

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Divinity

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: CONTROVERSY ON SEXUAL INTIMACY WITHIN MARRIAGE ON  
SABATH DAY IN THE SOUTH LUANDA AND CABINDA MISSION,  
ANGOLA

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The Sabbath of the seventh day of the week and the heterosexual and monogamous marriage are two institutions coming from the Garden of Eden during the week of Creation. Both remain in force and are also part of the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventists, guiding their values, behavior and identity. The first one is belief number 20 and the second one is number 23. According to this last belief, sexuality, as a gift of God, is an important element of marriage for pleasure, joy, procreation and sanctification.

However, some members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Luanda, Angola, have difficulty seeing harmony, unity and combination between the keeping and sanctification of the Sabbath and the sexual intercourse of a married couple on that day. Such as the researcher captured through observation and interviews, the church

members are divided into three groups about this controversial issue: those who accept the sexual intimacy within marriage on Sabbath day; those who refuse this practice; and those who are in doubt about it.

In order to contribute to solving this problem, the researcher conducted a deep biblical, exegetical and theological study through which he learned that there is not any contradiction between sex and Sabbath, because both are restful, blessed and holy, and both were given by God, the Creator, at the end of the week of Creation. That is, there is no sin or prohibition of sexual intercourse within marriage on Sabbath day. Any form of abstinence is the exclusive responsibility of the couple involved.

When this study was shared with the couples from the churches involved in the research, there was a positive change in thinking, feelings and beliefs, and the negative views were reduced to insignificant numbers.

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ON SABATH DAY IN THE SOUTH LUANDA AND  
CABINDA MISSION, ANGOLA

A project

presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Divinity

by

Florindo César Calei Chiconjo

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This project is dedicated to the Adventist couples who desire to enjoy their conjugal love to the fullest while seeking to live in holiness, obeying by faith the commandments of God, including the observance of the Sabbath

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Problem**

At the end of God's creation, He formed the human being (man and woman), His masterpiece, and gave them two gifts: The marriage and the Sabbath. Within the gift of the marriage, we found some special thing which constitutes the major expression of that should be the unity of man and woman as a couple. The Scriptures narrate that "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' [...] Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen 1:28; 2:24).<sup>1</sup> And the second gift, the Sabbath, is the seventh day of the week, which was the first moment of communion between God and the couple Adam and Eve, and between these last (Gen 2:1-2).

Both, the Sabbath and marriage are two older institutions of humanity that help us to remember and recognize the love and the power of God for us. Over time, the enemy tried to destroy these institutions with purpose of removing any remembrance of the love and power of the Creator from the hearts of the human beings, so that these may not worship and obey God.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all biblical references and quotations in this work are from New King James Version.

On the other hand, the enemy also tried to bring unhappiness and the loss to the human beings themselves. To achieve this evil purpose of him, he has used several means such as divorce, adultery, fornication, homosexuality and other perversions and deviations of behavior in sense to collapse the marriage; and he also has the purpose to collapse the Sabbath, utilizing the religious observance of Sunday or Friday to achieve such objective.

Among the Seventh-day Adventists, the enemy has sown doubts about whether or not sexual intimacy is legally permitted within marriage on the Sabbath day. Frequently, within the Church, people question if it is allowed the couple to have sexual intimacy on this day or not. The answers many times divide, not only the people, but also these two institutions as if they have come from two opposite authors; that is, the Sabbath came from God, and the sexuality came from Devil. Thus, the separation between Sabbath and marriage, specially the sexual intimacy, is fierce. Generally, people are divided into two extreme groups: Those in favor of engaging in sexual relation on Sabbath and those who oppose.

This scenario described above, is obviously present in the churches of Luanda, Angola. This country is located in Southern Africa, bathed by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, limited to the north by the two Congos, to the east by Democratic Republic of Congo and by Zambia, and to the south by Namibia. Its population is 34,094,077,<sup>2</sup> and in the capital Luanda is 9,359,552.<sup>3</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Church is present since 1924, and has 665,768 baptized members. The city of Luanda has 187,750 baptized members, distributed into 353 churches.

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<sup>2</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da população 2014-2050* (Luanda, Angola: INE, 2016), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da população da Província de Luanda 2014-2050* (Luanda, Angola: INE, 2016), 26.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Church members have questioned the legality of couples engaging in sexual intimacy on Sabbath in many occasions, in various churches and other places. The question has repeatedly asked during the study of the lessons of the Sabbath School, the biblical study meeting, as well in informal conversation. When the answer is “yes, it is allowed,” the question goes far and is associated with the Holy Communion, ordination, and preaching, with this interrogation: Can a pastor or elder who had sexual intercourse on Sabbath preside the Holy Communion in that very day, or, in the case of the pastor, officiate the ordination ceremony? And can a member who performed the same act participate in the Lord’s Supper, or be ordained on that very Sabbath? And what about the preacher? Can he stand on the pulpit and preach after sexual intimacy with his spouse? Are the Sabbath and the sexual relation opposite to one another? The question remains unsolved among the church members at the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission in Angola, necessitating this study.

## **Questions of the Research**

1. How do couples in the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission of Angola perceive the appropriateness of engaging in sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day?
2. What theological or doctrinal beliefs influence attitudes towards sexual intimacy on the Sabbath among married couples in these regions?
3. How does the practice of sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day impact the spiritual lives and marital relationships of couples in the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission?

4. What are the common concerns and challenges that the couples have faced regarding sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day within the context of their practices of culture and religion in Angola?

### **Purpose of the Research**

This study has as purpose to investigate the perceptions, beliefs, and practices related to sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day among married couples in the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission of Angola. The study aims to understand the theological, cultural, and relational factors that have influence on these practices, and to explore the impact of Sabbath day intimacy on the spiritual and marital well-being of couples within this specific religious context.

### **Significance of the Research**

This research aims to reach the following:

1. To contribute with a biblical-exegetical and theological study for an issue that is seldom explored by theologian scholars nowadays.<sup>4</sup>
2. To offer a tool to the pastors while dealing with these questions in the local churches.
3. To contribute for the harmonization of the married life through a correct understanding of the relationship between Sabbath and sacred ceremonies and practices versus sexual intimacy within Christian marriage.
4. To invite Christian marriages to involve God in all aspects of their lives, including in the physical intimacy.

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<sup>4</sup> Michael W. Campbell, "Sex on the Sabbath," *Ministry*, April 2015, 14-15.

## **Methodology and Procedure**

This study will employ a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing an approach of the science of phenomena to explore the experiences and perceptions that the married couples lived regarding sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day in the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission, Angola.

### **Participants**

The study will involve 30-50 married couples who are active members of churches within the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission, and 70 pastors who work in this mission. Participants will be selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of ages, lengths of marriage, and levels of religious commitment.

### **Data Collection Methods**

**In-depth interviews.** The researcher will conduct interviews that are semi-structured, with each couple, to figure out their beliefs, practices, and experiences related to sexual intimacy on the Sabbath. The interviews will include open-ended questions to encourage detailed and reflective answers.

**Focus groups.** Separate focus groups for men and women will be organized to facilitate open discussions about the cultural and religious factors influencing their views on Sabbath day intimacy. These discussions will help identify common themes and variations in experiences.

**Participant observation.** The researcher will attend church services, Sabbath School lessons, and other relevant religious meetings to observe the context in which beliefs and practices regarding Sabbath day intimacy are discussed and formed.

## **Data Analysis**

**Transcription and coding.** The survey interviews with the target-groups be literally transcribed, and coded according to the thematic analysis, which coding process will identify key themes, the patterns, and the categories related to the questions of the research.

**Thematic analysis.** The encoded data will be analyzed to uncover the themes that are common, and the differences in perceptions and practices. The analysis will focus on understanding the theological, cultural, and relational dimensions of Sabbath day intimacy.

## **Ethical Observations**

**Consent information.** All participants will have complete information regarding to purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the study. And each individual will express their consent by completing the survey form.

**Confidentiality.** The participants will have their privacy and confidentiality maintained throughout the study. Pseudonyms will be used in reporting the findings to protect participants' identities.

**Sensitivity.** The study will handle the topic of sexual intimacy with cultural and religious sensitivity, ensuring that participants may feel themselves comfortable and respected during the process of data collection.

## **Validity and Reliability**

**Triangulation.** Data will be triangulated by using multiple data collection methods (inquiry, target-group, and observations) to increase the credibility and the valid character of the search result.

**Member checking.** Permission is granted to participants to review and give feedback on the transcribed form and preliminary findings to ensure accuracy and authenticity.

## **Procedure**

This research project will be composed of five chapters: the first is the introduction and covers aspects such as the background and the statement of the problem, research questions, purpose and significance of research, methodology and procedure, and the delimitation. The second chapter will be a description of the controversy presented in two parts: firstly, the researcher will make a literature review about the various interpretations of the issue according to the Jewish, Christian and Seventh-day Adventist conceptions. Then, in the second part, through the interview by inquiry to the pastors and to the couples of the two selected churches, and its consequent data analysis, will be described the view, opinion and practices of the interviewed people about the issue.

The third chapter will be a deeper biblical, exegetical and theological study with purpose to capture the truth about it. The fourth chapter is a design of the program and its consequent implementation with purpose to give an answer to the questions raised by the churches, followed for another inquiry and the evaluation to determine the believability of the program. Finally, the fifth chapter will be a summary, conclusion and recommendations.

## **Delimitation**

This study focusses only on relationship between the sexual intimacy and the Sabbath and ceremonial practices. The scopes of application are the pastors of the

South Luanda city and two churches of this very mission, namely the Central-Kikuxi SDA Church and the Judeia-Mundial SDA Church, that were selected as a sample.

## CHAPTER 2

### DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTROVERSY

The controversy description explores the existing body of knowledge related to the intersection of sexual intimacy within marriage and Sabbath observance, particularly within the South Luanda and Cabinda Mission in Angola. This chapter delves into theological perspectives, cultural contexts, and previous research findings that inform the study. By examining these diverse sources, the researcher aims to identify gaps in the current understanding and provide a solid foundation for the investigation into the unique experiences of married couples navigating these intimate and sacred aspects of their lives.

#### **Various Interpretations of the Controversy**

##### **The Jewish Conceptions**

The Jewish conception about this issue comes from the Period of the Second Temple, and it is divided into two opposite currents of thinking: the idea of those ones who refuse and condemn the sexual intimacy on Sabbath in one hand, and in other hand, those ones who accept and recommend it.<sup>1</sup>

**The contrary view.** This is reflected in two types of documents: The Book of Jubilees and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first is an apocryphal book written in 135 to 105 BC, and sometimes considered as a lesser Genesis, because it is a

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson Razafiarivony, "A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy within Marriage on the Sabbath," in *The Sabbath and the Bible*, ed. Eriks Galeniaks (Nairobi: ATS AUA, 2017), 125-130.

rewriting of the book of Genesis as a code book of laws.<sup>2</sup> According to this document, the physical intimacy is incompatible with the holy time and place.

In regard of the holy place, the book refers that Adam and Eve had sexual intercourse as husband and wife out of the Eden Garden. Because this place was sacred, the first couple was not allowed to have their intimacy there. In fact, they do not dwell in Eden immediately after they were created. According to the connection that the same source does between the account of Genesis chapter 2 and the law of purity in Leviticus 12, Adam started to habit the Eden forty days and Eve eighty days after they have been created. The explanation for this delay is the necessity of them, outside the holy place, to gain time to consummate their marriage through the sexual union.<sup>3</sup>

The Book of Jubilees is clear to affirm that the sexual intimacy is prohibited on the holy time, specifically the Sabbath. The observance of Sabbath requires a purity state of the human being, without which such person is condemned to death.

The Jewish community of Qumran was constituted by members of the sect of the Essenes. This group of Judaism emphasized obsessively the purity and the holiness. They considered themselves as a sacred temple, and because of this they refused many things related to the body such as some kinds of food and drinks, practiced fasting and many of them avoided the sexual intercourse even with their spouses. In regard of marriage, some Essenes such as the inhabitants of Qumran

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<sup>2</sup> Razafiarivony, "A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy," 125.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 126.

were celibates, and others, mainly those that inhabited in small settlements, got married with the unique reason to procreate.<sup>4</sup>

The teaching and practices of this people are described in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They prohibited the physical intimacy within marriage on sacred time and place. This holy time refers to Sabbath and religious feast. They taught that God postulated that “anyone who lies with his wife and has an ejaculation, for three days shall not enter anywhere in the city of the temple in which I shall install my name.”<sup>5</sup>

**The favorable view.** The Jewish view in favor of sexual intimacy within marriage on Sabbath is found in the rabbinic writings. Beyond their favorable vision about sexual intercourse of the couple, they also defend and recommend it on Sabbath. Starting from creation account of the woman at the end of Friday, according to the Genesis chapters 1 and 2, they explained that there is not any contradiction between sex and Sabbath within marriage; on contrary, it is a need and religious duty to have sexual intercourse on sacred day. God delayed to create Eve, deliberately, so that Adam should express his desire in holy time and place.<sup>6</sup>

Within marriage however, sex is considered a mitzvah, or religious duty and a joy, rather than something shameful. The Torah actively prescribes sexual relations within marriage and even specifies that couples should have sex on the Sabbath and on certain holidays as a way of sanctifying the days. The purpose of sex is not only for reproduction, but also to strengthen and deepen the marital relationship.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 126, 127.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>7</sup> A. Etzioni and M. Baris, “A Communitarian Perspective on Sex and Sexuality,” *International Review of Sociology* 15 (2005) 215-241, quoted in Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 129.

As we can note the strict conception about this issue has changed to the permission or indulgence; and the comprehension of “Sabbath delights” or *Oneg Sabbath*, in Hebrew (Isa 58:13), has also changed. For rabbis this expression “includes Sabbath delights on the bed (i.e. sex and nap).”<sup>8</sup>

The Rabbis taught that the scholars of Torah should perform their conjugal duties in every Friday night, above all those who stayed in the school house during all week. They even rushed home to enjoy this pleasure. And one of Ezra’s ten decrees recorded in Talmud orders to eat garlic on Friday because of one of the benefits of this legume is its aphrodisiac power and the capacity to increase the sperm.<sup>9</sup> Sexual intimacy should not miss within marriage on holy day. It is part of the “Sabbath delights.”

Loretta P. Spivey, quoting the book *God Invented Sex* by Charles Wittschiebe, relates that the Orthodox Jews, which are regarded as “the ultimate Sabbathkeepers” have the night of Friday “as a perfect opportunity” for a couple to enjoy sexual intercourse.<sup>10</sup>

The regulations and practices of the faithful Jews after the Babylonian exile adds light in understanding their interpretation concerning the issue. It is not news that after the exile, the Jews established numerous rigorous codes and regulations to reinforce the Sabbath observance as a holy day. However, these codes allowed married people to engage in sexual intercourse on this day, and even, they described

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<sup>8</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 129.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 129, 130.

<sup>10</sup> Charles E. Wittschiebe, *God Invented Sex* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1974), 91, quoted in Gina S. Brown and Loretta P. Spivey, “Sex on Sabbath?” *Adventist Review*, September 1996, 19.

such practice “as a special ‘Sabbath blessing.’” The Friday evening was regarded as the ideal time for enjoying the consummation of the conjugal intimacy.

This privilege was also extended to those wives who lived apart from their husbands. It was also granted to them to meet the husbands for intimacy on this special night of Friday. If the husband refused to fulfill this pleasant duty, it should be a motif for her to take him to the rabbinic court, accusing him of abandonment.<sup>11</sup>

Describing the joy of the Sabbath at the Jewish homes, Richard M. Davidson affirms that this joy includes a special meal (a cup of wine as a symbol of cheer, the challah bread, and other “choicest food of all the week”), heartily accompanied with “joyous table hymns reflecting the feeling and mood of the Sabbath.” This environment of spirituality, fellowship, chant, praise, joy and eating takes the family to forget burdens, worries, and sorrows of the week and relax. In this celebration the connubial consummation of the couple couldn’t lack. “Friday evening is a time of family fellowship, of special intimacy between husband and wife.”<sup>12</sup>

### **The Christian Conceptions**

As it occurs with Jew conception, it is important to analyze the Christian conception out of the Bible, because biblical view will be presented in the next chapter. The fathers of the Church in early period, from second to sixth century, were divided into two schools of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures:

**The School of Antioch.** The named school defended the literal meaning of the Scriptures and maintained the inheritance of Jewish literalist method of interpretation, whose root comes from Ezra. Some of the major exponents of this school were

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<sup>11</sup> Campbell, “Sex on the Sabbath.”

<sup>12</sup> Richard M. Davidson, *A Love Song for the Sabbath* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988) 21.

Theophilus of Antioch (late second century), Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca.350-428), Diodores of Tarsus (d. Before 394), John Chrysostom (344-407), Lucian and Dorotheus. This method was abandoned completely in beginning of Middle Age, when papacy reached the absolute power.<sup>13</sup>

**The Alexandria School.** On contrary of the Antioch school, the school of Alexandria defended the allegorical method of interpretation of the Scriptures, which was developed under guidance of the father of the Church such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 155 to ca. 220 A.D.) and Origen (ca. 185 to ca 254 A.D.). This school taught a radical application of the allegorical method of biblical interpretation through the maxim according to which: “All scripture has a spiritual meaning; not all has a literal meaning.”<sup>14</sup> This type of interpretation was developed from a mixture of the Old Testament and Hellenistic thought, principally the Plato’s writings.

The Plato’s ideas about the two worlds were the base of this school and came to dominate the Christian doctrine throughout the times until the Protestant Reformation when people started to go back toward literal method of interpretation of the Antioch. However, the Plato’s philosophy remains in Roman Catholic Church and in many or almost all protestant churches.

The teaching of Plato says that the universe or reality is divided into two worlds: the intelligible and the tangible worlds. The first is atemporal, uncreated and eternal. It is the world of the spirit, soul and ideas which are pure and do not change and move. The second world is temporal. It is the world of the material, body and flesh, which are finite, impure and can move and change. Aristotle, disciple of Plato,

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<sup>13</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 46.

<sup>14</sup> Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), 84, quoted in Gerhard F. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1985), 2.

gave contributions to these ideas, and Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, great exponents of Roman Catholic Church and defenders of allegoric method of interpretation of the Scriptures, incorporated the Plato's worldview in Christian theology.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, the Greek and platonic ideas influenced also the Church fathers' mindset concerning sexuality. In their writings, there is not a direct reference of physical intimacy on Sabbath, but they present a negative view of the sex even within marriage. The following are few examples:

Justin Martyr (100-165) taught that sex is only for procreation, and its pleasure is evil.<sup>16</sup>

Clement of Alexandria expressed his idea against sexual pleasure within marriage in these terms: "if a man marries in order to have children, he ought not to have a sexual desire for his wife. He ought to produce children by a reverent, disciplined act of will."<sup>17</sup>

Origen taught that the Christian couple has permission to have marital intercourse "only for producing children." And so, during the pregnancy it is improper, even for the animals. These also refrain themselves at that time. For him, the sexual intimacy is so defiling that God couldn't hear or answer a prayer made in the marriage bed. He also taught that the Christian couple couldn't take approach the Lord's Supper in the same day they had sexual intercourse. The celibacy of the pagan

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<sup>15</sup> Fernando Canale, *O Princípio Cognitivo da Teologia Cristã: Um Estudo Hermenêutico sobre Revelação e Inspiração* (São Paulo, Brazil: Unaspress, 2011), 88-92.

