

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry  
Emphasis in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY TO RESTORE THE SANCTITY OF THE SABBATH  
IN THE LIMBE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH,  
SOUTH MALAWI FIELD

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Date completed: February 2017

This study led to a strategy to restore the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church, South Malawi Field. It was initiated because of the need for the observance and the sanctity of the Sabbath, which many Adventist members in Limbe Adventist Church were not able to do, even though they knew that they should observe the Sabbath as stipulated in the Bible (Isaiah 58:13, 14 and Exod. 20:8-11).

The Adventist congregation in Limbe has been steadily growing numerically, but the quality of membership there may be improved. For example, one of the key pillars of the Adventist faith, the doctrine of the Sabbath, is negated by the way many Adventists in Limbe observe and keep it. The prevalence of profanation and violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe makes a mockery of the general self-understanding of the Adventist Church to be the remnant church that “keeps the

commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” It is estimated that out of 190 baptized church members, over 50% of the members do not regard the sanctity of this seventh-day Sabbath according to the Scriptural admonitions.

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement and evaluate a biblically-undergirded strategy that would address challenges of inadequate theological understanding of the sanctity of the Sabbath. This may, in turn, raise the Limbe Adventist Church members’ awareness of the need to keep the Sabbath holy.

In this research, the researcher endeavoured in all the possible areas that had to do with the Sabbath and its redemptive components to salvation. All the findings are discussed in the six chapters of this dissertation. At first, the Adventist members did not have a place of worship that they owned—they rented the Imperial Tobacco Group (I. T. G.) facilities as their place of worship. This place was also rented by other denominations for the same purpose. Apparently, Adventists of Limbe area were impacted by the surrounding Christian denominations who keep their Sabbath (Sunday) and tended to compromise biblical principles.

The study of biblical instances of the sanctity and observance of Sabbath, both in Old Testament and the New Testament, revealed that the sanctity and observance of the Sabbath was imperative to all Christians.

The initial survey used both qualitative and quantitative (mixed) methods. This revealed more the need of Sabbath observance and its sanctity. Seminars were conducted. Each seminar took one hour. PowerPoint presentations were done during different intervals. A quantitative final evaluation was conducted to ensure that the participants understood the importance of the sanctity and observance of Sabbath.

The final analysis revealed that 75% (14) of the participants indicated that the challenge to restore the sanctity of Sabbath was adequately addressed by the

researcher. Eighty-five (85%, 15 participants) indicated that leadership should take a greater role in informing the church members of the proper way to keep the Sabbath holy. The urgent need was to encourage them to be positive and teachable when it comes to principles of Sabbath observance in the Adventist Church.

The results indicated that the intervention met its objective of restoring the sanctity of the Sabbath. Limbe Adventist Church may be used as a pilot and a model to help other churches to resolve the issue. As shown in the appendix, some church members requested the presentations to help other churches.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

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by

Eliezer Ernest Mthunzi

February 2017




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
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Dedicated to the glory of God, to my only sister who played a major role in my life and made me who I am. Dedicated to my wife, Mary Clara Mthunzi, and my two lovely daughters, Patience and Tatenda, for their commitment and standing by me all the way.

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

**Description of the Ministry Context**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been in existence in Malawi for more than 120 years. Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church belongs to the South Malawi Field, which is under the Malawi Union Conference. Limbe Adventist Church is located in the south east of Blantyre city about twelve kilometers east of the South Malawi Field offices. It is located in Limbe township one of the busiest location for commercial transactions in Blantyre. Limbe Adventist Church was organized in 1980 when they were worshipping in a rented hall of Imperial Tobacco Group of Companies (I T G) in Limbe. During that time there were not many proper structures that people would use for community meetings such as worshipping place.

The concise biblical record and the story of creation culminate in the crowing work of creating human beings in the image of God (Gen 1:26-2:3). Two very important gifts to human beings are specified in this creation narrative-marriage and Sabbath. Human beings were created not just to produce goods for God or themselves or for others, but to rejoice in the presence and service of God. When Yahweh created His Sabbath, He purposely set that day apart from the rest of the week for human beings to fellowship with him. “The Sabbath rest stands as the symbol of this noble human destiny.”<sup>1</sup> When God gave the Sabbath Commandment, He was, in a way,

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness* (Berrien Springs, MI: Bacchiocchi’s Publications, 1980), 177.

stating that human beings are created for fellowship with their Creator. The Sabbath enhances that fellowship when its sanctity is acknowledged and when it is observed and kept properly. What was true about the Sabbath at creation is still true today. Christian ministry in any context where human beings live include all efforts that are intended to connect human beings with God, their Creator. One of those efforts is to help human beings to acknowledge the sanctity of the holy time called Sabbath, and observe and keep it holy. The context of the ministry the researcher is concerned about in the study is one of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter shortened to “Adventist Church”).

The members of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church are supposed to benefit spiritually by remembering and keeping the Sabbath holy, but for now, Limbe Adventist Church members are not enjoying the blessings of keeping the Sabbath holy. Since the area is surrounded and dominated by other denominations like; the Roman Catholic, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), the New Life Ministries Church; many members of Limbe Adventist Church profane the Sabbath. Apparently, Adventists of Limbe area are impacted by the same modus operandi of the Christian denominations when it comes to observance and keeping the Sabbath. The way the surrounding Christian denominations keep their Sabbath (Sunday) is characterized by lack of recognition of holy time and keeping it holy as per biblical revelation. They tend to compromise biblical principles and they compromise a lot in such a way that it makes no difference whether their day is different from any other day of the week. So, although Adventists in Limbe profess to keep Saturday as their Sabbath, they tend to reflect the same practices that other Christian denominations engage in. Many of these Sunday keeping churches go to their church for one or two hours of worship and after that they engage into their normal business or other secular

activities. They can go and watch games on their day of worship-Sunday. This has been an on-going activity to the Sunday keeping churches which is contrary to what Seventh-day Adventist believers should do. The Adventists are supposed to keep the seventh day Sabbath holy, not part of the day, but the whole 24 hour- day of rest. For instance, now the Adventist Church in Limbe may win Christians from other Christian denominations, but when other members of the different denominations are converted and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Limbe, they come with tendencies of their former churches of not being strict Sabbath observers. As a result the lukewarm members in Limbe Church identify with these newly converted members. At the same time, some church leaders set wrong precedents that encourage members of Limbe Adventist Church profane the Sabbath. Many of those leaders discourage the church members from preparing for the Sabbath on Friday and tell them not to eat food that was prepared the previous day. They also threatened those who were doing this that they are troubling members for nothing by influencing them not to cook on Sabbath. The children born in these Christian homes watch what their parents do not do that is required the right way of keeping the Sabbath. As they grow up they follow not same as example of not observing and keeping the Sabbath holy.

The majority of the people living there are business people; those who work in companies and in civil service. Organizationally, Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church falls within the sisterhood of Adventist Churches which fall under the jurisdiction of South Malawi Field as the main administrative unit. At first South Malawi was taking care of all the churches in Malawi because in 1893 when the missionaries came to Malawi they stayed in the southern part of the country of Malawi, in a political district called Thyolo in Makwasa. To be specific Malamulo (at first Malamulo was called the Plain Field by the first pioneers, but the name

Malamulo came because people were saying this is a ten commandments keeping church) which is the mother of all churches in Malawi. By 1902 the Field had started expanding and more church districts were opened. The Field has the highest membership of Adventists than the other two; North and Central (Fields by then) Conference. Right now, Central Malawi Field has been organized into a conference. So there are two fields and one conference in Malawi. The South Malawi Field is situated in the southern part of the country with a “membership of 297,000 in 4,000 churches.”<sup>2</sup> The largest number of membership is in South Malawi Field territory because there are many church districts also. The Seventh-day Adventist Head Quarters was in the South Malawi Field for a long time until 2012 when it was moved to the Central Region of Malawi in order to facilitate the work better.<sup>3</sup> There is potential for growth in terms of membership and church development. When it is compared to actual political districts it has many districts than any of the two Regions mentioned above.

Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church started with few individuals who were staying within Limbe location. Many of these members came from Chiwembe Seventh-day Adventist Church that was across the river Limbe and started a prayer group and rented a place that belonged to Imperial Tobacco Group of Companies (I T G). Then later in 1980 they organized them as a branch of Chiwembe. By God’s grace they were given a free plot by the manager of Imperial Timber plantation where they built the prayer house. At first it was called Imperial Tobacco Group Seventh-day

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<sup>2</sup>South Malawi Field, “Statistics,” December, 2013.

<sup>3</sup>The South Malawi Field is known as the Mother Field of all Fields in Malawi in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This information was rendered by Mr Kaduya (pseudonym), senior member of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Adventist Church. But the members were not working for that Tobacco Company, they only rented the facility. The church centre as was called was used by many denominations which were keeping Sunday as their day of worship. Sometimes they could use it on Saturdays when there are funerals or if they wanted officiating weddings. This inconvenienced the Adventists members to worship on the Sabbath day. However, the name was changed to Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1982. They named it after the river Limbe that passes near the church ground. Immediately they were offered the place, they conducted their first camp meeting right at the same place. They are constructing a large church which is almost completed. The church that started with 25 members has the membership of 190 now.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sabbath observance by members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Malawi Field is declining. Members do not seem to have proper attitude and practice of Sabbath sanctity and observance. They profane and violet it to the detrimental of their faith in the Creator. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing numerically in South Malawi Field territory. Among the over 400 organized Adventist Churches in South Malawi Field is Limbe Seventh-day Church in Blantyre. The Adventist congregation in Limbe has been steadily growing numerically also, but the quality of membership there leaves much more to be desired. For example, one of the key pillars of the Adventist Church faith, the doctrine of the Sabbath, is negated by the way many “Adventists” in Limbe observe and keep the Sabbath. The prevalence of profanation and violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe makes a mockery of the general self-understanding of the Adventist Church to be the remnant church that “keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” It is estimated that, over

50% of the baptized members in Limbe Adventist Church do not regard the sanctity of this seventh-day Sabbath according to the Scriptural admonitions.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement and evaluate biblically-undegirded strategy that will address challenges of inadequate theological understanding of the sanctity of the Sabbath, and thus raise the Limbe Adventist Church member's awareness of the need to keep the Sabbath holy.

### **Methodology and Procedures**

In this research, the researcher endeavoured in all the possible areas that had to do with the Sabbath and its redemptive components to salvation. All the findings are in six chapters as follows:

Chapter one introduced the general overview of the research work. In this chapter the researcher gave the entire outline of the dissertation. Chapter one comprises description of the ministry context, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose, justification for the dissertation, delimitations of the dissertation, methodology, expectations, and definition of terms.

Chapter two sets the biblical and theological foundation and Ellen G. White theological perspectives about the sanctity of the Sabbath. This is where the account of what the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White have been given on the issue of the Sabbath as a reminder of creation and redemption of humankind; creation and redemption are discussed.

Chapter three is the review of literature. The researcher discovers more of the historical component of the Sabbath and how the compromise started. And to discover

how far the sanctity of the Sabbath was affected in line with the salvation of humanity as part of the redemptive component is concerned.

Chapter four was the description of the initiative. The chapter dealt with the concise profile of the ministry context .It focused on the baseline survey. This required a concise description of the initiative, understanding of the general context and the local church context. This was followed by a well-design questionnaire and interviews, and the implementation of the initial intervention for baseline as well as data presentation and analysis. Then an intervention for baseline was developed and implementation in chapter five.

Chapter five dealt with the implementation of the initiative designed in chapter four. After implementation the data that was collected were presented and analysed and results were also presented.

Chapter six provided the overview of the whole process and the work done in this study. It also presented the conclusion and the recommendations for further research as well as the recommendation for action.

### **Justification of the Dissertation**

The research is justified in that it seeks to raise the level of spirituality in the Adventist way of ecclesiological and eschatological self-understanding as the remnant church which “keeps the commandments of God and have the faith and witness of Jesus.”

### **Delimitation of the Dissertation**

Although the disregard of the Sabbath is prevalent in the whole church district, and even in the whole Field, this study will be delimited to be done in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church only.

## **Expectations**

The researcher embarked on this study with serious intention to come up with a concise but sound theological statement which will undergird the strategy to be formulated for proper understanding of Sabbath sanctity and observance. The right observance of Sabbath and its sanctity will be finalized. The researcher expected the following desired outcomes after the completion of the study and implementation of the developed strategy. Thereby, to assist all the members in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church to live a lifestyle that would uphold the sanctity and observance of the Sabbath.

It is assumed that members of Limbe Church embrace the sacredness of the Sabbath. Therefore, the Sabbath will contribute to the restoration process that will be experienced in the church of Limbe. (a) People will be better instructed on the distinctive beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular the sanctity of Sabbath before they are baptized; (b) This project will become a model for other churches where members are still struggling with faithful observance of the Sabbath in South Malawi Field; (c) The church leadership will become more conversant in encouraging church members to observe the Sabbath as the scriptures stipulates it; (d) Members will learn to put their trust in God as the one who can truly guide their honesty and sincere keeping of the Sabbath (Isa 58:13, 14).

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE SANCTITY OF THE SABBATH

This chapter was an endeavour to lay a theological foundation in order to respond to the problem identified in chapter one. It surveyed and discussed the Old Testament and New Testament Bible principles and concepts on the topic of restoration of the sanctity and observance of the Sabbath. The writings of the Spirit of Prophecy were surveyed also.

Among the fundamental Christian beliefs that are taught in the Bible, is the doctrine of the Sabbath. The Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church in Blantyre, Malawi, is supposed to be a Sabbath keeping Church which observes the Sabbath according to the teachings of the Bible. The members of this church are expected to refrain from work and other societal activities that are secular in nature or just entertaining on the Sabbath day. It is accepted that Sabbath keeping members do not just refrain from gainful employment on the Sabbath day, but also gather for the purpose of worshipping God on the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday. This is the day that the Adventist Christians believe, is the Sabbath of God that true believers worship.

Unfortunately, the majority of Adventist Christians in Limbe do not seem to have grasped the principles derived from Scripture concerning the sanctity of the Sabbath. A number of aberrant expressions by members concerning the way the Sabbath is regarded in Limbe Adventist Church have manifested themselves.

The situation of Limbe Adventist Church had compelled the researcher to investigate the doctrine of the Sabbath in order to lay biblical foundations for the Sabbath sanctity and its observance. In turn, the gathered principles shall be applied to the Adventist Church in Limbe. This chapter started with an examination of some of the biblical texts that support and affirmed the sanctity of the Sabbath in both the Old and New Testaments. An exegetical study of selected themes and concepts such as the Sabbath in the Old Testament (OT), and the usage and function of the Sabbath in the New Testament (NT) context. However, because of the nature of the subject at study, some books used may be out-dated but bear relevant information which informed the present situation.

### **The Origin of the Sabbath**

There are many theories that dealt with the origin of the Sabbath which are not biblically based. Gerhard said, “A century ago the quest for origin of the Sabbath was stimulated by the discovery of alleged Babylonian parallels and became part of the Bible-Babel controversy. ... Another astrological hypothesis claims that the Sabbath is of Kenite origin and governed by the planet Saturn.”<sup>1</sup> Strand said that the most “prominent of the sociological hypotheses holds that the Sabbath originated through an adaptation of market days, which recurred at intervals of three, four, five, six, eight, or ten days. ... No single hypothesis or combined hypotheses has succeeded to solve the quest of Sabbath origins.”<sup>2</sup> These submissions do not give concrete evidence

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. 22.

in relation to Sabbath worship, leaving the researcher with an option to survey the Pentateuchal passages regarding the origin, relevance and the meaning of the Sabbath.

In Genesis, God the Creator instituted the day of worship and rest so that He could fellowship with His creatures (Gen 1: 26-28 KJV). “An etiological origin for the Sabbath is supplied in Genesis 2:1-3, which speaks of God ceasing from the work of creation on the seventh day, blessing the day, and declaring it holy.”<sup>3</sup> “After the completion of the creation on the sixth day, the emphasis of the narrative turned to God’s surcease from the creative work on the seventh day.”<sup>4</sup> When God finished creating the earth He rested on the seventh day and God sanctified it blessed the seventh day (Gen 2:3). These three unique things happened on the same seventh day, other than different days of the creation week.

Though it might appear obscure, the Bible clarifies the origin of the Sabbath when God created the world up to the time the Israelites came out of Egypt. Norman says, “Having again gathered the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, Moses put Sabbath observance at top of the list of things God had commanded them to do: ‘Six days work be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy Sabbath of solemn rest for the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death’ (Exod 35:2).”<sup>5</sup> God had a purpose in commanding the Israelites to keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath is to be remembered and kept holy as a sign between God and man. God said, “It is a sign between the children of Israel for ever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens

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<sup>3</sup>My Jewish Learning, “Shabbath in the Bible,” accessed 2 June 2016, <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbat-in-the-bible/>.

<sup>4</sup>Paul J. Achtemeier and Roger S. Boraas, “Sabbath,” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* (NY: Harper & Row, 1985), 888.

<sup>5</sup>Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 30.

and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Gen 31:17). The Sabbath plays a role of contributing to the redemption of human beings. The time the Israelites were allowed to go to the Promised Land God redeemed them. Sabbath is a means of physical and spiritual rejuvenation to human beings after the six days of labour. In addition, it is a reminder to them for the generations to come that God created the world in six days and crowned it with a Sabbath rest. This is further emphasized in Deuteronomy 5:13-15,

Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor stranger who is within your gates, that your manservant and maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

A consideration of the biblical view of the term *Sabbath* attaches its root from the Greek word *sabbaton* which means “to cease, to rest.”<sup>6</sup> Strand said the word “Sabbath” is qualified by the adjective *qodes*, “holy” (Exod 16:23). Three usages of “sixth day” (Exod 16:5, 22, 29), and the four usages each of “seventh day” (Exod 16:26, 27, 29, 30), and “Sabbath” (Exod 16:23, 25, 26, 29) shows that the concept was clearly distinguished by the Sabbath theology.

Apparently, the Pentateuch leaves no confusion as what the word Sabbath is all about. Or as Longman III submits, “On the seventh day, God ‘rested’ or perhaps better, ‘ceased’ (from the verb *Shabbat* in Hebrew), from his creation work ... God

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<sup>6</sup>Kenneth A. Strand, “The Sabbath,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. R. Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 493.



‘consecrated’ (from the verb *qadash*) the seventh day.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, He set it apart from other days of the week.

In addition, Yahweh’s Sabbath is appears very important to Him. When the Israelites came out of Egypt God reminded them that they should not forget His Sabbath which originated from creation. In Exodus 20:8-11, it is recorded,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

It is evident from the passage that the patriarchs passed on the story of creation to their children and the children passed it on to the next generations before the written Scripture. The term Sabbath was probably there even before the coming of Christianity and several groups of people, tribes, and countries. The idea about the seventh-day Sabbath, as a day of worship and rest from normal duties was perhaps known to many indigenous people.<sup>8</sup> R. de Vaux submits that it is only the Bible texts that can explain this, “not even one theory created by man has attempted to explain

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<sup>7</sup> Tremper Longman III, ed., *The Story of God Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 2016), 40.

<sup>8</sup>It is believed that many communities, including the African continent, agree that they have the knowledge of the seventh-day Sabbath: the Babylonians, Akkadian, Ethiopian communities, the Yoruba of Nigeria, Ashanti of Ghana among others. In fact, scholars have identified Akkadian term *sap/pattu* which was associated with the monthly full moon day, (Willy Hartner, “The Earliest History of the Constellations in the Near East and the Motif of the Lion-Bull Combat,” *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1965):1-15).

the development and origin of the Sabbath.” “It is useless to try to find the Sabbath origin by connecting it to some way with the phases of moon.”<sup>9</sup>

In the same stance, Hamilton puts it, “The primary purpose for Sabbath observance is that in resting on this day, the Israelites took it as their model the Lord, who rested on this day after his work of creation.”<sup>10</sup> Arguably, during the first-century the practices of Sabbath keeping were part of normal life in Judea. It’s indicative that majority of the Jews had strong feelings that they should rest on the Sabbath (sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, Lev 23:32), which demonstrated their trust in God. Perhaps this served as reverence to the God who provided their needs during the exodus, and probably they were also being compliant to the Ten Commandments (Exod 20: 8-11). Burge, Cohick, and Green argue that, “People were not to engage in activities that earned money, such as tilling their fields, repairing equipment, or buying and selling.”<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the seventh-day Sabbath holds the idea of ceasing from labour and other personal activities on this holy day. Conclusively, those inclined to Sabbath keeping possibly have to cease from any work and secular activities on the seventh day, and pay more attention to the Sabbath. To fortify the discussion, the Sabbath can be summarised in the following seven points: I. All labour should be through by the sixth day just as God did during the creation week. II. A divine commandment clearly bade the keeping of the Sabbath according to the way the creator ordained. III. The

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<sup>9</sup>R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 480.

<sup>10</sup>Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 339.

<sup>11</sup>Gary M. Burge, Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament Within its Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 172.

Sabbath is the day that follows after the sixth day. IV. Sabbath is a day of “rest.” Rest in this case means abstaining from any work irrespective of what status one holds in a family, including domestic animals (Exod 20:10). V. The Sabbath is “holy or sacred” or set a side. VI. Sabbath was the Lord’s initiative, thus human beings cannot initiate another Sabbath as hinted in Mark 2:27, 28. VII. The final say is from God Himself.

According to Keil and Delitzsch, neglecting to keep the seventh day holy means a refusal to obey God’s will as articulated in His commandments. “The Sabbath has the character of a test of obedience and faith.”<sup>12</sup>

Conclusively, it is probably acceptable that the Sabbath is a testing ground for human’s commitment and relationship with the Creator. If that be the case, it is relevant to survey the sanctity of the Sabbath.

### **Sanctity of the Sabbath in the Old Testament**

One of the things God did on the day of rest was to sanctify the Sabbath. God tested the Israelites in the wilderness by giving them manna for six days a week but on Sabbath there was none (Exod. 16:4, 5). The absence of manna on the Sabbath day—which is the seventh day of the week—is used to validate the sanctity of the Sabbath. In addition, the manna collected was to be eaten the same day, otherwise it would decay before the following day. The narrative reveal that on the sixth day, a double portion was to be collected which half would be used on the Sabbath. The fact that it did not rot the next day is interpreted to signify the divine sanctity of the Sabbath (Exod 16:24). Perhaps this was to teach the Israelites the need of keeping the Sabbath holy. As presented in Exodus, when the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai

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<sup>12</sup>C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2, *The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952), 69.

God, told them to sanctify themselves because something great was going to happen. This was the giving of the Ten Commandments, which included the fourth that emphasizes observance of the Sabbath. God Himself reportedly said, “remember to keep the Sabbath holy” meaning that this day was sacred to Him so His followers should sanctify it (Exod 20:8).

Subsequently, as portrayed by Millie and John Youngberg, the Sabbath is very exceptional because God Himself had consecrated, rested, and blessed it. It persisted as an everlasting “reminder to God’s chosen people that God is the Creator, and the great Supporter.”<sup>13</sup> The Hebrew and Greek words for “sanctify” or “holy” *qadosh* and *hagios* respectively, means to belong to God. The adjective *qadosh* (*hagios*) to be holy or to sanctify is believed to have no other meaning apart from God. The Sabbath is holy because it belongs to God.<sup>14</sup> Strong submits that the Greek root also carries the meaning of “saint,” “holy,” and “hallow.” In the classical Greek, *hagizo* means “to consecrate” for instance, altars, sacrifices, to set apart for the God, to present, to offer.<sup>15</sup> God therefore intended that the Sabbath day was specifically to be set apart for His worship. This understanding is also supported by Ellen White:

A partial observance of Sabbath law is not accepted by the Lord and has a worse effect upon the minds of sinners than if you made no profession of being a Sabbath- keeper. They perceive that your life contradicts your belief, and lose faith in Christianity. The Lord means what He says, and man cannot set aside His commands with impunity.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Millie Youngberg and John Youngberg, *Family Sabbath Traditions: To Bless Your Heart and Home* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2001), 20-21.

<sup>14</sup>Tremper Longman III, ed., *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 1477.

<sup>15</sup>James Strong, *New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary* (Biblesoft, Inc, and the International Bible Translators, 2006).

<sup>16</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 4:249.

The definition of the Sabbath here is very clear, Ellen says that those who profess to be God fearing people and pretend to be doing the right things while inside are accomplishing something else God will not just over look that but they are deceiving the world. That was why God instructed Moses to tell the Israelites, as Neusner says, “Food for the day (Sabbath) is prepared in advance (Exod 16:22-26, 29, 30). Servile labor is not to be carried on that day by the householder and his dependents, encompassing his cattle (Exod 20:8-11). God said ‘let each person remain in place, let no one leave his place on the seventh day’<sup>17</sup> (Exod 16:29). Seemingly, the Jews were fully aware of the sacredness of the Sabbath day. They probably knew the consequences of breaking the Sabbath. “Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death” (Exod 31:15).

### **The Sanctity of the Sabbath as viewed by the Prophets in the Old Testament**

The issue of the Sabbath and its sanctity has been underscored by the prophets. Just as God used Moses and other patriarchs concerning the importance of Sabbath, many prophets were engaged in warning the Israelites not to profane the Sabbath. And among the prophets, Sabbath is given a special approach. Ezekiel for example uses the expression, “my Sabbaths” twelve times, mostly in chapter 20.<sup>18</sup> He told the Israelites that the Sabbath was to remain as a sign between them and their

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<sup>17</sup>Jacob Neusner, *Questions and Answers: Intellectual Foundations of Judaism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 171.

<sup>18</sup>Ezekiel indicates the fact that the Sabbaths are the Lord’s possession given to man as a gift “my holy day” (Ezek 20:12-24; 22:8-26; 23:38; 44:24; 45:17; 46:1-6, 12), as used earlier by other biblical writers (Exod 31:13; Lev 19:3, 30; 26:2; Isa 56:4; 58: 13).

God forever, “Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God” (Ezek 20:20).

**The sanctity of the Sabbath in Isaiah.** Prophet Isaiah mentions Sabbath recurrently, together with its sanctity in his first and last chapters. In Isaiah 1:13, he describes corrupted Sabbath tradition, called by God, "your" assembly as opposed to His own. Strand observes that it is evident from the prophets that the weekly Sabbath was celebrated in the kingdom of Judah as a seventh-day institution of rest and worship.<sup>19</sup> In Isaiah 56:1-8 and 58:13-14, the prophet praises honouring the holiness and the sanctity of Sabbath, rather than using it for personal gratification. Possibly Isaiah was very much concerned about the sanctity of the Sabbath, and knowing the consequences of breaking it, he reminded the Jews to always be mindful of the holy day. Many Jews had to avoid talk about money or secular matters on Sabbath.

Similar expressions in several chapters of the latter part of Isaiah show that the issue of the Sabbath observance was one of the Isaiah's central messages. In chapter 66, verses 22-23, the prophet reveals the Messianic Kingdom, in which the new moons and Sabbaths are events for the righteous to go and worship God with contrite hearts because sin will be no more. That is why God said through the prophet, “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable, if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly” (verse 13). This was a conditional expression; God was telling the Israelites the blessings they would enjoy if they kept the Sabbath holy. And He went on to say,

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<sup>19</sup>Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Prophetic and Historical Literature of the Old Testament,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand, 46.

“Then you shall take delight in the LORD and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isa 58:13, 14).

Unfortunately, perhaps many people have looked at the Sabbath observance as a negative way of God’s control over their enjoyable activities in life.

But it’s indicative that God wants his children to refrain from doing their own things or pleasure on the Sabbath day. There are obscured blessings in keeping the Sabbath holy as God wanted this to be. By keeping the Sabbath holy the Israelites became known by the surrounding nations that they worshiped a different God than theirs. It was a day that embraced every person rich and poor met together on the Sabbath day.

Isaiah’s message is divided in two ways: Keeping the Sabbath was considered as the first priority of showing one’s commitment and loyalty to Yahweh and His will (Isa 56:2-4; 58:13; 66:23). The second was about restraining ones feet on Sabbath that means relegating personal interests in favour of divine blessings. On top, Isaiah boldly refers to restrictions on travel on the Sabbath (Isa 58:13, 14). “Delight in sight of God was thought of as a kind pleasing the Sabbath. Conforming to Sabbath restrictions was interpreted as symbolic denial of doing your own pleasure on the day Yahweh sanctified.”<sup>20</sup> This was hinted in Exodus when God told Moses that, “See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day” (Exod 16:29). God intended that His people should learn to revere the Sabbath day. In his book Professor Davidson adds that, “there was no greater way of

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<sup>20</sup>John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Word Biblical Commentary 25 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 276.

uniting the people of Israel when exiled from their own land than the keeping of the Sabbath. Divine blessing is ever covenanted to those who maintain the sanctity of the day of rest.”<sup>21</sup> Moreover, God warned the Israelites that they should not break His Sabbath, because it was His sign between Him and the Israelites (Exod 31:17). One could easily conclude that the sanctity of the Sabbath is among Isaiah’s central message to Israel, which validates the sacredness of the Sabbath.

