

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPING A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTAKING OF HOLY COMMUNION IN MAHAZOARIVO ANTSIRABE DISTRICT, MADAGASCAR

Researcher: Ainanirina Andrianasolo

Primary Advisor: Jacques Ratsimbason, DMin

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After washing the feet of his disciple, Christ commanded them to do this service of foot washing (John 13:14). And after eating together with His disciples for celebrating the Passover, Christ told them to remember Him whenever they eat the bread and the wine (1 Cor 11:24-26). That is the recommendation of Christ, not only for His disciple, but for His Church through the ages before his coming, and the church should follow this. After making research about the Holy Communion, researcher investigate a problem about the participation in the Holy Communion Service (HCS) in the churches of the Mahazoarivo district which is in the Central Malagasy Conference, Madagascar. Researcher gives a solution for the base of problems and make a pastoral visit planning and training for the church members and church leaders.

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ANTSIRABE DISTRICT, MADAGASCAR

A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Ainanirina Andrianasolo

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

---

Primary Advisor  
Jacques Ratsimbason, DMin

---

Programme Director, MAPTh  
Davidson Razafiarivony, PhD

---

Secondary Advisor  
Oswell Dzvairo, PhD

---

Dean, Theological Seminary  
Feliks Ponyatovskiy, PhD

Extension Site: Adventist University Zurcher, Madagascar

Date: July 2022

I dedicate this work to my beloved wife Alexandra Elena,  
to my sons Sandraina Andrianasolo, Sandrino Andrianasolo  
and to my daughter Sandrinah Andrianasolo.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Central Malagasy Conference
HC	Holy Communion
HCS	Holy Communion Service
IOUC	Indian Ocean Union Conferences
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt 26:26-28 NKJ).

#### **Background of the Study**

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church practices Holy Communion as a ceremony, because Jesus said it should be done as a remembrance of Him. This ceremony is important because Jesus said that we do it over and over, not only to remember Him and His death, but also to pardon us of our sin. So, each and every time we practice this ceremony, our sins get pardoned. That is why, among all the practical services in the church, the Holy Communion is one of the most important services. Every Christian church practices this ceremony as a means of following the order given by Jesus Christ, with each church having a manner and time for practicing it, but the true and correct manner is prescribed in the Bible.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

There are many problems which are caused by the different ways of practicing the service of the Holy Communion. First, every member of the church gets confused when they see many differences not knowing which one is true and which one is not, this makes their participation in the service a mere routine. This problem depend more in the Church Leader. They have a problem of knowledge about the HC. The source

of their lack of knowledge is the missing time to train by the Pastor. In the Mahazoarivo District, there are twenty churches lead by only one Pastor, so it is a big challenge to the Church Leader to have a specific and systematic time from the Pastor for training. That is why Church Leader and Church Member do not have much knowledge about the meaning of HCS. They follow what they know even if it is wrong. So the first problem is the lack of knowledge of the Church leader and Church Member, and there is a big impact in the life of the Church Member and in their responsibility in the church.

Secondly, there is the problem of participation. There is discrimination in the participation of the ceremony because every church has laid down principles and requirements for the participants of this service and they go ahead to lay the criteria to be followed in determining who is to partake of the ceremony and who is not supposed to. There is also the problem of most church members not knowing the true meaning of the Holy Communion resulting in mere routine participation for them. This second problem is based on a lack of love for each other, it depends on the first problem. The lack of knowledge is coming from the lack of training, and it develops the lack of love for each other.

Church Leader and Church Member divided in two groups during the HCS. Some think that this Service is especially to those who are holy person, who do not sin, because the service is holy, coming from God the Holy One. So if there is an unholy person, as they think, they tell them to leave the place. Others think that this service is for those who are unholy person because Jesus came and called the sinner to follow Him. So during the service if the unholy person leads the service, the holy person will leave the church, and if the holy person leads the service, the unholy person will leave the church. Or if they don't leave, they do not participate. After that,

there is a big murmur in the church. This problem creates hypocrisy, and this hypocrisy decreases the love for each other.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study inquired to establish the biblical theory and practice of the Holy Communion. It showed the different ways in which churches practice the Holy Communion service, and the type of persons who can participate in this ceremony. This study also tried to evaluate the knowledge of the church and its members about the biblical principle of the Holy Communion, and come up with a solution on it. It has developed a program that can be used for the training of church and a plan for teaching all the church members so they can understand very well the true meaning of the Holy Communion and the practice of it in the service.

### **Research Questions**

The study posed the following research questions:

- i. What are the deep meanings of the Holy Communion?
- ii. Who can participate in the Holy Communion Service?
- iii. What strategies can be used to train church leaders and members about the Holy Communion Service?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is important since it shows church leaders and church members what the right Holy Communion Service is. This is crucial in the church program and in the individual life of the church members. It is hoped that the study will help in proving church members' conviction about the Holy Communion Service. After realizing all the biblical principles, members will be able to practice the Holy

Communion Service correctly and exactly as the Lord intended it to be celebrated as written in the Bible.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

This study focused on the Holy Communion Service or Lord's Supper in the New Testament and narrowed down on its foundation in the Old Testament. Both the New and Old Testaments give the meaning of the Holy Communion and describes the person who can participate in this service. The study also touched on the Passover in the Old Testament and the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. Before drawing the program and solving the problem in chapters three and four, the study was limited to a survey based on the grounded theory in one district where only the elders of the church and some church members were involved.

This study did not dwell on the details of the Passover in the Old Testament and Holy Communion in the New Testament, but focused on the correlation between the Passover in the Old Testament and the Holy Communion in the New Testament. In the chapter three, it did not survey and interview all the church members in the district but only the elders and a few selected church members and groups since this was a qualitative study that does not require a large number of participants to reach a conclusion.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative methodology because it is used to understand the interpretation and the experience of the people about the Holy Communion. The methodology was selected because it enabled the researcher to collect direct statements from people about their experiences, opinions and their knowledge and feelings through interviews. This study was more inclined to grounded

theory design because the theory allows for the exploring of common experience of individuals and helps in developing a theory based on that. This study focused on interviewing individuals to help reach a conclusion for solving the problem of Holy Communion service in our churches.

This study was divided into the following: Chapter one is an introduction that focuses on the background of the study which is about the actual situation in the church about the Holy Communion service. It is then followed by the statement of the problem which shows the main problem area being tackled by the study. It also has the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations of the study and finally the methodology used in the study.

Chapter two explores the theological underpinnings of the Holy Communion. This chapter is about the Holy Communion in the Old and New Testaments, how different churches practice the Holy Communion and the mentality of the people who take part in this ceremony and the SDA Church principles on the Holy Communion.

Chapter three describes the local district under study. It explains the place and the country of study where the problem being handled was done and implemented. Chapter four is the program development which deals with the evaluation and solutions to the problem under study. It developed a program for the church and the district to help answer all the difficult questions on the Holy Communion which are asked by the church members. Chapter five is the Conclusion. It summarizes the study and concludes it then gives recommendations based on biblical underpinnings and the situation of the local church.

CHAPTER 2  
THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS  
OF HOLY COMMUNION

In the Bible, the Holy Communion is practiced in both the Old and New Testaments, but it is given different names in each of the testaments. This chapter looks at the different meanings of the Holy Communion in the Old and New Testaments.

**Holy Communion in the Old Testament**

The Holy Communion is always referred to as the *Passover* in the Old Testament and during the time of Jesus, it was still referred to as the Passover. This section will dwell more on the Passover during the Old Testament time.

**Meaning of the Word “Passover”**

Passover in Hebrew means “*pecach*”<sup>1</sup> and in Greek it is “*Pascha*.” Passover literally means to pass over, or to spring over, or to spare, or to suffer.<sup>2</sup>

The Passover happened for the first time when the Israelites lived in bondage in Egypt, and there after it was a commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian

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<sup>1</sup> James Strong, *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible (SHDE)* (1999), s.v. “js”p.”

<sup>2</sup> “To suffer,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1996), 8:152.

slavery. The Passover is also called the feast of the unleavened bread, Easton affirms that:

**Passover**, the name given to the chief of the three great historical annual festivals of the Jews. It was kept in remembrance of the Lord's passing over the houses of the Israelites Ex. 12:13 when the first born of all the Egyptians were destroyed. It is called also the "feast of unleavened bread" Ex 23:15 Mr 14:1 Ac 12:3 because during its celebration no leavened bread was to be eaten or even kept in the household Ex 12:15. The word afterwards came to denote the lamb that was slain at the feast.<sup>3</sup>

To the Israelites, the Passover marked their deliverance from the Egyptian slavery. But to the Egyptians, the Passover was a judgment or punishment because of the bad treatment to the Israelites and the hard heart of Pharaoh. Edersheim says,

The people of God renewed the festive remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt. Truly, that first Passover on the soil of Palestine had a twofold meaning. Even the circumstances recalled its first celebration. As the night of the first Passover was one of terror and judgment to Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Origin of the Passover**

The word "Passover" first appeared in the Bible when Pharaoh refused to allow the Israelites leave the bondage of Egypt. After the announcement of the death of the first born in Genesis 11, God gave an instruction for the Passover in Genesis 12. It is well stated that: "it is the LORD's Passover" (Exod 12:11 NIV).

There are instructions that God gave to the Israelites to do during Passover in Egypt, and this can be said to be the origin of the Passover. It is written in Exodus that, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. Take care of them until the fourteenth

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<sup>3</sup> G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary (EBD)* (1998), s.v. "Passover."

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, vol. 3, *Israel in Canaan under Joshua and the Judges* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1997), 48.

day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight” (Exod. 12:2, 3, 6 NIV). The lamb was prepared on the first day but on the second day, they were to eat an unleavened bread. It is written, “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread because it was on this very day that I brought your descendants out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month, you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.” (Exod. 12: 17, 18 NIV)

Smith says, “It was kept on the 14th day of the first month, ‘between the two evenings’ — that is, late in the evening was the Lord’s Passover. On the next day, the 15th, it was the feast of the unleavened bread.”<sup>5</sup> According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, it was to be in the month of Abib or Nisan, “the Passover was the annual Hebrew festival on the evening of the 14th day of the month of 'Abhibh (Abib) or Nisan, as it was called in later times.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Meaning of the Elements in the Passover**

There are three elements which were used during the Passover. First, the Passover or the Lamb which was killed during the night (Gen. 12: 3)), then the unleavened bread (Gen 12: 15), and the third was the eating of the bitter herbs (Exod. 12: 8).

