

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY FOR INCREASING SABBATH SCHOOL ATTENDENCE  
AND PARTICIPATION IN CHIREMBA WEST

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Date completed: July 2013

The study is a strategy based research seeking to address how to increase attendance and participation during Sabbath School. Literature was analyzed and put into context of the current study and its application to the problem of low attendance and participation during Sabbath School. The Bible, Ellen White and other authors were consulted. The data which was collected mainly through questionnaires and interviews was then analyzed using statistical packages for social sciences. The questionnaires were distributed from the ambassadors to the adults in the church. In responding to the questionnaires descriptive method was employed. It was revealed in the study that generally members have lost interest and zeal in Sabbath School. In the study they are several tips given, if followed our attendance and participation will increase significantly. A list of recommendations was given in chapter 5.

Adventist University of Africa

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PARTICIPATION IN CHIREMBA WEST

A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Ernest Chinembiri

August 2013

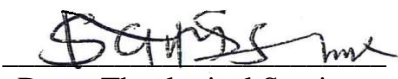
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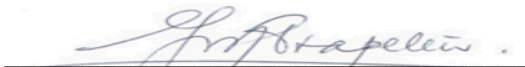
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Problem Statement.....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	2
The Significance of the Study.....	2
Definition of Terms .....	2
Methodology.....	3
Delimitations.....	3
2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION .....	5
Background of Sabbath School .....	5
Objectives of Sabbath School.....	8
Study of the Word .....	8
Fellowship .....	8
Community Outreach .....	8
World Mission Emphasis .....	9
The Structure of Sabbath School .....	9
Superintendent.....	9
Assistant Superintendent .....	10
Sabbath School Secretary and Investment Secretary .....	10
Ushers and Discussion Leaders .....	10
Sabbath School Council .....	11
Action Units.....	12
Sabbath School as a Unifier of the Seventh-day Adventist	
Church Worldwide.....	13
13 <sup>th</sup> Sabbath School Offering .....	13
Study Guide for Each Group .....	14
World Mission Story .....	14
Meeting Needs of Church Members.....	15
Meeting Needs Through Action Units.....	18
Importance of Quality.....	19
Discussion Leader's Duties .....	21
Members Participation in Sabbath School.....	24

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING.....	28
Nature of the District .....	28
Methodology.....	32
Data Collection Procedure.....	32
Questionnaire for Superintendants Responses .....	33
Comments.....	33
Teachers Questionnaires Responses.....	35
Student Questionnaire Responses.....	36
4. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION..	40
Program Design .....	40
Members .....	41
Program Implementation .....	42
Summary of the Contents of Each Topic.....	43
How to Make Sabbath School Interesting.....	43
Effective Teaching.....	44
Sabbath School Teaching .....	44
Acton Units.....	46
Interviews on the Impact of the Training Program.....	46
A Suggested Sabbath School Program Outline .....	47
Evaluation .....	49
The Importance of Evaluation .....	49
Strategy Evaluation.....	50
Evaluation of Superintendents.....	50
Evaluation of Discussion Leaders .....	51
Evaluation of members.....	52
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	54
Summary.....	54
Training .....	54
The Major Problems Found in the Study.....	56
The Major Action Taken to Resolve the Problems .....	56
The Results Especially Concerning Participation .....	57
Conclusion .....	57
Recommendations.....	58
APPENDIXES .....	61
A. QUESTIONNAIRES.....	61
B. TRAINING MATERIAL.....	63
C. PLANNING MATERIAL .....	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	72
VITA.....	75

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Sabbath School division by age of members. ....	12
2. Purchasing trend of Bible study guides in the East Zimbabwe Conference .....	38
3. Purchasing trend of Bible study guides in Chiremba West district .....	38
4. Training Schedule .....	43

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my wife Gamuchirayi Chinembiri for her support during the period of writing this paper. Furthermore special thanks to Dr Jonathan Musvosvi who was my Adviser. His effort and time were consumed in assisting me. Dr Orapeleng did his best as my second reader. Last but not least thanks to the Almighty God for His mercy and guidance during the whole study.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to investigate why there is such a low attendance and participation in the Sabbath school program. This Chapter will provide a background of Chiremba West District, the problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, the methodology, and the delimitations.

Chiremba West District is found in eastern part of Harare, Zimbabwe. It is part of East Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to East Zimbabwe Conference statistical information, the membership of Chiremba West District stands at 1528 December 2011. The district has seven organized churches and three companies. The members of Chiremba West District are active in evangelism but they have a habit of coming late to church.

In Chiremba West District about forty percent of the total membership attend and participate in Sabbath School. Which means about sixty percent is coming late or not even attending, and this is a cause of concern. This paper is going to discuss some strategies that can be applied in order to try and increase attendance and participation.

#### **Problem Statement**

In Chiremba West District about forty percent of the total membership attend and participate in Sabbath School. The rest attend only divine service and this is a cause of concern. The church has done little in finding the solution to this problem.



### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to find out why there is such low attendance and participation in the Sabbath School program. Furthermore the paper will find out whether the local Sabbath School programs are enriching and if members understand the importance of Sabbath School. The researcher will then develop a program for all the churches in Chiremba West District to increase Sabbath school attendance and participation.

### **The Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to enhance the spiritual growth of members. This study will seek to improve the attendance and participation in Sabbath School programs. This will in turn improve fellowship and communal study of the Bible.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Action Unit:**

A small group of people studying the Sabbath School lesson together. In addition studying together they provide the supporting fellowship and relevant nurturing needed. They also provide the caring atmosphere, inspiration and do follow up of missing members within their group.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> East Zimbabwe Conference, Sabbath School Handbook 2011, 18.

- Superintendent:** The leading officer of the Sabbath School, the person is responsible for planning and ensuring smooth running of the Sabbath School.<sup>1</sup>
- Discussion leader (teacher):** The one who leads the class discussions during Sabbath School lessons

### **Methodology**

In order to establish why members in Chiremba West District are not attending and participating in Sabbath School, the researcher will gather information using questionnaires and personal interviews. Questionnaires will be distributed to church members from the age group of youth to young and adults. Senior church members who are fifty years and above are going to be interviewed. A sample group of thirty-five senior church members will be chosen from the seven churches in Chiremba West District. The varying age groups will allow the researcher to compare attendance and participation. The data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. This paper will also make use of bibliographic documentary search. The internet is going to be used to search for other material that could be use.

### **Delimitations**

The paper will focus only on Chiremba West District of East Zimbabwe Conference and it shall cover adult Sabbath School alone. This researcher shall take three years to complete the research.

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2010), 104.

## **Summary**

Chapter 1 has provided the background to the study, the problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, the methodology, the delimitations and the format of the study. The next chapter will present the literature review. The literature review discusses ideas and key concepts on Sabbath School and its importance to the spiritual growth of members.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter seeks to highlight the structure, function and objectives of Sabbath School in a local church. The structure deals with the organization of Sabbath School in relation to its specific functions. If adhered to consistently, the quality of Sabbath School may improve and attendance and participation may consequently increase. The objectives deal specifically with what local church members are set to benefit from Sabbath School.

#### **Background of Sabbath School**

Perhaps for the members to appreciate the importance of Sabbath School there is need to provide the history of Sabbath School. This chapter is going to reveal what the Bible teaches about attending church and participating. The chapter will also give a brief history of the Sabbath School in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Other authors are going to be consulted in the attempt to get strategies to increase attendance and participation during Sabbath School.

In 1853, only a few years after the first group of Sabbath-keeping Adventists was formed in Washington, New Hampshire, James White, a former Millerite preacher and one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, organized the first regular Sabbath School in Rochester, New York.<sup>1</sup> In 1852, estimating an informal membership of about 1,000 in the state of New York, White had written a

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<sup>1</sup> [www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.orgaad](http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.orgaad) (accessed 15/01/2013).

series of 19 lessons appearing in the new *Youth instructor*. The purpose of these lessons was to primarily help church members then to grow spiritually. Another set of lesson series was organized by John Byington in Buck's Bridge, New York in 1854; and the third was organized in 1855 by M. G. Kellogg in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Early Sabbath Schools had only two divisions, one for children and one for adults, called the Bible Class. Teachers placed much emphasis on the memorization of Scripture. 'In 1863, the first series of Sabbath School lessons adapted for children appeared. The same year the first adult Sabbath School lessons, written by Uriah Smith, another early Adventist pioneer, appeared in the *Review and Herald*'<sup>1</sup>. There was little organization "until G. H. Bell, a pioneer teacher in Battle Creek, became editor of the *Youth's Instructor* in 1869."<sup>2</sup> He introduced two series of lessons, one for children and the other for youth. He also published a plan of organization providing for a staff of officers and regular reports of attendance. He later introduced articles for teachers and officers. After demonstrating success in Battle Creek, Bell travelled to other places organizing Sabbath Schools and counseling officers.

It is worth to note that Sabbath School was quickly spread to other states in America and other countries outside America.

Organization of Sabbath Schools began in California in 1877 with the formation of the first state Sabbath School Association. The formation of this society was followed in the same year by the organization of the Michigan State Sabbath School Association. In March 1878 the General Sabbath School Association was organized. The first association outside North America was formed in 1883 in Switzerland and another in 1886 in England. In 1886 the name was changed to the International Sabbath School Association. When the General Conference was reorganized in 1901, the international Sabbath School Association became the Sabbath School Department of the General Conference.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [En.wikipedia.org/wiki/sabbathschool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sabbathschool) (accessed 15/01/2013).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> [www.ssnet.org](http://www.ssnet.org) (accessed 17/01/2013).

From the quote above it seem to suggest that the Seventh- day Adventist pioneers regarded Sabbath School highly. Sabbath School is one of the first departments to be established. The pioneers of the Adventist church did not only concentrate with the adult lessons for Sabbath School. They also focused on the children. “In 1878, in Battle Creek, Michigan, the first division for smaller children was formed called ‘the Bird’s Nest.’ In 1886 this became the kindergarten division. In 1879 the first Branch Sabbath Schools were organized.”<sup>1</sup>

A major reorganization of the Sabbath School Department took place at the 1985 General Conference session when it became a part of the newly created Church Ministries Department. At the 1995 General Conference session, the Church Ministries Department was dissolved and the Sabbath School department was re-established in combination with Personal Ministries. Today it is known as the Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>2</sup>

The Sabbath School Department was established as a major setting for religious education in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It exists to teach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words the Sabbath School is to maintain the original objectives of Sabbath School which will be discussed shortly in the next page. This is to but emphasized to all members regardless of age.

Reviewing Adventist history helps one to appreciate that Sabbath school was organized for the purposes of bible study and nurturing of members. Upon discovering that Sabbath School was primarily organized for bible study and nurturing of members, it is disturbing to note that some members of Chiremba West District show reluctance in attending and participating in the Sabbath School programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

When Sabbath school was formed it had four specific objectives: study of the Word; fellowship; community outreach and world mission emphasis. The Pastor, Elder and Sabbath School Superintendent ought to be aware of these objectives since they guide and shape the Sabbath School.

