the late 1920's and ran through the 1930's. In 1944 McKim died and the Steens moved. In 1930 Lester and Ione Martin with co-directors Theron & Ethel Johnston began a club in Santa Ana, California.

The South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club was inducted on Saturday December 16, 2017. As a general unwritten rule, every Seventh-day Adventist administered school is expected to have a fully-functional Pathfinders Club, since one of the aims of the club is to create an environment where youth can “increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52), as Jesus did. As a former member of the Pathfinder Club, this researcher's level of commitment was influenced by a spirit of competition and rivalry which distracted the members from the true purpose which was to “lovingly lead others to Jesus Christ.” This thesis project is therefore designed to create a paradigm shift from “doing for personal gratification” to “being like Jesus” in selfless and loving service to humanity.

¹ <https://www.pathfindersonline.org/aim-and-motto> (accessed 01/29/18)

² Ibid

The wise man instructs believers to “train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it”³ This researcher hypothesizes that this newly born club is ideally positioned for the launching of this project which, in part, directs the participants’ attention, to the presence of a relational God, a constant God, and a gracious God. In accordance with the motto “shine for Jesus”, the members will ideally, respond to Jesus’s commandment to “love one another as He loves us” (John 13:34) and understand the difference between doing and being. The traditional culture within the club was one doing for reward (covenant of works). This researcher seeks to create a paradigm shift where the members will truly encounter Christ and “become”. When one encounters Jesus Christ, he/she surrenders his/her will (to Christ) and Christ becomes obvious through that person’s lifestyle. The apostle Paul states that “if any man be in Christ, he becomes a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Becoming like Christ is an opportunity to “partake of God’s divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). In an induction ceremony, members take a sacred oath to “become.” The members of this club have been consecrated (set apart or sanctified) and commissioned with the sacred task to “go” (Matt. 28:19). Stetzer and Putman state, “Jesus spoke again to his disciples and, by extension, to us as his church. With this he gave the clearest expression of the purpose of the commission. It is not about style; it is not about the externals; it is not about the culture. We have been called, commissioned, and consecrated to begin that journey personally and together with others in our church families. Jesus said that we are sent to all peoples, and we are sent with a message.”⁴

³ Prov. 22:6

⁴ David Putman; Ed Stetzer. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*, Kindle Locations 648-649

The message is the Good News, and Jesus is the Good News; it is a message that Paradise will be restored, it is a benefit for all mankind that is rooted in God's Everlasting Covenant. Historically, there have been varied perspectives on God's Everlasting Covenant and its intended recipients, but this researcher notices that God's desire is for everyone to live eternally (2 Pet. 3:9). Although there are various views on the historicity and understanding of the covenant, this researcher hypothesizes that, to begin with, there has been just one covenant, renewed and restated by God throughout history; it's called the Everlasting Covenant. In his book "*In Granite or Ingrained?*" MacCarty notices that the term "Everlasting Covenant" (Hebrew *berith olam*; Greek *ionios diatheke*) occurs sixteen times in Scripture. Thirteen times the English translation, the phrase "an Everlasting Covenant" is applied to the specific covenants God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:3-7, 13,19), Israel at Sinai, and David (2 Sam. 23:5).⁵

This researcher hypothesizes that the human response to Jesus' "go and make disciples" (Matt. 28:19) is one that is built upon a foundation of loving and caring relationships, developed within a community. It was after spending time with Jesus, that His disciples "became" and were able to connect with God and experience the Everlasting Covenant provisions; the understood sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy (with God), and justification. In reference to the Everlasting Covenant, Jesus declared, "this is my blood of the covenant (Greek *diatheke*)" (Matt. 26:28). The English translation for *diatheke* is covenant, will, or testament (Strong's Concordance 1242). Many biblical scholars argue that there was no covenant in mankind's earliest history (Gen. 1 – 5), but this researcher finds that biblical testimony points to the fact that God covenanted at creation (Hos. 6:7). Man's response to God's free gift must arguably be

⁵ Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained?* pp. 7

worship to God, and that's what the story of the Bible is about; it is the story of salvation.

Webber argues that "Scripture, history, and theology teach that the common rhythm of the story of God's saving work in Jesus Christ is fundamental to all Christian worship."⁶

What's in a covenant? The Hebrew *berith* is translated covenant⁷; the Greek *diatheke* is translated *testament, will, covenant*⁸. Because God speaks to us in ways we can comprehend, the closest term that reaches mankind is will. For this reason, the researcher seeks to direct the participants' attention to God's will for mankind. In his divinely inspired letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul defines God's will for mankind; Paul cautions, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect".⁹

The participants will ideally appreciate that a will is for the benefit of the "named" beneficiary, and to be a "named" beneficiary of God's perfect will, God's Everlasting Covenant provisions, is incomparable and irresistible. Furthermore, the testator (God) and the intended heir or beneficiary have a certain relationship (all - from the least to the greatest). The participants of this thesis project will be taking this Good News to their selectees (any number of persons they wish to evangelize) by informing them that they are named beneficiaries of God's written will. It is the Good News that they are beneficiaries of God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions of

⁶ Robert E. Webber, *Worship is a Verb: Celebrating God's Mighty Deeds of Salvation, Second Edition*, pp. 59

⁷ Strong's Concordance 1285

⁸ Ibid 1242

⁹ Rom. 12:1,2

sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy, and justification. God does this because He's relational, He is immutable, He is sensitive, and He is gracious.

2.1 God is Relational

In his article, "Justification as it relates to Adam and Christ within the New Covenant", Mark Pretorius notes,

As one looks back in a brief overview of the history of God's dealing with man, there are certain things that stand out which form the background for one's present relationship with God. It is very clear that God Himself does not change, but that His dealing with man does change."¹⁰ This researcher examines God's relational nature in the context of His Everlasting Covenant. God Himself exists in a perfect triune relationship – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17; 28: 19). Donahue suggests through his implicit definition of the word *covenant* that "small groups in churches have covenants that describe the relational climate they want to create."¹¹

God is the Creator of the Everlasting Covenant; this means that God created man for everlasting relationship with Him.

Relationships are formed and nurtured within a spirit of community. Issler posits that "God is building his kingdom community; it begins here and continues there."¹² For example, the Qumran Community (or the Qumran Sect) which dates to the first century BCE highlights respect for relationship as one of the core principles of covenant. Cloud and Townsend note, "Relationship is the fuel of life"¹³ and this researcher hypothesizes that with the reality of Jesus, the irresistible provisions of the Everlasting Covenant form the basis for communal existence. Eschatologically, God is building or restoring Paradise for everyone who accepts His gift of Jesus Christ by faith (John 14:1-3). This researcher hypothesizes that the Everlasting Covenant is based on one's faith

¹⁰ <http://www.galaxie.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/conspectus01-1-03> (accessed 01/30/18).

¹¹ Bill Donahue, *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, pp. 39

¹² Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character*, Kindle Location 703

¹³ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*, pp. 271

in God and not by works. The apostle Paul states that man is “saved by grace through faith; and not of themselves, it is the gift of God; not because of works, so that no one may boast. For man is His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that man would walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). Furthermore, being created in the workmanship of God, means that one will embrace the spirit of community. The participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, hopefully embrace this spirit.

This researcher notes, that at creation, God exemplified the spirit of community. The writer of Genesis states that Elohim (plural for God) said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). Although God is one (Deut. 6:4), the mystery of the Godhead represents the extent of His love. Paul states that “in Jesus dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9 - KJV). The Greek use of the word *theotes* is translated *deity* or *Godhead*. Cloud and Townsend explain God’s relational dynamic:

When God created humans, he put them into relationship, first with Him and then with each other. God made people for Himself and for one another. We have already seen that Adam depended on a relationship with God for life. But even with that relationship, he needed human connection as well. And God said, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Man was incomplete with God alone. At the outset, relationship was at the core at the way God created things¹⁴.

Relationship with God is relationship with love, because “God is Love” (1 John 4:8). When relationship with Love is broken, death occurs, for relationship is the fuel of life. God’s Law, which is another restatement of His Everlasting Covenant rests upon a foundation of love i.e. it rests upon God Himself. This researcher believes that “Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13:8), and therefore, the participants of this project will be encouraged. As they present the provisions of God’s Everlasting

¹⁴ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*, pp. 29

Covenant through the questionnaires, they can be assured that the “Word that became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) will not return void (Is. 55:11), because Jesus never fails. The entire Bible is about God’s relentless pursuit of relationship with man.

The Mosaic Covenant is a restatement of God’s Everlasting Covenant; God kept His promise to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, and He did after four hundred years of slavery¹⁵ that He Himself had prophesied. In their freedom, the Israelites, despite being delivered from Egypt, still retained “Egypt within their hearts” by way of idolatry. This was disheartening to God, but He (God) still wanted relationship with mankind – the Sinaitic Covenant. In Jer. 31: 32, God laments, “the renewed covenant will not be like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them.” The most intimate relationship was broken by man (Israel); God declares “He was husband to Israel”¹⁶. Relationship was broken and God “no longer cared for them”¹⁷, but being God means being true to His Everlasting Covenant to teach His bride Israel how to love Him.

In being true to His Everlasting Covenant, God maintains relentless pursuit of relationship with man, so at Mount Sinai, He clearly delineates what it means for man to have relationship with Him¹⁸ and relationship with each other¹⁹ in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. God wrote the Ten Commandments/the Decalogue with His Own fingers on tablets of stone – referred to as the “Book of the Covenant” by Moses²⁰. The theme of the Bible

¹⁵ Gen. 15:13,14

¹⁶ Jer. 31:32

¹⁷ Heb. 8:9

¹⁸ Ex. 20:1-11

¹⁹ Ibid 12-17

²⁰ Ex. 24:17

is love; love is about relationship, and God’s Everlasting Covenant is built on love – Moreover, it is found in the Good News. Sterns argues that “followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to love their neighbors as themselves.”²¹ This researcher argues that God’s Everlasting Covenant remains the same. Jesus is the Good News (Luke 2:10) and the author of the Book of the Covenant; He declares, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matt. 5: 17, 18). That is why the members of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers will be in fulfillment not necessarily of their personal or club goals, but rather the mission of Jesus, to indiscriminately offer the provisions of the Everlasting Covenant to everyone within their personal sphere of influence.

2.2 The Immutability of God

This researcher hypothesizes that God’s immutability is not just a religious or theological observation, but it is a life-transforming reality that guarantees eschatological hope for all. Titus teaches that “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds”²². There is no human agent or institution that is duly authorized or qualified to define God. To understand God, one must go to God, and God is His Word; one must look at the life of Jesus - the Word that “became flesh and

²¹ Richard Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel*: pp. 71

²² Tit. 2:13,14

dwelt among us”²³. God declares, “For I, the Lord, do not change”²⁴. In the renewed covenant dispensation, the writer of Hebrews declares, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever”²⁵.

Because of God’s immutability, all mankind is strategically positioned for salvation through Jesus Christ the Lord. In His parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus declares, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”²⁶. This researcher hypothesizes that God’s Everlasting Covenant Provisions are universally guaranteed; that is, everyone who listens to the proclamation of the Good News, can through the Holy Spirit be transformed through God’s amazing grace. This aspect of evangelism is called “seed sowing” and White admonishes, “Preach the Word so that it will be easy to comprehend. Bring the people right to Jesus Christ, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered. As you bring to them the Word of God, presenting it in a simple style, the seed will grow, and after a time you will have a harvest. The seed sowing is your work; the propagation of the seed is the Lord's divine work.”²⁷ As this thesis researcher argues, in the context of God’s immutability, His (God’s) Everlasting Covenant provisions offer eternal hope and reassurance as defined throughout the will – God’s Word.

- The prophet Isaiah proclaims, “So the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Is. 51:11).

²³ John 1:14

²⁴ Mal. 3:6

²⁵ Heb. 13:8

²⁶ John 10:10

²⁷ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 178

- Paul states, “Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming” (2 Thess. 2:8).
- As sender of a letter to Timothy, Paul, in recognizing Christ as the hope writes: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope” (1 Tim. 1:1).
- Just as God interacted with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus, so too every human being, through the Everlasting Covenant is also assured communication with the immutable God. The writer of Hebrews says, “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).
- James states, “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures” (James 1:17, 18).

In the context of God’s immutability, this researcher hypothesizes that the participants can go boldly to their selectees knowing that the provisions they deliver are guaranteed by a God Who changes not. However, while God does not change His mind (Num. 23:19 – NIV), sinful men and women, must change by the Holy Spirit must change to be “partakers of God’s divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4) and experience the benefits of the Everlasting Covenant provisions. In the renewal of His Everlasting Covenant, the eternal immutable God declares in the ultimate (fourth) provision, that He will “forgive their iniquity, and their sin He will remember no more” (Jer. 31:

34). This is the act of justification, where the eternally righteous God transforms the beneficiary from unrighteous to righteous through Christ. In the context of community, Donahue notes:

A culture of forgiveness makes any community irresistible. I desperately long to be part of a group, team, church, business, or board where people genuinely let go and let God do his transforming work at the soul level. We let go of the need to win, the temptation to shame others, and the constant drive of self-promotion. By grace, we exchange these destructive tendencies for other-mindedness and thus free one another and ourselves from the deadly plague of unforgiveness.”²⁸

In representation of His immutability, God’s original intent for man’s immortality was never in question. Through the implicit proclamation of perfection of His Everlasting Covenant at creation, “and everything was very good” (Gen. 1: 31), God was never going to settle for anything but perfection. Pretorius notes:

God’s plan for man’s redemption can be seen through the eyes of two covenants. The one, made with Adam and broken by him, resulted in man’s death. The second covenant, through Jesus Christ, resulted in man’s redemption. God now sees humanity either in Adam, under divine judgement and condemnation of death, or in Christ (the last Adam), under the abundance of divine grace, eternally justified and in Him made righteous (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9).²⁹

This research is not necessarily designed to examine a two-covenant (old covenant new covenant) dichotomy, but rather one covenant – God’s Everlasting Covenant. God’s initial intent and will have not changed, because God is His Everlasting Covenant, and He is immutable. It is a grace-based covenant, and “grace existed in Jesus Christ from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:9). The immutable God renewed His Everlasting Covenant, making it new in quality (Hebrew *chadash* meaning *new in quality* – Strong’s Concordance 2319), hence this researcher’s hypothesis of the “first and the renewed covenant.”

²⁸ Bill Donahue, *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, pp. 53

²⁹ <http://www.galaxie.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/conspectus01-1-03> (accessed 08/30/2018)

2.3 The First and the Renewed

This researcher is presenting God's four Everlasting Covenant provisions which were made available to all, through Jesus Christ the personification of grace (Eph. 2:8-10). The physical appearance of Jesus Christ, and His (Jesus') sacrificial offering at Calvary represents the perfection of the process that was initiated at creation (Heb. 10:15,16). It is no secret that over time, the Holy Bible continues to be reedited, reorganized, and repackaged to us. This has caused significant errors in our current theology, much to the detriment of mankind's response to a never changing God (Mal. 3:6, Heb. 13:8). The Bible is one continuous book with one continuous covenant written by divinely-inspired authors in various time periods. Using the term "New Testament" is misleading because it makes most people think that the law in the Tanach or Tanakh (Old Testament) has been done away with when it has not.