**The Lamb.** The lamb refers to Jesus Christ as John the Baptist puts it, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29 NIV). Wilson

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<sup>5</sup> William Smith, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary (SBD)* (2000), s.v. “Aaron-Zuzims.”

<sup>6</sup> “The Passover,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1996), 8: Bible Works 8.

adds, "The Lord Jesus was inspected before He was offered as the Passover Lamb."<sup>7</sup>

In addition, Wilson expounds:

The Lord Jesus is often compared to a lamb, and for many reasons. The lamb was used for food, and the Savior has told us to eat of Him. The lamb is used for growing wool to make warm garments, and so we are clothed with Christ that we may be accepted by God in Him. The lamb was an acceptable sacrifice to God, and so the Savior offered Himself to God as our sacrifice. The lamb was used as the Passover sacrifice, and the Scripture says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." The lamb is a gentle creature, and our Lord said he was "meek and lowly in heart." The lamb does not object to being sheared or killed, and so "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter."<sup>8</sup>

**The Blood of the Lamb.** The blood of the Passover means the blood of Christ which is given us a forgiveness (Heb. 9: 22). Coxe says:

And the blood of the Passover, sprinkled on each man's door-posts and lintel, delivered those who were saved in Egypt, when the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed. For the passover was Christ, who was afterwards sacrificed, as also Isaiah said, 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.' And it is written, that on the day of the passover you seized Him, and that also during the passover you crucified Him. And as the blood of the passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed.<sup>9</sup>

**The Unleavened Bread.** The Unleavened Bread as emblem of sin. "Among the Jews leaven was sometimes used as an emblem of sin. At the time of the Passover the people were directed to remove all the leaven from their houses as they were to put away sin from their hearts."<sup>10</sup> Wilson says that the "unleavened bread was 'the bread of affliction,' for they came out of Egypt in haste. Leaven is a species of

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<sup>7</sup> Walter Wilson, *A Dictionary of Bible Types (DBT)* (1999), s.v. "Leviticus 23: 12."

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, *DBT*, s.v. "John 1: 29."

<sup>9</sup> A. Cleveland Coxe *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, col. 493.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 95.

corruption — against which Jesus warned his disciples as in the peculiar errors of the Pharisees (Matt 16:6).”<sup>11</sup>

**The Bitter Herbs.** It means the trouble and anxiety of the Israelites. Wilson writes, “the bitter herbs eaten with the lamb were reminders of the bondage in Egypt, and of the anxiety and trouble mingled with blessings in life, an emblem of the crucifixion of nature.”<sup>12</sup> In the book of Mishnah, there is a large meaning of the Lamb and the Unleavened Bread. Rabban Gamaliel puts,

Whosoever has not said [the verses] concerning] these three things at Passover has not fulfilled his obligation. And these are they: Passover, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs: ‘Passover’—because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt; ‘unleavened bread’—because our fathers were redeemed from Egypt; ‘bitter herbs’—because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt.<sup>13</sup>

### **Steps to the Passover Sloughing**

The Passover is “the first of the three great annual festivals of the Hebrews, held in Nisan, 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>”<sup>14</sup> Easton confirms this by saying that, “it was afterwards incorporated in the ceremonial law in Le 23:4-8 as one of the great festivals of the nation.”<sup>15</sup>

As a commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt, the way they practiced the Passover to Egypt in Exodus 12 is not same to the way they practiced the Passover in the wilderness in the book of Numbers 9. There is a big difference between those

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<sup>11</sup> Wilson, *DBT*, “Enlivened Bread.”

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *DBT*, “Bitter Herb.”

<sup>13</sup> Pesahim 11: 5, The Mishnah Writing used in this paper is Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 150, 151.

<sup>14</sup> Smith, *SBD*, s.v. “Passover.”

<sup>15</sup> Easton, *EBD*, s.v. “Passover.”

two Passovers. According to the Mishnah, the difference is on the time that the people of God kept it:

Wherein does the Passover of Egypt differ from the Passover of the generations' [that followed after]? At the Passover of Egypt the lamb was got on the loth [of Nisan], sprinkling [of the blood] with a bunch of hyssop was required on the lintel and on the two side-posts, and it was eaten in haste and during one night; whereas the Passover of the generations [that followed after] continued throughout seven days.<sup>16</sup>

**During the First Passover in Egypt.** God said to Moses that on the tenth day of this month, each man was to take a Lamb for their family (Exod. 12: 3). They were to take care of this lamb until the fourteenth day and on the fourteenth day, they would kill the animal (Exod. 12: 6). After that they were to take some blood of the killed lamb and put it on the doorposts and above the doors of the houses. They would then eat the roasted meat during the night of this day with bitter herbs (Exod. 12: 7, 8). God commanded them to “eat it in haste; for it is the LORD's Passover” (Exod. 12:11 NIV). More explanation on the same can be found in the Bible Dictionary.<sup>17</sup>

After that God gave another instruction “for seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off

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<sup>16</sup> M. Pesahim 9:5.

<sup>17</sup> The ordinance of Heb: *pecach mitsrayim*, the last meal in Egypt, included the following provisions: (1) the taking of a lamb, or kid without blemish, for each household on the 10th of the month; (2) the killing of the lamb on the 14th at even; (3) the sprinkling of the blood on doorposts and lintels of the houses in which it was to be eaten; (4) the roasting of the lamb with fire, its head with its legs and inwards--the lamb was not to be eaten raw nor sodden (Heb: *bashal*) with water; (5) the eating of unleavened bread and bitter herbs; (6) eating in haste, with loins girded, shoes on the feet, and staff in hand; (7) and remaining in the house until the morning; (8) the burning of all that remained; the Passover could be eaten only during the night (Ex 12:1-23) “Pecach mitsrayim,” *ISBE*, 8: Bible Works 8.

from Israel” (Exod. 12:15 NIV). During these seven days of unleavened bread, the first day and the last day would be a day of special worship. During this night, the Israelites did what the Lord commanded them through Moses and Aaron (Exod. 12: 21-28).

**During the first commemoration of Passover in the wilderness.** God once again commended the Israelites to celebrate the Passover with two other festivals during a year. These two other festivals included the Feast of harvest and the Feast of Ingathering (Exod. 23: 14- 19). The first commemoration of the Passover was in the wilderness, and the Lord spoke to Moses on the mount of Sinai saying that: “in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. Celebrate it at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month in accordance with all its rules and regulations.” (Num. 9: 1-3 NIV).

The Mishnah explains more about that by saying that:

The Passover-offering was slaughtered [by the people] in three groups, for it is written, *and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter it*—'assembly', 'congregation', and 'Israel'. When the first group entered in and the Temple Court' was filled, the gates of the Temple Court were closed. [On the *shofar*] a sustained, a quavering, and again a sustained blaster were blown. The priests stood in rows and in their hands were Basins of silver and basins of gold. In one row all the basins were of silver and in another row all the basins were of gold. They were not mixed up together. Nor had the basins bases, lest the priests should set them down and the blood congeal.

An Israelite slaughtered his [own] offering and the priest caught the blood. The priest passed the basin to his fellow, and he to his fellow, each receiving a full basin and giving back an empty one. The priest nearest to the Altar tossed the blood in one action against the base [of the Altar].

When the first group went out the second group came in; and when the second group went out the third group came in. As the rite was performed with the first group so was it performed with the second and the third, [In the meantime the Levites] sang the *Hallel*. If they finished it they sang it anew, and if they finished it a second time they sang it a third time, although it never happened that they thrice completed it.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> M. Pesahim 5: 5-8.

## Some Point about the Passover

The tribes of the Jews in Judea and in Galilee did not keep the Passover the same way:

In Judea they used to do work until midday on the eve of Passover, but in Galilee they used to do nothing at all. In what concerns the night [between the 13th and 14th of Nisan], the School of Shammai forbid [any work], but the School of Hillel permit it until sunrise.<sup>19</sup>

## Passover and the Uncleanness

A question related to the Passover that arises from the book of Numbers is:

"We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?"

(Num 9:7 NIV). The Bible says that only the Jews could partake the Passover (Exod. 12: 43). Wilson explains "the Jews were redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb, but the Gentiles were not."<sup>20</sup> Even among the Jews, the unclean and the uncircumcised were not allowed to participate in the Passover. "Probably the Passover at the foot of Sinai (Numbers 9:1) had been the last, as that feast would not have been observed by the people in their uncircumcised state."<sup>21</sup> No alien or uncircumcised person, or unclean person could partake.<sup>22</sup>

Anyone who touched a dead body was to be excluded from the Passover feast. As Edersheim says: "Again, when certain men, defiled by 'a dead body,' complained

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<sup>19</sup> Pesahim: Feast of Passover, 4: 5.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, *DBT*, s.v. "Partition."

<sup>21</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History*, 48.

<sup>22</sup> *ISBE*, 8:154.

that they had thereby been excluded from the feast.”<sup>23</sup> Even if those people were not allowed to take part of the Passover, God gave to Moses the solution. They were not to partake in the first Passover in the first month. But after one month, in the second month, they could do a special Passover. God said: "Tell the Israelites: 'When any of you or your descendants are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, they may still celebrate the LORD's Passover. They are to celebrate it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They are to eat the lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.'" (Num 9: 10-11 NIV).

### **Holy Communion in the New Testament**

In the New Testament, Jesus commemorated the Passover while eating together with His disciples. The name of the Passover came to be changed to “Holy Communion.” Easton says in his dictionary that the Holy Communion is also called “Lord’s Supper.”<sup>24</sup> Not only did the name change but also the way in which people kept it. This section discusses the Holy Communion in the New Testament.

