

## THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Divinity

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: UNDERSTANDING EXODUS 20:8-11 AS A MISSIOLOGICAL MODEL:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ADVENTIST  
MISSION PRACTICES

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This study explores Exodus 20:8-11, the Sabbath Commandment, as a foundational missiological model with particular relevance for contemporary African mission practices. While traditionally viewed through theological, ethical and liturgical lenses, this passage also carries significant missional implications. By examining the Sabbath's embedded themes in creation, rest, inclusiveness, liberation, restoration, and covenantal identity, this thesis argues that these elements offer a holistic framework for mission that speaks profoundly to the African context marked by socio-economic challenges, injustice, ecological degradation, and cultural fragmentation. The research employs a missional hermeneutical approach by examining the text in Exod 20:8-11 and highlighting how the Sabbath principles can inform and transform Adventist engagement in Africa. This is done while emphasizing human dignity, communal renewal, and spiritual development.

Considering the conditions of the Children of Israel in the wilderness when the Command was given to observe the Sabbath, the study will show how Africa with similar conditions of lack and survival can be benefitted from the “gift of the Sabbath”.

The study further looks at Jesus’ understanding and practice of the Sabbath as supporting holistic mission as found in Exod 20:8-11, while emphasizing its implications for contemporary Adventist mission strategies in Africa. With the focus on ‘rest and work’, a more inclusive and effective approach to mission that transcends traditional boundaries and emphasizes, both the present needs and the eschatological hope for humanity, is highlighted.

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UNDERSTANDING EXODUS 20:8-11 AS A MISSIOLOGICAL MODEL:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ADVENTIST MISSION  
PRACTICES

A thesis

presented in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Divinity

by

Lottie Banda

May 2025

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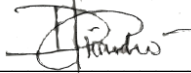
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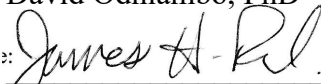
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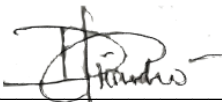
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of Study**

This study explores Exodus 20:8-11 as missiological model with practical implications for contemporary African Adventist mission practices. The fourth commandment in Exod 20:8-11, which is the observance of the Sabbath day, has long been held in both theological and practical significance among Seventh-day Adventist tradition. While it is interpreted from both doctrinal and ecclesiastical lenses, a closer examination shows that this commandment also embodies missiological themes such as creation, social justice, soteriology, holistic rest and covenantal identity.

The Adventist Church in Africa, like other parts of the world, has been undergoing a lot of change in socio-economic areas and needs to adapt to these changes to still remain missiologically relevant.<sup>1</sup> Like the children of Israel in the wilderness who lived without meaningful life support systems, most Africans live in an environment lacking in many life support systems. Apart from that, Africa has been affected by many socio-economic challenges including poverty, sickness, HIV/AIDS, wars, poor governance, family disintegration, prostitution, drugs and

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<sup>1</sup> Paulo De Oliveira, "Worldview: Vital for Mission and Ministry in the 21st Century," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 5 (2009): 1-18.

ecological degradation.<sup>2</sup> To this regard, the principles of the Sabbath as it was to the Israelites in the wilderness, are very much applicable especially, with the principles of “rest” and “release.” The Sabbath in mission is a meaningful way to observe the Sabbath day of rest while also serving others. This practice recognizes that Sabbath rest and service to others are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary and can enhance one another.

The intention of this thesis is to demonstrate the implications of this passage for mission practice within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa and how it affects the way it engages with non-believers. The Sabbath Command will be examined to provide both a theological and practical foundation for missions in Africa by examining the historical context of the text in order to explore what the Sabbath meant to the people of Israel and how it can be applied to today’s missions. In looking at the Sabbath as a sign (Eze 20:12,20)<sup>3</sup> with a purpose in keeping the Israelites separate and distinct from the surrounding nations, this study will look at “biblical rest” as an embodiment of liberation and a witness to the redemptive acts of God.

The study of Exod 20:8-11 with its familial structure having God as the central focus is what missions is about. The Sabbath provides solutions to challenges of poverty, injustice, racism, tribalism and many other challenges in Africa, presenting a view that humans are created equal before God. Adventists will not discriminate as to who should have priority in receiving the gospel of Jesus including those in the most difficult areas such as the 10/40 window. According to Bade

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<sup>2</sup> Economic Commission for Africa, “New and Emerging Challenges in Africa Summary Report,” May 2012, 5–20.

<sup>3</sup> All scripture is from the ESV

This passage is particularly pertinent to those engaged in evangelism and cross-cultural mission and can provide a useful model that enables the Church to remain faithful to its calling, identity, and relationship with God while maintaining an authentic and credible witness to the gospel... The global mission of the Adventist Church in the 21st century in light of Exodus 20:8-11, must be thoroughly Christ-centred, intentionally holistic, practically and spiritually discerning, and underpinned by theologically reflective practice. It must be rooted in the historical person, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ, and the missionary must have a clear understanding of what it means to follow Christ which is what Exodus 20:8-11 emphasizes. This passage to the church is important for maintaining faithfulness to God and a relationship with Christ as she seeks to be His witness. The Sabbath command was given as an essential part of the covenant between God and Israel (See Ex 32:15-16, 34:28). This was done to confirm the covenant, making it an essential expression of the covenant between human beings and God and a sign of the covenant relationship (See Ex 31:16-17). The Sabbath Command as seen in Exodus 20:8-11 points to creation when there was neither “Jew nor Gentile” thus making it clear that “the Sabbath was made for man...” (Mk 2:27). This then makes the Sabbath not just for a particular group of people but for all created in the image of God. Missions is about people and meeting the needs of the people is considered very vital to meeting this strategy in mission within the Adventist perspective<sup>4</sup>

Right in the fourth commandment of Exodus 20, there are principles of restoration for the family and the “stranger” which is God’s grand intention to unite all to Himself. It is this aspect of the Sabbath as found in Exod 20:8-11, that makes it important to the study of missions within the Adventist Church at a time when the church is calling for the involvement of every member in missions<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Michee Bade, “The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and ‘Growing in Christ’: From Ecclesiological Awareness to Missiological Engagement,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 13, no. 2 (2017): 119–131

<sup>5</sup> Gordon R. Doss, *Africa: Adventist Mission in Africa: Challenges & Prospect* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2011)

## **Statement of the Problem**

Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Sabbath as articulated in Exod 20:8-11 is a pillar of doctrinal identity and spiritual practice. However, while Adventist theology strongly emphasizes Sabbath observance in an apologetic sense, there are still significant gaps in applying the Sabbath command as a missiological model within the African context. In many African societies, social economic pressures, urbanization and syncretic religious practices often over shadow biblical principles of the Sabbath, even among Adventists, at most leading to lack or minimal participation in the mission. The Sabbath as it is viewed from an apologetic angle creates a hermeneutical challenge allowing a perception of legalism and social barriers by the non-believers. This gap reveals a need to re-examine the Sabbath Commandment in Exod 20:8-11 not merely as a ritual of observance, but a transformative paradigm for mission that speaks to the African realities of inequality, abuse, injustice, tribalism, civil wars, economic degradation, corruption and communal fragmentation. To help address this gap, the following questions need to be asked:

To help address this gap, the following questions need to be asked:

1. How does the Sabbath as described in this text impact the work of missions and discipleship within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa?
2. Are there steps in the passage that could be of help to this understanding? How does the literary form of the text help the understanding of missions with regard to the Sabbath?
3. How does the Sabbath deal with practical day to day missions among Adventists in Africa?

These questions need to be addressed in order to obtain a more complete representation and understanding of mission practices in light of the Sabbath in Exod 20:8-11 and what lessons can be learnt from the life of Jesus in relation to the Sabbath in the area of missions?<sup>6</sup>

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Sabbath text in Exod 20:8-11, in order to develop a Sabbath theology that will impact contemporary missions within the Adventist Church in Africa. This thesis will enhance missions through a missional approach<sup>7</sup> that includes living an exemplary life for mission practitioners impacted by the weekly Sabbath observance. It will demonstrate that the Sabbath, in Exod 20:8-11 shapes both the theology and practice of Adventist Missions in Africa by breaking cultural barriers, creating a missional mindset and a lifestyle of constant missions.

### **Justification of the Study**

The study of Exod 20:8-11 as a missiological model for the Seventh-day Adventist in Africa is both timely and critical. While the Sabbath remains central to Adventist theology, it is often approached primarily as a doctrinal obligation in an apologetic sense to defend Adventist identity rather than as a transformative mission tool. In the context of Africa's socio-economic challenges, the Sabbath command provides a biblically grounded framework to address these issues while maintaining the eschatological promise of the second coming of Jesus. By emphasizing 'rest' and

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<sup>6</sup> Sigve Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Kwabena Donkor, *The Emerging Church and Adventist Ecclesiology* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2011), 18-27.

‘release’, Exod 20:8-11 provides a holistic approach to mission that aligns with the Adventist Church’s goal of fostering spiritual, social and ecological well-being<sup>8</sup>. This study seeks to unlock the ‘Sabbath’s full potential as a missiological model, encouraging Adventists in Africa to shift from just doctrinal teachings, to active engagement with their community, reflecting the gospel and making mission not as program only, but a lifestyle impacted by the Sabbath day principles.

### **Delimitations**

This research will focus on Exod 20:8-11 in its latest stage. Detailed but not exhaustive exegesis of this text will deal with the Sabbath being the seventh day of the week and will only consider those texts that are related to the Sabbath in Exod 20:8-11 and also in the context of missions.

### **Methodology**

While there continues to be debates surrounding the process by which the texts under consideration achieved their current state<sup>9</sup>, this study works with the text as it is found in its final form. The biblical text under consideration will be analyzed using the missional hermeneutical approach<sup>10</sup>. Missional hermeneutics is a method of Biblical interpretation that prioritizes the Mission of God and how it is connected to

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<sup>8</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2018). Accessed May 14, 2025, <https://gc.adventist.org/official-statements/mission-statement-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church/?searchsite=gc.adventist.org&ref=on-site-search&searchterm=mission>

<sup>9</sup> Steven L. McKenzie and John Kaltner, *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth & Content* (Nashville, TN; Abingdon Press, 2007), 325.

<sup>10</sup> Brian D Russel, “What Is Missional Hermeneutics?” *A Foundation for Theological Education*, April 1, 2010, accessed 16 March 2025, [https://johnwesleyfellows.org/perspectives/what-is-a-missional-hermeneutic/#:~:text=A%20missional%20hermeneutic%20is%20an,%E2%80%99Cbehind%20the%20text%E2%80%9D\).](https://johnwesleyfellows.org/perspectives/what-is-a-missional-hermeneutic/#:~:text=A%20missional%20hermeneutic%20is%20an,%E2%80%99Cbehind%20the%20text%E2%80%9D).)

the Believer's lives and to the world. This method focuses on reading the Bible with a missional lens with particular interest in the key words of the text and the contexts in which they occur. This includes understanding the context of a text, connecting the text to missions and drawing implications for contemporary mission practices.

In this study, Chapter one which is an introductory overview of the study as a whole will include a concise overview of current scholarship. It will examine the benefits of both theology and missions on Exod 20:8-11 which is the Sabbath commandment, to help provide a better understanding of modern Missions in the Adventist Church in Africa. Chapter 2 will examine the various literature that have talked about the Sabbath Commandment and missions, especially in the light of the Adventist Church.