The second section of the English Holy Bible should have the title Renewed Covenant. A careful word study reveals that the second part is really a continuation of the story of God's intervention in time, as He undertakes the task of saving mankind from sin. This researcher revisits mankind's relationship with the Creator when either the first covenant ended or a new/renewed one was promised. God does nothing without warning His people, and an understanding of God's transparency is critical, since Yahweh says that he will do nothing except He reveals His secret counsel to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). The need for a Renewed covenant and a promise of its eschatological significance is found in Jeremiah 31:31-33, the focus of this Thesis Project.

Both the Hebrew *chadash*³⁰ and the Greek *kainos*³¹ words for "new" may be properly translated as "renewed". *Chadash* may mean new in quality, not new in time (1 Sam. 11:14; 2 Chron. 15:8; 24:4, 12; Job 10:7; Psa. 103:5; 104:30; Isa. 61:4; Lam. 5:21). It can mean to renew or repair. For instance, in Psalm 51:10 David says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." David uses the same word as in Jeremiah 31:31 (*chadash*). David is not asking for a brand-new heart, but for a renewal of what is already there. 2 Chron. 24:4 and 12, feature the terms *repair* and *restore* (root, *chadash*) with the already existent house of the Lord. One notices that in all these verses, there is a renewal, a repairing, a restoring of that which was already in existence. The same is true of the Jeremiah 31: 31-34) focus.

In the English New Testament, "new" is applied to the New Covenant eight times, seven of which use the term *kainos* (Strong's Concordance 2537) - properly, new in quality (innovation), fresh in development or opportunity – because "not found exactly like this before." (Matt. 26:28, 29; Mark 14:24, 25; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:13; 9:15) as opposed to *neos* (meaning new in time - Heb. 12:24). The use of term *kainos* means there was a preexisting covenant to which Jesus gave a qualitative difference.

This researcher notes that although some biblical scholars still refer to them as old and new covenants, there is one consistent theme in the Bible; the salvation of man through God's divine act of salvation through the promised Seed Jesus Christ. Skip MacCarty for example, posits that the New Covenant provisions are in found in the Old Covenant.³² He lists four New Covenant provisions as sanctification, reconciliation, mission, and justification. This researcher partially agrees with MacCarty in his understanding of the provisions but disagrees with the Old

³⁰ Strong's Concordance 2319

³¹ Ibid 2537

³² Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained?* Pp. 37

and New Covenant classification. The argument is for a “first and renewed covenant” classification. The participants of this thesis project, just as the prophets of old and the disciples of Jesus Christ, will sow the seed of the gospel through the Holy Spirit, so that the beneficiaries can receive the irresistible Everlasting Covenant provisions.

By renewing the Everlasting Covenant, God takes into consideration, man’s inability to “do.” Historically, God delivered many messages to the Israelites through Moses. They were messages of self-consecration so that God’s people would be prepared to be in the presence of holiness. Moses relays God’s message/s (the news, the seed) to the Israelites, all the people respond in unison, “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do!” (Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7; Deut. 5:27). Indeed, God was concerned about the welfare of His people, and that’s why He constantly reassures through His Everlasting Covenant. Acknowledging Him as the Everlasting Covenant God, the Israelites would be His Own possession (Ex. 19:5), but the initial covenant agreement hinged on what the people were expected to “do”. This researcher hypothesizes that the Israelites always responded cerebrally (from the head) and not lovingly (from the heart).

Calvinists argue that man is “totally depraved” and therefore, even as he (man) goes on breaking God’s Everlasting Covenant (sinning), his only hope of salvation is through God’s predestination.³³ Man (Calvinists argue) is incapable of choosing to desire God, so God must choose and predestine. While this is partially true, in the sense that man is incapable to earn his own salvation, this researcher argues that the blessing of the Holy Spirit allows the sinner to conscientiously cry out “Abba Father.” The apostle Peter, although called by His Master to “walk on water” (Matt. 14:28-33), allowed his sinful tendencies to get between him and Jesus.

³³ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 85

Consequently, he began to sink, but he cried out “Lord save me.” Peter himself admonishes, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance”³⁴.

The apostle Paul affirms that “God’s grace is sufficient for all” (2 Cor. 12:9), and “where sin abounds, grace abounds much more” (Rom. 5:20), and this is a magnification of God’s Everlasting Covenant provisions as he writes this letter to the Romans. He asks the rhetorical question, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Rom. 6:1,2). This is what Christ, the promised Seed accomplished for all (John 3:16). And yes, man is incapable, but as Paul urges, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ and most prolific writer in the renewed covenant, referenced Moses the author of the Torah (the Law) in the grace and Law dichotomy. Examining the consistence between grace and the Law (as represented by Paul and Moses), Schnittjer argues, “Neither Moses nor Paul think people will obey God’s commands; rather, they both think that the Torah reveals the rebellion of Israel and humankind.”³⁵ This researcher believes that the Bible supports this hypothesis; there is direct connection between Deut, 31:26, 27, and Rom. 3:19,20. Schnittjer continues,

The Torah is the beginning of God’s story – from the garden to the Skull – speaks the good news to all who have ears to hear. The Torah story, which has a beginning and an

³⁴ 2 Pet. 3:9

³⁵ Gary Edward Schnittjer, *The Torah Story*, pp. 534

end is not a world unto itself; Deuteronomy closes, as does Genesis, with a view of the other side, a view that stretches to the cross and beyond. The Torah is the beginning of the story that reaches its height in the death and resurrection of the Messiah. The Torah story is the beginning of the gospel story.³⁶

This writer hypothesizes that the Law is not at war with grace, but rather they are like “two peas in one pod.” While the law examines man and reveals his true condition (and this examination is an absolute necessity), grace offers the solution - a solution that man is not capable of securing for himself. Is the Law the Good News, just as grace is the Good News? Does not the Law speak death? Does not grace speak life? The participants of this thesis project will come face to face with Christ in an intimate way and will welcome a paradigm shift in the proclamation of the Good News. They will truly know what shining for Jesus means in the context of His Law and grace. They will passionately and zealously engage in the dispersion of the Everlasting Covenant provisions by sharing Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed.

2.4 Grace Versus the Law

Believers can take comfort in the fact that Jesus Christ, the Good News and the Promised Seed is the personification of grace, just as He is the personification of the Law. White notices that these two (law and grace) are inseparable. She captures this mystery with the following argument:

In the love of God has been opened the most marvelous vein of precious truth, and the treasures of the grace of Christ are laid open before the church and the world. What love is this, what marvelous, unfathomable love that would lead Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners. What a loss it is to the soul who understands the strong claims of the law, and who yet fails to understand the grace of Christ which doth much more abound. It is true that the law of God reveals the love of God when it is preached as the truth in Jesus, for the gift of Christ to this guilty world must be largely dwelt upon in every discourse.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 534, 535

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Book 1*, pp. 155, 156

The participants of the “Seed Sowing” project have four potent and irresistible provisions to present to selected beneficiaries of God’s Everlasting Covenant through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This writer notes that many theologians and biblical scholars alike pit grace against the law. However, this project is designed to present these two as inseparable in the context of God’s mysterious intervention in the affairs of man, which ensures salvation through Christ. The question is - which was first, grace or the law? What does this mean for the beneficiaries of God’s Everlasting Covenant provisions?

Since grace and the Law of God are biblical concepts, this researcher will allow the Bible to speak for itself. The first occurrence of the word *grace* in the Holy Bible is found in the book of Ezra. After God’s people had broken the covenant by intermarriage with Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites, God was not pleased. The Israelites, in acknowledgement of their abomination, subsequently confessed before God. The prophet Ezra states, “But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage” (Ez. 9:8). In the renewed covenant, the first occurrence of the word *grace* occurs in Luke; speaking of Jesus, the doctor validates the power of grace – “The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40, 52).

This researcher argues that Jesus neither receives nor offers grace; He is grace personified. The apostle Paul states, “The Lord has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in

Christ Jesus from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:9). This has been a mystery even for those closest to Christ. In his closing remarks in his letter to the Romans, Paul testifies:

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen (Rom. 16:25-27).

When John Newton penned the lyrics of the well-known Christian hymn “Amazing Grace” in 1779, he explicitly expressed his unworthiness of God’s grace. His was a profession of injustice against humanity; History reveals that John Newton was captain of a slave ship, and the sorrowful humming of an abused slave, took lodgment in his heart. Newton was part of a system that committed unspeakable crimes against fellow humans; he, like the other slave traders, were in direct violation of God’s Everlasting Covenant, but he was a beneficiary of God’s amazing grace through which the provisions are granted. At the time of the writing of this hymn, John Newton fixed the lyrics of this well-loved hymn to the humming melody of the abused slave.³⁸

The apostle Paul defines grace; “even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:22-24). This passage is arguably one of the best biblical passages to define grace. In acknowledging that all have broken God’s Everlasting Covenant, the inspired writer offers hope to everyone. This thesis project is designed for the participants from the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club to take this Good News to the beneficiaries within their

³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPMbiEkLK7E> (accessed 08/30/2018)

scope of influence. Those beneficiaries will be convicted by the Holy Spirit and will also be reenergized to “go and tell”.

The Law of God is His Everlasting Covenant instituted at creation and restated throughout history until the appearance of the Promised Seed Jesus Christ. Under divine inspiration, Paul advises the Romans, “So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Rom. 7:12). Just as the salvific compels the gift of grace, so too is the Law of God compelled. The apostle Paul addresses grace as well as the law. He writes, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:10). No wonder John sees a direct correlation between the Law and love; He writes, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The Law stipulates that the penalty for breaking God’s Everlasting Covenant is death. Paul declares that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), but he also acknowledges that, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). This researcher notes that the gift of God, Jesus Christ was present for all eternity, even before the Law was spoken at creation (2 Tim. 1:9). This researcher furthermore hypothesizes that the Law was spoken to Adam and Eve by Jesus Himself, the personification of grace – what glorious mystery! Jesus declared, “for on the day you eat of the tree, die you will die” (Gen. 2:17). The commandment is built not only on obedience, but also on love; Jesus, the author of the Commandment also advises, “If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments” (John 14:15). Using his “old covenant and new covenant” classification, MacCarty compares the responses to God’s Everlasting Covenant, describing the old covenant

response as “legalistic, perverted, and externalized, and the new covenant response as Holy Spirit generated, internalized, and loving.”³⁹

The Law of God is God’s Everlasting Covenant; it is the story from Genesis to Revelation, and it is God’s love story – “God is love” (1 John 4:8); agape love. It’s an expression of God’s goodwill⁴⁰ (Greek *agape* translates to *goodwill*) to mankind. It is no wonder that, the angel declares, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14- KJV). Peace and good-will are offered to all through God’s *agape* love; this love is consistently demonstrated every time God restates His Everlasting Covenant to the human representative, from Adam to Noah, and every successive restatement moment in history. Love is the common denominator in God’s Everlasting Covenant, and it must also be the driving force as the members of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club reach out to those within their sphere of influence.

This researcher examines the mystery of the Word of God; it implicitly offers life and death at the same time. God says to Adam, “if you break My Covenant, you will die” (this researcher’s translation of Gen. 2:17). Adam broke the covenant by eating the forbidden fruit with his wife (Gen. 3: 6). Suddenly, they experienced nakedness – they were exposed and separated themselves from Love – God is Love (1 John 4:8). In His expression of love, God offered substitutionary atonement (Gen. 4:21) by killing an animal to provide “cover” for mankind. The apostle Peter states, “Love (goodwill) covers a multitude of Sins” (1 Pet. 4:8).

In the time of Noah, “the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). The

³⁹ Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained*, pp. 83, 84

⁴⁰ Strong’s Greek Concordance 26

Hebrew “*ra*” for evil is translated adversity⁴¹. English synonyms for adversity include *different, bad, and disagreeable*. Man was continually disobeying God, but the loving God will plead with man for nearly one hundred years through the preaching of Noah (years of preaching calculated by reading from Gen. 5:32 to 10:21). Preaching is for the benefit of mankind, and it is built on love. Moses notes that “the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart” (Gen. 6:6). God’s love was the driving principle behind His sorrow. God was still going to offer sinful man the protection of the cover in the ark, for “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). Noah’s implicit preaching (2 Pet. 2:5) addresses not only the impending bad news in the flood, but also the good news of the cover of the ark.

In a vision, God promised an aged Abram a child, “and Abram believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Many biblical writers refer to righteousness as clothing or covering. Amidst his suffering, Job proclaimed, “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” (Job. 29:14). The prophet Isaiah declared, “He put on righteousness like a breastplate” (Is. 59:17). He also said, “He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness” (61:10). Abram was awarded the righteousness of God – God’s covenant with Abram was the only Everlasting Covenant renewal that required the human agent to provide the sign. Abram became Abraham and the act of circumcision was entrusted to him. This researcher notes that Abraham was a Gentile, a heathen, and God preached “the gospel” to him so that all nations would be blessed - all the Gentiles (or heathens) were to receive the gospel through Abraham who also was a heathen. It was not just Israel who was to receive the gospel, but the entire human race (Gal.

⁴¹ Strong’s Hebrew Concordance 7451

3:8). But it was Abraham's belief in God's ability to make him, that resulted in him being covered; "Love covers a multitude of sins" (2 Pet. 2:5).

God's Law or His Everlasting Covenant is most audibly expressed in Moses' encounter with God, as Israel was led out of Egyptian bondage. The people of Israel were freed by God since they were incapable of freeing themselves (Ex. 3:10 – 14:31). God promised Abraham that He will deliver his descendants, and He did after nearly four hundred years of Israel's captivity (Gen. 15:13, 14) – God keeps His promises. The reason for the deliverance was for Israel to worship God (Ex. 7:16, 8:1, 9:1, 10:3). The Bible states that at time of God's intervention on Israel's behalf, Israel did not even know God's name. In reasoning with God, Moses asked, "Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God declared, "Tell them 'I Am Who I Am'" (Ex. 3:14).

The final of ten plagues delivered by God was an act of covering. In the tenth plague, Israel was exempted from the activities of the angel of death because she obeyed God by applying "blood on the doorposts and on the lintel of the houses" (Ex. 12:7); the Israelites were covered. Even after God led Israel through the desert, guiding her with a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, the people still sinned. However, God gave simple instructions to Israel for their days to be prolonged (Deut. 6:1, 2). God's will for man is written in His Law – for man to live forever. The Ten Commandments/the Decalogue is God's definition of love – love to Him, and love to each other. The Israelites were covered – "Love covers a multitude of sins" (2 Pet. 2:5).