The Holy Communion is a service which Jesus and the Apostles practiced in their ministry. Paul the apostle also did practice it in the early church. Apart from the book of the Acts of Apostles, it is also stated that the Apostle Paul led a Holy Communion in Corinth. He is quoted to have said:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He

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<sup>23</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament: The Exodus and the Wanderings* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1997), 2:135.

<sup>24</sup> “Lord's Supper,” 1Co 11:20 called also "the Lord's table" 1Co 10:21 "communion," "cup of blessing" 1Co 10:16 and "breaking of bread" Ac 2:42 In the early Church it was called also "eucharist," or giving of thanks (comp.) Mt 26:27 and generally by the Latin Church "mass," a name derived from the formula of dismissal. Easton, *EBD*, s.v. “Lord’s Supper,” in *Bible Works 8* (Norfolk, VA: Bible works, 1992 – 2008).

had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1Co 11:23-26 NKJ)

The word "communion" comes from the word "Union." "Union is the state of being united or joined."<sup>25</sup> The Greek term for "communion" is *koinonia*. The meaning of this word is focused in the relationship. This is seen in the Greek Lexicon meanings of this term: "κοινωνία, ἡ, (κοινωνέω) *communion, association, partnership, fellowship*,"<sup>26</sup> κοινωνία, ας, ἡ (1) as a relationship characterized by sharing in common *fellowship*,"<sup>27</sup> κοινωνία, ας *f*: an association involving close mutual relations and involvement - 'close association, fellowship,'<sup>28</sup> "contact, fellowship, intimacy."<sup>29</sup>

Communion is a close relationship between people and God, and between people and people. So when talking about communion, we can say that it refers to a communication between people and God or a communication between people. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (*SDABC*) puts it that: "It is to reveal the great truth that Christ is an example of what we through His grace are to be in our intercourse with each other."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Union," *Wikipedia*, accessed September 27, 2017, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?search=union&title=Special:Search&profile=default&fulltext=1&searchToken=e91jniz02xng0ujmz6i9jbex1>.

<sup>26</sup> *LS Greek Lexicon* (Abridged), "koinonia," in Bible Works 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Freiberg Greek Lexicon*, in Bible Works 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Louw-Nida Lexicon*, in Bible Works 8.

<sup>29</sup> *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* in Bible Works 8.

<sup>30</sup> "A Dedication to Service" [John 13: 13-17], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (*SDABC*), ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 5:1139.

In the beginning, when God created the heaven and the earth, when sin had not yet come in the life of Adam and Eve, communication between people and God was perfect, and the fellowship and relationship between men and each other was also perfect. Immediately sin came in, this communication and relationship got broken.

### **Cause of the Broken Communication**

When we talk about communication, it can mean spiritual communication which is seen in two phases: First, the communication between God and people which is a connection between God and people. Then there is the communication between people and people which is described as a relationship between people and people. Unfortunately, these connections and relationships got broken when sin came into the world.

### **Cause of Broken Communication between People and God**

Satan came to the Garden of Eden and tempted Eve by using specific words in Genesis 3, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:5 NKJ). Satan wanted to put his own conviction about what God was to Eve. He said to Eve that God was lying. He was able to convince her to think that she could be like God. Satan's thinking from the beginning had always been "to be like God" and used the same phrase 'Ye shall be as God' to deceive Eve. This reveals most sharply the blasphemous nature of Satan's words . . . and the full gravity of his deception."<sup>31</sup> Matthew Henry's Commentary says:

*"You shall be as gods, as Elohim, mighty gods; not only omniscient, but omnipotent too;"* or, "You shall be as God himself, equal to him, rivals with

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<sup>31</sup> "Ye shall be as God" [Gen 3: 5], *SDABC*, 1:230.

him; you shall be sovereigns and no longer subjects, self-sufficient and no longer dependent.” A most absurd suggestion! As if it were possible for creatures of yesterday to be like their Creator that was from eternity.<sup>32</sup>

The thinking to be as God is from Satan (Isa 14:12-14), this can also be seen in (Ezek 28:15=17). Satan wanted to “lift up” himself from God, meaning that he wanted to place his throne above the throne of God, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” (Isa 14:13-14 NKJ). We can say that the thinking that Satan had simply meant “pride,” and it is this pride that is first seen in Satan. He transfers it to Eve, marking the beginning of sin. This transferred pride led to the eating of the forbidden fruit leading to the break of the communication between God and humans which used to exist (Gen 3: 8).

### **Cause of Broken Communication between People and People**

God said to Adam and Eve not to eat the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2: 16, 17), but they decided to do it disregarding the direction God had given them. After they did eat the fruit which they were not supposed to eat, they realized that they were naked, “and they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” (Gen 3: 8 NKJ). When God visited the garden, Adam and Eve ran away from His presence and they concealed from Him because they were afraid. They had done something wrong. They failed to follow what God had asked them and had to face the bad consequences. They

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<sup>32</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, on Genesis 3: 5, in Bible Works 8.

feared to face God, “the reason for their fear was neither humility nor modesty but profound sense of guilt”<sup>33</sup> or sense of culpability.

To cover their own faults, Adam said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." (Gen 3:12 NKJ). At this point we see the communication between Adam and Eve is broken. Adam is accusing Eve. Ellen White says “Adam could neither deny nor excuse his sin; but instead of manifesting penitence, he endeavored to cast the blame upon his wife, and thus upon God Himself: ‘the woman whom *Thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.’”<sup>34</sup> This means that the communication between Adam and Eve, which signifies the communication between people and people, was broken down. Sin had disrupted it because of pride, “A haughty look, a proud heart, *And* the plowing of the wicked *are* sin” (Prov. 21:4 NKJ).

### **Purpose of the Lord’s Supper**

The Lord’s Supper is meant to help restore this broken communication. It is celebrated to help in remembering the death of Christ, and to remember that Christ is alive and went back to heaven and will come again to deliver us from sin (1 Cor 11: 24 – 26). Christ, through His death on the cross removed us from the penalty of sin and gave us a new life. Ellen White affirms, “the symbols of the Lord’s house are simple and plainly understood, and the truths represented by them are of the deepest

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<sup>33</sup> “The Voice of the Lord” [Gen 3: 8], *SDABC*, 1:231.

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarch and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890), 57.

significance to us. In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover, Christ left for His church a memorial of His great sacrifice for man.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Foot Washing**

In the book of John 13: 1- 14, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet. Then they proceeded to eat the bread and drink the wine. With this act of foot washing, Jesus wished to give them a lesson on humility that is why He took a towel and water into a basin and began to wash the feet of his disciples. Ellen White writes that:

This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light. So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget.<sup>36</sup>

After Christ had washed His disciples feet, He command them to do what He had done to them as an example (John 13: 15). By this service, Jesus wanted to give a lesson to His disciples. He wanted them to be humble in all their life, “Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.”<sup>37</sup>

Before taking the bread and the wine, the disciples were to make it a habit to practice the act of humility, because “they had placed their own estimate upon

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<sup>35</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald 1946), 273.

<sup>36</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desires of Ages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1898), 644, 645.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Desires of Ages*, 650.

themselves and upon one another, and instead of regarding their brethren as more worthy, they had placed themselves first.”<sup>38</sup>

Ellen White confirms, “this ordinance is Christ's appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. As a result, we are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood, therefore, it was Jesus who appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”<sup>39</sup>

The other purpose of foot washing is to reconcile their relationship and to build love for each other, “the Purpose of the Ordinance of Service—Reconciliation one with another is the work for which the ordinance of feet washing was instituted. By the example of our Lord and Master, this humiliating ceremony has been made a sacred ordinance.”<sup>40</sup> Kovar also adds that: “The act of foot washing is to clear away the misunderstanding of self-exaltation to kindle a desire for higher spiritual life, to enable confession of sin and reconciliation, and to help and bless others.”<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, by doing the foot washing, Jesus removes away the selfishness and the pride in the disciples, and the disciples were to re-establish the relationship with God and with each. Ellen White states that “when Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts.”<sup>42</sup> So, like with the disciples and the foot

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<sup>38</sup> White, *Desires of Ages*, 645.

<sup>39</sup> White, *Desires of Ages*, 650.

<sup>40</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 275.

<sup>41</sup> Johannes Kovar, “Lord’s Supper,” *The Ellen White Encyclopedia*, ed. Denis Fortin & Jerry Moon (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2013), 949.

<sup>42</sup> White, *Desires of Ages*, 646.

washing, Jesus removes our pride and selfishness and gives us a spirit of humility.

Jesus gives us also the capacity and will to accommodate our broken relationship with each other.

### **Bread and Wine in the Table**

After foot washing, Jesus proceeded to the ceremony of bread and wine. He demonstrated to His disciples on how to celebrate the Passover which was now changing to Lord's Supper. The goal of the Passover in the Old Testament and the Lord's Supper in the New Testament is the same, it is only the form and how to celebrate it that changed. The Passover in the Old Testament was to help remember the deliverance of the Israelites from the slavery in Egypt while the Lord's Supper was to commemorate the deliverance from our sin paid by Jesus on the cross. Ellen White confirms,

The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin. The sacrificial lamb represents "the Lamb of God" [John 1:29], in whom is our only hope of salvation. It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the door posts; so the merits of Christ's blood must be applied to the soul.<sup>43</sup>

The Lord's Supper is to commemorate the deliverance from our sin paid by Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1: 29), for "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." (1Corinth. 5: 7 NIV). It is stated in the *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* that:

***Commemoration of the deliverance from sin.*** As the Passover festival commemorated Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, the Lord's Supper commemorates deliverance from spiritual Egypt, the bondage of sin. The Passover lamb's blood applied to the lintel and doorposts protected the inhabitants from death; the nourishment its flesh provided gave them the strength to escape from Egypt (Ex. 12:3-8). So Christ's sacrifice brings

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<sup>43</sup> White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, 277.

liberation from death; believers are saved through partaking of both His body and blood (John 6:54). The Lord's Supper proclaims that Christ's death on the cross provided our salvation, provided forgiveness, and guaranteed eternal life.<sup>44</sup>

Jesus lived among the disciples and showed them an example on how to commune amongst themselves and with God. The bread is a symbol of the communion of the body of Christ while the wine is a symbol of the communion with the blood of Christ (1Cor. 10: 16 NKJV). It means that by eating the bread and drinking the wine, the disciples brought back their connection with God. This connection made them establish a good relationship between brethren. Matthew Henry comment that:

And to eat of the feast is to partake of the sacrifice, and so to be his guests to whom the sacrifice was offered, and this in token of friendship with him. Thus to partake of the Lord's Table is to profess ourselves his guests and covenant people. This is the very purpose and intention of this symbolical eating and drinking; it is holding communion with God, and partaking of those privileges, and professing ourselves under those obligations, which result from the death and sacrifice of Christ; . . . By partaking of one broken loaf, the emblem of our Savior's broken body, who is the only true bread that came down from heaven, we coalesce into one body, become members of him and one another." Those who truly partake by faith have this communion with Christ, and one another;<sup>45</sup>

To summarize the purpose of Lord's Supper, Terjesen said that "it is not used to create faith, or to create unity; it strengthens an already present faith, and expresses an already present unity among those communing together."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "The Lord's Supper," *The Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, accessed September 29, 2017, <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-15.htm#4>.