Chapter 3 will examine Exod 20:8-11 from a Historical-Grammatical context in order to observe the elements of the text which will help in learning principles for contemporary practice. Chapter 4 will examine how the Sabbath appeals to mission in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church focusing on the "stranger within your gates." It will also consider the centrality of Jesus in the Sabbath command in order to develop a model to be applied for contemporary missions. Chapter 5 will be the Summary and conclusion. This concluding chapter will tie together the various components of the study, shedding light on the theological trajectory that proper understanding of the Sabbath does not just relate to a day but is a lifestyle and thus developing a model for Adventist mission in Africa.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This Chapter presents a theoretical discussion on the Sabbath within the context of Missions. Here the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week as found in Exod 20:8-11.

While many have written about the Sabbath, the focus has been mostly in an apologetic sense to show which day is the Sabbath, how it was changed to Sunday, the benefits of keeping the Sabbath such as good health, family and human relations in the context of those attending church. As observed in the Seventh-day Adventist Belief number 20, the Sabbath is a gift from the Creator and is the fourth of the Ten Commandments. It emphasizes the aspect of it being a sacred day kept by God's faithful from the beginning, including His Son Jesus and the end-time people of God. It also brings out the aspect of the specialness of God's people living in the last days.<sup>11</sup> One can notice in the very statement that it does not address how the Sabbath doctrine impacts adherents to do and how to do missions.

The development of Sabbath debates is a very old one. Adventist scholars such as Samuele Bacchiocchi labored to show that the Seventh day (Saturday) is the Sabbath as opposed to Sunday which to them was a creation of human institutions.

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<sup>11</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 281.

The debate has had a theological as well as historical emphasis especially among Adventists. With time Adventists began to look beyond the apologetic approach and saw other practical benefits of the Sabbath and also principles that could aid the better lives of Sabbath observers. Among the early Scholars to bring a different understanding of the Sabbath was Sakae Kubo who brought the elements of equity and equality among men as viewed from the creation connections of the Sabbath. In today's approach, with scholars like James Park and Kwabena Donkor, the Sabbath is seen to be the answer, to transforming Adventist missions and also to best compete with the "Emerging Church" missional approaches, which has swept the contemporary world. This is also affirmed by the Sabbath doctrine in the Seventh-day-Adventists' fundamental beliefs.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Sabbath and Mission**

This section will investigate what various scholars have written concerning the Sabbath as a particular day (Saturday), a tool for rest and liberation and how the Sabbath fits in missions.

#### **Saturday as the Sabbath**

Samuele Bacchiocchi examines the thesis espoused by many scholars who attribute to the Apostles, or even to Christ, the initiative and responsibility for the abandonment of Sabbath-keeping and the institution of Sunday worship and also he evaluates the extent of certain factors such as anti-Judaic feelings, repressive Roman measures taken against the Jews, Sun-worship with its related "day of the Sun," and

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<sup>12</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 285.

certain Christian theological motivations and how they influenced the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption by the majority of Christians of Sunday as the Lord's day.<sup>13</sup> His arguments though apologetic, bring a certain perspective of Sabbath liberation which is also supported by Sri when addressing Luke 4:16-30.<sup>14</sup>

Hartman brings a perspective that though throughout history, Sabbath-keeping for Christians has not been consistent it has become very popular in Christian devotional and spiritual literature. The Sabbath has three characteristics which are; Sabbath-keeping with a theocentric perspective, a slower and simpler style of living, and an eschatological encounter which are tools for environmentally sensitive modes of living. Christians who observe the Sabbath are a reminder to other Christians to enjoy Creation as God did when He rested on the seventh day in the beginning in Genesis 2. The Sabbath has an environmentally salutary effect, and it attracts Christians into a shared hope of a healed and redeemed creation.<sup>15</sup>

In examining Exod 20:8-11, Haynes indicates that many of the studies focuses on what proper Sabbath observance means and describing how Sabbath rest mirrors God's rest on the seventh day of creation. Haynes is clear that little investigation has

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<sup>13</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977).

<sup>14</sup> Edward Sri, "Release from the Debt of Sin: Jesus' Jubilee Mission in the Gospel of Luke," *Nova et Vetera* 9, no. 1 (2011): 183–194.

<sup>15</sup> Laura M. Hartman, "Christian Sabbath-Keeping as a Spiritual Environmental Practice," *Worldviews* 15, no. 1 (2011): 47.

been carried out into the relationship between the fourth commandment in Exod 20 and the shape of humanity's task and relationship with God on the seventh day.<sup>16</sup>

Though Vaida understands the Sabbath to mean Sunday, the principles of rest she brings stems from practices in Jewish tradition concerning the Seventh-day Sabbath. She also affirms that being a gift from God, it is a tool to affirm one's spiritual creed and identity and also brings out the aspect of maintaining a distinct faith identity for those who keep it.<sup>17</sup>

Also for Kyle Dieleman, though Sabbath meant Sunday, the Sabbath among the Dutch was to them a symbol of holiness and identity which is said to have lost its uniqueness meaning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Sabbath as a Tool for Rest and Liberation**

With Sakae Kubo, the principle of the Sabbath being a special day reflects the image of God in all men. To the Seventh-day Adventists Church, he emphasizes that they are to proclaim the brotherhood of all men in a special way. That each Sabbath as they observe it, they proclaim to the world that they believe that there is neither "Jew nor Greek", but one new man in Christ Jesus. Since the Sabbath points to creation, it points to the fact that we are all children of a common father. Thus, the Sabbath points to the creation of all men by the hand of God and opposes any idea that God can be

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<sup>16</sup> M. B. Haynes, "The Sabbath Commandment in Exodus 20:8-11 in the Light of the First Creation Account" (MA Thesis, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, 2015), 45.

<sup>17</sup> Cristian Vaida, "Sabbath and Sunday: Understanding the Meaning of the Day of Rest in the Ancient Church: A Hope for the Future?" *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 79 no. 1 (2023): 2-7.

<sup>18</sup> Kyle J. Dieleman, "The Battle for the Sabbath in the Dutch Reformation: Devotion or Desecration?" *Reformed Historical Theology*, 52 (2019): 831-833.

made in the image of man; on the contrary, it pictures man as created by God in the image of God. In bringing this principle Sakae notes that as adherents come to worship every Sabbath, they witness to the world that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, but are all truly united in Christ Jesus.<sup>19</sup> Though Sakae talks about the coming of people to worship on Sabbath that this action demonstrates to all humanity who they are in the eyes of God, he points out that the Sabbath is more than just observing a day but shapes the very life of Missiologists in their daily activities and interactions. This is the premise by which we develop the Missiological model in this paper.

Another focus on the Sabbath by Reid is about the meaning of rest as found in Jesus. Though the focus is redemptive in nature and that true rest deals with Jesus giving peace from sin<sup>20</sup>, this article did not bring out that ‘rest’ is not just for the believer but for all mankind and this is the focus of missions, to provide humanity with ‘rest’ through knowing and receiving Jesus.

For Lucas Scripter, who argues from the Jewish Sabbath point of view, he emphasized that the Sabbath rest is as re-fueling. Meaningful rest was needed for effective functioning in the week.<sup>21</sup>

Sigve K. Tonstad recovers the profound and foundational understanding of God that can be experienced in the seventh day. He shows that Scripture has consistently asserted that the Sabbath of Creation is the Sabbath of the whole story of

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<sup>19</sup> Sakae Kubo, “The Sabbath and Human Relations,” *Gleaner*, December 1979, 11.

<sup>20</sup> George W. Reid, “Faith Under Pressure: The Sabbath as Case Study,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 9, no. 1 (2000): 141–149.

<sup>21</sup> Lucas Scripter, “Meaningful Rest,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 38, no. 2 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.70003>

how God makes right what has gone wrong in the world. He argues that the seventh day is the symbol of God's faithfulness precisely when God's presence seems to be in doubt. He demonstrates how God, through the seventh day, seeks the benefit of all creation. Inevitably, this leads to an investigation of how this universal symbol became obscured. This sweeping work of biblical theology and historical analysis traces the seventh day as it is woven throughout Scripture and the history of Christianity.<sup>22</sup>

It is ironic how Holly Hough, connected the idea of rest to the relationship between Sabbath observance and mental, physical and spiritual rest. This is not just in the circles of spirituality but in area of psychology. He believes by following the principles of rest through having vacations, sleep, relaxation activities and social support, Pastors can have better mental health.<sup>23</sup>

Emily Stimpson who is a Catholic Scholar, claims that for today's parents, the idea of rest in preparing children with good morals is still critical. She champions the idea of reclaiming the lost values in the Sabbath which can make families and parenting better.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Sabbath and Mission**

Donkor addresses the contemporary issues of "mission" and "missional" in dealing with Adventist mission in the face of the emerging church. The emerging

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<sup>22</sup> Sigve Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>23</sup> Holly Hough et al., "Relationships between Sabbath Observance and Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Health in Clergy," *Pastoral Psychology* 68, no. 2 (April 2019): 171–193. Accessed 16 March 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-018-0838-9>.

<sup>24</sup> Emily Stimpson, "Give It a Rest: Reclaiming the Meaning of the Sabbath Day," *Catholic Counsellors*, May 8, 2014. Accessed 15 March 2025, <https://catholiccounselors.com/give-it-a-rest/>

church which emphasizes meeting people's needs here and now includes views of postmodern pluralism which denies the uniqueness of Christ in His role as Savior of humanity and the uniqueness of the Sabbath as a critical mark of identity for God's Remnant Church which is also the instrument of missions. Adventist mission in itself incorporates the preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ to others and without this aspect, according to McKnight, "unless you proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, there is no good news at all, and if there is no good news, there is no Christianity, emerging or evangelical". To this regard then, Adventist missions cannot be divorced from its uniqueness in a postmodern pluralistic environment and the Sabbath is a key component to that uniqueness.<sup>25</sup>

For Klingbeil, the Sabbath brings hope in the sense of declaring "God's presence, grace and future". He emphasizes divine-human fellowship as key in bringing out the principles of creation and redemption which are foundational to mission and service. From his viewpoint this is what humanity must rediscover in the Sabbath as it reflects God's love to humanity and that it is a gift to humanity from a loving God.<sup>26</sup>

According to David C Dollahite, et al., the Sabbath is also to be considered a day for the family which among Jewish practice provided a strong bonding

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<sup>25</sup> Donkor,18.

<sup>26</sup> Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Falling in Love All over Again: Rediscovering the Gift of the Sabbath in a Busy World," *Adventist World - NAD*, March 2017, 27-29.

experience.<sup>27</sup> This also is an area that many authors have not written on but becomes critical to reaching the unsaved in the context of family.

Owusu-Gyamfi attributes the exponential growth in membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with more than 41 percent of the membership in Africa, to the Sabbath. He quotes Charles Bradford who stressed that the Sabbath and the African roots have a unique relationship which is supported both by scripture and historical practice. Owusu-Gyamfi also quotes Francis Dolphijn who championed that the Sabbath must be contextualized in Ghana (*Africa*) and is to be a critical factor to reaching those living under heathenism. Francis gives an example of the Akan tribe in Ghana where God is known as Nyankopon Kwame Twidumpon (The Great dependable God of Saturday) making emphasis that Sabbath worship and doing missions with an emphasis of the Sabbath, is easily accepted and is a critical component to missions in Africa.<sup>28</sup>

One author that brings a fresh dimension to the Sabbath debate is James Park. He brings out this concept of “release” using the life of Jesus and the Sabbath, and that The Sabbath is meant to release people of their burdens as Jesus did. He points out that most of the healing miracles of Jesus were done on the Sabbath but that each day was to point to what the Sabbath really was, “to set captives free.” James refers to Sakae also in emphasizing that the Sabbath commandment contains a most inspiring mission statement that in many times is overlooked. He demonstrates in the Sabbath

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<sup>27</sup> Loren D. Marks, Trevan G. Hatch, and David C. Dollahite, “Sacred Practices and Family Processes in a Jewish Context: Shabbat as the Weekly Family Ritual Par Excellence,” *Family Process* 57, no. 2 (June 2018): 448–461.