<sup>16</sup> Razafiarivony "A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy," 124.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 124, 125.

priests impressed so much this church father, that he desired the Christians to practice the same.<sup>18</sup>

Augustine (354-430) taught that in Garden of Eden there was the possibility to generate descendants without lustfulness. Adam could dispatch the seed in the womb of his wife, without her losing her virginity. Thus, sexual union could have occurred by an act of will, with the exclusive purpose of conception without the influence of lustful cravings.<sup>19</sup>

For him, the original sin was equal to sexual excitement, and considered marital intercourse as “a necessary evil since it is the means for procreation;” that is, the satisfaction of the carnal lust is transformed into a fulfillment of the duty of generate a new living being. Unfortunately, through this the original sin is transmitted from the parents to the child. For this reason, it becomes necessary the baptism of children, even newborn, as purification and releasing from the guilt of the original sin.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, other things or situations that bothered and overloaded him as proof of the sinful nature of the human being are: the involuntary erection of the penis, the spontaneous ejaculations and the intensity of the carnal pleasure during the intercourse.<sup>21</sup>

Jerome (347-420) postulated that the original sin was the sexual intercourse between the first couple. Before sin they were virgin in Eden Garden, “but after they

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<sup>18</sup> Sakae Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex* (Nashville, TN: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 11, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Book 14, chapter 26, quoted in Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 125.

<sup>20</sup> Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, 12, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

sinned, and were cast out of the Paradise, they were immediately married.”<sup>22</sup> He also considered the matrimony as a permanent vice and, therefore, all that remain to do is to exculpate and to sanctify such practice. That’s why the Roman Catholic Church made it a sacrament.<sup>23</sup>

This kind of thinking became widespread in Middle Age and permeates the Roman Catholic Church doctrine today. Peter Lombard (1100-1160) and Francisco Gratien (century XII and XIII), for example, said that the Holy Spirit abandons the bedroom when a couple has the sexual intercourse, even when their purpose is the procreation.<sup>24</sup>

Other leaders of the Roman Catholic Church taught with insistence that the sexual intercourse is prohibited in all holy days and seasons, because God requires absolute sexual abstinence during these sacred times. Therefore, the same leaders advised the couples to rigorously abstain themselves from any kind of physical intimacy on five days of the week considered holy, namely the Thursday (because it was the day in which Christ was arrested), the Friday (because it was the in which Christ was crucified), the Saturday (because it is the day to honor the Virgin Mary), the Sunday (because this is the day Christ rose again), and the Monday (the day dedicated to the respect for the departed souls). The Tuesday and Wednesday only are the days for the couple freely enjoy sexual intimacy!<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* 1.16 (NPNF, 6.359), quoted in Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 125.

<sup>23</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 125.

<sup>24</sup> Tim Lahaye and Beverly Lahaye, *The Act of Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), chapter 8, accessed 19 January 2023, <https://www.pdfdrive.com/the-act-of-marriage-the-beauty-of-sexual-love-e196515964.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## **The Adventist Conceptions**

The Seventh-day Adventists are characterized by keeping of the Sabbath according to the Scriptures (Gen 2:1-3). They believe that the Sabbath is the sign between God and his people; and the God's people of the last days, the remnant church, will be recognized for possessing the seal of God, which is the Sabbath, beside other characteristics. They also believe that their mission is to preach the everlasting gospel and to call up every people to true worship to God Creator of the universe and Redeemer. This worship must be especially in Sabbath, the memorial of creation and redemption (Ezek 20:12, 20; Rev 12:17; 19:10; 14:6-12).

Parallel to the Sabbath, they believe that the matrimony is a divine institution, established by God in Eden Garden, as a gift to the man and women. They also believe that in its origin the marriage is monogamous, heterosexual and lifelong. This blessing of matrimony includes the gift of sex which can be enjoyed only within this sacred institution.

Although their beliefs concern also the Sabbath and Marriage, and their theologians consider these two elements (Sabbath and Marriage) as twin institutions, as mentioned in the introduction, there are very few writings about the issue of sexual intimacy on Sabbath within marriage. Therefore, we consulted four official documents in order to apprehend something related with this matter.

The first document is the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. This talks about the belief and practices regarding to the Sabbath, marriage and sexual intimacy. However, it does not say anything concerning the marital physical intimacy on sacred day; that is, on Sabbath.

Sexual intimacy within marriage is a sacred gift from God to the human family. It is an integral part of marriage, reserved for marriage only (Gen. 2:24; Prov. 5:5-20). Such intimacy, designed to be shared exclusively between

husband and wife, promotes ever-increasing closeness, happiness, and security, and provides for the perpetuation of the human race.<sup>26</sup>

The second document is the declaration of the twenty eight believes of the Seventh-day Adventists (the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*). This book also says few about the issue in study. According to this document, the man and woman were created for the fellowship between them, and the Sabbath is an occasion of fellowship between human beings and God.<sup>27</sup>

The act of sexual intimacy is the nearest thing to a physical union possible for them; it represents the closeness the couple can know emotionally and spiritually as well. Christian married love should be characterized by warmth, joy and delight (Prov 5:18, 19).

‘Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled’ (Heb 13:4). ‘The Scriptures teach us clearly that the joyous sexual expression of love between husband and wife is God’s plan. It is, as the writer of Hebrews emphasizes, *undefiled*, not sinful, not soiled. It is a place of great honor in marriage – the holy of holies where husband and wife meet privately to celebrate their love for each other. It is a time meant to be both holy and intensely enjoyable.’<sup>28</sup>

The third document is the book entitled *Statements, Guidelines & Other Documents*. This states the matrimony as being the unique locus morally appropriate to express sexual intimacy.<sup>29</sup>

About marriage and Sabbath, this document states that:

These two institutions, the home and the Sabbath, belong together. Both are gifts from God. Therefore both are sacred, the latter strengthening and enriching in its unique manner the bond of the former.

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<sup>26</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2016), 155.

<sup>27</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 289.

<sup>28</sup> Ed Wheat, *Love Life for Every Married Couple* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 72, quoted in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, 333, 334.

<sup>29</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Communication Department, *Statements, Guidelines & Other Documents* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010), 74.

Close fellowship is an important element of the home. Close fellowship with other human beings also is an important element of the Sabbath. It binds families closer to God and binds the individual members closer to one another. Viewed from this perspective, the importance of the Sabbath to the home cannot be overestimated.<sup>30</sup>

In description of the family activity on holy day, the same document refers the fellowship in afternoon meal time, with a kind of talking which does not belong to the secular issues; to explore the nature, to perform missionary visiting to the sick peoples or other whom are in trouble or need, and to participate to the church activities.<sup>31</sup>

In regarding to the wedding ceremony on Sabbath, there is no contradiction between both (wedding ceremony and Sabbath), because the first is also sacred in its essence. However, the preparations that involve many of the marriage ceremonies demand hard and secular work that mislead the spirit of Sabbath. That is why the Church discourages.<sup>32</sup>

The last document is the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*. This document does not add anything to the issue except a historical reference from The Book of Jubilees such as follows:

Among other activities prohibited on the Sabbath, on pain of death, are spousal cohabitation; discussion of business matters, including travel plans; drawing up water; and picking up anything to carry out of one's dwelling (50:8).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Communication Department, *Statements, Guidelines & Other Documents*, 263.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth A. Strand, "The Sabbath," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), chapter 14. Accessed 30 January 2023, <http://adventbeliefs.com/assets/BBR/12/Handbook-of-SDA-Theology-Sabbath-The.pdf>.

Regardless of the prohibition contained in this quotation, the handbook itself does not explain if such prohibition is correct on the light of the Bible, neither clarify if it is still in force today.

Apart from the Church official documents, few Adventist scholars or authors wrote about this theme. Among these we find Gina Spivey Brown and Loretta Parker Spivey, the authors of an opinion article of the column *Take a Stand*, in *Adventist Review*, entitled “Sex On Sabbath?”<sup>34</sup> This article is the most ancient Adventist document that the researcher accessed. It is of only one page, divided into two parts, Gina starts presenting her position against sexual intimacy on Sabbath, while in the following part Loretta responds her, wielding arguments on favor.

The article published by Gina and Loretta in that magazine dated 1996, was not welcomed by many readers. In the column of the readers’ letters of the edition of November, two readers manifested their disfavor for the publishing. The first one classified it as “totally unacceptable,” and the editors of the magazine as ones who “lack of propriety, decency, modesty, and good taste.”<sup>35</sup> And the Pastor Manuel Fernandez, from Miami, Florida, reacted so:

This is really a surprise! The *Adventist Review* is bringing for discussion to the Adventist family a delicate and private topic as this? I just can’t believe it. Who in the world thought of presenting an issue like this one? Don’t the editors know that this is one of the things of life that is so private that it should be kept between the couple and God? Who can benefit from this?<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Brown and Spivey, “Sex on Sabbath?”

<sup>35</sup> William G. Johnston, ed., “Letters,” *Adventist Review*, November 1996, 2-3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Michael W. Campbell is the scholar who did a first deep and theological study on the issue through an article published in magazine *Ministry*, which title is “Sex on the Sabbath.” He started affirming that this “topic is not uncommon, and it raises a diversity of opinions,” however he recognized that “little has been published,” referring to the Gina S. Brown’s and Loretta P. Spivey’s article, and the book *Adventist Hot Potatoes* by Martin Weber, published in 1991; and then he analyzes the arguments against the sexual intercourse on Sabbath, based on Isaiah 58:13, about “doing thy pleasure on my holy day;” next, he presents the biblical view of sexuality, followed by the ideas of the early church fathers that perverted the biblical view.

Although, throughout the approach, the faithfulness to the biblical text does not give rise to a position against sex on Sabbath, he concludes that to have or not physical intimacy on sacred day is “a deeply personal decision that should be prayerfully discussed between a husband and wife” (1 Cor 7:5). And whatever the decision that a couple takes (in favor or against), it should be respected, not condemned (Rom 14:3).<sup>37</sup>

The most recent work on this topic is the article of Davidson Razafiarivony, entitled “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy within Marriage on the Sabbath,” as a chapter in the book *The Sabbath and the Bible*, edited by Eriks Galenieks.<sup>38</sup> This article is not only the most recent, but also the broader and deeper historical biblical and theological study on the issue, which covers eighteen pages. He summons his conclusion in three points:

1. The overall biblical attitude toward physical intimacy within marriage is very positive.

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<sup>37</sup> Michael W. Campbell, “Sex on the Sabbath.”

<sup>38</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 125-130.

2. Physical intimacy within marriage is holy.
3. Physical intimacy within marriage may occur on Sabbath.<sup>39</sup>

### **Description of the Controversy in the South Luanda, Angola**

Angola is a country located in Southern Africa, bathed by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, limited to the north by the two Congos, to the east by Democratic Republic of Congo and by Zambia, and to the south by Namibia. Its population is 34,094,077 inhabitants,<sup>40</sup> and 9,359,552 dwell in the capital, Luanda.<sup>41</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Church is present in this country since 1924, and currently has 665,768 baptized members.<sup>42</sup> It is organized into two unions: The Northeast Angolan Union Mission and the Southwest Angolan Union Mission. The Northeast Union has four missions, and one of them is the Southern Luanda and Cabinda Mission, which comprehends the south part of the province of Luanda and the entire province of Cabinda. This last province possesses 917,916 inhabitants.<sup>43</sup>

At the end of the second quarter of 2023, this mission reported 97,224 baptized members, distributed into 180 churches which are led by 70 pastors (20 ordained and 50 non-ordained).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Razafiarivony, "A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy," 136.

<sup>40</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da População*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da População da Província de Luanda*, 26.

<sup>42</sup> General Conference Office of Archives, Statistic and Research, *Online Yearbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2023), accessed November 16, 2023, <https://adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=32666>.

<sup>43</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da população*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Mission of Southern Luanda and Cabinda of Seventh-day Adventists, *Statistical Report of the 2nd Quarter 2023* (Luanda, Angola: Mission of Southern Luanda and Cabinda of Seventh-day Adventists, 2023), 1.

In the field research, the researcher worked with 57 pastors and with two churches. All these pastors work in Luanda, except one who works in Cabinda province. Indeed, in this locality there are only four organized churches, with 1,221 baptized members, and three pastors. The research focus only two churches as sample namely: Kikuxi-Central Church and Judeia-Mundial Church. Leaders pastoring these churches, requested the researcher to give them support and guidances how to address the matter to their members and find a solution with regard to polemics about sexual intimacy on the Sabbath.

Through observation, the researcher discovered that this issue of sexual intimacy on Sabbath is really a big problem which has divided the churches and the couples into two opposite groups: Members and spouses who are convinced that there is not any problem in sexual practice on Sabbath, and on the other hand, those who are convicted that such practice is impure or sinful. And there is a third group who practice, but are in doubt if they are making a wrong or an allowed thing on Sabbath.

The biblical passages used by members who affirm that such practice is prohibited are Isaiah 58:13 and Exodus 19:5. And those who defend the practice, use the account of creation of the first couple, Adam and Eve, on Friday, affirming that the night of Friday to Sabbath was the nuptial night, the starting of the honeymoon, for the first couple (Gen 1:26-2:3).

In the first instance, we got this information in an indirect way, through the simple observation and auscultation in several marriage meetings, through attendance in pastoral office, and through informal talking. However, when we conduct the inquiry in these two churches, we realized that our observation was not far of the reality.

## **The Survey by Interview**

In order to get the opinions of the Church people regarding the issue, we conducted a survey by interview to the pastors and to the married Church members in general. This interview consisted in an inquiry made of eleven core questions which we may see below as we analyze their possible answers.

1. *What is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?*

This question has six possible answers. Two of them are positive, three negative and one that is not positive or negative, it expresses doubt. The positive answers are these: 1 - “It is a blessing” – this conveys a highly positive view of the sexual intimacy on Sabbath, meaning that it is right, good and a special and joyful gift bestowed by God to His sons and daughters; 2 - “It is something right” – conveying a simply positive view, meaning that it can be done and there is no sin or condemnation.

The negative answers are these: 1 – “It is impure” – this conveys the view that sex on Sabbath is not sin or wrong and does not have condemnation, but makes impure the couple who engages in it, inadequate for spiritual things which occurs on Sabbath and also for the encounter with God; 2 – “It is wrong” – meaning that, instead of being sin, the sexual intimacy on Sabbath is a deviation from the rule or norm that may become a sin such as some conduct or behavior which has a certain appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22; 1 Cor 6:12); 3 – “It is a sin” – it is an absolute declaration that whosoever has sex on Sabbath is committing sin, and unless he or she repents, will be condemned.

If the inquired person cannot give a positive or negative answer because is not sure, the only answer he or she may signalize is “I am in doubt.”

2. *In your opinion, can a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony, have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the program of the Church?*

The possible responses to this question are very direct. The person has to say only “Yes, he/she can,” “No, he/she can’t,” or, in case of doubt, “I’m not sure.”

3. *Have you ever had sex with your spouse on Sabbath?*

The possible answers are simple, only “Yes” or “Never.”

4. *If yes, how often?*

This question also has two possible answers: “Whenever it is necessary or it chances (happens)” or “Rarely.” The first one indicates that it is a very normal practice in the marital life of the surveyed people. And the second one indicates that the possibility of concentration on spiritual activities of the Sabbath day disconnects the minds of the surveyed people from sex.

5. *The times we didn’t have it, it was because...*

The possible answers to these questions are the following: 1 - “It just did not happen;” 2 - “We avoided it with a lot of effort;” 3 - “We avoided it very easily;” 4 - “Rarely we think it on Sabbath;” 5 - “On Sabbath I don’t have sexual desire.”

6. *The times we had it, it was because...*

The possible answers for this question are: 1 - “We desired;” 2 - “I wanted it, and my spouse gave in;” 3 - “My spouse wanted it, and I gave in;” 4 - “I demanded, and my spouse surrendered;” 5 - “My spouse demanded, and I only obeyed;”

These questions (3, 4, 5 and 6) allow us to evaluate how people are able to apply what they think or believe about the issue, such as they expressed in questions 1

and 2, and how they deal with their own sexual pressings and needs or of their spouses.

*7. Every time I did it, I felt myself...*

This question permits to know the feeling that follows or dominates the people who engage in sexual intimacy on Sabbath, and how it confirms or opposes their convictions expressed in questions 1 and 2. Such feelings or answers may be one of these: “In peace;” “Guilty;” “Ashamed;” and “In doubt.”

*8. Due to the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular, many couples have little or no time for sexual intimacy, remaining only the weekends for this purpose. Is this also your case?*

The answer for this question can be only “No” or “Yes”. If it is “Yes”, it means that the couple in reference has little or no time for sexual intimacy because of the rush of the current days in the city of Luanda during the week, except in the weekends. This weighs heavily on their sexual behavior on the Sabbath day.

*9. To what extent has the Church taught about this subject?*

The possible answer is “A lot,” or “Few,” or “Rarely,” or “Nothing.” The response will determine or give some foundation if it is necessary or not to approach this issue with the Church.

*10. Is it necessary for the Church to address this issue with the couples?*

The answer cannot be anything other than “Yes” or “Not” Such answer will confirm the previous answer concerning the need to proceed or not with the project of research.

*11. Comments or observations.*

At this point, we give opportunity to the inquired people emit what they think on this theme.

## The Inquiry to the Pastors

The inquiry to the pastors was conducted on May 4, 2023. Obviously, all of them are male. The non-ordained pastors' time of ministry varies from 5 months to 8 years. The number and percentage of all participants and their age group and marriage lifetime are described below through the Tables 1 and 2.

*Table 1. Number of Interviewed Pastors*

	Number	Number of Participants	Percentage of participants
Ordained pastors	20	14	70%
Non-ordained pastors	50	43	86%
Total of pastors	70	57	81%

*Table 2. The Age Groups and Marriage Lifetime*

Ordained Pastors			Non-ordained Pastors		
Age group		Marriage lifetime	Age group		Marriage lifetime
Over 55 years	6	34 to 43 years	40-55 years	5	17-27 years
40-55 years	6	9 -33 years	20-39 years	38	1 month to 17 years
20-39 years	2	5 and 11 years			

Note 1: One ordained minister who is over 55 years old, is single, never get married.

Note 2: Five of the non-ordained ministers in the age group of 20 to 39 years old are still single.

The core questions and their answers are the following:

1. What is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?

The answers of the pastors to this question is summarized in the Table 3, which allows us to observe their degree of positivity, negativity and doubt. The positivity is very high, in the order of 87,6%.

*Table 3. Pastors' Opinions about Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers		OP	NOP	Total	%
Positive answers	1 - "It is a blessing"	8	34	42	73,6%
	2 - "It is something right"	4	4	8	14%
Negative answers	1 - "It is impure"	1	0	1	1,7%
	2 - "It is wrong"	0	2	2	3,5%
	3 - "It is a sin"	0	0	0	0
Doubting answer	"I am in doubt."	1	3	4	7%

OP – Ordained Pastors; NOP – Non-ordained Pastors

2. In your opinion, can a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony, have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program?

The Table 4 presents the answers to this question.

*Table 4. Pastors' Opinions about Sex and Church Services*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
"Yes he/she can"	8	36	44	77,1%
"No, he/she cannot"	5	4	9	15,7%
"I'm not sure"	1	3	4	7%

OP – Ordained Pastors; NOP – Non-ordained Pastors

3. Have you ever had sex with your spouse on Sabbath?<sup>45</sup>

The answers are in the Table 5 below.

<sup>45</sup> For this question we did not take in account the answers given by 6 pastors (10,5%) who are single. One of them is already ordained, and the other five are still single. All of them obviously said "Never." But their answer to this question has little weight in our study, because we need to know the very practice in the life of the married people. However, this question apart, the opinions from the pastors are important, no matter if they are married or single, because they are opinion makers in the churches. They are influencer people.

*Table 5. Pastors' Practices about Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
"Yes"	11	36	47	82,4%
"Never"	2	2	4	7%

OP – Ordained Pastors; NOP – Non-ordained Pastors

4. If yes, how often?

The frequency of the pastors' sexual life on Sabbath is described in the Table 6 below.

*Table 6. Frequency of Pastors' Sexual Life on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
"Whenever it is necessary or it chances (happens)"	4	22	26	45,6%
"Rarely"	7	14	21	36,8%

OP – Ordained Pastors; NOP – Non-ordained Pastors

5. The times we didn't have it, it was because ...

The possible reasons for abstinence are presented in the Table 7.