### **Objectives of Sabbath School**

#### Study of the Word

When Sabbath School started in 1853 the emphasis was on Bible study. The platform was to help the students to understand the gospel and thereby make a personal commitment to it. After one makes a commitment, spiritual growth follows, which is the ultimate goal of Sabbath school.<sup>1</sup>

#### Fellowship

McGovan says that, “people will not only commit themselves because they have studied the Word. The aspect of fellowship plays a major role for commitment to grow and to nurture them.”<sup>2</sup> Sabbath School fosters fellowship among members, firstly, by developing projects for recruiting new members; secondly, integrating them into church life, and thirdly; finding ways of restoring inactive members.

#### Community Outreach

Sabbath School can be a good tool to reach the community. Moore believes that “the mission of the church is to take the gospel of Christ to all the people according to Matthew 28:19.”<sup>3</sup> In order to achieve the Sabbath School may organize

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<sup>1</sup> [www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org](http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org) (accessed 15/01/2013).

<sup>2</sup> Donald McGovan, *Evangelism Through Fellowship* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2009), 47.

<sup>3</sup> Luke Moore. *Church and Its Mission* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2010), 73.

its members to be trained for witnessing. This may result in members having a deeper understanding of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### World Mission Emphasis

East Zimbabwe Conference Sabbath School Handbook states that, “Sabbath School will present a clear vision of the global mission of the church.”<sup>1</sup> This objective seems to suggest that members of the Sabbath School are not only to understand, but to be involved.

### The Structure of Sabbath School

In the Seventh-day Adventist church, Sabbath School is members meet to study the Word of God and fellowship. The school is structured into two divisions, namely adult and children division. It is administered by officers who ensure smooth running of the programs. The structure of the local church Sabbath School department according to the Seventh -day Adventist Church Manual consists of the following: Sabbath School Superintendent, Assistant superintendent, Sabbath School Secretary, Ushers, Discussion Leaders, Investment Secretary, and Sabbath School Council.

### Superintendent

“The Sabbath School Superintendent is the leader of the Sabbath School.”<sup>2</sup> This person is responsible for the planning of the Sabbath School in order to have a smooth running of the programs. Furthermore, the superintendent is to support the plans of Sabbath School department at the conference.

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<sup>1</sup> East Zimbabwe Conference, *Sabbath School Handbook*, 2000, 2.

<sup>2</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2010), 103.



### Assistant Superintendent

There are normally two assistant superintendents. One concentrates on evangelism whilst the other on membership. On evangelism, the assistant superintendent helps to “direct the Sabbath School outreach in the community.”<sup>1</sup> In order to achieve this, each action unit is encouraged to set a goal for soul winning. They are to pray and possibly fast to achieve that goal. The assistant for membership is expected to analyze the local membership by checking the Sabbath School membership card with the church membership register. This helps to check whether members are attending Sabbath School.

### Sabbath School Secretary and Investment Secretary

The responsibility of Sabbath School Secretary is to compile and complete the reports that are needed by the Conference Sabbath School Director.<sup>2</sup> These reports include total Sabbath School membership, number of action units, total number of visitors, Seventh-day Adventist literature distributed. The investment secretary is responsible for promoting the investment plan for mission support with Sabbath School.<sup>3</sup>

### Ushers and Discussion Leaders

These are responsible for greeting and welcoming people as they enter the church. They also assist members and visitors to find places to sit in church.

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<sup>1</sup> Sabbath School Department of the Zambezi Union Conference, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Sabbath School Department of the Zambezi Union Conference, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), 22.

Discussion leaders are responsible for leading discussions during the lesson study period.

### Sabbath School Council

“This is the administrative body of the Sabbath School.”<sup>1</sup> The council is constituted of the Sabbath School superintendent, assistant superintendent, secretary, investment secretary, vacation Bible School director; an elder and pastor as ex-officio. As it administers, it ensures that the Sabbath School is running smoothly and fulfilling the Sabbath School objectives.

The children’s Sabbath School is done at the same time with the Adult Sabbath School. For children, the Sabbath School aids like charts and DVDs are used. In order to bring variety, drama is also encouraged to be used. Songs with actions are sung. Children Sabbath School, if well conducted, will draw parents and children to come early, hence improve attendance of Sabbath School.

Table 1 shows how the recommended class age and size. When Sabbath School classes are in these small classes they are manageable. Furthermore members will know each other more closely hence friendship and fellowship is encouraged and nurtured.

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2010), 104.

Table 1. Sabbath School division by age of members.<sup>1</sup>

Class	Age	Maximum Recommended Class Size
Cradle Roll	0 – 3	5
Kindergarten	4 – 6	5
Primary	7 – 9	6
Junior	10 – 12	8
Earliteen	12 – 14	8
Youth	14 – 18	10
Adult	19+	8

### Action Units

An action unit is like a cell. These are members grouped together in small groups of six to eight. They meet during Sabbath School class time. During the week, they normally meet for prayer and any other religious activities.<sup>2</sup> In these groups, members provide supporting fellowship and nurturing. In these small groups members know one another intimately. Furthermore, through sharing life experiences like burdens, joys, sorrows and prayer request, they nurture each other. They also share testimonies which strengthen them spiritually. This is likely to result in members of the action unit loving each other. The warm interaction and mutual trust that the Sabbath School classes develop can be so closely knit such that members may feel they belong. Furthermore, they minister to each other, hence this may minimize absence.

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<sup>1</sup> Sabbath School Department of the Zambezi Union Conference, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Sabbath School Department Zambezi Union Conference, *Church Growth Through Sabbath School Action Units* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1998), 5.

The discussion leader also gives time for marking Sabbath School cards. As the cards are marked, missing members will be identified and someone is assigned to minister to them. Assessment on participation of members in outreach community is done during the card-marking. Thirty five minutes is then allocated to lesson discussion and application. Children's action units may exceed the recommended number, because of lack of trained teachers.

### Sabbath School as a Unifier of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Worldwide

The Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide is united through Sabbath School. This is achieved through mission offering, 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath School, study guide lesson and world mission story. Mission offering is money that is collected during Sabbath School worldwide. The purpose of this offering is to meet mission needs in different parts of the world. For example,

In 1885 mission offering were first collected in Milton Oregon, decided to give a portion of its Sabbath School offerings to missions. The idea became popular and in 1887, over \$10 000 was given through the Sabbath Schools in America for establishment of Solusi Mission in Africa. This was the fore runner of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission work in all parts of the world.<sup>1</sup>

### 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath School Offering

“In 1912 the General Conference Committee designated the last Sabbath School of each quarter as a day on which Sabbath School should take a special mission offering. This has been called the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.”<sup>2</sup> Seventh-day Adventist churches worldwide are encouraged to give an offering on the 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath.

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<sup>1</sup> Sabbath School Department of the Zambezi Union Conference, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Sabbath School Department of the Zambezi Union Conference, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), 22.

This offering is designed to benefit special projects of the church worldwide, for example, the mission project for Second Quarter in 2013 was distributed as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Build a classroom block for the primary school at the University of East Africa Baraton Kenya.
2. Complete construction of the Adventist hospital in Mwanza Tanzania.
3. Build a classroom block to accommodate increasing enrolment at Lukanga Adventist University Democratic Republic Congo.
4. Build a Lay Evangelist training centre in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic Congo

#### Study Guide for Each Group

The Seventh-day Adventist church has designed Sabbath School Study Guides for each age group. The study guides are studied worldwide during Sabbath School. The purpose of the lessons is to help members to grow spiritually. They are also structured in a way that enables members to study at home daily.

#### World Mission Story

This is basically a story of testimony of an individually or family that was reached by the Seventh-day Adventist message. The story is read to all Seventh-day Adventist church members throughout the world.

If one is to miss Sabbath School he/she has missed this important element that unifies the church. Attending Sabbath School would mean that members are moving together with the other members of Seventh-day Adventist in other parts of the

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of the Adult Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Bible Study Guide* (England: Stanborough Press, 2013), 224.

district, countries and the world at large. Since these activities are expected to be done at the same time, this connects the local churches as Seventh-day Adventists worldwide.

Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual state that, “The Sabbath School Superintendent is the leader of the Sabbath School.”<sup>1</sup> This person is responsible for the planning the Sabbath School in order to have a smooth running of the programs. Furthermore, the superintendent should support the plans of the Sabbath School department at Conference.

### **Meeting Needs of Church Members**

The Sabbath School is structured in a way that meets the needs of individual members. Jesus’ ministry is an example of how people’s needs can be met. Jesus had compassion for the people. During Sabbath School, leaders are to emphasize this aspect of Jesus. “Showing compassion to people is far much better than best sermon preached on the pulpit.”<sup>2</sup> Sabbath school members are to be taught to be compassionate to the surrounding community. Compassion ought to be repeated so that it gets to each member’s veins and is expected to become a lifestyle for every Adventist in Chiremba district. Smith wrote, “Jesus also looked upon the multitudes and had compassion upon them, for they were as sheep having no shepherd.”<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that Jesus saw it as His duty to have compassion. According to Jesus if he did not help no one would help. This mind should be in every Sabbath School leader.

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson Clerk, *Pastor and the Church* (England: Autumn House, 2002), 101.

<sup>3</sup> Irvin Smith, *Church Growth* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2010), 91.

Compassion, if faithfully and sincerely practiced will result in companionship and love among Sabbath school members and in turn attendance and participation will increase.

Morris observes: “the afflicted flocked came to Him [Jesus] in great numbers and He cured every sickness and every disease.”<sup>1</sup> The above quotation clearly suggests that everyone who came to Jesus would have their individual needs met. Jesus healed the people. The synoptic gospels have recorded some miracles were Jesus has healed on Sabbath. Sabbath School is to be a place for healing. If Sabbath School attendance is to be increased, it will have to meet the needs of the members. Dickson adds another point when he writes, “Every person wants to attend church where his or her needs are addressed.”<sup>2</sup> The Sabbath School leader in Chiremba West District needs to identify the needs of their congregation. Programs should be planned and conducted in a way that encompasses all felt needs of their people. Failure to do so may affect Sabbath School attendance. The Sabbath school period should be utilized in such a way that no one returns home feeling the same way they came to church.

Howard writes: “the Sabbath School program should heal the hearts of church members. When they come with doubts in their hearts they ought not to leave with a more doubt because superintendent failed to deliver a good presentation.”<sup>3</sup> When the members come to Sabbath School in a despondent mood because of sickness, folly or misfortune, it is tragic if something is not said which will help them to see life in a

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<sup>1</sup> Morris Green, *His Ways* (Cape Town: Viney, 2004), 103.

<sup>2</sup> Dickson Rasmussen, *Adult Sunday School* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 17.

<sup>3</sup> David Howard, *Sabbath School Techniques* (Lincolnwood, IL: Publications International, 1999), 96.

different manner. Furthermore, it may cause them to go without a renewed faith in God. Healing from sin should also take place in Sabbath School.