<sup>28</sup> Clifford Owusu-Gyamfi, “Adventism and the Sabbath in an African Context,” *Academia Letters*, (2021). doi: 10.20935/AL3097

commandment, that God does not only invite humanity to rest but to share in that rest with everyone within their circle of influence.<sup>29</sup>This thought is critical to this study and together with the Sakae's views, have contributed greatly to this paper.

While Gerhard F. Hasel, acknowledges that the Sabbath topic has not been given the attention it deserves and emphasizes the aspect of Salvation for the one who practices it<sup>30</sup>, he does not bring out the element of service for those saved which is what this paper will explore further.

Donkor then traces the Sabbath among Seventh-day Adventists from the time it was passed to them by the Seventh Day Baptists, and he brings the uniqueness of the Sabbath among Adventists as one critical doctrine to them. The missiological aspect of the Sabbath he brings out in the sense that at the time the Sabbath was introduced to Adventists, there was a lot of missionary work being championed by the Seventh Day Baptists and the message of the Sabbath was critical to them, thus to Adventists this was "providential". According to Donkor, the Sabbath for Seventh-day Adventists unlike Seventh Day Baptists is more than just a day but has developed theologically into a day with prophetic and eschatological implications which are embedded right into the "Great Controversy" motif. The Sabbath now is critical to the preaching of the "Three Angels message" which is a vital component of all missiological approaches among Adventists.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> James Park, *Transforming Adventist Mission: A Practical Workbook on the Holy Spirit, Biblical Conversion, Discipleship and Mission* (Los Angeles, CA: Park Circle Scribes, 2023).42-46.

<sup>30</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Saviour and His Sabbath (Part 3)," *Ministry*, March 1975, 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> Donkor, *The Pillars of Adventism in the World Today: Being Seventh-day Adventist and Knowing Why* (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2024), 82-97.

## The Practice of Missions

On the aspect of missions which in this text will be tied to the Sabbath, Kwesi and Paul stated that from the onset the problem of missions came as a result of the mission being separated from the Africans. To this light the following statement was made

It has become increasingly clear and disturbingly so, that the Church has been speaking in Africa and to Africans in strange and partially understood tongues... unfortunately, hitherto, evangelism in Africa has been based upon the false notion that Africa has nothing to offer as a culture or spiritual basis for the Gospel.<sup>32</sup>

Christopher Wright points out that there is a shift in mission from sending missionaries to Africa and other developing countries, to Africa being the home of missionary work. He clarifies that more than half of the missionaries around the world now, are from Africa and that it is not unusual to meet African missionaries even in the western countries.<sup>33</sup>

The argument for contextualized mission in Africa has been the outcry of many. Daniel Simango calls for mission that takes into considerations the unique challenges of the Africans living in an environment of Inferiority complex, dependence and religious syncretism.<sup>34</sup>

Kwame Bediako stresses this very point by emphasizing that missions must be done with an understanding of the African environment without making Africa's

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<sup>32</sup> Dickson Kwesi and Paul Ellingworth, *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1969), 116.

<sup>33</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Simango, "There Is a Great Need for Contextualisation in Southern Africa," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 44, no. 2 (May 24, 2018)

unique challenges to be viewed from the lens of outsiders. The focus is to deal with mission in African context that takes into consideration the many facets that form the fabric of African community.<sup>35</sup>

Timothy D Stabell brings a thought provoking view in the same line of contextualization that Mission in Africa should consider the critical need of addressing suffering especially during funerals. He contends that there are more funerals in Africa than anywhere in the world and that mission must include addressing the element of loss.<sup>36</sup> This agrees with what this paper contents have having an incarnational mission that includes addressing the subject of suffering and death in the context of missions.

In recent times, the focus of missions has shifted greatly from the Western developed worlds to developing worlds that have seen significant increase in Adventist membership. This increase which is highly visible cannot be ignored. Rodriguez contends that this membership growth which is seen even in Africa will be the focus of mission not just to Africa but from Africa and other developing countries to the entire world.<sup>37</sup>

This idea of missions by Africans to Africans is also supported by Olivera with a caution that Adventist missions is not just to be moved by the African culture but that the ultimate purpose of Adventist mission is to establish a biblically founded

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<sup>35</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 1995). 174.

<sup>36</sup> Timothy D. Stabell, "Rethinking Contextualization and the Gospel in Africa.," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 24, no. 2 (2005). 168-175.

<sup>37</sup> Angel M. Rodriguez, "The Adventist Church and the Christian World," *Perspective Digest* 13, no. 1 (2008).

worldview in any cultural context. He cautions further that in doing missions, no one should superimpose his own culture and worldview to the people receiving the Gospel. The injunction is to all Christians in various cultures to develop a biblically rooted mission life making the church in Africa to be just as Adventist as that in America.<sup>38</sup>

According to Mike sharing on the same views, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was strategically designed to be a movement focused on people toiling together to advance a common passion; a people moved by a sense of purpose and destiny; a missionary enterprise. The church, he contends, was not organized to be merely a custodian of an organizational system. To this regard the Church in Africa must re-embrace the idea of becoming a missionary movement once again.<sup>39</sup>

Dybdahl adds to this by repeatedly calling for a paradigm shift in the manner Adventist mission is done. He argues that for this to happen, the church must have a “consciousness change to reach missiological consciousness” which is the consciousness needed to do missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He further asserts that most Seventh-day Adventists need to move beginning from a “historical consciousness” to a “theological and missiological consciousness” in order to be relevant in the times.

### **Conclusion**

It can be observed from the development of the Sabbath debate that the Sabbath is more than just a 24-hour cycle of time (a day) but that its principles of

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<sup>38</sup> Paulo De Oliveira, “Worldview: Vital for Mission and Ministry in the 21st Century,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009). 17.

<sup>39</sup> Mike Cauley, “Reclaiming Our Purpose: Becoming a Missionary Movement Again,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 8, no. 1 (2012).

“work and rest” are what forms the fabric of human society and must therefore be used to develop a mission approach that is at the heart of humanity itself. From the discussion, it has been observed that the research previously done, has not addressed this aspect of Sabbath in mission fully. As much as the apologetic approach to the Sabbath continues, this paper will focus on “living the Sabbath” on a daily basis as the ultimate apologetic approach and also a mission focus in every culture and missiological strategy from an individual member of the church to the much-organized institutions and the ecclesiology thereof.

This study agrees with scholars such Sakae Kubo, James Park and Kwabena Donkor on viewing the Sabbath as a tool for restoration, discipleship and mission but it goes further to develop a missiological model for Adventism in Africa, which has not been the focus on many Scholars. With this Sabbath model which involves every believer in impacting society in the context of present-day challenges, is able to provide both the theology and the Practice of missions which the church needs so much in the present age. In the Sabbath, the church is able to move from just a “historical consciousness” to a “missiological one,” where each member becomes a missionary.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CONTEXT OF EXODUS

#### Introduction

This section deals with the books of Exodus in general and will focus on specific areas of authorship, audience, purpose, historical context, genre and structure. It will begin by translating the Hebrew text in to English then exploring further the historical context and then the literary analysis which sets the passage in its proper context by considering its relationship to what comes before and after it. The textual analysis will be developed by considering parallel phrases and clauses within the immediate and larger context within the Pentateuch while exploring word studies to appreciate further the text and its meaning. Also to be considered is the inter-textual evidence around the “Sabbath” and finally the theological implications arising for the text, will be presented.

#### Hebrew Text

זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: 9 שֵׁשַׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשָׂה יָתְוֹן כָּל-מְלַאכְתָּהּ: 10 וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּתוֹ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְאֵת-תַּעֲשֶׂהָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתָּהּ אֲתָהּ וּבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבְדֵיךָ וְאֲמָתֶיךָ וּבְהֵמָתֶךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: 11 כִּי שֵׁשַׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: 12

#### Personal Translation

Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. Six days you are to serve and do all your work, but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. On it you are

not to do any work; you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your livestock or your stranger within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and all that is in them, and rested on the Seventh day. Because of that, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

### **Historical Background**

Exodus 20 is where the Decalogue also known as the Ten Commandments are given to Israel on Mt Sinai. This happens as Israel is in transit from Egypt to the Promised Land after a powerful deliverance by God through Moses the Leader. The Ten Commandments are given to Moses and Israel in the context of the practices of the Ancient Near East (ANE) where there was a Sovereign (Law giver) and the Vassal (Recipient). In this case the Decalogue was given by Yahweh (Sovereign) and Israel (Vassal). This denoted a covenant relationship and was demonstrated through a theophany- manifestation of the God's presence, to show the gravity and divine origin of the covenant.<sup>40</sup>

The Decalogue also reflected social norms and practices of the time which included the Patriarchal structure (Honour your Father and Mother), Property rights (Do not steal), Sanctity of life (Do not kill) and the importance of truthfulness (Do not bear false witness).<sup>41</sup> These practices were not just unique to Israel but reflected the other cultures of the time as was observed by laws found in documents like the Code of Hammurabi.<sup>42</sup> These laws went further to reveal how the social life of the people was

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<sup>40</sup> Cassuto, 186

<sup>41</sup> Wilson J. Wendland, "Commentary on Exodus 20:1-17," *Working Preacher*, 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

intertwined with the Divine authority and was basis for upholding moral and social order. In this context the Decalogue, is to understood, not only as a religious text but also as a document of legal and ethical standards of the time. The Decalogue also stands as a testament to the permanence of its principles of “justice and morality”, that were established in the ancient world.<sup>43</sup>

### **Authorship**

The authorship of the book of Exodus is traditionally agreed to have been written by Moses and is used as an argument for the authorship of the Pentateuch as well.<sup>44</sup> Traditional view has not been left unchanged by those who believe that the book was written partly after the Monarchy introduction in Israel (around the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC), other place it at another century (8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> Century BC) and others place it slightly after the Judean exile (Late 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC). The other popular belief is the J,E,D, P sources which attribute Co-authorship of Exodus with other who lived at different periods.

Some of the arguments against authorship of Moses include:

1. Death of Moses: The recording of the Moses’ death which they say that Moses couldn’t have recorded his own death and thus another author should have been involved.
2. Vocabulary differences: This is argued on the usage of some words including Yahweh or Eloihim as the name for God.

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<sup>43</sup> Wendland, 2021.

<sup>44</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary / Gen. ed. David S. Dockery 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006).

3. The use of many Egyptian words and descriptions: for some they make the argument that the author must have lived in Egypt but before the time of Moses.
4. Third person Narrative: The use of the third person “he” when referring to Moses is another argument.
5. Exodus as a literary tradition: The argument is that the material of Exodus was developed with time and not as a historical account.

Later Critics have suggested an exilic or postexilic timing while holding to an early assumption that the Canonical Decalogue is from the short “Ur-Decalogue.” That the final form is a product of very long evolutionary developments is what these scholars see in the text. But in actual sense, this does not reflect the historicity of the covenant that was established at Mount Sinai, according to the canonical text. To this regard, the understanding of this text in many studies, have been deeply affected.<sup>45</sup>

Recent studies by Schwartz on the Sabbath as found in the Torah sources suggest that the Decalogue holds the Elohist’s view of the Sabbath commandment, and it only includes Exod 20:8-10 and argues that a compiler of the four sources (J, E, P, D) of the Torah inserted v.11.<sup>46</sup> He further contends that in Israel’s society, the Sabbath only existed as a day of ceasing from work even though nobody knew its exact origins or purpose and that different people had different experiences of the

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<sup>45</sup> Mathilde Frey, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch: An Exegetical and Theological Study” (PhD diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 2011)

<sup>46</sup> Baruch J. Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources” paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, CA, 2007.