<sup>45</sup> *Matthew Henry Commentary* on 1 Corinth. 10: 16 in Bible Works 8.

<sup>46</sup> William P. Terjesen, *The Biblical Practice of Closed Communion* (New York: Lutheran Church of our Redeemer, 1994), 10.

## **Mentality Required for the Lord's Supper**

It is already established that the Holy Communion has a goal to refresh the Communication between men and God, and between men and humanity. To achieve this goal, there is need to have some mentality as one participates in it. It is worth to see the views and mentality which people have regarding this service.

### **View of the Lord's Supper**

#### **Roman Catholic View**

The Roman Catholic Church's view of Lord's Supper is what can be called the "Transubstantiation". It means that the bread changes to the body and the wine changes to blood. "By consecration of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine, Christ Himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: His Body and His Blood, with His soul and His divinity."<sup>47</sup>

For the Catholic Church, when the members eat the Eucharist, they are convinced that they are eating the real body of Christ and accept that the wine which the father drinks is really the blood of Christ. Raymond explains that: "The elements retain the *accidents* (that which is incidental to the thing) of bread and wine, while the *substance* (that which is essential to a thing) of the elements becomes the very body and blood of Christ."<sup>48</sup> During the communion service, the Catholics believe that Christ is truly the bread and wine, and they believe they are communicating with Him by eating those two things. Schaff noticed that: "The true body and blood of Christ are

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<sup>47</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1994), 356.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 959.

truly present in the form of bread and wine, and are therefore, communicated to those that eat the Lord's Supper."<sup>49</sup>

### **Lutheran View**

The second view of the Lord's Supper to be discussed in this study is the Lutherans view. For the Lutheran Church, it is referred to as the "consubstantiation" which means that the bread and the wine of the Eucharist are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus, so those who partake the sacrament do physically eat Christ's body which is "corporally, elementally and locally present."<sup>50</sup>

The Large Catechism in the book of concord states that the Lord's Supper consists of "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine."<sup>51</sup> It can be said that the Lutherans Church's view of consubstantiation and the Catholic view of transubstantiation is almost the same. These two churches views of Lord's Supper are the same because both of them follow the same tendency. The bread and the wine are transformed and become the true body and blood of Christ.

### **Calvinist Church View**

For the Calvinists, the real presence could not be conceived in any other form than the presence through the Holy Spirit. Calvin opposed the view of the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Churches. He rejected the doctrines of transubstantiation

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<sup>49</sup> Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 13.

<sup>50</sup> J. Ligon Duncan, *The Westminster Confession into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: True Communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper* (Scotland: Christian Focus in the Mentor Imprint, 2005), 2:437.

<sup>51</sup> *The Book of Concord*, trans. Theodore D. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), 447.

and consubstantiation. The Calvinist view of Lord's Supper is that of the spiritual presence of Christ. According to the Calvin, during Lord's Supper, people communicate spiritually with Christ.<sup>52</sup> Duncan explains that:

Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements, in this sacrament, do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally but spiritually, receive, and feed upon, Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.<sup>53</sup>

### **Zwinglianism Church View**

The Zwinglianism view of Lord's Supper is that of "the elements (of the Lord's Supper) are symbolic representations of the death of Christ. Christ is said to have intended the elements to invoke in the communicant's mind the recollection of his death on his behalf."<sup>54</sup> This means that bread and wine are just symbolic but not the real body and blood of Christ.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Church View**

The SDA Church supports the view of Calvinist and Zwinglianism. The SDA Church puts together the two views and maintains the spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. "Whenever it is celebrated, Christ is present by His Holy Spirit."<sup>55</sup> This is the same as the Calvinist view on the Lord's Supper. The SDA Church has also sustained the symbolic meaning of the bread and wine in Lord's Supper. Kovar

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<sup>52</sup> Brian Nicholson, "The Spirit Presence," *Calvin's Doctrine of the Spiritual Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper*, accessed October 5, 2017, [http://www.reformed.org/webfiles/antithesis/v2n2/ant\\_v2n2\\_presence.html](http://www.reformed.org/webfiles/antithesis/v2n2/ant_v2n2_presence.html).

<sup>53</sup> Duncan, *The Westminster Confession into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2:475.

<sup>54</sup> Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*, 960.

<sup>55</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 275.

supports this view and says that: “in her writings, she [Ellen G. White] expounds a Zwinglian understanding of the Lord’s Supper and advocates for open communion. . . . Ellen White stresses that Jesus used unleavened cakes and unfermented grape juice as special symbols.”<sup>56</sup>

Daniel Dei confirms the spiritual symbol of the bread and wine, saying that: “Among Adventists, the presence of Christ during communion services is not taken to mean the real presence of Christ’s physical body and blood. Rather, it should be understood as a symbolic reference to the spiritual presence of Christ.”<sup>57</sup> Leon Morris agrees and puts his ideas on the same as, “Those who receive the cup rightly receive Christ and are bound together in fellowship with Christ. . . . Such a reception is, of course, a spiritual process and therefore, takes place by faith. . . . The statement about the bread must be understood similarly: the broken loaf means a participation in the body of Christ.”<sup>58</sup> In the *SDA Church Manual*, it is written to confirm,

Angels declare that Jesus, the Redeemer of this world, is holy. Likewise, the symbols representing His body and His blood are holy. Since the Lord Himself selected the deeply meaningful symbols of the unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine and used the simplest of means for washing the disciples’ feet, there should be great reluctance to introduce alternative symbols and means, except under emergency conditions, lest the original significance of the service be lost. Likewise in the order of service and the traditional roles played by the pastor, elders, deacons, and deaconesses, there

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<sup>56</sup> Kovar, “Lord’s Supper,” *The Ellen White Encyclopedia*, 948.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Dei and Robert Osei-Bonsu, “Participation in Adventist Communion: Towards a Theological Dialogue,” *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, eds. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Ēriks Galeniekš and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi, Kenya: Theological Seminary Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 199.

<sup>58</sup> Leon Morris, “1 Corinthians,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 143, 144.

should be caution lest substitution and innovation tend to make common that which is sacred.<sup>59</sup>

## **The Participation in the Lord's Supper**

### **During the Lord's Supper**

Ellen White re-affirms: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."<sup>60</sup> Self-examination is the base of the mind to participate in the Lord's Supper. It establishes the required relationship with God and with fellow man. So one must examine himself or herself first to see if there is something which interrupts or destroys this relationship and connection. Ellen White notes that:

The celebration of the ordinances was made a most profitable occasion. On the Friday before, every church member endeavored to clear away everything that would tend to separate him from his brethren and from God. Hearts were closely searched; prayers for a divine revelation of hidden sin were earnestly offered; confessions of over-reaching in trade, of ill-advised words hastily spoken, of sin cherished, were made. The Lord came near, and we were greatly strengthened and encouraged.<sup>61</sup>

After reading 1 Corinthians 11: 28, we should examine ourselves before partaking an eating the bread and the wine. If find any sin, as humans, we need not to stay away from the ceremony. We have to repent and make a decision to give our hearts to Jesus because He washes our sins through this rite. Ellen G. White says, "As you see the enormity of sin and as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ come to save. We have not to reconcile God to us,

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<sup>59</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual*, 19<sup>th</sup> ed. (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2015), 124.

<sup>60</sup> White, *Desires of Ages*, 656.

<sup>61</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 274.

but-O wondrous love!-God in Christ is ‘reconciling the world into himself’ 2

Corinthians 5: 19.”<sup>62</sup>

Generally, members have a thinking that if they have sinned, or if they have some bad relation with one another, they should not take the communion. Ellen G. White opposed this thinking, and said “none should exclude themselves from the communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Savior. It is at these appointments that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence.”<sup>63</sup> If we accept Christ as our own Lord and Savior, we receive a power from God to win over our sins (John 1:12 KJV). God is in us and leads us to do His will “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phillip. 2:13 NKJ), through the Holy Spirit in us, we can do the will of God, and all the bad thinking and bad character will be erased. Ellen White says:

As we celebrate this ordinances, we are to remember that Christ is present, making the occasion one of great interest. Thus it will be to all who have a true sense of the situation. We should search our heart and confess the sins that we have cherished. If we are guided by the Holy Spirit, our thoughts will not be thoughts of self-exaltation, but of severe self-censure and humiliation. Selfishness, evil speaking, and evil thinking will be put away.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1982), 35. There is also other quotation about to have more explanation in the same chapter in the book of *Steps to Christ*, Ellen White said: “When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your redeemer and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’ and that you may be saved by His matchless love.” *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 656.

<sup>64</sup> Ellen G. White, “If Ye Know These Things, Happy Are You if Ye Do Them,” *Review and Herald*, November 04, 1902 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1899 – 1903), 4:463.

We have to focus our eyes to Jesus (Hebrews 12: 2 KJV) and come to Him.

We need not to wait until we are perfect before coming before Christ, we have to come to Him even if we seem to be culpable of our sin.