**The Sanctity of Sabbath in Jeremiah.** Jeremiah’s idea comes out clear that the exile was directly related to Israel’s failure to perceive and observe the Sabbaths. So in his time, Sabbath observance seemed almost insignificant as it was related to other charges God gave to His prophet,<sup>22</sup> (Jer 17:21-27). To make it clear, the book of Chronicles associated Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years of captivity (Jer 25:11, and 29:10), to be the failure of keeping the Sabbath (2 Chr 36:21). God was very open with Israelites about the strictness of keeping the Sabbath holy by not engaging in any work or business on His day of rest. God promised them blessings if they kept the Sabbath holy and to even protect them from enemies that would want to conquer them. “The LORD preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy” (Psalms 145:20).

John Calvin said, a special indignation is conveyed in Lamentations 2:6, where people had forgotten the appointed feasts including the Sabbath.<sup>23</sup> Indeed by staying so long in exile the Israelites forgot the sacredness of the Sabbath day. That is

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<sup>21</sup>F. Davidson, *The New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1954), 603.

<sup>22</sup>Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 137.

<sup>23</sup>John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Prophet Jeremiah and Lamentations*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 4:354.



why God would every now and then send a prophet to remind them His statues and promises so that they return to Him.

**The sanctity of the Sabbath in Nehemiah.** And the prophet Nehemiah sets the groundwork that is needed of God’s covenant people. As narrated in Nehemiah 10:28-39, God’s covenant people had in mind four specific responsibilities, which were to be adhered to in the society. The law of God, not to give their children in marriage to the people of the land, to keep the Sabbath holy, and to return faithful tithes and temple dues to God.<sup>24</sup> Nehemiah who was known to be in exile for a long time and knew the importance of the Sabbath reform, ordered that the gates be closed prohibiting commerce on the Sabbath (Neh 13:15-22). Nehemiah called the people to maintain themselves as a separate nation by observing the Sabbath and refusing to marry individuals outside the group.”<sup>25</sup>

God did not ordain the Sabbath to trap His children if they fail to keep it, but through the Sabbath man’s sweat and toil are united with his spiritual life. Beach said, “The Sabbath unites the body and the spirit, the physical and the spiritual. A complete life without the Sabbath is conceivable.”<sup>26</sup> The Sabbath, when viewed correctly, helps the believers to be relieved from destroying themselves from having no rest and this Sabbath lifts them into holy and peaceful atmosphere the presence of God the Creator.

### **Remember the Sabbath and Keep it Holy**

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<sup>24</sup>William Sanford Lasor, David Allan Hubbard, and Fredric WM. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 643.

<sup>25</sup>Victor H. Matthews and James C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 263-264.

<sup>26</sup>Walter R. Beach, *Dimensions in Salvation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1963), 150.

When God mentioned the two phrases, “remember” and “to keep it holy,” He had a reason behind them that need to be explored. The phrase “remembers” (*zakor*),<sup>27</sup> as used in the introduction of the Sabbath and carries a lot of weight for the total meaning of the Sabbath commandment. The retrospective aspect of remembering focuses on the past. It wishes to bring something to remembrance. Hasel said that, “the Sabbath is not introduced for the first time on Sinai it is already there ... pre-Mosaic Sabbath or pre-Israelite Sabbath.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, the Sabbath was there from creation time and God was to remind the Israelites what was already in existence. Abraham said that, “The Sabbaths are our great cathedral; and our Holy of Holies is a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Germans were able to burn.”<sup>29</sup> The prospective aspect of the Sabbath day, to remember; looks into both the present and the future of its existence. That was why God asked a searching question in Exodus 16 28, “How long do you refuse to keep the divine commandments and laws?” In fact God was telling the Israelites that to refrain from refusing to keep the laws of God was the same as to “remember,” or to observe, or to keep them (Exod 31:13-17).<sup>30</sup> “There are three ways to introduce a positive command in Biblical Hebrew: a simple imperfect */yiqtol* form, an infinitive absolute, and a second-person imperative.”<sup>31</sup> Such

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<sup>27</sup>Ronald James Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 39.

<sup>28</sup>Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand, 30.

<sup>29</sup>Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: United Synagogue of America, 1951), 8.

<sup>30</sup>Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 30.

<sup>31</sup>Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 340.

as, by the use of an infinitive absolute, *zakor*, the fourth commandment is a positive command.<sup>32</sup>

The second phrase “to keep it holy” is used as a factitive *Piel* in Hebrew and translates as “to make holy.”<sup>33</sup> Consequently, those trustworthy concerns of the previous six days are to be laid aside temporarily. It was interesting to also observe that, there is a connection between the Sabbath, which is the seventh day and the seven living beings called to observe the Sabbath: you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your cattle (that means even animals observe the Sabbath), and the sojourner.<sup>34</sup> The Sabbath therefore, as discussed in Exodus links the Sabbath with the seventh day rest after creation, while the book of Deuteronomy connects it with Exodus from Egypt.<sup>35</sup> To recall in a clear sense it is observed that the fundamental sanctions on the Sabbath in both statements of commandment is “creation” in Deuteronomy the creation of a people [redemption], in Exodus the creation of the world.<sup>36</sup> These few areas that have been surveyed from the OT indicated that it was God’s own initiative to create the Sabbath and that its sanctity should always be respected by His creatures. The Sabbath then is God’s time not ours;

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<sup>32</sup>W. H. Bellinger Jr., *Leviticus Numbers*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 116. See, James K. Bruckner, *Exodus: New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 185.

<sup>33</sup>Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1974), 415.

<sup>34</sup>Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 415.

<sup>35</sup>Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 193.

<sup>36</sup>B. Davie Napier, *The Book of Exodus*, The Layman’s Bible Commentary 3 (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1963), 82.

when people trespass upon it they are stealing from God. The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* commented, “God has given us six days in which to do the work, and has reserved only one for Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us—a day when we should lay aside all our secular matters and centre our thoughts upon God and heaven.”<sup>37</sup> The Sabbath becomes the focal point of meeting the Creator during worship and fellowship every week.

Conclusively, the survey of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch and the prophetic times of the Old Testament had indicated that Sabbath was known and honoured sometimes dishonoured from the time of the united monarchy through the divided monarchy to the time of Nehemiah in post-Exilic period. And the Sabbath had its ups and downs among the significant aspects of prophetic declaration as a sign, covenant and its sacredness. It was also discovered that the Sabbath originated from God the Creator. That was one of the major reasons the prophets stood firm to declare the sanctity of the Sabbath. The sanctity of the seventh day was a mandate by God to His creatures from creation to the future generations. God gave them the instructions as to how to observe it.

### **The Consequences of Breaking the Sabbath**

The sanctity of the Sabbath is held with great esteem in the Bible. Just as God is Holy, He said that the Sabbath is holy. “Hallow My Sabbath, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.” (Ezek 20:20). In the Bible show that God is displeased by those who profane the Sabbath and the penalty was death. “You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to

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<sup>37</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 138.

you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.” (Exod 31:14). This is how serious God treated the Sabbath day.

Many times when the Israelites profaned the Sabbath they would be taken into captivity; “Moreover they have done this to Me: They have defiled My sanctuary on the same day and profane My Sabbaths” (Ezek 22:38). God was not pleased when His children the Israelites disobeyed His laws and profaned the Sabbath. As Nehemiah puts it, “Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, ‘What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath? Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all the disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.’” (Neh 13:17, 18).

### **The Sabbath in the New Testament**

Just as the Sabbath issue has been discussed in detail in the Old Testament, the researcher engaged in finding out how the Sabbath was treated and observed in the New Testament. Jesus Christ the Creator of the Sabbath and the Giver of rest of the Commandments came to fulfil and demonstrate the right keeping of the Sabbath and its sanctity. As a matter of fact the observance of the Sabbath had been distorted by the Jews in times of Jesus when He was here on earth so there was a need that the Master should straighten up this as the author of the day of rest. Jesus said it clearly in Matthew 5:17-19, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil ‘Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.’”

### **Jesus and the Sabbath**

The interesting part of Sabbath services is found in the Gospels, there are several texts that prove that Jesus Christ was a Sabbath keeper. The Gospel of Luke, says when Jesus Christ was thirty-year old (Luke 3:23) began His ministry in home town of Nazareth, and attended the Sabbath services in the synagogue. “He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood to read” Luke 4:16.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand for the text to be understood well, two points are worth noting here; what was the Saviour’s custom? Does it mean it was His custom to teach (in the Jewish synagogue, Luke 4:15), or just entering the synagogue when it was a Sabbath day? Some scholars have responded to these questions as by defining the statement to mean, “It has been ‘His custom’ during His early life at Nazareth to worship in the synagogue every Sabbath.”<sup>39</sup> Secondly, “As His custom was’ (Luke 4:16) points to a lifelong habit of attending the synagogue on the Sabbath day.”<sup>40</sup> Jesus Christ who is the Creator of everything respected the sacredness of the Sabbath. He realized the importance of worship on the day He rested and blessed from creation. He was very much aware of what the opponents would do when it comes to the sanctity of the Sabbath.

### **The Sanctity of the Sabbath in the New Testament**

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<sup>38</sup>In Matthew 2:23, it says, “And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’” This is the city that after Joseph and Mary the parents of Jesus settled when they returned from the flight into Egypt. That is why Luke said that Jesus began His ministry there.

<sup>39</sup>Walter F. Specht, “The Sabbath in the New testament,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth Strand, 94.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 94.

## Jesus and the Pharisees

During the ministry of Christ the sanctity and the observance of the Sabbath was a very crucial issue mainly among the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Matthew 12:1-12, showed how the Pharisees missed the sacredness of the Sabbath. Jesus was revealing to them and to the whole world that in exceptional cases “the Sabbath may be infringed to save human life.”<sup>41</sup> Jesus told them that in all these incidents there was nothing wrong; first because when David was hungry with those who were with him entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat even those who were with him but the priests (verse 3-4). He then declared to them “For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath (verse 8).

Jesus continued telling the Pharisees when they tried to accuse Him of healing on the Sabbath day. “Then He said to them, ‘what man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath” (verses 11, 12). The One who sanctified, blessed, and rested on the Sabbath day revealed to His creatures that there are some permissible activities to be done on Sabbath. Mostly many of them are for life saving and charitable ones of which some were mentioned and done by the Master Himself. This was a controversial activity but Christ resolved by quoting incidents that occurred in the Old Testament. Jonathan said, “The original intention of the Sabbath was to declare the truth about the created order and the Creator himself.

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<sup>41</sup>Specht, “The Sabbath in the New testament,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth Strand, 96.

God's cessation of work was obviously never to imply His fatigue. Rather, it was God's declaration that his creation was ready to go. ... Nothing further was required."<sup>42</sup> In fact, what Jesus did on Sabbath was so save the souls those under the bondage of the devil. He (Christ) observed the Sabbath better than what the Pharisees and the Scribes were doing. But Jesus was not only concerned with Pharisees and the Sadducees in terms of their present situation of criticising Him, He warned them of the Sabbath keeping even when He would be gone.

Jesus made the following statement concerning the Sabbath: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath." (Matt 24:20; Mark 13:18). Jesus knew that if it was possible to happen during winter time many would not make it because of cold weather. He predicted this, "Because the cold and rainy weather would make it more difficult to flee as well as to find shelter."<sup>43</sup> And the concern of the Creator must also be understood as a reference to the prohibition of travelling beyond Sabbath days' journey, which was three fifth of a mile.<sup>44</sup> During Jewish time the Sabbath was strictly observed and protected because they knew it was life if they kept well or death if they deliberately defiled it.

Since many of the followers of Jesus Christ were of Jewish tribe they understood what Jesus meant about the sanctity of the Sabbath. This was also shown during the crucifixion of the Messiah. Just as God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day; He sanctified it as well as blessing it. During the

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<sup>42</sup>Jonathan Lunde, *Following Jesus, the Servant King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 2010), 148.

<sup>43</sup>Floyd V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), 255.

<sup>44</sup>J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Kritische-exegetischer Kommentar Uber das Neue Testament 3* (1998), 117.



crucifixion of Jesus (Matt 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19), the Scripture records that Jesus was crucified on the Friday *paraskeue*<sup>45</sup> “preparation” day, the day before Sabbath. Meaning that the last day of Christ’s ministry here on earth when He came the first time was closed on the sixth day of the week by His death. He rested, in the tomb on the Sabbath day and resurrected on Sunday morning, after the Sabbath (Luke 23:53-24:1). This confirmed that Jesus respected the Sabbath of creation; He sanctified it even at His death. Mark said that, “They wouldn’t even embalm His body on Sabbath. Jesus rested on Sabbath before He was resurrected on the first day of the week. Jesus kept the Sabbath in life and in death.”<sup>46</sup> Convincingly Jesus revealed an inner loyalty by sanctifying the Sabbath even at the point of His death when concluding His earthly ministry. This led the researcher to find out more the real purpose of the Sabbath.

### **The Purpose of the Sabbath in the New Testament**

The Sabbath is a weekly reminder that human beings are the property of God “In him we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) Mark Finley said, “The Sabbath has been given to us by a loving Creator to unite us with Him. The heart of the Sabbath is relationship—the acknowledgement that God is worthy of our supremest devotion, our deepest allegiance and our total loyalty.”<sup>47</sup> Just as the survey done in the Old Testament the purpose of keeping the Sabbath holy, there was also a need that in the New Testament the study should examine Jesus’ kind of the Sabbath

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<sup>45</sup>It is noted that by the NT times, the “preparation day” had become a technical name for Friday. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 490.

<sup>46</sup>Mark Finley, *When God said Remember* (Grantham, England: Stanborough Press, 2010), 45.

<sup>47</sup>Finley, *When God said Remember*, 78.

observance as expounded in Mark 2:27. “Then He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.’” The Sabbath was designed not only to be a blessing for man, or a day of physical rest, but also a day devoted to spiritual activities. This was supposed to be the time when believers enjoy the fellowship with their Creator God.

Unfortunately the Pharisees treated the day differently as though man and women were created to serve the Sabbath, rather than the Sabbath fulfilling the requirements of the Creator God. No wonder William said, “Reflection of Jesus’ act and word, through which he established the true intention of the Sabbath and exposed the weakness of a human system of fencing the Law with restrictions, revealed His sovereign authority over the Sabbath itself.”<sup>48</sup> This is one of the reasons the Jews hated Jesus because He exposed their wrong doing on Sabbath. It is for those who have committed their lives to the Lord as Bacchiocchi said, “Christians who love the Lord of the Sabbath find the Sabbath to be a day of joyful celebration of God’s marvellous accomplishments in the world and in their personal life.”<sup>49</sup>

The three Synoptic Gospels all give the final statement, “So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath,” (Matt 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). These words proved Christ’s Sovereignty over the Sabbath. Moreover, He was together with our heavenly Father when Sabbath was made (John 1:1-3). This demonstrated, that Christ, rather than the Scribes and the Pharisees, had and has the authority to state what is lawful and not lawful to do on the Sabbath day. So the argument that the Pharisees launched before Jesus was not the Sabbath law itself that Jesus’ disciples had violated, but man-

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<sup>48</sup>William L. Lane, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1974), 120.

<sup>49</sup>Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, 289.

made Pharisaic regulations concerning Sabbath keeping. That is why in one or more occasions Jesus ignored completely their oral law which looked so dear to the Pharisees. They valued the commandments of men that the law of God. In other words, the Pharisees exalted the traditions more than following the Commandments of God which included the observance of Sabbath. When Christ had ascended to heaven the apostles continued with the observance of the Sabbath.

### **The Apostles and the Sabbath Observance**

When Jesus left this earth the apostles continued with the work their Master left, of preaching the gospel. In Antioch in Pisidia (in Asia Minor), Paul and Barnabas attended and participated in synagogue worship. They continued to observe the Sabbath; the researcher examined the keeping of this sacred day in the apostolic times. In the book of Act alone, the Greek word for Sabbath “*sabbaton*” occurs ten times.<sup>50</sup> The sanctity of Sabbath observance was flourishing during the apostolic age, as churches, and homes, under-trees, and river banks were used for worship on the holy days.<sup>51</sup> Apart from the men who were apostles and were active in spiritual endeavours, the Scripture records women also, who participated in the congregation like Tabitha and Priscilla respectively (Acts 9:36; 18:4). It is clear that in the Scripture the apostles continued keeping the Sabbath that their Lord kept. Then the apostle Paul said in the book of Hebrews 4:4 “For he has spoken in a certain place of the *seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.’*” (Ref. Gen 2:2 KJV.) And it will be kept in the New Earth to come as explained in Hebrews

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<sup>50</sup>Acts 1:12; 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4.

<sup>51</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2008), 533.

4:9,10 “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from his.”

### **Sabbath in the Book of Hebrew**

The book of Hebrews confirmed the OT Sabbath activities and its sanctity just as it was supposed to be done in the NT. The author showed that the rest that the Sabbath gives was very essential to the children of God in the OT just as Jesus showed it in the NT time. Hebrews 4:9 “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.” But this rest seem to have another connection with the future when this world will be made a new. The author had the understanding of the prophet Isaiah of the future keeping of the Sabbath; Isaiah 66:22, “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, says the Lord ‘so shall your descendants and your name remain. ... And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord.” For the author of Hebrews, God’s Sabbath is an eschatological reality into which believers have not yet entered, even if by faith and hope they can claim it. “God’s eternal rest has been available within creation since the time when he completed his work, and believers will not enjoy God’s rest until they cease from their own labours on the Sabbath.”<sup>52</sup> Since the book of Hebrews reveals much that was happening in the Old Testament time, it mentions the “Rest” for the time to come for the saints of God.

The New Testament acknowledges the need of observing the Sabbath just as God said it in the Old Testament times. Jesus Christ the Creator, the disciples, Paul as an apostle and early Christians in the New Testament, they all kept and observed the

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<sup>52</sup>Herold Weiss, *A Day of Gladness: The Sabbath among Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 174.

sanctity of the Sabbath. The next area surveyed the Spirit of Prophecy the sanctity of and observance of Sabbath.

### **The Sabbath in Ellen G. White's Writings**

Theologically the writings of Ellen White agree with what the Bible said about the Sabbath both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Sabbath originated from God the Creator. She said, "The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation."<sup>53</sup> She continued to say:

Hallowed by the Creator's rest and blessing, the Sabbath was kept by Adam in the innocence in holy Eden; by Adam, fallen yet repentant, when he was driven from his happy estate. It was kept by all patriarchs, from Abel to righteous Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob. When the chosen people were in bondage in Egypt, many, in the midst of prevailing idolatry, lost their knowledge of God's law; but when the Lord delivered Israel, He proclaimed His law in awful grandeur to the assembly multitude, that they might know His will and fear and obey Him forever. From that day to present the knowledge of God's law has been preserved in the earth, and the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been kept.<sup>54</sup>

In other words, although there have been misunderstanding whether God is the Creator of the Sabbath or it came from these other gods as it was narrated in Pentateuch; the Babylonians or Kenite origin as explained earlier on that the Sabbath originated from them. Ellen said that even when Christ came He exalted the Law of God. "Of that law of which the fourth Commandment forms part, Christ declares, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.' So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 2005), 283.

<sup>54</sup>White, *The Great Controversy* (Ottawa, Canada: Pacific Press, 2005), 453.

<sup>55</sup>White, *The Great Controversy*, 283.

Moreover, Christ openly told the Pharisees that “I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:10). The Sabbath is included in those Ten Commandments. Ellen said that, “When Jesus turned upon the Pharisees with the question whether it was lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or evil, to save or to kill; He confronted them with their own wicked purposes.”<sup>56</sup> Those religious leaders of the past were blinded by the devil that they did not know that they were dealing with the Creator of the universe and the Creator of the Sabbath. Hosea in the OT said this “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos 4:6). Indeed Christ tried to show them the way on how to observe the Sabbath meaningfully. But many of them never listen to the Messiah. “Since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of love and power of Christ.”<sup>57</sup> The main purpose why God created the Sabbath was to have fellowship with His creation on the day of rest. Adam and Eve must have enjoyed the fellowship in the earliest days before sin came into the world.

### **Sabbath Sanctity, Ellen G. White**

God shed light regarding the importance of Sabbath which Ellen G. White received for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In this God was so particular in giving her the clear picture of what is needed of God’s peculiar people. In this section

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 287.

<sup>57</sup>White, *The Desire of Ages*, 281.

the attention will be paid to how she agreed with the Bible about the Sanctity of the Sabbath.<sup>58</sup>

She then said that “on 25<sup>th</sup> December, 1865, was shown that there has been slackness in regard to the observance of the Sabbath. There has not been promptness to fulfil the secular duties within the six working days, which God has given to man and carefulness not to infringe upon one hour of the holy, sacred time which He has reserved for Himself.”<sup>59</sup>

Conceivably, this is where many believers stumble when they think that God is like them in terms of handling spiritual matters. The sanctity of the Sabbath has to be regarded in the way God explained in the Scriptures. It is very interesting that Ellen White explains how connected she was with Scripture when she narrated the sanctity of the Sabbath:

In pleasant weather let parents walk with their children in the fields and groves. Amid the beautiful things of nature tell them the reason for the institution of the Sabbath. Tell them that when earth came from His hand, it was holy and beautiful. Every flower, every shrub, every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator. Everything upon which the eye rested was lovely and filled the mind with thoughts of the love of God.<sup>60</sup>

During the time of the Israelites God reminded them of the Sabbath to keep it holy. Ellen White said, “The Sabbath has not been kept. By some the work of six days has been carried into the seven. One hour, and even more, has often been taken from the commencement and close of the Sabbath. The researcher agrees with what Ellen

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<sup>58</sup>Ellen White was born at Gorham, Maine, in November 26, 1827. Her parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, were earnest and devoted members of Methodist Episcopal Church. The family later separated with the church in 1843 and joined the Adventist Church. Got married to James White; Ellen White died in 1915.

<sup>59</sup>Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Seoul, Korea: Everlasting Gospel, 2006), 1:532.

<sup>60</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:358.

White said when it comes to the sanctity of Sabbath; the majority of believers do not regard its sacredness. There are times that church members feel they are keeping the Sabbath in the right way by comparing themselves with other believers of the same church. But what they forget is that God is the measure of how they should keep the Sabbath.

There is a fault with Sabbath-keepers who do not respect the sanctity and observance of Sabbath. Ellen White said, “God is very particular, and all who think that they are saving a little time, or advantaging themselves by infringing a little of Lord’s time will meet with loss sooner or later. He cannot bless them as it would be His pleasure to do, for His name is dishonoured by them, His precepts lightly esteemed. God’s curse will rest upon them, and they will lose ten or twentyfold more than they gain.”<sup>61</sup> She was explaining the need of observance and the sanctity of the Sabbath. There are many believers who are not careful the way they regard the sacredness of the Sabbath. This is worthy instruction to be considered by faithful believers of God. There is need of strictly guarding sacred hours with care from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.

As a result of working for six days, many are working for seven days. By the time the Sabbath begins they are so exhausted to listen to the Church programs on the Sabbath. God gave the Sabbath for the benefit of both man and woman.

For the Sabbath observance to be realized a lot of preparation should be done not only on Friday (the preparation day), but throughout the week. White said:

On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.

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<sup>61</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 1:532.



Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment.<sup>62</sup>

This does not mean that people should not light fire as other people have always suggested that “no fire to be kindled on Sabbath” as they quote Exodus 35:3. About this she clearly commented, “While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather let the food prepared the day before be heated.”<sup>63</sup> This meant that fire was allowed to be kindled on Sabbath. While The Sabbath was to be a blessing, the truth is that the Sabbath was not meant to be a day for fulfilling human ambitions but to have ideas in regard to the truths contained in His word, and to devote a portion of time to appropriate prayer.

**Instructions about Sabbath Observance.** In the process of sanctifying the Sabbath there are blessings that come during the Sabbath hours.

The holy hours of the Sabbath should not be spent indoors. It is a time when parents should gather their children together to give the correct knowledge of the Creator by taking them through the beautiful scenery of nature. Ellen said, “Fathers and mothers are in a duty bound to settle this question early so that the child will no more think of breaking the Sabbath, neglecting religious worship and family prayer.”<sup>64</sup>

**Blessings of the Sabbath.** If this point is well understood, then the importance of the Sabbath will be clear in the minds of God’s people. Sometime many Sabbath

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<sup>62</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:355, 356.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 6:357.

<sup>64</sup>White, *The Advent Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 320.

keepers fail to get the Sabbath blessings because of the manner of the meetings, or the extent of the preparation for the Sabbath.

White said: “When worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. . . . Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. . . . We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer.”<sup>65</sup>

For example, White went on to say, “If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided . . . we should be more careful about travelling on the boats or cars on this day.”<sup>66</sup> That was to do with personal gains or businesses which were done on Sabbath. But that could be also for those who knew they were going to do God’s work on Sabbath and knew it was a long distance to travel, better avoid that on a Sabbath day.

Ellen White’s highlights some of the benefits enjoyed by the Sabbath keepers: She says “our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men and women who acknowledge Him. Thus, the observance of the Sabbath distinguishes God’s people from the idolaters.”<sup>67</sup> In other words, it was the Sabbath observance that made the distinction between those who acknowledge the sovereignty of God and those who refuse to accept Him.

In conclusion, from both the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White, it was established that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. She also supports the fact

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<sup>65</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 5:492.

<sup>66</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:360.

<sup>67</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 349-352.

that Jesus swept away the senseless restrictions of the Pharisees by asking a question regarding the Sabbath: “Is it lawful to do well on the Sabbath day?” (Luke 14:3). In this case, therefore, the Sabbath shall direct the minds of God fearing people to His precepts and commandments.

Moreover, the Sabbath is the sign that now distinguishes God’s people as they come out from the world ready to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath observance functions as a sign of relationship between God and His people, a sign that they honour His law, a sign of sanctification. True sanctification is manifested in harmonious living with God’s will. It is oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. It is a sign by which God recognizes His chosen people; it is a perpetual covenant. It will be there for eternity. What Ellen White was shown in a vision was the revelation of the similar experience Moses was shown. And this was what Ellen White concluded in her dream concerning the Sabbath.

She (Ellen White) saw what Moses was shown towards the end of this world: “I saw Sabbath trodden under foot, and a spurious institution established in its place.”<sup>68</sup> But she said that “when Moses saw what was happening he asked them ‘how could those who believe in Christ reject the law spoken by His own voice upon the sacred mount?’”<sup>69</sup> In other words it was difficult for Moses to believe people disregarding the law of God which is the foundation of God’s government. Ellen White understood very well that God meant what He said when it came to respecting

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<sup>68</sup>White, *The Great Controversy*, 477.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

His Sabbath including the whole Decalogue. The devil has capitalized in discouraging the saints of God not to be too serious with Sabbath keeping.

### **Summary**

In this chapter the issues concerning the sanctity, observance, and the part the Sabbath plays of the redemptive have been discussed and the authors cited agreed with biblical foundation for the sanctity of the Sabbath. It has been noted that the Sabbath originated from God and it is Him who is in control not man. It will endure for eternity. Theologically the Sabbath is the reminder of God's creation and contributes to the redemption plan of salvation. This lays the greatest need to clearly allow the members of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church to see the importance of the sanctity of Sabbath and how to observe it. When members of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church understand the essence of keeping the Sabbath holy their spiritual lives will be transformed. This chapter has also shown the authority of the Creator and how His people should do with His Sabbath. It has been brought to light what God expects of His children to do with His holy hours.

The Sabbath will remain the sign of God's work of creation week among His people. Theological foundation of the Sabbath is enough evidence to confirm that God wants His people to sanctify it at all times and to keep it holy as He blessed it. Since "God is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8). His Sabbath will endure forever. The Sabbath originated from God, sanctified by God it was blessed by God as He rested in it. When Christ came He kept it, His apostles observed it, and so His followers will continue sanctifying it.

Limbe SDA Church will have no excuse to violate the Sabbath when they will have learned so much from the Scriptures and from the inspired pen of the Spirit of

Prophecy. This led the researcher to venture more through the literature review and find out more what other authors have said regarding the sanctity of the Sabbath.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three main areas that were closely surveyed, these are: The origin of the Sabbath, sanctity of the Sabbath, and finally Sabbath and redemption. The literature review was explored with the view of what was researched in chapter two of theological foundation of the Sabbath. Furthermore, “the reasons that make many members in Limbe Adventist Church fail to observe the sanctity of the Sabbath were searched and solutions investigated as to be in accordance with the real challenges faced.”<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, the sanctity of the Sabbath has been investigated and the contributing factors that Sabbath play in line with the fellowship, worship and redemption of man through Jesus Christ was researched. The ideas expressed in chapter two are further polished by a review of the latest works and some old books but those that carry relevant information about the Sabbath. This is also with regard of Sabbath observance in Limbe Adventist Church. This study explored more on the issue of the sanctity of the Sabbath which reveals the plan of salvation, and to prepare the believers to have cordial fellowship with their Creator. Finally, the outcome of the areas attempted shall be summarized to confirm that the Sabbath is not man origin but

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<sup>1</sup>There are some encounters found among the members in Limbe Adventist Church which include: Allowing their children to go and dance during the political rallies on Sabbath, other members allow their vehicles to transport people on Sabbath when there are political meetings or do business. Since football has become one of the most popular games many church members go to watch soccer on Sabbath while others watch at home through televisions. Others just engage themselves into social activities on Sabbath. Some families send their children to school on Sabbath. Very few members are forced to work on Sabbath.

the Creator Himself. The first part to be looked into was the origin of the Sabbath both OT and NT from the perspective of the writers or authors.