*Table 7. Pastors' Reasons for Sexual Abstinence on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
"It just did not happen"	4	21	25	43,8%
"We avoided it with a lot of effort"	1	0	1	1,7%
"We avoided it very easily"	3	3	6	10,5%
"Rarely we think it on Sabbath"	4	11	15	26,3%
"On Sabbath I don't have sexual desire"	1	0		1,7%

OP – Ordained Pastors; NOP – Non-ordained Pastors

6. The times we had it, it was because ...

The Table 8 presents the reasons why pastors have sexual intercourse on Sabbath.

*Table 8. Pastors' Reasons for Sexual Practice on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
"We desired"	10	32	42	73,6%
"I wanted it, and my spouse gave in"	1	3	4	7%
"My spouse demanded, and I only obeyed"	0	1	1	1,7%

7. Every time I did it, I felt myself ...

The Table 9 describes the kind of feelings that dominate the souls of pastors after sexual intercourse on the Sabbath.

*Table 9. Pastors' Feelings after Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
"In peace"	10	34	44	77,1%
"Guilty"	0	1	1	1,7%
"Ashamed"	1	0	1	1,7%
"In doubt"	0	1	1	1,7%

8. Due to the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular, many couples have little or no time for sexual intimacy, remaining only the weekends for this purpose. Is this also your case?

The answers to this question are presented in the Table 10 below.

Table 10. *Hindrance for Sexual Intercourse during the Week*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
“Yes”	0	1	1	1,7%
“No”	13	35	48	84,2%

9. To what extent has the Church taught about this subject?<sup>46</sup>

According to the pastors, the Church has taught very few about this subject, such as it can be seen in the Table 11.

Table 11. *Church Teaching about the Subject*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
“A lot”	4	4	8	14%
“Few”	5	21	26	45,6%
“Rarely”	4	14	18	31,5%
“Nothing”	1	2	3	5,2%

10. Is it necessary for the Church to address this issue with the couples?<sup>47</sup>

The pastors opined in large percentage, such as the Table 12 shows, that the Church needs to address this issue with the couples.

Table 12. *Pastors’ Opinion about the Need for Addressing the Subject*

Possible Answers	OP	NOP	Total	%
“Yes”	13	41	54	94,7%
“Not”	0	1	1	1,7%

<sup>46</sup> Two non-ordained pastors (one married and other a single) did not give any answer for this question.

<sup>47</sup> Two pastors (3,5%), one ordained and other non-ordained, did not give any answer to this question.

When asked to comment or to make some observations, they wrote the following:

Comments or observations of the ordained pastors:

1. "Adam got married on Friday, did he spend the night fasting?"
2. "In my opinion, having sexual intercourse on Sabbath is not a sin. However, for those kinds of people who after the act have the desire to sleep, it is not advisable, because it stops being pleasurable and becomes a sin."
3. "I believe that the marriage is holy and a blessing at the eyes of God. There's no a chosen time or place for sexual act. Hebrews 13:4."
4. "There is a need for more meetings with couples and the family ministries directors, as well the teachings to the members or students of the baptismal classes, to approach and clarify this issue."
5. "Let's go back to the Eden Garden, and see that at the end of the week of creation, the major blessing that man enjoyed was to have the companion."

The non-ordained pastors' comments or observations:

1. "The marriage is holy and the sex also."
2. "It is necessary that the Church conveys the correct teaching regarding to the sexual intimacy, so that the Church may not entertain itself with the wrong teaching which the world offers."
3. "We need more approach on this issue, which may give more impact."
4. "Unfortunately, the issue of sex on the Sabbaths almost is not talked. It should be talked more. Among the members there is a taboo on this matter. There is someone who thinks that it is normal, and there is other who thinks opposite. It is because among the pastors there are those who think that it is correct, and others who say not. For me it is normal. The Sabbath is blessed and the sex also. In the light of the Bible it is a double blessing having sex in this blessed day."
5. "We need always to highlight this genre of issue, it is important to instruct promptly."
6. "This issue should be explain in a clear and efficient form, based on the Sacred Scripture and on the books of the Spirit of Prophecy, because of certain members who are extremists, and of the extremely polemic character of this subject."

7. "It is a matter of individual conscience."
8. "The churches need continue lectures on this topic, because many church members think that having sex on Sabbath may be a sin. However, lectures are needed to banish the taboo that is in the minds of some members."
9. "In my opinion, whereas the sexual intercourse is something established by God, it is a holy thing. Therefore, my answers in this inquiry are not a negation of sexuality as a sin, when it is making after the sunset on Friday, but the problem is the energy that is spent in performing the same act. Studies present that there is a greater energy expenditure in performing this act. That's why, in my opinion, the people of God should not make it on Sabbath, so that they may save energy for sacred activities, and reserve the intimacy for the following day."
10. "I believe that the sexual act is a blessing that God granted to the couple. Doing something that is sacred in the sacred day, is a blessing. But it is facultative, and depends on the married couple's view."
11. "For me it is not a sin because both things (Sabbath and marriage) are holy. How can a holy thing generate sin? But the lack of consensus can generate sin."
12. "It is necessary to approach this matter of extreme importance, which, in all the way, will help the Church to solve certain taboos that exist in our Church."
13. "I think that it is a problem for us in Angola. Many members defend strongly the idea that sex on the Sabbath or after the sundown on Friday. I suggest that after finished, this study (thesis or article), should shared in our churches."
14. "According to the Bible, when someone is charged to ministry the word, he should abstain from sex on the Sabbath, because it is a sacred day (1 Cor 7:5)."

### **The Inquiry to the Kikuxi Central Seventh-day Adventist Church**

This Church is located in the municipality of Viana, the most populated municipality of Luanda, with 1.451.989 inhabitants,<sup>48</sup> and more than its half is in the territory of this Mission (South of Luanda and Cabinda), because the part North of this municipality belongs to Angola North Mission. There are 37.738 baptized

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<sup>48</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da população*, 57.

members, distributed into 60 churches. The Kikuxi Central SDA Church is one of them with 247 baptized members and 39 couples.<sup>49</sup>

We met with the couples of this Church on Sabbath 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, to perform the inquiry. 23 men and 36 women, obviously all of them are married or living maritally, were present and took part. It is a couple representation in the order of 92,3%. Their time of marriage goes from 2 years to 41 years.

Their age group was distributed in scale presented in the Table 13 below.

*Table 13. Age Group of the Interviewed Church Members*

Men		Women	
Age group		Age group	
Over 55 years	2	Over 55 years	2
40-55 years	12	40-55 years	13
20-39 years	9	20-39 years	21

One man and fourteen women have non-Adventist spouses. All the men and women are Adventists for more than 6 years, except two men whom one is Adventist for 3 years and other for 6 months, and one woman who is for 1 year.

Going to the core questions of the inquiry, we got the following answers:

1. What is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?

The Table 14 shows the kind of answers they gave to this question.

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<sup>49</sup> *Statistical Report*, 3.

*Table 14. Opinions about Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers		Men	%	Women	%
Positive answers	1 - "It is a blessing"	9	39,1%	11	30,5%
	2 - "It is something right"	2	8,6%	2	5,5%
Negative answers	1 - "It is impure"	2	8,6%	3	8,3%
	2 - "It is wrong"	2	8,6%	7	19,4%
	3 - "It is a sin"	4	17,3%	6	16,6%
Doubting answer	"I am in doubt."	4	17,3%	7	19,4%

2. In your opinion, can a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony, have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program?

The Table 15 presents the kind of opinions that they have about this topic.

*Table 15. Opinions about Sex and Church Services*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
"Yes he/she can"	5	21,7%	2	5,5%
"No, he/she cannot"	15	65,2%	30	83,3%
"I'm not sure"	3	13%	4	11,1%

3. Have you ever had sex with your spouse on Sabbath?

The answers to this question such as presented in the Table 16 below, reveals that their practice is in contradiction with their thinking or opinion about the issue.

*Table 16. Practice of Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
"Yes"	22	95,5%)	30	83,3%
"Never"	1	4,3%	6	16,6%

4. If yes, how often?

The answer to this question is in the Table 17 below.

*Table 17. Frequency of Sexual Activity on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Whenever it is necessary or it chances (happens)”	12	52,1%	17	47,2%
“Rarely”	10	43,4%	13	36,1%

5. The times we didn't have it, it was because ...

The Table 18 clarifies the reasons why they abstained from sexual intercourse on Sabbath day.

*Table 18. Reasons for Sexual Abstinence on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“It just did not happen”	12	52,1%	13	36,1%
“We avoided it with a lot of effort”	1	4,3%	3	8,3%
“We avoided it very easily”	2	8,6%	4	11,1%
“Rarely we think it on Sabbath”	3	13%	3	8,3%
“On Sabbath I don't have sexual desire”	3	13%	7	19,4%

6. The times we had it, it was because ...

And the Table 19 presents the reasons why they engaged themselves in sexual intercourse on Sabbath day.

*Table 19. Reasons for Sexual Practice on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“We desired”	8	34,7%	9	36%
“I wanted it, and my spouse gave in”	8	34,7%	5	13,8%
“My spouse wanted it, and I gave in”	1	4,3%	8	22,2%
“I demanded, and my spouse surrendered”	2	8,6%	1	2,7%
“My spouse demanded, and I only obeyed”	2	8,6%	7	19,4%

7. Every time I did it, I felt myself ...

The kinds of feelings that dominated their souls after sexual intercourse on Sabbath are described in the Table 20 below.

*Table 20. Feelings after Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“In peace”	10	43,4%	11	30,5%
“Guilty”	5	21,7%	6	16,6%
“Ashamed”	3	13%	6	16,6%
“In doubt”	4	17,39%	7	19,4%

8. Due to the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular, many couples have little or no time for sexual intimacy, remaining only the weekends for this purpose. Is this also your case?

The answers to this question are below in the Table 21.

*Table 21. Hindrance for Sexual Intercourse during the Week*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“No”	20	86,9%	27	75%
“Yes”	3	13%	9	25%

9. To what extent has the Church taught about this subject?

The Table 22 presents the answers to this question.

*Table 22. Church Teaching about the Subject*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“A lot”	2	8,6%	3	8,3%
“Few”	10	43,4%	18	50%
“Rarely”	6	26%	12	33,3%
“Nothing”	3	13%	3	8,3%

10. Is it necessary for the Church to address this issue with the couples?

The Table 23 presents the answers given to this question.

*Table 23. Opinions about the Need for Addressing the Subject*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Yes”	21	91,3%	34	94,4%
“Not”	1	4,3%	2	5,5%

The comments or observations of the men are these:

1. “I still think that it is not correct to make sex in the day of Sabbath. It makes us impure in the face of God.”
2. “I, particularly, am very grateful with this lovely theme which will be presented to us. I hope that my question will be clarified: is it really a sin to have sex on Sabbaths?”
3. “It is good the Church to speak about it, because this issue is related to the profanation of the Sabbath.”
4. “We need our Church to talk about it.”
5. “The Church should teach more about it, because in the Church we have different positions, when this question is raised the Church becomes divided.”

6. “The marriage is sacred, the Sabbath is sacred, the people that are in marriage are also sacred, then the sex does not affect negatively our consecration.”

The comments or observations of the women are these:

1. “But, to make it is or isn’t a sin?”
2. “For me a person who will preside a sacred ceremony, such as the Holy Communion, should consecrate himself more, abstaining from sexual intimacy, not because it is a sin to have it in this day, but because it is a case of consecration.”
3. “Sometimes, I even shed tears because I made it on sacred day. I felt myself blamed. What should I do to avoid this? Please, help me.”
4. “Is it really a sin to have sexual intercourse on the Sabbath?”
5. “This subject came in good moment because I have lived many difficulties about this matter. Therefore, I hope to get more information.”
6. “The sexual intercourse is the greater blessing that God has given to us before the sin. For this reason, I am free to practice it at any time in the life.”

### **The Inquiry to the Judeia-Mundial Seventh-day Adventist Church**

This Church is located in the municipality of Belas, which population is of 1,443,298 inhabitants,<sup>50</sup> and the Adventist presence is of 8,974 baptized members and 34 local churches. The Judeia-Mundial SDA Church has 845 baptized members and 62 couples.<sup>51</sup>

Our meeting with the couples of this Church was on Sabbath 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. In this occasion, 50 men and 43 women were inquired. It is a couple representation in the order of 80,6%. All of them are married or living maritally, and their time of marriage goes from 6 months to 43 years.

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<sup>50</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Angola, *Projeção da população*, 57.

<sup>51</sup> *Statistical Report*, 2.

Their age group was distributed in scale presented in the Table 24 below.

*Table 24. Age Group of the Interviewed Church Members*

Men		Women	
Age group		Age group	
Over 55 years	4	Over 55 years	3
40-55 years	12	40-55 years	9
20-39 years	34	20-39 years	31

The wives of 5 men are not Adventists. Three men are in Church for 1 year, one for two years, and only one for more than 6 years. On other hand, two men declared that their wives are away or separated from the Church. The husbands of 14 women are not Adventists. One woman is a Church member for 1 year, two for 3 years, two for 4 years, and the other nine are Church members for more than 6 years. On other hand, ten women declared that their husbands abandoned the Church or are away from it.

Going to the core questions of the inquiry, we got the following answers:

1. What is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?

The Table 25 shows the kind of answers they gave to this question.

*Table 25. Opinions about Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers		Men	%	Women	%
Positive answers	1 - "It is a blessing"	26	52%	10	23,25%
	2 - "It is something right"	4	8%	8	18,6%
Negative answers	1 - "It is impure"	1	2%	3	6,9%
	2 - "It is wrong"	2	4%	2	4,6%
	3 - "It is a sin"	2	4%	0	0
Doubting answer	"I am in doubt."	15	30%	20	46,5%

2. In your opinion, can a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony, have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program?

The Table 26 presents the kind of opinions that they have about this topic.

*Table 26. Opinions about Sex and Church Services*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Yes he/she can”	12	24%	6	13,9%
“No, he/she cannot”	20	40%	13	30,2%
“I’m not sure”	18	36%	24	55,8%

3. Have you ever had sex with your spouse on Sabbath?

The answers to this question such as presented in the Table 27, below, reveals that their practice is in contradiction with their thinking or opinion about the issue.

*Table 27. Practice of Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Yes”	46	92%)	39	90,6%
“Never”	2	4%	2	4,6%

Note: 1 man (2%) and 2 women (4,6%) did not give any answer.

4. If yes, how often?

The answer to this question is in the Table 28 below.

*Table 28. Frequency of Sexual Activity on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Whenever it is necessary or it chances (happens)”	28	56%	18	41,8%
“Rarely”	17	34%	16	37,2%

Note: 4 men (8%) and 5 women (11,6%) who ever have had, couldn’t determine the frequency.

5. The times we didn’t have it, it was because ...

The Table 29 clarifies the reasons why they abstained from sexual intercourse on Sabbath day.

*Table 29. Reasons for Sexual Abstinence on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“It just did not happen”	22	44%	15	34,8%
“We avoided it with a lot of effort”	7	14%	4	9,3%
“We avoided it very easily”	4	8%	5	11,6%
“Rarely we think it on Sabbath”	8	16%	11	25,5%
“On Sabbath I don’t have sexual desire”	4	8%	3	6,9%

6. The times we had it, it was because ...

And the Table 30 presents the reasons why they engaged themselves in sexual intercourse on Sabbath day.

*Table 30. Reasons for Sexual Practice on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“We desired”	30	60%	21	48,8%
“I wanted it, and my spouse gave in”	10	20%	6	13,9%
“My spouse wanted it, and I gave in”	3	6%	5	11,6%
“I demanded, and my spouse surrendered”	4	8%	0	0
“My spouse demanded, and I only obeyed”	1	2%	7	16,2%

7. Every time I did it, I felt myself ...

The kinds of feelings that dominated their souls after sexual intercourse on Sabbath are described in the Table 31 below.

*Table 31. Feelings after Sex on Sabbath*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“In peace”	36	72%	22	51,1%
“Guilty”	3	6%	2	4,6%
“Ashamed”	0	0	0	0
“In doubt”	10	20%	16	37,2%

8. Due to the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular, many couples have little or no time for sexual intimacy, remaining only the weekends for this purpose. Is this also your case?

The answers to this question are below in the Table 32.

*Table 32. Hindrance for Sexual Intercourse during the Week*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“No”	21	62%	27	62,7%
“Yes”	15	30%	12	27,9%

9. To what extent has the Church taught about this subject?

The Table 33 presents the answers to this question.

*Table 33. Church Teaching about the Subject*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“A lot”	5	10%	5	11,6%
“Few”	15	30%	13	30,2%
“Rarely”	18	36%	12	27,9%
“Nothing”	9	18%	10	23,2%

10. Is it necessary for the Church to address this issue with the couples?

The Table 34 presents the answers given to this question.

*Table 34. Opinions about the Need for Addressing the Subject*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Yes”	49	98%	42	97,6%
“Not”	1	2%	1	2,3%

The comments or observations of the men:

1. “Firstly, the Bible doesn’t say anything about this. It means that each is free to decide if he or she can or not. For me, I think that it is not a sin.”
2. “Although, we do sex on the day of the Lord, even so, I think that it is not licit to practice sex when we have an encounter with God. We should purify ourselves, that is keeping us away from sex while we are preparing ourselves for a spiritual activity.”
3. “Please, solve my doubt. Is it really a sin to practice sexual intimacy on the Sabbath?”
4. “I would like to have a clearer answer from the Bible, because we are confused.”
5. “It is necessary for the Church to approach this matter with all couples, so that we may have the same idea, and a more healthful church.”
6. “It is a very pertinent theme nowadays, which has brought so many problems among the couples here, in our local Church, and in SDA Church, in general.”

7. “The sexual intercourse is a blessing from God. Since doing it is pleasurable, I think that there is not a specific day to make or not make. If the Sabbath is a blessing, then the sexual intimacy is also a blessing, therefore, it is not a sin – 1 Corinthians 7:1-3.”
8. “My opinion is that to have sex on Sabbath is not a sin, and it will never be, because God gave it as a pleasure, unless someone is obligated to make it. Since they both agree, there is no problem. In other hand, I don’t know if there is any biblical text that prohibits. If there is, please, give it to me. However, when I go to preach or participate in some ceremony, for major consecration, it is better to avoid such pleasure, so that we may not become tired and lazy. Thank you Pastor.”
9. “There are a lot of information regarding this issue, and we do not know which is correct because each one comes with a different idea. It would be good if it was given a lecture about it, which definitely will answer if sex on Sabbath is or not a sin.”
10. “It is important to debate this issue. Many have fallen into extremes. It is necessary to have more biblical foundations on it.”
11. “The Sabbath is a day of rest, blessed and sanctified by God. Therefore, we cannot have sexual intercourse on it.”

The comments or observations of the women:

1. “My observation is this: we have six days to enjoy the sexual act, and we should not wait to make it on Sabbath. In other hand, when we have good sex throughout the six days of the week, will not remain biological needs to be satisfied on the day of Sabbath, unless the spiritual needs that consist in meeting with God.”
2. “Our Church must approach more this topic. It will help many couples.”
3. “The Church must teach more on this topic, because there have been so many complains about it in the midst of the Church, manly in the women ministry. There are couples that do not know to talk on sexuality, and husbands who obligate their wives even during the menstrual period. I need to know more regarding it. Thank you.”
4. “In my opinion, having sex on the Sabbath period is something right. However, because of the necessary purification for the Sacred day and ecclesiastic activities, and also to avoid the wastage of energy. Therefore, so that the Sabbath day may be well passed, without the wearing of energy, it is advisable not make sex on Friday after the sunset.”
5. “Thank you very much Pastor for bringing this topic into our district, it is a very pertinent theme. There are a lot of taboo about it in our Church. I have some questions: In which day of the week was Eve created? If it was

on Friday, didn't Adam have sexual intercourse with her since God had already finished everything?"