As the class progresses, an enthusiastic school spirit develops. Roy Wright states that “nobody likes to attend a half-dead school, but there is much stimulation in being part of a live, growing class.”<sup>1</sup> As a result, the school enables members to grow spiritually and develop into a strong Seventh-day Adventist Christian. There is need for Sabbath School to be enriching.

The need to belong is a basic need for every human being. If the local church is to increase attendance, the discussion leader of the Sabbath School has to create a warm, friendly, and loving environment in class. Those who are already attending make friends with the new or non-members. Normally, when a visitor comes he/she wants to see if he/ she can make friends and fit well. “A warm welcome is required if the Sabbath school is to keep those already there and those that are coming. Everyone likes recognition, appreciation and friendship.”<sup>2</sup> A warm welcome can work as a magnet to draw different people to attend Sabbath School. Such an environment may easily be established if members of the action unit visit each other. The responsibility of visiting action unit members gives the discussion leader opportunity to know group members individually. John Miles states that, “visitation makes people feel they belong.”<sup>3</sup>

Discussion leaders are to foster fellowship within their action unit. This maybe achieved by what Kennedy suggests: Ten minutes can be allocated to mark the

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Wright, *Sunday School* (London: Jovanvic, 2006), 63.

<sup>2</sup> Benson Moffat, *Church Growth* (Cape Town: Viney, 2008), 51.

<sup>3</sup> John Miles, *Shepherding His Flock* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 112.



Sabbath School card. After making the cards, discussion leader can then allocate members to do the follow up to the absent members.<sup>1</sup> This will improve attendance if everyone realizes that the action unit is concerned.

On the aspect of fellowship, there is need to strengthen each other in faith. When one member fails to attend Sabbath School, the unit is affected. Jesus in the book of Luke 22:32 states: “And when you have turned back, strengthen your brother” (NIV). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary comments: “‘fortify them,’ Peter is being encouraged to strengthen his brothers.”<sup>2</sup> Members ought to realize that they are brothers and sisters in Christ and therefore need to strengthen each other in faith. In the book of Acts 15:32 church members “said much to encourage and strengthen the brother” one finds the issue of fellowship being repeated. Every member must take upon himself/herself to take time to encourage and strengthen others. Sabbath School classes are designed to achieve this goal.

### **Meeting Needs Through Action Units**

Action Unit is a small group. A small group can be referred to as a cell. These are all Sabbath School members. According to Wagner,

The cell is the spiritual kinship group. In it, the members not only know one another, they share their lives with one another on a deeper level. Interpersonal relationships are more intimate in the cell than in the congregation. Cell members make themselves spiritually accountable to one another. It’s ideal size is 8-12 members.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Kennedy, *Teacher’s Manual* (Berrien Springs, MI: Justified Walk Ministries, 2010), 19.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Jamieson, A.R Fausset, and David Brown, *A Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old Testament and New Testament* (Hartford, CT: S.S Scranton Electronic Database 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Wagner, C. Peter. *Leading Your Church to Growth: The Secret of Pastor /People Partnership in Dynamic Church Growth* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1983), 85.

In this scenario spectators can become participants. Instead of remaining mere spectators, a loving atmosphere of mutual understanding trust and support encourages participation. It gives members opportunity to open up to each other. This will result in sharing joys and burdens. Now that they are few, it is easy for the discussion leader to help them apply the Sabbath School lesson study into their personal lives. This will motivate them to deeper study, and soon everyone is participating in the class discussion.

In her book E.G. White asserts that, “One who cannot err has advised the formation of small groups as a basis of Christian efforts”<sup>1</sup>. If the idea of small classes is implemented spectators can become participants. Instead of remaining mere spectators, a loving atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust and support develops. Members open up, share their burdens and joys, and feel a bond of closeness. As a result members can be enabled to retain backsliders and win souls to God, thus increasing participation during Sabbath School. When participation is increased more work can be done. Ellen White says “The work of God on this earth can never be finished until the men and women compromising our church membership rally to the work and with their efforts with those minister and church officers.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Importance of Quality**

Phillip observed that, “At times Sabbath Schools do not have the quality they should have. This could be attributed to lack of training of those in positions of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Battle Creek, MD: Review and Herald, 1901), 352.

responsibility.”<sup>1</sup> Attendance and participation can be increased by improving the quality, order and organization of Sabbath school programs. Presently, people give high regard to quality. If Sabbath School is to be attended quality should not be compromised. E.G. White adds: “We have not men who are sufficiently trained to do justice to the work of managing our Sabbath School”<sup>2</sup>. Leaders of Sabbath School department at the local church need thorough training for them to produce the desired results. When a leader is well trained it is going to be easy to direct the whole church. E.G White states that

Superintendents and the workers in our Sabbath School have a very important broad field to cultivate. They need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit of God, that their minds may be impressed to use the very best methods and follow the best plans to make their work wholly successful”<sup>3</sup>

In other words those leading should avoid cheap ideas and dull plans. Ellen G. White also talks of ‘best plans’ which is a vital element if we are to improve our attendance. If the Superintendent does not plan members will be absent. Sabbath School leaders are to give a planned program, if possible, for the whole year. Members should be convinced from the beginning that they are going to receive a planned program. When best plans and best methods are used this automatically create interest in members hence attendance will increase. Superintendents should bear in mind that they have an important task upon their shoulders which need diligence and faithfulness. People are to understand the objectives of Sabbath School

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<sup>1</sup> Burns K. Phillips, *Effective Sabbath School* (Battle Creek, MD: Review and Herald, 1998), 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11.

if the church is to keep the original structure. They are to be clearly explained and laid down. The minds of the superintendents are to give room for new ideas.

Serious regard is to be given to the time allocated to Sabbath School. This will allow enough time to cover the weekly lesson. Little time may result in a rushed Sabbath School, hence, compromising the lesson and the whole Sabbath School.

Ellen, G. White wrote “now is the time to labor and to do it in the counsel of God. If you cannot consecrate persons with the mission and Sabbath School the work will become a mere form.”<sup>1</sup>

Those who are in charge should be people who are God-fearing, having in mind what Ellen, G. White when she said, “there are souls to be saved, souls in our churches, in our Sabbath schools.”<sup>2</sup> If this theme is driven in the members, minds our participation during Sabbath School will improve.

### **Discussion Leader’s Duties**

Appropriate time should be allocated for the class discussion. Some discussion leaders enjoy talking for the entire period. Martha Bruce does not submit to such leaders when she asserts, “it is a known fact that people are able to sustain attention for only a certain length of time and when fatigue sets in, there must be a change or attention is lost.”<sup>3</sup> In order to avoid fatigue the discussion leader needs to encourage discussion among group members allowing everyone to contribute, thereby achieving member participation. Discussion leaders will do well if they do not sermonize during

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 195), 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies Volume 5* (Mountain View, MI: Pacific Press, 1948), 566.

<sup>3</sup> Martha Bruce, *Tips for Sabbath School Teachers* (Washington DC: Pacific, 2007), 42.

class time. Paul E. Loth states that “too much talking exhausts the teacher physically and has less benefit to the student.”<sup>1</sup> The lesson must be conducted in a manner that both the leader and members are enriched. Leaders should not underestimate their students and be tempted to think that they know everything. The classes could be conducted in a discussion manner. This will encourage members to read outside class as they look forward to participating during class.

In order for Sabbath school classes to be vibrant and interesting, good discussion leaders are required. Benson states that, “the teacher should know how to present the truth in an interesting manner.”<sup>2</sup> This calls for people who appreciate group dynamics. The discussion leader has to bear in mind that not all people understand bible teachings at the same level. This is regardless of age. There is no direct correlation between age and understanding of Bible truths. In order to lead vibrant, interesting and enriching discussions the discussion leader must make a faithful preparation. Discussion leaders should avoid cases where they talk in order to just fulfill their duty. Willard puts it in a very interesting manner, “for God does not put message in the heads of teachers who are so lazy, they will not study the precious word.”<sup>3</sup> It should be known clearly by teachers that God does not help lazy teachers, but those who diligently prepare and are spirit filled.

In the volume, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, E.G. White says, “The Sabbath School, if rightly conducted, is one of God’s great instrumentalities to bring souls to

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<sup>1</sup> Paul E. Loth, *Understanding Teaching* (Library of Congress, 2008), 67.

<sup>2</sup> Benson Andrew, *The Teacher and The Class* (London: Deut and Sons, 1999), 115.

<sup>3</sup> Willard Dove, *The Teachers Guide* (Pretoria: Color Press, 2009), 39.

knowledge of the truth, it is not best for the teachers to do all the talking.”<sup>1</sup> According to her Sabbath School is not just a mere gathering of people, but a great instrument to bring souls to Christ. As a result teachers or discussion leaders have got a vital role to play. It is advisable to have a class where the discussion leader does not do all the talking. An interactive method of teaching is the one that is encouraged as this increases participation. In using this method the Sabbath school discussion leaders should ask thought provoking questions that bring about discussion and analysis. The class in response will then dig into scripture to find truthful and applicable answers.

Odom advises: “The Sabbath school discussion leaders should not be disturbed by the silence that normally follows after the question. Normally the students will be absorbing the question and searching for the right answer.”<sup>2</sup> If the Sabbath school discussion leaders can be patient, a profitable discussion can emerge.

Discussion leaders need to be well read. They should be able to divide the Word of truth such that the Word of God becomes relevant to the lives of church members. Lessons in the Bible study guide are to be applied well in real-life situations. In this rapid social change era, if discussion leaders fail on application, the lesson will remain foreign not worthy to take home. In the handbook by East Zimbabwe Conference, the following assertion is found: “stereo type leads to dull class, and a dull class leads to absence from Sabbath School.”<sup>3</sup> A wide reader normally puts things differently and interesting, but still maintaining doctrinal purity.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School* (Washington DC; Review and Herald, 1938), 115.

<sup>2</sup> Gloria Odom, *Tips For Creative Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 57.

<sup>3</sup> East Zimbabwe Conference *Sabbath School Leaders Seminar*, 2012, 3.

## Members Participation in Sabbath School

Sabbath School must not be left to the leaders of the department alone. The whole church should team up and work together. Every member should set aside time to study the bible Study Guide during the week. If this team work starts at home, the meeting at church will become an extension of what would have started in our homes. E.G. White says “The Sabbath School affords to parents and children a precious opportunity of the study of God’s word. But in order to gain that benefit which they should gain in the Sabbath School, both parents and children should devote time to the study of the lesson.”<sup>1</sup> When time is allocated for the study of the lesson at home, this creates an interest in young people to participate. Lesson time can be a good time for them to speak and be heard. By so doing parents are also grooming new discussion leaders, hence increasing participation and attendance in the long run. Cook adds that, “When parents study the lesson at home with their family they become the spiritual models of their children.”<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to the class it is the duty of every member to bear in mind the mission we have as God requires. The gospel marching orders of Mathew 28:19 “Go yee therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.” Let every class member if possible invite someone for Bible Study during Sabbath School. When class members invite guests it will encourage them to come early hence attendance will increase, further more they would have also participated. Scott says, “By inviting someone to attend church you

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen, G. White, *Child Guidance* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 3.