David begins his poetic writings with the opening salutation, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law, he meditates day and

night” (Ps. 1, 2). David links the act of meditation with love; he declares, “O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day (Ps. 119:97). This thesis project is designed to create a culture of loving nurture of the young hearts and minds of the members of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers. In theory, they will “love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their strength, and with all their mind; and their neighbor as themselves” (Luke 10:27, c.f. Deut. 6:5). The renewed Everlasting Covenant with David was also an expression of God’s unconditional love. God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever (2 Sam. 7, 1 Chron. 17: 11-14). God is love and Jesus is God; God says, Love is on its way through the seed of David, the one who meditates on God’s Law, day and night. This statement of Jesus emphasizes the fact that there is no change to God’s Law (the meeting with Moses), even with the renewal of the Everlasting Covenant with David. David knew, that when he attempted to cover his own sins (2 Sam. 11), he failed just as Adam did (Gen. 3:7). However, he appealed to God (Ps. 51), and Love saved him.

When Jesus became incarnate, He reassured mankind of eternal life through faith in Him; that was the theme of His ministry here on earth. He’s the Law, and in human terms, the law condemns. But Jesus allays all human fears, for He declares, “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47). Jesus is the good will; after His post-baptism forty-day fast (Matt. 4:1, 2) He presented his mission statement (Luke 4:18,19) after successfully warding off the devil’s temptations. Unlike Adam, Jesus the upholder of the Law rebuked the devil, using the Word as His only defense (Luke 4: 1-13), and remained connected to Love. He subsequently returned to Nazareth, entered the synagogue, and declared, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to

the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (v. 18, 19). This is Jesus the Law speaking life to all mankind. The provisions of God’s Everlasting Covenant are embedded within this mission statement (Luke 4: 16-18). His Father sent Him, and He went.

Jesus also declares, “this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28). His use of the definite article (Greek *tes*) as it relates to the covenant implies that there is only one covenant: God’s Everlasting Covenant. This researcher notes that the coming, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ offers the eschatological hope for all mankind. The writer to the Hebrews testifies, “By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10). He continues:

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their mind, I will write them” (11-16).

The participants of this thesis project, will be convicted by the Holy Spirit to create a new culture within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, specifically within the Pathfinder Club. Under their motto “Shine for Jesus,” they will go forth knowing that God’s Everlasting Covenant is for all generations (App. G). They will also embrace the idea that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for all are one in Christ Jesus. And if all mankind belongs to Christ, then all are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:28, 29). This is the Good News; the seed that the participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club will hopefully spread indiscriminately. Lord-

willingly, the selected beneficiaries will embrace the Everlasting Covenant provisions of sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy with God, and justification.

Chapter 3

Scattering the Provisions from the Seed of Promise

3.1 It's all about the Seed

The Lord God said to the serpent, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (Hebrew *zera*¹); He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Gen. 3:15). As discussed in previous chapters, this was God’s immediate response to the fall of man; it represents the activation of the plan of redemption. This redemptive act comes through the *zera*. Included in the definition of the Hebrew *zera* are *a sowing, seed, and offspring*². The *zera* shall be bruised on the heel in the process of securing man’s redemption. The prophet Isaiah prophesizes, “He was bruised for our iniquities” (53:5 – K.J.V.), and again in verse 10 (K.J.V.) Isaiah writes, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.” The *seed* is described as “he”, but to whom does the writer refer?

Since the literary genre in use is prophetic, it’s important to share findings through prophetic lenses. In his *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Stefanovic reveals the identity of the *seed*. He sees a direct correlation between Gen. 3:15 and the prophecy of Rev. 12: 3-17. In his interpretation, he argues:

This standing of the dragon (“the ancient serpent” in 12:9) before the woman refers to the great hostility of the serpent toward the woman, and the enmity between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed, as announced in Genesis 3:15. Revelation 12:5 presents Satan’s bruising of Christ’s heel. Satan’s primary effort to destroy Christ at the moment he was born continued until the end of Jesus’ ministry. The child is finally born. John does not leave his readers in any doubt that this child is anybody else but the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the one who is to shepherd all the nations with the rod of iron. John alludes here to the royal Psalm 2:7–9 where the Davidic king is the anointed

¹ Strong’s Concordance 2233

² Ibid

Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the one who is to shepherd all the nations with the rod of iron. John alludes here to the royal Psalm 2:7–9 where the Davidic king is the anointed one to whom God speaks: “You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations as your heritage, and the ends of the earth as your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron” (RSV). Revelation 12:5 also echoes the prophecy of Micah, about the “ruler in Israel” to be born in Bethlehem: “‘His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.’ Therefore, he will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child.... And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God” (Mic. 5:2–4).³

The results of this research offer the participants a solid evangelistic tool, to indiscriminately share this one *Seed*, Jesus Christ, in Whom are all the provisions of God’s Everlasting Covenant. The Gen. 3:15 prophetic declaration of God is widely regarded by theologians as the first Good News or Hebrew *protoevangelium*, that is, the first (*proto*) announcement of the Good News of the Gospel (*evangelium*). It is God’s direct response to a life-threatening crisis, and God does this to secure eternal life for mankind. Packer echoes Stefanovic’s interpretation; he argues:

The fulfillment of the old covenant in Christ opens the door of faith to the Gentiles. The “seed of Abraham,” the defined community with which the covenant was made, was redefined in Christ. Gentiles with Jews who are united to Christ by faith become Abraham’s seed in him (Gal. 3:26-29), while no one outside of Christ can be in covenant with God (Rom. 4:9-17; 11:13-24). The goal of God’s covenantal dealings is, as it always was, the gathering and sanctifying of the covenant people “from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev. 7:9), who will one day inhabit new Jerusalem in a renewed world order (21:1-2). Here the covenant relationship will find its fullest expression—“they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (21:3). Toward this goal God’s shaping of world events still moves. The covenant framework embraces the entire economy of God’s sovereign grace. Christ’s heavenly ministry continues to be that of the “mediator of a new covenant” (Heb. 12:24). Salvation is covenant salvation: justification and adoption, regeneration and sanctification are covenant mercies; election was God’s choice of future members of his covenant community, the church; baptism and the Lord’s Supper, corresponding to circumcision and Passover, are covenant ordinances; God’s law is covenant law, and keeping it is the truest expression of gratitude for covenant grace and of loyalty to our covenant God. Covenanting with God in response to his covenanting with us should be a regular

³ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, kindle loc. 8125 - 8134

devotional exercise for all believers, both in private and at the Lord's Table. An understanding of the covenant of grace guides us through and helps us to appreciate all the wonders of God's redeeming love.⁴

This thesis project involves thirty-nine participants, thirteen primary participants who are members of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, and twenty-six secondary participants who are the selectees/beneficiaries of the former group (the Pathfinder Club). The age group of the primary participants ranges from thirteen to fifteen years, and it is a representation of the club's demographics. The final thirteen participants were selected based on their expressed willingness to participate. This researcher believes in the power of "child evangelism". Concerning "child evangelism", Ellen G. White, in her book *Evangelism*, states:

In the children who were brought in contact with Him, Jesus saw the men and women who should be heirs of His grace and subjects of His kingdom, and some of whom would become martyrs for His sake. He knew that these children would listen to Him and accept Him as their Redeemer far more readily than would grownup people, many of whom were the worldly-wise and hardhearted. In teaching, He came down to their level. He, the majesty of heaven, answered their questions and simplified His important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their minds the seeds of truth, which in after years would spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life. When Jesus told the disciples not to forbid the children to come to Him, He was speaking to His followers in all ages, --to officers of the church, ministers, helpers, and all Christians. Jesus is drawing the children, and He bids us, "Suffer them to come"; as if He would say, they will come, if you do not hinder them. Let not your un-Christlike character misrepresent Jesus. Do not keep the little ones away from Him by your coldness and harshness. Never give them cause to feel that heaven would not be a pleasant place to them if you were there. Do not speak of religion as something that children cannot understand, or act as if they were not expected to accept Christ in their childhood. Do not give them the false impression that the religion of Christ is a religion of gloom, and that in coming to the Saviour they must give up all that makes life joyful. As the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of the children, co-operate with His work. Teach them that the Saviour is calling them, that nothing can afford Him greater joy than for them to give themselves to Him in the bloom and freshness of their years. The Saviour regards with infinite tenderness the souls whom He has purchased with His blood. They are the claim of His love. He looks upon them with unutterable longing. His heart is drawn out, not only to the best-trained and most

⁴ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 89,90

attractive children, but to those who by inheritance and through neglect have objectionable traits of character.⁵

When this researcher met with the thirteen primary participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club on Friday 07/06/2018, there was an unexplainable air of excitement from among them. The ensuing power point presentation on God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions in Jesus Christ, resulted in an almost unanimous vocal response of, "I want to sow this *Seed*, I want to scatter the Good News." With this level of intensity and passion, the young farmers (metaphorically speaking) of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, went out to scatter their seeds with a focus on God's Everlasting Covenant declaration.

3.2 Scattering the Good News of Sanctification

God declares, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it" (Jer. 31: 32a). This thesis project is informed by the divine acts of God as Creator and Sovereign Owner of the universe. When God writes His name, He undeniably declares Ownership. In writing His law on the heart of every person, He sets them apart as His Own; this is called sanctification. Referencing the Westminster Shorter Catechism, J. I. Packer posits that sanctification is "the work of God's free grace, whereby one is renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and is enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness"⁶. Packer also argues that sanctification is in one sense, synergistic in nature, and it's "an ongoing cooperative process in which regenerate persons, alive to God and freed from sin's dominion (Rom 6:11, 14-18), are required to exert themselves in sustained obedience".⁷ In this thesis project, the writer's goal is

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 579, 580.

⁶ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 169

⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 170-171

for the participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, to willingly embrace the free gift of sanctification in Jesus Christ, and to work with Jesus to write His laws on the hearts of men, so that they too can be sanctified.

A sanctified person becomes a son/daughter of God, and by extension, a beneficiary of God's divine will. This writer hypothesizes that when one acknowledges his/her adoption as a child of God, he/she accepts responsibility to share the Good News with the other beneficiaries within his/her scope of influence. Titus notes, "Christ gave Himself for man, to redeem them from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works" (Tit. 2:14). It is through this act of redemption, that this writer's understanding of sanctification is informed. Indeed, mankind is born in sin and shaped in iniquity (Ps. 51:5,6), but he/she still benefits from the provision of sanctification, through God's amazing grace (Rom. 6:11, 14-18). This is the Good News, and the participants from the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club are free to scatter this seed indiscriminately.

The Hebrew *qadash*⁸ which occurs 175 times in the first covenant book, translates into English *consecrated, sanctified, or set apart*. In the Renewed Covenant Book, the Greek *hagiazō*⁹ occurs 28 times, and it translates into English *make holy, consecrate, sanctify, or separate*. For this thesis project, the *sanctification definition of hagiazō* is the focus. Wood A. Skevington posits that God has offered sanctification by allowing the believer to have Christ dwell within him/her.¹⁰ When God writes His Law on the hearts of His children, He's writing His Word which "became flesh and dwelt among man" (John 1:14). This Word that became flesh is Jesus Christ,

⁸ Strong's Concordance 6942

⁹ Ibid 37

¹⁰ Wood A. Skevington, *Walter Marshall and "the Gospel Mystery of Sanctification, Evangelical Quarterly, ISSN 0014-3367, 01/1958, Volume 30, p. 18*

the Promised *Seed* in the *protoevangelium* (Gen. 3:15), Who establishes Himself in the hearts of men. In the process of having the *Seed* planted in one's heart, Jesus' mission becomes the mission of every believer.

Jesus's mission is His Father's mission, which is the proclamation of the Good News to the beneficiaries. After His forty days fast in the desert, Jesus declares, "The Spirit of the Lord has anointed Me to preach the Good News to the poor" (Luke 4:18). This writer notices a loving response by Jesus Christ, Who wants "the world to know that He loves the Father, and does exactly as the Father commands Him" (John 14:31). How can one, like Jesus remain obedient to the mission? How can the beneficiaries of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club remain true to their mission? How can they "shine for Jesus"?

The young Sparklers can "shine for Jesus" by lovingly and selflessly informing their respective two selected beneficiaries (the secondary participants) of their inclusion in God's divine will – His Everlasting Covenant. God's mission is urgent because the time is short (Heb. 10:37, Rev. 22:20); scattering the Good News of Sanctification, requires a dedicated and committed group of people united through the Holy Spirit. Donahue argues:

A community becomes truly and radiantly one when all its members have a sense of urgency in their mission. There are too many people in the world who have no hope. There are too many cries which go unheard. There are too many people dying in loneliness. It is when the members of a community realize that they are not there simply for themselves or their own sanctification, but to welcome the gift of God, to hasten his Kingdom and to quench the thirst in parched hearts through their prayer and sacrifice, love and acts of service, that they will truly live community. A community is called to be a light in a world of darkness, a spring of fresh water in the Church and for all people. If a community becomes lukewarm, people will die of thirst. If it bears no fruit, the poor will die of hunger. The mission is service in the name of Jesus, sharing His Good News in word and deed.¹¹

¹¹ Bill Donahue, *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, pp. 120-122

Because the provision of sanctification comes through oneness with Jesus Christ, those who respond to Jesus' call to mission do so in a spirit of community. Jesus' prayer to His Father defines the community; He prays:

But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me ¹².

God's act of writing His law in the hearts of men is an act of sanctification. He also notices that oneness with God is the same as oneness with His Word or oneness with Jesus. This desired oneness stretches across the continuum from eternity past to Paradise restored, and it's the driving force in God's Everlasting Covenant. This provision of sanctification is for all generations (App. G); God declares, "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deut. 7:9). At creation, Adam and Eve, being in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:27), walked in the Garden with Him. "They were both naked and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2: 25). Their oneness with God, and their conjugal oneness with each other is a divine provision for all mankind; thus, God says, "everything is very good" (Gen. 1:31). At their marriage ceremony, God declared, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

¹² John 17:13-21

This researcher hypothesizes that sanctification is a crucial life principle that is exhibited in every thought, word, and deed of the believer.

This provision of sanctification is seen in the renewal of the Everlasting Covenant after the fall. Also known as the Covenant of Redemption, God declares “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Gen. 3:15). After the fall, man loses oneness with God; he is separated. Man is no longer safe and he feels naked; he is captured by sin and Satan and he needs to be redeemed and saved – he needs salvation. Man tries to cover himself in the Garden with fig leaves (Gen. 3:7), but he fails in his attempt to “do”. As an expression of His Everlasting Covenant provisions, God offers substitutionary atonement, by the implied killing of an animal and uses the skin as covering (Gen. 3:21). The writer to the Hebrews states that “without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22). Donahue states, “It’s often been noted that we are not human doings; we are human beings. Being is our identity. We are men and women made in the image of God, redeemed and set apart to enjoy community with him and with one another as we serve the world.”¹³

God’s sense of community never changes, and as God, He maintains the integrity of that community in a mysterious way. In the Torah, Moses writes that “God looks down at His people and notices that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Assuming from the context, Moses says that during the wickedness, Noah stands out as a righteous man, blameless in his time, and he walks with God”¹⁴. The writer to the Hebrews says that “God warns Noah about things not

¹³ Bill Donahue, *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, p. 165

¹⁴ Gen. 6:9

yet seen; in reverence, Noah prepares an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemns the world, and becomes a beneficiary of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Heb. 11:7). God cleanses the earth through the great *mabbul* (Hebrew for flood – Strong’s Concordance 3999), but the family of Noah is implicitly sanctified, through Noah’s faith, for the perpetuation of the humanity (Gen. 9:7).