Sabbath. It is this personal experience that led to a formulation of different and independent texts about the Sabbath as found in the J, E, P, and D sources.<sup>47</sup>

For the Elohist, the Decalogue reflects a distinctive version of the Sabbath as an institution that for it to be a special day, needed to be guided and regulated by laws to make it a special day of social and human gesture of rest for all workers in various sectors, including strangers and animals.<sup>48</sup> Schwartz and others who hold that the connection to the creation Sabbath in Exod 20:11 is not part of the original Sabbath command, but an inclusion by a late compiler, ignored the fact that preceding verses twice refer to the Sabbath of creation: The first is the phrase ששת ימים, “six days” (v. 9), which suggests a connection to the six creation days. This is reinforced by its connection to ויום השביעי “the seventh day” (v. 10), which comes as a reference to Gen 2:2-3<sup>49</sup>. Again, there is the phrase כל-מלכתך, “all your work,” during the six days (v. 9) and the command not to do כל-מלכה, “all/any work,” on the seventh day (v. 10). These phrases highlight some tight linguistic and thematic links to Gen 2:2, 3. All this suggests that the entire Sabbath commandment in vv. 8-11 is linked to the account of the creation Sabbath.

The arguments in favour of the authorship of Moses are also numerous and include internal evidence, Jesus belief in Mosaic authorship (Jn 5:46-47), evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the simplicity of the traditional model.<sup>50</sup> In this particular

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<sup>47</sup> ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Gerald A. Klingbeil, “The Sabbath Law in the Decalogue(s): Creation and Liberation as a Paradigm for Community” *Revue Biblique* 117, no. 4, (2010), 502.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 18, 2013).

study the authorship of Moses in relation to this creation in Genesis is what is affirmed in the sense of the traditional view.

### **Audience**

The intended audience for the book of Exodus, were the Israelites particularly, those who were present during the 40 year journey in the wilderness. It is believed that Moses wrote it as a historical account and theological instruction for this generation, aiming at reminding them of their identity as God's chosen people and to establish the covenant relationship between God and Israel.<sup>51</sup>

### **Purpose of the Book of Exodus**

The purpose of the book of Exodus is in its overall theme "redemption". The book provides a detailed account of Israel's liberation from slavery in Egypt and their journey toward a covenant relationship with God, culminating in the establishment of the holy nation. It highlights God's power, faithfulness and love as He rescues His people and provide them with the law and a dwelling place, the tabernacle, to live His pleasure.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Theme of Exodus**

Understanding Exod 20:8-11 is critical to our findings in this paper. This particular text which is found at the very heart of the Decalogue is the most exalted and central theme of the Decalogue. The theme of the Decalogue according to the

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<sup>51</sup> Joel S. Baden, *The Book of Exodus: A Biography*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

<sup>52</sup> Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible, Exodus* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publ. House, 1992). 582.

book of Exodus goes back into Israel's past and is founded on the covenant relationship of יהוה with Israel's Patriarchs. The theme is "Redemption- how God delivered His Israel and made them His special people among nations". The future is also brought out in the Decalogue by establishing a set of principles with permanent implications for Israel's history and of humanity at large.<sup>53</sup>

### **Genre of Exodus 20**

The genre of the Exodus 20 though given as a narrative is primarily a law code. It contains the Ten Commandments which are a set of religious and moral stipulations formulated as part of the covenant relationship between God and Israel on Mount Sinai. While the book of Exodus as a whole includes narrative, poetry and theology, Chapter 20 with its focus on God's commandments, is predominantly a legal text.<sup>54</sup>

### **Literary Analysis**

#### **Grammatical Data**

The Sabbath Commandment in Exod 20 has two distinct features:

1. It is the longest in wording, of all the Commandments in the Decalogue, and in the Masoretic text. It has 55 words and together with the three preceding commandments, have a focus on God. It is then followed by six commandments with a focus on human relations. This commandment has a duo focus which demonstrates its unique features, firstly, on the aspect of

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<sup>53</sup> Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, repr.(Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1967). 186.

<sup>54</sup> Stuart, *Exodus*

humanity (vv. 8-10) and Secondly, on God (v. 11).<sup>55</sup> This duo focus creates an alternating thematic movement in the Decalogue, making the Sabbath commandment to occupy a strategic position with the following emphasis: The first three commandments focus on God (vv. 3-7) and the last six on humanity (vv 12-17). The Sabbath Commandment unlike the first three and the last six, focuses both on Humanity (vv. 8-10) and on God (v. 11). This duo aspect makes the Sabbath commandment to be at the very heart of the Decalogue<sup>56</sup>.

2. There are eight of the commandments, which begin with the negative particle לֹא, “not,” and followed by some imperfect verbs presenting a variety of prohibitions (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17). Unlike the other commandments, the sabbath commandment does not begin with negations. Besides the others such as the one commanding respect for parents<sup>57</sup> which begins with an imperative, כבד, <sup>58</sup>, “honor” (v. 12), It implores an infinitive absolute verb זכר <sup>59</sup> which is “remember.”(v.8) Though this form is rare it is not uncommon in other parts of biblical Hebrew literature and it brings to light a positive and emphatic command which is even more stronger in use than the

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<sup>55</sup> Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Daniel J. Harrington, and William H. Shea, eds., *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 159.

<sup>56</sup> Frey, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch: An Exegetical and Theological Study”

<sup>57</sup> Frey, 138. “The Samaritan Pentateuch uses the verb שָׁמַר, “keep” (cf. Deut 5:12), instead of זכר, “remember,” likely in an attempt to harmonize Exod 20:8 with Deut 5:12”.

<sup>58</sup> Gerhard Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren., eds *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. 9: Māraq - Nāqā*” (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).254.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

imperative form.<sup>60</sup> The Infinitive absolute זָכַר in this context of the Sabbath commandment may also function as the positive command form with an intensifying promissory usage.

## Biblical Context

### The Creation Focus

The usage of the verb זָכַר in line with the Sabbath has ignited many scholarly debates because this “remember” presupposes in some sense intellectual knowledge of something familiar, for the purpose of its recollection.<sup>61</sup> In respect of the literary context of the Sabbath commandment in Exodus, one can easily conclude that it refers to first and foremost the experience of Israel in the wilderness of Sin, where its observance had been established through the manna experience (Exod 16). Shortly after this experience, the Israelites upon arrival at Mt Sinai, received the Decalogue which included the command to remember the Sabbath (Exod 19:1-2; 20:1-17). Nevertheless, while this Sabbath commandment and Exod 16 may share similarities in language (e.g., the noun שָׁבַת, “cease,” in Exod 16:23, 25, 26, 29; 20:8, 10, 11 and the verb נָוַח, “rest,” in vv. 23, 33, 32, 33; 20:11), it also alludes to Gen 2:1-3, the creation Sabbath, as the reason for Sabbath observance. This link between the Sabbath in Exod

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<sup>60</sup> The infinitive absolute form of the Hebrew root זָכַר, “remember,” functioning as an emphatic imperative also occurs in Exod 13:3; Deut 7:18; 24:9; 25:17; Josh 1:13. Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (trans. T. J. Conant; New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1851), 245-246. Waltke and O'Connor point out that the usage of absolute infinitives as command forms is extremely old and can be detected in other Semitic languages. Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 593-594. Cf. Reuven Yaron, “Stylistic Conceits II: The Absolute Infinitive in Biblical Law,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. David P. Wright, David N. Freedman, and Avi Hurwitz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 449-60.

<sup>61</sup> Gen 8:1; 9:15, 16; 40:14, 23; 42:9; etc. See H. Eising, “זָכַר,” *TDOT* 4:64-82

20 and that of creation is very strong and can be seen also in the usage of words in Exod 20:11 that point directly to Gen 2:2-3. In Exod 20:8-11, there are phrases such as *ששת ימים* (v. 9), *יום השביעי* (v. 10), and *כל-מלאכתך* (v. 9), which connect this Sabbath commandment to the creation Sabbath. Additionally, the verb *קדש*, “make holy, sanctify,” occurring twice in the Sabbath commandment, expressly refers to Gen 2:1-3 and brings the Creation Sabbath to mind<sup>62</sup>.

### Lexical data

#### The Verb *נוח*

The verb *נוח*, “rest,” is another interesting choice of word relating the behavior of God on the seventh day instead of the verb *שבת*, “cease,” used two times in Gen 2:2, 3.<sup>63</sup>

While *שבת* is connected to “absence of activity” in intervals of time that are viewed as significant such as, the feasts, the sabbatical year and the seventh-day Sabbath, the use *נוח* emphasizes rest with the view of tranquility and being at peace in a specific space. This verb *נוח* calls for observations in three aspects in the Pentateuch:

1. *נוח* appears 25 times in the *hiph'il* form and 8 times in the *qal* form. In the *qal* form, it is used with the following subjects: the ark (Gen 8:4, the locusts (Exod 10:14), God (Exod 20:11), the Spirit of God (Num 11:25, 26), humans (Deut 5:14),), and animals i.e. donkey and ox (Exod 23:12).

What is observed in above texts, just shows different applications *נוח*: the

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<sup>62</sup> Botterweck and Ringgren, 254.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

ark “settled down” on the mountains of Ararat; On the Seventh day, God “rested”; upon the prophets, the Spirit of God “rested”; the locusts “settled” in the territory of Egypt; and the ox, the donkey, the male servant, the female servant. Here Sabbath observance is dependent upon ceasing (תשבת, Exod 23:12) or not working (לא תעשה כל-מלאכה, Deut 5:14) so that (למען, Exod 23:12; Deut 5:14) they may rest (נוח).<sup>64</sup>

It is only in Deut 5:14 where the *qal* form of נוח embraces human beings as subjects of this verb. The Sabbath observer here creates through the Sabbath an opportunity of rest for himself as well as other human beings. This text further demonstrates that though humans may be the subjects of this verb נוח, they have less active involvement in causing their own ability to rest. This rest comes about through not doing any work (כל-לא תעשה מלאכה) on Sabbath.

2. In the 25 references with the usage of the *hiph'il* form<sup>65</sup>, the different nuances of the נוח comes with God causing human beings to rest or provides rest to Israel in the Promised land. The first occurrence of the verb נוח as seen in the Pentateuch demonstrates that God is the causative force, who took and “caused the man to rest” (ינחהו, *hip'il*) in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15). It is also seen in the later promise of God to Israel: “My face will go [with you] and I will cause you to rest” (הנחתני, *hiph'il*) (Exod 33:14). This *hiph'il* form is also used in situations where humans apply

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<sup>64</sup> Botterweck and Ringgren, 254

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

force to “put” or “place” others in confinement or in some isolated places. (Gen 19:16; 42:33; Lev 24:12; Num 15:34).

The *hiph'il* form is also used, when humans were commanded to “set aside” the manna for the observance of the Sabbath or some articles related with the sanctuary. (Gen 39:16; Exod 16:23,24, 33,34; Lev 7:15; Num 17:19,22; 19:9; Deut 14:28; 26:4, 10)

3. In all 33 occurrences of the verb נוּחַ in other places, show that it is not used as an imperative such as to order humans to rest, on the seventh day. It can be concluded that from usage of the verb נוּחַ in the Pentateuch in respect to the Sabbath that it requires the verb שָׁבַח, “cease” (Exod 23:12), or the phrase לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה, “you shall not do” (Deut 5:14), to indicate that the Sabbath is a privilege for both animals and humans to rest. It can be stated differently here that though in a grammatical sense, the donkey or the ox, and humans maybe subjects of the verb נוּחַ, they are not self-determined and independent subjects, but are dependent in their resting on the Sabbath, on the cessation from their work, of others.

To this regard, humans need to depend upon the provider of rest, who is God, and they need to depend on Him who provides them with rest.