### **The Origin of the Sabbath in the Old and New Testaments**

There were some areas that said about the origin of Sabbath which are just theories not based from the Scriptures. The focus of this portion of study is the Old Testament on the origin of the Sabbath, and then it proceeded to the New Testament. But there are some writers that have written and spoken positively of the origin of the Sabbath. It is generally agreed that the origin of the Sabbath is closely related to the origin of the week.<sup>2</sup> Lee said that, “The seventh day as the Sabbath was instituted immediately after God had created the heavens and the earth. Even before sin entered the world, God had already sanctified the seventh day to be a memorial and special day of worship.”<sup>3</sup> The Sabbath carries unique manifestation of blessings and peace of mind as compared to the other six days of the week. When God created the Sabbath, He did something to set that day apart from the rest of the week for a purpose. Mark Finley says, “In the marvels of Creation, God has left his fingerprints throughout the universe. There are scientists who, observing God’s Creation, see his handwork. They see evidence for his existence. They see evidence for a Creator God—one who fashioned the world.”<sup>4</sup> The origin of the Sabbath did not come from human beings who are limited in knowledge and they are mortal; that is why the information was

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<sup>2</sup>Merrill C. Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 182.

<sup>3</sup>John K. Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption* (Hong Kong: Global Chinese Evangelism, 2010), 2.

<sup>4</sup>Finley, *When God said Remember*, 33.

unavailable to them. There are no sources to base the origin of the Sabbath outside God's providence and the revealed word of the Bible.

In the previous chapter, the Theological Foundation of the Sabbath was clearly shown that the Master Designer had in mind the need for His creatures a cycle of events in life in the sequential order of activities. That is why He created human beings last on the sixth day and gave them the Sabbath rest.

As a matter of fact, Lee says the issue of the origin of Sabbath has “always been controversial, each side (of believers) thinks it is right and refuses to compromise. . . . The Sabbath is not the doctrine of a certain denomination, but a truth that is clearly revealed in Scriptures.”<sup>5</sup> What the author is trying to say is that the Sabbath originated from God it is not man's making. In other words, Lee continues to say that “the Sabbath is the revelation of God in scripture that represents His supreme authority which ought to be obeyed by all believers.”<sup>6</sup> The researcher added to the statement of John Lee that not only the believers but every human being was and is supposed to obey the authority of God by keeping and respecting the seventh day Sabbath. Those who argue about the authority of the Sabbath mostly do that with the guidance of the opposing power that comes from the devil, who always opposes anything that comes from God the Creator (John 8:44).

The creation Sabbath is one of the topics that bring a lot of excitement among many Bible believers. Bond says, “No institution of the Hebrew religion had greater disciplinary influence upon the chosen people of God, or more fruitful life-giving results, than the Sabbath keepers. The Jews believed in a *transcendent* God who

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<sup>5</sup>Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption*, 2.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. 2.



created the heavens and the earth, who dwells outside of and beyond the earth, and who is greater than all that he created.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore it appeared to the researcher that the Sabbath was created by God and His intention was to let it be a perpetual sign of love between God and His creatures. God intended to always be closer to His creation and have fellowship with them that was why He instituted the Sabbath.

Herold said the Israelites knew very well that the Sabbath came from God and that was why they were very careful in observing it. He expressed these views, “The origin of the Sabbath is evident in the earlier version of the fourth commandment, which offers as a rationale for the cessation from the work the liberating power of God at the Exodus, rather than God’s rest at the completion of creation.”<sup>8</sup> Many nations followed the Sabbath of the Israelites when they saw how powerful their God is. Herold quoted some verses from the Bible that confirmed the author of the seventh day like Exodus 16:29; Exodus 35:2, 3; Jeremiah 17:19-21; Nehemiah 13:19-21. These verses showed how God wanted the Israelites to keep the Sabbath He created which is always sacred. Prophets knew that anytime the Israelites profaned the sanctity of the Sabbath God would allow the enemies to defeat them. That was why they would remind those (Israelites) to keep the Sabbath holy. Notice how Helmer narrated the creation account.

First, eight acts of creation are distributed among six days. This is obviously because the story in its present form focuses on the seventh day as a day of rest, i.e., its purpose is partially to give a reason for observation of the Sabbath. The original

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<sup>7</sup> Ahva John Clarence Bond, *Sabbath History before the Beginning of the Modern Denomination* (Plainfield, NJ: American Sabbath Track, 1927), 12.

<sup>8</sup>Weiss, *A Day of Gladness*, 10.

account probably contained only eight stages of creation without the seven day schema.<sup>9</sup>

Helmer was comparing the creation story of Genesis 1:1-; 2:3 and history, he said “that there were many similarities that many nations learnt from Israelites how the Sabbath originated”<sup>10</sup> as said above. The ancient nations were aware of creation because the counting of days was different from the present times. What they knew was the first day; second day, up to the sixth day then came the Sabbath, seventh day.

In Hebrew, the word *Shabbat* appeared in the “Torah as a verb, *shavat*. ‘And God ceased/rested/stopped.’ *Shabbat* is re-created weekly as Jews make *Shabbat*”<sup>11</sup> said Diamant and Cooper. The authors clearly indicated that the Jews choose to keep the Sabbath of the Bible by choice meaning they are committed to do so because they love their God. “Choosing *Shabbat* means making commitment to a weekly period of rest and peace. It means making distinctions between activities that are *Shabbat*-like from those that are workweek like.”<sup>12</sup> It was God’s plan that human beings should have cycle of days that would lead to one day of rest from each week. This rest was based on the seventh day which is known as a Sabbath, the day the Creator rested. The next section deals with the creation of Sabbath in the New Testament.

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<sup>9</sup>Helmer Ringgren, *Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 106.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>11</sup>Anita Diamant, Howard Cooper, *Living A Jewish Life* (NY: Harper Collins, 2007), 29.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

## **The Foundation of the Sabbath in the New Testament**

Even though the creation of the Sabbath does not come out clearly in the New Testament but the truth is that Jesus Christ who was the Word in the beginning with God, fulfilled the origin of it. All things were made through him; and that Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1-3, 14) confirmed that He was the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28). Mark Finley said, “His (Jesus) attitude towards the Sabbath can be summed up in a simple but profound statement He made in response to his critics: ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath’” (Mark 2:27, 28).<sup>13</sup> Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies and all activities that the Scriptures mentioned were to be carried out because Christ’s other name is the Great I AM.

This shows that Sabbath did not just come by man’s dreams or that he invented it; no, it came from God the creator. As Mark Finley continued to say, “The origin of the Sabbath is not some bishop or priest or pastor. It is not some church council. The origin of the Sabbath is the Creator himself. It is his sign. It is his memorial. It is the memorial. It is his emblem. It is his command.”<sup>14</sup> Just as human beings were created by God and they get all the necessary support from God so the Sabbath which God created it is guarded by Him. It is regarded as the special day of God that should be remembered and to be celebrated every week. Continuity of Sabbath between Christianity and Judaism is evident. Bacchiocchi says, “When Eden was lost, the Sabbath remained as a weekly reminder and the symbol of God’s desire and plan to

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<sup>13</sup>Finley, *When God said Remember*, 12, 13.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

restore the broken relationship of fellowship and mutual belonging with His fallen creatures.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, one can have a noticeable continuity between the OT and NT, and the impressions of Law and Grace as given in the NT. This led the researcher to find out more about the purpose of the Sabbath.

### **The Purpose of the Sabbath**

Of all the doctrines with distinct Seventh-day Adventist emphasis, the Sabbath, perhaps, contains resources for spirituality which are recognized even by those who do not observe the biblical Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Wirzba writes, “There is an ancient rabbinic tradition that says if we learn to celebrate the Sabbath properly and fully even once, the Messiah will come.”<sup>16</sup> This is a striking view because it suggests that the Sabbath observance is the fulfilment or perfection of a religious life that is harmoniously turned to the life-giving and life-promoting ways of God. That means when human beings are connected to God in the right way then the blessings that come with the keeping of the Sabbath properly will be experienced in their spiritual lives. The results would be the transformation of their spiritual lives for the better.

“Seventh-day Adventists learned about the Sabbath from Seventh-day Baptists.”<sup>17</sup> Today, many Christians recognize the importance of keeping the Sabbath of creation which the Bible ordains. “Seventh-day Adventists cherish the seventh day

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<sup>15</sup>Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, 110.

<sup>16</sup>Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>17</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of the 28 Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 289.

Sabbath as day of delightful communion with God, and a sign of sanctification and redemption in Christ.”<sup>18</sup>

If ever there was a time when human beings needed freedom and serenity in the midst of a tension-filled environment that time is now. Proper observance of the Sabbath meets this need. Wirzba writes, “The central significance of the Sabbath, though well understood (if not always faithfully observed) by the ancient Israelites, has mostly been lost to us. In part this is because frantic and competing schedules make it much more difficult to keep a Sabbath focus, particularly if the Sabbath observance we mostly understood as communal rest of one full day in the week.”<sup>19</sup> To sum up the purpose of the Sabbath, God ordained it to worship and fellowship with His creatures. It is to bring joy and closeness to the Redeemer of the world. It was given to human beings to rest and redeem the physical loss during the six working days.

Abraham said, “Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one’s lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man and woman are not beasts of burden, and the Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of his/her work.”<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, there is need to find out if the seventh-day Sabbath is temporal or is it for generations to come.

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<sup>18</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 289.

<sup>19</sup>Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath*, 14.

<sup>20</sup>Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, 14.

## Permanency of Sabbath

When Yahweh created the Sabbath He gave it to human beings for the purpose that it should be before the minds of men. This makes the Sabbath unique. Andreasen says, “Throughout changing customs and varying dispensations amid the passing of empires and crash of nations, surviving floods, famines, and even ‘the end of all things,’ the Sabbath stands unmoved and supreme.”<sup>21</sup> For example, the Israelites who were not willing to obey God’s Commandments and to keep His Sabbath holy were punished by other heathen nations or God alone (Amos 8:5-9). God is always waiting for His children to come to Him and to fellowship with the rest of humanity on Sabbath. “The Sabbath comes to us from a sinless world. It is God’s gift, enabling the human race to experience the reality of heaven on earth.”<sup>22</sup>

When God created the seventh day, He meant that His Sabbath will remain forever. The other reason is that God does not change so are his Moral Laws which portray His character (Jer 10:10; Heb 13:8). Mrs. White supports the immutability of the Sabbath which is part of the Commandments God gave. She says, “The claim so often put forth that Christ changed the Sabbath is disapproved by His own words. Think not I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will by no means pass away from the law until all is accomplished”<sup>23</sup> (Matt 5:17-19). The Sabbath as the memorial of creation it is also a reminder to the

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<sup>21</sup>M. L. Andreasen, *The Sabbath: Which Day and Why?* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1942), 9.

<sup>22</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists believe*, 282.

<sup>23</sup>White, *The Great Controversy*, 437.

Israelites that they were once slaves in Egypt. So it is a sign between God and man (Deut 5:12-15; Ezek 20:20).

In other words, evidences prove from the Scripture signifying the period the Sabbath has been in existence in both the OT and the NT. After Christ had ascended to heaven the earliest converts were mostly Jews who were God-fearing, kept on observing the Sabbath. When Jesus showed the authority over the Sabbath He was confirming that the Sabbath will be there as long as Christ is the Lord. “The readers of the gospel would know that Jesus had assumed ‘Son of Man’ as a messianic title...Jesus’ extraordinary authority in calling the disciples, teaching, healing diseases, driving out demons, and forgiving sins; Jesus authority even over the Sabbath commanded ... the Sabbath was committed to Him not the Christ committed to the Sabbath.”<sup>24</sup>

**The Sabbath remains the same.** In the Garden of Eden, before sin entered, there were no ceremonial ordinances, but certainly there were moral laws: “God gave humankind a standard to follow or right of conduct from the beginning. If man had never sinned, there would never have been the penalty of death; there would be no need for redemption, and no types and shadows. Consequently, there would have no need for ceremonial laws.”<sup>25</sup> For instance, Adam and Eve were living in perfect peace with their Maker but He gave them the Sabbath to keep on reminding them about the creation.

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<sup>24</sup> Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 2010), 735, 736.

<sup>25</sup>B. Thurmon, *The Sabbath Today: A Reply to A. G. Hobs* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1962), 10.

Bacchiocchi commented on this moral issue of the Sabbath that it is like the way things are arranged in “priorities on the Sabbath which contributes to the ordering of our moral consciousness.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, the Sabbath has a continuity aspect in it, when Christ came He kept the Sabbath as His custom was (Luke 4:16-19). The other vital point of the Sabbath is that it was written by God’s own finger on the tablets of stones as part of the Ten Commandments (Exod 34: 1-2). Even in the ark of the covenant the Moral Laws were put inside the ark while the ceremonial laws were beside the ark of covenant (Heb 9:3), and these laws are sometimes called the laws of Moses for they pointed to the time Christ would be sacrificed as the Lamb of God.

When sin came into the world it destroyed this plan and that is why some laws [ceremonial laws; that dealt with killing of animals and sacrifices until the time Christ were crucified on the cross to pay the penalty of sin] were added apart from the moral law [the Ten Commandments which were clearly written on two tables of stones at mount Sinai, Exod 20: 1-17] that God gave to the entire race of humanity. No wonder the devil tries to make God’s people to violet the Sabbath because it reminds the true believers about creation and the Creator. The permanency of the Sabbath will be there as long as the Decalogue remains. “Seventh-day Adventists hold the Sabbath to be for all the world and for all time. We firmly believe that there is nothing of a ceremonial or typical nature in the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.”<sup>27</sup> The other important aspect of the Sabbath is its sanctity. The next section deals much with the need of sanctifying the Sabbath in line with the command of the Giver of the Sabbath.

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<sup>26</sup>Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, 190.

<sup>27</sup>A Representative Group of Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 138.



## **Sabbath Sanctity in Both the Old and the New Testaments**

The sanctity of the Sabbath was strictly observed by the Jewish people from the very beginning of this world. Similarly the issue of the sanctity of Sabbath is a challenge to many church members in the world mainly those who profess that they keep the Bible Sabbath of creation in these last days. Schlessinger says, “From the very beginning of time, the seventh day is endowed with sanctity. The pinnacle of God’s creation, a day of sacredness built into the fabric of creation.”<sup>28</sup> God designed that human beings should commune with their Creator for fellowship. In other words, the Sabbath was supposed to be celebrated from sun set Friday to sun set Saturday and it should be to honor God the Creator. That is why God said no work should be done as stipulated in Exodus 20: 8-11. Moreover, Yahweh insisted that no one is to work; it does not matter whether they are paid or are volunteer workers as it is said in verse 10, which included the animals they are supposed to rest as well. John says “As a matter of fact, the Bible, an all-time classic that never goes out of date, is the inspired Word of God.”<sup>29</sup> What John says here is that when God had spoken He does not change because God Himself changes not (Mal 3:6). “The Lord is everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable,” (Isa 40:28 RSVB). So is His Sabbath when He sanctified no one can reverse that. The Sabbath should be observed in the way the Creator wants it to be no human wisdom is needed to clarify that.

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<sup>28</sup>Laura Schlessinger, *The Ten Commandments* (Los Angeles, CA: Harper Collins), 1998.

<sup>29</sup>Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption*, 28.

Moreover, “Shabbat is called a covenant between God and the Jews. Just as the relationship between loving couples is represented by a token, such as a wedding ring, Shabbat is the token between God and His people. ‘I have given them my Sabbath to be a sign between Me and them, so that they will know I am the One that sanctifies them.’”<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that God told Moses in the wilderness that the Israelites should learn to respect the Sabbath and He did this during the time He gave them manna. Yahweh told Moses that manna will fall for six days each week but on the seventh day there will be no manna because it is the Sabbath day. They were even told that on Friday which was the sixth day they were to collect double portion of it (two omers) since there would be no manna on Sabbath (Exod 16:18-32). In other words, God intended that the sanctity of the Sabbath should be maintained by not allowing His creatures to do any work on this seventh day. That is why Moses told the Israelites that on Friday let them “cook what they could cook and bake what they could bake and to boil what they could boil that which was left to be kept until the Sabbath is over” (Exod 16:23).

Besides, what the researcher gathered from these comments is that when it comes to Sabbath sanctification let God be in charge of the holy hours, no watching football or other secular games on Sabbath. Christians are not supposed to go for political activities on Sabbath, children are not supposed to go to school on the Sabbath. This day is sanctified for holy activities only. The researcher found it convenient and helpful that if members would stick to these simple advices the sanctity of the Sabbath would be maintained. And that could also help members to attend afternoon programs on the Sabbath day.

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<sup>30</sup>Diamant and Cooper, *Living a Jewish Life*, 27.

In addition, it is advantageous to keep the Sabbath holy for there are many positive results in it: i) you get revived spiritually; ii) you regain new strength for the following week; iii) your relationship with the Creator becomes strong and bond with your family better. Just because the Sabbath belongs to God man has to be careful the way the holy hours are spent. Finley says, “The Sabbath is a day exclusively set apart for physical, mental, and spiritual renewal. The Israelites drifted away from God when they defiled the Sabbath. The day our Creator set aside for spiritual, physical, and mental renewal became a day of exhausting toil. The day of liberation from bondage of buying and selling, working and earning deteriorated into a business-as-usual day.”<sup>31</sup> As a result many people negate the sacredness of Sabbath because they feel contented in their hearts. God instituted 24 hours of observing the seventh-day Sabbath with man not engaging in any secular activities that would tamper with the holy hours. Scripture gives full evidences that show the sanctity of the Sabbath between the OT and the NT. “Our observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is an expression of our belief that Christ created the world. And it is a sign of our love, loyalty, and devotion to Him as our Maker and King ... the lord of the Sabbath so loved us that He became man and sacrificed His life to save us from sin’s ruin, makes His Sabbath all more precious.”<sup>32</sup>

The next section deals with understanding the Sabbath Commandment (fourth commandment).

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<sup>31</sup>Finley, *Remember The Sabbath Day*, 100.

<sup>32</sup>A Representative Group of Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors, *Questions on Doctrines*, 136.

## Sabbath, a Day of Rest

Three books that contain three different expressions of the Sabbath observance are worth mentioning here: Exodus and Leviticus, and Isaiah's versions of the Sabbath commandment ("remember," "observe," and "refrain"). Moreover, Scripture expresses it as follows: "Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy" (Exod 20:8). This is very important to notice that, the Sabbath commandment is the only one that bids human race "remember," for God knows we will forget. "The word sanctify in Exodus 20:8, where we're enjoined to 'remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it,' is the Hebrew word *l<sup>e</sup>-qādēshō* which is the same word the Talmud uses to speak of hallowing or betrothing a woman to a man."<sup>33</sup> So far, the Sabbath is a covenant between man and God.

But the second case is in reference to the Ten Commandments, God definitely calls for His people to "observe" the Sabbath (Lev 23:3). To observe, conveys the concepts of farsighted, guaranteeing, looking into, and to contemplate rigorously. Specifically, to observe the Sabbath has the meaning; keep it holy by insuring its truthfulness, its entirety. That is why Ochs defines the Sabbath observance as follows: "we know for sure that scripture commands observance of *šabbāi* and that observance entails 'doing no manner of work.' But precisely what is included in 'work' and what not, and when, and in what circumstances?"<sup>34</sup>

It is worthy to note what this author says, Robert Goldenberg's words, "the rabbis enumerated 39 categories of work which can be divided, "into four broad

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<sup>33</sup>Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), 44.

<sup>34</sup>Peter Ochs, "Nonviolence and Shabbat," *The Conrad Grebel Review*, Fall 2011, 100.

groups: preparing *food* (the first eleven) making *clothing* (the next eleven) producing parchment for *writing* (the next eleven), and constructing *shelter* (the last six).”<sup>35</sup> In a considerate sense, the limitations should not be seen as constraints, but for anyone who keeps the *šabbāt*, these limitations assured a kind of freedom; the Sabbath thus, re-sanctifies the creation, not to be destroyed entirely by misuse of human beings (John 11:9-10).

On the contrary, in the Jewish liturgy, the presentation of Psalms (The *Kabbalat Shabbat* psalms),<sup>36</sup> was a special service created by the Kabbalists, similar to the Friday vespers practiced in many Adventists organizations, served as a kind of prelude to the Friday night worship service which reminded people on the role of the Sabbath. At the same time this helped people to maintain the sacredness of Sabbath. These poetical songs give special focus on creation. The earth, sky, and all who dwell in them are dynamic and vibrant participants in the life of God's world. Throughout this service, the Jews sing, praise, and quiver to honour the One who made them. In these psalms, creation and Creator are close. They lucked to do frequently during the holy hours. And at the same time, there are those who blame the Seventh-day Adventist Church for sticking to the creation Sabbath. Douty said that “Adventists hold that God created the world in six days and then rested on the day following; that is He made the world from Sunday to Friday and then rested on Saturday. ... Adam

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<sup>35</sup>Robert Goldenberg, "The Place of the Sabbath in Rabbinic Judaism," in *A Shabbat Reader: Universe of Cosmic Joy*, ed. Dov Peretz Elkins (NY: UAHC Press, 1998), 12-26.

<sup>36</sup>The Kabbalists strung together six psalms to set just the right atmosphere for Shabbat. The psalms they used were 95-99 and 29.

who was created on Friday was to rest in accordance with the divine actions recorded in Gen. 2:3.”<sup>37</sup>

The death of Jesus Christ was part of affirmation of the Sabbath when He rested in the grave on the seventh day. Many who call themselves Christians do not understand that Jesus by resting in the grave on Sabbath He was sanctifying it as well. In understanding of the word "rest" is used in Hebrew 3 and 4 and it carries three distinct senses. Entry into the Promised Land is an important theme throughout the OT history. It is a portrait—a tangible example—of the idea of rest. A second connotation of "rest" is seen in the application of the term to God's own rest on completion of Creation. For each of the first six days, the text speaks of "evening and morning." The beginning and the end were clearly marked off. But the seventh day has no such demarcation as evening and morning instead God said celebrate the Sabbath evening to evening (Lev 23:32). This denotes the fact that the Sabbath rest is eternal. Strikingly, it is His rest (Heb 4:5) that believers are invited to enter.<sup>38</sup> Finally, the analysis of the early generation that failed to experience the divine rest is a specific application to the believer's experience. "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9). The Bible teaches that humankind is to rest from work, just as God did from His (Heb 4:10). In Hebrews three references and analysis of the early generation that failed to experience the promised rest, contributed to the critical

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<sup>37</sup>Norman F. Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1962), 80.

<sup>38</sup>Two OT texts are combined in the explanation of the Sabbath in Hebrews 4: Gen 2:3 and Psalm 95:11. "God rested on the seventh day from all His works" (Heb 4:3; Gen 2:2-3). By the latter (Psalm 95:11), he explains that the scope of this divine rest includes the blessings of salvation to be found by entering personally.

problem involved their attitude toward God. Moreover Paul in Hebrews talks about the Sabbath of rest. This is the thought with which the chapter begins (Heb 4:1).

Even though a later, obedient generation did enter the Promised Land, that entry did not completely fulfill the promise of a "rest" for God's people. In fact, much later, in the time of David, the promise and the warning were repeated: "Today, if you hear His voice" (Heb 4:7). If God's full blessings for His people had been granted when Joshua led Israel into Palestine, then the promise of a rest would not have been repeated much later to the people of David's day, or by the writer of Hebrews to Christians then and now.<sup>39</sup>

This people heard what God said. But they hardened their hearts, and would not respond. Unwilling to trust God, they were unable to obey (Rom 1:19-21). He had finished the work he came to do here on earth. The Sabbath brings the spiritual rest as well.

### **Spiritual Rest.**

Rest is one attribute when it comes to the sanctity of the Sabbath. When God rested on the seventh day it was not a sign that He was tired but He set a precedent that human beings should follow. Dawn says, "Although physical rest is the first dimension that readily comes to mind when we think of Sabbath rest, we cannot begin immediately with that aspect because it is really impossible to rest our bodies thoroughly if our spirits are ill at ease."<sup>40</sup> This shows that when God gave the Sabbath He wanted His

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<sup>39</sup>Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary*, Complete Published Teacher's Commentary [CD ROM] (Canada: Victor Books, a Division of Scripture Press Publications, 1987), comments on Hebrews 4:1-11.

<sup>40</sup>Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 55.

creatures to have time to regain what was lost through sin. The closeness of the creatures with the Maker on the Sabbath brings in new dimension in life. The way God made us shows that there is need to rest. “Spiritual rest which God especially intends in this commandment (the new command to keep the Sabbath holy) is that we not only cease from our labour and trade but much more—that we let God alone work in us and that in all our powers we do nothing of our own.”<sup>41</sup> On the seventh day God “rested and was refreshed” (Exod 31:17), yet not rest because He needed it (Isa 40:28). The verb “rested,” “*shabath*,” means literally “to cease” from labor or activity (cf. Gen 8:22). “God’s rest was the result of neither exhaustion nor fatigue, but a cessation from previous occupation.”<sup>42</sup> This is where many Christians err, when God talks of rest, it does not mean that God got tired and that He rested to renew His strength. It was just a change of activities as God but the human beings that rest is needed not only physical but emotionally and mentally rest. Lee says,

God requires us to follow His example, in that He rested from all His work on the Sabbath. In so doing, we express our complete faith and trust in our Creator. God is pleased with such a perfect faith, and will reward the faithful with eternal life and happiness in the heavenly home. Yet many Christians today seem not to understand, nor are they willing to follow the example of God. For the sake of worldly needs, they are still labouring on Sabbath. They keep saying ‘I love Jesus,’ ‘I trust God.’ ‘I obey the Lord,’ but where is the work of faith that should match these sentiments? Here we have a divine appeal and a rebuke no less, saying, ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. But you would not (Isa 30:15).’<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, in Isaiah 58, the ‘refrain’ is introduced in respect to the Sabbath compliance. “If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own

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<sup>41</sup>Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 56.

<sup>42</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 282.

<sup>43</sup>Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption*, 185.



interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you shall honour Him, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs” (Isa 58:13 NRSV). NRSV titles “False and True Worship.” And this is explained by the prophet Isaiah. “The Lord tells the people that their spiritual disciplines are not true spiritual disciplines, but are rather self-centred practices that strike the pose of worship”<sup>44</sup> The prophet’s passage begins with the word “refrain.” In Latin, this word comes from one meaning to stop a horse with a bridle. Perfect for believers in God, the researcher thought that, for Sabbath can feel like a bridle in the context of our galloping lives. Stopping is just about the most counter ‘ cultural action believers can take. The Hebrew word *šabbāt* means “Quit ... Stop ... Take a break.”<sup>45</sup>

In Genesis 2, God stopped. “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy” (Gen 2:2-3). (This is the first use of the word “holy”— *qādōsh*— in Jewish Scriptures). Like God, there is a need for humankind to stop from their personal duties, and have a rest. In conclusion, the prayer and recitation of psalms, the fundamental meaning of *šabbāt* in Genesis 2, the use of the terms “remember,” “observe,” and “refrain” as used in relation to the Sabbath commandment, to have time to meditate upon the Creator.

To summarize, there are four main points being addressed in the Sabbath Commandments: the Sabbath was put in place by God in order to: 1) Preserve faith in Yahweh. The Sabbath day is not just a day to be spent in the house. It involves taking

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<sup>44</sup>Phillips Bible.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

time to seek God's guidance, and an appreciation for the created world. It is therefore sensible for one to cease from work each week, and pause to remember that Yahweh created everything that is in the world. 2) Guard an individual's life. Elohim the Creator knows the physical limits of humankind: if not forbidden then, man and woman would labour unceasingly and so shorten human life. Yahweh knew that human beings are not machineries. Elohim therefore prearranged that man and woman should work six days but rest on the seventh day. Thus the establishment would give time for the body to be reinvigorated and the mind comfortable. 3) Preserve lives of the labourers or employees because on Sabbath, the son, the daughter, the manservant, and the maidservant, even the strangers would worship God. 4) Let the animals rest on the Sabbath day. God, who is Omniscient (All-knowing), did not want the animals to continue working by being given to other people to use while owners kept the day of rest, and because of this God became specific by pointing out that the animals need time to rest during the Sabbath. This rest gave time for physical healing, for the animals. As the fourth commandment mentions the physical rest there was a need to find out more about this rest.

### **Physical Rest**

The body needs rest just as there is spiritual rest. The work that is done for six days the body gets tired so it needs to rest. Dawn says, "An important warning immediately comes to mind as we pursue the subject of physical rest. It seems to me that our culture's obsession with audio and visual media has decreased the possibility of true physical rest. Our bodies are not able to rest when our senses are assaulted by advertisements and our sensibilities are bombarded with immoralities."<sup>46</sup> Dawn is

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<sup>46</sup>Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 69.

saying that human bodies were meant to rest so that they can have time to do maintenance. The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* says, “The secret institution of Sabbath is a token of God’s love to humanity. It is a memorial of God’s power in the original creation and also a sign of power to create and sanctify the life (Ezek 20:12), and its observance is an evidence of our loyalty to Him.”<sup>47</sup> Physical rest cannot be over-emphasized in today’s world. This rest brings back new strength physically and clear mind as pointed out by Bacchiocchi, “The believer who on the Sabbath lays aside his secular concerns, turning off his receiver to the many distracting voices in order to tune in and listen to the voice of God, experiences in a real sense the spiritual presence of Christ ... the nearness of Christ’s presence experienced on the Sabbath fills the soul with joy, peace and rest.”<sup>48</sup> The other rest that human beings need is the emotional and intellectual rest as well as social. God created us with emotions for a reason and when it comes to Sabbath rest these senses of emotion, intellectual wellbeing, and social need rest too.