That faith was also evident in the life of Abraham, through his response to God’s command to sacrifice his only son by Sarah, Isaac. Abraham proceeds and is ready to slay his son Isaac (Gen. 22:10), but he’s prevented from killing his son by an angel of God (v. 11, 12). God subsequently makes a promise unto Abraham that his *seed* would live forever. The apostle Paul writes, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his *seed*. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. Abraham is sanctified because of his “belief in God, and this is accounted to him as righteousness” (James 2:23). Paul also affirms that “all nations will be blessed in Abraham, so then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer” (Gal. 3: 8, 9). God’s Everlasting Covenant is faith-based.

As God hears the cries of His people down in Egypt, He calls on Moses and asks him to go back to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel. God requires of Moses to go back to the very place he had fled forty years earlier for killing an Egyptian (Ex. 2:11-25, Acts 7:30). Moses, after admitting his human deficiencies, surrenders to God through faith, and leads the Children of Israel out of Egypt. In his defense before the high priest, Stephen implicitly links the Gospel of Jesus Christ with God’s Everlasting Covenant, and God’s act of freeing Israel. Reference to Moses, Stephen proclaimed, “This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like

unto me; him shall ye hear” (Acts 7:37). The reference to Moses in the Renewed Covenant Book is significant, for it was Moses who received the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. Many argue that this Law was abolished by Jesus, but God Himself references His Law several times in Scripture E.g. Ex. 32: 12-14; 33:1, Lev. 26:42, Deut. 1:8; 4:3). In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matt. 5:17, 18). The writer of Hebrews warns, “Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Heb. 10:28).

God appoints the prophet Nathan to deliver His covenantal message to David; Samuel recalls:

Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David (2 Sam. 7:8-17).

Notice that David’s son is sanctified even before he is born. God declares, “this house shall be built in My name, and the kingdom shall be established forever”; this points to the

eschatological reality of the Restored Paradise. God demands holiness from His leaders, and as a leader, David sinned. With his sin, the entire nation of Israel suffered (2 Sam. 11-18). In setting David on the throne, the psalmist also states that God established an everlasting covenant with David and his line (Ps. 89:28–29). This did not give David and his sons the right to do as they pleased. Were they to break the law of God, they would be punished. Still, God promised never to remove His love from David’s line (vv. 30–37). David’s sin and God’s pardoning of David’s sin (2 Sam. 12:13), foreshadows the work of David’s greater son—Jesus the Messiah Who alone is man’s sanctification.

Two features are central to sanctification: Jesus Christ himself is man’s sanctification or holiness (1 Cor 1:30); and it is through union with Christ that sanctification is accomplished in man. Packer sees this union as a component of God’s Everlasting Covenant. He writes, “Our salvation involves, first, Christ dying for us and, second, Christ living in us (John 15:4; 17:26; Col. 1:27) and we living in Christ, united with him in his death and risen life (Rom. 6:3-10; Col. 2:12, 20; 3:1). This vital union, which is sustained by the Spirit from the divine side and by faith from our side, and which is formed in and through our new birth, presupposes covenantal union in the sense of our eternal election in Christ¹⁵. In the apostle Peter’s second sermon, he describes Jesus as the *archegos*¹⁶ (Greek for English *founder* or *leader*) of life (Acts 3:15). The writer of Hebrews also describes Jesus as the *archegos* of man’s salvation (Heb. 2:10). He is the Good News of Sanctification (App. I).

There are varying views on the doctrine of sanctification, but the common understanding is that sanctification is a passive act; that is, it can only be experienced when the repentant sinner

¹⁵ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 147

¹⁶ Strong’s Greek Concordance 747

acknowledges and humbly accepts God’s special gift to mankind, in Christ Jesus. One popular doctrinal view of sanctification is that of John Wesley, founder of the Wesleyan Movement. His view asserts the “primacy of justification, and the assurance the believer could have based upon the righteousness of Christ. However, his Arminian view of election creeps into his view of final salvation. He views the process of Sanctification as one of making the individual worthy of salvation.”¹⁷ Another popular view of sanctification is that of the Pentecostal Movement; the Pentecostals have three different perspectives on sanctification viz. instantaneous, progressive, and entire sanctification.¹⁸ The following describes Instantaneous Sanctification:

Table 1: 1 Components of Instantaneous Sanctification

It occurs at the moment of belief
It involves the believer being set apart from the world to follow Christ
It is symbolized by baptism (Col. 2:11-12)
It occurs because the believer is united with Christ and given new life (1 Cor. 1:30)
It puts the believer in perfect relationship with God
It sets Christians free to do God's will
It is based on the finished work of Christ

¹⁷ Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Sanctification*, pp. 207

¹⁸ <https://www.xenos.org/essays/five-views-sanctification> (accessed 08/30/2018)

Proponents of Progressive Sanctification hold that “the blood of Christ cleanses believers from sin in an ongoing way, and those supporting the Entire Sanctification perspective define it as: 1. following the purposes and desires of God to the best of one's ability or 2. an event that occurs when Christ comes back and gives the believers glorified bodies”.¹⁹ J. Robertson McQuilkin represents the Keswick Movement. He defines sanctification as a setting apart for service to God. And, like the others, he shares the view that that believers in God’s gracious acts, exemplify lives of high moral standing: those who are sanctified are set apart from sin and consecrated to God. He also argues that the process of sanctification results in the believer receiving a new body and becomes like Christ.²⁰ Another popular view is that of the Augustinian-Dispensational Movement. The representative John Walvoord states:

Two things occur at conversion: regeneration and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration occurs at the point of conversion, involves the granting of eternal life and the new nature, and moves a Christian from spiritual death to life. It does not, as some suggest, "bring perfection of character or freedom from a sin nature." The baptism of the Holy Spirit, spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:13, is the placement, at the moment of conversion, of the convert into the body of Christ. When we are identified with Christ in this way, we share in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:12). As a result, we can utilize God's power and guidance for our lives. This experience was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost and occurs to anyone the moment they repent and turn to Christ.²¹

The Protestant Reformation was the 16th-century religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered Catholic Europe, setting in place the religious structures and beliefs that would pave the way for all to be free to know God directly, through His Son Jesus Christ. Many conflicting issues arose, including the doctrines of justification and sanctification.

¹⁹ <https://www.xenos.org/essays/five-views-sanctification> (last accessed 08/30/2018)

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

Therefore, it is of paramount importance for this researcher to view the Doctrine of Sanctification, through the lens of Catholicism. Packer notes:

Official Roman Catholic theology includes sanctification in the definition of justification, which it sees as a process rather than a single decisive event and affirms that while faith contributes to our acceptance with God, our works of satisfaction and merit contribute too. Rome sees baptism, viewed as a channel of sanctifying grace, as the primary instrumental cause of justification, and the sacrament of penance, whereby congruous merit is achieved through works of satisfaction, as the supplementary restorative cause whenever the grace of God's initial acceptance is lost through mortal sin. Congruous, as distinct from condign, merit means merit that it is fitting, though not absolutely necessary, for God to reward by a fresh flow of sanctifying grace. On the Roman Catholic view, therefore, believers save themselves with the help of the grace that flows from Christ through the church's sacramental system, and in this life no sense of confidence in God's grace can ordinarily be had.²²

God's Everlasting Covenant Provision of Sanctification is available to anyone who is willing to become a "new creature in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17). The common component in the theological perspective, as discussed above, is man's total need of Christ. Since Christ offers His love to all, this researcher argues that the participants of this project, can, without timidity, indiscriminately disperse God's provision, through His Holy Spirit. Additionally, this provision of sanctification is intimately packaged with reconciliation, personal intimacy with God, and justification (App. F). When God writes His Law on someone's heart, He's declaring ownership. The Bible uses the word *seal* and *law* to refer to the same process, for example Isaiah writes, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples" (8:16). God declares, "Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (Prov. 7:2,3 – KJV).

²² J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 166

When God writes His *Law* on the hearts of His children, He seals them as His own, and an obedient response occurs when the believer internalizes the *Law*. When one is not surrendered to the workings of the Holy Spirit, his/her response is as a result of an externalization or perversion of the Gospel. Stefanovic posits:

The basic ancient idea of sealing is ownership. When anything was sealed, such as a document, it was either for the sake of ratification or the protection of its contents (see Notes on Rev. 5:1). This sealing of people in the New Testament denotes identification of those who are God's faithful people. Sealing is something that takes place when a person comes to Christ. Being sealed by the seal of the Holy Spirit is the sign of a genuine Christian who belongs to God and the sign of assurance of salvation.²³

Thirteen primary participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club viewed the power point presentation on God's four Everlasting Covenant Provisions. This researcher was encouraged by the level of engagement displayed by these participants, and their zeal to *scatter the Good News of Sanctification*. They were noticeably engaged especially during and after completing the questionnaire on the Good News of Sanctification (App. A). At the end of the questionnaire, their acceptance of this provision was affirmed by way of the following two-point acknowledgement: They each acknowledged that through His grace, God has sanctified them, and they were all excited about the Good News of Sanctification. The thirteen primary participants selected were all "fired up" to scatter the Good News of Sanctification. After a prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance, they left their meeting place, each with two questionnaires and answer sheets to deliver to their respective two unchurched family members. One week later, on the following club day, the twenty-six completed questionnaires (two completed questionnaires from each of the thirteen primary participants) were returned to the meeting place. The result from the response to this anonymous survey was the same as from the

²³ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Kindle Loc. 5543-5546

primary participants; that is all twenty-six secondary participants selected “yes” (see App. K). The *Seed* has been sown.

3.3 Scattering the Good News of Reconciliation

God declares, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jer. 31:33). This provision reinforces the point that God was no longer a God to His people at some point. God said “when Israel broke His Covenant after He brought them out of Egypt, He no longer cared for them” (Heb. 8:9 - KJV). However, God declares, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (v. 12). Continuing in verse 13a, the writer points to verse 12 as the reason God calls it a *new covenant*. The Greek word for *new* is *kainos*; included in the English definitions are *new in quality and fresh in development or opportunity* (Strong’s Concordance, 2537). Unrighteousness causes a break in relationship between a righteous God and an unrighteous people, but mysteriously God’s salvific and restorative plan cannot be broken. Paul notes that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19). The Greek word for *reconciliation* as it is used in this passage is *katallagé* and included in its English definitions include *reconciliation, restoration to favor, and return* (Strong’s Concordance, 2643).

Cloud and Townsend note, “the message of reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel. In salvation and in the growth process, God is reconciling things, bringing them back to the way they should be.”²⁴ In the first covenant book, David states that God restores (Hebrew *shub*) His people to righteousness (Ps. 23:3), so that His people can “dwell with Him forever” (v. 6). This

²⁴ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*, pp. 27

act of reconciliation/restoration is connected to the other three provisions that comprise God's salvific act on behalf of mankind (App. F). Packer states that "those who have received reconciliation through faith in Christ are justified and have peace with God."²⁵

When the Good News of reconciliation is indiscriminately dispersed, God's love in Christ is unstoppable, even "within the wrath of nations."²⁶ David Shenk captures the power of reconciliation through the Word of God; he shares the following story – this is part of an extract from a Muslim-Christian peacemaking dialogue, undertaken by a Christian pastor, who recalls:

Four years ago, the committee invited me to meet with Muslim and Christian leaders in the central mosque to break the fast on a Ramadan evening. They asked for counsel on peacemaking; I told them of a dialogue I had written with a Muslim, Badru Kateregga, which some Muslim-Christian peacemaking dialogue groups have found helpful.⁴ They decided on the spot to jointly translate and publish that book. The meeting with the Hizbullah was for the launching of that book. The book, however, is only one dimension of the reconciliation movement. The young self-effacing pastor who leads the reconciliation movement formerly led prayers in a mosque in his youth. He cultivates good relations with the moderate peace inclined Muslims, and his congregation has released him for full-time reconciliation ministry. He uses that platform of trustful relations with moderates to engage the militants. His first visit to the Hizbullah was three years ago. The commander greeted him gruffly, "You are a Christian and an infidel, and therefore I can kill you!" Unfazed, the pastor returned again and again to the commander's center to drink tea and converse. Then the pastor invited the commander and his officers to fly with several Christian leaders to Banda Aceh to work with Christian teams in the post-tsunami reconstruction. Prior to the tsunami Banda Aceh had acquired notoriety as a center for Islamic militant fervency. Much of the reconstruction efforts, however, have come from Christian philanthropy. Remarkably, the Hizbullah leaders accepted, and for two weeks they worked with the Christian teams in rebuilding projects. The commander slept in the same room with the pastor, and they became friends! One evening around the evening meal, the commander began to weep. He said, "When I think of what we have done to you, and how you reciprocate with love, my heart has melted within me!" He confided to the pastor, "I have discovered that you Christians are good infidels."²⁷

²⁵ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 132

²⁶ David Shenk, *The Gospel of Reconciliation Within the Wrath of Nations- International Bulletin of Missionary Outreach*, Vol. 32, Issue 1

²⁷ David Shenk, *The Gospel of Reconciliation Within the Wrath of Nations- International Bulletin of Missionary Outreach*, Vol. 32, Issue 1

This researcher posits that the Christian pastor approached his mission with love, as is confirmed by the Muslim Commander's own words – “you Christians reciprocate with love.”²⁸ This is what Jesus does all the time, and therefore, the youth of South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club can emulate this pastor's example and “shine for Jesus” as they sow seeds indiscriminately, in their perceived “world of conflict.” God's Everlasting Covenant is driven by love, and the provision of reconciliation is available in Jesus Christ, “the immovable Rock upon Whom the church is built” (Matt. 16:18). Are there situations that warrant extreme care and caution from a human perspective? Of course, there are, but John states that “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18a). Jesus is God, and God is love; Ellen G. White posits that “reconciliation cannot be negotiated; this provision is only available through Christ”.²⁹

Another noticeable component of reconciliation is prayer. The pastor led a life of prayer from his youthful days at a mosque; he was connected to God. Jesus asserts, “if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you” (John 16:23b). Jesus gives all the right to address God as Father (Matt. 6:9), and to use His name to receive the Everlasting Covenant provisions. Prayer is the communication between God and His children. This communication prevents the uncomfortable experience of estrangement, especially when it occurs between a parent and a child; it results in a loss of provisions. What is even more significant is the underlying cause of the estrangement and the enmity it brings; however, the Good News for sinners is found in Paul encouragement; he writes, “For if while we were enemies we were

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 15

reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:8).