If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13:23. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are.<sup>65</sup>

However, we have to prepare ourselves before taking the Lord's Supper, we have to be ready and to pray and meditate among ourselves. We should participate in this service with joy but not with sorrow because God is ready to clean our sins through this service. The *SDA Bible Commentary* states,

After having awarded a careful stricture of his life in relationship to the Lord, let the believer approach the table of the Lord with joyful thankfulness for all that the crucified Savior means to him. . . before taking in the Lord's Supper the believer should prayerfully and carefully review his experience as a Christian, and make certain that he is ready to receive the blessing that participation in this ordinance provides for all who are in relationship with God.<sup>66</sup>

During the Lord's Supper, we meet God. We see Him coming to us in the love with which He loved His only begotten Son. We taste and sample the price that Christ has paid to bring us back into fellowship with God. Therefore, in response to that love we can renew peace with God, deeply amazed that He found us, called us to Himself, and carried us along until this day.

At the Lord's Supper, we also meet one another, we eat the same bread and drink from one cup. It appears that at the very same moment we too are standing

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<sup>65</sup> Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, 31.

<sup>66</sup> "So" [1 Cor] *SDABC*, 6:765.

together at the source of our mutual love-fellowship, we renew peace also with one another, deeply amazed that we have been given another chance and that we have remained preserved together.

### **Three Types of Participation**

During the ceremony of the Communion service, there are always three types of principles which denominations do use. They include: Closed Communion, Close Communion, and Open Communion.

**Closed Communion.** It is a type of communion that focuses only on the members of the local church and only the official members in good standing or in good social position are allowed to partake of it.

The practice of closed communion—restricting communion to church members—is also an attempt to make sure someone doesn’t partake in an “unworthy manner.” . . . Closed-communication churches consider that only the local body is able to determine the spiritual worthiness of its members; there is no way of determining the spiritual condition of outsiders or strangers.<sup>67</sup>

**Close Communion.** It is the communion in which members of the church are allowed to partake the communion with members from other churches but the same denomination. Only members in churches in the same denomination can eat and drink the bread and wine. “In ‘close’ communion members of other churches in the same denomination are allowed to break bread together with the members of the local church.”<sup>68</sup>

**Open Communion.** It is a practice where all believers in Christian churches, even different denominations are allowed to participate. Nichols said that: “To some,

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<sup>67</sup> “So” [1 Cor] *SDABC*, 6:765.

<sup>68</sup> “Should Communion be Open or Closed?” accessed September 25, 2017, <https://www.gotquestions.org/communion-open-closed.html>.

the term ‘open communion’ means open to anyone, saint or sinner; anyone who wants to partake is welcome to do so.”<sup>69</sup> So in the open communion, everyone can participate in the service without any discrimination.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Church Principle of the Participation in the Lord’s Supper**

The principle of the SDA Church participation in the Lord’s Supper has been changing over time. Clinton Whalen writes that: “It appears that the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of this subject has developed over time. In our early years, Seventh-day Adventists did indeed celebrate a closed communion.”<sup>70</sup> In 1873, in an article by G. I. Butler, the communion service of the SDA Church was a closed one. In 1932, when the first edition of the church manual was published, the communion service was a closed one. In 1971, a new edition of the *Church Manual* was published and it indicated that the SDA Church was to practice an open communion. In 1980, the General Conference session affirmed that the SDA Church was practicing the open communion.<sup>71</sup>

Since then up to now, the SDA Church has been practicing open communion. It is written in the last General Conference of SDA *Church Manual*, “*Who May Participate*—the Church practices an open communion. All who have committed

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<sup>69</sup> Paul O. Nichols, “Open or Closed Communion?” accessed September 25, 2017, [https://www.newtestamentchurch.org/Outlines/Topical\\_Outlines/Nichols/Tracts/OpenorClosedCommunion.pdf](https://www.newtestamentchurch.org/Outlines/Topical_Outlines/Nichols/Tracts/OpenorClosedCommunion.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> Clinton Whalen, “Open or Closed Communion?” *Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed September 29, 2017, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Open%20or%20Closed%20Communion.pdf>.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

their lives to the Savior may participate.”<sup>72</sup> The Church maintains this practice in the *28 Fundamental Beliefs* where it is written that “The communion service is open to all believing Christians.”<sup>73</sup>

Questions have been asked if non baptized SDA Church goers can participate in the foot washing and communion service. Anderson responded to this question by saying that:

Linda<sup>74</sup>, Seventh-day Adventists officially practice "open communion." That means that anyone who wants to may participate - whether member or non-member. Participation is left up to individual conscience. And that includes foot washing. If you experienced being excluded from foot washing, that is not normal Adventist practice.<sup>75</sup>

SDA Church goers, even if they are not baptized yet, are supposed to know what the Bible says. They should understand who are qualified to participate (John 13:10). What does the church say about children taking part in the Holy Communion? In the SDA Church, children are not allowed to practice it until they are baptized. “The Communion service, therefore, is only for believing Christians and children do not customarily participate in these ordinances unless they are baptized.”<sup>76</sup> In the

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<sup>72</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual*, 126.

<sup>73</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Church, *The 28 Fundamental Beliefs* (Silver Spring: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015), 7.

<sup>74</sup> Linda is someone who posed a question about the participation communion, her question is “Why if you aren't a member of the Church you are not allowed to do the foot washing?” “Lord’s Supper – Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief 16,” accessed September 22, 2017, <http://ssnet.org/about-us/fundamental-beliefs-seventh-day-adventists/lords-supper-fundamental-belief/>.

<sup>75</sup> Inge Anderson on May 27, 2015 at 7:50 pm, <http://ssnet.org/about-us/fundamental-beliefs-seventh-day-adventists/lords-supper-fundamental-belief/>, September 22, 2017. “Inge Anderson is the publisher of Sabbath School Net. A retired teacher, she writes from British Columbia, Canada.” <http://ssnet.org/blog/author/inge-anderson/> September 22, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Frank Holbrook, "For Members Only?" *Ministry* (February 1987), 13.

*Elder's Handbook*, it is stated that: "arrange for a story time for the children who are not participating in the foot washing,"<sup>77</sup> since children are not allowed to partake this service but they can watch and see what is happening in the program and learn through it. "Children learn the significance of the service by observing others participating. After receiving formal instruction in baptismal classes and making their commitment to Jesus in baptism, they are thereby prepared to partake in the service themselves."<sup>78</sup>

Why should children wait to be baptized so as to partake the Lord's Supper?

To answer this question, Nichol said:

Unless we hold that there is a great and real significance to church membership, we undermine the whole idea of the need of joining the church. If unbaptized children may partake of Communion, we are preparing the way for them to continue to participate on through the years even though they are never baptized and so never join the church. Thus we destroy some of the prime symbolic value of the Communion and make it a common thing in which any may join without an open avowal of Christ and a dedication of life to Him.<sup>79</sup>

Children may take this practice as routine if they partake of it before baptism, and that can destroy their thinking.

Why then the open communion in the SDA Church? Ellen White stated, "Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty, this the Holy Spirit plainly teaches in 1 Cor. 5:11. But beyond this, none are to pass judgment."<sup>80</sup> Open communion is practiced because it is not the

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<sup>77</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Elder's Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of SDA Ministerial Association, 2016), 139.

<sup>78</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual*, 126.

<sup>79</sup> Francis D. Nichol, "Questions People Have Asked Me," accessed September 22, 2017, <http://ellenwhite.org/content/file/children-and-communion#document>.

<sup>80</sup> White, *Desires of the Ages*, 656.

mentality of Christ to exclude someone from partaking the Lord's Supper with Him. He calls everyone good and bad. He calls sinners to Him. He knows Judah the traitor, but Jesus didn't exclude him in the communion. "As an example of Judas demonstrates, Christ does not want exclusiveness at the communion service."<sup>81</sup> We should not exclude someone from this ceremony. As Ellen White affirms,

Though Jesus knew Judas from the beginning, He washed his feet. And the betrayer was privileged to unite with Christ in partaking of the sacrament. A long-suffering Saviors held out every inducement for the sinner to receive Him, to repent, and to be cleansed from the defilement of sin. This example is for us. When we suppose one to be in error and sin, we are not to divorce ourselves from him. By no careless separation are we to leave him a prey to temptation, or drive him upon Satan's battleground. This is not Christ's method. It was because the disciples were erring and faulty that He washed their feet, and all but one of the twelve were thus brought to repentance.<sup>82</sup>

Christ gave an example that it is not the duty of man to decide who is to participate in the service or not. "God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the heart? Who can distinguish the tares from the wheat? 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.'<sup>83</sup> Dei adds that no one should be hindered from its participation.<sup>84</sup>

We can examine ourselves but we are not to examine others. If we notice that we have sinned, we should repent and eat the bread and then afterwards drink the wine. Furthermore, if we see that someone has sinned, we should not judge him or her from participating in the Communion. Ellen White writes that: "None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present.

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<sup>81</sup> Norman R. Gulley, "Lord's Supper," *The Ellen White Encyclopedia*, 949.

<sup>82</sup> White, *Desires of the Ages*, 655-656.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 656.

<sup>84</sup> Dei and Osei-Bonsu, "Participation in Adventist Communion," 208.

Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he or she accepts Christ as the personal Savior. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence.”<sup>85</sup>

We should not exclude also whoever is visiting and is present in this service. “These unseen visitors are present on every such occasion. They may come into the company persons who are not in heart servants of truth and holiness, but who may wish to take part in the service. They should not be forbidden.”<sup>86</sup>

### **Biblical Understanding of Baptism, Footwashing and Bread and Wine**

A closer look of the statement of Jesus in John 13:10 is in order. Jesus says, “He that is washed all over [Greek *louō*] needs not to wash [Greek *nīptō*] save his feet.” (John 13:10 DBY). Two different verbs are used. The first one is *louō* (“to bathe,” implying whole body immersion in the water) and the other *nīptō* (“to wash” part of the body; in this context the feet).