6. "I am a member of Seventh-day Adventist Church, but my husband not, and there are moments that he obligates me. What can I do?"
7. "My husband is not baptized, but he frequents the Church in his time off. About the issue, I think that there is not any evil in having sex on Sabbath, because the marriage is sacred such as the Sabbath, therefore there is not any evil in making sex (something that God has done). In other hand, I only cannot have this intimacy in a day or hours that precede a spiritual ceremony, because I think that I will distract myself, and I become lazy."

### **Conclusive Analysis**

Analyzing these results, we may conclude the following:

#### **About the Pastors**

They have a highly positive opinion about the practice of sex on the Sabbath day. 73,6% affirms that this practice is a blessing, and 14% admit that it is right to enjoy it and there is no fear of sin or condemnation. In total there is 87,6% of positivity. Following this positive view is the doubt idea which is 7%. And negativity is rating in 5,2%.

With such view, it is not strange to hear that 77% of them affirms that a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony can have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program. Only 15% disagree, and 7% are in doubt.

Their experience also is a confirmation of what they think. 82,4% (corresponding 47 pastors) confess that they ever have had sex on Sabbath, and only 7% (corresponding 4 pastors) never experience it. The rest of 10,5% (corresponding 6 pastors) are single. 45,6% of those who confessed, affirm that it is very normal in their marital life, whenever it is necessary or chances, no matters if it is Sabbath or not, they have sexual intimacy; and 36,8% said that they do that rarely on Sabbath.

The major reason why they rarely do that on Sabbath (28%) is because their minds on Sabbath is disconnect from sex, may be because of the intensity of the Sabbath spiritual activities. Only 1,7% avoid it with a lot of effort.

From the 82,4% pastors who ever have had sexual intimacy on the Sabbath, 73,6% affirm that it happened because they as a couple desired, and 7% admit that they wanted and their wives gave in to satisfy them. But 1,7% said that he did it in obedience to the demand of his wife.

The feelings that dominated their minds after this practice is peace for 77,1% pastors, meaning that their sentiments are aligned with their biblical, theological and spiritual believes and convictions. Considering that 84,2% have time enough to enjoy the marital intimacy from Sunday to Friday. We also cannot ignore that 1,7% felt guilty, 1,7% felt ashamed and 1,7% felt in doubt after this intimacy.

About the extent in which the Church has taught about this, only 14% said that it has done it a lot, however 45,6% said that the Church has done few, 31,5% said that rarely, and 5,2% said that it has did nothing. Regardless, 94,7% said that it is necessary the Church to approach this issue with the couples.

### **About the Kikuxi Central Seventh-day Adventist Church**

The husbands of this Church have a more positive view of the issue than their wives, however both groups are under 50%. 47,7% of the men affirms that have sexual intimacy on Sabbath is a blessing (39,1%) and right (8,6%), while only 36% of the women share the same idea (30,5% affirms that it is a blessing, and 5,5% affirms that it is right). At the other extreme, 34,5% of the men are negative, affirming that such practice is impure (8,6%), wrong (8,6%) and a sin (17,3); while the women with this kind of view are 44,3%. 8,3% say that it is impure, 19,4% say that it is wrong and

16,6% say that it is a sin. Almost in the middle of the line are those who are in doubt: 17,3% of the men and 19,4% of the women.

Answering the question if someone who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony, can have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program, they both were peremptory to say “no” (65,2% of the men and 83,3% of the women). Those who said “yes” were 21,7% of the men and only 5,5% of the women. 13% of the men and 11,1% of the women were in uncertainty.

Although, going through their experience, we can see a large difference of what the majority think, believe or affirm: 95,5% of the men and 83,3% of the women confessed that they ever have had sexual intimacy on Sabbath. From these numbers, 52,1% of the men and 47,2% of the women did it frequently, that is, whenever it was necessary or happened. The rest (43,4% of the men and 36,1% of the women) did it rarely. Only 4,3% of men and 16,6% of women never did it on this day.

Among the men and women who are sexually active on Sabbath, only 4,3% of the men and 8,3% of the women had to do a lot of effort to avoid it, while 34,6% of the men and 38,8% affirmed that they have no difficulty to avoid it even though they believe it is impure, wrong or a sin. The sensual desire and the will to please the spouse (82,35% of the men and 74,7% of the women) are the dominant reason of this kind of conduct among these people. But, 8,6% of the men and 19,4% said that they did it only as obedience to the demands of their spouses.

The sentiments that resulted from this behavior are very closed to that they affirmed before. Those who are in peace when it happens are 43,4% of the men and 30,5% of the women. 21,7% of the men and 16,6% of the women felt guilty, 13% of

the men and 16,6% of the women felt ashamed, and 17,3% of the men and 19,4% of women were in doubt.

Of this people, only 13% of the men and 25% of the women have no time for intimacy from Monday to Friday due to the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular.

Questioned on how extent has been the Church teaching about this issue, only 8,6% of men and 8,3% of women said as being a lot. The rest said few (43,4% - men, and 50% - women), rarely (26% - men, and 33,3% - women) and nothing (13% - men, and 8,3% - women). For this reason, 91, 3% of men (against 4,3%) and 94,4% of women (against 5,5%) said that it is necessary the Church to approach this issue with the married people.

In summary, in the Kikuxi-Central SDA Church, we inquired a total of 59 people (36 women and 23 men), and the people who have a positive view over the sex on Sabbath day are 24 (13 women and 11 men), corresponding to 40,67%; those who have a negative view are also 24 people (16 women and 8 men), corresponding to 40,67%; and those who are in doubt are 11 people (7 women and 4 men), corresponding to 18,64%.

### **About the Judeia-Mundial Seventh-day Adventist Church**

The view that this Church has about sexual intimacy on Sabbath is, in one side, more positive (60% - men, and 41,86% - women), and, in other side, an uncertainty or doubt (30%- men, and 46,5% - women). 56% of the men and 25,5% of the women say that it is a blessing, and 8% of the men and 18,6% see it as something right to be enjoyed without any impurity, wrong or sin. The negative view is very few

(10% of the men and 11,5% of the women). While the negative ideas of the men were divided into impure, wrong and sin. No woman said that it is sin.

Answering the question if someone who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony, can have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program, they were not so negative as the Central-Kikuxi Church. 24% of the men and 13,9% of the women said “yes,” the person can; 40% of the men and 30,2% of the women said “no;” and 36% of the men and 55,8% of the women are in doubt.

Talking about their own experience 94% of the men and 90,6% of the women said that they ever have sexual intimacy on Sabbath. And 56% of the men and 41,8% have a normal frequency, depending on the need of the moment. For 34% of the men and 37,25% it has happened rarely. 94% of the men and 74,3% affirmed that they do this because of the sensual desire and of the will to please the spouse. Only 2% of the men (1 man) and 16,2% of the women affirmed that they did on Sabbath without a desire and will, they only obeyed to their spouses’ demands.

The incoming feelings also varies between peace (72% - men, and 51% - women) and doubt (20% - men, and 37,2% - women), intermediated by the guilty (6% – men, and 4,6% - women).

Comparing to the precedent groups (the pastors and the Central-Kikuxi Church), the people of the Judeia-Mundial Church is more affected by the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular<sup>52</sup>, so that 30% of the men and 27,9% of the women declared that they have no time enough for sexual intimacy during the week, unless on weekends.

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<sup>52</sup> The geographical location of the Mundial area combined with the conditions of the roads become the movement from and to this area a big challenge. The most available means of transports are the trucks, which also are very crowded. Many people travel long distances on foot to go to work and to go back home.

About how extent the Church has been teaching about this issue, 10% of the men and 11,6% of the women answered that it has been a lot; 30% of the men and 30,2% of the women said few; 36% of the men and 27,9% of the women said that it has been rare; and 18% of the men and 23,2% of the women said that nothing has been taught. However, almost in unanimity affirmed that it is necessary the Church to approach this issue with the couples (98% - men, and 97,6% - women).

In summary, in the Judeia-Mundial SDA Church, we inquired a total of 93 people (43 women and 50 men). From these, the number of the people with positive view over the sex on Sabbath day are 48 (18 women and 30 men), corresponding 51,61%; those who have a negative view are 10 people (5 women and 5 men), corresponding to 10,75%; and those who are in doubt are 35 people (20 women and 15 men), corresponding to 37,63%.

## CHAPTER 3

### BIBLICAL-EXEGETICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY

In this chapter our approach will be centered in two fundamental themes which are the Sabbath and the sexuality, and how they are related to one another, following a deeper biblical-exegetical and theological study, which will be searching for the answer to the questions raised up by this research, and also raised by members whom we inquired. These questions are:

What does the Bible say on sexual intimacy within marriage on Sabbath? Is it allowed or not? When the answer is “yes, it is allowed”, the question goes far and is associated to the Holy Communion, ordination and preaching, with this interrogation: Can a pastor or elder who did sexual intercourse on Sabbath preside the Holy Communion in that very day, or, in the case of the pastor, preside the ordination ceremony? And can the member who also did the conjugal act participate in the Holy Super, or be ordained in that very Sabbath? And what about the preacher? Can he stand on the pulpit and preach after sexual intimacy with his spouse in worship day?

#### **The Sabbath: A Special Day**

##### **The Establishment of the Sabbath**

The word “Sabbath” derivates from a set of Hebrews words which root is *šbṭ*<sup>1</sup>; the words that derived from *šbṭ* are the verb *šābaṭ* and the nouns *šebeṭ*, *šabbāṭ*,

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<sup>1</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

*šabbāṭôn* and *mišabāṭ*. The verb *šābaṭ* means to cease, to desist and to rest;<sup>2</sup> or “to keep Sabbath,” such it is rendered by some modern English Versions of the Bible.<sup>3</sup> And the nouns have the following meanings: *šebet* means cessation; *šabbāṭ* means Sabbath; *šabbāṭôn* means Sabbath keeping, solemn rest; and *mišabāṭ* means cessation, annihilation.<sup>4</sup> Six or seven times the words *šabbāṭ* and *šabbāṭôn* appear together (*šabbāṭ šabbāṭôn*), indicating intensification.<sup>5</sup> It is not clear about what the word comes first, if the verb (*šābaṭ*) or the noun (*šabbāṭ*).<sup>6</sup>

In the New Testament, the Greek words for Sabbath are *sabbatōn*, or its apparent plural, *sabbata*, *sabbatismos* and *katapausis*. In addition to the meaning of Sabbath day, sometimes *sabbatōn* also has the meaning of the entire week (Luke 18:12; Matt 28:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2). And the word *sabbata* is determined by the context whether its meaning is singular or plural. The noun *sabbatismos* which occurs in Hebrews 4:9, “is correctly translated as ‘sabbath rest.’”<sup>7</sup> And *katapausis* means rest.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible mentions the Sabbath for the first time in Genesis 2:1-3, in the context of the week of creation. This was the occasion on which the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, or the Saturday, was established (Exod 20:11; 31:13-17). The verse 1 of Genesis 2 does a summary of the conclusion of the work of creation

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<sup>2</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, “2323 (*shabat*) cessar, desistir, descansar,” in *Dicionário Internacional de Teologia do Antigo Testamento (DITAT)*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. And Bruce K. Waltke (São Paulo, Brazil: Vida Nova, 1998), 1520.

<sup>3</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

<sup>4</sup> Hamilton, “2323 (*shabat*) cessar, desistir, descansar,” *DITAT*, 1520.

<sup>5</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

<sup>6</sup> Hamilton, “2323 (*shabat*) cessar, desistir, descansar,” *DITAT*, 1520.

<sup>7</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

described as day-by-day activities, during six days, in the previous chapter. And then, the verses 2 and 3 describes the establishment of the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week.

In this text it appears only the verb *šābat* two times, to express the rest of God on seventh day, but not any noun which designates the Sabbath. The seventh day is highlighted because in these two verses is referred five times: three as “seventh day” and two by use of the pronoun “it.” The prominence of the Sabbath is also evidenced by the chiasm or inverted parallel statement such as Strand elaborated and exposed below, which center is the declaration: “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.”

A. God finished his work (verse 2)

B. And he rested on the seventh day “from all his work which he had done” (verse 2)

C. So God blessed the seventh day “and hallowed it (verse 3)

B'. Because on it God rested from all his “work which he had done (verse 3)

A'. In creation (verse 3, cont.)<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, in the light of Genesis 2:2-3, the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week is established not only by the abundant reference (five in a very short text) and by the chiastic structure, but, above all, because of the three things that God did in it: He rested, blessed and sanctified.

It is important to emphasize the meaning of the rest of God, and the blessing and sanctification he put on the seventh day. Starting with the rest, the Bible is clear in affirming that “the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the

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<sup>9</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary” (Isa 40:28). How can we understand the affirmation that God rested on seventh day of the week of creation, while He neither faints nor is weary? Ángel Manuel Rodríguez explains that the statement that God rested is an anthropomorphic language which consists of attributing to God the needs of human beings in order to demonstrate the plan that He has to meet these needs.<sup>10</sup> Considering that the human being was created in the image and likeness of God, the rest of the Creator also is a clear expression of His concern for humankind.

With this act, God gave a practical lesson to the men that they do not need only to work, but also need to rest in specific day, determined by the Creator, so that they may enjoy a deep and personal communion with the Creator and other members of the God’s family. Then, Rodríguez presents a thought of Hans LaRondelle which is in the same line:

God’s rest then means His ceasing the work of creation in order to be free for the fellowship with man, the object of his love, for the rejoicing and celebration of His completed work together with his son on earth, the *imago Dei*, his festive partner.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the divine rest at the end of the week of creation, on seventh day, is a vivid example to the human beings, providing them a model of the weekly rest. In addition, there is not any evidence in the Holy Scriptures that suggests that the human beings made some work on this day after the creation. On contrary, they rested even though they did not have done anything or didn’t have been tired. Such as God rested, not having been faint nor weary, the human race also rested,

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<sup>10</sup> Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “O Sábado na Bíblia: Em Busca de Uma Perspectiva Adventista,” *Parousia* 1 (2012): 88.

<sup>11</sup> Hans K. LaRondelle, *Perfection and Perfectionism* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1971), 72, quoted in Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “O Sábado na Bíblia: Em Busca de Uma Perspectiva Adventista,” 89.

not having been faint nor weary, but they did it to enjoy and contemplate the grace of God manifested in His work of creation. Such as Alberto Timm expounds:

Since Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day (Gen 1:26-28), and God rested on the seventh (Gen 2:2, 3), it is evident that for that couple the Sabbath was the complete first day of their existence, in which they participated by the grace of God in Sabbath rest.<sup>12</sup>

The very act of God to rest is a reaffirmation of the image and likeness of the man with God, in which God comes down to the level of His creatures. When we rest on Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week, we are confessing our acceptance and faith that we were created in the image and likeness of God.

The second brand of the Sabbath that signaled its establishment is the blessing. To say that God blessed the seventh day, the Hebrew text uses the verb *bārak*, to express the same act bestowed to the animals and to the humankind (Gen 1:22, 28). What does it mean the Sabbath be blessed? The blessing given to the animals is associated to the fertility and multiplication: “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:22). And the blessing given to humankind includes fertility, multiplication, dominion over all nature and food (Gen 1:28, 29).

In other occasions, very after the creation, we find the same principles of the blessing. In the case of Noah, God blessed him and talked about fertility, dominion and food (Gen 9:1-3); for Sarah, the blessing meant to be a mother of nations and kings of peoples (Gen 17:16); for Ishmael, the blessing meant to be fruitful, exceedingly multiplied, father of twelve princes and of a great nation (Gen 17:20); for the children of Israel through the priests, it meant to be kept, to have the face of the Lord shining upon them, have His mercy, to have His countenance upon them and

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<sup>12</sup> Alberto R. Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia* (Tatuí, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2010), 23.

having His peace (Num 6:24-26); for the Psalmist the blessing is life forevermore (Ps 133:3).<sup>13</sup>

Yet, about the Sabbath we don't see any explanation of what this blessing means. Some defend that its meaning consists in the *qādaš* (sanctification in the Hebrew), because it is the word to which it is linked.<sup>14</sup> Even though, Bacchiocchi, relying on the ideas of Nicola Negretti, points out that “the inner sense of the holiness and blessing of the Sabbath ‘remains sealed’ in Genesis. When are the seals removed? In the unfolding of the history of salvation.”<sup>15</sup>

Rodríguez affirms that “if the verb ‘to bless’ (*brk*) expresses the basic idea of bestowing benefits upon something or someone, then when God blessed the Sabbath He bestowed it with benefits that would be enjoyed by those who will keep it.”<sup>16</sup>

The third divine action which brands the Sabbath is the sanctification. The biblical account says that God “sanctified it” (Gen 2:1). The Hebrew verb to sanctify is *qādaš* that also means “to separate,” “to set apart,” and “to cut,” “to prepare,” “to dedicate.”<sup>17</sup> In the Old Testament we find that God sanctified, places, people, objects and times for rituals of the sanctuary which calendar obeyed a monthly timetable regulated by the moon. But the sanctification of the weekly Sabbath is very singular because it is in no way related to the cycle of nature.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1988), 80, 81.

<sup>14</sup> Rodríguez, “O Sábado na Bíblia,” 89.

<sup>15</sup> Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest*, 81.

<sup>16</sup> Rodríguez, “O Sábado na Bíblia,” 89.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas E. McComiskey, “1990 (*qadash*) ser consagrado, ser santo, ser santificado; consagrar, santificar, preparar, dedicar,” *DITAT*, 1320-1323.

Strand, “The Sabbath.”

<sup>18</sup> Elias Brasil de Souza, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament: Day of Rest or Day of Worship,” in *The Sabbath and the Bible*, ed. Eriks Galeniaks (Nairobi: ATS AUA, 2017), 11, 12.

Therefore, the sanctification of the weekly Sabbath is also related to its purpose of worship – the communion of the human being with God and other worshipers. In addition, the root of the verb *qādaš* (*qdš*) derivates “the noun *miqdaš*, which designates the sanctuary as the place of worship par excellence. Thus prior to appointing a place of worship specifically designated as *miqdaš*, God appointed a time of worship by sanctifying (*qādaš*) the seventh day of the week.”<sup>19</sup>

However, when talking about the establishment of the Sabbath, two questions are raised against its observance: one that says that the Sabbath is not a literal period of 24 hours, since the days of Creation are not a literal period of 24 hours, but a geological era of a thousand of years (P 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8); and other that says that the Sabbath is a day established exclusively for the Jews, not for Christians.

To refute the first objection, we should say the following:

1 – There is any exegetical and hermeneutical connection between these texts (Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8) and the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. “As no one of these declarations refers to the days of creation, such an association is nothing more than a false analogy.”<sup>20</sup>

2 – The Hebrew text uses the word *yôm* to express “day,” instead of the *aeon* (era), regulated by the interchange of light and darkness, what should not be considerate as uncalculated period of time, but as simple earthly days.<sup>21</sup>

3 – The mention of the “evening” and the “morning” associated for each day of creation attests to the meaning of a 24-hour period.

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<sup>19</sup> Souza, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 11, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

4 – The linguistic structure of Genesis 1, the sequence as the events are described, as well the reference that the other biblical texts (Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17) do to the account of creation in Genesis, confirm that the days of creation are literal periods of 24 hours.

5 – The seventh day of creation is the model for the observance of the weekly Sabbath (Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Heb 4:4-11). It means that that first Sabbath was so literal as it is today.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, William H. Shea in turn also makes his rebuttal against the argument of the denial of literality of the days of the week of creation, pointing out the very language of the chronological formula used in the account of Genesis which excludes the possibility of such interpretation. He bases his affirmation on four elements: first, “the verbal expression ‘to let there be,’ which, in truth, appears two times;” second, the expressions “evening” (to mention the darken part of the day) and “morning” (to refer the clear part of the day); third, the ordinal numbering of the days; fourth, the appearing of the word “day,” properly said, at the end of each daily account. In the case of the first day, the two temporal elements light (day or morning) and darkness (night or evening) “joined together to form a day.”<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, he concludes his analyses saying that

When is done a confrontation between this type of chronological formula and other evidences of the OT (see Gen 33:13; Exod 12:18; Neh 5:18), does not remain any doubt that the writer was speaking of a period of light and darkness of 24 hours, that compounded an entire day. The addition of other

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<sup>22</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 22.