<sup>2</sup> David, C. Cook, *Church Programs for Family Learning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 98.

also grow spiritually and your influence is enlarged.”<sup>1</sup> Class members need to understand that we cannot all be in front conducting Sabbath school program, but by bringing someone to study the Bible during lesson time they would have participated greatly. E.G. White asserts, “The Sabbath School teacher need to know it and every Sabbath School Scholar ought to understand it. We are all under obligation to God, to know what he sends to us”.<sup>2</sup>

More emphasis is also required in the area of outreach. Ellen G White writes “When the church members put faith, earnest effort to advance the message, they will live the joy of the Lord and will meet with success. Triumph always follows decided efforts.”<sup>3</sup> This means the work of evangelism should not be the responsibility of those in leadership position alone. Every church member in Chiremba West has got a part to play.

Gina wrote, “In the book of Acts we find the twelve disciples of Jesus in the business of making other disciples. Actually the book is full of acts of making disciples.”<sup>4</sup> After the training the disciples understood that Jesus had called them to exercise their gifts and participate in furthering the good news. This shows that those with gifts if they get empowered much can be achieved.

Church members ought to know that in order to attend Sabbath school they must rise early and prepare. E.G. White asserts, “Let not the precious hours of Sabbath school be wasted in bed. On Sabbath morning the family should be astir. If they rise

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<sup>1</sup> Marlene Scott, *Church Growth* (London: World Publishing, 2009), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *This Day with Go* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1964), 93.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen, G. White, *Testimonies Vol. 7* (Mountain View, MD: Pacific Press, 1948), 50.

<sup>4</sup> Jessica Gina, *The Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 5.



late, there is confusion and hustle in preparing for breakfast and Sabbath school.”<sup>1</sup>

Rising late from bed will mostly result in not attending Sabbath School. Church Elders and Sabbath School leaders may need to take the responsibility of encouraging people to raise early on Sabbath. Prolonged absence from Sabbath School can create a negative attitude towards Sabbath School. High regard should be given to the time allocated for Sabbath School.

There are offerings that are to be made during Sabbath School. If members do not financially support the Lord’s work, their hearts may not be in the Lord’s work. (Matthew 6:21) “for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” Thomas agrees, “Normally human beings put attention where their money is.”<sup>2</sup> It is important that members support Sabbath School financially. By so doing they will identify themselves with Sabbath School to further the mission. These offerings should be promoted, if possible, monthly or quarterly. On the last Sabbath, usually the thirteenth Sabbath of each quarter, a special offering is taken, and a percentage is applied to certain pre-selected mission projects in world divisions. “Birthday thanks offerings are a token of appreciation of Gods’ blessing and preservation of life.”<sup>3</sup> As early as 1890 Ellen White wrote “On birthday occasions the children should be taught that they have reason for gratitude to God for loving kindness in preserving their lives for

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School* (Washington DC; Review and Herald, 1938), 115.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Thomas, *Understanding the Book of Matthew* (San Dimas, CA: Tyndale House 2010), 147.

<sup>3</sup> East Zimbabwe Conference (*Sabbath School Handbook*, 2008), 35.

another year”.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, “There is also investment offering.”<sup>2</sup> This offering is there to promote and increase of mission gifts beyond regular giving. There is no particular amount allocated to it. It can be brought weekly or quarterly, but periodically a special promotional appeal is presented in the Sabbath School.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Adventist Review & Sabbath Herald* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, November 13 1994).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

## CHAPTER 3

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

This chapter seeks to give a brief description of the setting where the district of Chiremba West is located. Furthermore the description of local setting is going to unveil some challenges in the local setting that affect Sabbath School attendance and participation, in Chiremba West district. The last part will deal the data collection. The researcher will employ questionnaires and interviews and then will analyze the data.

Chiremba West District in East Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is constituted of seven congregations. The district is situated seven kilometers from Harare's central business district. This district was organized in 1982. It was the first black congregation in an area that was dominated by whites. Cranborne Church was Chiremba District's pioneer church. As the congregation grew companies were started, the companies were organized into churches and by 2006 Chiremba District had become too large to manage and was split into Chiremba West and East.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Nature of the District**

The District has mainly middle class families (people who minimally struggle to get the basic survival needs). These families are suffering from the middle class

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<sup>1</sup>The above summary was given by Max Chisewe one of the old member members of Chiremba West district.

squeeze which sees them working hard six days a week to keep up their life style.<sup>1</sup> As a result Saturday is their rest day. This is caused by the economy of Zimbabwe which shrunk significantly after 2000, resulting in a desperate situation for the country and widespread poverty and an 80% unemployment rate.<sup>2</sup> As a result they reported that this is the reason why they come late for Sabbath school because they work hard for long hours.<sup>3</sup> The middle-class squeeze is the situation where increases in wages fail to keep up with inflation for middle-income earners.<sup>4</sup> Persons belonging to the middle class find that inflation in consumer goods and the housing market prevent them from maintaining a middle-class lifestyle<sup>5</sup>. These people have fears to change their standards of living to a lower class<sup>6</sup>. In Zimbabwe for example, middle-class income is declining while many essentials are increasing in price, such as electricity, water, rates, education, housing, and insurance.

Some of the Sabbath school attendees complain that the programs are shallow and boring. When they are elected to positions of leadership they turn down because of their busy schedule. The positions are then given to the unemployed who may make presentations that may not appeal to the middle class. This then contributes to

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<sup>1</sup> En.wikipedia.org/wiki/google employment rate in Zimbabwe (accessed 27 April 2013).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> This information was supplied by five bread winners who were interviewed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2013.

<sup>4</sup> En.wikipedia.org/wiki/google employment rate in Zimbabwe, (accessed 27 April 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

poor attendance in Sabbath school.<sup>1</sup> Failure to attend may be a sign that members are not challenged by the programs or the programs are not aiding their spiritual growth therefore they do not see the benefit of attending Sabbath School.

Some Sabbath School members are working mothers who have young children and who during the week have maids to assist them with cooking and getting their children bathed and ready for school. When Sabbath comes these maids go for their off days, meaning that the mothers have to get up make breakfast, get their children bathed and ready for church and get ready themselves.<sup>2</sup> This may cause some of the mothers to be late for church because they will be over whelmed with house chores as everyone will be looking to them to get everything ready.

Some church members are mothers who may be married to men who are not members of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Since Saturday falls on a week end probably they would want to spend the day with their families.<sup>3</sup> This means coming to church early may be difficult for these members. In addition to this their partners may not understand about the need to get to church early and the lack of support may lead to these members being late for church. There are also men who have wives who do not attend the Seventh-day Adventist church; they might as well not prioritize Sabbath preparation for their husbands. Hence they come late resulting in poor Sabbath School attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> This is from an interview with Mr. X when he was commenting on the Sabbath School at his local Church. The researcher named him X because he was not willing to disclose his name.

<sup>2</sup> The researcher got this comment in a nominating committee when a lady who was breastfeeding was elected to be Superintendent and she declined the position.

<sup>3</sup> This response came from Mrs. Maziti, who was converted to the Adventist Church, but her husband is not an Adventist.

New converts and members who have recently moved to the district may find that some churches in the district are very exclusive. Sabbath school is an interactive time and is used for church members to get to know each other better some 'new members' may find it hard to fit in to the current church culture. It may also be difficult because when churches are very tight knit it may be difficult to break into those groups and make friends therefore avoiding Sabbath school time all together may seem easier. Some new converts may not have understood the importance of Sabbath school in the first place and may need more lessons on the role of Sabbath school in a Christian's life. Many Sunday keeping churches in Chiremba West attend church only for an hour. Some of the converts are coming from such a background. This could be why they come late for Sabbath School. Therefore in depth study needs to be undertaken to make Sabbath School a priority.

Some of the members in the district do not live near the churches some might travel more than 25km to get church. This could be as a result of personal preference, they are more comfortable in this district than in the district they live in and because of the distant they have to travel. Traffic congestion is another contributing factor. The city of Harare has the highest volumes of vehicles compared to any other city in Zimbabwe and the road network prohibits people to travel fast. Some members are delayed for Sabbath school because of traffic congestion.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this there are members who use public transport to come to church, they live outside Chiremba West district. Usually they arrive late because of traffic congestion. Other families have got five to seven members who use one bathroom. This is time consuming as they take turns to bath. This also contributes to poor attendance during Sabbath School.

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<sup>1</sup>This was an observation by the researcher when he was doing Pastoral visits.

Also from an interview with Mr. Y he highlighted that some Shona people culturally are poor time keepers. Shona esteem the event rather than time. Unfortunately Sabbath events are scheduled according to specific times. As a result they come late for Sabbath school.

### **Methodology**

In order to get information from the members, questionnaires were administered. Three sets of questionnaires were distributed namely discussion leaders' / teachers'; students'/ members' and Sabbath School superintendents'. The superintendents' questionnaire was designed to find out if they were conducting meetings as recommended by the Church Manual. It was also meant to check how long they had stayed on that same position. The teachers' questionnaire was to assess whether there was a good rapport between the teachers and members. Furthermore to check if teachers were preparing well enough for their class. Members' questionnaire was to check if members were studying their Bible Study Guide lesson during the week. It was also to assess if members still had interest in Sabbath School.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaires were administered by the elders responsible for Sabbath School department at local church. Seven hundred questionnaires were distributed to members and five hundred and ninety seven returned their questionnaires. For the superintendents fifteen questionnaires were distributed and ten were returned for analysis. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed to teachers. One hundred and fifteen were brought back. EZC office was also consulted in getting statistical membership records. In terms of verbal interviews five members were verbally interviewed.

## Questionnaire Data Analyses

### Questionnaire for Superintendants Responses

1. What is the average age of your congregation? 35 – 50 years
2. How long have you been superintendent of this church? 1 – 2years
3. Have you ever been a teacher for Sabbath school class before? 2 yes 13  
No
4. How often do you have departmental meetings? Once a quarter
5. List a simple agenda with your staff.....
6. Do you have files for you minutes? Yes
7. What added equipment or facilities do you need in your department? Majority requested for Sabbath School Material.
8. Do you understand your responsibility well? Yes
9. How would you rate yourself? More than half need grooming.
10. Do you sometimes contemplate to give up your job as the superintendent? Yes
11. Besides challenges that you maybe facing would recommend someone else to be the superintendent for next year? Yes
12. Have you managed to set up action units for the lesson study? No

### Comments

The average age of Adventist in Chiremba West is 35 – 50 years. This indicates that the church has got middle age population. If superintendents would appreciate that this age group wants to be identified with organized programs because this is the age of company directors; people who are drivers of the economy of the



country.<sup>1</sup> As a result superintendents are to plan well their programs if they are to catch the interest of the church members.