It is clear that Jesus is alluding/referring to two different things: (1) baptism (of the whole body), and (2) footwashing (of a part of the body), evidently indicating that foot-washing should follow baptism, and not vice-versa. In addition, as a matter of fact, based on the passage (John 13:1-10), the verb *louō* (bathing, immersing, washing of the whole body) occurs only once (13:10), while *nīptō* (washing a part of the body) occurs six times (13:5, 6, 8, 10). This implies, that while baptism happens normally once in a Christian lifetime, footwashing is done repeatedly during HCS.

Mueller clearly explains,

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<sup>85</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1991), 298.

<sup>86</sup> Dei and Osei-Bonsu, “Participation in Adventist Communion,” 208.

The figurative language of John 13:10 seems to refer to baptism and compares it to foot washing. The term *louo* (“to bathe,” “to wash”) is used in Hebrews 10:22 to describe baptism. Members of the Christian community commit sins even after having been baptized. These postbaptismal sins require forgiveness. Foot washing points to the fact that Jesus is willing to wash away these sins and cleanse us.<sup>87</sup>

### Summary of the Chapter

To summarize this chapter, the Passover and the Holy Communion are important in the lives of God’s people during the OT and the NT. After participating in the Passover in the OT times, the Israelites were ready to leave Egypt and enter into the Promised Land and to live a holy life. That is same in the Holy Communion in the NT times. In the same breadth, God’s people should be ready to leave the boundaries of sin and go to the Holy City in heaven and live a Holy life.

Foot-washing is symbolic and practical. We bend down in humility before another person to wash their feet, an act of service that symbolizes our love for one another and our service to one another, but it also symbolizes our commitment to serve as Jesus did, in the manner in which he served them. We also let someone washing our feet. We acknowledge that we are not fully clean and in this we let God wash, forgive, and renew us. Then we are able to join hands, go and share the body and blood of Christ in His sacrament, and from there, go as members of his body into the world. Concerning participation in the Holy Communion and based on the findings of this study, we can say that the SDA Church embraces principle of open communion where everyone can participate in this service except the children. Based on the biblical instruction he or she has received from the church, everyone should examine himself or herself for the participation.

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<sup>87</sup> Ekkehardt Mueller, “Seventh-day Adventists and the Lord’s Supper,” *Ministry* (April 2004), 12. For the same idea, see also R. V. G. Tasker, *John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 155.

## CHAPTER 3

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

#### **Mahazoarivo District**

Mahazoarivo District is one of the biggest districts in the Central Malagasy Conference (CMC) of the Indian Ocean Union Conferences. The CMC is located in the center of Madagascar, and the Mahazoarivo District is situated in the South of the Conference, in the Vakinankaratra Region whose capital is Antsirabe. It is about 180 Km South from the CMC office, and 167 km South of Antananarivo.

<sup>1</sup> The Mahazoarivo District is one of the districts in the capital of the Vakinankaratra region, with its capital is Antsirabe. In Antsirabe, there are two districts, in the South West is Tsarasaotra District, and in the North East is the Mahazoarivo District.

#### **Statistics**

**Churches.** There are twenty churches in this district all under one pastor. That is one of the big challenges that pastors face in CMC. The twenty churches are divided in three groups, ten organized churches, five organized groups and five non organized group or Sabbath school extension.

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<sup>1</sup>“Antsirabe,” *Wikipedia*, accessed April 11, 2022, <http://fr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antsirabe>.

**Membership.** There are 1079 church members in this district. The organized churches and groups have more than 25 members, and the Sabbath school extension has less than 25 members. All this information can be found in the membership book and the statistics second trimester report attached as an appendix. The church has 718 active members with 75% of them being women and 25% men.

### **Culture and Religion**

A part from the SDA Church, there are many other denominations within the Mahazoarivo District. Most of the SDA Church members converted from those denominations.

There are many Sabbath keepers in these denominations with some being conservatives while some are for or against the Spirit of Prophecy. There are also many Sunday keeping churches such as the Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, Anglican, and charismatic churches.

### **Target of the District**

The church has a purpose and every year it makes an evaluation and renews the purpose depending on the results of the evaluation. Every church leader organizes for a meeting to do the evaluation. To accomplish the target, an elders meeting is organized once in two months, where every elder, treasurer and, church clerk from each church is expected to attend. The district divides its target into three parts: personal, home, and church targets.

**Individual Target.** The individual target is a target in which each person or each member is aiming to reach a personally set goal. It is also referred to as a personal goal. The first aim of the individual target is to increase the personal spiritual life of each member of the church and to do this, each member should do a personal

meditation every day in the morning after waking up, and at night before sleeping. Every member should communicate with God by praying and reading a spiritual book like the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy and any spiritual books during this personal meditation.

The second objective is that each person is to stay active and participate in every program of the church. Beginning from Friday evening to welcome the Sabbath, Sabbath morning in the Sabbath school and worship program, the divine service and the Sabbath evening program. Finally the personal target should encourage one to be willing to go and do missionary work as advised by the GC with the theme: “I Will Go”, and collaborate actively in the missionary program of the church.

**Home Target.** This is the target where the home or family is the target to be reached. Everyone has a systematic worship program in which every family member assists actively in worship every morning and every night. Every home does a missionary activity to reach the neighboring homes. It means that every home becomes a missionary site for preaching the gospel.

Every family member ought to have a good relationship with God and with each other in the home and with all the people outside the home. Every family ought to be faithful returning tithes and giving offerings, and actively follow the church missionary program.

**Church Target.** This is the target where the church is the target to be reached. Every church has a good program to nurture and to provide for every church member so that they don't develop any idea or plan to leave the church. All church members assist in every church program and follows actively in the missionary activities. Every church member remains loyal and stands firm in the faith first to create a systematic

program to train every church member, not only on the Sabbath day but on the other days also depending on their program.

### **Description of the Problem about the Holy Communion Service**

As earlier mentioned, the problem being tackled in this study is about the participation in the HCS. The wide problem can be looked at from the individual, family and church perspective since the problems germinate from the three mentioned aspects.

#### **Individual Problems about the Holy Communion Service**

The individual problem refers to a personal problem in relation to participation in the HCS. Such a problem occurs based on a personal choice made by the individual when he or she decides to participate or not. It is a personal decision.

**Cause.** The major cause of the individual problem of the HCS is based on the lack of knowledge of the Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, resulting in the lack of praying and communion with God. When an individual does not have time devoted to prayer and reading of Scripture, his/her spiritual life decreases. That person may think that God discriminates on people and does not love the sinner. They think that God wants everyone to be holy before coming to Him.

So the person remains in a state of sin as a human being. They will not participate in the HCS program because they think that God is Holy and never mixes with an unholy person. So the individual stays away from the HCS because of the thought that this program is meant to be a holy service for holy people only. The individual gets afraid thinking that partaking in it is vanity and waits to be perfect to participate in it.

**Consequence.** The consequence is that there is a guilty mind and because of that, the individual will not want to participate. During the service, they leave the church or the place where the service is taking place. As a result of this, they do not receive help to remove their sins, and their communication with God and with people may dwindle. They become a difficult person because they always blame everyone and every program in the church.

One interviewed church member said:

What I know is that the Holy Communion Service is guided by God, it is a Holy service because God is Holy, and because God is Holy, He cannot mingle with the unholy, so the unholy person cannot be in the same service together with God. So, I prefer to leave my place in the church soon before the service is starting. After that, I don't want to come back but my mind told me to never give up.

### **Home Problem about the Holy Communion Service**

The home problem can be defined as a family problem that involves all the family members together. The problem comes from the home and the family resulting in an impact in the entire family member.

**Cause.** The person or individual who has a problem can easily influence their family members not to participate in the HCS. So because of discrimination, individual may think that they are sinner and do not have a right to participate because of their sin.

**Consequence.** This action leads to most of the family members leaving the church or the place whenever the service begins. They keep thinking that they are an unholy family that have no right to take or participate in the holy things and do not have a right to go to the holy place. So they may not accept to do the work of God because God is Holy. After that, they influence each other to leave their duty in the church.

Another interviewee said “When I am feeling to be sinner, I do not dare to do the work of God and I don’t dare participate in church activity. I tell my family to stay at home and away from any church activity. All of us are do not participate because we are an unholy family”

### **Church Problem about the Holy Communion Service**

A church problem is a problem that comes from the church, having an impact on the church, and happens in the church. Every church member will eventually feel the impact of it.

**Cause.** Because of the individual’s and family’s guilt, every person in the church develops bad thinking. Their thinking is about themselves.

**Consequence.** A week before the HCS, some individuals and families decide to stay at home instead of going to church for the service because they have a hating for the ceremony. They got afraid to be excluded over and over again. So some people missed church and had bad thinking about the ceremony. They eventually blamed the church, left, and never came back.

On the day of the ceremony the church maybe full in the beginning. Then the members get people divided in two classes. One class for those who think they are holy and should be the ones to participate in the service. The danger of this is that they may become proud of their state and their character. They may discriminate automatically against other people who are participating. Before the program starts, they look around to see who should and who should not participate. And if there is someone who should not participate, they tell the person to leave the place and to not participate in the ceremony.

The other class is for those who think they are sinners, they think that they cannot participate in the service because they cannot mingle with the holy people in a holy place during a holy service. It is dangerous because after the sermon, just before the foot washing, they leave. And their sins are not washed and removed. They leave with their sins and remain in the state of sin resulting in guilt.

This divides the church into two groups, one of the holy people and the other of the sinners. The two groups fight each other, making them work for God for selfish reasons. The group of sinners will keep doing church activities as a result because they are afraid to be blamed by the holy group.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

Mahazoarivo District is a big district because it has so many churches led by only one pastor. It is so difficult for one pastor to fully be in charge, so he depends entirely on elders in each church leading to the genesis of the problem under study. Each member and each elder does not have the same idea and knowledge about the principle of the HC. Every elder and their church like doing things their own ways because the pastor has no time to train them regularly in their church. This has made the church divided into two groups of the holy and the sinners. The two groups fight each other and it has impacted the administration of the church.

## CHAPTER 4

### EVALUATION OF THE PROBLEM AND PASTORAL INTERVENTION

Churches in the District of Mahazoarivo face an issue when it comes to participating in the HC. This chapter makes an evaluation of the problems and tries to come up with solutions to these problems through pastoral intervention.