### **Emotional, Intellectual and Social Rest**

The Sabbath is very amazing because of what happens to our bodies when we rest on this day. The body gains new strength when properly rested on Sabbath day. The way God created the human bodies is beyond human understanding and He made them that there must be a break of one day to let them rest so that they regain new strength. Dawn says, “All these gifts offer Elijah space and tools for emotional

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<sup>47</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 163.

<sup>48</sup>Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, 220

healing. The Sabbath is a day set a part for deepening our relationship with God, and that necessarily leads to emotional healing.”<sup>49</sup>

Sabbath helps humanity to grow intellectually. By spending enough time reading the word of life during Sabbath hours, the lives of those individuals change in a better way. Dawn continues to say, “In the silence of our Sabbath observation the minds can rest, and that often leads to the freedom to learn anew how best to use the minds for the glory of God. To cease labouring and resting the brains dispels the frenzied fear that drives the minds when others fall prey to the world’s expectations for accomplishment. ... The intellectual rest gives the courage to give up any senseless thinking or intellectual pride that might thwart God’s purposes.”<sup>50</sup>

God made the social beings and that is why there is need for social rest. Dawn says, “On the interpersonal level, keeping the Sabbath is a good way to be held accountable to God for the relationships. He said that he can’t enjoy a day set apart for fellowship with him if his relationships with others whom he has also created are out of whack.”<sup>51</sup> Those who are open to fellow believers find it enjoyable to go and meet those friends on Sabbath. God created human beings with that vacuum which can be filled socially when there are interactions with fellow beings and the Creator Himself.

Is it true that some Christians assume that Christ commanded the church to abandon the Sabbath and adopt another day of worship? How could it be possible that of all the Ten Commandments, Jesus chose the Sabbath Commandment as the only one to be eradicated but accepted the nine others to be kept to honor God? On the contrary, if there is no biblical support for the Sunday worship, should Christians

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<sup>49</sup>Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 74.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 93.

continue dishonouring God by continued-breaking of the fourth commandment—Sabbath? The evidences stated below enlighten Bible believers to comprehend the biblical-theological convictions.

It therefore means that the theoretical rejection of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday must have originated with the discontinuity of the above concepts, if it is to be a theologically correct point of view.

Saunders said, it is easy to note that there is “a distinguishing mark on one who regularly keeps the Sabbath.”<sup>52</sup> Besides, Saunders in his argument pointed out the blessings that come when one is a faithful Sabbath keeper. Such kind of people who remain loyal to God by doing what God demands will always experience peace of mind and spiritual growth in their lives. He continues saying that those who keep the sacredness of the Sabbath “get the rest of the body and of mind and get the blessings of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>53</sup> According to the argument of the writer those who stick to the Bible Sabbath that is the creation week will get all the blessings that fall on the seventh day.

Sometimes believers make a mistake by thinking that salvation is in the Sabbath as if the commandment says so. There is no salvation by keeping the law or the Sabbath. Lee said, “Keeping the Sabbath, as well as the rest of the commandments, is by no means a prerequisite for us to be saved, for we are saved by grace through faith. ... However, having been saved in Christ, we Christians are required to keep the

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<sup>52</sup>Herbert E. Saunders, *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-creation*, (Plainfield, NJ: Judson Press, 1970), 16.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 16.

Sabbath as an expression of our faith, love, loyalty, obedience and sense of belonging to the Lord.”<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, the apostles affirmed in the Scripture records that there were mass conversions of thousands of Jews soon after Jesus had ascended to heaven (Acts 5:14; 9:42; 12:24; 13:43; 14:1; 17:10). Furthermore, they were Jews obviously who were converted by thousands as they accepted Christ Jesus of Nazareth through whom they saw the fulfilment of their Messianic expectations. Throughout the early church’s time, the apostles took time to reason with those who were not conversant with Christian teachings (Acts 17:1-2; 16, 17).

All what Christ did in life and teachings were an affirmation, as well as a continuation, and a fulfilment of the OT theological insights for they all pointed to Him. When addressing the rich young ruler, Christ underlined the fact that “he was to keep the commandments” (Matt 19:16-19). It is obvious that Jesus included the Sabbath as part of the Ten Commandments. Christ never contradicted Himself when it came to the keeping of the Commandments. They were the Jews who could not follow Christ’s arguments when it came to dealing with the law.

Furthermore, they recognized the moral aspect of the law, including the principle of observing the Sabbath as part of their requirement to God (Acts 2:41; 4:4). This brings the researcher to the importance of the Sabbath worship.

### **Sabbath and Worship**

The climax of the Sabbath to the children of God was and is the worship time. Worship would be done in many forms; singing, giving, preaching, and many more. Richard said, “In addition to attending synagogue services on Shabbat, people get

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<sup>54</sup>Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption*, 327.

involved in other activities to bring a special dimension to this festive day. Most activities revolved around praying, reading, and studying. Naturally, the congregation performs a public reading of the Torah during Saturday morning services.”<sup>55</sup>

The Jews enjoyed the Sabbath hours because there were many activities from Friday evening to late Sabbath afternoon. Since meals are prepared on Friday the Jews have enough time to worship and praise their God. When Christ ascended to heaven the tradition of how the Sabbath was observed continued. It was believed that all along Jews and Christians were worshipping on the same day Saturday the seventh day of the week; changes started when Christ resurrected from the grave.

In fact, the Jews and Christians were not sharing the same synagogues for worship services on a Sabbath day. It is well-known that the Sabbath hours belong to God and these hours are to be used for Him alone. “Let us gather in the family circle at sun set and welcome the Sabbath with prayer and song, and let us close the day with prayer and expressions of gratitude for His wondrous love. The Sabbath is a special day for worship in our homes and churches, a day of joy to ourselves and our children, a day in which we can learn more of God through the Bible and great lesson book of nature.”<sup>56</sup>

Worship has always been the order of how those who respect their Creator and more also the activities of the Sabbath. There are also false ways of worshipping God, which are not acceptable on His day of rest. In Genesis 35:2, God summons His people to “put away the foreign gods,” which happened in the first book of the Bible

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<sup>55</sup>Richard D. Bank, *101 Things Everyone should Know about Judaism*, (Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2005), 118,119.

<sup>56</sup> General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 138, 139.

as a form of prohibiting true worship. Bacchiocchi says, in Revelation 14:6, 7 the Bible talks about fear and worshipping God. “The mission of the church at this time, as portrayed effectively by the three apocalyptic angels, is to promote the *true worship* of ‘him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water’ (Rev 14:6). The Sabbath is a most effective vehicle through which the church can promote the restoration of true worship.”<sup>57</sup> In many churches, the spirit of worship is not there because members of many of those churches are not told the true worship of the Sabbath. When people worship God in the acceptable way they get the blessings of the Sabbath.

### **Worship on Sabbath during the Time of the Apostles**

Before the out pouring of the Holy Spirit the apostles were not ready to worship and preach the word of God. It was after the Holy Spirit had been manifested in the lives of the disciples and even when Paul was converted that they worshiped God without fear. The Gospels point out that Jesus started His public ministry in the Jewish synagogues. The first followers of Christ were called Christians at Antioch, Acts 11:26 and the apostles continued meeting on Sabbath for worship. Many churches were found to grow because the apostles were mostly gathering for worship on Sabbath and this was common in the book of Acts 13:13-52; 17:1-9’ 18:1-4; 24:14; 28:17. Paul kept the Sabbath and remembered to worship on this day of rest.

Many of Paul’s missionary journeys in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth he worshipped with the saints on Sabbath. Specht says, “On his third journey, Paul again visited Ephesus, and for three months he entered the synagogue and spoke boldly,

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<sup>57</sup>Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, 183.



arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).<sup>58</sup> The scripture says that many of Paul’s visits were on Sabbath.

### **The Blessings of the Sabbath**

God intended that the Sabbath should be a blessing to His children. Lee says, “God handed down this commandment so that His children could rest from all their work on Sabbath, and so they could come before God to worship Him and receive His teachings, instructions, strength and blessings.”<sup>59</sup> The blessings of the Sabbath day cannot be compared to any other day. It is better to obey than to refute.

In summary, the only day that John the writer of Revelation knew as the “Lord’s Day” by the end of first century when he wrote the book of Revelation is the Sabbath. This is the only day of which Christ proclaims Himself to be “*Lord-kurios*.” “For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:8). Finally, the immediate context that precedes and follows Revelations 1:10 contains unmistakable references to the eschatological day of the Lord. Thus, this suggests the possibility that the “Lord’s Day” on which John was transported in vision was a Sabbath day in which he saw the great day of Christ’s Coming.

It therefore means that Sabbath-keeping should be viewed not as a Mosaic institution given exclusively to the Jews, but as a creation ordinance given to humankind. Moral laws have to do with the right conduct of man, while ceremonial laws have to do with the symbolic acts of worship. The moral laws, as contained in the OT and NT, have not changed and cannot change, however, the ceremonial rites do

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<sup>58</sup>Specht, “The Sabbath in the New testament,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth Strand, 109.

<sup>59</sup>Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption*, 245.

change. The covenantal requirements of the Sabbath and the Jubilee as both cultic and social institutions provided laws of economic behavior based on historical and religious experience. The practices of the Sabbath were not mere legal stipulations. They were grounded in the collective history and faith of the Hebrew people.<sup>60</sup>

From God's point of view, the Sabbath is so important that it occupies a hallowed place in humankind's moral system as the Ten Commandments were. Before delving into the moral or ceremonial nature of the Sabbath commandment, the study will provide foundational points to confirm the permanency of the Sabbath.

### **The Sabbath and Spirituality**

There is a connection between the Sabbath and the spiritual life of the observer towards the Creator. "The law of the LORD is perfect converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise simple." (Ps 19:7) Since the Sabbath is part of the Law of God it influences spirituality if kept as God says. Take time to meditate upon the nature of God and His word. Ellen said, "In their endeavor to make themselves (Jews) holy, they were trying to bring clean thing out of an unclean. The law of God is holy as He is holy, as perfect as He is perfect. It presents to men the righteousness of God."<sup>61</sup> There are many people who are miserable and yet they assume that they are doing the right way of worshipping God and being spiritual. This is what Ellen White was addressing that holiness in oneself is not possible. Raoul said, "To keep the Lord's day holy is also to gather together to hear

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<sup>60</sup>Christopher Spotts, "The Possibilities of the Hebrew Sabbath for Black Theology," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 33, 2 (2013): 41-56.

<sup>61</sup>Ellen White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Ontario, Canada: Pacific, 1956), 54.

and study God's Word, to confess and to share the Christian faith, to offer prayer and praise to God."<sup>62</sup>

### **The Sabbath and Redemption**

This section deals much with the eschatological time of the Sabbath. As the Israelites were meeting every Sabbath it was a regular event that they were always looking forward to as a joyous time. At the same time Sabbath was a redemptive component to them. Deuteronomy 5:12-15 says

Observe the Sabbath day keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you, six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you do any work, neither you, nor your son or your daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

This Sabbath Commandment in the book of Deuteronomy is slightly different from Exodus 20:8-11 because it does not start with the word "remember" but it says "observe" and ends reminding the Israelites that they were "slaves in Egypt."<sup>63</sup>

Andreasen said that "the Old Testament Sabbath Laws have a finality and urgency.

When Isaiah prophesied about the work of the Messiah and predicted what God would do to Him it was more to do with redemption work He would do. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of prisons to those who are bound; And the

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<sup>62</sup>Raoul Dederen, "Reflections on a Theology of the Sabbath," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand, 301.

<sup>63</sup>Niels-Erik Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978), 118.

day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn” (Isa 61:1-2). This is the prophecy Jesus read that was fulfilled on the day He went to the temple to worship on Sabbath. It is one of the redemptive acts that pointed to Jesus Christ as a Messiah. Jesus read it as a quotation in the gospel of Luke 4:16-18. Ellen said, “The great plan of redemption results in a fully bringing back the world into God’s favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed to be eternal abode of the obedient.”<sup>64</sup> When the Sabbath is observed in accordance with the Scriptures it brings peace of mind. One is redeemed from the activities of the devil and you have fellowship with the Creator.

Bacchiocchi says, “We have found that the Sabbath has been understood as representing the very goal of human history. ... All week there is only hope of redemption. But when the Sabbath is entering the world, man is touched by a moment of actual redemption; as if for a moment the spirit of the Messiah moved over the face of the earth.”<sup>65</sup> The issue of redemption was so connected with the work of good deeds done on Sabbath. Jesus did a lot of healing on Sabbath day because that was a redemptive work.

In both the OT and NT, there are abundant of blessings associated with Sabbath observance. The Sabbath thus served not only to provide personal rest and liberation from the hardship of work and social injustices, but also to nourish the hope for future Messianic peace, prosperity and redemption. No wonder Prophet Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of the Sabbath blessings: “delight, honor, joy,” (Isa 56:1-7; 58:13-14; 66:20-24).

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<sup>64</sup>White, *The Adventist home*, 539.

<sup>65</sup> Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, 145.

In the book of John, for example, the relationship between the Sabbath and Christ's work of salvation is alluded to in the two Sabbath miracles: the healing of the paralytic (John 5:1-18), and of the blind man (John 9:1-41), both of which testify of Jesus' work of saving humankind. In these cases, Christ extends to His followers the invitation to become links of the same redemptive chain, saving the lost in this generation. The Sabbath is a testing ground of man's relationship with God. "The Sabbath has the character of a test of obedience and faith."<sup>66</sup>

In conclusion, it has been observed from the few studies that the Bible, testimonies from theological scholars, contemporary Adventist theologians, the writings of Ellen G. White, among other literature clearly demonstrate the seventh day Sabbath as the day to be observed in honor of God's creative act of Creation.

### **Summary**

The sanctity of the Sabbath has been discussed in a way that it shows its sacredness. As the memorial of God's creation, the banner of his government, and being the sign of His sovereignty, the Sabbath was instituted in Eden. From that time up to now the Sabbath has remained unchanged. It is believed that it will be unchanged until eternity.

Therefore, in this chapter some authors have proved that the Sabbath should be kept holy as God demanded it. It originated by God and it is permanent just like the other nine Commandments are permanent too. The Sabbath was there in the OT times when Jesus came He kept the same Sabbath. The apostles kept the creation Sabbath including Paul who established many churches in his time as a missionary.

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<sup>66</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2, *The Pentateuch*, 69.

Seventh-day Adventists and other denominations that keep the Bible Sabbath still adhere to the creation Sabbath. They have the confidence that this true Sabbath will be kept in the New Earth that is why they maintain its sanctity. The following chapter dealt with the field work and surveys conducted.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE DESIGN

This chapter is built on biblical foundation of chapters two and three of literature review. It is divided into several sections. These are; ministry context, research design, population and sample, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation of finding and designing of the intervention program. The purpose of this research was to develop a biblical-Sabbath response which will benefit Limbe Adventist Church. As Limbe Adventist Church is growing numerically the majority of the members do not respect the sanctity and observance of Sabbath. They engage in politics, they like secular activities: watching football, some of them go for wedding festivals; other members' children go to school on Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> Some of them had to go for work by compulsory on Sabbath day. They are free to do “secular” (washing, playing and watching games and many more) activities.<sup>2</sup> In addition to these factors that have been mentioned, is the challenge of leadership.

There are some leaders who do not really understand the sanctity of the Sabbath as the Bible stipulates. So it was leadership problem that has contributed to

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<sup>1</sup>Mr J. Kaduya (pseudonym) provided the researcher the above information during the time of survey. He is one of the elders in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. 12<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

<sup>2</sup>The former church pastor in Limbe, Pastor B. Ntchentche (pseudonym), 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

the failure to keeping the sanctity and observance of Sabbath of the seventh day. Another contributing factor; the short term evangelistic campaigns; two weeks and to some converts less than two weeks they are baptized without learning more of the sacredness of Sabbath and its observation.<sup>3</sup> These few reasons and those that were pointed out in theological foundations and in literature review compelled the researcher to do more study on this research. The researcher started by looking at the macro- context of the setting where this study was conducted.

### **Malawi—Land and People**

The macro-context of the dissertation was based on historical, geographical, social areas of Malawi and the economical part as well.

#### **Geography of Malawi**

Malawi is long and narrow land, and about twenty per cent of its total area is made up of Lake Malawi as it was called (Lake Nyasa then). Several rivers flow into Lake Malawi from the west, and the Shire River (a tributary of the Zambezi) drains the lake in the south. Malawi has the boundaries with Zambia in the West, Tanzania North-East and Mozambique East and the whole Southern area and part of the West. Much of the rest of the country is made up of a plateau that averages 2,500 to 4,500 ft (762–1,372 m) in height, but reaches elevations of c.8, 000 ft. (2,440 m) in the north and almost 10,000 ft (3,050 m) in the south.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the capital city Lilongwe and the commercial city of Blantyre, other cities include Mzuzu and Zomba. Almost all of the country's inhabitants are

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Pastor Ntchentche.

<sup>4</sup>Malawi Profile, accessed 2 June 2016, <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopaedia/world/Blantyre.html>.



Bantu-speakers, and about 90% are rural agriculturalists. The Tumbuka, Ngoni, and Tonga (in the north) and the Chewa, Yao, Lomwe, and Nyanja (in the center and south) are the main subgroups. About 80% of the population is Christian (mostly Roman Catholics and Presbyterians), and roughly thirteen per cent is Muslim; others follow traditional beliefs. Chichewa, spoken by about 60% of the people, is the official language; other languages have regional importance.<sup>5</sup>

### **History of Malawi**

Early human inhabitants of what is now Malawi dated from 800–200 B.C. Bantu-speaking peoples migrated there between the 1st and 4th centuries A.D. A large slave trade took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and brought Islam to the region. At the same time, missionaries introduced Christianity. Several major kingdoms were established in the pre-colonial period: the Maravi in 1480 A.D, the Ngonde in 1600 A.D, and the Chikulamayembe in the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

The first European to make extensive explorations in the area was David Livingstone in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1884, Cecil Rhodes's British South African Company received a charter to develop the country. The company came into conflict with the Arab slavers in 1887–1889. Britain annexed what was then called the Nyasaland territory in 1891 and made it a protectorate in 1892. Sir Harry Johnstone, the first high commissioner, used Royal Navy gunboats to wipe out the slavers. In the year 1480, Bantu tribes united several smaller political states to form the Maravi Confederacy which at its height included large parts of present-day Zambia and

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<sup>5</sup>Malawi Profile, accessed 2 June 2016, <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopaedia/world/Blantyre.html>.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Mozambique plus the modern state of Malawi. Dr Hastings Banda (who came from the Central Region) led Malawi from independence in 1963 until he fell ill in 1993.<sup>7</sup>

In seventeenth century Portuguese explorers arrived from the east coast of present-day Mozambique. Around 1790-1860, Slave Trade increased dramatically. In 1850, Scottish missionary David Livingstone's exploration of the region paved the way for missionaries, European adventurers and traders. In 1878, Livingstonia Central African Mission Company from Scotland began to work to develop a river route into Central Africa to enable trade. In 1891, Britain established the Nyasaland and District Protectorate. In 1893, the name was changed to the British Central African Protectorate.

White European settlers were offered land for coffee plantations at very low prices. Tax incentives forced Africans to work on these plantations for several months a year, often in difficult conditions receiving very little or no pay. In 1907, British Central African Protectorate became Nyasaland. Whereby, 1915 Reverend John Chilembwe who was the leader of Providence Industrial Mission (P. I. M.) led a revolt against British rule, killing the white managers.

Nationalists established the Nyasaland African Congress in 1944. Between 1951 and 1953 October, despite strong opposition from the Nyasaland African Congress and white liberal activists, Britain combined Nyasaland [Malawi] with the colonies of Northern and Southern Rhodesia (which are now called Zambia and Zimbabwe) to form a federation, a move protested by black Africans who were with the ultra-conservative white minority rule in South Rhodesia.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice* (Blantyre, Malawi: Assemblies of God Press, 1999), 225.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 226.

In 1958, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, "the black messiah," denounced the federation and returned from the US and the UK, where he had been studying, to lead the Nyasaland African Congress. In 1959, violent clashes between the Nyasaland African Congress supporters and the colonial authorities led to the banning of the organisation. Many leaders, including Banda, were arrested, but Kamuzu Banda and few others were sent to Gwelo prison in Zimbabwe and a state of emergency was declared. Malawi Congress Party was founded as a successor to the Nyasaland African Congress. In 1960, Banda was released from Gwelo prison and attended talks in London with the British government on constitutional reform. 1961—Elections held for a new Legislative Assembly. Banda's Malawi Congress Party won 94% of the vote. In 1963, territory was granted self-government and Banda was appointed prime minister.

### **Presidents of Malawi**

Dr H. Kamuzu Banda ruled Malawi from 1963 to 1994; multiparty came in. President Bakili Muluzi reigned from 1994 to 2004, then came Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika from 2005 to 2011 when he died and Joyce Banda took over from 2011 to 2014. Of all these presidents only two stand out in the history of Malawi; Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda brought the freedom of worship and ordered the government to allow Malawians to work from Monday to Friday. The second one is Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika who accepted that graduations for universities, colleges and other higher learning institutions should be done during the mid-week not Saturdays to allow Seventh-day Adventists worship on Sabbath freely together with the other

denominations that keep Saturday as the day of worship. Said Mr. Kaduya.<sup>9</sup> Despite all these chances many church members do not regard the Sabbath sanctity. This brings out why Blantyre stands out than any other city in the history of Malawi. It is one of the oldest cities in Malawi which has a lot of impact to economic growth of the country. Many missionaries used to pass by the city of Blantyre for its beauty and its good weather for tourists.<sup>10</sup> It is a commercial city populated by multicultural citizens and foreigners.

### **Education**

Blantyre is densely populated politically and has many educated people of different nationalities. This has helped the missionaries who started to come and worked in the city spread the gospel easily. There are many colleges and two university campuses within the city. There are medical schools and several hospitals. Limbe is another location within Blantyre city that is growing fast numerically but many Indians stay and work there. They have opened Islamic centers and schools.

### **Industry**

The city of Blantyre is known because of its commercial activities. There are many banks that are owned by the indigenous people as well as the foreigners. It is a city that Christianity is a big challenge. People work seven days a week no rest.

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<sup>9</sup>Mr Kaduya (pseudonym) followed closely the political changes in Malawi though he is just an English teacher and history as well, he has been able to follow the changes in politics.

<sup>10</sup>History of Malawi, accessed 12 June 2016, [www.infoplease.com/country/profiles/Malawi.html](http://www.infoplease.com/country/profiles/Malawi.html).



Figure 1. The Map of Malawi Showing the Political Districts

### Description of the Micro-Context

The micro context begins with Seventh-day Adventist missionaries who come and opened another hospital in 1939 in the city of Blantyre from Malamulo Makwasa. This is the place that the church started in 1893. When they came to Blantyre they went to Chiwembe in Limbe district (church district).<sup>11</sup> This did not work well

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<sup>11</sup>This information was provided by Mr. J. Kaduya (pseudonym) senior member of Limbe SDA Church. At that time there was no Seventh-day Adventist Church in Blantyre, so the place that was found in Limbe. The first church was established in Chiwembe within Limbe area the same year 1939.

because Makwasa was very far 64km from Blantyre, so they decided to have a clinic which did not require much in terms of man power and facilities in Kabula. The next church to be opened was Soche SDA Church, and then Ndirande and many more churches were established in Blantyre city. A Field was opened to cater for these churches. South Malawi Field is the largest of all the fields in Malawi as mentioned in chapter one.

### **Malawi Union Conference**

The Malawi Union Conference (MUC) is the national administrative structure of the Seventh-day Adventist in Malawi. It administers Central Malawi Conference, South Malawi Field and the North Malawi Field.

### **South Malawi Field**

South Malawi Field is the administrative unit of Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the southern part of Malawi. The larger population of the country is found there and when it comes to church membership SMF has the highest membership of Seventh-day Adventist Church. Blantyre is found in the SMF as well.

### **Limbe Adventist Church**

In 1940s, came a company called Imperial Tobacco Group of Companies (I T G) which acquired a very big land in Limbe. The sole purpose of the company was to buy, sell and process tobacco from local growers. The company apart from buying and selling tobacco provided commendable social amenities like housing for its staff, a primary school for the children and community centres where people met to socialise on week-ends.

It was in vein of provision of social amenities that a church centre and a mosque were provided for the purpose of spiritual gatherings. Among the churches

that met for prayers in the Christian Church were the Roman Catholics, the Anglicans, and the Seventh-day Adventists. In 1980, the Imperial Tobacco Company began winding up its activities and in the process sold its residential area to the Malawi Government who entrusted the administration of the dwelling units into the hands of a Malawi Housing Corporation. At about the same time, the Limbe Catholic Cathedral and St. Martins Anglican Church opened their facilities to the general populace, thus weakening the I T G church centre's congestion and allowing other smaller churches to join in. The churches were Bible Faith Ministries led by Reverend Chikhwaza and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.

The Seventh-day Adventists led by twelve men under the leadership of Mr Mposa met with the challenge which arose as a result of funerals affecting the other churches disrupted Adventist Sabbath prayers. Because of these other churches that wanted to conduct their funeral and wedding services on Sabbath (Saturday) in the church centre made things hard for Adventist members. This did not go well with the Adventists who enjoyed full Sabbath Day worship and so they began looking for a place of their own to build a church. The second challenge was the subscriptions which were paid to the church centre; other churches had mammoth membership as compared to the Adventist Church but they had to give the same amount of rental fee. When this was brought forward to the custodian of the place those other churches did not like it, the only solution was to find a plot where to build a church.

The members chose to have some days of fasting and to write a letter to the Malawi housing Corporation for a plot which did not work. Another letter was written to the Imperial Timbers Company which had plenty land where tree plantations were for the supply of timber for furniture products. The manager who was a white man obliged and gave the Adventist Church a plot for free. It is on this plot where the

Limbe Adventist Church is located. For a long time the church maintained the name Imperial Tobacco Group Adventist Church, but since they had their own plot they decided to change the name to Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church because of its proximity to the Limbe stream. The first camp meeting was held in 1988 on the same plot. Since in Malawi as a whole the majority of Christians are Sunday worshipers; the members of Limbe met with a lot of challenges in establishing the church and even to win souls for Christ. Despite the challenges encountered the membership is increased and opened other branches. Moreover, the members of Limbe are very united and committed to the work of God; they have been able to erect a big church that can accommodate 2,000 members. The church is still under construction because wind blew off the roof while doing some finishing work.

The researcher was transferred to this district which has ten churches from Blantyre Adventist hospital where he served as a chaplain in 2014 January. Then within six months the researcher was transferred to Kabula Adventist Church where he is serving currently. All the transactions were done in Limbe with the members. The next level was to engage the researcher in field research to confirm with what was discussed in previous chapters. The researcher wanted to find out more through the survey that was carried out of the members of the Limbe Adventist Church the challenges of profaning the sanctity of the Sabbath.

### **Applied Research**

Applied research “is conducted when a decision must be made about a specific real-life problem. ... Examples of applied research include an investigation to improve agricultural crop production; or a study on the development and commercialisation of technology with the potential to reduce carbon dioxide



emissions.”<sup>12</sup> The researcher followed this method which has a practical way of dealing with the restoration of the sanctity of Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. This had to do with how members in Limbe were profaning the Sabbath and others being engaged in secular activities. As one of the elders explained to the researcher during the time when the researcher was surveying the district.<sup>13</sup> These qualities can be seen but not tangible. When members go for secular activities such as; attending weddings on Sabbath, buying and selling goods on Sabbath and even sending their children to school on a Sabbath day. However, when people’s lives have changed more converts may come because the majority of the members of Limbe Church profane the Sabbath.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, with the applied research the method used was mixed method which deals with both quantitative and qualitative approach. Some writers call it hybrid method; because of its nature. The approach used accommodates more information which is carried out in this research. Roberts says that the use of a hybrid or mixed approach is workable. She called this blended approach because it helps to overcome the biases inherent in any of the methods.<sup>15</sup>

### **Quantitative and Qualitative Approach**

The researcher’s intention was to establish the options, values, experiences and the perceptions of the respondent, not only that but to see to it that the Holy Spirit

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<sup>12</sup>John Adams, Hafiz T. A. Khan, *Research Methods for Graduate Business and Social Science Students* (Mathura Road, New Delhi: Vivek Mehra Press, 2007), 27.

<sup>13</sup>Mr. Malunga (pseudonym) the first elder Limbe SDA Church 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

<sup>14</sup>Mr J. Kaduya and Mr. Malunga (pseudonyms) 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014. They said these words when the researcher had preached on the topic of sanctity of the Sabbath.

<sup>15</sup>Carol M. Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Company, 2010), 142.

will convict the members of Limbe Church to embrace the sanctity and observance of the Sabbath. Thus, quantitative approach was of much value to study.

