THE PLACE OF NON-JEWS/FOREIGNERS IN THE EARLY
POST-EXILIC JEWISH COMMUNITY IN EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Oreland Presbyterian Church USA, John and JoAnn Swart and my wife Joyce Member Usue. It is through their spiritual, emotional and financial support that I have been able to accomplish this study. May this work be used for the glory of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
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The aims and objectives of this investigation were to find whether non-Jews or non-exiles related with the early post-exilic Jewish community in their religious life and communal living according to Ezra and Nehemiah; to discern the nature of such relationship; to discover the basis on which this relationship was sustained; and to examine the text of Ezra-Nehemiah and see whether Ezra and Nehemiah exhibits exclusivity in their dealing with non-Jews or non-exiles as supposed by others (cf. Williamson 1987:83).

The inquiry reveals that the author(s) or editor(s) of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah re-interpreted certain passages from the Pentateuch in a peculiar way to support the exclusive religious and social reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. Consequently, two viewpoints emerged from the text of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning non-exiles. The one is exclusive and the other is inclusive. The researcher contended that the inclusive perspective is the appropriate approach toward non-Jews as evidenced in the spirit of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as well as in the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic history. In other words, the Abrahamic covenant and certain passages from the Pentateuch and from the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic history provide a framework for a religious and communal relationship between the Israelites and or Jews and foreigners.
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