<sup>23</sup> William H. Shea, “Criação,” in *Tratado de Teologia Adventista do Sétimo Dia*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Tatuí, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 470.

elements of this formula to the word “day” gives a specificity that requires a limited and local application of this locution in the time.<sup>24</sup>

To the second objection which says that the Sabbath was established only for the Jew people, here is the answer is this: Adam and Eve, the ancestors of all humanity, were not Jews. At that time this people did not exist yet. And Jesus, Himself, confirmed the universality of the Sabbath when He said that “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). He said “man,” not “Jew.” And six centuries before, the prophet Isaiah said that the Sabbath would be kept by the eunuchs and foreigners in messianic age (Isa 56:1-8).

### **The Sabbath in the Old Testament**

**Before the Sinaitic Covenant.** Having been established at and as the end of the week of creation, the Sabbath continued with its essential characteristic (rest, blessed and holy), after the fall into the sin, throughout the history of humankind, independently of the men’s obedience or not, even before God made the covenant with the Israelite people at the Sinai, where He gave to them the Law of the Ten Commandments (Exod 19; 20). This affirmation is founded on the evidences such as the mention of the week in the context of the flood through the expressions “another seven days” (Gen 8:10, 12) and the allusion of the week on the occasion of the wedding of Jacob and Leah (Gen 29:27, 28).

These facts reveal that the patriarchs knew the weekly cycle. And as much as we can know, the weekly cycle, unlike other time cycles (day, month and year) does not have any connection with any phenomenon of the nature; that is, the phases of the moon and the movement of rotation and translational around the sun, such as it happens with the months, days and years. Therefore, the existence of the

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<sup>24</sup> Shea, “Criação,” 470.

week has as its only foundation on the week of creation, which is compound of seven days, including the Sabbath.

The continuation of counting the time par week by the generations after Adam and Eve, demonstrates that the Sabbath was present among the God-fearing people, and they observed it in obedience to the God's Law (Gen 26:5).

Another evidence is related to the liberation of Israel people from the Egyptian captivity. This liberation had many implications such as political, economical, social and spiritual. This last one was the most important because the other ones depended on this. The spiritual liberation also aimed the restoration of both the sacrificial system and the obedience to the 'statutes' and 'laws' of God (Exod 3:18; Ps 105:43-45).<sup>25</sup> This also implied the keeping of the sabbatical rest on seventh day of the week. That's why Pharaoh reacted accusing Moses and Aaron of making the people of Israel to rest (*šābat*, in the Hebrew text), and called them of idle because they were ceasing their work to worship God (Exod 5:5, 8, 17).

Timm comments that "It is likely that on the very accusation that the Israelites were 'idle' (Exod 5:8, 17) there would be evidence of a restoration of the observance of the Sabbath, resulting in even greater oppression (Exod 5:6-14)."<sup>26</sup>

George Rawlinson, cited by Timm, adds that

Since the ancient Egyptians did not have an institution like the weekly Sabbath, and they certainly would not tolerate the Hebrew slaves abstaining from work on one day in seven, we must assume that the Sabbath rest, if already known by the Hebrews, had fallen into disuse during their stay in Egypt.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 28.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> George Rawlinson, "The Book of Exodus," *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. Spencer and Exell (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eedmans, 1950), 1:53, quoted in Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 28.

Another evidence of the prevalence of the Sabbath before the covenant from the Sinai mount is the story of the manna in Exodus 16. This food fallen from the heaven daily, and the people gathered enough for the same day. If it was left over or even saved for the next day it would rot. But on Friday, they should gather twice, for that very day and for the following day, the Sabbath, because is a day of rest, and the manna “did not stink, nor were there any worms in it” (vv. 19-26). However, the rebellious and stubborn character of some Israelites came to the fore: “they went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none” (v. 27). And to rebuke them, “the Lord said to Moses, ‘how long do you refuse to keep My commandments and my laws? See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore, He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day” (v. 28, 29).

This incident reveals that the commandment of the Sabbath already existed before this event. Waterman says:

This passage [Exod 16:28, 29] shows that the Sabbath was certainly made known to Israel before the law was given at Sinai. The Israelites did not reach Sinai until the following month (16:1; 19:1). The passage also shows that it was not first institution of the Sabbath. The accidental manner as the issue is introduced and the Lord’s admonition regarding to the people’s disobedience presupposes that the Sabbath was previously known. The question of the Lord: “how long do you refuse to keep My commandments and my laws?” [Exod 16:28] sounds as it existed for a long time ago.<sup>28</sup>

For Strand, the wording of the verses 28 and 29 is a distinct indication that the Israelites already had knowledge of Sabbath day.<sup>29</sup>

**In the Sinaitic Covenant.** The covenant that God made with the children of Israel, at the Sinai Mount was also a covenant of grace, a renewal of the

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<sup>28</sup> G. H. Waterman, “Sabbath,” in Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1976) 5:184, quoted in Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 29.

<sup>29</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

everlasting covenant, in which preamble God speaks about His gracious salvific work that redeemed this people from the bondage of Egypt, brought them to Himself, and was leading them to the promise land of Canaan. After that God presented them the stipulations or the law of the covenant which consisted in the Ten Commandments (Exod 19:3-6; 20:1-17).

This covenant, such as other previous and posterior ones – the covenants with Adam (Gen 3:15; Rom 16:20), with Noah (Gen 6:18-20; 9:9-11), with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-7; 17:1-14; Gal 3:6-9, 15-18; Rom 4:9-12) and with David (2 Sam 7:1-17, 22-24; 23:5; Isa 55:3; Ezek 37:24-27) - is a covenant of grace, part of the everlasting covenant, which also includes the New Covenant (Jer 31:24, 31-33, 40; Ezek 36:25-28; 36:37; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 8:8-13; 9:15; 12:24). In light of this, the Sinaitic Covenant does not differ from the New Covenant, unless in fact that now, in this last one the antitype substituted the type, the mean of salvation remains the same – by grace through the face -, and the answer of the believer also remains the same – the obedience to the law written in the heart, the same law of the Ten Commandments which is sums up in love.<sup>30</sup>

Within the Ten Commandments is the fourth one (Exod 20:8-11) that requires the sanctification of the Sabbath. This commandment “occupies a central place in this alliance, serving as a link between the commandments that concern duties towards God [Exod 20:3-11] and those that deal with duties towards man [Exod 20:12-17].”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ivan T. Blazen, “Salvação,” in *Tratado de Teologia Adventista do Sétimo Dia*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Tatuí SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 310-313.

<sup>31</sup> G. H. Waterman, in Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 29.

Eriks Galeniëks explains that:

The fourth commandment is one of the longest in the Decalogue. It is the most expanded and elaborated of all commandments. No other commandment has received as much replication and as many defining and clarifying interpretative reference-passages as this one. Its importance is also seen in the fact that it operates as a connecting link of those commandments that are related to our worship of God and our relationship with one another.<sup>32</sup>

The Decalogue has 172 words, and almost one third of them (55 words) makes the fourth commandment.<sup>33</sup> This commandment is also a pivotal point that makes the transition from the issues concerned to God to those concerned to human being. The link that the Sabbath makes between God and the mankind in the Decalogue (Exod 20:8-11), can be seen in the following parallel:

A – The human being should remember and keep holy the Sabbath – v. 8

B – The human should labor in six days – v. 9

C – The human being should rest on Sabbath – v. 10

C' – God rested on Sabbath – 11b

B' – God labored in six days - 11a

A' – God blessed and hallowed the Sabbath – 11c

The fourth commandment as the center of the Decalogue reveal a progression in the issue of worship. In the first, God presents Himself as the only one God that should be worshiped; in the second, He establishes clear-cut rules how the worship should be done; in the third, it is defined that the worship should

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<sup>32</sup> Eriks Galeniëks, "The Sabbath Commandment in Exodus," in *The Sabbath and the Bible*, ed. Eriks Galeniëks (Nairobi: ATS AUA, 2017), 27-42.

<sup>33</sup> Edson Nunes Jr., "O Sábado e a Relação entre Forma e Conteúdo em Êxodo 20," *Parousia* 2 (2012): 19.

be in a reverent ambience to His name; and finally, He stipulates the week day dedicated exclusively to worship.<sup>34</sup>

The commandment of the Sabbath is also the unique in all Decalogue that presents the three characteristics of a seal: the name of the Sovereign (YHWH), His royal title (Creator) and His territory (heavens, earth and sea). That is why He calls the Sabbath as a sign or seal between Him and His people (Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12, 20).

The commandment starts with the word “remember” (*zakōr*), in qal infinitive absolute, which “functions as the equivalent of an emphatic imperative, and as always, in contexts of covenantal obligation, it means ‘remember,’ in the sense of ‘observe without lapse’ or ‘hold as a present and continuing priority.’”<sup>35</sup>

The verb *zakōr* (to remember) is not just restricted to a simple thought process, but it has a ampler scopes of meaning, including the connotation of an active relationship to the object of memory which includes actions. So, when God remembers, He acts, not because He forgot before, but because the very time for Him to act has come. His remembrance transforms it into action; it is an action. It happened when He remembered Noah (Gen 8:1), Abraham (Gen 19:29), Rachel (Gen 30:22), the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod 2:24), and Hezekiah’s past faithfulness (2 Kgs 20:3). Therefore, to remember the Sabbath means to set apart this day, separating it from the routine of other days, to keep it holy, to reserve it for worship, missionary and other saint activities aligned to the Lord’s will for this day.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Galeniaks, “The Sabbath Commandment in Exodus,” 27-42.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

The use of the verb *zakōr* (to remember) also indicates that the establishment of the Sabbath is anterior to the promulgation of the Ten Commandments at the Sinaitic Covenant, and the people also were familiarized with this day as a day of rest, blessed and holy. Indeed, the very text of the commandment takes us to the creation week, in the beginning, to justify its observation.

According to the commandment, the Sabbath is also the leveler of the humankind and an ecological mean to protect the nature. Because in this day not only the master or the mistress and the father or the mother should rest, but all who are under their authority – son, daughter, male and female servants and the visitors – should rest. The same rest is extensive to the animals.<sup>37</sup> So, the Sabbath makes us to remember the edenic harmony of creation, lost because of the sin, and also anticipates the future harmony which will be established at the second coming of Jesus.

The insertion of the Sabbath commandment in the Decalogue indicates that they share the same moral nature. The obedience to the fourth commandment is also a moral obligation. This indicates that it is in force nowadays and is part of the process of sanctification. When the human being obeys this law, he imitates God, and reflects in fuller manner the image of God (*imago Dei*).

The weekly Sabbath which is spoken on the Decalogue differs from ceremonial Sabbaths for these reasons: the weekly Sabbath was instituted at the creation week (Gen 2:2, 3), while the ceremonial Sabbath were instituted at the

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<sup>37</sup> The Hebrew text uses the pronoun *'atāh*, the second person masculine singular, and in following description of those ones who also should rest, the wife is not mentioned. Galeniaks (ibid.) explains that it occurs “not because she was considered unimportant or was to be excluded from the rest, which is inconceivable. On the contrary, it reflected her high status, for she was not considered as the man’s servant, nor in any way of lower status. She was considered his equal and was already included in the ‘you’ of the original address.” Ibid, 36.

covenant of the mount Sinai (Lev 23:4-44); the weekly Sabbath has a moral characteristic, was established before the sin; the ceremonial Sabbath came after the sin; the weekly Sabbath serves as memorial of creation and redemption, and as the sign between God and His people (Exod 20:11; Deut 5:15; Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12, 20), while the ceremonial Sabbaths are “a shadow of the good things to come” (Heb 10:1; 8:5); the weekly Sabbath is eternal (Isa 66:22, 23) and the ceremonial Sabbaths ended at the cross of Christ (Eph 2:5; Col 2:14).

The commandment of the weekly Sabbath was written by the very finger of God on the tablets of stone (Exod 31:18; Deut 4:13) and kept in the ark of the covenant (Exod 40:20; Heb 9:4); the ceremonial Sabbath were written by Moses on a scroll of papyrus (Exod 34: 27; Deut 31:9) and kept beside the ark of the covenant (Deut 31:26); God calls the weekly Sabbath “My Sabbaths” (Lev 26:2; Isa 56:4; Ezek 20: 12-24) while the ceremonial Sabbaths He calls “Your Sabbaths” (Lev 23:32; Hos 2:11).

**After the Sinaitic Covenant.** Since the second half of the second month after the Israel people had left the Egypt (Exod 16:1) until the day they had entered in the land of Canaan, forty years later, and “had eaten the produce of the land” (Josh 5:12), they experienced the rest, the blessing and the holiness of the Sabbath of the seventh day related to the miracle of manna for more than two thousand weeks. This time were more than enough to engrave in the deepest and wholeness of each individual and of the entire nation the principles of the Sabbath day, so that they may have no doubt.

During the forty years of pilgrimage in the desert, were registered two cases of transgression of the Sabbath: the first one was that related to the manna (Exod 16:27-29), which we spoke above, and the second one was an act of premeditated

and opened defiance against God's authority, performed by a man who was "gathering sticks on the Sabbath day" (Num 15:32-36). His penalty was the death by stoning. This reinforced the awareness of the people concerning the importance and the sanctity of the Sabbath.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, God instituted the special offering for the Sabbath day (Num 28), which should be in double portion (vv. 9, 10). C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch comments this fact saying that the Sabbath was "exalted above the other days of the week, as the sanctified day to the Lord in a most elevated degree than the other days, by a large number of the holocausts, food offerings and libations."<sup>39</sup>

With this experience the Sabbath was so inculcated in the Israelite soul, so that there was not a need for more prescription or advertence during the first five hundred years in the promise land. That's why we almost observe a silence about it. This silence is an evidence that the day was being observed normally (1 Chr 9:32; 2 Kgs 4:23; 11:5-9; 2 Chr 23:4-8). It is also important to highlight that the Psalm 92, which is a song for the Sabbath day was written in this epoch, concretely the epoch between King David and the prophet Elisha.<sup>40</sup>

However, this silence was broken by the preexilic prophets who stood up and rebuked the people because they neglected to observe the Sabbath according to the Law of God. Among them we find Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Amos prophesied in the northern kingdom, Israel, during the time of the king Jeroboam II (793-753 BC). He proclaimed against the social injustice and the commercial corruption associated to the desire that people had for the fast passing

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<sup>38</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 34.

<sup>39</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, Commentary on the Old Testament 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 217, quoted in Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 35.

<sup>40</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 37.

of the Sabbath so that they may “trade wheat” and make “the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scale by deceit,” and “by the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals” (Amos 8:4-6).

Isaiah proclaims the blessings that may fall on faithful Sabbath keepers. His prophecy is like a beatitude discourse (56:1-8; 58:13, 14). He foresees the messianic era when the eunuchs and the gentiles will come near to the Lord, will serve Him, will be joined to His people and will keep the Sabbath, will also enjoyed the blessing of the Messiah (56:1-8). And in the chapter 58:13, 14, he talks of the Sabbath in the context of the true fast. Here he presents the Sabbath as a day that should be honored by the God’s people. This honor consists in abstaining from doing the own pleasure on this day. God will do His part, blessing those ones who fulfill this word. And finally, he talks about the Sabbath in eschatological dimension, when announces that in the new heavens and in the new earth, “from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says the Lord” (66:22, 23).

Therefore the Isaiah’s message on the Sabbath highlights threes fundamental aspects of this day: 1 – the universality: the Sabbath is intended to every people, nation, tribe and language (56:1-8); 2 – the coverage: the Sabbath focuses in and influences all the areas of the human life (58:13, 14); 3 – perpetuity: the Sabbath follows the entire human history until the end, and “comes in through the gates of the eternity” (66:22, 23).<sup>41</sup>

Jeremiah whose ministry was from 626 to 586 BC warned the people against the profanation of the Sabbath that consists in bearing burdens on the Sabbath (17:21-27). The practice of profanation would also be the cause for the

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<sup>41</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 40.

destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and for the exile in Babylon. But if the people obeyed the word of God, sanctifying the Sabbath, such punishment would be avoided, and the city and the people would be saved from the destruction and the exile. Unfortunately, these appeals were not heard, and the curse, through the Babylonian captivity, fell down upon the nation (2 Chr 36:15-21).

Other prophets, during the exile, namely Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1-3) and Daniel (Dan 1:1-6), also talked about the Sabbath. Ezekiel, reminding the experience of the rebellious Israel in the wilderness (Ezek 2:1-44), he reproached their apostasy saying that they refused to walk in the Lord's statutes, despised His judgments and defiled His Sabbaths, which is the signal between them and the Lord. This behavior was the reason why their ancestors did not enter in the Promised Land (v. 12, 13, 20). Ezekiel mentioned that the profanation of the Lord's Sabbaths by the people of Jerusalem and, specially, by the priests was the cause of the exile (22:8, 26).

Ezekiel also foresaw the liberation of the people from captivity, and the restoration of the "ideal-temple" (chapters 40-48), which will also involve the restoration of the Sabbath (44:24; 45:17; 46:1-4, 12). In this time, for example, the priests, the sons of Zadok, shall hallow the Lord's Sabbaths (44:15, 24), the Prince of the nation will be a faithful observer of the Sabbath, and "the gateway of the inner court" of the temple will be opened on Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon for worship (46:1-3).

The prophet Daniel in his apocalyptic prophecies also talked about the Sabbath. In chapter 7:25, he announces that the antichrist, represented by the little horn, "shall intend to change times and law." The change of the time is a reference

to the Sabbath of the seventh-day of the week that was changed to the Sunday, the first day of the week, in 321 AD, by Constantine, the Roman emperor; and the change of the law also refers to the change of the Ten Commandments by the Roman Church in its catechism.<sup>42</sup>

After the Babylonian exile, Ezra and Nehemiah conducted a deep spiritual revival and reformation among the Jew people (Neh 8:1-18), and they “committed themselves, in solemn alliance, to no more continue to profane the Sabbath (Neh 9:38; 10:28-31).”<sup>43</sup> But, they again fell into this transgression. Then, Nehemiah, making use of his political position as governor, reestablished the observation of the Sabbath (Neh 13:15-22), ordering the closing of the gates of the city before the sunset, when “it began to be dark before the Sabbath,” “so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day.” The gates were opened only when the Sabbath finished (v. 19-21).

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

**The Sabbath in the Second Temple period.** The remembrance that the disobedience to the Law of God through the idolatry and the profanation of the Sabbath led them to the terrible experience of captivity in Babylonia, it made the Jews to create measures to prevent another captivity or other similar punishment. This led them to opposite extreme, the extreme of the legalism. Among the many legalistic measures that they created were those related to the Sabbath. The Book of Jubilees (150 BC) and the Documents of Damascus (100 BC) present these

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<sup>42</sup> For better understanding of this prophecy, see: C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Uma Nova Era Segundo as Profecias de Daniel*, (Tatuí, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2013), 1:107-149; Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 234-292; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 100-120.