On Friday July 13, 2018, the thirteen primary participants returned to their club and were excited with the overall response from the twenty-six secondary participants. A brief discussion on the day’s questionnaire, *Scattering the Good News of Reconciliation* (App. C), was facilitated by this researcher, followed by the participants’ completion of the questionnaire. At the completion of this questionnaire, the thirteen primary participants acknowledged that **through God’s saving grace in Christ Jesus, God is theirs’s and they are God’s**. They were all excited about the Good News of Reconciliation. They were still “fired up” to sow the *Seed*; this time, by scattering the Good News of Reconciliation. Once again, the Holy Spirit’s help was sought, and they left their meeting place, each with two questionnaires and answer sheets to deliver to their same two respective unchurched family members. One week later, on the following club day, the twenty-six completed questionnaires were returned to the meeting place. The result was no different from the first; like the primary participants, all twenty-six secondary participants selected “yes” (see App. K). The *Seed* has been sown.

3.4 Scattering the Good News of Personal Intimacy with God

God declares, “for all will know (Hebrew *yada* ³⁰) Me; from the least to the greatest of these” (Jer. 31: 34). The English translation for the Hebrew *yada* is know; the list of synonyms for the English *know* ³¹ include *familiar friend, have relations, and intimate friends*. In God’s first biblically recorded encounter with Jeremiah, God declared, “Before I formed you in the

³⁰ Strong’s Concordance 3045

³¹ Strong’s Concordance 3045

womb, I knew (*yada*) you” (Jer. 1: 5a). That is, before God formed Jeremiah, there was personal intimacy between God and Jeremiah. This researcher’s question becomes; Is this true for all mankind? God answers this question through this inspired writer Jeremiah. God declares, “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?” (Jer. 32:27). This is Good News, and the participants from the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, can “run with it.”

Although he was not numbered among the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul’s transformation stands out as a reminder of God’s impartiality and encouragement to all mankind. There is a strong connection between sanctification, reconciliation, and personal intimacy with God. In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul states, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you *know* (Greek *eido* ³²) how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not *know* (Greek *eido*) God (1 Thess. 4:3 - 5). The Greek *eido* (Strong’s Greek Concordance 1492) is the word used for English *know*; among its synonyms are *be aware*, *behold*, *consider*, and *perceive*.

When one hungers for the truth (and this researcher hypothesizes that all humans do), he/she is really seeking Christ Who declares that, “He is the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). Donahue argues, “Man’s hunger for truth is ultimately a hunger for intimacy with the Triune God. Jesus admonishes, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13a). The Spirit works in and through man, points them to Christ, and confirms they are loved by the Father.”³³ In his letter to the Romans, Paul also emphasizes that

³² Strong’s Greek Concordance 1492

³³ Bill Donahue, *The Irresistible Community: An Invitation to Life Together*, pp. 194

receiving of the Holy Spirit is fundamental to the beneficiaries of God's Everlasting Covenant; that is, by accepting the Holy Spirit, one also accepts adoption as son or daughter, just as Jesus is the Son of God. Paul declares to the Romans that, "you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15). Pretorius argues:

The important thing to see is that what Christ did as Saviour, was to open up the way to intimate fellowship with God by the Spirit; and to bring believers into sonship through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This receiving of the Spirit places one into sonship through adoption. The ultimate evidence of this "sonship" is the believer's use of the Son's own address to the Father in prayer, Abba. Through this crying out, the believer not only gives voice to his or her consciousness of belonging to God as His child, but also to having a status comparable to that of Jesus himself. In ascribing to Christians indwelt by the Spirit the use of this same term in addressing God, Paul shows that Christians have a relationship to God that is like Christ's own relationship to the Father.³⁴

The question still lingers, how can one truly know or have personal intimacy with God?

In her book *Steps to Christ*, Ellen G. White writes:

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all.³⁵

The Good News is that God attends to each person on a private and individual level. White further posits that "the relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though

³⁴ <http://www.galaxie.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/conspectus01-1-03>

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 85

there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son”.³⁶

On Friday July 20, 2018, the thirteen primary participants returned to their club and engage in a lively discussion on the results of the two previous anonymous surveys. A brief discussion on the day’s questionnaire Scattering the Good News of Personal Intimacy with God (App. E) was facilitated by this researcher, and the ten-point questionnaire completed by the participants. Like the two previous questionnaires, the participants acknowledged that through Jesus Christ, they can be intimately connected with God. They were very excited about personal intimacy with God. Upon completion of that phase of the day’s proceedings, they wasted no time to physically stand for prayer and rush off to sow the *Seed*; this time, by scattering the Good News of Personal Intimacy with God. They quickly departed with two questionnaires and answer sheets to deliver to their same two respective unchurched family members. One week later, on the following club day, the twenty-six completed questionnaires were returned to the meeting place. The result was no different from the previous two; like the primary participants, all twenty-six secondary participants selected “yes” (see App. K). The *Seed* has been sown.

3.5 Scattering the Good News of Justification

God declares, “for I will forgive (Hebrew *salach*) their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer. 31:34c). The Hebrew *salach*³⁷ means to pardon or forgive, and when God offers *salach*, He remembers the sin no more. This is Good News for the beneficiaries of God’s Everlasting Covenant provisions, and the participants of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club, will present it without discrimination. When God frees the sinner

³⁶Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 100

³⁷ Strong’s Concordance 5545

from sin, he/she becomes justified through the saving work of Christ Jesus. Justification is available to all through faith; Paul declares, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1, 2). This provision makes the following three realities possible: Firstly, there is peace with God - Nothing is more important than being at peace with God. To be at odds with the God of the Universe is a terrible thing. To be under his wrath and curse, subject to his righteous judgment is horrifying. Everyone needs peace with God, and the only way to get it is through justification which comes through Jesus Christ.

Secondly, one has access into grace - In addition to peace with God, justification by faith gives the believer access to God's grace. In verses 20c to 21, Paul continues, “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Thirdly, one can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God – The believer experiences joy at its fullest. Not only is there the promise of peace with God, and the gift of His grace in Christ Jesus, but the believer also rejoices (Greek *kauchaomai*), delights, exults, or boasts in hope of His glory. Hope, in Scripture, is a very strong word. Hope isn't a just a wish, but it is personified by Jesus Christ, Who is also known as the “Blessed Hope” (Tit. 2:13). The Good News is that “He (the *Blessed Hope*) came that all may have life and have life more abundantly” (John 10:10). Paul affirms that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise” (Heb. 3:28, 29).

The provision of justification is for all; Paul states, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you” (Gal. 3:8). The Greek for justification is *dikaiow* and it means to show to be righteous or declare righteous (Greek Concordance, 1344). In this letter to the Galatians, the apostle Paul cites *faith* as an important component of one’s path to righteousness. He declares that “everyone is a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). In fact, the word *faith* occurs 14 times in this chapter alone and it shares this distinction with Heb. 11, the faith chapter of the Bible. Paul affirms that “justification by the blood of Jesus, saves the sinner from the wrath of God” (Rom. 5:9).

Why should one accept God’s Everlasting Covenant provisions?” Should it be the love of God which results in eternal life, or the fear of the wrath of God which results in eternal damnation? Packer states:

God’s “wrath”, that is, his active judicial hostility to sin, is wholly just in its manifestations (Rom. 2:5-16), and his particular “judgments” (retributive punishments) are glorious and praiseworthy (Rev. 16:5, 7; 19:1-4). Whenever God fulfills his covenant commitment by acting to save his people, it is a gesture of “righteousness,” that is, justice (Isa. 51:5-6; 56:1; 63:1; 1 John 1:9). When God justifies sinners through faith in Christ, he does so on the basis of justice done, that is, the punishment of our sins in the person of Christ our substitute; thus, the form taken by his justifying mercy shows him to be utterly and totally just (Rom. 3:25-26), and our justification itself is shown to be judicially justified.³⁸

God’s holiness is therefore the answer to man’s unholiness, but because God will forever pursue man for relationship, unholiness will have to be dealt with in a hostile way. This researcher notes that God loves (Greek *agape*) every sinner (John 3:16, Rom. 3:23), but He hates the sin. The *agape* love is God’s deepest expression of His covenantal will for mankind – the definitions of

³⁸ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 44

agape include *wish well, takes pleasure in, longs for, and esteem* – Strong’s Concordance, 25).

The Psalmist captures God’s “obsession” with man when he asks, “What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?” (Ps. 8:4).

It is Good News that God has such “obsession” with man. In His omnipotence, He finds ways of maintaining “oneness” with unholy or sinful man. The apostle John states, “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4: 9, 10). The Greek *hilasmos* (Strong’s Concordance, 2434) is translated English propitiation, and included in its definitions is *Christ’s atoning blood that appeases God’s wrath, on all confessed sin*. Packer points out:

As always in the New Testament, “us” as the objects and beneficiaries of redeeming love means “us who believe.” Neither here nor elsewhere does “we” or “us” refer to every individual belonging to the human race. New Testament teaching on redemption is particularistic throughout, and when “the world” is said to be loved and redeemed (John 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 2:2), the reference is to the great number of God’s elect scattered worldwide throughout the ungodly human community (cf. John 10:16; 11:52-53), not to each and every person who did, does, or shall exist. If this were not so, John and Paul would be contradicting things that they say elsewhere.³⁹

The response by the participants of South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club is therefore one that is built on faith. Their response represents a paradigm shift that revolves around their belief in God. They appreciate being like Jesus and embracing the reality that they are “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, suffering with and being glorified with Him” (Rom. 8:17 paraphrased). The paradigm shift is from doing to being; it is not about how many projects they can do, but it is by continuously “abiding in Christ, and having Christ abiding in

³⁹ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp.46

them, so that they can bear fruits of the vine that is Christ” (John 15:4, 5). The Greek for *abide* is *menó*, and its definitions include *remain*, *stay*, and *wait* (Strong’s Concordance, 3306). John also states that “the one who says he/she abides in Christ, will also walk as Christ walked” (1 John 2:6). The provision of justification causes the believer to “joyfully” (Rom. 5:2) walk in Christ and indiscriminately share the Good News of Justification.

On Friday July 27, 2018, the thirteen primary participants gathered for their club meet; this was very special to them for it was time for them to prepare to distribute the last of four Everlasting Covenant Provisions. They were ready to Scatter the Good News of Justification, but not before a discussion of the previous engagements and the completion of the questionnaire. At the completion of this ten-point questionnaire (App. G), the participants acknowledged that through Jesus Christ, God forgives and forgets all their sins. Once again, they were all excited about the Good News about their sins being forgiven and forgotten. With the anticipated eagerness, they voiced their intention to “rush off” to sow the *Seed*; this time, by scattering the fourth and final provision through the Good News of Justification. After praying for the Holy Spirit’s guidance, they left their meeting place, each with two questionnaires and answer sheets to deliver to their same two respective unchurched family members. One week later, on the following club day (Friday August 03, 2018), the twenty-six completed questionnaires were returned to the meeting place. The result was no different from the previous three; like the primary participants, all twenty-six secondary participants selected “yes” to this last Everlasting Covenant Provision. The seeds have been scattered (App. K). The *Seed* has been sown. A prayer of thanksgiving was offered, and the Holy Spirit was implored to take charge.

3.6 Seeds Scattered: So, What?

The most potent model for church growth was established by the *Seed* Himself; when the *Seed* is sown upon the hearts of men, they “become” sowers themselves. As Jesus was preparing to return to His Father, He seated His eleven disciples on the Mount of Olives in Bethany (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:12) and gave them final instructions. According to Luke, Jesus spent His last forty days on earth with these men who had received Him into their heart; it was a “forty days intensive”. Jesus’s command to the eleven was to “remain in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit, as the Father had promised (Acts 1:4). Jesus continued, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (v. 8). This was the early church model and it was established by the *Seed* Himself. So, Jesus the *Seed* departed right before His disciples’ eyes (vs. 9-11), and what did the disciples do?

The disciples did exactly as Jesus commanded them; they waited in Jerusalem, received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and the church grew daily by the thousands (Acts 1-6). They started on the inside, and then they were “externally focused”. Rusaw and Swanson posit, “The early church was not only attractive for its mercy, but it also served as an agent of spiritual and societal transformation. The early church did not see engagement in community as optional but essential to its calling. To these brothers and sisters, the term “externally focused church” would have been utterly redundant. The church, by definition, was externally focused!”⁴⁰ The thirteen primary participants received the *Seed* from this researcher, and they happily responded by “scattering” the seeds of sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy with God, and justification. They scattered in their sphere of influence; they moved within their contextual

⁴⁰ Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Church*, Kindle Locations 2194-2196

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the remotest part of the earth. The evidence of their activity speaks for itself, but what about the twenty-six secondary participants? Now that they have received the *Seed*, what next?

When one encounters Jesus, he/she delights in indiscriminately dispersing God's four Everlasting Covenant Provisions. With patience, David cried unto the Lord, "I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; Behold, I will not restrain my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation" (Ps. 40:8-10). David begins this Psalm with an attitude of waiting; He proclaims, "I waited patiently for the Lord." The sowing of the *Seed* is the work of the human agent, but after the agent sows, he/she waits on the Lord Who Himself is the *Seed* in the context of Evangelism (Luke 8:11). The thirteen primary participants have sown the *Seed* upon the hearts of twenty-six secondary participants; they must now step back, cry unto the Lord and wait patiently.

The role of these primary participants is over; what's next for the secondary participants? In a literal context, when seeds are sown, there are certain factors that determine the outcome. Likewise, sowing the *Seed* also requires the primary participants to totally surrender the other phase of the process to Jesus Christ. In a parable of the sower and the seeds, Jesus defines the various soil types as well as the environmental risks involved in seed sowing (Luke 8:4-15). Despite these risks, the writer to the Hebrews declares that "the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (4:12).

Additionally, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit Who takes full responsibility for the process that follows the sowing of the *Seed*.

Cloud and Townsend elaborate on the workings of the Holy Spirit and suggest a way to determine if a person is under the control of the Holy Spirit. They believe that when someone is under the control of the Holy Spirit, “he/she believes that Jesus is the Christ and trusts Him for forgiveness”.⁴¹ This test is presented to the secondary participants at the end of each of the four questionnaires, where the question is asked, “are you excited about?” The apostle John affirms that “it is the Holy Spirit Who testifies about Jesus” (1 John 5:6).

Because of the power of the Holy Spirit, the *Seed* as delivered by the primary participants would potentially cause a change in the heart condition of the secondary participants. As the Sparklers sow the *Seed* and wait patiently for the Holy Spirit, Cloud and Townsend present the sower’s expectation based on faith in the Word; some of the functions of the Holy Spirit are as follows:⁴²

Table 1:2 Functions of the Holy Spirit

He will always be with God’s people no matter where they are or what they are doing; He never leaves (Ps. 139:7).
He will search men’s hearts and show them what they need to change (Ps. 7:9; Prov. 20:27; Rom. 8:27; 1 Cor. 2:10).
He will give men and women the ability to do things they need to do, even gifts for work, or wisdom, or words to say when they do not know what to say (Ex. 31:3; Deut. 34:9; Judg. 14:6; 2 Sam. 23:2; Mark 13:11).
He will lead men and women and guide them in life (1 Kings 18:12; 1 Chron. 28:12; Neh. 9:20; Ps. 143:10; John 16:13; Acts 13:4; 16:6).