This was followed by qualitative approach which is equally important for this study of restoring sanctity and observance of Sabbath in Limbe Church. Then the undertaking of this research sought to gather data on the participating population's experiences, commitment by keeping the Sabbath holy. It engaged the population on the practices of giving honour and glory to God by respecting the holy hours of the Sabbath.

The data collection approach was followed by the survey form which was composed of questionnaires, which were simplified to suit all members that were interviewed. The participating sample was originally to be sampled from twenty individuals. However, two respondents did not respond to the questionnaires.

By the time the sample population was recruited the researcher had been posted in another church district in the month of August 2014. The respondents were identified through voluntary way but then the Church Board took an action to vote for them. Their ages were from fourteen years upwards. The idea was to make sure the accepted age groups were those that are baptized into the church faith of Seventh-day Adventist. Immediately the sample population were selected the researcher trained them how to carry out the process collecting the data while the focus group were responsible to discuss and give their opinion on the matters concerning the research question why Limbe Church mostly profane the Sabbath sanctity.

Following the recommendation of Roberts that ethical consistency was ensured, as she said 'this should include areas such as attention to human rights, data

collection, data analysis and interpretation, respect for the research site, writing and disseminating the research.<sup>16</sup>

### **Rationale for Selection**

The researcher chose this design just because the researcher wanted the holistic picture, a wide-ranging and complete understanding of the singularity of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. The research of this kind can be better undertaken through the research design that has been chosen because of the instruments of collecting data. The base line survey used the open ended questionnaires whose analysis is quantitative. In collecting data, the researcher used the focus group interviews which also needed questionnaire whose analysis was qualitative. These approaches complemented each other by providing results with greater depth and extensiveness. The researcher made sure that the advice is followed about the ethical issues and that they were taken into consideration. The questions that were asked are included in Appendix 1. At this stage in order to further examine the following: Survey, data collection, population, sampling and data analysis in more clear way.

### **Survey**

Doing a survey is one of the methods that are used for gathering data in social research. That means in this context it was used in the early stages of this research and also in chapter five. Krysik and Finn said, “A survey is a systematic way of collecting

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<sup>16</sup>Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey*, 31.

data from a number of respondents. The survey can be used to determine what respondents know, believe, or feel or how they say they behave.”<sup>17</sup>

This study is appropriate because a good number of the church members in Limbe Church do not give the due respect of the sanctity of the Sabbath. Subsequently, about 30%-60% of the members go for secular activities on Sabbath like watching football, going for political rallies and some members sending their children to school on Sabbath. Some could not differentiate between the holy hours of the Sabbath and any other day of the week. Since 80% of the church members are converts from the denominations that keep Sunday as their Sabbath, they do not care much of what the fourth Commandment say in terms of not doing any work on Sabbath except doing good things that would serve souls. This prompted the researcher to undertake this research. This is very important that the validity of this research is ascertained and also to determine the assumption of this research. In fact, by finding out what the respondents knew, believed or felt the intervention that was designed was able to satisfy the needs of the participants and focus of the research. This shows that without the survey the interventions designed could have been uninformed and most probably the respondents’ needs may not have been met. As a result, the semi-structure interview questions and the questionnaires addressed the need of the research.

### **Data Collection**

On the other hand, the way of collecting primary data was based on interviewing and questionnaires. And Gray gives five categories of interviews. These

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<sup>17</sup>Judy L. Krysik and Jerry Finn, *Research for Effective Social Work Practice* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 140.

are structure interviews, non-directive interviews, focused interviews and formal conversational interviews.<sup>18</sup> The research used the three categories of interviews; semi-structured, closed ended questionnaires, and interviews. This was for both individuals as well as focus group interviews. Gray further says that semi-structured interviews provide for the flexibility because the questions are not rigid, and they are non-standardized which lend themselves useful for qualitative analysis. Then he adds by saying that “in semi-structured interviews the interviewer has the opportunity of modifying questions and adding questions as the original questions serve as guides.”<sup>19</sup>

Besides, the focused interviews gave the interviewer more room to help the respondents stay on the track in case the respondents drift off theme. In fact, the three approaches were found to be very appropriate to this research of restoring the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Adventist Church. The other important thing was the nature of the topic dealt with, that needed respondents who are open to say the real problem which members in Limbe Church had that contributed for the failure of observing the Sabbath as God wanted it to be. After all, Gray’s advice was seriously considered in that the issues of internal and external validity was looked into by ensuring that the sample selected allowed for the subjects: to be viewed from all relevant perspectives.<sup>20</sup> The researcher used the restriction that is to say the researcher used the boundary of the research, outside limits of what is studied. Furthermore, the researcher was consistence when it came to dealing with the data collected because the instruments used were also reliable. The questions for the focus group were

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<sup>18</sup>David E. Gray, *Doing Research in the Real World* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009), 371.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 373, 374.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 376.

modified and used standardized instrument. Gray adds that by saying that the other “way to avoid this of systematic error is to standardize not only the interview schedule, but the behavior of the interviewer. This is especially important if interviews are being conducted by more than one person.”<sup>21</sup> The focus group were informed how they would handle the questions given for easy results. If some questions were not clear they were told to ask or leave until it is clarified.

### **Population**

Population “is an identified group of elements (for example, people, products, organizations) of interest to the researcher and pertinent to the information problem.”<sup>22</sup> Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church had a membership of 190 at the time this project started, but it is the sample of twenty participants for easy monitoring the activities. And within the twenty respondents there were eight people as a focus group. These people in the focus group were responsible for dealing with discussions and analysing the data collected. The only drawback was that out of the twenty participants eighteen actively participated in the research journey.

### **Sampling**

In this research two approaches were used these are: the random approach, and the context sampling approach. There were twenty respondents that were selected randomly. In sampling method only those respondents that are committed to the task are chosen. Bryman says “The sampling of areas and the participants is a common

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<sup>21</sup>Gray, *Doing Research in the Real World*, 376.

<sup>22</sup>Joseph F. Hair, Jr., Mary Wolfenbarger, *Essentials of Marketing Research*, (Burr Ridge, IL: Quebecor World Dubuque, 2008), 129.

strategy in ... research.”<sup>23</sup> The wonderful thing with these respondents was that they were committed to their duties and the time that was arranged for them they were there.

The second approach was participants sampling. This was done in purposive sampling because of the nature of the topic the researcher wanted to get enough and deep response from the respondents. The age group was of no segregation all the participants worked together. This purposefully was incorporated to let every participant to feel accommodated. Twenty questionnaires were distributed among the respondents to fill and to bring them after two weeks. Eighteen returned them but two did not submit. The table below shows in detail the different age groups, employment, how long they have been in the church and level of education

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<sup>23</sup>Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 417.

*Table 1. Demographics*

<b>Sample Matrix</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Age in years	14-20	1	1
	21-27	2	2
	28-34	4	4
	35-41	3	2
	42 and above	1	-
Employment	Business	5	4
	Civil service	3	3
	Unemployed	2	1
	Students	1	1
How long have been an Adventist	1-10 years	2	1
	11-20 years	5	4
	21-30 years	2	2
	31-40 years	1	1

Table one presents the samples as indicated above. The total participants were twenty and twenty questionnaires were given to them to fill. Eighteen participants responded; these were persons of different age groups. Among these eighteen participants, eight were selected to form the focus group who worked with the researcher closely. Table shows population sample level of academic achievements.

*Table 2. Level of Education*

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Primary	2	1
Secondary	2	2
Diploma	2	2
Degree	3	2
Doctoral	1	1



The sample in table two as indicated was for the categories of the academics of the participants. This was to assist the researcher know how their level of understanding when it came to answering the questionnaires. So the questionnaires were in two languages local and English. Since the researcher has been an interpreter and a translator before it was not difficult to write everything in English when the data was collected at the end. These two tables served as guides in selecting the respondents. This helped to know how conversant they were when dealing with topic of the sanctity of the Sabbath and to give maximum responses in solving the problem of members profaning the Sabbath.

### **Research Data Presentation**

Data collection procedure, presentation, and the analysis are dealt with in this section. Furthermore, the presentation will follow descriptive statistical method. Thereafter, this will apply to both qualitative individual interviews and quantitative study.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data was collected through surveys using mixed or hybrid methods. These were qualitative and quantitative methods. Even the surveys were both the qualitative and the quantitative methods. The first part of data collection was done through the quantitative data collection. The second part deals with the qualitative data collection.

*Part 1:* The data collection for the survey questionnaire was done among the selected participants in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the time when the questionnaire was to be administered, it was first assessed to make sure it was clear to the respondents before they distributed the rest of the copies to them. They were three members who were also participants in the church two men and one lady.

The procedure was to have purposely selected participants within Limbe Church. They all came to the church and procedures were given them at the same time the questionnaire was given to take home and fill it. Each participant was given one document that had 24 questions printed according to the language he or she was comfortable to fill. The following week they were told to bring it back to church and be given to the focus group. Since these participants promised that they would be very cooperative in the whole process, trust was that they would do as they promised. But on the day the focus group together with the researcher met eighteen respondents had done a faithful work, the other two did not return the questionnaires. Therefore, the eighteen respondents that returned the eighteen questionnaires represented 90% of fully answered questions. The other two respondents who never showed up represented ten per cent of the failed response to the whole study. These questions were made in three categories. The first was dealing with the understanding of the sanctity of the Sabbath. The second was dealing with the effectiveness of being in Bible Class before baptism. The third and last part was dealing with the statements that showed how much they were conversant with the Sabbath keeping and its sacredness. The last part, table five had five points scale. Starting from strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree.

*Part 2:* This area was the qualitative data collection which was also carried out through a survey. Both individual and group interviews and discussions were conducted. Individual interviews were conducted with the eight participants. These were five men and three ladies who made up the focus group. The researcher took notes and recorded the interview with the consent of the interviewee for easy assessment at a later time. The interviews were collected in a form of interpreting what was discussed in the understanding of the researcher. The information was so

relevant to the church so that it was presented after all data was collected and analyzed as it is in chapter five of this research.

The data was collected for both quantitative and qualitative survey methods. Since the researcher was delimited to Limbe Church, the first presentation was quantitative data focusing on the eighteen participants and the second presentation was qualitative data focusing on the eight members of the focus group.

### **Presentation and Description of Findings**

This is the process of finding more from the participants what they shared in the interviews.

#### **Presentation of Quantitative Data**

The membership of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist was 190 in 2014 and the first quarter of 2015. The data, presented in tables with brief description before each table, represented the view of eighteen participants. Data was collected from eighteen respondents who were the sample participants from the entire church of Limbe. The data, represented in tables with brief description of each table, represent the views of the eighteen members. In the first two tables the respondents were answering according to their understanding of the Sabbath. So each question had been arranged in a way of the number answered in percentage. All tables from three to five the respondents were given five point scale. This was in this order: 1=strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (DA) 3=not sure 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA). For the sake of saving space on the tables short forms were used so the tables should fit and the font was reduced to ten instead of twelve. Each table has each own theme. There are four themes even though they are not clearly stated in the literature review dealt with in this chapter. Some of the numbers are converted into percentages. The analysis of the

data comes under the sub-heading called data analysis. As a result, this section briefly presents and describes the data as collected. An introduction is provided to be described before each table.

Table six is the data representing the responses of the respondents on the questionnaire item of eight key questions. These eight sought the perceptions of the eight respondents on the understanding of the rest of the church in line with the sanctity of the Sabbath. This was according to their ability of understanding.

Table three dealt with the understanding of the Sabbath sanctity. This table has the data representing the responses of the respondents on questionnaire items 7, 8, 9, and 10. As mentioned these dealt with the sanctity of the Sabbath. The focus group and the researcher assisted those who seemed to have challenges in understanding the questions that were asked. They were also a way of finding out the commitment of the church members in Limbe when it came to afternoon programs mainly those that were attached to dealing with the Sabbath. One of the questions in particular enquired the understanding of keeping the Sabbath holy as the scripture requires.

*Table 3. Understanding the Sanctity of the Sabbath*

Item	1=SD	2=DA	3=NS	4=A	5=SA
Non-committed Christians break the Sabbath (7)	2	1	-	5	10
Sabbath topics during Bible studies less taught(8)	1	2	1	6	8
Christians don't honour the sanctity of Sabbath? (9)	3	3	2	4	6
There are reasons members break Sabbath (10)	1	4	-	6	7
Frequency	7	10	3	21	31

Table four shows the data representing the responses of the respondents on questionnaire items 11, 12, 13, and 14. These questions sought the understanding of the respondents about the baptismal class experiences. The respondents openly gave their consents with a lot of concerns because of what they experienced when they shared with other members of the group.

*Table 4. Effectiveness of Baptismal Class*

Item	1=SD	2=DA	3=NS	4=A	5=SA
Baptismal class is not very effective (11)	2	1	-	4	11
Elders, pastors not very responsible for Bible class ignore Sabbath lessons(12)	2	2	1	5	8
Pastor preaches/teaches seldom about Sabbath (13)	3	1	2	6	6
Frequency	8	6	4	21	33

Table five shows the data representing the respondents on questionnaire items 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. These questions sought the level of their understanding in different areas of the Sabbath and how to keep it holy. This was to check their ability and how they will deal with such issues of Sabbath and also to prepare them on how they would assist others who would fall short of the same problem of profaning the Sabbath. The frequency column represents the highest problem that contributed to the Sabbath profanity or misunderstanding of it.

*Table 5. The Level of Understanding the Sabbath Keeping*

Item	1=SD	2=DA	3=NS	4=A	5=SA
Parents taking children to school on Sabbath days (14)	1	2	1	7	7
Pastors and elders teach scarcely about Sabbath keeping (15)	2	3	1	2	10
High prices of commodities affect the keeping of the Sabbath holy; many have to work (16)	2	1	1	6	8
The Bible and spirit of Prophecy not quite understood about the sanctity of the Sabbath (17)	2	2	-	5	9
Some SDAs go for political rallies and secular activities on Sabbath (18)	2	1	-	12	3
Those married to non-SDA spouses break the Sabbath easily than the rest (19)	2	2	-	4	10
Limbe Church members do not attend afternoon programs that deal with Sabbath observation (20)	2	1	-	5	10
Limbe Church members profane the Sabbath sanctity as opposed to what the Bible say (21)	1	2	-	6	10
There is not enough taught about the Sabbath holiness (22)	2	1	-	4	11
Many SDAs cook on the Sabbath day (23)	2	2	-	4	10
Do you agree that other members watch sports on Sabbath and other social activities (24)	1	3	-	5	9
Frequency	19	20	3	60	97

### **Qualitative Data Presentation**

The qualitative data are presented based on eight questions reflecting the four themes in this research. The interviews were done and this is the summary of those interviews. The researcher introduced the interviewees individually by starting with a prayer. The leader was appointed and the vice who were to work with the researcher. These were to work as focus group as well as monitors to the questionnaire that were

given to the larger group. The decision was made that all the meetings would be done in the church on Sunday unless otherwise. The eighteen participants were not of this team but the eight that made up the focus group. The interview questions were as follows:

First question was, “What do you know from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the culture of the Seventh-day Adventist members reading about the observance of the Sabbath?” It was clear from the discussion that more members do not read both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books. In the focus group 75% confessed they do not read the Bible frequently and the Spirit of Prophecy. But 25% said they read both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books. Even though many thought that they knew what was expected of them but still they were not doing what was right of respecting the holy hours. They said something has to be done to correct the situation. Two of the group said that they had read Ellen G. White writings about the Sabbath and what the Bible say about the Sabbath. At the end of the discussion it was resolved that there must be a way encouraging members to read the Bible on their own. It was a shame one of the focus group member said that “we have tried to live like other Christians of different denominations by being careless in observing the holiness of the Sabbath.”

The second question was, “Can you explain why members who have food preserving gadgets still cook on Sabbath?” It was a surprise to discover that 87.5% of the focus group discussing the Old Testament of strict Sabbath observation was not necessary. But when they were reminded of Exodus 20:8-11 and Isaiah 58:13, 14; they saw that they were wrong the Sabbath sanctity is still binding. About preparing food on Friday Exodus 16:23-29 said that clearly. Even Ellen G. White mentioned in the same way the Bible puts it in her book she said;

“On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let boots be blacked and the baths taken. It is possible to do this. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.”<sup>24</sup>

“The pastors who came and pastored in the district or just came to preach discouraged the members from preparing their meals on Friday and warm them on Sabbath” lamented one participant. It was discovered that some church leaders threatened those who would continue cooking their meals on Friday even if they had the facilities to keep the food preserved. The focus group quoted Exodus 35:3 where God told the Israelites that fire was prohibited on Sabbath but when the Israelites entered the Promised Land that was lifted. They could not reach an agreement whether food should be cooked on Sabbath or continue what is in the Bible. When the researcher shed more light about the stand of both the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White where she said, “While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather, let the food prepared the day before be heated. And let the meals, though simple, be palatable and attractive.”<sup>25</sup> There were others that wanted to know if there was a comment from the Spirit of Prophecy about kindling fire on Sabbath. The answer was yes in one of the books *Patriarchs and Prophets* it says, “During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fire upon the seventh day had been strictly prohibited. The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth.”<sup>26</sup> As a result of following these comments, the focus group said that they had been misled by the leaders sometimes to

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<sup>24</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:355

<sup>25</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:357.

<sup>26</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 409.



do what they tell them than following the Bible and comments from the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

Question three: Is viewing secular programs on TV and watching games on Sabbath wrong? If yes why?

Because of the background of many members in Limbe Church the focus group said that they had no problem with that. To the church members, church is mostly attended in the morning. Let them relax in the afternoon by socializing with those friends they could not meet during the week. The views of many viewing secular programs while at home after the morning worship they perceived nothing wrong. This discussion kindled a lot of fire because even some focus group members were doing the same on Sabbath. In Isaiah 58:13-14:

If you turn your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on my holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the lord honourable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Moreover, the argument given would not sustain because the issue of Sabbath keeping was not new to the respondents. The members were just giving excuses that were not valid. The other factor that contributed to profaning the Sabbath hours members referred to the period the baptismal class members take in class. Many felt that during the time of baptismal class the main emphasis in about the true Sabbath and when it falls, not how should people keep it holy. Only 37.5 supported those who keep the Sabbath half day not the entire 24 hours.

Question four was, "In what way or ways is God's presence somehow different on Sabbath to you, how can you tell?" The responses were that many of them felt the same whether Sabbath or any other day of the week. They see as God is no longer interested with the affairs of His children on earth.

By the look of things members in Limbe Church are just following what other members who are Sunday keeping churches are doing, they send on Friday evening their children or servants to buy groceries for Sabbath.

In your opinion do you regard those instructions as something bothering?

In response to this question 25% which represent two people said they found out that ten per cent the members in Limbe Church embrace these instructions of Sabbath preparation but 90% do not prepare food for the Sabbath. Even this is what was happening to the children of Israel as recorded in Exodus 16:22-29. Some of the reasons given were that life is difficult in these days money is scarce that not many can afford to buy enough food for Sabbath. It was discovered that there are groups of church members who buy groceries on Sabbath according to the information gathered by the 75% which is six members of the focus group. Though this question is almost very close to question three which was dealing with people that have facilities of preserving food for Sabbath, but they are slightly different. Both questions needed intervention as soon as possible.

Question six was, “Why do you think the Sabbath is not only an OT Institution to be observed but also a NT Institution?”

The 25% which is two people of the group said that the Old Testament Sabbath is the same in the New Testament and it falls on Saturday. They continued to say that when Jesus came He said He did not come to destroy the Law and Prophets but to fulfil the Law (Matt 5:17). While 75% the remaining six said according to their findings there are those who think the Sabbath is sacred in the OT not in the NT. Jesus Christ did a lot of healing on Sabbath and that gave way to the followers to violate it. This question caused lot of discomfort among the focus group some said that when Jesus said “it is finished” He meant that the Sabbath strict keeping was over, they

said. The discussion of this question took the group together with the researcher one and half hours to come to a conclusion.

Question seven was, “What are some of the practices of Jesus in the New Testament that should help to teach faithful Sabbath observance in Limbe Church?”

Jesus did a lot on Sabbath they observed, 25% that is two members of the focus group added by saying He healed on Sabbath, He preached on Sabbath, he set free those under the bondage of sin which was doing good on Sabbath. And six people representing 75% focus group said Jesus was breaking the Sabbath by healing and doing tiresome work on Sabbath. They said that the Pharisees were hard on the Master because it was obvious to them that Jesus was breaking the Sabbath by what He did in terms of healing many other activities.

Question eight was, “In your opinion, do you see that those members who compromise their faith on the Sabbath by engaging in activities that break the Sabbath hours a stumbling block to the faithful members?”

Yes said 87.5% seven members and continued to say in their findings the majority 80% of the church members are affected when they see such things happening and the church takes no action to discipline such members. Then the 12.5% one said it depends with one’s faith in God that you can join in breaking the Sabbath as well. This question needs an intervention so that members will know how sacred the Sabbath is at all given time. The researcher observed that the participants were very interested to learn more about the sanctity of the Sabbath. They also saw the dangers of not keeping the Sabbath holy. This led to the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Analysis of the Quantitative and Qualitative**

The researcher used the mixed method as in research; in this “the investigator collects data, integrates the findings and draws inference using either qualitative quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry.”<sup>27</sup> The researcher followed the same procedure of collecting data first before arriving at a conclusion of the research. As Bryman says, “data are examined to extract core themes that could be distinguished both between and within transcript.”<sup>28</sup> The researcher analyzed the data using quantitative and qualitative data analysis but organized the data in a content analysis

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

In analysis of quantitative data, the researcher used the “mode”<sup>29</sup> in the interquartile to analyse the distribution of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree of each content. The data was analyzed not “nominal, referring to as categorical qualitative or discrete data,”<sup>30</sup> that is no order of rank, colour, religion but “interval” meaning whole range of parametric statistics.<sup>31</sup> The aim was for developing intervention that should address prevalent issue of restoring the sanctity of Sabbath. The data collected was considered from five points; from strongly disagree, to strongly agree. The order of the frequency will give the meaning. In analysing the nominal data will be treated like interval data. As Gray says, nominal data do not have

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<sup>27</sup>Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 18, 19.

<sup>28</sup>A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 13.

<sup>29</sup>Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 290.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 285.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 285.

to be in orderly manner of ranking, but constitute name value.<sup>32</sup> But Pickard goes on to say that when you are using interval you need to put them in the order of the two nominal and ordinal and that it becomes easy to use in arithmetic manipulation. [For example you can use it calculating age, population size, distance between one location and another.<sup>33</sup>

When it came to analysing the data the method used was conversation analysis (CA).<sup>34</sup> The first data to be analyzed is of quantitative which is reliable with the data presentation. It had to start with the issue of understanding the sanctity of Sabbath in four items seven to ten. The analyses were based on the mode and used interquartile range (IQR) of the 5-scale points which was arranged in the order at the highest frequency to the lowest. The mode deals with the frequency of each category and makes “Cumulative Frequency”<sup>35</sup> of those grouped contents or CA. These will be in three columns; strongly disagree and disagree as one, those of strongly agree and agree as another one then the ones not sure together also. This will make the interpretation easier than to go for each item and its percentage. On the same the frequency all the figures under frequency will be shown and the cumulative frequency so that it becomes easy to find the percentage of any highest challenge in the table.

Furthermore, on table six, the mode is 31 and the cumulative is 62, which show that the respondents were agreeing that something has to be done in terms of Limbe Church members not doing very well when it comes to Sabbath observation. Then

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<sup>32</sup>Gray, 451.

<sup>33</sup>Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 285.

<sup>34</sup>David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (London: SAGE, 2011), 210.

<sup>35</sup>Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 290.

those who agreed (the total sum of those who strongly agree, and agree) with the statements on table three gave 52 (72.2%) points, the number that disagree (which is the sum of strongly disagree, and disagree) with the statements about the understanding of the Sabbath gave seventeen (23.6%) points, and the number that were not sure about the understanding of Sabbath keeping gave three (4.2%) points. The conclusion then is that the majority of the respondents need to be educated on how to keep the Sabbath holy.

*Table 6. Analysis of How Members Understand the Sabbath*

Variable names	Frequency	Mode	IQR
Not sure	3	21	52
Disagree	10		
Strongly disagree	7		
Agree	21		
Strongly agree	31		

Table seven is about the effectiveness of baptismal class to members who eventually got baptized in Limbe Church. The respondents who agreed that they did not stay in baptismal class for more than one year were 54 (75%) points, and those who disagreed were fourteen (19.4%) points, and those not sure were four (5.6%). Again this showed that there is a big challenge in Limbe Church that needs to be straightened up. The mode is 21 and the interquartile range is 54, the frequency shows what is going there.

*Table 7. Effectiveness of the Bible Class*

Variable names	Frequency	Mode	IQR
Not sure	4	21	54
Disagree	6		
Strongly disagree	8		
Agree	21		
Strongly agree	54		

Table eight is about the level of understanding of the Sabbath keeping which involved Limbe Church. This is the area that had a lot of challenges with the members, because not many had learnt how to observe the Sabbath holy in that church. The number of points for those who disagreed in keeping the Sabbath 39 (19.6%) points, those who were not sure about the keeping of the Sabbath holy for 24 hours their points were three (1.5%), and those who agreed number of points 157 (78.9%). The mode is 60 and the interquartile is 80. In all the three divisions of the interview the general feeling is that members of Limbe Church have a great need of keeping the Sabbath holy.

*Table 8. The Level of Understanding of the Sabbath Keeping Holy*

Variable names	Frequency	Mode	IQR
Not sure	3	60	80
Disagree	20		
Strongly disagree	19		
Agree	60		
Strongly agree	97		

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The information just analyzed is about the quantitative data analysis. The following description is for qualitative data analysis. The respondents were

interviewed on eight questions apart from some additional materials that were used. Their responses were analyzed below. The focus group responded very well to discussions that the researcher had prepared.

For many of the respondents it was a new and strange to be in group of that nature and freely shared topic that directly affected their spiritual understanding. They were able to demonstrate their knowledge and their openness on such issues.

There were eighteen respondents out of twenty making 90% but the two never showed up and this was ten per cent of the group. But within those eighteen respondents, eight made up the focus group. There were three people who really worked hand-in-hand with researcher. These were the chairman, vice chairman, and the secretary. Actually the respondents felt comfortable when they heard that the research was done for their own good. There were power point presentations and seminars. Sometimes the researcher would present some topics that dealt with Sabbath during preaching hour of the Sabbath. When some questions were presented 75% showed that there is need to correct that situation. The keeping of Sabbath holy was shown that members needed a lot of teaching and study on that area. Others had to confess that they never knew how serious God was when it comes to keeping the Sabbath in the right manner the Bible demands it.

Table nine show the accumulative points and %s that the respondents were able to see that much need to be done to correct the behaviour of Limbe Church in the way they had been observing the Sabbath in the past. The table does not show the number of actual people deciding but the entire points from several items. So in the area of respondents failing to own the holy hours of the Sabbath had 52 (72.2%) points. And respondents disagreed seventeen (23.6%) points. Those who were not sure of the question to be answered three (4.2%) points. The need of members being



dealt well in the baptismal class the respondents agreed that more should be done in that area gave 54 (75%) points. For those who disagreed gave fourteen (19.4%) points. And those not sure what to say gave four (5.6%) points. The third section that was to do with the level members knew about the sanctity of the Sabbath members who agreed that there was need to do something to correct the situation 157 (78.9%) points. Those opposing showed that they were doing the right thing scored 39 (19.6%) points. And those not sure of the issue at hand just scored three (1.5%) points. Sabbath keeping in Limbe is not a small issue it needs more effort and prayers to correct it, hence the researcher showed more interest to assist these members. There are many other areas that the Sabbath keeping need to be tackled.

*Table 9. Concluding Analysis*

Items	Agree		Not sure Points	Disagree		
	Points	%		Points	%	
Challenges of not observing Sabbath well	137	72.2	8	4.2	44	23.6
Baptismal class not effective	142	75	11	5.6	37	19.4
Level of not understanding of the sanctity of the Sabbath	150	78.9	3	1.5	37	19.6

After summarizing both quantitative and qualitative data analysis display that there was need to design an intervention that will help to resolve the problem of profaning the Sabbath. As much as the participants were committed to this research it was shown that the members were behind in their spiritual journey when it came to Sabbath observance.

## **Designing Intervention**

The intervention design/plan was based on the data gathered through quantitative and qualitative methods.

1. The first thing is that the members in Limbe Church are very interested to learn from the Bible and through the Spirit of Prophecy the right way of keeping the Sabbath holy.
2. To prepare materials that deal with leadership in line with the Sabbath keeping
3. To prepare lessons for seminars that deal with the keeping of the Sabbath in Limbe.

The intervention intended to change their worldview of behaving like the Sunday worshipers who do not care much about their day of worship. This will be done through musical programs, Bible quizzes, and many more on Sabbath afternoons.

4. And lastly to conduct Bible studies using power- point presentations. But not neglecting preaching sermons that deal with Sabbath observance.

## **The Overall Goal**

The overall goal for this research was to implement the restoration of the sanctity of Sabbath observance in Limbe by June 2016. Some of the activities that should be done are to prepare a guide that deal with biblical verses that explain the importance of Sabbath and its observation and to evaluate the progress within the church.