This rest of the Sabbath (נוּחַ) in principle is not imposed nor does it demand regulation for human beings. The statement that on the seventh day God rested according to Exod 20:11 presents the subject of the verb as God and shows that by resting on the Sabbath, He provided more than an example for humans to follow. This makes the Sabbath more of God’s essential gift to humanity. As a gift from God, rest on the

Sabbath is more for human beings than just cessation of movement and action, as it transcends human needs and provides awareness into the realm of divine peace.<sup>66</sup>

In Exod 16 נִוַּח is also used to support the idea of the characteristic of the verb as a ‘gift’ with regards to the Sabbath. Appearing here four times in the *hiph'il* this verb נִוַּח is used in this form with regards to the manna for the Sabbath and as a commandment to the Israelites to be the ones to “cause to rest” or “to set aside” (הַנִּוַּח, *hiph'il*, impv.)<sup>67</sup> One challenge in this text of the collection of the double portion of the manna on the sixth day for the seventh day, (Exod 16:23) is that the people “caused the manna to rest overnight” being a part of the dark time of the seventh day. The miraculous freshness of the bread on Sabbath morning, as described in the narrative, was the product of this “resting.” This was contrary to the daily collections of the weekdays that would be spoiled when left over. Here however, the narrative shifts in its meaning to a totally different level and demonstrates that, to the Lord, manna is not His primary gift, but rather the Sabbath (v. 29). In this manner the Israelites learned that it was not in their “setting aside” the manna that kept it fresh, but YHWH, who gave the Sabbath so as to provide the fresh food.

The verb נִוַּח here, as used in the Sabbath command points to the Sabbath as the gift of God for all human beings but does not command them to rest but rather to “labor.” (עָבַד) and “do” (עָשָׂה) all their work in the six weekdays, but they are asked “not to do” (תַּעֲשֶׂה לֹא-) on the seventh day in order that they may “rest” (נִוַּח).

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<sup>66</sup> Philip Alexander, “Sabbath in the Christian Tradition,” *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, ed. Brendan N. Wolfe (Saint Andrews, Scotland: University of St Andrew, 2022).

<sup>67</sup> Botterweck and Ringgren, 254.

The implication of the Sabbath commandment here seems to be that the Sabbath day is a work-free day and this is what makes it a gift from the Creator God. This is important to our study as the idea of “rest” which points to the God of creation (Gen 2:2-3), is here as a gift for all humanity removing the social challenges of inequality, injustice and discrimination.

### **The Verb זכר “Remember”**

In the introduction of the Command in Exod 20:8-11, the verb that brings out the distinctive aspect of the Sabbath is זכר, “remember.” Eight times in the book of Exodus this root appears and is always used in relation to God’s covenant with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and also the event of the exodus<sup>68</sup>. This root זכר, moreover, is specifically linked to God’s name, who just after identifying Himself as the great אהיה, “I AM” (Exod 3:14), is revealed as “YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exod 3:15). This fashion of bringing of names as a whole, is what is then called זכרע, God’s “memorial” name for the children of Israel, established on the covenant with their ancestors (Exod 3:15).<sup>69</sup>This verb then reminds Israel of who God is to them and what He has previously done.

A close examination of the eight times the root זכר occurs in Exodus demonstrates that there is a chiasmic structure which highlights that in the Hebrew

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<sup>68</sup> Botterweck and Ringgren.254.

<sup>69</sup> Cassuto here notes that the significance of Exodus 3:15 as mentioned in the Hebrew Bible is often called a remembrance that will endure forever (Isa 26:8; Pss 102:12; 135:13). Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 30-40.

Bible.<sup>70</sup> They are the only commandments that prescribe the keeping of specific days by applying exactly the same grammatical form, the *qal* infinitive absolute זָכוֹר.

Between the two days with this prescription, one found in Exod 13:3 as the day of the exodus and the other in Exod 20:8 as the day of the Sabbath.<sup>71</sup>

### Theology

In the book of Exodus there is a beautiful Chiastic structure that is created around the verb “remember” and is premised around the name of God and the theme of the Covenant focusing on the commands to remember the days of the exodus and that of the Sabbath.

- A Covenant: “God remembered (עִזְרוֹר) his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (2:24)
- B Name of God: “This is my name forever, and this is my memorial (זִכְרֵעַ) name to all generations” (3:15)
- C Name of God and Covenant: “I did not make myself known *by* name, YHWH. I have remembered (אֶזְכֹּר) my covenant” (6:2-5)
- X Exodus: “Remember (זָכוֹר, *qal* inf abs) this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery” (13:3)
- X’ Sabbath: “Remember (זָכוֹר, *qal* inf abs) the Sabbath day, to keep it (20:8)
- C’ Name of God and Covenant: “In every place where I cause my name to be remembered (אֶזְכִּיר), I will come to you and bless you”(20:24)
- B’ Name of other gods: “Do not mention/remember (תִּזְכִּיר) the name of other gods” (23:13)
- A’ Covenant: “Remember (זָכֹר) Abraham, Isaac, and Israel whom you swore by yourself.” (32:13)

The chiastic structure above outlines the close relation the Sabbath and the “day of the exodus” have. At the core of this chiasm, two things are observed; the

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<sup>70</sup> Frey, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch.”

<sup>71</sup> Jacob et al, 582.

Sabbath commandment and the liberation of Israel from slavery, as balancing each other. The central concept of the chiasm then, supplies equal significance to both the exodus and the Sabbath is premised upon the basis of liberation or “release” for all humanity. This thought of “release” is another critical component for missions especially in the context of Africa in light of “modern-day slavery”.

To remember “the day of the exodus” and that of the Sabbath, is not limited to a mental appreciation of the exodus but to also celebrate the event, demonstrating through actions to the children and coming generations, to also have an experience similar to that of the exodus event. (Exod 12:24-27; 13:14-16; cf. Deut 11:1-7)<sup>72</sup>.

In teaching the exodus event there was the use of dialogue with active verbal interaction among family members. To this regard, remembering the exodus event motivated all rituals of the Passover. Similar characteristics apply to the Sabbath commandment. Remembering the Sabbath also meant to celebrate a *שבתון*<sup>73</sup> *שבת*, “Sabbath feast” (Exod 16:23), being a day where members of the household could not go to work. This remembrance of the Sabbath brought together all the members of the household including the stranger and even the animals, and suggested relationships within and outside familial interactions. This brings us to another aspect of mission, ‘the stranger’.

Like the weekly Sabbath, the day of the exodus also included both native Israelites and also strangers. In Exod 12:38, a mixed multitude is part of those who

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<sup>72</sup> William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, Anchor Bible. (New York: Doubleday, 2006). 421.

<sup>73</sup> Botterweck and Ringgren, 254.”

departed from the land of Egypt on the eve of the Passover together with the Israelites, moving along with large herds of flocks and cattle.<sup>74</sup>

Here in this text in the act of God to deliver the Israelites out of slavery, had the effects were on all those that chose to leave Egypt, including their animals. In the observance of the Sabbath, both Israelites as well as non-Israelites even their animals were to profit from the gift of Sabbath rest. What is found here is the motivation to reach the “stranger” and help these marginalized people feel they also are part of God’s plan of providing rest for them.

Some differences between the Sabbath and the Passover of Exodus are observed as follows:

### **The Sabbath and Holiness**

First of all, in the Sabbath, the theme of holiness operates so prominently with regard to the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8-11 which is framed by the verb *קדש* involving some similar wording at the start and at the *inclusio* which is an <sup>75</sup> conclusion of the commandment<sup>76</sup>

In Exod 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” את- יום השבת לקדשו זכור

In Exod 20:11 “Therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and kept it holy”

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<sup>74</sup> Cole Ross H, “The Sabbath and the Alien,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 38, no. 2 (2000):81-70.

<sup>75</sup> Botterweck and Ringgren,254.

<sup>76</sup> Ekkehardt Mueller, “The Sabbath Commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12–15,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 2 (2003):144.  
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jats/vol14/iss2/10>

את- יום השבת ויקדשהו על י-כן ב-ר-ך This link between holiness and Sabbath demonstrates that, unlike the Passover which reminded people of the Egyptian experience of servitude and bitterness, the Sabbath points back at creation, an aspect that was never experienced by the Israelites.

Secondly, the holiness of the Sabbath has its beginnings way before oppression, suffering and death, even before liberation from oppression. Much more, Sabbath holiness is beyond human existence in that it originated in God Himself.

Thirdly, the Sabbath commandment also prohibits כל-מלאכה, “all work,” which to this regard makes it different from the Commandment of the Passover that stated: “no work at all shall be done, except what must be eaten by every person” (Exod 12:16). The Sabbath refers back to creation when God celebrated and declared that all of what he had done in that creation week was “very good” (Gen 1:31). This commandment suggests a parallelism between כל-מלאכתך, “all your work,” during the six weekdays (Exod 20:9) and כל-מלאכתו, “all his work,” during the six days of the creation week (Gen 2:2, 3). It can be seen here that the Sabbath commandment reveals that “all your work” performed during the six weekdays may reflect the creativity, skillfulness, and satisfaction of “all his [the Creator’s] work” and that cessation from all work on the seventh day concludes and makes the work of the six weekdays complete. Thus it is seen here that the Sabbath moves from observing a single day to touching the livelihood of people during the six working days.

Lastly the Sabbath unlike the Passover reveals the needed relationship between God and humanity, *imago Dei* in theological terms, as it points back to the creation account of Gen 1. Much as the Sabbath commandment requires Sabbath holiness of the human being (Exod 20:8), it presents this command as a direct

response to God's Sabbath sanctification in creation times (Exod 20:11). Though Genesis creation account on the Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3) did not explicitly point to the participation of the human being in keeping the Sabbath, the compliance with the Sabbath commandment as in the Decalogue, brings human beings to be fully identified as created in the image of God.<sup>77</sup>

This realization of who man is in the presence of God in the light of creation and redemption is very vital to the understanding of mission which require that both elements must be brought together to win back God's lost humanity.

### **Literary Structure**

The chiasmic structure of Exod 20:8-11<sup>78</sup> unfolds a careful construction of this unit by paralleling the activity of humans with that of the Divine with regards to both work, during the weekdays, and abstaining from work and rest on the Sabbath:

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<sup>77</sup> Peter Söes, "Image of God (Imago Dei)," *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, ed. Brendan N Wolfe (St. Andrews, UK: University of St. Andrews, 2025).

<sup>78</sup> Jacques Doukhan, "Loving the Sabbath as a Christian: A Seventh-Day Adventist Perspective in the Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions," in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions* ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, William H. Shea, and Daniel J. Harrington (New York: Crossroads, 1991). 159.

- A     “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.  
 B       Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a  
           Sabbath of YHWH your God; you shall not do any work,  
 X       you or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your  
           female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with  
           you.  
 B’      For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all  
           that is in them, and rested on the seventh day;  
 A’      “therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”<sup>79</sup>

### **Application**

#### **The Stranger Within your Gate**

This Sabbath commandment for some reasons, includes “the stranger within your gates” (Exod 20:10). Unlike the Passover festival which native Israelites and circumcised aliens were the only ones allowed to observe (Exod 12:48), the Sabbath commandment did not require the alien to be circumcised in order to participate in its observance. To this Levenson observes: “It is humanity in general and not any people in particular that is created. Israel is not primordial. It emerges in history, twenty generations after the creation of human species in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27).”<sup>80</sup>

The commandment’s chiasmic structure highlights this universal principle of the Sabbath by listing seven beneficiaries (You, your son, your daughter, your man-servant, your cattle and the stranger) at the core of the Sabbath commandment, implying covering every category of human life itself.<sup>81</sup> Mission must then include

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<sup>79</sup> Frey, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch”

<sup>80</sup> Jon D. Levenson, “The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism” in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark Brett (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1996), 143–69,

<sup>81</sup> Doukhan, 159.

participation for all and impacting all humanity. It is using people with similar needs to reach out to their kind.