Notably, out of the 15 superintendents and their assistants in the district only three have been in this position for the past three years the rest have two and less years experience in the department. As much over-staying in a position has its own negative impact. If one is not given enough time to learn, at times programs will be below expectation. It would be difficult to reach the desired goal. If superintendents would be given a period of five years to implement their plan probably they would accomplish their set goals. This will allow them to gain confidence and at the same time focus on what they have come up with.

According responses, thirteen superintendents and their assistances indicated that they have never been discussion leaders of Sabbath School class before. This may have some negative impacts on Sabbath School. Taking someone who has not been part of the Sabbath School leadership to lead that person will take time to learn and gets acquainted with crucial areas of Sabbath School. When the superintendent will be ready to execute the duties his or her term of office is about to end.

From the questionnaires our superintendents are requesting resource material to use in their work. Even if they understand their responsibility it will be difficult to execute their duties to the required capacity if they do not have resources.

The following responses came from the teachers/ discussion leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with one of the members who withheld her identity and age.

## Teachers Questionnaires Responses

	Yes	No
1. Do you visit you members/students?	113	
2. Do you follow the study guide?	112	3
3. Do you mark your Sabbath School record card before starting?	34	81
4. Do you know your students by name?	70	45
5. Do you always do the talking whilst your students stare at you?	65	50
6. How many students do you have?	Average	17
7. Do you have favorite student?	75	40
8. Do you take time in preparing for lesson?	105	10
9. Do you read widely, not only Sabbath School Guide?	43	72
10. Were you		
a) forced to teach	0	0
b) volunteer to teach	3	0
c) elected to teach	112	0
11. Do you have an Adventist background?	62	53

Out of the 115 teachers who returned questionnaires only two visit their students/class members. If teacher and student relationship is poor it will be very difficult to achieve desired target of increasing attendance and participation.

Though classes are small a challenge still remains that most of the teachers are not marking their Sabbath School cards. On these cards is information which can be used to evaluate our own class. Now if the cards are not marked, it will be difficult to check progress. It is sad to note that the majority of members do not have Bible

Study Guides lesson. This is a clear indicator that our members are losing interest in Sabbath School or the Sabbath School leaders have not yet promoted them.

These were the responses of the students/ members who attend Sabbath School. They are the ones who are members of the action units.

### Student Questionnaire Responses

1,2,3,4,5. 1 is the poorest and 5 is the strongest.

	Yes	No
1. I feel that I have a strong personal relationship with my teacher?	105	201
2. My teacher has an active interest in the progress of the development of my spiritual life?	178	71
3. I feel free to discuss my doubts and questions regarding Adventism or Christianity?	101	122
4. The weekly lesson are valuable to me?	75	277
5. I freely participate in class discussion?	65	312
6. I apply bible lessons to my life?	306	-
7. The Sabbath school experience feeds me spiritually and provides for growth in my Christian life?	217	35
8. I come to class because		
a) I am forced to come	34	
b) I enjoy Bible study	259	
c) I want to see friends	19	
d) It's a habit		
e) Other reasons		
9. I will be a better student		
if.....		

10. Do you always come late for Sabbath School. If Yes Why, If No

why.....

.....

11. My spiritual growth as a direct involvement in this class could be described as

- a) Becoming less interested      2
- b) No interest      1
- c) Reading my Bible more      201
- d) Praying more      277
- e) Changing attitude      268
- f) Dedication to Christ increased      211
- g) Interest in evangelism increased      11

12 Do you have your own personal Bible Study Guide? 200 Yes 234 No

13 I have my own Bible Study Guide lesson 108 Yes 482 No

Some students are having a problem in attending Sabbath School. From what came out from the questionnaire they are waking up late, whilst some admitted that they over work during the week. Its sad to note that majority of the members do not have Bible Study Guides. The noteworthy observation is that members indicated that they still enjoy Bible study regardless of coming late.

The researcher went to the East Zimbabwe Conference to the Secretariat department and Sabbath School. The following table shows the findings.

How Sabbath School Bible Study Guides have been bought in East Zimbabwe Conference per quarter.

Table 2 shows the purchase of Bible Study Guides in Chiremba West district.

Table 3 indicates that there is a problem in studying the Word of God. There was a significant rise in 2013. Sabbath School provides time to study the Word, lack of the study guides shows that members are not studying, hence the lack of participation.

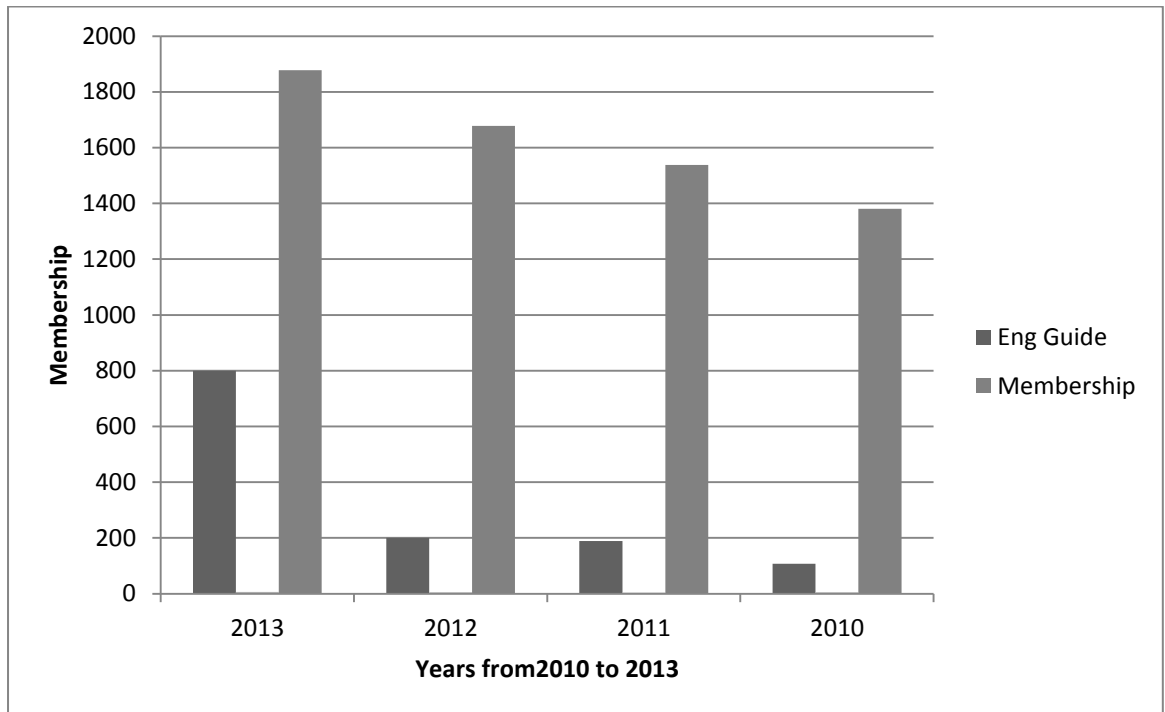
*Table 2. Purchasing trend of Bible study guides in the East Zimbabwe Conference*

<b>Year</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Shona</b>	<b>Membership</b>
2013	8000	6000	273,987
2012	7000	5775	272,095
2011	6000	5800	263,980
2010	no figure supplied	5800	259,893

*Table 3. Purchasing trend of Bible study guides in Chiremba West district*

<b>Year</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Shona</b>	<b>Membership</b>
2013	800	6	1878
2012	200	5	1678
2011	189	4	1528
2010	167	5	1381

Figure 1 has the same information with Table 2. The researcher puts the information on the graph for clarity purpose.



*Figure 1.* A comparison between district membership and Bible study guide purchasing.

CHAPTER 4  
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION  
AND EVALUATION

**Program Design**

There is a great need to give awareness lessons on the importance of Sabbath School and what Sabbath School can do for the church if conducted in the rightful manner. Members, Sabbath School Superintendents, and Discussion Leaders should really understand and appreciate the role of Sabbath School in the Adventist Church. In order to achieve this researcher will take the following steps

1. Train all superintendents and discussion leaders at beginning of the year. After the training superintendents must be able to
  - a) Present programs that meet the needs of the church members
  - b) Present well planned programs that will appeal to members
  - c) keep time and not end up doing rushed program/ presentation.
  - d) Should have Sabbath School resource material
  - e) Implement action units at their local churches.

In a bid to increase participation and attendance, there is need to divide classes into smaller units. This is encouraged because members will be able to meet, motivate and encourage each other. Westing writes “Churches that meet people’s needs fill their facilities. People drive or walk great distances, passing many churches enroute, to attend a church where their lives will be enriched.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harold J Westing, *Make your Sunday school Grow Through Evaluation* (Cleveland, OH: Union Gospel Press, 2008), 47.

After training Discussion leaders should be able to

1. Ensure Sabbath School cards have been marked
2. Be able to understand group dynamics
3. Help action unit members in identifying their spiritual gifts
4. Develop skill of delivering a lesson.

### Members

A lesson will be conducted in church on the history of Sabbath School and its relevance to Adventist today. Sometimes the church assumes that everyone knows about Sabbath School. There is need to take a deliberate approach of teaching and instructing members about Sabbath School. This will be the awareness program to all church members.

The pastor and elders to promote Sabbath School attendance and participation in church. If the pastor and elders do a deliberate and systematic approach of regularly promoting the Sabbath School, there may be a significant increase in attendance.

Those who are early comers' maybe recognize by announcing their names in church. This may encourage others to come early next time. The church can put a budget to buy books and give to those who come early. This can be done to instill a culture of time consciousness.

To improve punctuality

(a) Families to make Sabbath School presentation

(b) Action units to make Sabbath School presentations.<sup>1</sup>

On the area of punctuality Ellen White has wrote that,

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<sup>1</sup> If members and action units are going to be given chance to present in church, this will solve the problem of punctuality. They are going to come early because they have something to do. Their friends will come to give moral support, hence attendance is increased and participation.



It is a sad failing with many that they are always behind time on Sabbath morning. They are very particular about their time, they cannot afford to lose an hour of that, the Lord's time, the only day out of the seven that the Lord claims as His and requires us to devote to Him, quite a portion of this squandered away by sleeping late in the morning.<sup>1</sup>

Punctuality was a major concern for Ellen G. White. From the quotation one can picture a healthy church, with excellent attendance if the church members took heed of Ellen G. White counsel on Sabbath School. In an attempt to improve punctuality of members in Chiremba West the following should be done

- 1) Encourage churches to form Sabbath School Choirs
- 2) Encourage members to form singing groups
- 3) Encourage families to form singing groups

As they meet for their musical practice they encourage one another, hence their commitment will increase. At the same time participation increases.

Family members and friends are likely to come early to give support to choir members or groups when they are presenting in church.

- 4) Programs are to be advertised well in advance.
- 5) The Sabbath School Council can also give certificates of appreciation to those who come early for Sabbath School.
- 6) Members should be motivated to come early by the quality of programs
- 7) Programs to be people oriented and members ought to feel that they are being considered.