## **The Intended Change**

The change imagined was to enlighten the church members in Limbe the importance of the sanctity of the Sabbath which will bring revival and reformation in their lives. However, this required the commitment of the Christians to God and to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

There will be change in the leadership about how they have been looking at Sabbath sanctity. Members will no longer be bothered about issues of cooking on Sabbath and Sabbath programs in the afternoon. The church members will be able to defend the Sabbath hours when forced to profane them.

For this to be achieved the recommendations that are written in chapter two of this research if followed the members will be conversant with the need of observing the Sabbath according to the Commandment. By the end of the period allocated for this dissertation members will have known what is required of being children of God who will maintain the sanctity of the Sabbath.

As a result, what is in the OT and NT in line with the literature review information, there will be no excuse of failing to keep the Sabbath holy. These activities and the back ground information from the two chapters; chapter one and two will play a major role in shaping up chapter five.

### **Limitations**

Since the researcher started the doctoral ministry as a self- sponsored student, there were a lot of challenges that took place. The writing of this dissertation was disturbed many times in many ways. The transfers that were done with short notices affected the implementation of some activities. The researcher lost some valuable books and materials because the transfers were all done during rainy seasons. The death of the only mother in June 2016 and brother in December within a short period of time this affected the researcher very much to an extent that some activities were not done as they were designed.

## **Summary**

The quantitative and qualitative data showed clear the real status of Limbe Church members. The information gathered through these methods mentioned above is very vital to bring change to members of Limbe Church. These members need closer monitoring of their ways when it comes to the keeping actual Sabbath hours.

Lastly, quantitative and qualitative data has helped to reveal more of what is happening in Limbe Church when it comes to keeping of the Sabbath holy. The plans laid in this chapter were further implemented in chapter five where actions were done. In this chapter the layout of the data collection was done. The survey was carried out and instruments were gathered for actual finding out how the Sabbath was kept. This led to chapter five where the actual implementation took place.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION DESIGNED

This chapter responds to the complications that have been compound together in chapter four. It reports the implementation of the intervention that should address the problems. The report includes the final evaluation, the research instrument used and data analysis. Data were collected in chapter four that confirmed the problem statement, which was about the profaning the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. The negligence of observing the Sabbath in the way the Scripture says was the focus of the study, and ways to correct the situation to be followed. Even though there were few members 25.6% who were trying to do the right thing by keeping the Sabbath holy.

These members had very little influence upon other church members because they were doing it in secret. When some of them were approached to explain why they were hiding, the reasons they gave were; 1. They were labelled as legalists or strong conservatims. 2. Others called them as “the holy than thou” kind of people and also un-touchable in the church. To worsen it some pastors threatened them that they would be disciplined from the church books. This chapter outlines the steps that were carried out to resolve the failure to keep the keep the Sabbath holy. This required further research on the issue of restoring the sanctity of the Sabbath. The contextual analysis done in chapter four was the basis of the outlines made in this chapter and steps were carried to solve the problem.

Seminars that focused on how to respect the Sabbath hours and never to engage in social and secular activities were arranged and carried out. The researcher worked with small group in order to implement more activities of the sanctity of the Sabbath. The implementation plan of the seminars were developed and adopted to the challenge of the Sabbath observation. This covered from October 2015 to February 2016. The evaluation followed after the implementation.

Because the researcher was dealing with one church the seminars were made in such a way that they followed different topics but in-line with the Sabbath observance. When a topic was through there was an evaluation at the end. There were three main areas that were tackled because of the time frame for the presentation. Each seminar was allocated one hour, but due to unforeseen circumstances some topics took a longer time than the others nevertheless at the end things moved as planned. The venue was in the church building, and there certain Sundays were set apart that the participants met. The time was scheduled at two to three in the afternoon. There was a register to know who came and who did not come on those appointed days.

The evaluation was scheduled after five months of implementing the concepts learned during the seminar. There were three topics for the whole five months covered. Evaluation of the participants' understanding of materials shared, and expected to receive results after those five months. If there was need to adjust some materials to suit the situation that was considered. Adjustments were made to the content after the evaluation was done.

The objectives for learning were measurable, simple, attainable, realistic, and time bound. In fact, this was purposefully arranged to be helpful during the valuation time. Even the objectives strengthened the content progress. The small group became

so useful during the time of implementation. By the use of the objectives the assurance that the problems in the statement confirmed in chapter four were decided. The researcher decided to have that small group and design a protocol that helped in many ways; collecting data, bringing questions that some members thought to be very confusing to them. The final evaluation data is presented and analyzed in this same chapter. The conclusion is as reflected in chapter four as well, since this started in that chapter.

### **Implementation of the Intervention**

The implementation of the designed intervention was done through seminars, Bible Studies and preaching. The participants of that special small group received questions each was given one hour for interviews on proposed passage dealing with the Sabbath. The focus group became so equipped with enough materials like hand-outs, soft and hard copies of power-point presentations to be used even when the seminar would be closed. Because of the nature of the subject that was dealt with, the seminar took three months meeting twice a month and on Sunday because the researcher had now been transferred to another church district but within the same city of Blantyre. The participants were given questions to answer to see if they were following the discussions. The questions were directly dealing with the sanctity of the Sabbath and why people fail to keep it holy. Why do other people become biased when some people try to think that they are doing what is required when it came to Sabbath keeping. Members liked the implementation because the objectives were able to lead the participants to the right direction of the discussion and conclusion.

## **The General Objectives of the Seminar**

By the end of the seminar participants should be able to understand the sanctity of the Sabbath and be able to defend it when met with controversial people who do not regard the sanctity of the Sabbath. These are people who claim that they make other people bring back the glory of Sabbath by forcing them to do complicated activities like them. In other words they load many rules on others that are not required when it comes to keeping the Sabbath holy. For example, those members said that no lights should be on in the evening of Friday from electricity supply because there are people working there on Sabbath. They should not draw water even if it is within the house on Sabbath, no kindling of fire, or warming of food should not be done on a Sabbath day.<sup>1</sup> These were some of the challenges that contributed to confusing members as to how the Sabbath should be observed.

Another objective was to let those participants go and conduct their own seminars in other churches within Limbe district after the project is closed in June 2016. To help members in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church develop a changed mentality of attending secular activities on Sabbath. And also to help them see the need of preparing for the Sabbath in advance by doing other activities like making clothes, cooking, and cleaning home during the week on Friday and not on the Sabbath day. To help Limbe Church members see the other side of the Sabbath keeping with the blessings that are given.

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<sup>1</sup>Light bearer people led by Mr. Joseph Phiri (pseudonym), is a group of people have confused members in churches in south Malawi Field Seventh-day Adventist Churches that include Limbe Adventist Church. They said that their work is to bring back the lost glory of the Sabbath and they also teach people privately that Christians should not eat meat but be total vegetarians. Then they threaten members that those who eat meat will never go to heaven and they base their argument from the writings of Ellen G. White quoted out of context.



## **The Sabbath and the Church**

The name Seventh-day Adventist has two sides; the first one is that the church believes in the seventh day of worship which is Saturday according to the Bible Genesis 2:1-3. God created the world in six days and on the seventh day He rested. When one reads the Ten Commandments, the fourth deals with the day of rest; the Sabbath in Exodus 20: 8-11. When this Sabbath is not kept holy as the Scripture requires it to be, then the church loses her dignity and becomes like any other secular organization in the world. So to keep this day holy is imperative to the believer and that pleases God as well Isaiah 58:13, 14. And the word or the term “Adventist” means that the church believes that Jesus who was born and brought up in this world with the mission of saving human kind will come again. As Jesus Himself said in John 14: 1-3 that He is gone to heaven to prepare a place and He will come again to take His people to be with Him in heaven; so the word Adventist means second coming of Jesus. The name Seventh-day Adventist promotes two things, these are; the seventh-day Sabbath and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

In this chapter, the implementation is not about which is the Sabbath day, but rather how the Sabbath should be observed in an attempt to please God and get the blessings promised. It is about guidelines of Sabbath keeping, as such the guiding principles on how the Sabbath should be kept. The Bible has a lot that is said about how the Sabbath should be kept and obeyed as was covered in chapter two and three.

## **The Need of Dealing with the Sabbath Keeping**

The members in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church have the challenge of profaning the Sabbath hours, this started in 1980s up to the time this project started. According to the observation of Mr. Kaduya, “There has always been a minority group of people (25.6% which is 23 members) in the church that was treated

differently because they were preparing meals on Friday and never did anything on Sabbath not even warming their meals on the Sabbath.”<sup>2</sup> The researcher found it necessary to find out more why such a large number (74.4% representing 67 members) do not care to keep the Sabbath holy. The reasons given above showed that there was great need to do the research in Limbe Adventist Church to solve the problem of Sabbath profanity. The topic under discussion is also sensitive to some leaders in the church of Limbe as it is to other church leaders of Seventh-day Adventist in Malawi including some church pastors. The researcher was explaining the concerns of members in Limbe Adventist Church that it was the leadership that failed many members to keep the Sabbath holy apart from some of their own weaknesses. It was discovered that the issue of cooking on Sabbath was discouraged by some church leaders.<sup>3</sup> Even the researcher at one point during the ministerial meeting was threatened that “if we (the leaders themselves) hear that there are some ministers among you forcing church member not to cook on Sabbath we will deal with you or dismiss you from work.”<sup>4</sup> But the researcher went on to implement and conclude the research as planned with the help of God.

### **The Implementation of the Strategies**

This study based the implementation of restoring the sanctity of Sabbath in Limbe Church on four strategic points. By the way, the word strategy, Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble, and Stickland III define it as the set of action and moves an

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<sup>2</sup>Mr J. Kaduya (pseudonym) a member of Limbe Adventist Church, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Mr. Kaduya (pseudonym).

<sup>4</sup>One of the prominent church leaders, the name with- held because he is serving somewhere else, no longer holding the same position and not the same Field.

organization takes to outperform its competitors.”<sup>5</sup> The first strategy to deal with was how to bring the holiness of the Sabbath in Limbe Church. The second objective was for members to take enough time to be in the baptismal class before they are baptized. The third objective was the challenge of leadership that discouraged some committed from preparing for the Sabbath on Friday. And the fourth objective which was also the last one was to raise the level of understanding of keeping and not profaning the Sabbath day. These four objective strategies were developed and carried out during the entire seminar which was divided in five months. These topics were spread throughout the three months on different Sunday afternoons.

The other two months were for presentations done on Sabbath and some of these were Bible study topics which were presented by using power-point. The other Sabbaths were marked for preaching on the topic concerning the Sabbath keeping. The idea behind was to make sure that this research involved many members in Limbe Church because of the nature of the topic.

### **The Restoration of the Sanctity of the Sabbath**

The objectives of this section were, by the end of this session the participants will: have a clear understanding of keeping the Sabbath holy. Secondly, to appreciate keeping the Sabbath as the Bible ordained it to be. Thirdly, share with others the importance of keeping the Sabbath holy. In chapter three it was shown that the Sabbath should be kept holy through different writers, and God showed that the seventh day Sabbath is His day of rest. To demonstrate that God is in control of this day called the Sabbath; there are three main areas that were dealt with in chapter four

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<sup>5</sup>Arthur A. Thompson, Margaret A. Peteraf, John E. Gamble, and A. J. Stickland III, *Crafting and Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage Concepts and Cases*, 20<sup>th</sup> Ed. (NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2016), 3.

after summarizing the questions and grouped the results into three parts: Challenges of not observing the Sabbath according to the Scripture, but with some sub-topics included. Secondly, the importance and the need of extending the time of baptism for baptismal class members. Thirdly, the level of understanding of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Church and how that can be corrected. The origin and the sanctity of the Sabbath were discussed in chapter three, and it was theologically explained in chapter two what God expects of His people. Biblically the Sabbath started at creation time and it was God who ordained it. He sanctified it, blessed it, and rested on it (Gen 2:2, 3). This was discussed in chapters two and in literature review. The first problem that was discovered in chapter four was failure to keep the Sabbath holy, when data was collected 72.2% revealed that members in Limbe Church do not observe the Sabbath in the right way. Therefore, the first seminar was aimed at dealing with the negligence of keeping the Sabbath holy.

### **The Challenges that Contributed to Sabbath Profanity**

The objective of the seminar were: firstly, help the participants see the need of keeping the Sabbath holy, show that God is concerned with the way the Sabbath hours are handled by His children, and be able to accept the biblical sanctity of the Sabbath. Secondly, by the end of those presentations participants should be able to see the difference on how the Sabbath should be kept holy. The section started with a prayer and five minutes devotion, followed by reading some passages from the Bible that showed how the Sabbath should be observed. The first text to be read was Exodus 20:8-11:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heavens and the earth, the sea, and all

that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The text was read aloud to the participants and then they were asked to explain what it meant. The discussion took 45 minutes of the allocated time. Similar text was Genesis 2:1-3, which shade more light to the discussion. Members were asked to explain what they thought the passages were trying to reveal to them. This is where it was shown that many participants went wrong by thinking that the verses were saying what God wanted the Israelites to do at that time not now. The misunderstanding was resolved when Matthew 5:17-19 what Jesus said that He did not come to destroy but to fulfil the law. The debate was based on not doing any work on Sabbath, which involved the workers at home and animals. So passages like Isaiah 58:13, 14 were also read, which said to “turn away ones foot from the Sabbath, from doing your own pleasure on the holy day ... not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord.” God through Isaiah was establishing the His authority over the Sabbath day. Many questions were posed on these texts. Quotations from Ellen G. White were given to support what the Bible said. White said:

On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let boots be blacked and the baths taken. It is possible to do this. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.<sup>6</sup>

Participants were very keen to learn more because they had so many of their questions answered that were confusing to them. The spirit of openness prevailed during the time of discussion. One of the participants asked the issue of not cooking

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<sup>6</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Ottawa, Canada: Pacific Press, 2005), 6:355.

on Sabbath; does it mean that no fire should be kindled on Sabbath?<sup>7</sup> This question was in line with what was said in Exodus 35:3 where God said “You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.” Then what is also written in the same books Exodus 16:23, 29,

Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.’ ... See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”

The answer given to the questions asked was that the issue of not kindling fire was lifted the time the children of Israel entered Canaan. White says, “During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fires upon the seventh day had been strictly prohibited. The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth.”<sup>8</sup> The issue of not cooking on Sabbath White says “While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather let the food prepared the day before be heated.”<sup>9</sup> The participants saw that they were misguided that no need to worry of preparing meals on Friday, they said this is one of the things that made many Christians 72.2% in Limbe to think that they can do anything on Sabbath. This is in terms of buying food, cooking, and fetching firewood on Sabbath. When the time keeper announced that five minutes were left to conclude the lesson, members asked for extra time, the researcher said 30

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<sup>7</sup>Mrs Chrissie Mbewe was very interested to know more about the Sabbath keeping and the challenge of not cooking on this day.

<sup>8</sup>Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 409.

<sup>9</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:357.

minutes be added but if the discussion will not be finished by that given extra time then that would be carried over to the next meeting.

The session was concluded by many good remarks from the participants. Only one sad comment was given by an elderly member who said that they were misled that the Sabbath keeping principles were no longer there. Jesus came to change everything that was done in the Old Testament she said. This was a leadership challenge of misleading the flock. The participants were able to give comments and ask questions in line with what was taught on that day. One of the concerns of the participants was about afternoon programs; attendance was most of the time very poor fifteen members out of every hundred members came back they said. It was shown that the church is mainly comprised of ladies, and the majority 60% of them are married to non-Adventist men. This contributed to having low number of turn up for afternoon programs even if they are not dealing with Sabbath keeping. The participants resolved that they come up with a program of visitations on Sabbath afternoon at least twice a month and do it for a quarter for a start and observe the results. Implementation of the program was initiated; the facilitator was included. It was given a period of four months which was within the time of implementation: November 2015 to February 2016. Some ladies who are married to non-Adventists did not like the idea because they feared that would bring conflicts in their homes.

This ended up by voting; out of eighteen participants twelve (67%) said yes. The focus group which was now acting as the protocol agreed to do that with the assistance of the facilitator. This was to start with immediate effect. After the seminar on that day, the small group remained to plan how they would carry out the visitation program. First the chairperson and the secretary were appointed. The group said the same leaders who handled in collecting data and the questionnaires continue to do

that. When that started there was need of choosing some days to do that. Since many people go for work during the week, some Sabbaths afternoon and some Sundays as well were set aside for that event. Not long when that was being implemented when the fruits started showing. The results were evaluated after the four months.

The second meeting continued with the same topic of profaning the Sabbath hours but discussing the challenges of watching sports and secular activities. The prayer was given, and then the secretary gave the feedback of what was discussed in the first seminar. Books like Nehemiah 13:15-22; Isaiah 58:13, 14 were read and participants started discussing as what were writers trying to say. When the book of Nehemiah was read, the participants shared their understanding of the verses. The question was, why did Nehemiah did that? Some of the facts given were that Nehemiah quoted from the Ten Commandments and the fourth one in particular where work of any kind is forbidden by the Creator. Since the Israelites were in captivity for a long time, they forgot about the sanctity of the Sabbath. They behaved like any other nation that surrounded them. Business was done almost every day by the people and they saw no difference when it came to the day of worship and other days.

One participant posed a question; he wanted to know how people who are using the technology of these days can avoid the breaking of Sabbath. Mainly those who are in high positions if they use their cell phones to communicate about work on Sabbath to their subordinates when they know it is Sabbath. Others wanted to know what you do with people who are watchmen, cooks, and medical people working on Sabbath. At first, there was confusion that went on because seven (39%) participants said there is no way one can keep the Sabbath holy in these days. This was resolved by reading Isaiah 58:13, 14 and Matthew 12:9-13. God told Isaiah that it is a blessing



to do things that pleases Him on Sabbath than doing things that you feel are pleasing to you as a human being not to God. The participants came up with the following answers that God would be pleased with. A. Going to the house of God on Sabbath as David said; “One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the lord, and to inquire in His temple”<sup>10</sup> David saw how good to be in the house of the Lord to just behold His beauty. This was a delight to him, because the devil would have nothing to do with him when he is in the presence of the Lord.

Wirzba says, “Delight is not merely a passive phenomenon. It presupposes the internal personal preparation whereby we put a halt to the controlling, self-serving impulses that would reduce others to our personal satisfaction or fancy. . . . To realize Sabbath’s potential, we need to focus for a moment on delight’s inner meaning and manners.”<sup>11</sup> What Wirzba is saying is that those who take time to do things that please God not human beings will refrain from doing things that would displease Him. Answering the other question Jesus came to make things right by healing on Sabbath. There was nothing wrong to do the right things than to destroy life. “Jesus said; Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”<sup>12</sup>

However, the participants were warned that not all good things are permissible to the Sabbath of God. For example if one is a business man, and it happens you have a grocery where people get their groceries and a fellow Adventist come to buy bread

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<sup>10</sup>*The Holy Bible New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982).

<sup>11</sup>Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press 2006), 52, 53.

<sup>12</sup> NKJV.

on Sabbath morning when he or she had enough time on Friday to do that. There were other duties that were permissible on Sabbath even during the time of the Israelites like; watchmen, priests performing duties in the temple of God on Sabbath people bringing sacrifices on Sabbath and many more. Therefore medical people, watchmen, some cooks, soldiers can perform their duties on Sabbath. But the bottom line is that who have this permission of “working” on Sabbath should regard what they do on this day as charitable duties even though they are paid.

The session ended while the participants were convinced that there is no need for Christians to watch games or watching TV on Sabbath, these things do not please God at all.

### **Leadership Challenge towards the Sanctity of the Sabbath**

This issue of leadership was dealt in line with the sanctity of the Sabbath. The participants were open enough to expose the weaknesses that leaders in Limbe Church were doing. One man during the discussing time about church leadership within Limbe was all about. He said that he was converted from the Roman Catholic Church. It was a joy for him to embrace the truth of the Sabbath after reading the writings of Ellen G. White and the verses in the Bible that are written to instruct members how the Sabbath should be kept. He kept it as said in the Bible not cooking, not having unnecessary trip on Sabbath. He could not wash, or watch games on Sabbath but he was disappointed when one of the elders told him that what he was doing was more of being a slave. These are leaders that are misleading God’s people just as Isaiah had condemned. “His watchmen are blind, They are all ignorant; They are dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber” (Isaiah 56:10). Leadership styles were discussed and it was clearly showed that apart from many other reasons members in Limbe do not keep Sabbath because leadership ranked top.

Some are dictators, autocratic, democratic and others are laissez-faire. Some of the leaders were threatening members with excommunication from the church.

It was interesting to see some of the leaders confessing that they were doing things in ignorance. After attending the Sabbath seminars and the Bible studies they realized that they needed this kind of light. The information that was gathered in theological foundation and the writings of Ellen G. White made Sabbath sanctity of much value. The literature review was considered and what the authors said made the participants to understand more the importance of Sabbath observation. The conclusion of this section was that Jesus was a good leader but He respected the holy Sabbath and maintained its sanctity. Leaders are supposed to be exemplary in their leadership all times and not to compromise the truth.

### **Baptismal Class and Sabbath Keeping**

The objectives of the seminar were to: firstly, help the participants see the need of baptismal class members to stay longer before baptism, make them realise that to change ones worldview of understanding spiritual issues require enough information to be able to replace the wrong beliefs with the spiritual understanding of the Bible, that by the end of the seminar participants should be able to defend themselves about proper keeping of Sabbath.

The seminar started with prayer by one of the participants. The first 27 minutes were for group discussion. The text that was read was from Isaiah 28: 9, 10 (NKJV): “Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.” The question was; what does that mean? At what age should a person be baptized in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? The Bible does not

specify the actual age a believer is supposed to be baptized. But on the other hand it does not encourage infant baptism. The church came up with the age limit that at least twelve years even though other churches within the Seventh-day baptize a child who is ten or eleven years old. Although other members wanted to know why other denominations practice infant baptism like the Roman Catholic, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian and many more? The facilitator who was guiding the discussions gave a short answer, that there no biblical backing on that it was based on wrong assumptions of child dedication which Jesus did by praying for those children who came to Him and laid His hands on them (Matt 19:13, 14). After sharing that then Matthew 28:19-20 was read. The other question was if a person has accepted Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour how long should one be in baptismal class? The facilitator wanted to test their understanding of the scripture. It was interesting to see how enthusiastic the participants were in giving their views on this topic. Quick answers were; as soon as one has joined the church, others said a minimum of three years and maximum of four years.

At first the participants thought that there was no need to keep candidates in baptismal class for a long time. But when the following verses were read, they saw the need. It was discovered that the members who stayed longer in baptismal class were more likely to know more of the biblical truth than those who just stayed for less than six months. The other area that brings many members into the church is evangelism which the participants questioned. Their concerns were that there are many evangelistic campaigns in these days that last for two weeks and ending up with baptism. Even if some of these newly baptized members are enrolled in what others call happiness class for may be three months or six months. Not all attend and not all come to that class regularly so they remain uncooked in the doctrines of the Adventist

Church. One person commented by saying, “many of these problems that are occurring in our churches are the results of wanting to have numbers baptized than converted Christians who can stand on their own when it comes to defending the truth of the Bible.”<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Njoka said, “it is better to baptize two or three people who are very conversant with the Bible teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church than to just let people join the church when they are not ready and matured in understanding the truth.”<sup>14</sup>

On the same topic participants commented that there are also those who come through transfers from other churches to join the congregation of Limbe; they baptize or teach these newly converted members with wrong guidelines of Sabbath observance. Since these converted members are not rooted in truth they accept anything.

Another burning issue concerning keeping members for short time in baptismal class; some participants said that there were other concerns like: church leadership, pastors and elders do not take time to teach the baptismal class members about the Sabbath keeping in many churches including Limbe Adventist Church. Yet when one wants to know the truth they are the ones who are on the forefront hindering the members from doing the right things of obeying God in keeping the Commandments which include the Sabbath. Hosea 4: 6 says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also

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<sup>13</sup> Mr. George Chimayimba (pseudonym) said these words on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>14</sup>Mr Jonathan Njoka (pseudonym) church member who agreed with the other participants of increasing the period of time for baptismal class members.

will forget your children.” This is a powerful text, commented few 40% members. It is high time that when people join the baptismal class should stay in class for one and half years as minimum, but two years is ideal they said as a recommendation.

Before the session closed on that day the participants suggested that at the end of the research program, a recommendation should be made to the higher organization, requesting that the period of members being in baptismal class should be one and half years to two years before being baptized. This will make members to know more about the Sabbath keeping and other doctrinal pillars of the church. This decision was arrived at because of the testimony that Mrs Joyce Changoyima gave. She told the participants that why she has been one of the long serving and committed Christian in Limbe Adventist Church was that she stayed in the baptismal class for three years according to her. The first time she was asked to be baptized was after she had been in that class for one year. But during the time of her class examination, the pastor brought many questions based on the doctrines, which she was not able to answer not even a quarter of those questions. The pastor was very strict that he said she was not ready for baptism. Joyce made a vow that she would not be baptized until she knew all the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This took her three years being at the baptismal class. When she was examined again she did very well and got baptized. In her remarks, she said since that time God has used her to win many souls to Christ. Because when she could be confronted by other members of different denominations and debated on any biblical doctrine she convinced them and her faith has not shaken. Lastly she told the participants that the time she decided to keep the Sabbath according to the Bible she has received a lot of

blessings. One of the many blessings was a stable family and a loving a husband.<sup>15</sup>  
This was to do with the worldview people have.

Hiebert says, “Worldviews are the most encompassing frameworks of thought that relate belief systems to one another. They these belief systems with an aura of certainty this is, in fact, the way reality is. They are the fundamental givens with which people in a community think, not what they think about.”<sup>16</sup> This was clear to many participants because they many Christians do things the way they were used to do and to change that was not easy. So what Joyce said was very true because the longer she stayed on that class her worldview was being changed by the Holy Spirit through reading the Bible.

Hiebert and his colleagues go on to say when they discuss about transforming worldviews, “If we simply work within traditional explanation systems, there is a real danger that the gospel will be transformed into Christo-paganism—animism with a Christian veneer. New Christians often see Christian prayers as magic formulas, Bible verses as amulets, and preachers as magicians more powerful than their old ones. Christianity is perceived as powerful witchcraft and spiritism, but the fear of witchcraft and spirits remains.”<sup>17</sup> In other words Hiebert and the other authors are saying that this has to do with people’s ideas about doing well-being, if they

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<sup>15</sup>Mrs Joyce Changoyima (pseudonym), an active member in Limbe Church and she has served in many positions in the church. Gave the testimony on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw and Tite Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book Company, 1999), 40.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 168.

experience misfortune and evil, which must be transformed by biblical teaching and this, should be combined with their understanding of the nature of God.<sup>18</sup>

This is true to many Christians in Limbe Church; some maintained the way they were praying in their Pentecostal churches. Therefore, to have Christians who will keep the Sabbath holy, they must take enough time to undo the beliefs they had from their past denominations. The session took two hours and it was closed with a prayer.

### **Level of Understanding of the Sanctity of the Sabbath**

The objectives for this seminar were to: shade more light on Sabbath keeping, increase the knowledge of participants about the fourth commandment that dealt with the Sabbath, and be aware that Sabbath is a sign of test of faith from God.

This topic started with prayer, the materials for discussion were distributed to the members. It was very interesting that members kept time and were eager to participate in the discussions. The session took one hour 30 minutes. Some of the sub-topics to share were: why do some Christians watch sports on Sabbath and some secular activities; are there challenges that make some parents take their children to school on Sabbath? What is the best way of observing the Sabbath in these last days? The connection between worship and Sabbath is inseparable. These verses were considered during the session. Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Ezekiel 20: 12, 20; Leviticus 23:32; Luke 4:16; Matthew 12: 11-13; Mark 2:23-28 and Exodus 16: 28-30. The writings of E. G. White were also considered on the same.

Before the session, the participants requested for an extra 30 minutes since it was the last day of meeting as participants in the seminar. They asked from the

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<sup>18</sup>Hiebert, Shaw and Tiéno, *Understanding Folk Religion*, 168.



facilitator to be considerate in going through all the handouts of that day. The book of Deuteronomy was read first the issue of being in bondage in Egypt and that God had set them free. The element of redemption was discovered. Whereas the Sabbath is a special day of God, it is also the time that Christians make their new resolution to their Maker. Lee says, God has made an Everlasting Covenant with us with the Ten Commandments as the stipulation of the Everlasting Covenant (Deut 5: 12-22).”<sup>19</sup>

Sabbath was given to be a sign between God and his people (Ezek 20:12, 20). During the session questions were raised as what are these Sabbaths all about, is God not including Sunday as another day of rest? This caused a hot debate, but the facilitator cooled them by shading more light on the text. God meant that there more weeks in a year (52 weeks) and in each week there is the Sabbath that needs to be observed. Sunday is not a Sabbath and it will never be. This was in connection with forbidding people to do any work or business that does not bring glory to God. That included watching TV and attending any secular games.