### **The Sabbath and Relationships**

The central aspect of the Sabbath commandment enumerates the complete Israelite household.<sup>82</sup> The seven listed categories are: “You, your son, your daughter, your man servant, your female servant, your cattle, and your stranger (Exod 20:10). The Sabbath commandment demonstrates that observing the seventh day being the “Sabbath of YHWH your God” (Exod 20:10) does not disconnect human beings from each other, it does not dissolve or eliminate familial and emotional relationships, it does not place human beings in isolation but brings them closer to each other. Placing the list which includes every household member in the core of the chiasmic structure of the commandment, reveals that the Sabbath’s main focus is on establishing relationships, on involvement in the family, communication, and on close links of friendship between human beings. The element of Sabbath holiness, which is a unique characteristic that separates this day from other days, is for the purpose of relationships.

The Sabbath commandment has its main focus in supporting equality among human beings which includes all of society’s levels, “you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you” (Exod 20:10). Through the Sabbath, humanity can possess the same

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<sup>82</sup> Yohanes Rahdianto Suprandono and Robert Setio, “Rereading of The Sabbath Law (Exodus 20: 8-11) as A Response to Modern Slavery Issue,” *Jurnal Jaffray* 19, no. 2 (October 2021): 202,

privileges, opportunities, rights, treatment, and value for human beings. The Sabbath demonstrates that all creation must be treated equally and impartially.<sup>83</sup>

### **Sabbath Barriers for Non- Jews**

The intention of the Sabbath as observed earlier from the aspect of creation is that God intended the rest to be for all humanity. At a time when there was no Jew or any other race or tribe, the Sabbath was instituted and given. As one looks at the creation account, it can be seen that God's intention over the Sabbath was both deep and broad.

The list of the various beneficiaries of the Sabbath as indicated in Exod 20:10, brings to light that not only is it mentioned in the context of family but also real people that form the very fabric of society are involved. What is seen in this text is not just a "Sabbath statistic" but Sabbath keepers are people who are living with others throughout the week and throughout their lives. This then is emphasis that the Sabbath is not just a 'one day holiness thing' but that as long as these various parties remain, they are to remind Sabbath keepers of their place in both the creation and redemption, which are both caused by God. To this regard no aspect of seclusion should be entertained as the Sabbath is "the Sabbath of the Lord your God..." and should be rid of all external barriers created in the safeguard thereof.<sup>84</sup> According to Frey

The Sabbath encapsulates and reveals God's presence in the world, regardless of limits of nature and condition. The Sabbath was introduced by divine cessation from work in order for holiness to enter the world for the benefit of all humanity. Holiness is the essence of the divine-human relationship, which enables human beings to fully become what they were created to be: the image of the Creator.

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<sup>83</sup> Kubo,11.

<sup>84</sup> Frey, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch"

In its rhythmic recurrence, the Sabbath signifies the Creator's constant presence in the world and his care for it. Since the fall into sin, the Sabbath liberates people from oppressive regimes of man-made gods; it places them in proper relationships with each other; it relieves their attitude toward work in a society exhausted and stressed by hard labor; and it testifies to the sacred design in time and space whereby they can recognize and emulate the Maker of all. Thus the Sabbath is an important part of God's program for restoring the *imago Dei* in fallen human beings.<sup>85</sup>

The Sabbath, by its command to let all men rest including the servants of the master, also points to the fact that this command, presents all humans as equal before God. The master must do the servant's work, while the servant is free from any work.<sup>86</sup>

Israel's redemption from Egypt was not simply for the purpose of freeing them; ultimately, it was to advance God's intention to bless all of humanity through the seed of Abraham. In other words, there is a correspondence between God's plans for humanity and the function of Israel within those plans (cf. Genesis 12:3).<sup>87</sup>

These interactions as brought about through the Sabbath Command are what Missiologists must present in a world of human seclusion and segregation. God's Sabbath Keepers are to present to the world who God is and what He is willing to do for them and through Sabbath observance, this opportunity is given on a weekly basis.

### **Sabbatical Barriers in Israel**

The intention of God for the Sabbath has always been for the blessing of all humanity. According to Cole

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<sup>85</sup> Frey, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch"

<sup>86</sup> Kubo, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

Many scholars in modern Judaism have discerned universal dimensions to the Sabbath.' However, few writers in earlier Judaism ever saw them. It is almost superfluous to add that non-Sabbatarian Christians have rarely seen these dimensions either.

This failure to see universal dimensions may seem surprising, for three passages in the Pentateuch affirm that the גר, "resident alien," is to rest on the weekly Sabbath, along with the Israelite (Exod 20:10; 23:12; Deut 5:14). However, rabbinic Judaism has traditionally identified the py in these passages as the ger saddzq, the circumcised "righteous alien," rather than the ger toshab, the uncircumcised "sojourning alien." The ger saddiq was a newcomer to Jewish territory, but not to the Jewish religion.<sup>88</sup>

After the Babylonian exile the Sabbath seems to have grown in strictness. The account in Neh. 13:15-22 points to the barriers created as a result of the neglected Sabbath laws. The desecration of the Sabbath consisted in the treading of wine presses, bearing of burdens by men and animals, the selling of victuals and wares. The scribal laws came into force in the later centuries and the Sabbath became a yoke of oppression from that time, till the time of Christ.

In Eretz Israel, the rabbis commonly taught that the Sabbath was given only to Israel. The Torah, it was said, is like the wife of another to the heathen. Indeed, the Sabbath was not merely unrequired of non-Jews; it was forbidden to them! Simeon b. Laqish (also known as Resh Laqish, a Palestinian rabbi of the mid-century) said: "A Gentile who keeps the Sabbath deserves death." It was a common enough sentiment.

Rabbi Jose B. Hanina said: A non-Jew who observes the Sabbath whilst he is uncircumcised incurs liability for the punishment of death. Why? Because non-Jews were not commanded concerning it. And what is your reason for saying that a non-

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<sup>88</sup> Cole Ross H, "The Sabbath and the Alien," *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 38, no. 2 (2000), 223.

Jew who observes the Sabbath becomes liable to the punishment of death? Rabbi Hiyya B. Abba said in the name of Rabbi Johanan: In mundane affairs, when a king and his consort are sitting and conversing together, should one come and interrupt them, does he not thereby make himself liable to punishment of death? So, too, the Sabbath is a reunion between Israel and God, as it is said, "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel" (Ex. 31:17); therefore, any non-Jew who, being uncircumcised, thrusts himself between them incurs the penalty of death. The Rabbis say: Moses declared before God: "Master of the Universe, just because the Gentiles have not been commanded to observe the Sabbath, wilt Thou show favor to them if they do observe it?" God replied to him: "Do you really fear this? By your life if they fulfill all the commandments in the Torah, yet will I cause them to fall before you.'

The Sabbath was Israel's own bride and belonged to no other. Exod 16:29 was interpreted in an exclusive sense: The Lord hath given you-Israel-the Sabbath, but hath not given it to the heathen (Ex. R. 25: 11.) We even find the angel telling Moses: "We kept Sabbath in the heavens before it was made known to any flesh to keep Sabbath thereon on the earth. And the Creator of all things blessed it, but he did not sanctify all peoples and nations to keep Sabbath, but Israel alone (Jubilees 2:30-33.)

Sabbath observance in Nehemiah 13:15-22, is linked clearly to the Captivity of the Jews in Babylon. People were treading in wine presses, loading donkeys, grapes, figs and wine on the Sabbath in accordance with vs 15. Nehemiah warned and reminded them that their selling of merchandise on the Sabbath (13:16), was a desecration of the Sabbath (13:16-17) and that God had brought calamity on the people when their ancestors had done a similar thing (13:17). Nehemiah even took physical action by closing the gates to Jerusalem and setting guards to keep merchants

away from the city. In all this he concluded that the past failure to observe the Sabbath previously was what led Judah to the Babylonian captivity.

In Isaiah 56:2 God affirms those who kept the Sabbath without breaking it. The repeat of this affirmation is done in Isaiah 56:6 where the Lord promises a blessing and mentioned that there is joy in God's temple and those who honor the Sabbath will ascend to His holy mountain, and will have their sacrifices and offerings acceptable to God (56:7):

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it not by going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.<sup>89</sup>

The Scripture here shows the importance of respecting the Sabbath and seeking after God's will that day. This day was not to be wasted in shallow pursuits and selfish ambitions, but in observing it as holy. Those who honor the Sabbath, have the promises of God of joy in their relationship with Him and His blessings. As this honoring of God happens in the context of the covenant community, Isaiah is associating the observance of the Sabbath to the restoration of covenant people to their inheritance.

In Isaiah 58:13-14, God promised a blessing to those who refrained from profaning the Sabbath and pursuing self-interests on his holy day. The passage indicates that God desired acknowledgment on the Sabbath. He wanted his people to delight in the Sabbath and to honor the day. He contrasted pursuing one's own interests with seeking the Lord. He affirmed that true joy comes from seeking him.

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<sup>89</sup> Isa. 58:13-14, NIV.

The primary focus of this passage is the covenant. If the covenant community keeps the Sabbath, they will “ride upon the high places of the land” (58:14). They will be exalted as God’s covenant community on their promised land that is the heritage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Jeremiah 17:21-27, God instructed the people of Judah and those coming through the gates of Jerusalem not to carry a load on the Sabbath. The Sabbath day is holy. God proclaimed blessings for those who kept it holy and cursing for those who disobeyed it. Desecration of the Sabbath led to fire and consummation of the fortresses of Jerusalem. The issue is the faithfulness of the covenant community. Keeping the Sabbath holy, ensured that the Israelites were not defeated by outside powers but remained God’s covenant people. If not, they were defeated and their covenant community scattered and their promised land was desecrated.<sup>90</sup>

The Babylonian captivity in 587 BC brought a realization upon the Jews that they had failed to be the covenant keeping people of God; they had failed to keep the Torah including the Sabbath day. The scribal tradition arose for this basic purpose of determining how to keep the Torah and upholding the status of God’s faithful covenant people. It is this scribal tradition that developed rules for Sabbath observance, outside what God had prescribed, and this was orally passed on until around 200 AD when the Mishna was codified. The Scribes established elaborate rules to observe the Sabbath. For example, having known God’s requirement that they not carry burdens on the Sabbath day (Jer. 17:22), they made rules defining what a burden was. They realized that they were not to work on the Sabbath (17:24), so they

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<sup>90</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly, Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.) .42.

made laws that would clarify what work was. These Jews were so careful in obeying the letter of the law making themselves slaves to the very laws that ensuring their faithful covenant observance. They created problems in the commandment which had no problem. In the Mishna, scribal documents dealing with Sabbath observance are called “Shabbat” in Moed (the second of the six orders of the Mishna). These allude to the thirty-nine prohibitions in line with work on the Sabbath, and also “Eruvin,” dealing with the traveling and carrying on the Sabbath.

### **Conclusion**

In analyzing Exod 20:8-11, this section has dealt with the entire book of Exodus to create the place of the Sabbath in line with the Decalogue. This is part of the historical setting of the text and has also looked the literary structure of the text to analyze how it is linked to creation, liberation, rest, holiness and other important themes that are associated with missions.

In the Commandment of the Sabbath in Exod 20:8-11, it has been observed in this chapter that God and humanity enter into a covenant relationship that has great benefits for humanity. The idea of work and rest; restoration, liberation and family unity have been key aspects not just in a day but in the way of life of those who kept the Sabbath in accordance with the Commandment.