### **Program Implementation**

After having distributed the questionnaires to all the teachers, superintendents and students, the researcher discovered that there is need now to implement a program.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen, G. White, *Counsels On Sabbath School Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald 1938), 13.

This program will assist in empowering the superintendents in Sabbath School as well as the discussion leaders. So much training is required if we are to achieve our desired goal of increasing attendance and participation during Sabbath school. Table 4 below contains the implementation program for superintendent and teachers.

Table 4: Training Schedule

Date	Presenter	Topic	Participants Comments	Venue	Time
05/01/2013	Pastor E.Chinembiri	How to make Sabbath School interesting	It was well attended	Baptist Conference Centre	4 hours
12/01/2013	Pastor Chinembiri	Effective teaching methods	An eye opener	Hatfield	4 hours
02/02/2013	Pastor Khan	Ways to improve your teaching	Everyone was participating	Cranborne	4 hours
10/02/2013	Pastor Chinembiri	Sabbath School Action Units	Very good	Cranborne	3 hours

### **Summary of the Contents of Each Topic**

#### **How to Make Sabbath School Interesting**

The presenter made some emphasis on fellowship. Fellowship is a very fundamental element that should not be neglected. Members need this unique warmth and are able to share their joy and sorrows. Once the Sabbath school meet this need attendance is likely to increase quickly. Wright says, “Fellowship help in both

nurturing the old members and bring new members”<sup>1</sup> if new members join a church with a strong fellowship culture they easily follow and get strong in faith. The other aspect which was interesting was on planning. Teachers and Superintendent ought to plan their work. It is unfair to present unplanned program or lesson to the church. Monroe Marlowe says, “The first step in planning the session is for you to get in touch with the session scripture yourself. Spend plenty of time reading the scripture from different versions.”<sup>2</sup>

### Effective Teaching

Sabbath School leadership should not forget that our goal is to increase attendance and participation during Sabbath school. To achieve the presenter highlighted the following.

- a) The teacher must give chance for the class to respond
- b) The superintendent must monitor his/her teachers.
- c) Our lessons must be transferred to experiences of life.
- d) Don't assume everyone knows what you know.
- e) Teach using stories, but they should not many otherwise they will distort the lesson

### Sabbath School Teaching

Sabbath school leadership should avoid doing the same things over and over again. If things are done the same way they become less challenging and boring. Once

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<sup>1</sup> Wright Harold, *Growing Adults on Sunday school* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2008), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Monroe Marlowe, *Creative Bible Learning for Adults* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 103.

members consider it boring they will abscond. On the ways to improve your teaching, teachers were challenged to think outside the box and come up with ways that suits their classes. Kenneth says, “The variety of teaching methods is almost limitless.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore let discussion leaders be disciplined enough to think and come up with variety but not compromising on quality. The following were emphasized.

- a) Inspires students to think for themselves and to express their own ideas sincerely.<sup>2</sup>
- b) Avoid embarrassing students.
- c) A good discussion leader does not shout when speaking.<sup>3</sup>
- d) Great teacher have passion.<sup>4</sup>

The researchers then established teachers’ class were discussion leaders come early and discuss the lesson together. This is a way to equip every teacher so that during lesson time they don’t stammer, because of lack of information. Lesson time must be the most interesting period of the Sabbath School program, as it allows everyone to take part. Teachers’ class is also an opportunity to reinforce the guidelines that are required when teaching. Furthermore during teachers’ class, time is spent encouraging discussion leaders to plan their lessons. Smith wrote, “Any

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Improve your Teaching* (England: Victor Book. 1986), 8.

<sup>2</sup>The researcher got this quotation from a magazine unfortunate it the first pages tone away. The article was written by Marlin, L. Neffs, and was entitled *The Art of Teaching*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> East Zimbabwe, *Sabbath School Handbook*, 2012, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching Methods* (Chicago: Moody Publishers 2009), 215.

enterprise built by wise planning, becomes strong.”<sup>1</sup> It is very vital for teachers to plan, failure to do so will result in students getting bored and eventually they will absent themselves.

### Acton Units

Sabbath school must be done in such a way that it should never be monotonous. Adventists refer to school as the heart beat of the church. The four Sabbath school objectives, fellowship, studying of the Word, World Mission Emphases, must be seen in the programs. Small group ministries through action units have to be emphasized. Through, Ellen G. White, the Lord tells us that this small group methodology is still valuable today, “The formation of small companies as a basis for Christian effort is a plan that has been presented to me by one who cannot err.”<sup>2</sup> The philosophy of small group is to allow members to interact not only on Sabbath school, but on a daily basis.

### **Interviews on the Impact of the Training Program**

After each presentation I carried some interviews to evaluate the impact of the training. It was worth noting that confessions were made. Some members admitted that for the past years, their teaching has not been effective according to the training. Recommendations were made that, if possible the training to be given to the whole church. The reason being that since local church election are done yearly and changes

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<sup>1</sup> Frans C. Smith, *Improve your Teaching* (California: Trinity Divinity School, 2010), 89.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 78.

are normally done. If the next group of Sabbath School leadership changes there is high possibility to return to the old ways of conducting Sabbath School.

### **A Suggested Sabbath School Program Outline**

9:00 am – 9:45 song service (*15 minutes*)

Opening Song and Prayer

Welcome

Superintendent's Remarks

World Mission Report

Evangelism Thrust

Small Group Action Units

9:45 am – 9:50 am caring for missing members

9:50 am – 10: 10 am care co-ordinator/ outreach activities

10:10 am – 10:45 am lesson study

Dismiss for preaching service

### **Proposed Lesson Outline**

#### **Introduction**

- i) Arrest interest in the first five minutes
- ii) Ask simple question like how was the week
- iii) Tell an incident very brief
- iv) Find a comment that will leads naturally into the topic of the day

#### **Presentation**

- i) summarize the lesson touching on the main points in the lesson
- ii) statements by teacher, usually its encourage to quote notes or texts
- iii) ask question to encourage participation and involvement

- iv) true or false question can be asked

### **Application**

- i) avoid to be personal
- ii) should bring the lesson to meet members' needs
- iii) should end logically

The superintendents are now empowered to monitor their classes and make sure everyone has a Bible Study Guide to read. We have arranged with Adventist Book Centre to purchase on account and the Superintendent will also work as the agent of Adventist Book Center at the local church. The commission will go to the Sabbath School department. We now have action units functioning though we still need to break some of them to even smaller numbers. During training we discovered that there is need to group our units according to age. This will enhance fellowship and it makes a lesson life application easy, as compared to a mixed group. We have revitalized our teacher's class that is held between 8:00 – 8:45. All of our five churches now participate in this period were we standardize our lesson and make sure we all have same information. This is also the moment to assist each other as teachers to answer some of the question that may be existing between us.

In response to the members who are bringing their visitors we have begun a class for visitors only which uses the Bible Doctrinal manual as a teaching resource. This move is aimed at creating thirst to learn more about the Bible. We have selected elders who are good in delivering the Word of truth. At Cranborne, Hatfield and Masasa Park there has been an increased in number at this visitor's class. Visitors have increased by more than 15%. Masasa Park has introduced a table for visitor with some juice were they take their contacts for follow up purpose. Cranborne church has

gone a step further in preparing lunch for all visitors every Sabbath. We have witnessed some of them getting baptized because of this gesture.

## **Evaluation**

### The Importance of Evaluation

After we had gone through all the necessary stages of the strategy of increasing attendance and participation during Sabbath school, there is need for an evaluation. James Brown asserts, “an evaluation should not be attempted unless there is a definite description of responsibilities and goals.”<sup>1</sup> In this research discussion leaders and superintendent have been well trained, their duties have been well spelled out. Training is important because it stimulates the level of expectation after which evaluation will be given. Evaluation affords an opportunity of self-search and it creates an inward desire to grow. In the beginning of 2012 it was announced to all Sabbath school team that there will be an evaluation in 2013. This made teachers to read and they took all our training with high regards. The feedback that came was growth from the discussion leaders first, because they were now disciplined to study their lesson before class. If the discussion leaders grow he or she will pass it on to the class and there will be growth at the class, which is our desired goal.

Evaluation is open to valid criticism. Normally when an evaluation exercise is being carried out, there are bound to be some short-comings in the department. They must not discourage or frustrate the leaders, but should accord an opportunity to improve. Areas where they are good must be noted to instill confidence and encourage

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<sup>1</sup> James Brown, *Success through Evaluation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 46.



the leadership. If it is carried in the right spirit it should leave everyone the mood to execute their duties.

When evaluation is announced all who are involved are fully aware, they definitely awake from slumber. Generally human beings are made in such a way that they do not want to fail. Introducing evaluation will make everyone jump around. The participation by everyone is the desired goal. It also brings some seriousness in the work of God. Many times people handle the work of God lazily and it results in destroying the interest in some members. If evaluation is to be carried out those in leadership will be serious. Frank says, "I have found only a few teachers that have shown serious concern about the effectiveness of their teaching."<sup>1</sup> This highlights that teachers/discussion at time can choose to slacken if systems are not well controlled and checked. Evaluation brings total control of the whole system. As long as the department is under control it will remain focused to our desired goal of increasing attendance and participation.

## **Strategy Evaluation**

### Evaluation of Superintendents

The researcher also noted that superintendents need to be encouraged. Sometimes they get discouraged with other members. Normally they accept this great responsibility because of their love for God, but along the way they stumble because of the difference circumstances. It is the responsibility of Pastors and Elders to continuously encourage so that the fire and zeal to work keep on burning. Frequent meetings with Sabbath School Leadership is also important, so that reports can be

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Frank, *Success through Evaluation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 45.

given and assistance can be rendered were need is required. The researcher noted that when Sabbath School leaders meet with the Pastor they develop confidence as they implement their strategies. In some churches we were facing resistance in downsizing the numbers in action unit. Some of Sabbath School leaders were getting discouraged and were contemplating to leave the position. When we continuously met encouraging them they gained confidence and have managed to establish functioning action units.

Sabbath School programs have increased quality; this is the result of the training that was carried out. Furthermore Superintendents were encouraged to buy their own Sabbath School resource material. Chiremba West Superintendents now fully understand their responsibilities and their expectations.

#### Evaluation of Discussion Leaders

In the questionnaire we discovered that discussion leaders are not conducting lesson to the standard required to improve attendance and participation. The researcher then organized Sabbath School seminar at Camborne Church which was conducted by Pastor Kahn Conference Director for Sabbath School. Pastor Kahn emphasizes on making each member feel important, because he or she has attendant Sabbath School. The feedback we got was that the whole church should have attended the seminar. After the seminar we started to notice some changes, in the number of attendance. Its clear according to Lawrence says, “Human beings have a desire for belonging.”<sup>1</sup> When our discussion leaders took the lead to visit their action unit members, they accepted and leave. This resulted in our attendance increasing. One of the churches which had no teachers lesson ended up with a very vibrant teachers class which is now meeting every Sabbath morning to discuss the lesson together

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *Creative Bible teaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers 1998).