⁴¹ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*, pp. 97

⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 97,98

He will reveal and teach men and women the truth (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 John 2:27).
He will counsel and help men and women (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
He will help men and women to live the life they need (Rom. 7:6; 8:2, 4-6, 9, 11, 13, 26).
He will fill men and women and control them (Rom. 8:6; Eph. 5:18).
He will correct men and women and convict them (Ps. 139:23,24; John 16:8; Rom. 9:1; 1 Cor. 4:4; Phil. 3:15).
He will change men and women (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 3:3; 5:16-25).
He will give men and women gifts to help each other and put the Body of Christ together (1 Cor. 12:7-12).

Scattering the Good News remains a collaborative effort between humanity and divinity. This researcher was blessed to witness first-hand, the power of the Word in transforming even the lives of the thirteen children of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club. With such alacrity, they received and with even greater alacrity, they went out and sowed the *Seed*. Every time the thirteen participants returned, like the apostles of Jesus, they reported all the good things that they experienced by just calling the name of Jesus (Matt. 14:31, Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10, John 6:1). The participants, with their youthful exuberance were encouraged by the positive response by their respective two secondary participants. They further understood that by accepting sonship/daughtership, they belonged to a “royal priesthood, part of a holy nation, called out of darkness into the marvelous light in Jesus” (1 Pet. 2:9). Steinmann captures this reality when he posits that “even Jesus’ opponents acknowledge that He is the son of David”.⁴³ It

⁴³ Andrew Steinmann, *What Did David Understand About The Promises In The Davidic Covenant?* Bibliotheca Sacra, Volume BSAC 171:681

is a good thing to partner with Jesus Christ through the workings of the Holy Spirit, hence the success of this thesis project.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This researcher believes in, and embraces the power of reassurance in God's Word. God cares about man's well-being and not about condemnation and punishment; God assures in His Word, that He cares about man's prosperity and not poverty; He cares about man's eternal salvation and not eternal destruction. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God declares, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (29:11). God tangibly demonstrated this care for humanity when the "Word became flesh and dwelt among man" (John 1:14). This "dwelling among man" was physically expressed by God when from creation, He walked with man in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8). God's desire has not changed, since God changes not (Mal. 3:6). Even after the fall, God has been looking for man (Gen. 3:9) and will continue throughout all generations (App. G) until the restoration of Paradise when sin and sinners will be no more.

God's Everlasting Covenant spans a continuum from Paradise lost to Paradise restored. As recorded in Luke's gospel (about 70 AD), the first use of the word Paradise in the Bible occurs at Calvary; a repentant thief on the cross pleads with Jesus to remember him in His (Jesus') kingdom. Jesus's response to the repenting thief was, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The Greek word for *Paradise* is transliterated *Paradeisos* (it stems from an ancient Persian word), and among its English translations are *park*, *garden*, and *paradise* (Strong's Concordance 3857). Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians (about 53-57 AD), mentions *Paradise*, as he experienced in his vision (12:4). Subsequently, he feels empowered to boast of Jesus Christ. Finally, the disciple John (about 81-96 AD), speaks of his vision where Jesus Christ Himself promises those who "overcome to eat from the tree of life,

which is in the midst of the *Paradise* of God” (Rev. 2:7). Stefanovic, among other biblical scholars, notes that “in the Septuagint (LXX), the word “paradise” is used with reference to the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8–10). The paradise of God in Revelation symbolizes the restored garden of Eden in which the redeemed will share the gift of eternal life which Adam enjoyed before the entrance of sin into the world.”¹ God’s thoughts for man culminate with the return of man to Paradise.

God’s thoughts for man cannot be taken lightly; the Hebrew for *thought* is *machashebeth*, and among its English translations are *design, devise, intentions, purpose, scheme, thoughts, and ways* (Strong’s Concordance 4284). God hints at one of His Everlasting Covenant Provisions in this passage (29:11); He uses the word *yada* (Strong’s Concordance 3045) expressing His intimate connection with the well-being of man. He says, “I *know* (Hebrew *yada*) the *thoughts* I have for you” (v. 11). God uses this very word *yada* in the announcement of His renewed covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). He declares “all will *yada* Me, from the least to the greatest of these” (31:34). This researcher hypothesizes that there is not one sinner on earth who has been excluded from God’s will. The apostle Peter reassures believers, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Paradise or the return to Paradise is contingent upon the sinner repenting of his/her sin. The Greek word for *repentance* is transliterated *metanoia*, and among its definitions are *repentance, a change of mind, change in the inner man* (Strong’s Concordance 3341). A change

¹ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Kindle Locations 2738-2741

in the *inner man* is a change of heart; The Hebrew for heart is *leb*, and among its English translations is *inner man* (Strong's Concordance 3820). The prophet Joel records God's word that came to him. God warns, "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments" (2:12,13). In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve focused on their garment, and not on their hearts; they sewed clothing of fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). They did not "rend their hearts" so they could not enjoy their usual communion with God in the "cool of the day" (Gen. 3:7). God does not change; on that day, God turned up as usual and cried out, "where are you" (3:9)? Adam and Eve hid because of their expressed "nakedness" to which they were oblivious before they ate the forbidden fruit (3:6). Now, sin enters and so does death, for God did warn that "in the day that man eats from it he will surely die" (2:17).

God addressed the sin issue with a promise known as *protoevangelium* or the *first Good News*. In speaking to the devil (3:14), God continues, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15). This curse, as many Theologians call it, introduces two elements not previously known in the garden Paradise before, elements that are fundamental to Christianity. The first element is the curse on mankind because of Adam's disobedience, and the second demonstrates God's amazing grace and His love for mankind – it is the Provision of a Savior from sin and its effects; a Savior Who would take the curse upon Himself. This Thesis Project was designed to demonstrate the power of the *Seed*, once planted in the human heart. When one receives the *Seed*, he/she receives the four Provisions of the *Seed*. He/she will never be the same again, and as an expression of joy and gratitude, he/she will indiscriminately scatter the Good News of Sanctification, Reconciliation, Personal Intimacy with God, and Justification.

The Provisions of the *Seed*, were grace based, and grace is found in Jesus Christ. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes “God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (1: 9, 10). In order for Adam and Eve to be saved from immediate death, God offered a substitute; He implicitly killed an animal (Gen. 3:21) and covered man’s nakedness, since man was not capable of covering Himself. The writer to the Hebrews asserts that “without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin” (9:22). God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden Paradise (Gen. 3:23,24), but He continues to this day to offer His Everlasting Covenant Provisions in Christ to all (see App. F).

In Christ, there is Sanctification, Reconciliation, Personal Intimacy with God, and Justification (see App. F). The Everlasting Covenant Renewal, as God declared to the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34) commences at the level of the heart. God declares, “I will write my Law on their heart” (v. 33). The Hebrew for *Law* is *Torah* and it translates to *direction, instruction, and law* (Strong’s Concordance 8451). As mentioned earlier, the Hebrew for *heart* is *leb* (*inner man, mind, will, and heart*). When God writes His *Law* on someone’s heart, this means ownership; such a person is sealed by God and for God. Packer states that “Sanctification is an ongoing transformation within a maintained consecration, and it engenders real righteousness within the frame of relational holiness. Relational sanctification, the state of being permanently set apart for God, flows from the cross, where God through Christ purchased and claimed us for himself (Acts 20:28; 26:18; Heb. 10:10).² Like the angels, the Sparklers’ act of scattering the seed of

² J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, pp. 169

sanctification, proclaimed, “do not be afraid for behold I bring you Good News of great joy which will be for all the people for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10, 11).

God is not merely concerned with man’s externalization of His Everlasting Covenant; God is concerned about a loving response by those who are excited about truly being His. History shows that God’s people perverted the Everlasting Covenant by declaring with one voice, “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do” (Ex. 19:8, 24:3, 7); they were formalists.

Packer notes:

The Pharisees were formalists, focusing entirely on the externals of action, disregarding motives and purposes, and reducing life to mechanical rule-keeping. They thought themselves faithful law-keepers although (a) they majored in minors, neglecting what matters most (Matt. 23:23-24); (b) their casuistry negated the law’s spirit and aim (Matt. 15:3-9; 23:16-24); (c) they treated traditions of practice as part of God’s authoritative law, thus binding consciences where God had left them free (Mark 2:16–3:6; 7:1-8); (d) they were hypocrites at heart, angling for man’s approval all the time (Luke 20:45-47; Matt. 6:1-8; 23:2-7). Jesus was very sharp with them on these points.³

When God renewed the covenant with Jeremiah, He (God) reasoned that the “renewed is not according to the covenant that He made with their fathers in the day when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in His covenant, and He disregarded them” (Heb.8:9). The writer to the Hebrews also notes that the first covenant is “becoming obsolete, growing old, and ready to disappear” (8:13); the first has not “become” obsolete; it is “becoming”. This is the Good News; God will not disregard His people again, for their inability to do as He says”. God delivers His Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of His people so that they can internalize the Good News and respond in a loving way.

³ J.I. Ibid, pp.176

The second Everlasting Covenant Provision is found in God's continued declaration, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33b). When God's people forsook Him, He stopped being their God. He was a "husband to them, and they broke the Everlasting Covenant" (v.32), but this second provision demonstrates God's constant desire for reconciliation with His "wife", and it is offered to all. This is Good News for all spiritual adulterers, and that includes every single human being, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). God's "wife" is His church. In the exposition of Rev. 12:1-2, Stefanovic looks at the word "wife" as it is used in Bible prophecy; he posits:

This sign is a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. The word "sign" used here for the woman suggests that this is not a literal woman, but that she is a symbol. This symbol was very familiar to the readers of Revelation in John's day, for the Old Testament portrays the covenant people of Israel as the wife of God. In the same way, the New Testament refers to the followers of Christ in terms of the wife or bride of Christ. Isaiah spoke with reference to Israel: "Your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 54:5). Paul calls the "Jerusalem above" the "mother" of God's people on the earth (Gal. 4:26).⁴

This is true reconciliation, when a husband can completely forget about his wife's infidelity and still maintain the same intensity of love. In the first covenant, God disregarded His wife, but in the renewed covenant, God's everlasting attribute of reconciliation is extended to all; He declares, "I will be their God and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33). No one has to ask God to be their God nor to apply to God to be declared His; God, in His Everlasting Covenant Provision has already made this a reality for His wife; she will always be His (2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 1:14).

⁴ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Kindle Loc. 8070-8071

The third Everlasting Covenant Provision declared by God is, that “all will have personal intimacy with Him; from the least to the greatest of these” (Jer. 31:34b). It is Good News that God does not discriminate on the basis of socio-economic status, gender, religion, race, political affiliation, or nepotism among others. On this continuum from the “least to the greatest of these”, no one can claim exclusive right to membership of a privileged club. Under divine inspiration, the apostle Paul shares the Good News, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:28,29). God knows everyone, even those not born as yet, and this cannot be taken lightly. In speaking to the prophet Jeremiah, God declared, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations” (1:5). Because God does not discriminate, His relationship with every single human being, from the “least to the greatest of these” is the same.

The Psalmist David, like all the other biblical writers captures God’s knowledge of human beings; he declares, “Lord, you have examined me and know all about me. You know when I sit down and when I get up. You know my thoughts before I think them. You know where I go and where I lie down. You know everything I do. Lord, even before I say a word, you already know it” (139:1-4).

The fourth Everlasting Covenant Provision declared by God is that “He will forgive their sin, and their iniquity He will remember no more” (v. 34c). Biblical scholars identify this provision as justification. Paul, in his letter to the Romans states that “man is being justified as a gift by God’s grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (3:24).

4.1 Solution to the Addressed Problem

This thesis project addressed the issue of plateauing and dying Christian churches, especially among Evangelicals. With some concern, this researcher has noticed this trend even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church of which he has been a member all his life. He ascribes this problem (among others) to a poor evangelistic delivery machinery. This researcher notices that the church has a sharper focus on the reaping phase of evangelism than on the sowing phase. He hypothesizes that a paradigm shift from human-driven reaping to a Holy Spirit-driven sowing brings more joy to the sower and to God's church at large. He solicited the participation of the youth arm of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The Sparklers Pathfinder Club was approached, and thirteen enthusiastic members expressed their willingness to meet Jesus, Scatter the Good News of Sanctification, Reconciliation, Personal Intimacy with God, and Justification, and by faith, leave the rest to the Holy Spirit. Over a period of four to five weeks, the thirteen Sparklers (primary participants) indiscriminately dispersed God's four Everlasting Covenant Provisions among twenty-six unchurched adult family members.

By dispersing God's four Everlasting Covenant provisions, these youthful sowers were demonstrating with such alacrity, a heart-generated, Holy Spirit response to the Great Commission issued by Jesus. The Great Commission is a command given by Jesus to all who receive Him. Jesus is the Good News, the Gospel, the promised *Seed* (Gen. 3:15, 12:3, Deut. 18:15, 2 Sam. 7:16, Ps. 16:10, Is. 7:14; 9:6,7; 53:5, 9, Dan. 7:13-14, Mic. 5:2, Zech. 9:9,10; 12:10, Mal. 4:2, Rom. 9:6-8, Gal. 3: 8,9; 16; 29). Speaking to His disciples, Jesus commands, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28:19). The first step of Evangelism is *sowing*, and therefore this researcher's paraphrase of this passage (Matt. 28:19) is, "Go therefore and sow the *Seed* indiscriminately". When the *Seed* is sown in someone's heart, a

supernatural change occurs. The apostle Peter summarizes it this way, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (Acts 2:38, 39).

4.2 Opportunities for Further Development of the Project

As a member of the Christian community, and specifically Seventh-day Adventist Church, this researcher is willing to incorporate this approach into the pre-existing evangelistic protocols. *Seed* sowing must be a continuous exercise; it is the primary function of the church, both within and without. This proposed paradigm shift in evangelism has attracted the attention of the senior pastor of the church body with which I presently fellowship. In preparation for an evangelistic outreach program, this researcher has been invited to share and incorporate this model into the program. This is most encouraging and offers direct and immediate opportunity to tactfully and through prayer and the Holy Spirit’s help, initiate a paradigm shift; from human-driven, time sensitive reaping, to the Holy Spirit-led *Seed* sowing.