Using verbs like remember and rest, that the Sabbath reminds mankind that they were created by God and in the image of God to be holy to Him. This is not just about identity but also restoration, because mankind usually forgets and they start discriminating and abusing their fellow humans, forgetting that they all come from God.

The Sabbath has been linked to the Exodus and Passover, highlighting the fact that through Sabbath keeping men and women find liberation from all kinds of injustice and abuse. It also points out that Sabbath keepers will be instruments of liberation, themselves.

This section has also shown that Sabbath restrictions on individuals who were non-Israelites or Jews were not part of the original plan of God concerning the Sabbath which points way back to the creation and the identity of humanity itself. It is true that the Sabbath has undergone several adjustments in terms of its practice depending on the circumstances of the time. It is these principles that continue as long as there are human beings still alive on earth.

CHAPTER 4  
THE SABBATH, JESUS AND CONTEMPORARY MISSION  
IMPACT TO ADVENTISTS

**Introduction**

In understanding how Exod 20:8-11 impacts missions, it is important to consider this important definition of missions by Donald McGaravan which states

The word “mission” must be understood as essentially those activities that multiply churches, that win the lost, that disciple unreached peoples—namely, church growth. The phrase “mission/church growth” must come again to mean what the New Testament church did as it multiplied churches across the Roman world... Mission/church growth/effective evangelism as the new and definitive statement of the underlying purpose of the Bible. He firmly believed that “God wants all people to believe on Jesus Christ, become members of his body, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and live in him.”<sup>91</sup>

It is to this regard that the reading of Exod 20:8-11 has presented missiological directions for contemporary missionaries who have a sense of reaching out to the lost and making them disciples of Jesus Christ. The Sabbath has very important principles to the contemporary aspects of mission for the church as observed in the previous chapter. This chapter will look at how this passage impacts missions in view of its message, methods and the messenger, to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa.

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<sup>91</sup> Donald McGavran, “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10, no. 2 (April 1986): 53–58.

In considering the Sabbath Command, a major shift from observing just a day, which is critical to mission, to considering the implications of the text will help in understanding how critical this command is to the aspect of Adventist missions in consideration of various cultures and people groups. Raymond Holmes once said concerning the observation of the Sabbath day, “worship ends, service begins”<sup>92</sup>. James Park also clearly states, “The Sabbath commandment contains a most inspiring mission statement that is often overlooked. In the commandment, the Lord not only invites us to rest but to share that rest with everyone within our sphere of influence.” To state it in more specific terms, the one object of keeping the Sabbath ... and all the other practices of the Bible is “fruit bearing”<sup>93</sup>. Baab says “While Sabbath-keeping is commanded in the Bible, God intends it as a reminder of freedom and abundant life.”<sup>94</sup>

The heart of the fourth commandment is sharing the Sabbath rest with others.

Ellen White also puts this way,

We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ and exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Doukhan, 154.

<sup>93</sup> Park, 25-27.

<sup>94</sup> Lynne M. Baab, *Sabbath Keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

<sup>95</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church* 6 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1901). 354.

## **Keeping the Sabbath in the Six days of the Week**

First of all, it has been observed that God in the fourth commandment of Exod 20:8-11 commands all humans to observe a day which is the seventh day to keep it holy. In the command, the members of the family are impacted by the different participants including the “stranger” living within the gates who comes within the influence of Sabbath keepers. It is easy to be blinded to thinking the emphasis of this command is in a “twenty-four-hour day” only, but one cannot miss the mention of the other six days within the Sabbath command that helps to conclude that the Sabbath then cannot be divorced from the rest of the days of the week. The influence of the Sabbath as a day extends to how God’s people relate with Him and with one another within the six days impacted by the Seventh-day. This shows exactly that social life in the six days, is to a greater extent impacted by one’s relationship with God.<sup>96</sup>

In the command it is seen that the Sabbath principles must affect parents (husband and spouse), children, one’s wealth and the other people around Sabbath observers. That the Sabbath influences the physical (cessation from work), spiritual (relationship with the Lord your God), mental (remembering), economical (your cattle) and the social (the structure of beneficiaries) is found in the Exod 20:8-11 and is seen as what mission and salvation are about. This principle then impacts the method by which missions is done. Mission in this context is not just a single event or a trip to a distant country but is the life lived by Believers and in this context, those who keep the Sabbath.

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<sup>96</sup> Park, 41.

### **Sabbath Impact on Relationships**

It has been observed that in the order of beneficiaries found in Exod 20:8-11, the Sabbath must first impact relationships<sup>97</sup> in the family, which impacts relationships at the workplace and in turn relationships to the acquisition and use of wealth, which ultimately impacts those who come into contact with the Sabbath observer in the local sphere and also elsewhere. In contemporary language, the Sabbath moves from impacting an individual to his family, then to his workplace and investments, to finally the social, technological, economic, political, environmental and legal which constitute the business environment. This is exactly where mission is supposed to take place.

### **Sabbath Impact on Missions**

The principles of mission in Exod 20:8-11 then presents to missiologists a challenge of being inclusive, intentional and unintentional in the manner they do missions<sup>98</sup>. Intentional in this sense will mean deliberately bringing the principles of the Sabbath in every sphere of human existence and unintentional by their lifestyle on a daily basis. One can train missionaries how to do missions, but this also requires that every Sabbath observer lives a life of a missionary according to the Sabbath command.

Since the Sabbath command emphasizes on two actions of ‘work and rest’, the work ethics of Sabbath observers must be excellent. “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,

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<sup>97</sup> Kubo, 11.

<sup>98</sup> Kapyia Kaoma, ed., *Creation Care in Christian Mission*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series 29 (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2015).11.

and rested on the seventh day.” (vs 11), it can be observed that the work in the six days of the week are critical to this approach of missions and must ultimately present rest as a balance to work<sup>99</sup> . Here Sabbath observers must never think of isolating themselves from society like what Israel did, in order to be holy but must practice holiness in the midst of a busy and sin polluted environment. To this regard while the six days are the space for mission, the seventh day then becomes the space for resuscitation by being in the presence of God.<sup>100</sup>

### **The Principle of “Rest” in Missions**

The “rest” of the six days are now impacted by this “Sabbath rest” which must be given to those who didn’t have the opportunity either by choice or ignorance. This “rest” as observed above must then be provided by working to relieve others of their burdens. This rest is not just cessation from work but is what God gives to those who come to Him. God “causes the rest” and by presenting God through work and interaction with others, the “stranger” finds his rest too.

Sabbath observers who are practicing missions, in the context of the Sabbath command, will never ignore a soul that is in pain or disadvantaged. They will see opportunities around them and will always think and find ways of reaching out to the suffering through encouragement and also practical help.

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<sup>99</sup> Volker Kessler, “The Sabbath as a Remedy for Human Restlessness,” *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 46, no. 2 (November 2012).

<sup>100</sup> Kyle Hauck, “The Beginning and the Sabbath: Indicators for the Perpetuity of the Sabbath,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 9, no. 2 (2017.): 36–52.

## **Holistic Missions**

As the order of beneficiaries in Exod 20:8-11 represents everyone found in this world in a localized sense, the focus of mission will be from the local church out. But this doesn't mean that world missions which require cross-cultural and crossing of borders will be ignored. This approach basically means there should not be anyone who will never be impacted by the Sabbath observer. Local and global challenges will need to be addressed with the view that God's people are found in all the places of the world including the continent of Africa. With this approach, these Sabbath principles will be practiced at home, at the workplace including the board room, in business summits and formulation of economic and political policies and also in the social environment which includes the world of entertainment and the media. The Sabbath will be like a poster placed everywhere where people are.

## **The Eschatological Challenge**

This approach to Sabbath observance which emphasizes "rest" and "release" for all, sounds like that of liberation theology<sup>101</sup> which to some extent, limits intervention in human affairs, to the present initiatives and leaves out the Second coming of Jesus as the "ultimate rest". Far from it, the Sabbath Command provides a hope beyond the present interventions and puts everything in perspective by pointing out that it is God who created everything in six days and is the "causer of rest" for all who keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath must not be seen to be just a humanitarian model that seeks to improve the present lives of people, but must continue to give hope, that

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<sup>101</sup> Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987). 3.

through God, humans can have “total rest”. In the Command, one can observe that the principles of the “great controversy” are present as not having rest means one is not living the life God intended. The Sabbath Command can be re-constructed to read as follows:

You may not do all your work in six days, but you must complete them on the seventh day as it is not the Sabbath of the Lord and He is not your God. On it you shall do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord did not make the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and He did not rest on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD did not bless the sabbath day and He did not make it holy.

This re-construction suggests that those who do not keep the Sabbath day holy have a different Master who in this case, is the enemy of God (Satan). Satan then becomes the implied causer of “restlessness” and lack of fulfillment in this life. In the keeping of the Sabbath, the observer fights on the side of the Creator and can see that ultimately God’s rest is intended to be given to all humanity. This is the hope that Sabbath observers have, and the eschatological nature of the Sabbath is brought to light in that only God, will put to an end this restlessness by defeating the antagonist (Satan). This remains a reminder to mission practitioners that ultimately, the mission belongs to God; He started it, and He will provide the final rest to conclude it.

### **Jesus and Sabbath Mission**

The principles of the Sabbath that this thesis has presented as found in Exod 20:8-11, are also observed in the Sabbath life of Jesus Christ while on earth. Jesus

who is the great model of missions observed the Sabbath (Matt 12:12; Mk 2:24-28).

According to Marshall

In his presentation of the ministry of Jesus, Luke calls particular attention to the interest that the Lord showed in out-casts; all the gospels give witness to this undeniable fact, but it is Luke who takes greatest delight in making it clear. Another aspect of Jesus that Luke is careful to highlight is his interest in the poor, and his warnings that rich people who live for themselves thus exclude themselves from the kingdom of God<sup>102</sup>

The interest in the marginalized is Jesus' hallmark of ministry and mission.

What Jesus was accused of by the Jews of breaking the Sabbath because He healed the sick, cast out demons and He taught the truth to the people. Jesus' ministry also included the liberating mission on the day of rest (Lk. 4:31-37; 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6), which provoked a negative response from the Pharisees and Scribes who, from that time on, sought for ways to kill Jesus. To this regard, the passages describing the healing of the disabled (Lk 5:17-26), the man with the withered hand (Lk 6:6-11), is strongly a shift in understanding of the Sabbath by the Jews.

In His time, Jesus went against the isolation of religious beliefs with day to day challenges that needed practical solutions. In healing and liberating the demon possessed on the Sabbath (Lk 8:26-39), Jesus demonstrated what the Sabbath was about; restoring man back to God's intended purpose. This, Jesus continued to do on the other six days of the week but with special emphasis on the Sabbath day.

In the life and mission of Jesus, a shift from just liturgy to living the mission was demonstrated. The barriers that had been set in the Sabbath were broken and each person became regarded as a child of Abraham (Lk 13:16) or as a child of God.

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<sup>102</sup> Howard Marshall, *Nuevo Diccionario Bíblico*, ed. J. D. Douglas. and Hilyer (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Certeza, 1991).

Considering the Messianic role of Jesus, His announcement of His ministry in the synagogue (Lk 4:16-19) was timely; on the Sabbath so as to show that the Sabbath itself has a liberation message and function. The words Jesus used to describe His messianic role are what the Sabbath is intended to be and as Jesus lived these words not just on a day but throughout His life, Sabbath observers must do the same. (Jn 13:15). The words in Luke state

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Lk 4:16-18)<sup>a</sup>

In this messianic proclamation, Jesus demonstrated that His role was that of a leader, educator, social activist, liberator, healer, lawyer, Judge and spiritual leader. His life was both to present the theory and the practice. The Sabbath challenges its adherents to be leaders in their various fields, to transform people’s knowledge through the knowledge of God, to practically fight against the abuses of the underprivileged in society and take a leading role in liberating them and also present the Savior for the liberation from their sinful ways. In this, Jesus clarified that the Sabbath principles were not just to be talked about, but practically lived on a daily basis. The Sabbath was the great illustration of how mission was to be done.