## Evaluation of Members

A lesson on the importance of Sabbath School was conducted as an awareness program to all churches. The lesson covered the history of Sabbath School, its relevance to the Adventist Church and what it can do or contribute if rightly conducted. After the awareness program there was an appreciation of the Sabbath School from the members. This helped some new converts who were coming from other churches which conduct one service for an hour.

There was also an increase in the purchase of Sabbath School Study Guides. This was as a result of the arrangements that was made between the Adventist Book Center and superintendents, were by Study were being given to superintendents to sell at local churches. Out of a membership of 1878 only 200 had Bible Study Guides. After the arrangements with ABC to have superintendents as their agency, members with Bible Study Guides increased to 820.

When members were given opportunity to make presentations families, an increase in attendance was noticed. It is noteworthy that by 9:00am churches like Cranborne, Hatfield and Masasa Park pills will be full of church members ready to start Sabbath School. The church in Chiremba West now realizes that Sabbath School well conducted sets the tone not only for the day but for the whole life.

It is easier for members to open up in smaller groups than in big crowds or large groups. One element that also gets accomplished by small units is recognition of each member. It is human nature to feel happy and welcome when one is recognized. After I had recommended to the Sabbath School Council to divide the classes into smaller action units, there has been an increase in attendance. There is no doubt that participation has also increased simultaneously. The number of discussion leaders has increased significantly; the youth have been co-opted to teach. When people are in

smaller units they get the quality discussions they want and their time will not be wasted.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

The Sabbath School Department was established as a major setting for religious education in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It exists to teach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. To honor this original purpose, the Sabbath School communicates the good news with the objective to win, hold, and train for Jesus Christ, men, women, youth, boys and girls, throughout the world. The Department provides Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, designs material for Sabbath School programming, offers training and resources to discussion and members, cooperates with the Office of Mission Awareness in the promotion of support for world missions, and designs programs and resources to help those areas of the world where church growth is limited. The Sabbath School department is a very important part of the Seventh-day Adventist movement and is the heartbeat of the church.

#### **Training**

Training includes training discussion leaders in high impact teaching meaning being able to teach relate a lot of fundamental ideas in a short period of time, certification in Bible study and teaching skills, advanced training in teaching methodology and training in use of teaching tools and resources. This training will

- Increase teaching skills.

- Development in broad background and appreciation of the departments overall operations and objectives.
- Teachers will be willing to take on more responsibility because of increased ability.
- Creation of a reserve of qualified teachers in case there is need for a replacement.
- Improved selection for Sabbath School Superintends.
- Minimum lag when new superintends are put in office because of increased skill.
- Improved teacher's morale.
- Attract a better quality of teacher.
- Increased effectiveness.

Sabbath school teachers association would be an organization that would offer support to Sabbath school teachers where they can meet and discuss problems they are facing and exchange ideas on how they can overcome them. They would have access to resources and discuss innovative ways to improve the Sabbath School experience. This association will act as support group to make the teaching experience a little less stressful.

Advantages of such a support group:

- Feeling less anxious about being judged about their teaching skills.
- Gaining a sense of empowerment and control.
- Improving your coping skills and sense of adjustment.
- Talking openly and honestly about their frustrations associated with teaching.
- Reducing distress when it comes to teaching.

- Developing a clearer understanding of what to expect when teaching.
- Getting practical advice or information about teaching methods.
- Comparing notes about resources and alternative options.

These measures will lead to

- An increase in Sabbath School attendance and participation
- An increase in the quality of Sabbath School programs
- An increase in trained teachers.
- An increase in mission offerings.

#### The Major Problems Found in the Study

The researcher observed that church member did not prioritize Sabbath School that is why their attendance was low. There was also problem in the area of superintendents who did not understand their responsibilities. Training was lacking to the discussion leaders on the are of understanding group dynamics. In some churches they were resisting the idea of action units. Majority of the members did not have Sabbath School Study Guides.

#### The Major Action Taken to Resolve the Problems

The lessons on the history and the importance of Sabbath School with its relevance to the Adventist today were conducted. This then solved the problem of not prioritizing Sabbath School. Training was offered to superintendents and discussion leaders, the training was to equip them for the task which was entrusted to them. All superintendents are now ABC agencies, this has seen the number of members with Bible Study Guides increasing.

## The Results Especially Concerning Participation

Participation has really increased by more than 70%. Now that the number of members with Bible Study Guides has increased, this indicates that there is participation in the action units. Families and action units can now make Sabbath School presentations. Action units are now in place and members are caring for each other by sharing their joys, burdens, visitations and praying for each other.

### **Conclusion**

Chiremba West members can appreciate what Sabbath School can do to them. Sabbath School deals with religious education at the local church level covering the four objectives bible study, fellowship, community outreach and world mission emphasis. And these objectives can be implemented thereby increasing participation. Sabbath school programs can fit in any one of the objectives in order to increase attendance and participation.

Superintendents and discussion leaders now enjoy their work because they now understand the needs of the members. Fellowship in Chiremba West district has been fostered through the implementation of action. This has resulted in church members bonding and encouraging each other to attend Sabbath School. During training their responsibilities were outlined so that as the year proceed, burn out is avoided.

During class period discussion leaders are to be more of facilitators than the lecture system of delivering the truth presupposes that its only the teacher who know and students to pass should take all that is being said. This is not normally the case in our Sabbath School class. The period should be for learning for both the facilitators and members. The facilitators should afford the members to discuss that makes the whole lesson interactive, hence participation would have been achieved. They should also ask provoking questions that results in discussion.



## **Recommendations**

- 1) Small group ministries
- 2) Teachers association
- 3) Sabbath School teachers training
  - Allow the Sabbath School leadership to run at least two years
  - Avoid the Sabbath School to be run by an individual, allow the Sabbath School Council to meet monthly to review their work
- 4) Avoid other meetings during Sabbath School
- 5) The facilitator must know his or her class members by name
- 6) Since the facilitators have an influence on their class members, they are encouraged to take note of the following
  - a) Dressing – The way that you look determines what people think about you.
  - b) Non verbal communication includes facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice and gestures displayed through body language. These non-verbal signals can give clues and additional information and meaning over and above spoken (verbal) communication.
  - c) Tact – saying the right thing
    - To the right person
    - At the right time
    - In the right place.
- 7) Develop a pleasant voice. Ellen White says “when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God’s love.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen White *Desire of Ages* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 297.

- 8) Pastors and Elders must consciously promote the purchase of Bible Study Guide
- 9) Advertise the programs for the whole quarter, to stimulate interest within our members.
- 10) Make sure the class record is taken every Sabbath. This record is the key resource for identifying missing members.
- 11) Have trained ushers, who quickly identify visitors and assist them in offering place to seat
- 12) Sabbath School department to continuously hold guest day program, where the community is invited to Sabbath School program in fulfillment of our objective of community outreach
- 13) Churches to have resource materials, for Sabbath School programs.

From the researcher's observation less regard was being placed on the selection of discussion leaders. The tradition in Chiremba West District was to leave the selection of discussion leaders to the Sabbath school committee. For the church to realize and appreciate the importance of Sabbath School a careful selection of teachers should be done by the church board members. Ellen G. White says, "Those who attempt to direct others, who make a pretension of guiding souls to the path of holiness, while their own life is marked with pleasure loving with pride and with love of display, are unfaithful servants. It is essential that care should be taken when placing men and women in position of trust."<sup>1</sup> Our selection should not just centre on their eloquence in speech and their appearance. The church should know something in

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen, G. White, *Counsel On Sabbath School Work* (Washington DC: Review and Herald 1938), 47.

regard to their spiritual standing. The church board, when selecting discussion leaders should consider the ability to understand Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental beliefs, ability to deliver and character. It is very interesting to note that Ellen White has picked what some could put aside thinking they are minor, she says “those whose duty it is to select teachers should be guarded, and not urge those into the school who are not fitted to exert good influence How is the teacher’s behavior? Is he punctual? Is he clean and neat? This should be given attention, for these qualities are essential in a teacher.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

1. How unity among the Sabbath School leadership can improve Sabbath School programs.
2. The role ushers can play to increase the number of visitors at a local church.
3. What action units can contribute to the local church

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 92.

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRES

Exhibit A : Student Questionnaire

- 1;2;3;4;5. 1Is the strongest or best and 5 is weakest or poorest
12. I feel that i have a strong personal relationship with my teacher -----
  13. My teacher has an active interest in the progress of the development of my spiritual---  
----- life.
  14. I feel free to discuss my doubts and questions regarding Adventism or Christianity----  
-----.
  15. The weekly lessons are valuable to me-----.
  16. I freely participate in class discussion-----
  17. I apply bible lessons to my life-----
  18. The Sabbath school experience feeds me spiritually and provides for growth in my  
Christian life-----.
  19. I come to class because
    - f) I am forced to come
    - g) I enjoy bible study
    - h) I want to see friends
    - i) Its a habit
    - j) Other reasons
  20. I will be a better student if .....
  21. Do you always come late for Sabbath School. If Yes Why, If No why-----  
-----  
-----  
-----
  22. My spiritual growth as a direct involvement in this class could be described as
    - h) Becoming less interested
    - i) No interest
    - j) Reading my bible more
    - k) Praying more
    - l) Changing attitude
    - m) Dedication to Christ increased
    - n) Interest in evangelism increased

Exhibit B: Questionnaire for Superintendents

13. What is the average age of your congregation-----
14. How long have you been superintendent of this church-----
15. Have you ever been a teacher for Sabbath school class before-----
16. How often do you have departmental meetings-----

17. List a simple agenda with your staff-----  
-----  
-----  
-----
18. Do you have files for you minutes-----
19. What added equipment or facilities do you need in your department-----  
-----
20. Do you understand your responsibility well-----
21. How would you rate yourself-----
22. Do you sometimes contemplate to give up your job as the superintendent-----  
-----
23. Besides challenges that you maybe facing would you recommend someone to be the superintendent for next year-----
24. Have you managed to set up action units for the lesson study-----  
-----

Exhibit C: Questionnaire for Teachers

12. How often do you visit you members/students-----
13. Do you follow the study guide-----
14. Do you mark you Sabbath School record card before starting-----
15. Do you know your students by name-----
16. Do you always do the talking whilst your students stare at you-----.
17. How many students do you have-----.
18. Do you have favorite student-----
19. Do you take time in preparing for lesson-----
20. Do you read widely, not only Sabbath School Guide-----
21. Were you
  - d) forced to teach
  - e) volunteer to teach
  - f) elected to teach
22. Do you have an Adventist background-----
23. How many have study guides -----

## APPENDIX B

### TRAINING MATERIAL

#### **How to Make Sabbath School Interesting**

Have you wondered why many of the church pews are empty when it is time to start Sabbath school. This could be caused by programs that are boring. The following are creative suggestions to help in making Sabbath School interesting.