<sup>43</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 42.

traditions which later on were compiled in the *Mishnah* (c. 200 AD), that also was incorporated in the *Talmud* (c. 500 AD) with commentaries of the rabbis which are called *Gemara*.<sup>44</sup>

The Book of Jubilees (150 BC) is the most ancient Jew list of the prohibited activities on the Sabbath. Among these prohibited things, under the penalty of death are the following: to make a travel, to ride a boat, even to make plans for travel, to light a fire, to fast, to have sexual intimacy, to discuss matters of business, to pick up water, and to carry something out of the house. The permitted activities were only to eat, to drink, to rest, to bless God, to burn frankincense and to bring gifts and sacrifices before the Lord (2:27; 50:9-12).<sup>45</sup>

The Document of Damascus (100 AD), also known as Zadokite Document, was composed by the Essenes, and it, like The Book of Jubilees, gives specific stipulations about the observance of the Sabbath, with the difference that it does not prescribe the death penalty in case of a violation. It occurs, probably, because when it was written, the Jew were under the Roman dominion, and didn't have permission to execute the death penalty. Its stipulations were the following: it is prohibited to journey more than 1000 cubits, but when it comes to guiding an animal to pasture, the permission is to walk 2000 cubits; it is prohibited to carry around the infants, to assist an animal in giving birth its youngs, to rescue a newborn animal that had fallen into a cistern or well; Josephus reports that the Essenes even prohibited defecation on the Sabbath (Wars 2. 8. 9)!<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 48

<sup>45</sup> Strand, "The Sabbath."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

The various traditions of the law and those contained in The Book of Jubilees and the Zadokite Document were compiled in the “first comprehensive written codification of the oral law”<sup>47</sup> of the rabbinic tradition which is called *Mishnah*, in the third century AD. This was made up of 63 tractates or books that mention the Sabbath. However, two of them, the *Shabbath* and the ‘*Erubin* (Sabbath-day’s Journey), are specifically dedicated to the Sabbath. One enumerates the basic rules for observance of the Sabbath (the *Shabbath*) and the other one presents the subterfuge for its breaking without incurring guilt (the ‘*Erubin*).<sup>48</sup>

The following were the 39 acts prohibited on the Sabbath according to the *Shabbath*:

Sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying [a knot], loosening [a knot], sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting fire, striking with a hammer and taking out aught from one domain into another.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout the time, the Rabbis expanded these 39 categories, multiplying them by 39 deployments, thus obtaining 1,521, so that they may cover all details of the rabbinic prohibitions. This scribes’ casuistry in developing the oral law generated a large number of prohibitions and accommodations which only the teachers of the law themselves could be able to understand and deal with their various nuances.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

<sup>48</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 48.

<sup>49</sup> Strand, “The Sabbath.”

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

In conclusion, Strand points out

In spite of such a cumbersome load of restrictions and modifications, ancient Judaism considered the Sabbath a day of special privilege and delight. On Friday evening the Sabbath was welcomed with special joy. The Sabbath noonday meal was to be particularly good, and by no means should it be missed. Sabbath rules were relaxed for certain occasions, such as religious festivals, and in cases of extreme emergency.<sup>51</sup>

The context described constitutes the background for understanding the New Testament teachings and practices concerning the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week.

**Jesus's teachings about the Sabbath.** When Jesus initiated His ministry as the Messiah, in His first public teaching He reaffirmed the law in the light of the New Covenant by saying: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law until all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:17-19).

And in fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel about the New Covenant in which the Law will be written in the heart (Jer 31:24, 31-33, 40; Ezek 36:25-28; 36:37; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 8:8-13; 9:15; 12:24), Jesus went deeper in His teaching by saying that the true obedience of the law starts from the heart. The external acts are only the manifestation of what had happened in the heart of the true disciple (Matt 5:20-48).

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<sup>51</sup> Strand, "The Sabbath."

This statement of Jesus becomes more clear when we pay attention to two realities about Jesus Himself, as it is described in the New Testament: (a) Jesus Christ is God the creator and the author and giver of the law (John 1:1-3, 14; 8:58; Exod 3:2, 14; Acts 7:30-38), and (b) Jesus Christ is the center of the New Covenant (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25).

Since the fourth commandment, that requires the keeping of the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week, is the central part of the moral Law, in reaffirming the perpetuity of the Law and its spiritual nature, Jesus was also confirming this commandment. However, the Jews of the period of the Second Temple did not have any doubt if they should or not obey the Sabbath. Their problem was the mountainous burdens that they put on this day. Thus, the work of Jesus was to correct the wrong practices through the teaching and example.

Jesus demonstrated His faithfulness to the fourth commandment and the Sabbath. His custom was to frequent the synagogue every Sabbath to worship service (Luke 4:16; Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:31; 13:10). At the time of His death, His disciples followed His example of keeping the Sabbath (Luke 23:54-56). In teaching about the persecution which the believers will suffer at the coming end or destruction of Jerusalem and of the world, He advised disciples to pray so that their “flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath” (Matt 24:20).

Commenting this verse, Strand says that:

The hardship of winter is readily understandable, but why would the Sabbath be mentioned? It is sometimes suggested that flight on the Sabbath would be difficult because of Jewish interference; however, if the Jews were occupied in warfare the Sabbath would be a propitious time to leave the city. Nor is there cogency to the concept that the “Sabbath-day’s journey” would be a hindrance, for the type of Sabbath keeping set forth in the Gospels implies Christian rejection of this extrabiblical device (moreover, even Rabbinic tradition allowed flight for the purpose of saving life). The implication of the text is that the disciples should pray that their flight not be on the Sabbath to

avoid an experience that would diminish their ability to engage in normal Sabbath keeping and thus lessen their sense of Sabbath sacredness.<sup>52</sup>

In demonstration that the Sabbath as the day of blessing is eternal, Jesus performed miracles of healing on this day such as the deliverance of a man from the demoniac possession, and the healing of the Peter's mother-in-law at the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37; Matt. 8:14, 15, 16; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38, 39 40). And this did not arouse any controversy. However, other situations of healing were very controversial (Matt 12:9-13; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:2-9; 9:1-41) and, in addition, the act of plucking grain on Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5).

Through these acts that aroused controversies Jesus sought to correct the wrong ideas and practices imposed above the Sabbath by the Jew traditions. The act of plucking grain meant for the Jew a grave violation of the Sabbath since their tradition classified it as reap, threshing, winnowing and preparation of a meal.<sup>53</sup> In answer, Jesus cited 1 Samuel 21:1-6 which says that David and his men ate "the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests" (Matt 12:4) and the fact that every Sabbath the priests profane this day through the sacrifices they should do (Num 28:9, 10), and were blameless (v. 5). With these two facts Jesus showed that the human life is more important than the Sabbath, and it is a day to save not to condemn, because, He concludes, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, 28).

About the healings, the Jesus' answers are summarized in this statement: "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matt 12:12); that is, the law allows to do

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<sup>52</sup> Strand, "The Sabbath."

<sup>53</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 55.

good or to heal on the Sabbath. The works of cure also gave opportunity to Jesus to reveal His divinity when He said that “‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’ [...] making Himself equal with God.” (John 5:17, 18); and it was also the opportunity to once again proclaim His mission as the Messiah and Savior (John 5: 19-26, 39, 40).

The acts and teachings of Jesus Christ, far of nullify the Sabbath, confirmed it as a rest, blessed and holy day, established by Himself as Creator, and removed the burden of human traditions imposed by the Jew rabbis which were hindering the humanity to enjoy the divine blesses given on this day.

**The example of the apostles.** Following the steps of Jesus, and being good Jews the apostles and all primitive Church, including the believers who came from a non-Jewish background, did not had any problem with the observance of the Sabbath (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 11; Heb 4:4-11; Rev 1:10). The Sabbath was not a matter of discussion. Some texts that usually are used to oppose the perpetuity of the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week, such as Romans 14:5; Galatians 4:10, 11<sup>54</sup> and Colossians 2:16, 17,<sup>55</sup> when submitted to a deeper exegetical and hermeneutical analysis, reveal that they are not dealing with the seventh day of the week. Nor the texts used to prove the change the Sabbath to the Sunday, the first day of the week are really saying about it (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

**The Sabbath in the book of Revelation.** It is important to highlight three references to the Sabbath in the book of Revelation: The Lord’s Day (Rev 1:10),

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<sup>54</sup> For deep study and understanding of Romans 14:5 and Galatians 4:10, 11, see Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 67-150. See also Rodríguez, “O Sábado na Bíblia,” 88.

<sup>55</sup> For deep study and understanding of Colossians 2:16, 17, see Ron du Preez, “The Sabbath of Colossians 2:16: Reflections on a Debated Text,” in *The Sabbath and the Bible*, ed. Eriks Galenieks (Nairobi: ATS AUA, 2017), 77-101.

the appeal to worship the Creator (Rev 14:7), and the Seal of God versus the Mark of the Beast (Rev 7:2; 13:16, 17; 14:9-13).

***The Lord's Day (Rev 1:10).*** In Revelation 1:10 the apostle John says that "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet." The expression "Lord's Day" is the translation of the Greek expression *kuriakē hēméra*. Five different interpretations have been given to it, such as: 1) the day of the Roman Emperor, 2) the Easter Sunday, 3) the eschatological Lord's Day, 4) the Sunday and 5) the Sabbath.<sup>56</sup>

Analyzing each of these interpretations, starting with the first one which says that *kuriakē hēméra* is referring to the day of the Roman Emperor, we can observe that this is inconsistent for these reasons: there is not any evidence that in the first century the term *kuriakē* was applied to the emperor. In addition, the reason why the apostle John was exiled in the Patmos Island was his faith in Jesus Christ as his unique and absolute sovereign, refusing to recognize the emperor as the absolute lord. This, in itself, undermines the idea that the apostle was considering the Lord's Day as the day of the emperor.<sup>57</sup>

The second interpretation which says that the Lord's Day is the Easter Sunday does not have biblical foundation. This idea comes from extra biblical sources of the second century of the Christian age. Therefore, the apostle was not thinking in this.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 74.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

The interpretation that it is the eschatological Lord's Day of the final judgment does not also have foundation in the same text of Revelation. Timm explains that:

This theory is not confirmed by the Revelation, which basic content is compounded by eight different visions: ([1] 1:10-3:22; [2] 4:1-8:1; [3] 8:2-11:18; [4] 11:19-14:20; [5] 15:1-16:17; [6] 16:18-18:24; [7] 19:1-21:4; e [8] 21:5-22:5). If the apostle John had been caught up to the eschatological day, then the content of the vision received on that day must have been essentially eschatological; but it presents a historical description of the seven churches of the Asia Minor (1:10-3:22), applicable to the different period of the history of the Christianity. Therefore, it is evident that the aforementioned expression refers to the day on which John received the vision.<sup>59</sup>

Some Roman Catholic translations of the Bible render the expression *kuriakē hēméra* as “Sunday,” and many biblical commentators do so, identifying it as the Sunday. But this faces three problems: first, the Bible never calls the Sunday as the Lord's Day, but only as “the first day of the week” (John 20:1, 19); second, there is not any biblical and historical foundation which gives evidence that the change from the Sabbath to the Sunday occurred on the apostles' time, then, it is no possible the apostle call the Sunday as the Lord's Day; third, the reference to the Sunday as the Lord's Day began in the end of the second century AD, so the attempt to apply it in Revelation 1:10, “is artificial and unbiblical.”<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, the unique interpretation that remains is that which says that the Lord's Day (*kuriakē hēméra*) is the weekly Sabbath, because the Old Testament calls it so (Exod 31:13; Isa 56:4; 58:13; Ezek 20:12-21), and in the New Testament, Jesus proclaimed Himself, as “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

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<sup>59</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 75.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

*The appeal to worship the Creator (Rev 14:7).* Even though the word Sabbath is not found in this passage, the text itself, in inviting the people to worship the Creator, uses the words of the commandment of the Sabbath, the fourth commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:8-11. It is clear that the book of Revelation does allusion to the language, ideas, places and persons of the Old Testament. So, to understand this book is necessary to search the allusions that the book does to the previous testament, and then to observe the existing parallels, whether these are verbal, thematic or structural. In the text of Revelation 14:7, we find verbal, thematic and structural parallels that point to the Exodus 20,<sup>61</sup> as we may observe below:

*The verbal parallels.* These parallels occur when the text of Revelation contains two or more words that are present in the Old Testament text that serves as source. The greater number of words in common, the more likely the intention of the author is for the reader to perceive that that passage of the OT and of Revelation share their meaning. So, Revelation 14:7 is a verbal parallel with both Exodus 20 and Psalm 146:6. But this raises the question: which OT passage is being cited? To get the answer, we should observe other parallels.

*The thematic parallels.* This occur when both texts share the same themes or ideas, even though there is only one or even no one word in common. However, thematic parallels are the weakest among the three. The thematic parallels that are present in Exodus 20 and Revelation 14:7 are the three motivations for obedience. The first one is the motivation of salvation (Exod 20:2, 3; Rev 14:6 – “the everlasting gospel”); the second is the motivation of judgment (Exod 20:5; Rev

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<sup>61</sup> Jon Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9 n°. 1-2 (1998): 182-184.

14:7a); and the third, is the motivation of the creation (Exod 20:11; Rev 14:7b).

Although, these thematic parallels also occur in Psalms (146:3-5 – salvation; v. 5, 6 – creation; v. 7 – judgment).

*The structural parallels.* The passage of Revelation 12-14, which develops the theme of the great controversy in the book, is built on a structure of the Ten Commandments (12:17; 14:12), of which Exodus 20:11 (the fourth commandment) is an integral part. The worship and obedience are the questions which are involved in this controversy (Rev 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11). And it focuses on the first table of the Ten Commandments that deals with the relationship between God and the man. The passage does not only talk about the false trinity (the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet), but also portrays their attack against the first four commandments.

The first commandment (Exod 20:3) is attacked by the beast that came from the sea, who takes the God's place, being worshiped as a god (Rev 13:4); the second commandment (Exod 20:4-6) is attacked by the beast of the land that makes an image to the first beast for worship (Rev 13:14, 15); the third (Exod 20:7) is attacked by the blasphemy of the beast (13:1, 4, 5). The fourth commandment presents God as creator, the first reason for worship, and also the Sabbath, as the memorial of creation. This commandment is also the unique that has the all characteristics of a seal (Exod 20:8-11). And the beast also counterfeits it, imposing its mark (13:16, 17).

These structural parallels, absent in the Psalm 146, and combined with the thematic parallels and the strong and significant verbal parallels “between Rev 14:7

and Exod 20:11 were intentional on the part of the author of Revelation. There is absolutely no similar relationship between Revelation and Psalm 146.”<sup>62</sup>

*The Seal of God versus the Mark of the Beast (Rev 7:2; 13:16, 17; 14:9-13).* The mark of the Beast is a parody of the Sabbath, the seal of God. For better understanding of this issue, we should go back to the Old Testament, from where the theme or idea of seal or mark comes. Because this is related to the obedience of a certain law or commandment, Antony MacPherson coined the term “sign-commandment”<sup>63</sup> to express this idea. The concept of “sign-commandment” is rooted in the OT, when it designates several specific commandments and practices as signs, for instance: the circumcision (Gen 17:11), the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the law of the firstborn (Exod 13: 3, 9, 16), both are also called signs on the hand and forehead, and the Sabbath (Exod 31:13, 17; Ezek 20:12, 20). In addition, in Deuteronomy, the concept of the commandment as a sign put on the hand and forehead, is attributed to the practice of keeping all regulations of God in obedience to the great commandment to love God with the whole person (Deut 6:4, 8; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 11:18-21).

The sign-commandments serve for three functions: 1) Memorial of the God’s acts - for instance, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a memorial of the liberation from the Egyptian captivity (Exod 13:9); 2) Identification of the God’s people – for instance, the circumcision identified the Hebrew people as a people who entered in covenant with Yahweh (Gen 17:11); 3) Ceremonial or Ritual - different of other moral commandments, the sign-commandments fulfill a ritual or

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<sup>62</sup> Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath,” 185.

<sup>63</sup> Anthony MacPherson, “The Mark of the Beast as a ‘Sign Commandment’ and ‘Anti-Sabbath’ in the Worship Crisis of Revelation 12-14,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 43 (2005): 269.

ceremonial duty. This ceremonial or ritual characteristic is seen, for instance, in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, circumcision and the Passover (Exod 12:13, 14).<sup>64</sup>

In the light of these three characteristics of a sign-commandment, in the moral law (the Decalogue), the unique commandment that has all these characteristic and is also called a sign or seal is the fourth commandment, the commandment of the Sabbath (Exod 31:13-17). The commandment of the Sabbath is an appeal to remember God as creator and redeemer (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15); is sign that fulfill the role of “outwardly identifying ‘who’ the worshiped God is and ‘who’ the worshipers are”<sup>65</sup> (Exod 31:13-17; Ezek 20:12, 20); and it has a ritual or ceremonial characteristic because the individual must put aside the seventh day of the week, cease his work and dedicate this day for worship or holy convocation (Lev 23:3).

Therefore, since the ceremonial law had its end at the cross, the sign-commandment spoken in Revelation, must be in the moral law, the law that is in force. Thus, the Sabbath is this seal or sign-commandment. And the mark of the Beast is a counterfeit of this sign-commandment of the Sabbath. The characteristics of the mark of the Beast, presented in the book of Revelation, confirms this reality that it is a parody of the Sabbath, otherwise let’s see:

- a) It is placed on the hand or on the forehead (Rev 13:16);
- b) It identifies those who have it as being in obedient relationship with the Beast (Rev 14:9);
- c) Those who have the mark do not suffer the economic boycott and the death threats (Rev 13:15, 17);

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<sup>64</sup> MacPherson, “The Mark of the Beast as a ‘Sign Commandment,’” 269, 270.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

- d) It is related to the ceremony of worship (Rev 13:12-16; 14:9-11);
- e) Such as the Sabbath, the mark of the Beast unites the name and the number (Rev 13:17);
- f) It regulates the economic life, the rest and the people's work;
- g) It has a universal reach (13:16, 17).<sup>66</sup>

### **The Theological Implications of the Sabbath**

The observance of the Sabbath is not restricted into a mere obedience of the law, but it has at least five theological implications, namely on the doctrines of God, of humanity, of salvation, of the Church and of the last things.<sup>67</sup>

**Implications on the Doctrine of God.** The Sabbath helps us to know more about the nature, character and activity of God. As memorial of creation, the Sabbath presents God as creator (Gen 1; 2; Exod 20:8-11); and as memorial of redemption, it presents Him as redeemer (Deut 5:12-15). The Sabbath day is also a sign of sanctification within the process of redemption, in which God is presented as the one who sanctifies (Exod 31:17; Ezek 20:12). The Sabbath reveals God as the Lord of the covenant, the one who makes and maintains it faithfully instead of the human behavior of disobedience (Exod 31:16, 17; Ezek 20:20; Jer 31:31-33; Heb 8:10; 10:16). These aspects of God's nature enhance the God's perfection and His character as Giver of good gifts and Sustainer of the creation. All this is a confirmation of the divinity of Christ (Matt 12:8; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:17-20).

**Implications on the Doctrine of Humanity.** The Sabbath makes us to be always aware that we are created beings, limited and dependent on the grace and power of God for existence. And the fact that God granted us the Sabbath as a day

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<sup>66</sup> MacPherson, "The Mark of the Beast as a 'Sign Commandment,'" 270, 271, 278.

<sup>67</sup> Strand, "The Sabbath."

of rest, blessings and sanctification also reveals the value that He attributes to us among His creatures. The Sabbath is the leveler of humankind, because according to the commandment (Exod 20:10), everyone should rest, there is no father/mother or son/daughter, boss or servants, and national or foreigner people. It offers opportunity for fellowship, love and compassion within the families, in particular, and within the God's family in general, especially through the saint convocation (Lev 23:3).

**Implications on the Doctrine of Salvation.** As part of the law, the Sabbath reveals the man's sin and his need for forgiveness and salvation (Rom 3:20; 7:7, 12). And when the person is saved, the Sabbath signs his sanctification. About it, Strand presents four biblical considerations that serve as the base for soteriological significance of the Sabbath:

1. The obligation for keeping the Sabbath, along with the other nine commandments of the Decalogue, was set forth at Sinai in the framework of God's redeeming love and saving activity. 2. The Sabbath was declared to be a sign that Yahweh is the God of His people and that He sanctifies them. 3. Rightly observed, the Sabbath results in delighting oneself in God as set forth in Isaiah 58:13, 14. 4. Christ's Sabbath healings forcefully illustrate His power to heal spiritually as well as physically. Indeed, Christ is the only Saviour. It was He who redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage (see 1 Cor 10:1-4), and it is He who forgives sins and gives to sin-shackled human beings both freedom and wholeness.<sup>68</sup>

**Implications on the Doctrine of the Church.** The Sabbath gives opportunity for the believers in Christ to meet together as a Church every week, and this strengthens the Church as a community where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is no slave or free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28). And being together as a Church the believers get opportunity to grow spiritually in Christ and to receive and exert the gifts and

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<sup>68</sup> Strand, "The Sabbath."

ministries of the Holy Spirit in the edification of the Church as the body of Christ (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:11-14).