Participants were allowed to re-discuss Nehemiah 13: 15-22. It was discovered that what is happening now happened in the past also. When people break the Sabbath they think that they are the only ones but as the participants were discussing the incidents that happened during the time of Nehemiah the very things are happening now. The man of God went on to even close the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath began on Friday. Just as God said to Moses; “It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your Sabbath” (Lev 23:32). In

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<sup>19</sup>Lee, *Sabbath and Redemption*, 117.

other words, God was saying that His Sabbath starts on Friday evening and ends on Saturday evening. That is why Ellen White said:

On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the Commandment.<sup>20</sup>

When this quotation was read the participants felt comfortable and were then able to share openly some experiences of the past history of Limbe Church. One of long stayed member commented by saying, “the challenge of Sabbath preparation has been the controversy between the church leadership and mere Christians. When the light of Sabbath keeping come people are happy to receive it, but when leadership change many changes follow too, said the man.”<sup>21</sup> The facilitator told them that this is why the seminar was conducted to see that change should take place in the church. God is very concerned when the Sabbath is treated lightly by his children. The tendency of some church members who took their children to school on Sabbath day was discussed in depth. The participants shared their concerns about this kind of behaviour that it was affecting others in the church. During the time the issue of improving the status of keeping the Sabbath more concerning issues were pointed out. The other one was about Christians who go for political activities on Sabbath. At first it was shown that Malawi had one party system of government for more than 30 years. This contributed a lot in terms of politics which were having their rallies on Sabbath and

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<sup>20</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:355, 356.

<sup>21</sup>Adams L. Phiri, a senior member of Limbe Church, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

sometimes Sundays. In those days, primary and secondary students were by force told to go and attend those political meetings and rallies.<sup>22</sup> Classes were conducted on Sabbath, that included government examinations were conducted even on Sabbath commented another participant.<sup>23</sup> The facilitator reminded the respondents that the main aim of the research was to find ways from the Scripture and the Spirit of prophecy of how Christians in Limbe Church should keep the Sabbath holy. This was very important because sometimes the participants would become very emotional and the discussions would almost go off balance. Another good news is that graduation for Government University was scheduled on Wednesday instead of Saturday. In Isaiah 56:2 (NKJ) “Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing evil.” God is ready to bless those who remain faithful to Him and keep the Sabbath holy. Wirzba says, “A Sabbath home is a place where people can learn the art of being faithful to each other before God. It is a place where we can accentuate and nurture the gifts of

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<sup>22</sup> Mr. J. Kaduya (pseudonym) said a lot on this tragic phenomenon, because he said, sometimes politicians would come to the church and demand it to be closed so that people can go and attend those meetings on Sabbath. It even affected civil service workers; they were told to work on Sabbath as well. It was when the leadership of the church took an action to go and meet with the State President to appeal that Seventh-day Christians be exempted from attending political rallies and meetings on Sabbath. This plea was heard and they were exempted, the president who was Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda declared that with immediate effect the citizens of Malawi should be working from Monday to Friday until the further notice. That was in 1971 until now even though Kamuzu died in 1997 but up to now the citizens of Malawi including all organizations and private sectors work from Monday to Friday a week. From that time 1971 the Seventh-day Adventists started to be known and to grow. But the damage was done because the Sunday keeping churches were always looking down upon the SDA Church saying it is a Jewish church because of keeping Saturday as Sabbath.

<sup>23</sup>Mr. Dulanya Moses (pseudonym) who was most of the times very quiet during discussion time.

God given to us and strengthen the memberships that make us whole. ... As we practice Sabbath keeping in our homes, we will invite God's delight to shine among us."<sup>24</sup> The Sabbath rest is best medicine to our bodies. David said, "You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forever" (Ps 16:11 NKJ). Jesus promised rest to those who come to Him. "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28 NKJ). Before the lectures were concluded the participants checked and made sure that all the topics were covered for evaluation to follow. The session ended at a very good note and a closing prayer was offered. The discussions were of spiritual tone and the participants showed their worry that there many church members who do things unaware that God is watching.

### **The Sabbath and Worship**

The facilitator informed the participants for the seminar that the Sabbath observance was imperative to all who chose to become Christians and they are ordered to keep it. It was their time to go and demonstrate to the other church members and the world the significance of keeping it. Signs show that time is short God is looking for dedicated Christians who will stand for the truth eve if the heaven fall men and women who will not fear to call sin by its right name.<sup>25</sup> God wants us to be a light which should shine in the world for others to know who God is (Matt 5:14).

This was discussed in chapter two and three that one of the reasons God created the Sabbath was to allow His children worship with Him. The participants

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<sup>24</sup>Wirzba, 114.

<sup>25</sup>Ellen G. White, *Education* (Ottawa, Canada: Pacific Press, 2005), 57.

realized that one element which is lacking in Limbe Church is true worship on Sabbath day. The Sabbath is the day of spiritual celebration and commitment. God enjoys the fellowship that is there between Him and His children. During the time of questions and answers one member wanted to know if it was permissible that on Sabbath dance since it is a day of celebration. That brought confusion among the participant during the Bible Study on Sabbath afternoon. Thank God that the Holy Spirit controlled the situation; it was said that since God is a God of order not confusion the answer was it should be in the fear of God. When the Bible says “Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth” (Rev 14:7). It means God deserves honour and glory all the time from His creatures. The participants realised that it is important that on Sabbath members should refrain from all other worldly activities and worship God.

### **The Blessedness of Keeping the Sabbath**

The facilitator shared with the seminar attendants the benefits of keeping the holy that the heavenly angels become your visitors in your homes. Sabbath worship was spiritually invigorating for Jesus, and it will refresh us spiritually as well.<sup>26</sup> The Sabbath is too plain to be misunderstood; God says remember the Sabbath to keep it holy (Exod 20:8). Mark Finley says, millions of people find their identity in what they do. Their work defines them. The Sabbath invites us to find our true worth, not in what we do, but in who we are.<sup>27</sup> So the Sabbath is a delight to those who keep it holy. It was a pleasure to see how committed the participants were and the interest they developed during the sessions of the seminar.

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<sup>26</sup>Finley, *When God Said Remember*, 96.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 97.

## **The Implementation Matrix**

The researcher told the participants with the information gathered during the implementation it was the convenient time to summarize some key points in a table called the implementation matrix. During the time of lecturing the secretary was taking minutes. At the same time when there were topics that required the participants to vote or make decision all these were recorded. The matrix was to bring to memory their remembrance what were discussed in major points so that the conclusions are reached positively.

The quantitative data has been tabulated to show the major points of the implementation matrix. Table 10 shows the key areas and it is divided into four columns. On the first column shows the major key areas. The second column shows what were the decisions reached which were also the implementation. Then the third column shows the number of participants and the presence during the entire implementation. Since they were the participants who comprised the seminar attendants except those presentations that were done on Sabbath the number was always big from eighteen to 85 sometimes.

The actual participants were eighteen that worked with the researcher. But during the seminar time there were those who had just heard that a group of people are conducting a seminar for a period of time, they used to come. They were treated as observers not to participate in everything that was going on during the seminar sessions.

*Table 10. The Implementation Matrix*

<b>Content</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Implement</b>
Main topics lectured	Outcome and suggestions	Candidates	Ready to go
Sabbath profanity	Members committed to keep it	18	12
Failing to attend afternoon programs	Started and encouraged others	17	-
Married to non-Adventists challenges	Visitations to their homes	18	14 doing it
Missed blessings of Sabbath	Coming to church faithfully	18	Shared
How to help secular lovers on Sabbath	Volunteers to help how it worked for them	16	
Sabbath and baptismal class problems	Prolong period 1 1/2 – 2 years	18	
People with wrong worldviews	Treated with love God loves all	18	Lessons to be given
Misunderstanding the sanctity-Sabbath	Those enlightened to go-help	18	
To keep the Sabbath 24 hours	Members committed to do that	18	

### **Final Evaluation**

The final evaluation was carried in Limbe Seventh-day Church where the seminars were conducted. The first six months were for the seminar and other presentations as implementations, and the other two to three months were for the evaluation. The participants responded positively during the whole period of implementation. The research started with twenty participants 100% but ended with eighteen participants 90%. The participants remained faithful until the research came to a conclusion. The overall goal was achieved because both parties were convinced that they benefitted a lot from the research carried in their church.

## **Research instruments**

Instrumentations used are not discussed in this section which was used for collecting data for final evaluation for this research. The instruments were described in chapter four thoroughly. So there is no need to discuss that again here in detail. The final evaluation report was based on qualitative survey instrument and used semi-structured questions. Because of language challenge the researcher chose those who could hear and write in vernacular but translated them into English. But the majority were able to speak and write in English. Out of eighteen only four had the challenge of doing everything in English. The researcher used direct observation by being found in all meetings that the Researcher was called to attend. It was very encouraging to the participants participating in the church. The participants' contributions in the running of the research were very welcome. The researcher used narrative analysis data collecting. The final part was evaluation which was inductive in mode. Smith says the indicative mode is a way of moving data information which helped in conclusion or from data to theory.<sup>28</sup>

## **Sample Selection**

Snowball sample was taken from the respondents who participated in the discussions of the documents given. Pickard says, "Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy whereby referrals from earlier participants are used to gather the required number of participants."<sup>29</sup> The implementation was done in one church of Limbe. The focus group that was comprised of eight members were

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<sup>28</sup>Malcolm Smith, *Research Methods in Accounting*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2015), 2-3.

<sup>29</sup>Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 326.



responsible for training. But because of the nature of the topic the other ten volunteered to be coming and participate in the Bible study because they said, they found it profitable to attend. They [ten] agreed that they will be spectators as this qualitative research was being carried out. There were eight questions that were designed to address the three major areas of the topic. The content relevance, content implementation, implementation matrix, impact, on the proper observance of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church for practicality and workability of building close relation with the Creator.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section deals with the data received to be analyzed and this is done by data presentation. Below is the table that gives the final data analysis that showed the final results of the study carried out.

*Table 11. Final Data Analysis*

Questionnaires of Final Evaluation	Yes	No	N=18	%
Did you benefit on this topic and were you enriched—sanctity of the Sabbath	Y	-	18	100
The issue of Sabbath profanity—resolved and understood	Y	-	16	85
Agreed that Bible class be for 1 1/2 to 2 years	Y		14	75
The challenge of leadership to be carried on	Y	-	18	100
Overall consensus of the participants was it worthy to carry out the research?	Y	-	18	100

## Data Presentation

The data presentation normally follows the qualitative approach method known as “narrative inquiry.”<sup>30</sup> This goes on to say that a narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into the experience through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus.”<sup>31</sup> The impression that the researcher created, built a very good relationship with the participants and the data presented in this paper reflects the interactions with the participants, and the researcher’s observations. During the interview time the focus group was very calm and accommodative and showed welcome impressions to the research. The conclusion was drawn from the data that was presented.

The focus group was able to meet for three times in the church on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016, on 28<sup>th</sup> February and on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016. These interviews were marked to last for one and half hours unless otherwise. There were eight questions three per day and the remaining two on the last day. Each question was estimated to take 30 minutes or less. Besides, there were prayers involved and introductions which are normal. That did not make a big difference in terms of contributions of the participants.

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<sup>30</sup>R. Burke Johnson and Larry Christensen, *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2014), 418.

<sup>31</sup>D. J. Clandinin & Huber, J. (in press), “Narrative Inquiry,” in B. MacGaw, *International encyclopaedia of education*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. E. Baker, & P. P. Peterson, (New York, New York: Elsevier, 2010), accessed 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016, <http://www.mofet.macam.ac.il/amitim/iun/collaborativeResearch/Documents/Narrativeinquiry.pdf>.

The first question was, “How much did you understand from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy about the Sabbath observance? The respondents gave a 100% appreciation that the lectures were well organized and they were an eye opener to them. However, others went on to say these materials should be duplicated for other members to read also. They said that they were helped enough to stand and defend the truth of the Sabbath observance they had received. One of the participants said all along he thought that the writings of Ellen White were biased to what the Bible says of the sanctity of the Sabbath. The other issue was how the Sabbath should be kept, and in the book of Patriarchs and Prophets; she cleared the doubt of many that fire can be kindled on Sabbath to warm food prepared on Friday.<sup>32</sup>

The second question was, “Is it worth having means and ways of keeping preserving gadgets for meals to eat on Sabbath when many people cook on Sabbath that you cook on Sabbath also? The respondents 100% said the Bible has not changed in the way of keeping the Sabbath. They said if God gave the Israelites manna in the wilderness in six days and on the seventh day there was nothing He is telling us the same today. White says,

“On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and all the cooking is done. Let boots be blacked and the baths taken. It is possible to do this. The Sabbath is not to be given to repairing of garments, to cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.”<sup>33</sup>

The participants said God was merciful to reveal the true way of keeping the Sabbath to them. One of the participants and he is church elder vowed that from the day he got the true way of keeping the Sabbath holy, he will not disappoint God. The third

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<sup>32</sup>White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, 40.

<sup>33</sup>White, *Testimonies*, 6:355.

question was, “How realistic for those who were used to watching TV and going for secular activities on Sabbath that they are no longer doing that?”

The participants assured the researcher that with the light they have received they do not think of watch that any more. Moreover, 75% of the members came in front that day and said we were doing this, but after learning the sacredness of the Sabbath they will not do that again. Then they said we will discourage those who were doing the same to start to respect the Sabbath.” The book of Isaiah explains this better in Isaiah 58:13, 14. Avoid doing your own will on the Sabbath day.

Question four was, “In what way or ways have you experienced God’s presence during the Sabbath hours?” The participants 100% confessed they were missing a lot of blessings by not keeping the Sabbath holy. They have experienced different ways of how the Sabbath can be enjoyed: the musical programs, Bible studies, testimony sharing and many more for the past six months they felt closeness to God.

Question five; what are your reaction on the statement that Ellen White said of preparing for the Sabbath by polishing shoes, bathing, and cooking on Friday. The 90% of the participants said they have already started implementing that in their homes. But it was clearly pointed out that in these days people can take a bath on Sabbath because of the new technology. Yet at the same time those who felt no to do that on Sabbath were not forced. This was the same with cooking on Sabbath. For those who are not able there were some ways that were discovered if they want to prepare their food on Friday. This was a simple and very educative demonstration during the implementation period.<sup>34</sup> Since not many have the right means of preparing

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<sup>34</sup>How to eat hot ugali or nsima (this is hard porridge made from flour of maize) in Malawi (mainly in SDA Churches); build an oven in the kitchen with some

for the Sabbath there are ways of doing it. Make sure your firewood is collected on Friday water drawn on the same Friday. Pots should be clean by Friday and on Sabbath just light the fire, cook your ugali or nsima after the church service, then you can go back for the afternoon programs on time.

Question six was, “Are you convinced that the Sabbath is not emphasized in the Old Testament only but in the New Testament also?” Participants said that the two Testaments agree to each other and the Sabbath is as binding as it was in the Old Testament. So 100% were committed to promote this true keeping of the Sabbath that has not changed.

Question seven was, “What have you learnt from the practices of Jesus in the New Testament in terms of observing the Sabbath day” They said doing good to those who are in need even if it is on the Sabbath day is very permissible to do charity activities. There is need to avoid doing our own activities on the Sabbath that are contrary to the Bible teaching. No wedding attendance on the Sabbath day, and making unnecessary trips.” The New Testament activities of Jesus were most of them pointed out in the Old Testament time; healing, feeding teaching on Sabbath. The 100% of the participants said are ready to go the Jesus way of doing things on Sabbath.

Question eight the last one was, “In your opinion what have you gained during this time of implementation about compromising the Sabbath with the worldly benefits?” The participants said those who accept God’s instructions will not be disappointed in life because you cannot compromise with Him. The 100% of the

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bricks or just mud then make two compartments one for lighting fire and the other to keep your cooked ugali or nsima. Make a cover on top that is thick after lighting fire and heating it for some time put your prepared food there and cover up. When the morning will come the food will still be very warm ready to be eaten after church.

participants said that they will not be the same because of what they have gained from the study how to keep the Sabbath holy. They requested the facilitator to come up with a pamphlet that can be used to assist many Seventh-day Adventist Christians in Limbe Church.

### **Data Analysis**

The data that is presented in this qualitative research is that the eight participants were mostly 100% in support and agreement of the questions discussed. In other areas 75% were ready to continue doing what was discussed during the implementation period. Sometimes in other circumstances the participants could not be clear about what was discussed but they were quick to ask questions and this made the whole research meaningful and important. The data indicated that the challenge was real in Limbe and this has been shown by the data analyzed and its outcome.

### **Conclusion**

The outcome of the implementation and evaluation has revealed that the sanctity of the Sabbath has been successfully been accepted by the Christians of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. From 25% to 75% of the church membership of Limbe stood and made their commitment to always observe the Sabbath as taught from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. Already the eighteen respondents made their vow to assist in contributing the materials which were used during the study.

Therefore, based on the above evaluation result, this can be safely concluded that this study had met its requirements. This is possible that the restoration of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Church can be a model to be used in other churches of Seventh-day Adventists in South Malawi Field.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provided a total overview of the entire dissertation. It is a summary and conclusion of each chapter of the dissertation. At the end it gave the recommendations by the researcher.

This study was to develop strategies to restore the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. This was the summation of the entire dissertation shading more light about what had been done and achieved in each chapter of the preceding chapters. The chapter gave the final conclusion which hinged on the conclusions arrived at, in other earlier chapters. At the very end of the chapter there are recommendations for further study or implementation of some areas that would be of much help in this dissertation of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### **Summary of the Dissertation**

The main findings of this study were presented in chapters four and five respectively. Chapter one discusses the general overview while chapter two establishes the biblical and theological foundation for this study and chapter three is the literature review. The subsequent paragraphs give a chapter-by-chapter summary of this study.

Chapter one started with an introduction and a concise and a brief description of the ministry context. It stated the problem that many believers among members in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church were not observing the Sabbath according to

the principles laid in the Bible and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. About 74.6% of the church members were involved in profanity of the Sabbath; this had resulted in affecting the members watching TV secular programs, attending political rallies, sending children to school, and others going for work on Sabbath. The purpose of the study was to develop and implement an intervention program, through seminars and Bible studies, focused visitations that could be used in church to address challenges related to breaking of the Sabbath.

The problem statement was justifiable. Firstly, failure to keep the Sabbath holy in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church had raised serious concerns many members engaged in secular activities, low turn up for afternoon programs on Sabbath. Secondly, the newly baptized members disregard the sanctity of the Sabbath because of short period of time spent in baptismal class or getting baptized in an effort of two weeks. Thirdly, the leadership challenged discouraged members not to observe the Sabbath as the Scriptures say. Therefore, the leaders have confused church members regarding the right way Jesus taught of keeping the Sabbath holy. Fourth, because of the couples that are married to non-Adventist spouses many of them including others did not come back to church for the afternoon church programs. Lastly, there was a need to provide intervention programs by which the church would train and equip members and restore in them by the grace of God the spirit of observing the Sabbath holy.

The delimitations set the parameter of the study because it could not be done to all the churches in the district; therefore one sample church was chosen as an area of the study. This was purposely selected from a given geographical area. The mixed methods were used in chapters four and five. The expectations were that at the end of the study the restoration of the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Seventh-day



Adventist Church would be achieved. The spirituality of Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church and South Malawi Field will be strengthened. The implementation of the project will help to increase percentage of members who will observe the Sabbath holy in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. The project will also assist Seventh-day church members in Limbe Church and beyond the entire district to embrace the sanctity of the Sabbath which will result into revival and reformation in their lives.

Chapter two laid a solid biblical foundation for the study which was theological foundation of Sabbath observation and its sanctity in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church. The chapter also explored the institution of the Sabbath that God established as the climax of creation in both and NT in detail. This chapter dwells on the concept of its observation in the Bible. It examines counsels and observation in the writings of Ellen G. White. The sanctity of the Sabbath was dealt deeply and its conclusion.

Chapter three introduced literature review that had been written regarding the guidelines, blessings of keeping the Sabbath and curses that members find when the Sabbath was not observed according to the Bible. The chapter started with the origin of the Sabbath. The most challenging areas that people faced keeping the Sabbath holy. The good example of how the Lord Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath. It included the solutions of handling the holy hours of the Sabbath. The various literature reviewed tackled some areas of Sabbath observance. The main focus was on restoring the sanctity of the Sabbath.

Chapter four began with an introduction of macro and micro ministry. Giving a concise description of the country and the fields found in Malawi. The micro context concentrated on church administering structure in brief and a detailed

description of the local church under the study. The type of research used was qualitative and quantitative which is known as mixed methods. It was based on chapters two and three. Firstly, it presented the description of the study's initial survey and the intervention design. The historical aspect was included, with a true picture of Malawian politics that affected the spiritual aspect of members of the church. Micro-context, the geographical and historical background of the church and the name Seventh-day Adventist- Malamulo were discussed.

The research approach was explained in detail with examples. The mixed methods that combined quantitative and qualitative research methods, the sampling of the population narrative and the focus group discussion were all explained. The mixed method used the base line survey used eighteen respondents and one focus group, they were all from Limbe Adventist Church. The focus group was comprised of eight participants; six males and two females.

The results obtained from the study indicated that indeed, there were problems in Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church how the Sabbath is observed. This led to the development of the program design which was based on seminars, Bible study, and visitations.

In chapter five the intervention design was implemented through seminars and Bible studies and focused group, visitations that were all implemented at an agreed time. In quantitative research the data collected were analyzed using mode method, the implementation program for not less than six months. There were four parts or areas implemented as presented. The first part dealt with the profanity of the Sabbath. The second part dealt with the leadership challenge when dealing with the sanctity of the Sabbath. The third part was about the Sabbath sanctity and the baptism class. And

the last one, the fourth, dealt with the level of understanding the observance of the Sabbath.

After the implementation, an evaluation was carried out and was also outlined in this chapter. The evaluation used both quantitative and the qualitative methods. There were eighteen respondents dealing with questionnaire and one focus group. Focus group had eight participants. The method of reporting the evaluation report was the narrative. When data collected was analyzed after implementation then a conclusion was made. The evaluation showed that the program was workable though it needed support from the entire church leadership. Chapter six was a summary of all the five chapters that preceded it. It also provided a comprehensive conclusion to the entire dissertation. Furthermore, it gave recommendations for further research. Chapter six bound together the thoughts and argument of this dissertation.

### **Conclusion**

The first chapter concluded that Limbe Adventist Church members have the problem of not sanctifying the Sabbath. The challenge would be investigated after finding out from the church members so to establish ways of resolving the problem. The main objective of the study was to restore the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Adventist. About 74.4% of the members in Limbe Church had problems of observing the Sabbath holy. The purpose of this study was to develop and implement an intervention program through seminars and Bible studies and visitations.

Chapter two concluded that the Sabbath was created by God and He sanctified it every human being is obliged to keep it holy. No work is supposed to be done on the seventh-day Sabbath as stipulated in Exodus 20:8-11. The God of the Old Testament and New Testament brought about Sabbath to have fellowship with His creatures. The Spirit of Prophecy through Ellen G. White shade more light in terms of

how to observe the holy hours of the Sabbath. The theological foundation is laid as a solid biblical foundation for restoring the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Adventist Church.

Chapter three dealt with the interaction with other writers and concluded that the sanctity of Sabbath and its observance should be followed. Many of them had the similar opinion that God created the Sabbath and commanded His creature to keep it holy.

Chapter four data analysis and findings revealed that Limbe SDA Church had a large number 74.4% of members who needed a restoration of the sanctity of the Sabbath. The analysis of the data revealed and confirmed that yes the Sabbath had not been observed as the Scripture had said. The conclusion came up with an intervention program to address the sanctity of the Sabbath in Limbe Church.

Chapter five reported the implementation of the intervention program and analyzed the final results. The conclusion of the results based on the data indicated that the intervention had been a success. The four questions asked at beginning were addressed back to the participants and they all responded positively. The eighteen respondents' commitment to God and that they will work hard to let others receive the light they have embraced. The focus of the overall goal was maintained as the activities were implemented. The time frame was managed during the implementation. The mixed method was used in order to get the maximum results of the research. The participants were in two sections; eighteen respondents for quantitative results when analysing the statistics from the data collected and qualitative method there was a focus group.

The participants committed themselves to never disappoint God by failing to keep the Sabbath holy. They said that when God gives commands that certain things

should be done the way He wanted no one who opposes will go unpunished. The seminars and Bible studies, and home visitations were conducted within Limbe Church area. Three sections were given and scrutinized by the participants in Limbe Adventist Church. The area that dealt with the challenges members had that contributes to the breaking of Sabbath.

The data that was collected through the qualitative and quantitative methods four months after the implementation of the intervention, indicated that the keeping of the Sabbath has increased from 25% to 60% according to the church pastor in Limbe Church of 2016, first quarter report.<sup>1</sup> The result indicates that the programs that were put in place and the Bible studies through power point presentations.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above study, a number of recommendations could be made for further study. Firstly, the challenges which many leaders used to have had been stumbling blocks to proper observing of the Sabbath in Limbe Church. This included the pastors and laymen in leadership of the church at all levels. The effects that had been discovered in baptismal classes make many converts to break the Sabbath because of their short stay in the class. During the study the researcher observed that the issue of keeping the Sabbath holy is big problem. The researcher further noted that a church that is composed of faithful Sabbath observers will make a vibrant spiritual church.

Secondly, the researcher recommended that a further study on the causes of engaging in secular activities like watching TV, games, going for political rallies and

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<sup>1</sup>Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church District Pastor, "First Quarter Report" (Limbe: Limbe Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2016), 2.

weddings on Sabbath should be studied further. Based on the two groups the focus group and the other participants if utilized well more changes will take place in Limbe Church as it has already started. Unless church members will take the keeping of the Sabbath holy there seriously will be programs attended poorly in the afternoon in Limbe Church, and lukewarm spiritual members.

The third category of recommendations pertains to this study. From the researcher's experience and observation, many good and effective programs have died a natural death due to non-commitment and negligence. The researcher therefore recommends that the leadership of the church (the Union, Conference and the Field) should come up with modalities of reinforcing the program through follow-up and conduct more Bible studies on the sanctity of the Sabbath in Seventh-day Adventist through the ministerial department, should adopt the revival and reformation program for all her churches as a must in Malawi. Through the ministerial secretary, all pastors in Malawi Union Conference should be taught the need of bringing back the sanctity of the Sabbath through seminars in a ministerial workers' meeting early next year.

For this study, it suffices to say that this study has been a success and challenging to the researcher who learned and grew during the research work. It was a challenge because the researcher was venturing into a project that has always been a controversy among believers and even the pastors in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Malawi.

It was a success because the fruits were visible four months down the line of program implementation. Finding new ways of enlightening many members in Seventh-day Adventist Church is now the hallmark of the researcher on this topic but with new dimension. Therefore, to God be the glory for the great things He has done

despite the challenges the researcher went through. God has shown that He has a lot to do through the researcher in future.

## APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

LETTER



LIMBE ADVENTIST  
CHURCH  
SMF

SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST  
CHURCH

South Malawi Field P.o.  
Box 926, Blantyre,  
Malawi  
Telephone: (265) 01  
833522  
01985254101985256

Dear Limbe Church Board,

**INTRODUCING PASTOR ELIEZER MTHUNZI AS A STUDENT  
OF AUA**

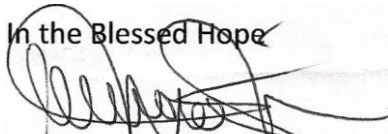
I write on behalf of the South Malawi Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to introduce the bearer of this letter Pastor Eliezer Mthunzi as one of employees in this organization.

Pastor Eliezer Mthunzi has been a Pastor for many years and was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in January 2004. Pastor Eliezer Mthunzi is pursuing a Doctoral degree of Ministry.

He is married to Mary Clara Mthunzi and is currently serving as a church Pastor for Limbe Church within the city of Blantyre. He is a committed worker and dedicated to duty with clean record. Assist him as he carries out his research project

Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Greetings in the Lord

In the Blessed Hope  
  
**PASTOR WYSON ELIYA**  
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Cc: The President -SMF

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRES

**QUESTIONNAIRES FOR CHURCH MEMBERS**

**SECTION A**

1. a) Name..... (optional)  
b) Age..... (Optional)
2. For how long have you been a member of Seventh-day Adventist Church?  
1 year..... 10 years ( )  
11 years..... 20 years ( )  
21 years..... 30 years ( )  
31 years..... 40 years ( )  
41 years and above
3. Are you still active member in your church?.....  
a) Please indicate the name of the church you go to.....  
b) Which is your level of education?  
Primary School Completed ( )  
Secondary School Completed ( )  
Diploma Level Completed ( )  
1<sup>st</sup> Degree Completed ( )  
Doctoral level
4. Do you have cases in your churches about members who do not correctly observe the Sabbath?  
Yes ( ) No ( )  
If your answer is yes, what is the average number per church in your district?  
.....
5. Who are usually the reported as Sabbath breakers in your church?  
a) Church Leader  
b) Church Member

- c) The Youth
  - d) All the above
6. What measures do you take to those reported to have profaned the Sabbath?
- a) You chase them away ( )
  - b) Remove them from the church register ( )
  - c) You censure them ( )
  - c) Visit and reclaim them ( )
  - d) You ignore them ( )
7. How often do you teach, preach or listen about Sabbath observance to your church members?
- a) Once per quarter per church ( )
  - b) Once per month per church ( )
  - c) I don't remember teaching anytime only to the baptismal class alone. ( )

**SECTION B**

1. Why do you think Sabbath-day is not only an Old Testament Institutions to be observed but also a New Testament?

.....  
 What are some of the practices of Jesus in the New Testament that should help us teach faithful Sabbath Observance among our church members?