1. Arrange the program in a different order. Who says you must always begin with an opening song? Try having the mission story first, for a change. Why not have special music first? There is no law that says Scripture reading must be followed by prayer. There are 720 different ways to arrange the basic ingredients of a Sabbath School program. Doing things in a different order will lift you out of the rut.
2. Look at things in a new light. What would happen if you upon the Sabbath school as a spiritual clinic with you as the doctor? Can you imagine the Christian life to be like a highway to heaven, complete with speed limit and road signs? Imagine you Sabbath school to be a classroom and you are the teacher. Look at things in a different way will bounce you out of the rut.
3. Change the way you do things. Who says you have to stand behind a pulpit? Try removing the pulpit and using a circle chairs, as for a TV talk show. St around a table as for a newscast. Get out into the audience, as a roving reporter. Divide your audience into small groups for an interactive program. Plan a program on the church lawn or in a park. A change of location can move out of your rut.
4. Use visual aids. If the theme is Christian growth, set up a scene with gardening tools, fertilizer and plants. Set the scene for a banquet table. Talk about going on a trip and enhance your point with suitcases. Use signs, posters, object lessons, blackboards, maps, flipcharts and overheard projectors. Having visual aids will get and adult Sabbath school out of a rut.
5. Use different types of program formats. Surprise programs, quiz programs, interviews, demonstrations and small group sharing are all ways to pull your Sabbath school out of rut.
6. Start at different time. Occasionally announce that your Sabbath school will begin a half hour early. Plan something special for those who come early, such as a film, hot drink and muffins in the fellowship room, or a musical program by the children.

## Surprise Programs

Surprise programs are exciting because the audience never knows what is going to happen next nor who will be doing it. The basic idea is to have volunteers from the audience select an envelope, box or bag. When they open their choice they discover the next item on the program. The volunteer may or may not be asked to do that program item. It doesn't matter in what order items happen.

There are two ways to get volunteers to come forward. One way is to make a statement that the program will not happen without their participation. Another way is to arrange ahead of time for the first person to respond. That person in turn names the next volunteer.

This type of program is excellent when you don't know who will be present, such as at a retreat or weekend conference. It may be used also on holiday weekends when many members will be away. You will find even visitors volunteer.

**Christmas Gifts:** Have items that depict the particular wish we have for the Sabbath school for another year. A calendar for perfect attendance. A "Praying Hands" picture for prayer. A welcome mat for hospitality to strangers. A globe bank for support of missions.

**Wedding Gifts:** Plan the theme around a wedding reception. Talk about the gifts Christ provides for His bride, the church.

**Fruits of the Spirit:** Have a fruit arrangement on a table. Volunteers choose a piece of fruit. Taped to each piece of fruit is something to read about one of the fruits of the Spirit. Each fruit becomes part of the program. The fruit of joy could be revealed in the opening song of praise. The fruit of faith could be shown by our giving to missions.

**Planting Bulbs:** have a packet of flower bulbs on display, as well as gardening items used to plant bulbs. Volunteers choose a packet of bulbs and so whatever is taped to it. Afterward they take the bulbs home to plant in their gardens.

**Grab Bag:** Brightly colored bags are available in gift stores and cards shops. Have one item of your program in each bag. Include a small gift for each volunteer as well.

**Bag Lineup:** Write one letter of your program title on each paper bag. Line the bags up on a table to spell your title. Volunteers pick any bags up and follow instructions.

**Mother's Day Flowers:** Have each volunteer choose a flower or courage to give his mother. The catch is that he has to do whatever is taped to the flower.<sup>1</sup>

## Variety Programs

Variety is not only the spice of life; it is also the spice of the Sabbath school. Some programs do not fit any basic category because they are made up of several different types of material.

In variety programs you might combine music, poems, choral speaking, and stories. It is possible to mix quizzes, parables, skits and music. Interviews can combine with quizzes and music to make an outstanding program.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Variety programs often work best when your theme is centered around holiday, season of the year or inspirational thought.

**Spring Fever:** Use springtime thoughts and poems from *Ideals* magazine. Intersperse with musical numbers. Include a quiz about Bible events that happened in the spring, such as David and Goliath, Ruth, the Passover, and many New Testament stories that took place at Passover time.

**Harvest Festival:** Set a harvest theme with a display of garden produce. Combine thanksgiving music, testimonies, poems and the theme of a “world harvest of souls.” Interview individuals about what brought about the reaping point in their lives – how did they become Adventists?

**Winter Winds:** Use a winter’s issue *Ideals* to gather poems and thoughts on winter. Bring out the inspirational thought of the winter winds that blow in our lives, trials, difficulties, hardships, sickness, problems, divorce, death and disappointment. Share testimonies of people whose winter winds worked good in their lives. Use music that fits the theme. *Trust in God During Difficult Times*.

**Patriotic Symbols.** Use patriotic symbols of your country such as flag, military uniform, seal national bird, or national emblem. Compare these to something in our spiritual life. The Sabbath is the banner of our allegiance to God. Our uniform is the “whole amour of God.” Combine with patriotic songs and poems.

**Festival of Faith:** Celebrate faith. Have imaginary interviews with famous people of faith, living or dead. Have a Bible quiz on characters who had great faith. Use testimonies on the theme “A time in My Life When It Took Great Faith to Survive.” Sing songs of faith.<sup>1</sup>

### **Effective Teaching Methods**

The discussion leader plays a major role during the class period. It is encouraged to introduce a variety of methods when leading during the lesson to avoid being monotonous.

The following are suggested methods taken from the book *Teaching Techniques* that can be implemented by discussion leader leading the class.

1. Teaching from memory.  
The discussion reads the lesson during the week and teaches from the head. This helps the discussion leader to maintain eye contact with his/her members.
2. Teaching from your own outline  
It must be clear, it must stimulate discussion, must be interesting
3. Teaching Aids  
The discussion leader may use teaching aids, this will create interest and capture attention
4. Tell a story
5. Questions and Answer
6. Debates stimulates interest

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



7. Teaching by discussion
8. Teaching with case studies
9. Give assignments
10. Allow students to report back
11. Teaching through Role playing.<sup>1</sup>

### **Ways to Improve Your Teaching**

1. Great teachers have credibility  
Students evaluate their teachers based on what they say and how they live.
  - As a teacher avoid statements that cast doubt in the minds of students
2. Information must be reliable  
Teacher must not think that he/she know it all.
3. Have pure motive  
When teaching do it to fulfill the Lord's call. Teaching must be done to achieve some inappropriate personal ends.
4. Warmth and Friendliness  
The discussion leader is expected to be welcoming and friendly during and after the class.
5. Passion  
To be a good teacher one has to develop a passion for teaching. This will drive the discussion leader to research more and think outside the box to try and bring the best for the class. When a discussion leader with passion speaks, one can feel convinced with the sincerity in their words.
6. Clarity of content  
Discussion leader must not confuse students. Thought must flow from one point to the other.
7. Clarity of purpose  
There must be a purpose why the class are learning about Amos for example. When a purpose is spelled out its easy to apply to real life situation.
8. Clarity of Presentation  
Discussion must be able to present their lesson. They can use illustration and stories.
9. Involve the learner  
Discussion leaders must know and appreciate that people learn more when they are involved. The less the discussion leader talks the more the students learn. Allow the class members to discuss, let every one sir out his/her views.
10. Vocal Variety  
Voice is a great teaching tool. By varying the rate of speech, the range or voice and the volume of a word, teachers can encourage students to listen more carefully.
11. Respect people

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Wright, *Teaching Techniques*, (New York, Routledge, 2003), 62.

A good discussion leader does more than teaching. He/she values class members and treat them as people should be treated.

### **Action Units**

Action units can provide an atmosphere – a climate where it is safe for the reclaimed and new members to grow – safe for the Lord to work. “he does not bring many in because of the unconverted in the church”.

Action units can provide an atmosphere that inspires outreach. Sharing Jesus becomes contagious when even one person shares experiences, and time is devoted weekly to witnessing.

Experience proves that in the small group these steps occur:

- (1) Group members know one another intimately.
  - (2) They love one another
  - (3) They minister to one another.
  - (4) The focus then turns outward – the natural outgrowth of knowing, loving and ministering to one another is outreach.
- a) Notice this from a Sabbath School superintendent of a transformed church:  
“I have interviewed a large number of members who have expressed their appreciation for the loving, caring atmosphere that has developed through the Action Units. There is a bonding, a fellowship, a feeling of family a climate where everyone feels comfortable and wanted like they belong. Each is given the opportunity to share sorrows and joys. A more intimate understanding of one another has engendered love. Love for one another has developed to the extent that each once to become involved in meeting the needs of the others in the group. But more than that, this love bonding is an expanding phenomenon, it does not focus inward. United in love as the disciples each one is beginning to long to reach out in caring ministry with the Word to invite their neighbors into this loving fellowship.

This sleeping church has been really transformed into a dynamic centre of activity. They is a tremendous increase in the bible studies. One member who said her goal was never to give bible studies is now thrilled in doing it. She has two baptism just recently.

Action units can provide a way for total involvement according the members desires in a multifaceted united way. “If Christians were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world.” (9T 221)

Action Units can bring to fruition that divine imperative we know so well that must come about for a finished work.

“The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their effort with those of ministers and church officers” (GW 352).

Regardless of the higher education of ministers and fantastic sermons, a very basic is: "...We can receive only as we impart to others" (DA 370, italics supplied).

Action Units can be a very real means of assisting "the largest portion of the church (to be)... Laborers together with God" without which the outpouring of His spirit without measure" (the Later Rain) will not be (another divine imperative) (R & H, July 21, 1896).

Action Units can be a very real means of establishing organized, continual outreach. Note another divine imperative. Time is short and our forces must be organized to do a larger work" (9T 27).

Action Units can make every church a training school – another divine imperative. "Every church should be a training school for Christian workers" (MH 149)

Action Units can help the Sabbath school to be one of the greatest instrumentalities to bring souls to Christ and to a knowledge of His truth. Notice what should be.

APPENDIX C

PLANNING MATERIAL

**Exhibit A: Annual Activities Plan Sheet**

This form may be used to plan the activities around which you will build your Sabbath School programs for the years. Include Rally Days, Visitors Days, Thirteenth Sabbaths.

Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Month 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

**Exhibit B: Weekly Program**

Weekly Program Planning Guide	Use this form for organizing weekly Sabbath School programs. Answering the questions will help focus the program so they do not become routine and the same every Sabbath. It will help you become creative and innovative
Needs	What are the needs of my church that can be met by this week's program?
Emphasis & Focus	What is the emphasis and focus of this week's program?
Participation	How can this program motivate the participation of the members?
Objectives	Which of the four main purposes of Sabbath School are emphasized in this week's program?
Results	What specific results do we expect from this week's program?

### Exhibit C: Planning Sheet for a Quarter

This form can be used to plan the programs for each quarter of the year. Well planned programs in advance keep the Sabbath school to running smoothly and effectively.

Week	Activity	Person Responsible
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		

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