**Implications on the Doctrine of Last Things (the Eschatology).** The spiritual experience of the rest on the Sabbath is a harbinger of the eternal rest that the believers will enjoy in the New Earth (Heb 3:7-4:13). But just before the second coming of Christ, the Sabbath will play a preponderant role in the last stage of the great controversy, because Satan will pour out his anger on the remnant people, those “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17). The aspect of the God’s commandments that will be under the attack will, obviously, be the Sabbath, the seal of God (Rev 13:11-17).

### **Some Ways of Observance of the Sabbath**

Thus, how to appropriately observe the Sabbath? This is the question that came after all that was said. On the Sabbath we should to make a rupture with the routine of life. The human being is very attached to the things, to the space and, recently, to the cyberspace of the virtual world. And this relationship stimulates the egocentrism, the competitiveness and an unbridled search for being bigger and for accumulating things. “And the Sabbath invites us to put aside our “own ways” (Isa 58:13) and to live in an altruist way, focusing on the good of others (Matt 12:12).”<sup>69</sup>

Since the Sabbath is the special day for worship and for the encounter with God, special preparation for that is also necessary. This preparation should be in two forms: internal and external. The internal preparation is about the spiritual communion with Jesus through daily meditation, prayer, study of the Bible,

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<sup>69</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 115.

sanctification of the heart, testimony about Jesus through a living in the sanctity.

The external preparation is about the interruption of those activities that are inadequate for the Sabbath on Friday, the day of preparation (in Greek *hēméra ên paraskuês*), for the Sabbath (Luke 23:54).<sup>70</sup>

The activities that should be interrupted are different types of work, commerce, academic, listen to, read or watch news and secular entertainment (Neh 13:13-22). The cleaning and tidying of the house, the preparation of the vestments and certain kinds of food must be done until the Friday (Exod 16:22-30).

The reception of the Sabbath at the sunset on the Friday (Lev 23:32; Deut 16:6; Neh 13:19) should be made with a worship service at home, in the small group or in the Church. In the closing, at the sunset of Saturday the same thing also should be done. The worship activities should be combined with missionary activities or charitable activities for those in need.

## **Sexuality in the Bible**

### **The Biblical Terms for Sex and Sexuality**

In the Hebrew Bible there is not any term which express direct and specifically “sex” or “sexuality,” nor a single word or specific term that refers to the sexual organ or to the sexual behavior such happens in the modern languages with the help of the modern anatomy.<sup>71</sup> But there is a reach quantity of euphemistic terms to refer to male and female sexual terms and behavior. Richard Davidson points two reasons for this absence: 1) the classical Hebrew language was very limited and did not have “the modern range of scientific anatomical

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<sup>70</sup> Timm, *O Sábado na Bíblia*, 115.

<sup>71</sup> Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 2, 7, 8.

vocabulary;” and 2) this limitation of anatomic terms is also reinforced with “the Hebrew wholistic view of humanity” in which one organ may often refer in metaphoric form to the manifestation of various attitudes of the total self, and the genitals organ of man and woman with frequency are “described in terms of their relation to the entire body.”<sup>72</sup>

Some of the euphemistic terms that the Old Testament presents to talk about this issue are the following:<sup>73</sup>

**Terms used to designate the penis.** *bāšār*, which literal meaning is flesh (Gen 17:11); *yārēk* which literal meaning is thigh, body or loin, but is frequently used to refer the male genitalia, and to indicate “the general region of the body that constitutes the seat of the procreative power, and serves occasionally as a circumlocution for the male genitalia, especially when particular refinement of language is called for”<sup>74</sup> (Gen 24:2, 9; 46:26; 47:29; Exod 1:5; Judg 8:30). *šopkâ* which is translated into “outflow” (with reference to the “fluid duct” of the penis), “privy member” and “penis” (Deut 23:1); *mēbûšîm* that means “genitals” and, literally, “that which excites shame” (Deut 25:11); *šēt* (buttocks), indicating the masculine genitals in general (Isa 20:4; 2 Sam 10:4); *yād* (hand or forearm), to say penis, genitals or nudity (Isa 57:8, 10); *kap* (hand, socket or concavity) in Gen 32:25, 32; *kēlî* (vessel) in 1 Sam 21:5; and *‘āqēb* (heel, hindpart) in Jer 13:22; *zera’* (seed) translated several times as semen (Lev 15:16; 22:4; Jer 3 1:27).

Other term is the word *zirmâ* which means “emission” (Ezek 23:20), and is used to refer a “to a ‘phallus’ in the sense of ‘erect penis’ or alternatively to

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<sup>72</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 8.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-12.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

‘ejaculation,’ the ‘emission (of semen)’.”<sup>75</sup> *šĕkōbet* (lying) appears several time in the Pentateuch with the probable meaning of “penis” (Lev 18:20, 23; 20:15; Num 5:20); *motnayim*, literally “loins”, probably it was a slang term to designate the “(royal) penis” (1 Kgs 12:10; 2 Chr 10:14); *’erwāh*, literally nakedness (Lev 18:6-19) *raglayim*, literally feet or legs, and *birkayim*, literally knees (Ezek 7:17, 21:7, 12).

**Terms used to designate the vagina.** *bāšār* – flesh – the same term used for male genitalia is used also for female (Lev 15:19); *yārēk* - thigh, body or loin – besides its use for male organ, this is also applied to female sex, in the sense of uterus in Num 5:21-29 and in the sense of vagina in Deut 28:57; *raglayim*, literally feet or legs, and *birkayim*, literally knees (Judg 16:19); - *nablūt*, literally shame or lewdness (Hos 2:10), and *’erwāh*, nakedness (Lev 18:6-19; 20:17-2 1, 30; Lam 1:8; Ezek 16:37; 23:1 0, 29).

**Specific terms for some organs of the masculine reproductive system.** In the OT we may find two precise anatomical terms which designate the masculine genitals organs: *’ešek* (testicle) and *’orlā* (foreskin) (Lev 21:20; Gen 17:11, 14).

**Specific terms for some organs of the feminine reproductive system.** The specific terms linked to the female sexuality, utilized in the OT are: *reḥem* (womb), *šad* (breast) and *dad* (nipple). These organs are described “with candor (and often delight)”<sup>76</sup> – Gen 29:31; Job 10:18; Jer 1:5; Prov 5:19; Ezek 23:3, 8, 21. Other term is the word *niddā* (menstruation) (Lev 12:2, 5).

**Other euphemistic terms for the organs of the reproductive system.** To refer the organs of male or female reproductive system the Bible also uses euphemistic terms such as *yārēk* (thigh, body or loin) for uterus (Num 5:21-29);

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<sup>75</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 9.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 10.

*ḥālāṣayim* (loins), to describe the place where the descendants of a man come from (Gen 35:11; 1 Kgs 8:19; 2 Chr 6:9); *derek* (way) to describe the menstrual period (Gen 31: 35); *zûb* or *zôb* (to flow, to discharge or flow, discharge) to describe the menstruation, an abnormal period of menstruation and an abnormal male discharge of semen (Lev 15; Num 5:2; 2 Sam 3:29); *mē'im* (intestines, internal body organs), used also to refer to the male loins or the female womb, as denotation of the body place from where the children come into existence (Gen 15:4; 2 Sam 7:12; 16:11; Isa 39:7; 48:19; 2 Kgs 20:18; Gen 25:23; Num 5:22; Isa 49:1); *nēḥōšet*, which occurs uniquely in Ezekiel 16:36, and according to its Akkadian origin, literally means abundance, wealth or extravagance.<sup>77</sup> The term *nēḥōšet* is used euphemistically to mean menstruation, filthiness, lust and the “female genital ‘distillation’ produced by sexual arousal (in the context of lust).”<sup>78</sup> Last, but not least is the word *'ôn* that generally denotes the generative power or virility of a man (Gen 49:3; Deut 21:17; Ps 78:51; 105:36).

**Terms that describe the sexual intercourse.** To describe sexual activity the Old Testament also use a set of euphemistic verbs or expressions, such as: 1) *yāda'* (to know) – this verb is utilized to express the heterosexual act approved by God and the homosexual act (Gen 4:1, 17, 25; Num 31:17, 35; Gen 19:5, 6; Judg 19:22; 21:11); 2) *bô' 'el* (“to come in to” or “to go in unto”) – this verb often is intended to put “emphasis upon sexual intercourse for purposes of procreation”<sup>79</sup> (Gen 6:4; 16:2, 4; 19:31; 29:21; 29:23, 30; 30:3, 4, 16; 38:2, 8, 9, 16, 18; Deut 21:13; 22:13; 25:5; Judg 16:1; 2 Sam 3:7; 16:21, 22; 1 Chr 2:21; 7:23); 3) the verbs *qārab* and *nāgaš*

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<sup>77</sup> “Lascívia” [Ezequiel 16:36] *Comentário Bíblico Adventista do Sétimo Dia (CBASD)*, ed., Francis D. Nichol e Vanderlei Dorneles (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2013) 4:690.

<sup>78</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 10.

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

which mean “to come near,” “to touch” or “to approach” – (Gen 20:4-6; Exod 19:15; Lev 18:6, 14, 19; 20:16; Deut 22:14; Ezek 18:6), used to describe the illicit sexual practices; 4) the verb *šākab ’im* (“to lie with”) and its related expression *nātan šěkōbet*, (“use [one's] penis for sex”) are also used to refer the illicit sexual intercourses (Gen 19:32-35; 26: 10; 30:15, 16; 34:2; 35:22; 39:7, 10, 12, 14; Exod 22:1 6; Lev 15:18, 33) which include homosexuality and bestiality (Lev 18:22; Exod 22:18); 5) *’āhab/’āhēb* (to love) – when this verb is used in the sense of sexual intercourse (Gen 24:67; 1 Kgs 11:1; Ezek 16:37), its emphasis “is more on the experiencing and desiring of sexual relations than on the act itself. Sometimes a distinction of meaning is connoted by using the active form rather than the stative;”<sup>80</sup> 6) *gālā ’erwat* which means “uncover the nakedness of” is the expression used to refer to the incestuous sexual practice (Lev 18:6-17; 20:19; Ezek 22:10) and other illicit sexual attitudes or behaviors (Lev 18:18-19); 7) *šāgēl* is the term that describes the “ravish” or “sexually violate” (Deut 28:30; Isa 13:16; Jer 3:2; Zech 14:2); 8) *rāba’*, this word is a loan from the Aramaic, which means “to copulate” (Lev 18:23; 20:16; cf. 19:19), and is used to describe the bestiality practiced by the women, and also the sex between animals.

To make clearer the reason why the euphemistic expressions are used in the OT when it speaks about sex, Davidson explains that

These various ways of indicating sexual intercourse may be described as euphemistic if it is remembered that such “euphemisms” do not necessarily entail an avoidance of more explicit sexual terminology by substituting less offensive expressions. The “euphemisms” frequently were the most precise terminology available. Far from representing an impoverishment of expressive capability, moreover, these euphemistic expressions were often able to connote what modern scientific sexual terms cannot, namely, the essential meaning of the act as well as an objective description. This is true, for

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<sup>80</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 11.

instance, in the usage of the verb *yāda* ‘, “to know,” to indicate sexual intercourse.<sup>81</sup>

## **The Origin of Sexuality**

The originator of sex is God Himself. After He had created the human being as two individuals, each one having a sexual organ which is different or distinct from the other one’s (male and female), He united them in marriage with this blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:28).

Beside this, God as Creator made the complete human body, and this includes the genital organs and its functionalities or the human reproductive system. The Bible says about the all creation which God had made, including this, that all was very good (Gen 1:31). If all, including sex, is very good, this reveals that there is nothing wrong with sexual intimacy within marriage, unless it is done out of the rules that God established (Exod 20:14; Deut 22:13-23-14).

Therefore, the origin of the sexuality is inseparable from the origin of the world and of the humankind according to the account of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. God created everything and the human being with all that it involves, including the body and its sexual distinction and function, and the marriage. And it all “was very good.” Genesis 1:31. And the accounts of the chapter 1:26-28 and 2:24, 25 say:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

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<sup>81</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 11.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Some jewels of truth that can be captured from these accounts are the following:

**The body and all that involves it are very good.** God is the creator of the human body and the sexuality. A correct view of the body according to the Bible determines also our view of the sex. As Sakae Kubo says: “any theology of sex must begin with a theology of the body. How one understands the body will determine how one views the sex.”<sup>82</sup> The Greek negative conception of the body as something evil or a prison of the soul led to a negative attitude towards sex. God created everything, including the body and its pleasurable sexual function, and, contrary to the Hellenistic ideas, He declared that “indeed it was very good.” (Gen 1:31). The human being with its body and respective genital organs are not only good, but very good when a male and female are bind together in marriage. Only then do they fully reflect the image of God (v. 27).

The Bible does not present the man as a dichotomy but as an integral or whole unity being (Gen 2:7). There is no separation between soul and body. The human body is not a prison of the soul, but the temple or the habitation of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

Other important point to highlight the goodness of the body is the rite of circumcision as a symbol of dedication, belonging and loyalty to God. He commanded Abraham and his descendants, as people of the covenant, to do it in the male genital organ, the penis. “One can reasonably assume that God chose the genital organ because in one sense it lies at the center of the life. From the man’s

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<sup>82</sup> Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, 9.

side, it produced the ‘seed’ that shared in the process of reproducing children in the image of their parents, who reflected the image of Adam, who reflected the image of God. God created life; man originates it through the process of reproduction.”<sup>83</sup>

**Both male and female are the image of God.** God created man (‘*ādām*), male (‘*īsh*) and female (‘*īshshâ*). It is worthy to note that the word ‘*ādām* (man), from which derivates the name Adam, means also human species, human and someone; and its antonymous or feminine genre is ‘*ādāmâ* which meaning is not woman, but soil, ground and earth.<sup>84</sup> The word ‘*ādām* designates all humankind of both genders<sup>85</sup> as it appears in Genesis 5:1, 2. It means that the human being (male and female) reflects the image and likeness of God in its plenitude when they are bind together in a monogamous marriage. The image and likeness of God in the human being is complete in a compound unity between male and female, because “God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen 1:27).

Being image and likeness of God implies to carry some God’s transmissible attributes such as love, spirituality, morality, rationality, relationship, companionship, responsibility, etc. The attribute of love is visible or concrete only when the one who holds it is in a relationship or companionship with someone else. It is impossible to show love outside of a relationship; that is, the love

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<sup>83</sup> Charles E. Wittschiebe, *God Invented Sex* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1974), 15, 16.

<sup>84</sup> Leonard J. Coppes, “‘*ādām*. Homem, espécie humana,” *DITAT*, 13.

<sup>85</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 20.

expresses itself within a relationship. It confirms the Trinitarian nature of God.<sup>86</sup>

“The fact of God be love requires that He may be more than one person. The love necessarily requires one subject and one object [...] genuine love requires the existence of someone to be loved.”<sup>87</sup>

Thus, to be created in image and likeness of God also means to love and to be involved in a relationship. And most deep and intimate relationship that the human being can enjoy is the marriage, the union with someone of opposite sex. Since the Trinitarian nature of God also implies relationship of companionship, the human being as His image and likeness was also made for relationship of companionship, which the most sublime and deep is the union of one man and one woman through the marriage (Gen 2:18-24). Therefore, “the primary aim of marriage is not procreation but relationship.”<sup>88</sup> This kind of relationship is that the male and female join themselves, including sexually, and “become one flesh” (v. 24). The love that eternally unites the three Persons of the Divinity is reflected by the love that unites husband and wife in the marriage.

Commenting Genesis 1:27, Sakae Kubo says:

Theologians have much debated the question of what constitutes “the image of God.” Since Scripture distinguishes between man and the other creatures, theologians have usually suggested such things as man’s rational powers or his moral sense as constituting the image of God. Karl Barth, however, on the basis of the last part of the above verse, has stressed that the image of God consists in his being in fellowship. In the words of Paul Jewett, who explains Barth: “Because Man is created as the one who confronts God and is confronted by God and by another like himself, he is created in the image of God. God is, in his own being, supremely free and

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<sup>86</sup> See Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *A Trindade* (Tatuí, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2003), 129-133, 272-287.

<sup>87</sup> Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *A Trindade*, 130, 131.

<sup>88</sup> Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, 16.

fellowship. Since God is no *Deus solitrius* (solitary God), but the *Deus triunes* (the triune God), i.e. God-in-relationship, there is no possibility that Man, who is in his likeness, should be *homo solitrius* (solitary Man).”<sup>89</sup>

**The purpose of the sex within the marriage.** In giving sexuality to the human being, God had in mind some purposes. Among these purposes the Bible points out the major and plain reflection of the God’s image and likeness, the procreation, the full joy and pleasure of the man and woman (Gen 1:27, 28; Prov 5:15-19; Eccl 9:9) the confirmation and the strengthening of the of the marital ties so that man and woman become indeed one flesh (Gen 2:24).

Adam and Eve were created naked. According to the Calvin B. Rock:

The fact that our first parents have been placed naked in the garden and not to be ashamed, it proves not only the innocence of the human sexuality, but also the convenience of husband and wife to show each other only in conjugal intimacy.<sup>90</sup>

The reproduction is the smallest purpose of the marriage and the sexuality. In fact, it requires a very few numbers of coition and time comparing to the lifetime of a couple. According to Charles Wittschiebe, for example a couple who has five children needs “only a limited number of coitions.”<sup>91</sup> Wives who are highly fertile if got into sexual intercourse exactly in the fertile period, can be pregnant in first try, for five children they would need only five acts. If the love play for each act lasts, to be most generous, one hour, five hours should be enough to generate five children. However, in the case that to get pregnancy is necessary ten or fifteen acts, to generate one child will require ten or fifteen hours, to

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<sup>89</sup> Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, 23.

<sup>90</sup> Calvin B. Rock, “Casamento e Família” in *Tratado de Teologia Adventista do Sétimo Dia*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Tatuí, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 806.

<sup>91</sup> Wittschiebe, *God Invented Sex*, 122.

complete five children, it will be necessary seventy-five hours. And what are seventy-five hours of intimate lovemaking within the lifetime of the marriage?

Wittschiebe responds in the following form:

For the Lord to place the nerves and muscles in the sexual organs the way He has, with their tremendous capacity for sensation and expression to give a man and wife exquisite pleasure and unique delight, and then expect us to use them only a minute fraction of the time spent in marriage is cruel. It is illogical and out of character with His nature, and with the ways in which He speaks of sex in marriage in the Scriptures. Note, too, that a primary reason for creating Eve was Adam's aloneness. The marriage met his need, even before the birth of children.<sup>92</sup>

**The exclusiveness, permanence, and intimacy of sex.** Genesis 2:24 and 25 highlights the exclusiveness, permanence and intimacy of the sex within the marriage and the marriage itself. The exclusiveness is expressed by the verb *'āzab*, a verb loaded with force, which means to abandon or to forsake, the same word used to describe the actions of Israel in abandoning Yahweh, their God, to follow the false gods. In this context of marriage, the verb *'āzab* “indicates the necessity of absolute freedom from outside interferences in the sexual relationship.”<sup>93</sup> That is, even the nearest relatives of the spouses must be abandoned in geographical, physical, emotional and economical senses, and they have no way to share any aspect of the marriage and, obviously, much less sexual intimacy. For this reason, God condemns any form of sexual activity or satisfaction that is apart from the own spouse such as adultery and fornication or immorality in all its forms (Exod 20:14; Deut 22:13-23-14; Heb 13:4).