#### **Evaluation of the Problem**

The introductory part of this study tells of the problem of participation in the HCS. This problem has a big impact on the life of individuals, the family and the church at large. Hence this section of the study attempts to find out the major causes of the mentioned problem and evaluate them.

#### **The Church Leaders**

One of the major causes of the mentioned problem are the leaders of the local church. Everyone will go where they are led to. And if the leaders lead to a wrong practice, the people will definitely follow them. As we know, the local SDA Church is led by pastors and elders but in the case of Mahazoarivo District, there is only one pastor in charge of the 20 churches. As a result of this, it is so difficult for the churches to get a pastoral visit every Sabbath.

So the churches depend more on the elders when the pastor is not around. The elders organize all the programs every Sabbath in the church and the members depend more on the elders because they are close to the members every day and every week.

The members follow easily what the elders advise them to do and go where the elders lead them.

If the elders say that the sinner should not participate in the HCS, the church members follow exactly that, and if the elders introduce some form of discrimination in the HCS, the church members receive and practice it with ease. It means that the said problem can be attributed to the elders. Perhaps also, every elder in the church may make a claim because they have different characters and different leadership styles. The church members follow what seem to be good to them and what they want to in their lives. So church members are always divided and follow the elders and their convictions. After that, we realize that the cause of the problem is the lack of knowledge, training and love between the elders and the church members.

### **Lack of Knowledge**

The main cause of this problem that is caused by the elders is their lack of knowledge of the HCS. Pastors have studied theology while the elders have no schooling or systematic study of the Bible. The elders depend on their personal research and study. Then they make personal conclusions, and practice them in the church services, whether wrong or right. The church members then follow them easily without much questioning.

This was proven by the interviews carried out on some church leaders in the district. They were asked some question about HC, and they gave answers depending on what they know about it. The interview questions will be discussed below with the answers that the leaders gave.

**Question One.** What is the meaning of the Holy Communion?

Seven church leaders in the district answered actively this question. The first one said: “the Holy Communion is a redemption and an eternal life and

communication to Jesus.” The second leader defined it, “the Holy Communion is a recommendation of Christ to the disciples that is why He told them that ‘to do it is to remember me.’” The third one defined it as: “the Holy Communion is a way to unite men with God.” Another said “the Holy Communion is remembering Christ’s death on the cross.” Then another responded, “the Holy Communion is remembering Christ’s death and the unity with Him.” A lady, leader of the church, replied, “the Holy Communion is a unity of Christ,” and another “the Holy Communion is the cleansing of sin and eating a meal together with Christ.”

The seven leaders interviewed knew very well the meaning of the HC from the definitions that they gave. It can therefore, be deduced that Church leaders in Mahazoarivo District know and understand the meaning of the HC. Their definitions can be summarized as: communication and unity to Jesus, recommendation of Jesus, remembering of Christ’s death, and cleansing of sin. These as mentioned are the true base of the definition.

The same seven leaders were asked a second question on who should be allowed to participate in the HCS. Their responses are as summarized below:

**Question Two.** Who can participate in the HCS?

The same seven church leaders attempted to answer the second question. The first one said: “the Holy Communion is for everyone, not just specific ones.” The next agreed, “The Holy Communion Service is for the family of Christ, it was initially meant for the disciples but now it should be to make disciples for Christ, for everyone who follow Jesus.” Another affirmed that “The Holy Communion Service is for everyone because Jesus invited everyone to it.”

One leader from a church has given a different answer to question two. He said that: “the Holy Communion Service should only be for those who have been was

baptized.” Another agreed with him and said that: “The Holy Communion Service is for those who has been baptized.” A lady leader said, “what I know until now is that the Holy Communion Service is for those who was been baptized.” Another lady leader also is of the same opinion and says that: “The Holy Communion Service is for those who was been baptized.”

Two of the seven leaders interviewed said that everyone can participate in the HCS and five of them said that the HCS is only for those who have been baptized. Majority in the church think that the HCS is only for those who have been baptized. This shows that members have different knowledge and opinions of the HCS and this creates some difference in the practice and thinking, thereby creating disorder in its implementation. It can be deduced from the interviews that church leaders know what HCS is but do not agree on who should be allowed to take part in it.

### **Lack of Training**

The lack of training is the major cause this little or no knowledge of the HCS. It can be thought that perhaps pastors do not have time to train their elders because they have so many churches with so many church members under their watch. The pastors always spend most of their times in trying to solve problems faced by the general church members.

The other question that was asked to the interviewees was on the trainings offered in the church. This question was based on the time which the leaders or the church members used to assist in the training on the HCS.

**Question.** Can you tell me the time which you follow a program of training especially about the Holy Communion?

All the seven leaders interviewed agreed that there is no much training about HCS in the district. One said that: “there has not been any training during my time in

this district about the HCS. I can only think of one training in the 20 years I have been here.” Another supported this idea, “Yes, there was a training about HC but it was a long time ago, it was about 15 years ago.” It is truly a long time since a training on HCS was done in the district as confirmed by a third elder, “I have assisted in one training about the HC before, but it was a long time ago when the trainer said that only those who have been baptized can participate. The training was not enough above all about the HC.” The lady leader answered, “there was one training about the HC once before but it did not assist much since it was not so much detailed.” From this it can be deduced that there has been only one training in the past 15 to 20 years.

Another elder told me that there has been no training in the church, he said that: “there has been no training about the HC, but if there is one, it was not detailed as required.” The same has been said by another leader, “I don’t know or have I heard of any training about this HCS.” The women leader confirms this and says that: “there is no training yet about HC in this district, but the elders teach us in church about what they think and what they know before conducting this service.”

It can be concluded that there has not been enough training on HCS in the district and in the church. This lack of training of leaders and members is the main cause of the problems to do with HCS we see in our churches today. Even if there have been trainings, they don’t get enough time and the kind of training delivered are not well detailed.

### **Lack of Love for Each Other**

The HCS is meant to lead to love God and fellow human beings. This is well evidenced whenever there is any form of discrimination during the HCS. There are two types of questions about the self-esteem during the HCS that were asked during the interview and a conclusion was reached from the answers that were given by the

church leaders and members. The first question asked to the church members was on the exclusion of members from the HCS while the second question was for those who were allowed to take part in HCS. Question one was meant for church members to seek their opinion on how they would feel if they are prevented from partaking of the HCS.

**Question.** “How would you feel if you are denied the chance to take part in the HC?”

In an attempt to answer this question, a member said: “I was taught that if I sin, I should not participate in the HC. So because of my sin, I don’t want to participate in the service. I will wait and take part in it once I am not a sinner. So during the HCS, I simple leave church and go home.” Her opinion is that when she is excluded from HCS because of her sin, she leaves the place where the HC is being held because she is a sinner and cannot participate in it. This mindset has an impact in her accountability. She confirms that: “and when I am feeling that am a sinner, I don’t dare do the work of God and avoid any church activity. I tell my family to stay at home during the HCS since we are labelled an unholy family.”

Another member answered this question by saying that:

As a sinner, what the church teaches me is that, I cannot participate in the HCS and when I am present in church during this service, I feel to be culpable and I think of going out of the church never come back. I accept that the holy cannot mix with the unholy but my feeling pulls me to leave the church.

The second question which was asked was for who is allowed to participate in the HC. This question was asked to help know what a person who is permitted to participate thinks. I interviewed two people to help me know their thinking about participation of the HCS.

**Question.** “What do you think if you are permitted to participate in the Holy Communion Service?”

A sister elder in one of the churches in the Mahazoarivo District answered,

If I have this authority, as an elder of the church, I will make a planning to separate the person who can and who cannot participate and before the service is starts, I tell those who cannot participate to leave the place and come back next week, because the program should be only for those who can participate, since it is a holy program.

One of the elders in a church in the Mahazoarivo District give his opinion by saying that: “I think that I am holy and I cannot be together in God’s work with sinners. I cannot sit together with them during the HCS so I ask them to leave and to go out.”

The problem of participation in the HCS is a serious one. It can lead to the dissolution of a church because it can make church members fight each other. It can destroy the spiritual lives of people, and it can lead people to fight against the church organization. However, it is relieving that where there is problem, there is always a solution.

### **Solution of the Problem**

The major cause of the problem is the church leaders. However, this can be divided into three major causes of the problem, that is, the lack of knowledge, lack of training and the lack of love for each other. The best way to solve these problems is to tackle each and provide for the deficiencies. The solution should come from the pastors to the elders and then from the elders to the church members. The pastor needs to do some serious planning on training the elders systematically by finding a day and time which is favorable to the elders. For example, one day per month, or every first Sunday of the month, so the pastor will have 12 days to train them one year, then

divide his training by 10 to 12 chapters, then the following year, the pastor can do 10 to 12 chapters by focusing on another subject.

Once the elders are trained by the Pastor, they should to go and train the church members every Sabbath afternoon. The elders have to take a time for training and discussing about what they have learnt from the Pastor. During this training, they should give time to the church members to speak what they have in their minds about the subject. The members should be allowed to ask questions and say where they think the problem is and how they see it. The elders will then create time to respond to the questions and answers from the church members and try to get solutions.

The Pastor and elders should to plan to visit the church members in their homes so as to know them at personal levels and seek what problems they face in their lives and then pray for them and with them. During such visitations, the Pastor should explain in detail the meaning and principle of the HCS so that they can get to understand very well what to do and what not do during the HCS and in their spiritual life. It means that the Pastor and church members together with the elders should do a systematic visitation to study the Bible and to focus on all the doctrinal problems including the HC problem.

The Pastor and church leaders should create a program to increase the love for each other in the church. Programs for eating together include potlucks, picnic, camping, sports, and fasting. Every church member should have a responsibility during the election of church board and feel that it is their responsibility to elect their leaders.