In this model, the church, through the designed questionnaires gets the opportunity to take a second look at the four provisions of God’s Everlasting Covenant. The questionnaires will be modified for distribution to the unchurched members of the community. This distribution will not be part of an anonymous survey, but a bridge building and membership drive effort. Therefore, contact information of the visited unchurched community members, would be crucial once the *Seed* is sown. The church would prayerfully be made to understand that the *Seed* is sown into the heart, and since the human agent does not know the heart, then it’s imperative to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. The church must continue to pray and, like David, “wait patiently on the Lord” (Ps. 40:1). Each questionnaire used in this thesis project posed a two-point

acknowledgement, while maintaining anonymity. For the purpose of further development of this model, the following will be added to each questionnaire:

- Would you like further study on God's Everlasting Covenant? Yes or No
- If yes, when would be the best time to contact you?
- Name:
- Home address:
- E-mail address and/ or telephone number:

The ultimate goal of this thesis project is to create an awareness of the eschatological hope within God's Everlasting Covenant. It is salvific in nature and will be realized upon the second advent of Jesus Christ, the Son of David Who will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to restore man to his former glory, which includes everlasting dwelling in Paradise with God and all the heavenly hosts. God never changes, "He's the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8), and because of His unchanging nature, and despite man's fall, God still yearns for intimacy with man, and He has made it available in Jesus Christ at Calvary.

At Calvary, Jesus declared, "this is my blood of the Covenant which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). In Jesus Christ lies man's only hope; Jesus is the eschatological hope, and He offers everlasting life to all who believe; to all who are willing to accept what has been bequeathed to them. In this thesis project, God's perfect will for man has been highlighted. God's good and perfect will is man's sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3); that is for God to restore man by writing His law upon their hearts. Through the questionnaires, the primary participants understood empowerment through willing surrender to Jesus Christ, and by acknowledging God's sovereignty over their lives. There is every reason to celebrate the Good News in Jesus Christ. Referring to the letter to the Hebrews, Francesco de Gasperis argues, "this

letter celebrates Jesus as the pledge and mediator of a 'better covenant' than that at Sinai (not than that foretold by Jeremiah: cf. Heb 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:11-17; 10:15-17, 2829; 12:18-29; 13:20-21), far from denying these conclusions, instead confirm them.”⁵ The Everlasting Covenant provisions or promises are explicitly stated and offered to everyone, and made available in Jesus Christ, hence the celebration.

Finally, this model of evangelism is designed to create a sense of urgency among the Christian community. From creation, God has, and will always be concerned about man's salvation. As a result, God constantly intervenes in the affairs of man even in these last days. There is a sense of urgency, as John's vision in the book of Revelation (14:6-12) seems to suggest. When human agents, even children choose to partner with God through Jesus Christ, they embrace that same sense of urgency. The youthful membership of the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club embraced that spirit of urgency. Their response was constant, and so was the response of the secondary participants, as can be seen by graphic representation (App. D). This researcher notes that when the Good News is delivered using this model (sow the *Seed* and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit), people are more likely to open their hearts, than when they're given human-driven ultimatum. This researcher further argues that this paradigm shift (from human-driven premature harvesting to Holy Spirit-led sowing of the *Seed*) must be urgently implemented, in order for the Holy Spirit to affect the cultivating that will ultimately bring in the harvest.

⁵ Francesco Rossie de Gasperis, *Two Testaments One Covenant*, The Month, ISSN 0027-0172, 02/2000, Volume 33, Issue 2, p. 45

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Appendix A: Questionnaire on the Good News of Sanctification

Jer. 31:33a - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart, I will write it"

- i. In His Everlasting Covenant, God offers the ----- as a sign between Him and His people. All who accept this provision are ----- (Hebrew qadash) (Ex. 31:13).
- ii. According to the Hebrew "qadash", to be sanctified means to be made set apart or
- iii. When Jesus prayed to His Father, He declared, "Sanctify them in the truth, Your ----- is truth" (John 17:17).
- iv. Only ----- can sanctify us (Lev. 22:32).
- v. The provision of sanctification has been assured to ----- who have faith in ----- (Acts 26:18, 1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11).
- vi. Jesus calls us ----- because of the provision of sanctification by the same Father (Heb. 2:11, 12).
- vii. "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ----- for -----" (Heb. 10).
- viii. "For by -----offering, Jesus has perfected for all time those who are -----" (Heb. 10:14).
- ix. In His provision, God promises to write His ----- on our ----- (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).
- x. God made an Everlasting Covenant with ----- flesh (Gen. 9:16).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God has sanctified me. Yes or No

I am excited about the Good News of Sanctification. Yes or No.

App. B: Answer Sheet on A

Jer. 31:33a - “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart, I will write it”

- i. In His Everlasting Covenant, God offers the **Sabbath** as a sign between Him and His people. All who accept this provision are **sanctified** (Hebrew qadash) (Ex. 31:13).
- ii. According to the Hebrew “qadash”, to be sanctified means to be set apart or **consecrated**.
- iii. When Jesus prayed to His Father, He declared, “Sanctify them in the truth, Your **word** is truth” (John 17:17).
- iv. Only **God** can sanctify us (Lev. 22:32).
- v. The provision of sanctification has been assured to **all** who have faith in **Jesus** (Acts 26:18, 1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11).
- vi. Jesus calls us **brethren** because of the provision of sanctification by the same Father (Heb. 2:11, 12).
- vii. “We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once** for **all**” (Heb. 10).
- viii. “For by **one** offering, Jesus has perfected for all time those who are **sanctified**” (Heb. 10:14).
- ix. In His provision, God promises to write His **law** on our **hearts** (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).
- x. God made an Everlasting Covenant with **all** flesh (Gen. 9:16).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God has sanctified me. Yes or No.

I am excited about the Good News of Sanctification. Yes or No.

App. C: Questionnaire on the Good News of Reconciliation

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jer. 31: 33b).

- i. To be reconciled (Greek katallasso) means to be ----- (Rom. 5:10), even while we were at enmity with God.
- ii. We are encouraged to “exult in God through our Lord -----, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:11).
- iii. “While we yet sinners, ----- died for us” (Rom. 5:8). This was God’s demonstration of His love for ----- mankind (John 3:16).
- iv. “God was in Christ reconciling the ----- to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to ----- the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5: 19).
- v. According to the angel, the sign of God’s Everlasting Covenant in the Seed (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4, 5) would be the “babe would be wrapped in cloths and lying in a -----” (Luke 2:12).
- vi. His name shall be called Jesus for He shall ----- His people from their -----” (Matt. 1:21).
- vii. We have been “saved by ----- through -----, and not of ourselves” (Eph. 2: 8).
- viii. “----- was available through ----- even before the law” (2 Tim. 1:9).
- ix. Through ----- we suffer with Christ and we are also ----- with Christ. We become heirs with Christ and ----- with God. We can cry Abba ----- (Rom. 8:15-17).

- x. God promises to be the God of ----- mankind (Jer. 31: 33b; Heb. 8:10b).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God is mine and I am His. Yes or No

I am excited about the Good News of Reconciliation. Yes or No.

App. D: Answer Sheet on C

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jer. 31: 33b).

- xi. To be reconciled (Greek katallasso) means to be **favored** (Rom. 5:10), even while we were at enmity with God.
- xii. We are encouraged to “exult in God through our Lord **Jesus Christ**, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:11).
- xiii. “While we yet sinners, **Christ** died for us” (Rom. 5:8). This was God’s demonstration of His love for **all** mankind (John 3:16).
- xiv. “God was in Christ reconciling the **world** to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to **us** the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5: 19).
- xv. According to the angel, the sign of God’s Everlasting Covenant in the Seed (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4, 5) would be the “babe would be wrapped in cloths and lying in a **manger**” (Luke 2:12).
- xvi. His name shall be called Jesus for He shall **save** His people from their **sins**” (Matt. 1:21).
- xvii. We have been “saved by **grace** through **faith**, and not of ourselves” (Eph. 2: 8).
- xviii. “**Grace** was available through **Jesus Christ** even before the law” (2 Tim. 1:9).
- xix. Through **adoption** we suffer with Christ and we are also **glorified** with Christ. We become heirs with Christ and **heirs** with God. We can cry Abba **Father** (Rom. 8:15-17).
- xx. God promises to be the God of **all** mankind (Jer. 31: 33b; Heb. 8:10b).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God is mine and I am His. Yes or No

I am excited about the Good News of Reconciliation. Yes or No.

App. E: Questionnaire on the Good News of Personal Intimacy with God

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Jer. 31: 34a).

- i. The Hebrew yada is used to denote intimacy e.g. “And Adam yada/ ----- his wife and she conceived and gave birth” (Gen. 4:1, 25).
- ii. God yada/ knows us intimately, even ----- we are born (Jer. 1:5).
- iii. To know (Hebrew yada) God is to have ----- with Him (Jer. 31: 34a).
- iv. God is intimately concerned about the needs of His people. He declares, “For I ----- the plans I have for you” (Jer. 29:11). God’s plans for us is not only for now, but also for the -----.
- v. Without personal intimacy with God, we are ----- (Jer. 4:22).
- vi. One example of God’s provision of personal intimacy with us is seen in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:9), when He inquired of Adam and Eve, “-----? ”
- vii. In offering personal intimacy, God does not discriminate. T or F
- viii. Only licensed pastors and evangelists are authorized to preach the Good News to every kindred, and tongue, and people. T or F
- ix. God wants us to be just like Him. T or F (2 Pet. 1:4).
- x. The Sabbath observance is one of God’s ways to demonstrates intimacy with mankind. T or F (Ex. 16:23; 20:8; Lev. 16:31; Heb. 3:11; 4:3).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God and I are intimately connected. Yes or No.

I am excited about personal intimacy with God. Yes or No.

App. F: Answer Sheet on E

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them’” (Jer. 31: 34a).

- xi. The Hebrew yada is used to denote intimacy e.g. “And Adam yada/ **knew** his wife and she conceived and gave birth” (Gen. 4:1, 25).
- xii. God yada/ knows us intimately, even **before** we are born (Jer. 1:5).
- xiii. To know (Hebrew yada) God is to have **personal intimacy** with Him (Jer. 31: 34a).
- xiv. God is intimately concerned about the needs of His people. He declares, “For I **know** the plans I have for you” (Jer. 29:11). God’s plans for us is not only for now, but also for the **future**.
- xv. Without personal intimacy with God, we are **foolish** (Jer. 4:22).
- xvi. One example of God’s provision of personal intimacy with us is seen in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:9), when He inquired of Adam and Eve, “**Where are you?**”
- xvii. In offering personal intimacy, God does not discriminate. **T** or **F**
- xviii. Only licensed pastors and evangelists are authorized to preach the Good News to every kindred, and tongue, and people. **T** or **F**
- xix. God wants us to be just like Him. **T** or **F** (2 Pet. 1:4).
- xx. The Sabbath observance is one of God’s ways to demonstrates intimacy with mankind. **T** or **F** (Ex. 16:23; 20:8; Lev. 16:31; Heb. 3:11; 4:3).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God and I are intimately connected. Yes or No.

I am excited about personal intimacy with God. Yes or No.

App. G: Questionnaire on the Good News of Justification

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer. 31: 34b).

- i. To be forgiven (Hebrew salach), means to be ----- (Jer. 31: 34b).
- ii. To be justified/dikaioo means to be declared ----- before God.
- iii. Being justified (Greek dikaioo) is a ----- by God’s ----- through the redemption that is in -----(Rom. 3:24, 1 Cor. 6:11).
- iv. A man is justified by ----- apart from the works of the ----- (Rom. 3:28).
- v. We are not justified by the ----- of the law, but through ----- in Christ Jesus (Gal. 2:16).
- vi. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from ----- sin (1 John 1:7).
- vii. Being justified by His grace, we would be made ----- according to the hope of eternal life (Tit. 3:7).
- viii. Even our best works cannot place us blameless before God (Eph. 2:8-10) T or F.
- ix. All our righteous deeds are like a ----- garment (Is. 64:6).
- x. If we confess our sins, He is ----- and ----- to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from ----- unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God forgives and forgets all my sins. Yes or No.

I am excited about the Good News about my sins being forgiven and forgotten. Yes or No.

App. H: Answer Sheet on G

“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer. 31: 34b).

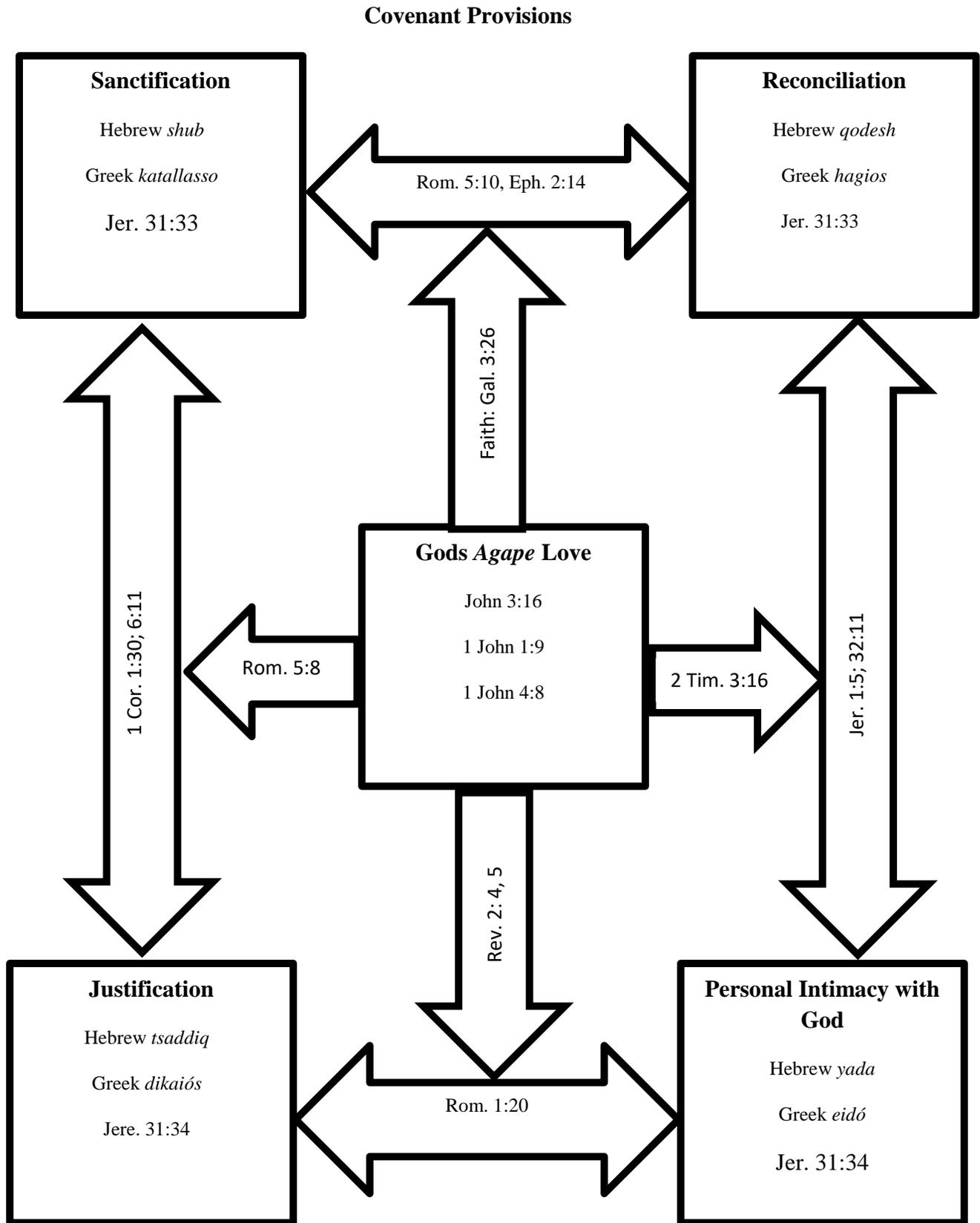
- xi. To be forgiven (Hebrew *salach*), means to be **pardoned** (Jer. 31: 34b).
- xii. To be justified/*dikaioo* means to be declared **righteous** before God.
- xiii. Being justified (Greek *dikaioo*) is a **gift** by God’s **grace** through the redemption that is in **Christ Jesus** (Rom. 3:24, 1 Cor. 6:11).
- xiv. A man is justified by **faith** apart from the works of the **law** (Rom. 3:28).
- xv. We are not justified by the **works** of the law, but through **faith** in Christ Jesus (Gal. 2:16).
- xvi. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from **all** sin (1 John 1:7).
- xvii. Being justified by His grace, we would be made **heirs** according to the hope of eternal life (Tit. 3:7).
- xviii. Even our best works cannot place us blameless before God (Eph. 2:8-10) **T** or **F**.
- xix. All our righteous deeds are like a **filthy** garment (Is. 64:6).
- xx. If we confess our sins, He is **faithful** and **just** to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that through His grace, God forgives and forgets all my sins. Yes or No.