.....  
 In E.G. White's writings the preparation and the observance of the Sabbath emphasize such minute things as polishing one's shoes, bathing, amending one's clothes etc. In your opinion do you regard those instructions as something bothering?

.....  
 In your own opinion are there large percentages of our church members cooking food Sabbath? And if yes, what can we do?

.....

2. Many of our church members are late to come to church on Sabbath and never attend Sabbath afternoon Bible Study. In your opinion how can we stop this habit?

.....  
 It is well known fact that our parents who are church members should be role models to their children. What percentages of your church members take their children to school on Sabbath and why?

.....  
In your own opinion, do you think that dual career family, where both parents are working, is causing the members to stay with their family Sabbath afternoon are never to return to church?

.....  
In your own opinion, as a pastor, are you satisfied how the baptismal class, the post-baptismal (happiness) class, and even the church members are taught about the Sabbath Observance?

.....  
In your churches, what are some of the ways that we can use to alleviate the habit of breaking the Sabbath?

- .....  
3. Is viewing secular programs on the TV going for sports on Sabbath a problem to most of your members? If yes what are you doing about it?

- .....  
4. How best can you explain to a member who has a food preservative gadget is still cooking on Sabbath?

.....  
In your opinion, do you see that those members, who compromise their faith on the Sabbath teachings in their working places, are a stumbling block to faithful members?

.....  
Is it the culture of the Seventh-day Adventists members of not having time to read the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy books affecting our Sabbath observance?

.....

## SECTION C

### Key

- A. Strongly Disagree
- B. Disagree
- C. Not Sure
- D. Agree
- E. Strongly Agree

1. Do baptized members of the church break the Sabbath?	A	B	C	D	E
2. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books are not very clear of how people should observe the Sabbath-day.					
3. There is enough teaching in baptismal classes about Sabbath observance.					
4. It is not good to engage yourself as a member in business of buying or selling on a Sabbath-day.					
5. As a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, you can prepare yourself for the Sabbath-day in other areas but cooking you can do on the Sabbath.					
6. A great percentage of Seventh-day Adventist Church members cook on the Sabbath.					
7. The majority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church members buy minor items like bread and milk for breakfast on the Sabbath morning.					
8. A large number of Seventh-day Adventist Church members come to church late and never return in the afternoon for Bible Study.					
9. Economic pressures disorient people from Sabbath observance.					
10. Majority of the Seventh-day Adventist members' children goes to school Sabbath.					
11. Seventh-day Adventists church members have no guilty conscience when watching secular messages on TV or listening to radio on a Sabbath-day					

## APPENDIX C

### HELPFUL BIBLE VERSES ON SABBATH KEEPING

Isaiah 56:2, 6. The blessings that God has granted for keeping the Sabbath holy.

Exodus 20:8-11. The sanctity and remembrance of Sabbath and it is not for secular work

Deuteronomy 5:14-15 God is the Redeemer of His people the Sabbath accommodates everyone in the world

Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 15 God offers blessings on those who are obedient to His commandments of which the Sabbath is included.

Leviticus 23:3 The Sabbath is also called the holy convocation, or a day of worship

Luke 4:16 Jesus worshiped each Sabbath in many places including His home district

Leviticus 23:32 The holy hour of the Sabbath begins on Friday sun set and ends on Sabbath sun set- evening

Nehemiah 13:15-22 No worldly business or secular activities

Mark 2:23- 28 Jesus did good things on the Sabbath and He is the LORD of the Sabbath

Matthew 23:8-12 Better to save than to kill on the Sabbath day

Isaiah 58: 13, 14 The Sabbath is the day of delight.

Genesis 2:1-3 God created the Sabbath day

Matthew 11:28-30 Divine rest for

## APPENDIX D

### GUIDELINES ON SABBATH OBSERVANCE

- ▶ **Guide Lines on Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ The meaning of Sabbath
- ▶ How Sabbath was Observed in the Old Testament
- ▶ How Sabbath was Observed in the Inter-Testamental Period
- ▶ How Sabbath was Observance in the New Testament
- ▶ Jesus and Sabbath Observance
- ▶ Spirit of Prophecy (EG. White) & Sabbath Observance.
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Sabbath is one of our main teachings of Adventist Church.
- ▶ Sabbath was taught to us by Rachel Oarks, then Sabbath conferences followed and the seventh day Sabbath accepted it.
- ▶ David Hewitt proposed that this church be known as Seventh-Day Adventist Church.
- ▶ Since 1863, we moved from worshipping the first day of the week to seventh day of the week.
- ▶ **Introduction**
- ▶ The topic under review in this presentation is not about when is the Sabbath day, but rather how we can observe the Sabbath hours in an attempt to please God and get the blessings promised.
- ▶ This presentation is meant to address the guidelines of Sabbath keeping, as such will not go into details of Sabbath observance but rather what appears to be guiding principles.
- ▶ It is interesting to note that from the time of resettlement of the Israelites from exile, through inter-Testamental period, New Testament time, up to our time, the Sabbath keepers have always being divided between two schools of thought.
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ One group is viewed as strict Sabbath keepers.
- ▶ While the other group is viewed as liberal Sabbath observers.
- ▶ The strict Sabbath keepers mostly do not cook or heat their food on Sabbath, others do not black and brush their shoes, some of them do not even take bath on Sabbath, while some do not turn their TVs or radios to secular stations, if

married some do stay away from their spouses, others are in between and the list is endless.

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ The strict Sabbath observers views those who does some of the chores listed above as Sabbath breakers.
- ▶ Those viewed as liberals are able to cook, take bath, freely come near their spouses, and some are free to turn their TVs or radio to secular stations, buy fuel when traveling, some are mixed between strict and liberals etc.
- ▶ Those who belong to this group views their colleagues as going too far and creating a miserable life for themselves.
- ▶ Both groups have texts that seem to justify their cause of action.
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Most of the times when this discussion emerge in a Bible study or in a sermon each group will list catalogue of texts that seems to justify them and demonize the other group.
- ▶ It would appear that even ministers are divided into these two schools of thought.
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Most often the victims of this discussion are the new members, some will associate themselves with one group or the other, while others are left confused.
- ▶ In some churches this topic is avoided in an attempt to create a brotherly environment as this topic has the potential to flare up tempers of some saints.
- ▶ It could be a good idea to approach this subject with sober mind and a teachable spirit.
- ▶ **Introduction**
- ▶ This presentation is not meant to exhaustive or be comprehensive.
- ▶ This topic rather seeks to acknowledge the differences in Sabbath observance amongst Adventists and provide with guidelines.
- ▶ It is also interesting to note that these differences are not unique to Adventist in Malawi, but all over the world.
- ▶ The Meaning of Sabbath
- ▶ The word Sabbath is coming from a Hebrew term ‘shabbat’.
- ▶ The verb ‘shabbat’ in qual (simple active) it means ‘to stop’, ‘stop working’, or ‘take a holiday’.
- ▶ The verb ‘shabbat’ in niphil (simple passive) it means ‘be brought to stop.’
- ▶ While in ‘hiphil’, (causative active) this verb stands for ‘make rest’, or ‘removed.’
- ▶ **The Meaning of Sabbath**
- ▶ The verb ‘shabbat’, is used 104 times in the OT; the books with the highest frequency of usage are: Lev.24×; Ezek.15×; Exod.14×; Neh.14×; 1-2Chron.8×; Isa.7×; Jer.7×; 2Kgs5×; Num.3×; Deut.3×.
- ▶ It is used once each in Ps, Lam, Hos, and Amos.



- ▶ These statistics point to more frequent usage in OT books where priestly influence dominates.
- ▶ **The Meaning of Sabbath**
- ▶ There were important similarities between the Sabbath and the new moon: On both days it was customary to visit a holy man (**2Kgs 4.23**).
- ▶ On both days, business and trade were suspended (**Amos 8.5**).
- ▶ The weekly 24hour Sabbath was first mention in **Gen.2.1-3**.
- ▶ The first command to observe the 24 hour weekly Sabbath was first mentioned on **Ex. 16.1-**.
- ▶ The weekly Sabbath was made an integral part of system of Sabbaths when the law covenant was formally inaugurated at Mt Sinai (**Ex. 19.1-; 20.8-11; 24.5-8**)
- ▶ **The Meaning of Sabbath**
- ▶ Apart from the weekly 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, there were also other Sabbaths.
- ▶ The 7<sup>th</sup> year, the 50<sup>th</sup> year (jubilee year), Nisan 14 (Passover), Nisan 15, Nisan 21, Sivan 6, (Pentecost), Ethanim 1, Ethanim 10, (Atonement day)
- ▶ The Meaning of Sabbath
- ▶ The Hebrew expression yohm hashabbath (the Sabbath day) is drawn from the verb ‘*shavath*’ meaning ‘rest, cease.’ (**Gen. 2.2; 8.22**).
- ▶ The Greek term is ‘*he hemeratou sabatov*’, (the Sabbath day). (**Gen. 2.2; 8.22**).
- ▶ This was a day set apart by God for rest from regular labors; the Sabbath was given by God as a sign between him and his people (**Ex. 31.16, 17**)
- ▶ The term Sabbath day, therefore means a day of rest from secular work and reflect on God and His creation work.
- ▶ **How was Sabbath Observed in the OT?**
- ▶ In the OT the weekly Sabbath was more restrictive, no work was to be done except in the sanctuary. From gathering of wood, to lighting of fire it was prohibited (**Nu.15.32-36; Ex.35.3**), including travel was also restricted, (**Ex.16.29**).
- ▶ While on the holy convention days of the festivals no work, trade, or business activities could be engaged in, but cooking, festival preparations, and so forth, were allowed (**Ex.12.16; Lev.23.7,8,21,35,36**)
- ▶ Sometimes two legal Sabbath would fall on the same 24 hour period, and this was called a ‘great Sabbath.’ such as Nisan 15 (a Sabbath day) coincided with a regular Sabbath. (**Joh.19.31**).
- ▶ **How was Sabbath Observed in the OT?**
- ▶ Sabbath days in the OT, gave parents opportunity to inculcate God’s laws and commandments in the minds and hearts of their children (**Deut.6.4-9**).
- ▶ The Sabbath was occupied with taking in knowledge of God and attending spiritual needs of the people (**Deut.33.8,10; Lev. 10.11**).
- ▶ It is believed that their failure to honor the Sabbath contributed largely to their down fall and the desolation of the land of Juda for 70 years. (**Lev. 26.31-35; 2Chron. 36.20-21**)

- ▶ **Old Testament Sabbath Observance in View of Spirit of Prophecy**
- ▶ However, the Spirit of Prophecy seems to suggest that some restrictions that took place during the wilderness period were lifted when they entered the promised land.
- ▶ **‘During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fire upon the seventh-day had been strictly prohibited.’**
- ▶ **‘The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth.’ (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 409)**
- ▶ Sabbath was Observance in the Inter-Testamental Period?
- ▶ Inter-Testamental period which were about 400 years, starts from the time the Israelites came back from captivity to about the time when Jesus was born.
- ▶ These years are also known as silent years, not necessary that it was silent period but no known prophet rose.
- ▶ It was during these years when different sects of religious groupings rose up.
- ▶ Most of those groups wanted to avoid the recurrence of captivity. Because it was believed that exile happened due to disobedience to God’s Law and inter marriage with surrounding nationals.
- ▶ Sabbath was Observance in the Inter-Testamental Period?
- ▶ **Some of these groups will include:**
  - **Pharisees**
  - **Sadducees**
  - **Essenes**
  - **Herodians and Zealots**
  - **Sanhedrin**
  - **People of the Land**
  - **Diaspora**
  - **Jewish Education**
- ▶ **Sabbath was Observance in the Inter-Testamental Period?**
- ▶ According to rabbinic sources, during the Inter-Testamental period and the time when Jesus was on earth, three trumpets blasts at about the ninth hour, or three o’clock, on Friday afternoon announced the Sabbath day’s approach.
- ▶ At this time all work and business were to cease, the Sabbath lamp was lit, and festive garments were put on.
- ▶ Then three more blasts indicated that the Sabbath had actually begun and no one was allowed to do anything.
- ▶ **Sabbath Observance in the Inter-Testamental Period?**
- ▶ **Rabbinic Sabbath Restrictions.**
- ▶ 1. They believed that their failure to honor the Sabbath contributed largely to their down fall and the desolation of the land of Juda for 70 years. (**Lev. 26.31-35; 2Chron. 36.20-21**)

- ▶ 2. Their intermarriage with other nations was also viewed as one of the reasons they were taken into captivity for 70 years.
- ▶ In their zeal to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles as much as possible especially when they came back from Babylonian exile, they formulated rules.
- ▶ **Sabbath Observance in the Inter-Testamental Period?**
- ▶ Sabbath was regarded as Jewish divine election (**Jub. 2.19,31; 50.9**).
- ▶ During the Maccabean revolt pious Jews were killed on Sabbath without resistance (**1Mac.2.32-38**).
- ▶ However, they reviewed this law and ordered that only in self-defence they can lift a weapon even on Sabbath. (**1Macc.2.39-41**)
- ▶ It was said that when life was in danger the Sabbath commandment might be broken and one could either take to arms or flee on Sabbath (**Lohse, 'Sabbath', Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. 7, p.9**).
- ▶ **Sabbath Observance in the Inter-Testamental Period?**
- ▶ **When they came back from the exile, observance of the Sabbath was very strict.**
- ▶ **However, the strictness of its observance depended on which grouping one belonged.**
- ▶ **1. The Essenes** kept the Sabbath more strict than other Jews. (*not allowed, prepare anything to eat, to draw water, not carry anything in or out of the house, not travel more than 1000 cubits, not lift cattle, or human out of pit with a rope or ladder etc. The rules were written in Mishnah*)
- ▶ **How Sabbath was observed in the Inter-Testamental Period?**
- ▶ **2. The Pharisees and Scribes** tried to bring Sabbath laws into harmony with practical situations of life in order not to destroy the joy of the Sabbath. (**Lohse, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 'Sabbath', (W. Kohlhammer Verlag Stuttgart, Germany), 1971, p. 10.**)
- ▶ How Sabbath was observed in the Inter-Testamental Period?
- ▶ Sabbath was also observed during the period between the testaments.
- ▶ However as indicated above they were divided into two schools of thought: Essenes were very, very strict Sabbath keepers.
- ▶ They are almost silent in the Bible as they did not want to mix with people.
- ▶ The Pharisees and Scribes were viewed as liberals in their observance of the Sabbath and kept attacking Jesus.
- ▶ Sabbath Observance in the New Testament
- ▶ Just like the period between the Testaments in the New Testament, Sabbath was observed.
- ▶ The most popular groups who were known of observing the Sabbath in New Testament were: Pharisees and the Scribes.
- ▶ We will compare the Sabbath keeping of the Pharisees and Scribes and the stance of Jesus on Sabbath as He also claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath.
- ▶ **Sabbath Observance in the New Testament**
- ▶ In the NT, Priests were allowed to offer statutory offerings on the Sabbath (**Mat.12.4**).

- ▶ If a man or beast was in mortal danger, assistance may be given (**Mat. 12.11; Lk 14.5**).
- ▶ The Law which required all Israel boys to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth was to be kept even on Sabbath (**John 7.22**).
- ▶ The Bible alludes that the circumcision came from forefathers and yet it was allowed to be done even on Sabbath. (**John 7.22-23**)
- ▶ **Sabbath Observance in the New Testament**
- ▶ There is no real line drawn between the Inter-Testamental period and NT time.
- ▶ In the NT no work was done on Sabbath, hence the body of Jesus was taken down before the Sabbath to avoid desecrating the Sabbath (**Mk 15.42**).
- ▶ Harvesting including plucking of ears was not allowed on Sabbath (**Mk.2.23**).
- ▶ Help and healing was not allowed to a sick person unless in danger of death (**Mk 3.1; Lk 13.14; 14.3**).
- ▶ Carrying of all kinds of objects was not allowed (**John 5.9**)
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ **But why were the disciples innocent when they had transgressed the Sabbath commandment?**
- ▶ Mathew uses the statement that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, (**12.8**). His disciples are released from the absolute obligation of the Sabbath.
- ▶ Jesus appears to suggest that, their supreme command over and against the Sabbath is that they exercise mercy (**12.7**).
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ In Mathew's gospel (**Mat.12.1-8**), the debate between Jesus and the Pharisees is extended by two additional references.
- ▶ First, the sacrifices which were offered by the priests on Sabbath according to **Num.28.9**, entails a violation of the prohibition of work.
- ▶ Jesus says, the commandment of love is above the Sabbath restrictions.
- ▶ Jesus appears to suggest that, if you the Pharisees understood the saying of the prophet you would not have condemned the innocent disciples (**Mat. 12.7**)
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ In Mark, Pharisees and Scribes confront Jesus for plucking grain on Sabbath, (**Mark 2.23-28**).
- ▶ The law of Moses allowed (**Deut.23.26**) but the Pharisees objected, Jesus answers the objection by referring to David and his men when they met Ahimelech the priest, they ate shrew bread meant for priests only (**1Sam. 21.2-7**).
- ▶ It is believed that it was on Sabbath day when David came to Ahimelech (**Lev.24.8-9**).
- ▶ Jesus justified the conduct of his disciples; on the bases that they were hungry and they needed food to eat.
- ▶ Jesus seems to suggest that man and his needs are of greater value than the Sabbath (**Mk 2.27-28**).
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**

- ▶ In **Mark 3.1-6**, Jesus enters a synagogue and He sees a man with a withered hand. According to generally accepted halakah (*from the root to walk, The authoritative Jewish way of life as expressed in moral law and ritual precept, based on Exod.18.20*), rules it was permitted to help a sick man on Sabbath only when there was imminent danger of death.
- ▶ Jesus heals this man and thus demonstrates that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.
- ▶ Again Jesus indicates that it is good to save life even on Sabbath.
- ▶ In **Mark 3**, the command of love rather than the restriction requirements of the Sabbath is set at the heart of the demand made by the divine commandment.
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ Jesus said, ‘**The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.**’ (**Mk 2.27**).
- ▶ But on verse 28, He said, ‘**The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.**’ (**V28**), this is not a deduction from the first saying by which man is granted lordship over the Sabbath.
- ▶ For sure man cannot be the measure of righteousness.
- ▶ ‘Man is the measure of all things.’ (*Protagors, ancient Greek Philosopher*), What Jesus is trying to communicate here is that, in His lordship Sabbath restrictions comes to an end.
- ▶ By implication it would suggest that man’s needs should be viewed important above the Sabbath.
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ The book of **Luke** has two additional accounts of healing on Sabbath (**13.10-17; 14.1-6**).
- ▶ In **13.10-17**, the argument again moves from the less to the greater; anyone will take an ox or ass from its stall on the Sabbath and water it, (**v15**).
- ▶ Jesus says if you can water an animal on Sabbath, how much more should this daughter of Abraham be loosed from her bond on the Sabbath (**v16**).
- ▶ Again this woman was not in immediate danger.
- ▶ In halachah, it was stressed that the tying and untying of knots was one of the 39 chief tasks forbidden on the Sabbath, except if it can be tied with one hand.
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ Luke has also the account of the disciples of Jesus going through the field plucking grains which was not allowed (**Luke 6.1-7**).
- ▶ Luke further record the account of a man with withered hand who was healed by Jesus on Sabbath (**6.6-11**).
- ▶ It would appear that in both incidences there was no immediate danger of death to the concerned persons, but Jesus decided to heal in full view of His opponents.
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ The fourth gospel of **John** has also two accounts of healing on Sabbath, that brought Jesus into sharp controversy with the Jews.

- ▶ The first was **5.1-9**, Jesus heals a disabled man of Bethesda on Sabbath and orders him to take up his mat and go.
- ▶ Again, this man was not in immediate danger of death.
- ▶ Furthermore, it was not permitted for anyone to carry anything on Sabbath. (**Jer. 17.21-22**).
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ Cattle naturally had to drink on Sabbath. However, one was not allowed to pour in water and set it before the animal on the Sabbath; but one may pour in water so that the animal drinks for itself.
- ▶ Again in **14.1-6**, Jesus heals another person who was not in immediate danger of death according to halachah rules.
- ▶ The million dollar question is that, why did Jesus who was well aware of the Jewish rules decided to heal on Sabbath people who were not in immediate danger?
- ▶ **Jesus and Sabbath Observance**
- ▶ Carrying anything was among 39 chief tasks forbidden on the Sabbath.
- ▶ On **John 9.1-41**, Jesus heals a blind man on Sabbath.
- ▶ As has been the case in previous texts, this man was not in any way in eminent danger of death.
- ▶ Jesus did not only heal him, He spat on the ground, kneaded the spittle into clay, and put this on the eyes of the blind man to restore his sight.
- ▶ Kneading is listed expressly among the 39 chief tasks forbidden on the Sabbath.
- ▶ Jesus and Sabbath Observance
- ▶ As indicated above, between the Essenes and the Pharisees in view of Sabbath observance the Pharisees were the liberals meaning to say they were lenient.
- ▶ However, though the Pharisees were viewed as lenient yet the Pharisees branded Jesus as Sabbath breaker.
- ▶ This suggest that Jesus was more lenient as compared to the Pharisees when it came to Sabbath keeping.
- ▶ **Spirit of Prophecy (EG. White) & Sabbath Observance.**
- ▶ **Sabbath Time Too Precious to Sleep Away**
- ▶ None should permit themselves, though the week to become so absorbed in their temporal interest, and so exhausted by their effort for worldly gain, that on the Sabbath they have no strength or energy to give to their service of God. (**The Review and Herald, June 13, 1882**)
- ▶ We are robbing the Lord when we unfit ourselves to worship Him upon His holy day... (**The Review and Herald, June 13, 1882**)
- ▶ **Spirit of Prophecy (EG. White) & Sabbath Observance.**
- ▶ Let not the precious hours of the Sabbath be wasted in bed. On Sabbath morning the family should be astir early.
- ▶ If they rise late, there is confusion and bustle in preparation for breakfast and Sabbath school.

- ▶ There is hurrying josting and impatience. Thus unholy feelings come into the home. The Sabbath, thus desecrated, becomes a weariness, and its coming is dreaded rather than loved. (**Testimonies For the Church, vol. 6, p. 357**)
- ▶ **Spirit of Prophecy (EG. White) & Sabbath Observance.**
- ▶ **Make Friday the Preparation Day –**
- ▶ ‘On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness, and that all the cooking is done.’
- ▶ **‘Let the boots be blacked, and the bath be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule, you can do it. The Sabbath not to be given to the preparing of the garments, to the cooking of the food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.’**
- ▶ **‘Before the setting of the sun, let all the secular work be laid aside, and all secular papers be put out of the sight. Parents explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment.’ (Testimonies For the Church, vol. 6, pp. 355, 356)**
- ▶ **Spirit of Prophecy (EG. White) & Sabbath Observance.**
- ▶ While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather let the food prepared the day before be heated.
- ▶ Let the meals, though simple, be palatable and attractive. Provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day. (**Testimonies For the Church, vol. 6, p. 357**)
- ▶ Parents make the Sabbath a delight that your children may look forward to it and have a welcome in their hearts for it. (**Testimonies For the Church, vol. 2, pp. 584,585**)
- ▶ **Spirit of Prophecy (EG. White) & Sabbath Observance.**
- ▶ **Sabbath Hours Not Ours but God’s**
- ▶ ‘God has given us the whole six days in which to do our work, and has reserved only one to Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us, a day of when we should lay aside all our secular matters and Centre our thoughts upon God and heaven.’ (**Manuscript 3, 1879.**)
- ▶ ‘When the Sabbath commences, we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord’s.’ (**Testimonies For the Church, vol. 2, pp. 702, 703.**)
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ From the time between testaments up to our time the subject of Sabbath observance has always divided believers into two groups.
- ▶ It would appear that these groups will exist until the second coming of Jesus.
- ▶ In the Old Testament especially after the Israelites lived in Egypt for over 400 years God reminded His people to keep the Sabbath holy.
- ▶ Conclusion

- ▶ As you might recall the restriction in the OT was to do with: gathering of manna, gathering of wood, currying of stuff, and travel. (**Nu.15.32-36; Ex.35.3, Ex.16.29**).
- ▶ There are few texts in the Bible that prohibit in door preparation of food, considering that preparation of the manna was done at home (**Numbers 11.7, 8**).
- ▶ Special Sabbaths, all activities were prohibited except for cooking and other preparation of the functions(**Ex.12.16; Lev.23.7,8,21,35,36**).
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ When two legal Sabbath fall on the same 24 hour period Sabbath, this was called a ‘great Sabbath.’ such as Nisan 15 (a Sabbath day) coincided with a regular Sabbath. Still the cooking and all activities took place.
- ▶ Although currying of stuff was prohibited, in special functions God allowed currying of heavy stuff:
  - ▶ 1. Carrying of the ark by priests for seven days (**Joshua 6. 1-16**)
  - ▶ 2. sick person who was allowed to carry his mat and walk (**John 5. 8-12**).
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ It would appear that the restriction of kindling of fire on Sabbath was instructed by Moses as also he did on the issue of marriage.
- ▶ Exodus 35.1-3
- ▶ **Deut. 24.1 (Mat. 19.7-9)**
- ▶ **The letter of divorce was not the original plan of God on marriage, but because of how women were ill-treated Moses made a provision for divorce.**
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ **‘During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fire upon the seventh-day had been strictly prohibited.’**
- ▶ **‘The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth.’ (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 409)**
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ When God instituted the Sabbath He intended that we should develop a relationship with Him.
- ▶ It seems that the purpose of Sabbath was to create an environment conducive for us to commune with our God and the prohibition of work was meant for us to concentrate on God His love for us, and His creation.
- ▶ It also appears that works of kind can be taken to address the needs of others even on Sabbath.
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ Those who can not afford to prepare their meals on Friday should not judge those who are able to do so.
- ▶ Similarly those who are able to prepare their meals on Friday should not judge those who may not afford to do so.



- ▶ The concern is for those who took lightly that which God has sanctified and do their business as usual and make no difference between Sabbath and other days of the week.
- ▶ **Conclusion**
- ▶ While the church would love to have all its members thoroughly prepare for the Sabbath to avoid unnecessary delays to attend church activities, the church is aware of differences to access of resources.
- ▶ Therefore the members who make all the necessary preparations on Friday and on Sabbath prepare their meals should not be censured.
- ▶ Similarly the church does not discipline its members for taking a bath on Sabbath.
- ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ What should be avoided is the spirit of imposing our personal conviction to all believers, and thinking that who ever opposes to our view is not born of heaven.
- ▶ Recall that the scripture says, ‘Do not judge that you may be judged.’ (**Mat. 7.1**).
- ▶ The Bible as chronicled on Mathew 7.12 says, “In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law and the prophets.”
- ▶ **Conclusion**
- ▶ *“These things happened to them as examples and were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come.” (1Cor. 10.11).*

APPENDIX E

**PROGRAM OUTLINE FOR THE SURVEY 2015 – 2016**

**TABLE OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES FROM OCTOBER 2015 TO MARCH 2016 THE OTHER THREE MONTHS APRIL TO JUNE FOR OBSERVATIONS**

MONTH	ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS	REMARKS
October 2015 11	Seminar Sabbath afternoon for one hour	Turn up good
” ” 18	Seminar Sabbath afternoon	
” ” 25	Concluding the seminar	
November 2015 8	E. G. White Sabbath observance	
” ” 15	E. G. White Sabbath Sanctity	
” ” 22	Questions and answers on Sabbath	This was educative
” ” 29	Concluding the Spirit of Prophecy on Sabbath	Members were convinced
December 2015 13	Difficulty areas concerning the Sabbath keeping	
” ” 20	Bible Study using power point	
January 2016 09	Preached in Limbe Church on Sabbath keeping	Generally good
” ” 16	Bible study with the whole church	
” ” 23	Focus group discussion on eight question	
” ” 30	Focus group continued the discussions	
February 2016 07	Assessing the progress of the project	
” ” 14	Musical program and Bible quizzes	

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” 21	”	<b>Leadership seminar on Sabbath issues</b>	
” 28	”	<b>Discussions on those with Sabbath challenges</b>	
<b>March 2016</b> 13		<b>Focus group discussed the qualitative questions</b>	
” 20	”	<b>Evaluating the program</b>	
” 27	”	<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	
<b>April</b>		<b>Implementing the program</b>	<b>Visitations Members doing Bible study</b>
<b>May</b>		<b>Implementing the program</b>	<b>Final survey</b>
<b>June</b>		<b>Implementing the final program</b>	<b>Participants liked it</b>

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At first the letter was given from the Field office and the Church Board took an action to allow the researcher to do the project

The first questionnaires were distributed to church and twenty people were at randomly picked in October 2015. Only eighteen were committed up to the end. Eight respondents were selected also at random as a focus group.

The chairman was an elder and the vice a man, the recording secretary was a lady.

The eighteen participants were of different age groups but there were two young people a girl and a boy.

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- Mitundu Secondary School teacher in Lilongwe, September, 1994 to December, 1996
- South Malawi Field; Youth and Education Director October, 1993 to August, 1994
- District pastor, Kanjedza, Blantyre, January, 1992 to December, 1993 to October 1992
- Hospital chaplain, Malamulo January 1990 to January 1992