Pastors and elders should also train the parents to know that they are the keys to their families as Ellen White says:

The directions that Moses gave concerning the Passover feast are full of significance, and have an application to parents and children in this age of the

world. The father was to act as the priest of the household, and if the father was dead, the eldest son living was to perform this solemn act of sprinkling the doorpost with blood. This is a symbol of the work to be done in every family. Parents are to gather their children into the home and to present Christ before them as their Passover. The father is to dedicate every inmate of his home to God and to do a work that is represented by the feast of the Passover. It is perilous to leave this solemn duty I the hands of others.

<sup>1</sup>

### **Pastoral Intervention**

The Pastor should prepare a training program, and draw up a schedule for that and for his daily and weekly activities. The Pastor should also to do a schedule for the program of his training in the district and the church then give this schedule to the local churches for adoption.

### **Time Table of the Training Program**

Below is a time table for planning the first semester of 2021 for Mahazoarivo District. The table offers a planning for pastoral training and pastoral visitation in every church within the district.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 324.

*Table 1. Time Table of the Training Program*

PLANNING 2021 (First Semester) District: MAHAZOARIVO					
Pastor ANDRIANASOLO Ainanirina					
January	February	March	April	May	June
2	6	6	3	1	5
Mahazoariv	Ampahtrimah	Antsapany	Andrefatsena	Vatofotsy	Manampisao
3	7	7	4	2	7
Deacons Training	Sabbath School Training	Personal Evangelism Training	Church Clerk Training	Treasury Training	Other Department Training
9	13	13	10	8	12
Atsongo	Analakely	Andoharano	Analakely	STAR	Andohasabe
16	20	20	17	15	19
STAR	Ambrnomby	Hitavo	Andrangy	Ambohitrony	DISTRIKA
23	27	27	24	22	26
Andrano/tra	Andranobe	andohasabe	Ampahtrimah	Antanimena	Mahazoariv
24	28	28	25	23	27
Elders Training	Elders Training	Elders Training	Elders Training	Elders Training	Elders training
30				29	
District Meeting				District Meeting	

### **Explanation of the Planning Table**

The table above shows a whole semester planning for the visitation of the church members on a weekly basis together with the planning of the elders and departmental training made by the district pastor in the Mahazoarivo District. The Pastor here is planning for a training for the elders and department leaders once per month. The plan also shows that the department training is done every first Sunday of the month with the elders training very fourth Sunday in the month. It is during this time that the Pastor can give a detailed training. Then, every Sabbath afternoon, the elders can in turn train the church members. In the second semester, the department heads and the elders will organize for the practical of all the things which they have

learnt from the Pastor. There is also a district meeting every fifth Sabbath of the year so that the pastor can talk and train directly his members in the district.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter specifies the real problem of the HCS. Participation in this ceremony is a big problem because there is the lack of the knowledge of the HCS, lack of the training on HSC and lack of love for each other. However, there is a solution, and the solution begins with the church leaders, the Pastor and the elders. They should be able to make a systematic plan for training.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The HCS is very important for God's people. He commanded that it be done again and again to commemorate His death on the cross to save humanity. There seems to be a problem though, especially in the Mahazoarivo District in the CMC, one of the conferences in IOUC in Madagascar.

The problem is about participation in the HCS. Most of the church members say that the HCS is only for the people who have been baptized, and are holy and the holy service is meant for such. This type of thinking as created some disorder and misunderstanding in the church because people are now divided in two groups namely the holy and the sinners. The holy people tend to exclude the sinners during the service and the sinners leave the church with their families and blame the church for their troubles.

We attempted to find a biblical foundation and discovered the Adventist position on participation in the HCS. It can be said that the Passover was one of the greatest festivals in the time of the Israelites. The main goal of God was to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt so that they could successfully enter in the Promised Land. In the Old Testament time, the Passover was practiced every year to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

The New Testament teaches that Jesus is our Passover. He delivered us from sins. When Jesus comes, He will deliver us and save us from our sin, and He calls us

to participate in the bread and wine of the HCS as a remembrance of Him, so that we may experience His grace, salvation and forgiveness.

So, today, as we partake of the HCS, it reminds us of our deliverance from our sin through Jesus. In this practice, our Lord wants to meet us, and we have to be open at heart to Him and for Him. When we meet to celebrate the ordinances, we should lay aside all routines and whatever hinders us from listening to His voice and His story. We should accept the Lord's invitation to His wonderful meal. Therefore, celebrating the HC is not a right for us that we may make use of, or not, as we deem fit. According to the institution of Christ, it is very clearly a honorable duty, for we do it primarily with an eye to the honor of God and his Son Jesus Christ and for that reason, it is still a duty toward God, the church, and oneself.

When we sit down at the table of the Lord's Supper we are functioning most definitely as members of the church of Christ. We recite our confession of faith, we proclaim Christ's death, we greet one another with fellowship, and together we await our Lord's return in glory. Because the Lord's Supper "declares the Lord's death (retrospect) until His comes (prospect)"

1

The SDA Church practices an open communion, and we do not have the right to exclude anyone. Members of the church, baptized or non-baptized, should come to church to be instructed in the way of the Lord. Particularly for HCS, the order to follow is baptism, footwashing, and bread and wine (John 13:10). Then, a member who is well and properly instructed by the Pastors or the elders, with good conscience, will make a personal decision whether to participate or not in the HCS.

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<sup>1</sup> Merril F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1967), 636.

Moreover, we should not blame ourselves when we commit sin, we should come to Jesus for forgiveness. Children though must wait for their baptism in order to partake this service. The Bible advises that we should “Do all things without complaining and disputing, so that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2: 14-15 NKJ)

Chapter three and four specified the real problem in the Mahazoarivo District and tries to provide solutions to these problems faced. We discover that the real problem is all about the lack of knowledge, lack of training and lack of love for each other amongst the church leaders and the church members. The solution to all these is to plan for a systematic training and visitation. The researcher provided that training in 2021. Aside from training, there is also a need to create social activities for the church as camping, picnic pot lock and fasting.

It is for sure that if the Pastor gets serious in his ministry, and if the elders profit maximally from the time given to them by the pastor for training and if the church members follow what the Bible says, then all the problems faced are likely to be solved. There will be an increased growth in church membership, and Christ’s coming will be hastened.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STATISTIC REPPORT OF MAHAZOARIVO DISTRICT

CENTRAL MALAGASY CONFERENCE  
B,P, 670 – Antananarivo Madagascar  
STATSTIC 2nd TRIMESTER 2021

Pastor: Ainanirina						COME IN					COME OUT							
	District <b>Mahazoarivo</b>	CHURCH	GROUP	S S Extension	Members Onset Trimestre	Adjustment	Baptism	Vote	Letter	Total Come In	Letter	Dead	Apostasy	Disappeard	Total Come Out	<b>OUTCOME</b>	Members end of Trimestre	Active Members
1	Mahazoarivo	X			128		3			3				10	0	3	131	121
2	Star	X			90					0				42	0	0	90	48
3	Vatofotsy	X			94					0				24	0	0	94	70
4	Amboronomby	X			91					0				38	0	0	91	53
5	Andrefatsena	X			85		2			2				21	0	2	87	66
6	Antsapani/Hazo	X			80					0				45	0	0	80	35
7	Andranobe	X			52					0				22	0	0	52	30
8	Ampahatrimah	X			55					0				20	0	0	55	35
9	Andrangy	X			60		1			1				34	0	1	61	27
10	Andoharano	X			88					0				43	0	0	88	45
11	Andrano/Latra		X		40					0				5	0	0	40	35
12	Aambohitrony		X		45					0				23	0	0	45	22
13	Analakely		X		31					0				16	0	0	31	15

14	Hitavo		X		32					0				10	0	0	32	22
15	Manampisoa			X	22					0				7	0	0	22	15
16	Andohasahabe			X	15					0					0	0	15	15
17	Tsiafahy			X	10					0					0	0	10	10
18	Atsongo		X		32					0				1	0	0	32	31
19	Antanimenakely			X	23					0					0	0	23	23
20	Ambatomainty			X	0					0					0	0	0	0
	TOTAL				1073		6	0	0	6	0	0	0	361	0	6	1079	718

There are 20 churches and 1079 members with only 718 active members and 361 apostasy or disappeared members.

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This is an interview. Answers to these questions will remain anonymous, that is, the names of the interviewees will not appear in the project.

#### **Questions**

1. What do you understand by the term Holy Communion?
2. Who should be allowed to participate in the Holy Communion?
3. If you are excluded from participating in the HC, how would you take that?
4. If you are allowed to participate in the HCS, how would you take that?
5. When are you likely to attend training program especially about the HC?

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Andrianasolo  
 Surname: Ainanirina  
 Birth date: 11 / 06 / 79 at Hospital Itaosy Tananarive Madagascar  
 Nationality: Malagasy  
 Phone Number, WhatsApp: +261 34 19 322 10  
 Mail Address: pst.ainanirina@gmail.com  
 Married to Raharivelo Alexandra Ellena  
 Date of marriage: 02 / 01 / 09  
 Number of Children: 3  
*Baptismal Date: 07 / 04 / 98*

### ACADEMIC STUDY

YEAR	DIPLOMA	INSTITUTION
2017-2022	Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology Candidate (MAPTh)	AUA
2004-2007	Bachelor of Arts in Theology (BATH)	AUZ
2002	Baccaloreate	LPM

### PROFESSIONAL WORK

YEAR	FUNCTION	FIELD	POSITION
2019-2022	District Pastor Of Mahazoarivo Antsirabe Director of Adventist Radio Vakinankaratra	CMC	Ordained Minister
2021	Visiting Professor at Adventist University Zurcher	IOUC	Visiting Professor
2016-2019	District Pastor of Androndra	CMC	2017 Ordained Minister
2013-2015	District Pastor of Behenjy	CMC	2011-2016
2009-1013	District Pastor of Vatomandry	CMC	Authorised Pastor
2008-2009	District Pastor of Tsarasaotra Pioneer at Ankiranomena Fenoarivobe	CMC	2008-2010 Pastoral Internship
2007-2008	Journalist, technician et cameramen of Malagasy National Radio and Malagasy Television	RNM and TVM	
2007	Pioneer of Global Mission at Vangaindrano, South Malagasy Conference	SMC	Pioneer