I am excited about the Good News about my sins being forgiven and forgotten. Yes or No.

App. I: Illustration showing Christ's Centrality in the Dispensation of God's Everlasting



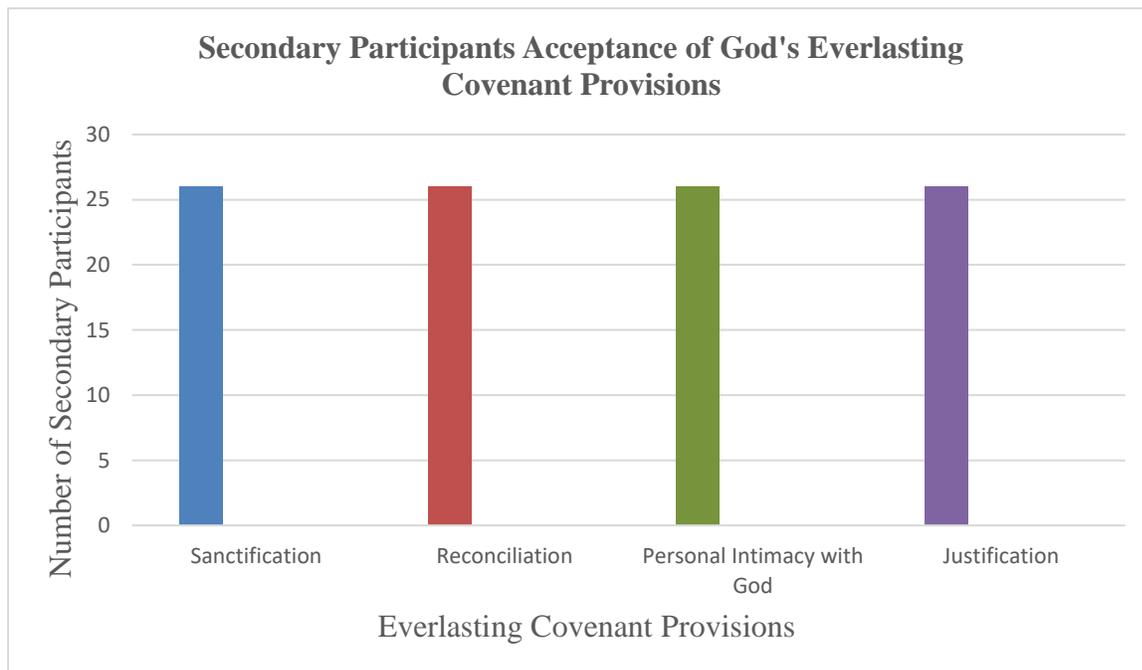
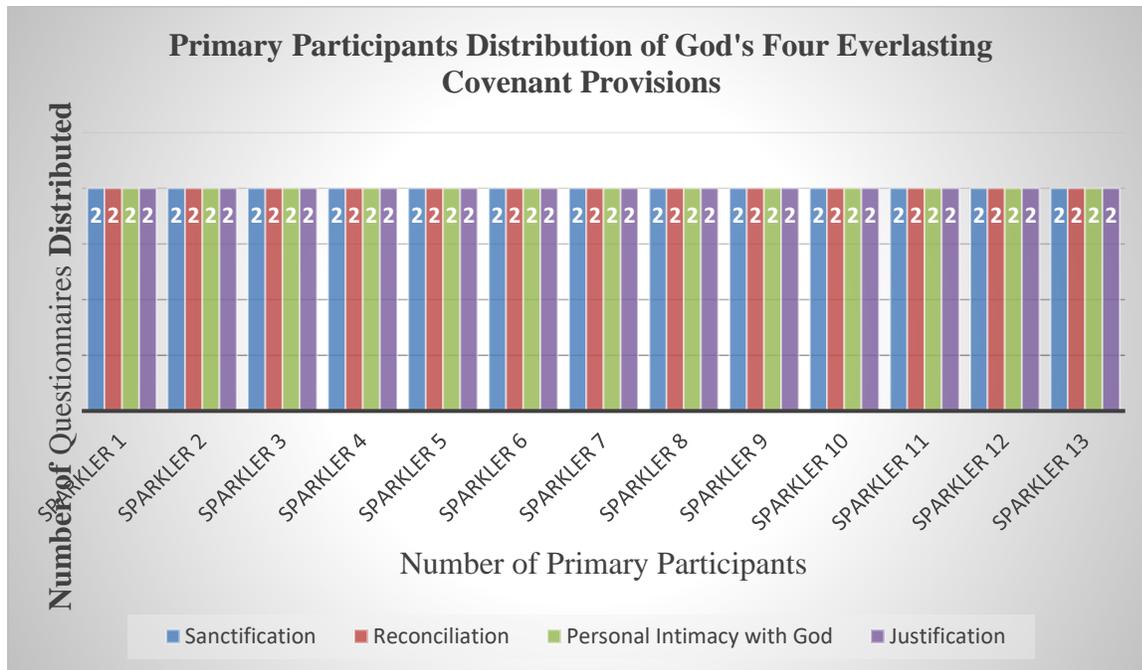
**App. J: Chart Illustrating God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions Throughout All
Generations**

		Covenant Renewal: Redemption and Restoration					
Everlasting Covenant Provisions	Adam at Creation	Adam after the Fall	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David	Jesus
Sanctification – I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it (Jer. 31: 33a).	Gen 1:26-27, 31 Implied Hos. 6:7	Gen. 3:15	Gen. 6:9, Ez. 14:14,20 Heb. 11:7 Implied	Gen 26:5 with John 15:5 Implied	Ex. 31:12-13 Lev. 20: 7-8 Deut. 30:6,11-14	Ps. 37:11; 40:8; 119:11	Heb. 10:7 with Ps. 40:8
Reconciliation – I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Jer. 31:33b).	Gen 1:26-27, 31 Implied	Gen. 3:15, 21; Gal. 4:4, 5.	Ez. 14:14,20 Heb. 11:7 Implied	Gen. 17:7 Deut. 29:12-13	Ex. 6:7 Lev. 26:12	2 Sam. 7:5-16 Ps. 89:3-4, 20-29	Mat. 1:23 Mat. 3:17 Heb. 1:1-5
Personal Intimacy with God – They will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them (Jer. 31: 34b).	Hos 6:6,7 Gen 1:26-27 Gen 2:3, 15-22 Implied	Gen. 3:15, 21; Heb. 9:22	2 Pet. 2:5	Gen. 12:3 Gen. 28:14	Ex. 19:5-6 with 1 Pet. 2:9 Ps. 67:1-2 Ez. 36:22-23	2 Sam. 23:5 with 1 Chron. 16:7-33 Isa. 55:3-5	John 17:25 John 14:7,9 John 10:30
Justification – I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31: 34c).	Provided even before the fall. 1 Cor 1:23-24: 2:2,7 2 Tim 1:8-9 1 Pt 1:18-20 Rev 13:8	Gen. 3:21; Rom. 5:12-21; 2 Tim. 1:9	1 Kin. 8:46 Ez. 14:14,20 Heb. 11:7 Implied	Gen. 15:6 Rom. 4:1-4	Ex. 34:6-10 Ps. 103:2-14	Ps. 32:1-5 with Rom. 4:6-8 Isa. 55:3-7	Rom. 3:24 Eph. 1:3-8 Heb. 2:9, 14-17 Heb. 9:15 1 Pet. 2:22-24

	Heb. 13:20						1 Pet. 1:18- 20 Rev. 1:5 Rev. 13:8
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App. K: Graphs Illustrating Distribution and Acceptance of God's Four Everlasting Covenant Provisions

Covenant Provisions



Appendix L: Recruitment Letter for Primary Participants

07/06/2018

Parent's Name:

Address:

Dear,

As a graduate student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand evangelism. The purpose of my research is to evaluate the human response to God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions to mankind. Your child is being invited to participate in this study, to specifically share these provisions. The provisions are sanctification, reconciliation, personal intimacy with God, and justification.

If you are willing to allow your child to participate in this research, he/she will be asked to participate in four simple half hour study sessions. Each session will be followed by a post-test questionnaire. Each post-test questionnaire will take five to ten minutes to complete. Your child will then be asked to share the respective questionnaire with two (preferably) adult unchurched family members or close friends of the family. The family member or family friend will be asked to complete the questionnaire for each session, and return them to your child, who will then return them to me. This will continue weekly, until all four provisions are completed and results analyzed on the club days.

If you choose to allow your child to participate, you and your child will need to sign the parental consent form attached to this letter and return it to me. The consent form contains additional information about my research.

Sincerely,

.....

Courtney W. Wickham

Doctor of Ministry Candidate

Rawlings School of Divinity

Liberty University

Appendix M: Recruitment Letter for Secondary Participants

07/06/2018

Address:

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a graduate student at the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand “Evangelism”. The purpose of my research is to focus on the power of the first step of Evangelism – “Seed Sowing”. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

Your participation is solicited because you’re an unchurched adult. You will be asked to complete four questionnaires. Each questionnaire should take five to ten minutes to complete. This study will be completely anonymous, so no personal identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please review the consent form attached to this letter. The Consent form contains additional information about my research. If you wish to participate after reviewing the consent form, please work with the club member that recruited you to complete the questionnaires. You do not need to return the consent document.

Sincerely,

.....

Courtney W. Wickham

Doctor of Ministry Candidate in Pastoral Counseling

Rawlings School of Divinity

Liberty University

Appendix N: Parental Consent and Assent for Primary Participants

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/29/2018 to 6/28/2019 Protocol # 3197.062918

CHILD ASSENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

A STRATEGIC EVANGELISM PROJECT FOR THE YOUTH OF THE NEWLY FORMED SOUTH BROOKLYN ACADEMY SPARKLERS: THE INDISCRIMINATE DISTRIBUTION OF GOD'S FOUR EVERLASTING COVENANT PROVISIONS

Courtney W. Wickham

Liberty University

Rawlings School of Divinity

Your child is invited to be in a research study on evangelism. This study focuses specifically on the first step in the evangelism process, "sowing". He/she was selected as a possible participant because of his/her active membership in the South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers Pathfinder Club. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow him/her to be in the study.

Courtney W. Wickham, a doctoral candidate in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to reassure the participants that God does not discriminate – His love is manifested to all through the provision of His Everlasting Covenant Provisions.

Procedures: If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I would ask him/her to do the following things:

1. Attend one general thirty minutes power point presentation on God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions.
2. Attend four, thirty-minute presentations on each of four Everlasting Covenant Provisions and complete a simple post-test after each session. There are four sessions and four post-tests. Each post-test should take 5 to 10 minutes to complete.
3. Select two adult unchurched family members or close friends of the family to complete each questionnaire.
4. Return the completed questionnaires before the next club meeting.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants may derive a better understanding of God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions.

Benefits to society may include deriving a better understanding of evangelism.

Compensation: Your child will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. Survey responses will be anonymous. The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/29/2018 to 6/28/2019 Protocol # 3197.062918

Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect his/her current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to allow your child to participate, he/she is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If your child chooses to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that your child wishes to discontinue their participation prior to submitting their study materials. Their responses will not be recorded or included in the study. Any data collected will be anonymous, so whatever data is received up to that point may be used in aggregate.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Courtney W. Wickham. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at (269) 362-5276 or email cwickham1@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Allen McFarland at armcfarland@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate in the study. (NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

Signature of Minor Date

Signature of Parent Date

Signature of Investigator Date

Appendix O: Consent for Secondary Participants

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/29/2018 to 6/28/2019 Protocol # 3197.062918

CONSENT FORM FOR SECONDARY PARTICIPANTS

A STRATEGIC EVANGELISM PROJECT FOR THE YOUTH OF THE NEWLY FORMED SOUTH BROOKLYN ACADEMY SPARKLERS: THE INDISCRIMINATE DISTRIBUTION OF GOD'S FOUR EVERLASTING COVENANT PROVISIONS

Courtney W. Wickham

Liberty University

Rawlings School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study on evangelism. This study focuses specifically on the first step in the evangelism process, "sowing". You were selected as a possible participant because you are an unchurched adult. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Courtney W. Wickham, a Doctor of Ministry Candidate in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to reassure the participants that God does not discriminate – His love is manifested to all through the provision of His Everlasting Covenant Provisions.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete four brief questionnaires and return each questionnaire to the club member within 5 to 7 days of receipt. Each questionnaire should take you approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Do not sign your name or place any identifying marks on the questionnaire/s.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants may derive an understanding of God's Everlasting Covenant Provisions Benefits to society may include deriving a better understanding of evangelism.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. Survey responses will be anonymous.

Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the surveys, without affecting those relationships. The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/29/2018 to 6/28/2019 Protocol # 3197.062918

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the club member that you wish to discontinue your participation prior to submitting the study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study. Any data collected will be anonymous, so whatever data is received up to that point may be used in aggregate.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Courtney Wickham. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at cwickham1@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Allen McFarland at armcfarland@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked

questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study

Appendix P: IRB Approval**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 29, 2018

Courtney Wickham

IRB Approval 3197.062918: A Strategic Evangelism Project for the Youth of the Newly Formed South Brooklyn Academy Sparklers: The Indiscriminate Distribution of God's Four Everlasting Covenant Provisions

Dear Courtney Wickham,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB.

This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

Your study involves surveying or interviewing minors, or it involves observing the public behavior of minors, and you will participate in the activities being observed.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP *Administrative Chair of Institutional Research* **The Graduate School**

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