In the life of Jesus one would see the very principles as found in the Sabbath Command of Exod 20:8-11. These principles are what made His ministry to be more successful in His ministry, within a short period of time He lived here on earth.

## Developing a Sabbath Missiological Model

Having considered what the Sabbath meant to the Jewish economy and how it was meant to be observed, considering its implications to creation, having considered how the Sabbath became a tool of discrimination among the Jews for the non-Jew, and having considered the life of Jesus and how the Sabbath principles were part of His messianic identity, this paper proposes a Sabbath model that can be implemented at family and community all levels and also at the Church organization level. This model will follow the very structure as portrayed in the Exod 20:8-11 which is as follows:

STRUCTURE IN EXODUS 20:8-11	LOCAL MISSION LEVEL
You	Leadership
Your Son/ Daughter	Membership
Your Man Servant/ Female Servant	Institutional Management
Your Cattle	Business Involvement
Your Stranger	Cross-cultural missions

This model requires that all those in leadership will be mission oriented and will lead by example using their influence to reach out to others including their fellow leaders or those in position of influence. The local Pastor or Conference President will lead out in bringing other leaders within the Church together and prepare them for mission in their various fields. This includes challenging politicians, Traditional leaders, Government Officials, Business Owners, Academicians and others, to be given special training or preparation on how to get involved in missions. This preparation for leaders should result in them organizing engagements and meetings to reach out to their fellow leaders and use their “high-level” interactions to present Christ.

The next level of this model requires the involvement of every member of the Church. This will require that through the Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Ministries, an inventory of each member and their specialized field, should be developed. This inventory will call together related fields such as professionals (teachers, health practitioners, Journalists, Lawyers and others), Businessmen and women, students, home makers and others, to be prepared for missions. Meetings or trainings that will require each specific group and also working with other related groups will be very critical to this level of missions.

At the Institutional Management level of missions, it is required that each local church and local Conference will have an institution to manage. This is where the Church will engage other professionals to work for it and through these services, the Church will reach the workers as well as impacting the community with its services. This could be done through a school, clinic, food service, TV/Radio Station, Centre of Influence and other related services. This is critical to missions as not every area requires evangelistic campaigns to reach people but through these services, more can be reached including those in areas where other faiths are dominant but also it requires the prudent use of funds to ensure that these services are organized.

The Business Investment level requires that local churches and local Conferences take advantage of Business Investments in their areas or countries to help increase funding for specialized assignments. Africa is time and again hit by many challenges which require huge amounts of funds to mitigate. The church in Africa must not distance itself from these avenues as the practice has been. The high levels

of sickness, Civil wars, poverty, hunger, high un-employment levels, homelessness<sup>103</sup> and other challenges, require the church to be deliberate in addressing the financial pressures that Africa is facing. This will reduce more dependence on the Western Countries to finance these interventions through Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) and the works of ADRA will be financed locally. This approach will also mean that the church will not take too long to react to the social needs of her community.

The Cross-Cultural level of missions is where Evangelism takes place. Considering what is now happening in Africa in terms of intra-migration and inter-migration<sup>104</sup> One doesn't need to travel and cross rivers or borders to reach other people groups. Africa has become a home to a diverse people. In Africa apart from those practicing African Traditional Religion (ATR), Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and other religions are available. Also, Africa houses people from the West and the East who are staying there permanently or temporarily. These people groups and faiths are supposed to be met from the local church and local Conference. There is need to recruit and train people who can reach these people groups. These people recruited can be locals, but the emphasis is to have those same people groups who have been converted to Adventism to be trained to reach out to their kind. No longer should this emphasis of missions be done from the higher organs of the church without the local church and conference taking full involvement.

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<sup>103</sup> Xiaoyu Zhang, "Sustainable Development in African Countries: Evidence from the Impacts of Education and Poverty Ratio," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 11, no. 1 (October 18, 2024): 1386

<sup>104</sup> Wendy Williams, "African Migration Trends to Watch in 2025," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, accessed 16 March 2025, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/migration-trends-2025/>.

## **Applying the “Sabbath Mission Model” for Pastoral Ministry**

While this model requires the involvement of all members from the family setting and all levels of church structure, the pastorate remain key implementers when it comes to the local church and its membership. The Pastors can help to implement this model through conducting Bible studies on the topic of the Sabbath; ensuring that the principles of mission in the model are discussed in Church Boards and Business meetings; developing a reporting mechanism that will include all levels of the model and ensuring that members have a way of reporting their activities through Sabbath School and Personal Ministries. Part of what is needed to ensure this is done is to have each local congregation develop an inventory of the people living in that particular locality and align what they do with what members of the church do. This will help to strengthen the aspect of missions from where people are found. Pastors must also ensure that more interactive activities between the church and the community are organized so as to break some social barriers.

## **Conclusion**

Today, the world especially in Africa has evolved into complexity, but the basics of human needs and cries are the same. This chapter has shown that once again the Sabbath has an impact on how humans relate with each other by first impacting the family and then the rest of community. This impact from the nucleus of the family to the rest of the community is what will successfully impact missions in Africa. This is because Africa which is highly a communal environment, responds much from a familial standpoint. This approach to mission is seen to impact the life of the observer on a daily basis and reaching out to others in liberating them and providing “rest” as demonstrated through the life and teachings of Jesus.

The life of Jesus with regards to the Sabbath has shown that the “messianic declaration” He made in the synagogue on Sabbath about who He was, was in sync with the Sabbath principles and He lived those principles daily. Jesus broke down barriers of discrimination, legalism and a judgmental attitude towards non-Sabbath Keepers.

The Adventist Church in Africa that has challenges of inequality, abuse, discrimination, poverty, family fragmentation, wars and corruption, can through the Sabbath make a difference and create an environment where every person is restored to the image of God and provided with the “rest” that comes from God through Sabbath observance. This relevance of Sabbath also means bringing Christ to the market and streets and not just during evangelistic campaigns or special events where millions of dollars are spent to reach out to people who have not heard the truth.

Africa lives in an environment of pluralism and dualism and mission has been replaced by missional practices <sup>105</sup> which emphasizes the “here and now” and is engrossed in dealing with present challenges facing humanity, the Sabbath then is a unique gift that embraces both mission and missional aspects. Adventist missions in Africa should focus not only in “winning people to the Church” as it has been in most cases, but to have each convert transformed into a “fruit bearing Christian”. This should be the number one preoccupation and Sabbath keeping then must result into “loving and lovable” Christians who live for the good of others and to give glory to

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<sup>105</sup> Kwabena Donkor, *The Emerging Church and Adventist Ecclesiology* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2011). 18.

God.<sup>106</sup>With these every believing Adventist will be moved to being a living missionary wherever they are found.

The Church needs a model that will make it to be more relevant and efficient in its mission endeavors. The Sabbath Mission Model which uses the five levels as found in Exod 20:8-11, will not only respond to the demand for “Total Member Involvement” but will also help to reach out everyone in whatever field of life they belong to. This approach also devolves certain aspects of missions as currently practiced, such as Cross-Cultural missions, from the higher organs to the local church and the local conference. This approach is also different in that missions at all these levels can be done even at an individual level and converts will not just be limited to the indigenous people group but will also flow to others as long as they are found in those areas. As observed earlier, this approach will produce a prudent use of resources as Adventist missions will become more needs based than just fulfilling an itinerary.

This chapter has also dealt with how the Pastorate which are critical to implementing this model from the local church can have a role to play to ensure that this model is implemented. This is through teaching, social interactions, policy development and inventory of the people living in that area including what their occupation is.

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<sup>106</sup> Park, 25-27.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### **Summary**

In the light of the details presented in this paper, the study of Exod 20:8-11, has shown that this law which is right in the heart of the Decalogue has missiological implications which are still applicable today.

The principles observed in Exod 20:8-11 go beyond the mere keeping of a day to eternal principles of a believer's lifestyle. In this passage it has been observed that the Sabbath is not limited to the Jews or to any specific group but is a blessing to all mankind. Sabbath keeping is also a reminder that amidst the many abuses of this life, humans were created in the image of God (Imago Dei) and by God. This in itself should be one of the many reasons to treat others fairly and equally. To this regard the Sabbath is the great equalizer among human beings and goes against all forms of discrimination, abuse and mistreatment regardless of their state or situation in life.

The Sabbath is said to be a day of "rest". This rest as seen in this paper comes from God and it includes physical, emotional and mental rest and also rest in the sense of shalom or peace which involves the wellbeing of the whole person. This rest then should cover someone's past, present and future concerns of life. This aspect of rest is the emphasis of this text in that Sabbath observers will not just show better work ethics but will through God, help others realize the rest that comes from Him. It is this rest that must be provided on a daily basis and not just on a particular day. While it is important to note that both work and rest relate to man's relationship with God, the

benefits accrued from this relationship are then appropriated to fellow human beings who now benefit from this relationship.

The Sabbath also has an eschatological function that must be understood in the light of the “Great Controversy” between Christ and Satan. In this it has been observed that this battle is about rest and restlessness. That God is the provider of rest and Satan restlessness is implied in the Sabbath Command. Sabbath observance then provides a message of hope that God will ultimately provide His creation with total rest. As long the Sabbath remains, eschatological hope that will arise as a result of God defeating Satan, will be realized and this is the promise of the Second coming of Jesus.

This paper also considered the barriers that were put in place by the Jews concerning the observance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath as observed from the beginning was instituted by God for the benefit of His creation especially humanity.. With the many things that divide human beings, one of the assignments God’s people, is to restore the truth God and His people and why He created them. This is a privilege God has given mankind, and it is at this point that each person created by God should feel important, empowered and special. The Sabbath then is a tool against any form of abuse, discrimination and prejudice against other human beings.

In going back to the creation account, it is seen that the Sabbath goes beyond any cultural beliefs that that discriminate and oppress others, as result of society’s making and the changes of time. The Sabbath then becomes a part of the landmarks that will always remind humans to be cautious of creating policies or laws that will remove the identity of individuals in the name of modernity or contemporary governance practices.

In the light of the many contemporary challenges faced in Africa, the Sabbath with its principles of “rest” and “release” remain relevant to the approach of missions in Africa. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a crucial role to ensure that through the Sabbath, humanity is given “hope, identity, rest, release and restoration”. This must be done through the family, community and the church through the “Sabbath Mission Model” that has been developed in this paper in the context of Africa.

### **Conclusion**

For the Adventist Church in Africa to grow its membership, not just in quantity but also in quality, there is need to move from an apologetic approach of the Sabbath to a mission conscious approach. The principles found in the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8-11 have shown that through the idea of “rest” and “release”, many can be benefitted. The “Sabbath mission model” which this paper has developed for the church from the family to all her levels will help members to begin to live a constant life of missions. These principles which resonate with the life of Jesus as observed in the study, are what people would like to see. They will not see the day but they will see relationships that lead to their Creator.

Through the correct observance of the Sabbath as stated in this paper, all manner of social barriers are broken to present people to back to the God; this is the mission of God (*mission-Dei*). The Sabbath then should be lived in all the spheres of human economy. It must influence policy makers as well as policy implementers. It must influence the young and the old; the rich and the poor and any person regardless of their status in society. Like the order of human society in Ex 20:8-11 where the Sabbath was to impact every level of human living in society, Jesus demonstrated it, and it must be demonstrated by Sabbath observers in every generation. It is in the

Sabbath that Adventist African believers will find their identity, their place in God's family and their call to missions for Africans and beyond

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