The permanence of the sex and marriage is portrayed by the verb *dābaq* (to be joined), also a “robust term, signifying strong personal attachment,”<sup>94</sup> and conveys the

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<sup>92</sup> Wittschiebe, *God Invented Sex*, 122, 123.

<sup>93</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 43.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

original imagery of “sticking, clinging, remaining physically close, as skin to flesh and flesh to bone.”<sup>95</sup> This same word *dābaq* also is used in the covenant of God with His people Israel. And in Genesis 2, it is an affirmation that the marriage tie is a covenant sealed by the blood, through the unification of the bodies into one flesh. This is the reason why Adam, in Genesis 2:23, expressed his matrimonial vows before God in terms such as

This is now bone of my bones  
And flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called Woman,  
Because she was taken out of Man.

The intimacy of the sex and marriage is stressed by the expression “one-flesh” which is a translation of the Hebrew *lēbāšār ’ēḥād*. Man and woman become one flesh after to be clung as the skin is clung to the flesh and this to the bone. Davidson explains

The “one-flesh” relationship centers in the intimacy of sexual union, sexual intercourse. The physical act of coitus is the primary means of establishing the “innermost mystery” of oneness, and in the covenant context of this verse seems to constitute the sign of the marriage covenant.<sup>96</sup>

He clarifies that *lēbāšār ’ēḥād* (one flesh) does not refer exclusively the sexual intercourse. Besides sex, it involves, as the term *bāšār* (flesh) is employed in the OT, human relationship, a conjunction of bodies and minds, *erōs* (physical passion or physical love) and *āgapē* (altruistic love, abnegation), psychological, emotional and spiritual unity, psychic and physical gift and exchange. “The one-flesh experience of marriage includes the deepest kind of intimacy, a total transparency between marriage partners, described in v. 25: ‘And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not

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<sup>95</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 45.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

ashamed [before each other].”<sup>97</sup> Beyond the transparency and the intimacy between this couple, the account about their nakedness without shame also indicates the beauty, purity and sacredness that marital sex involves upon the face of God as the apex of the wedding ceremony and the matrimonial union.

### **Sex after the Fall throughout the Old Testament Account**

After the fall, the Bible presents two facts related to the Adam and Eve, which some biblical students use to interpret under a light that distorts the positive view of the sex. One is Genesis 3:7 about the nakedness of this couple after the sin, and other is the chapter 4:1, that says that Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived.

**The nakedness of Adam and Eve.** Those who fail to consider the divine purpose for sexuality present in chapters 1 and 2, interpret that the prohibited fruit was the sexual intercourse in which the first couple was involved in first time, and then they got awareness of their nakedness (or sexuality) as described in Genesis 3:7, meaning that the sin was not literal fruit, but sexual intercourse which made them aware of the nakedness. Before that, they were naked (2:25) but not aware of that because they didn't yet involve themselves into sexual intercourse.

The answer to this argument is that the Hebrew text uses two different words translated into “naked.” In Genesis 2:25 the word is *'ārôm*, and in chapter 3:7, 10, 11 the term is *'êrôm*. Elsewhere in the Bible the word *'ārôm* is frequently utilized to refer “to someone not *fully* clothed or not clothed *in the normal manner*.”<sup>98</sup> And *'êrôm* means “naked” in the sense of being completely naked or bare. This word “elsewhere

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<sup>97</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 48.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

in the Scripture always appears in a context of total (and usually shameful) exposure, describing someone ‘utterly naked’ or ‘bare.’”<sup>99</sup>

However, Genesis 2:25 does not say clearly or explicitly in which way the first couple was *’ārôm* (naked), if in the sense of “not *fully* clothed” or in the sense of “not clothed *in the normal manner*.” But the parallel account of the creation in Psalm 104 talks about garments of honor and majesty, and the Psalm 8:5 says that the man was crowned with glory and honor. This takes to the conclusion “that Adam and Eve may have been originally ‘clothed’ with ‘garments’ of light and glory.”<sup>100</sup> Therefore, far of talking about sexual intercourse, and there is not any evidence for such idea, Genesis 3:7, 10, 11 is making a contrast; that is, because of the sin Adam and Eve lost their garment of glory and honor, and became completely naked.

Besides, the fact that there is no evidence that indicates the nakedness of chapter 3:7, 10, 11 as sexual intercourse or the consequence of it, the text does not indicate any self or mutual shame or embarrassment between the couple. But the shame and embarrassment was to appear naked in the face of God. The physical nakedness was a reflex of the spiritual nakedness full of guilt.<sup>101</sup> In this regard, Davidson says that

Adam’s nakedness described in 3:10 is also obviously more than physical nudity, for Adam depicts himself as still naked even though already covered with fig leaves. The nakedness of Gen 3 seems to also include a sense of ‘being unmasked,’ a consciousness of guilt, a nakedness of soul. Likewise, God’s clothing of Adam and Eve with skins appears to represent more than a concern for physical covering, more than a demonstration of the ‘modesty appropriate in a sinful world,’ although these are no doubt included. For many Christians in the evangelical tradition, the skins from slain animals are seen to intimate the beginning of the sacrificial system and the awareness of a

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<sup>99</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 56, 57.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

substitutionary atonement, because of which humans need no longer feel unmasked or ashamed.<sup>102</sup>

**“Adam knew Eve his wife” – Genesis 4:1.** Some tend to interpret this verse as saying that the sexual intercourse only started after the fall and outside the holy ground which was the Garden of Eden. But, Davidson, in quoting the comment of Nahum M. Sarna on Genesis, explains that the way as the verb *yāda* ‘(to know)’ is employed conveys the idea that had been taken place before the fall and that Eve already came out pregnant from the Garden of Eden.<sup>103</sup> Such as the account of 1 Samuel 1:19 in no way indicates that it was the first time Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, so the account of Genesis 4:1 does not say that it was the first time that Adam knew Eve his wife. Let us pay attention to what Nahum M. Sarna says:

The Hebrew construction here employed usually indicates a pluperfect sense; that is, it would normally be rendered ‘the man had known.’ This leads Rashi to conclude that coition had already taken place in the Garden of Eden before the expulsion, an interpretation that finds support in 3:20. There is nothing to sustain the idea that sexual activity first occurred outside Eden. A text like 1 Samuel 1:19-‘Elkanah knew his wife Hannah’-shows that the Hebrew phrase in our text does not need to imply that we have here the first occurrence of sexual experience.<sup>104</sup>

**The sexual life of the patriarchs.** In the book of Genesis, we may find candid glimpses of the sexual life of the patriarchs that give evidences of their view of sexuality as wholesome and positive. Some of these glimpses are the account about the stunning physical beautiful of the matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel (12:11; 20:11; 24:16; 29:17); the reference to the pleasure of the sexual intercourse and of having a child by Sarah (18:12); the loving sexual relation of Isaac and Rebekah in

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<sup>102</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 57.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 425.

<sup>104</sup> Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 31, quoted in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 425.

the day of their wedding (24:67); and the description of the moment when Isaac and Rebekah were sharing intimate caresses (26:8).<sup>105</sup>

Another worthy passage to highlight is Deuteronomy 24:5 which says: “When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.”

Commenting this verse that deals with military service for the young newlyweds, Tim and Beverly LaHaye say:

Further insight into God’s approval of the act of marriage appears in the commandments and ordinances of God to Moses for the children of Israel. He instructed that a man was to be exempt from military service and all business responsibilities for one year after his marriage (Deut. 24:5) so that these two people could get to “know” each other at a time when their sex drives were strongest and under circumstances that would provide ample opportunity for experimentation and enjoyment. Admittedly, this provision was also given to make it possible for a young man to “propagate” before he faced the risk of death on the battlefield.<sup>106</sup>

And the *Comentário Bíblico Adventista do Sétimo Dia (The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary)* in regard of the same passage says:

It is advantageous for the state to establish measures that tend to honor and exalt the matrimony. This law provided time for the home to establish itself firmly. And, even more important, from Hebrew point of view, it gave possibilities for the birth of a heir that perpetuated the family’s name and inherited their land.<sup>107</sup>

**The sexuality in the book of the prophets.** Other evidence of the positivity and wholeness of the sexuality in the OT is present in the messages of the prophets where God use the image of the marriage and sexual intimacy to portray his relationship with His bride the Israelite nation, and the unfaithfulness of this

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<sup>105</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 425.

<sup>106</sup> Lahaye and Lahaye, *The Act of Marriage*, chapter 1.

<sup>107</sup> “Não Sairá à Guerra” [Deut 24:5] *CBASD*, 1:1141.

people is compared to the adultery or sexual immorality of an unfaithful wife. The marital covenant is also utilized as a symbol of the covenant of God with His people (Hos 2; Jer 2:2, 3; 3:12, 14, 22; Ezek 16:8; 24:16).

**The sexuality in the book of Proverbs.** The books of Writings, particularly Proverbs (Prov 5:15-19), talks of sexuality as something “designed for relationship, fellowship, intimate partnership between husband and wife.”<sup>108</sup> In the verse 15 we find some euphemistic expressions: *bō’r* or *b’e’ēr* (cistern, well, spring or fountain) – to refer the feminine sexual organ. This comparison of the vagina with the cistern or well is also retaken in the book of Song of Songs (4:12)<sup>109</sup>; and *may* or *mayim* (water or waters) to refer to the sexual intercourse and its pleasure. It means that the joy and the pleasure of the sexuality within the marriage is so important for the wellbeing and happiness of the couple as is the water for the body.

The verses 16 and 17 reaffirms the exclusiveness and the intimacy of the sexuality within the marriage. And the verse 18, is an incentive and blessing for the enjoyment of the sexual pleasure with the spouse.

In the verse 19, the author portrays the loving marriage relationship in a very erotic way, as a relationship of continual affection and deepest intimacy, using three special Hebrew terms: 1) *rāwā* (to satisfy): “Let her breasts satisfy (...);” 2) *tāmîd* (all the time, always): “(...) you at all times (...);” 3) *šāgā* (to be enraptured, to be intoxicated): “(...) be enraptured with her love.”<sup>110</sup> Similar to this, is the counsel that the Preacher gives in Ecclesiastes 9:9: “live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of

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<sup>108</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 426.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 593, 594.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.”

### **The Sexuality in the Book of Song of Solomon**

The book of Song of Solomon, also called Song of Songs and Canticle of Canticles, is a biblical book specially and exclusively dedicated to the marital love and to the sex. Due to its content which is erotic, the book has raised many challenges among the Jews and the Christians. Many have questioned: how could a book that speaks openly and exalts the sexuality be part of the canon? A magisterial answer for this question, always quoted when the book is being approached, is that of the rabbi Akiba in the Yavneh council in 90 AD, which says:

For in all the world there is nothing to equal the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the writings are Holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies.<sup>111</sup>

In the Hebrew canon the Song of Salomon belongs to the third part which is the *ketubîm* (writings). It is a poetic book that together with Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther constitutes the *meḡillôt* (five scrolls) that were read publically in the main festivals of Israel. The Song of Solomon were read in the Passover feast, Ruth in the Pentecost, Ecclesiastes in the Tabernacles, Lamentations on Av 9<sup>th</sup> (end of July), in remembrance of the doom of Jerusalem in 587 BC, and Esther in the feast of Purim.<sup>112</sup>

**The authorship and date.** The title of the book, as well the tradition, attributes its authorship to the king Solomon (1:1), and the date, therefore, is the tenth century BC. Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba (2 Sam

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<sup>111</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 545.

<sup>112</sup> Michael A. Eaton and G. Lloyd Carr, *Ecclesiastes e Cantares* (São Paulo, Brazil: Mundo Cristão, 1989), 178.

12:24). He became the third king of Israel, the wisest and richest king among the kings of the ancient east (1 Kgs 10:23, 24). He was the author of three thousand proverbs and one thousand five songs (1 Kgs 4:32-34). Besides these two evidences (the title of the book and tradition), there are other evidences that indicates this authorship and date, on contrary of a post exilic date. These are some of these evidences:

1. Among the Dead Sea scrolls were found four fragments of Song of Solomon;
2. Song of songs uses vocabulary and grammatical forms that are archaic, such as the parallelism of “one word” (1:2b-3a; 2:15; 6:8), a characteristic of the poetry of the century 12 and 11; the relative particle *še* instead of the most common *’šer* that in the book occurs only in the title; and the verbal parallelism of the Ugarit literature of the 14<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>113</sup>
3. The author reveals an enough knowledge about plants, animals and other peculiarities of the nature which is in conformity with what the Bible says about the wisdom of Solomon (1 Kgs 4:32-34);
4. The mention that the book does of the foreign products imported at the time of the king Solomon;
5. The existence of similarities between the books of Song of Solomon and Proverbs (Song 4:5, cf. Prov 5:19; Song 4:11 cf. Prov 5:3; Song 4:14 cf. Prov 7:17);
6. The Hebrew of the Song of Solomon is a very poetic, vigorous and fresh as the Hebrew of the time of the king Solomon, when this language was in flourishing, in opposition of that of the decadent Hebrew of the divided monarchy time;<sup>114</sup>
7. The book makes nine direct mentions of Solomon: six by name (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11, 12) and three as king (1:4, 12; 7:6);
8. The reference to the king Solomon’s wedding (3:7-11) as parallel of the account in the book of the kings (1 Kgs 3:1);

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<sup>113</sup> Eaton and Carr, *Ecclesiastes e Cantares*, 180, 181.

<sup>114</sup> “2. Autorial,” *CBASD*, 3:1255.

9. Since the king Solomon was the author of 1005 songs (1 Kgs 5:12), “it would be strange if none were preserved;”<sup>115</sup>

10. The book alludes to the wealth and luxury life of Solomon portrayed in the book of kings (Song 1 :9, 12, 13; 3:6, 9; 1 Kgs 9:26-28; 10:28);

**The theme.** Song of Songs is about the conjugal love between two spouses: Solomon (the husband) and Shulamite (the wife). It portrays the desire, the passion and love of one another, their wedding ceremonial and the expression of the sexual pleasure that they enjoyed after the marriage. The portrait of the marital love and the sexual pleasure that the book makes is an expression of the divine ideal for the human marriage and pleasure. Richard Davidson says that this book is intimately closed to the first two chapters of Genesis in the matter of the matrimonial love and sexuality.

Several recent studies have penetratingly analyzed and conclusively demonstrated the intimate relationship between the early chapters of Genesis and the Song of Songs. In the “symphony of love,” begun in Eden but gone awry after the fall, The Song constitutes “love's lyrics redeemed.” (...)

The Song of Songs is a return to Eden, but the lovers in the Song are not to be equated in every way with the pre-fall couple in the garden. The poetry of the Song reveals the existence of a world of sin and its baleful results: there are the angry brothers (1:6), the wet winter (2:11), “the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards” (2:15), the anxiety of absence from one's beloved (3:1-4; 5:6-8; 6:1), the cruelty and brutality of the watchman (5:7), and the powerful presence of death (8:6). Yet the lovers in the Song are able to triumph over the threats to their love.<sup>116</sup>

**The structure.** The scholars subdivide the book into various and different structures, but the most of them, if not all, present three main parts which are the phases of the marital life of the couple:

A – The dating and engagement (1:1-3:5)

B – The wedding ceremonial and consummation (3:6-5:1)

Procession for the marriage (3:6-1 1)

Consummation of the marriage (4:1-5:1)

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<sup>115</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 562.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 552, 553.

A – The affirmation and consolidation of the marriage (5:2-8:14)

Marital conflict and resolution (5:2-6:13)

Maturation of the marriage (7:1-8:14).

**The interpretation.** The study and interpretation of Song of Solomon has divided the scholars into four different forms or categories of interpretation, namely: allegorical, typological, dramatic and natural or literal.<sup>117</sup>

***The allegorical interpretation.*** The term allegory derivates from two Greek words: *allos* (other) and *agoreyō* (to speak, to proclaim). Therefore, the idea that the word allegory conveys the sense of “to say one thing that means other.”<sup>118</sup> When applied to the biblical text, the allegorical method of interpretation sees the biblical account as a metaphor; that is, what the Bible says is not a real fact, it is not historically true and never had happened. It is only a metaphorical way to transmit a spiritual truth. Thus, the content of Song of Solomon never happened, and as a metaphor, it serves only to convey a spiritual message. Some Jew rabbis, instead of “their basically healthy and robust view of sexuality,”<sup>119</sup> and some Christian church fathers shared this view about the book, for instance the rabbi Akiba and Origen of Alexandria, who influenced throughout the centuries this method in the Christendom.

***The typological interpretation.*** From the Greek term *typos* - meaning pattern, standard or model - and from its derived term *antitypos* - which means “that corresponds to something that existed before.” The typological interpretation accepts that the biblical account is a fact that really happened, but it is only a

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<sup>117</sup> Eaton and Carr, *Ecclesiastes e Cantares*, 183.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 545.

shadow of a future reality. Its difference with the allegorical method, is that the allegorical refuses the historicity of the biblical facts while the typological accepts it as a reality that occurred in the OT times, but were only a type or a shadow of a fact or teaching of the NT, the antitype.<sup>120</sup>

***The dramatic interpretation.*** The third approach of interpreting Song of songs, also used by the Christian tradition, is that that sees this book as a drama. The one who proposed this view was also Origen, who said this book “is a matrimonial song that Solomon wrote in the form of drama.”<sup>121</sup> This idea was later on retaken, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, by Delitzsch in his comment on Song of Songs. However, the description of such drama are very different among them. But what unified them “is the perspective that Songs would be a dramatic text, originally composed to be performed on stage, or to be sung.”<sup>122</sup>

***The natural or literal interpretation.*** This method of interpretation approaches Song of Solomon in its plain, natural and literal sense such as the facts seem to be. Thus, the book is a conjugal love poem which portrays the relationship of a couple – Solomon and Shulamite -, their feelings, hope, fear, sexual desire and pleasure. Michael A. Eaton e G. Lloyd Carr prefer to call this method of interpretation as “natural” instead of “literal,” because “the word ‘literal,’ understood literally, leaves no room for figures of speech.”<sup>123</sup> However, the text is full of euphemistic expression to speak about sex as it occurs in other books of the OT.

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<sup>120</sup> Eaton and Carr, *Ecclesiastes e Cantares*, 186-194.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 196.

The pioneer of this school of interpreting Song of Songs throughout the history of Christianity is Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428). He “asserted in his commentary that the Song should be understood according to its plain and literal sense - as a love song in which Solomon celebrates his marriage to Pharaoh’s daughter.”<sup>124</sup> Because of this view, he faced many oppositions. He was followed by the reformer John Calvin, who defended that “the Song is both inspired by God and a song of human love.”<sup>125</sup> The English Puritan Edmund Spenser But and the German romanticist Johann G. Herder concur with the Theodore’s and Calvin’s approach. Today this approach is notably shared by many scholars.<sup>126</sup>

**The Song of Solomon’s teachings on the marriage and sexuality.** Taking this book in its plain, natural or literal sense. We find out that the Bible, in continuity and development of the principles of the marriage and sexuality, dedicated an entire book to celebrate the dignity, purity and blessing of the human love and sexual pleasure, as God intended in the book of Genesis, and to “proclaim that human sexuality is not cheap, ugly, and evil but beautiful, wholesome, and praiseworthy!”<sup>127</sup>

Thus, the principles of conjugal love and sexuality highlighted by this book are the following:

***God is the creator of marriage, love and sex.*** Song of Songs presents Yahweh as the creator of the marital love in its high level, which is the sexual pleasure, called as “a Flame of Yahweh” (8:6, 7);

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<sup>124</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 548.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 550.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 551.

*The true marriage is heterosexual.* God gave the gift of sexuality for the human heterosexual couples (male and female) as represented by Solomon and Shulamite;

*The divine ideal for the human marriage is the monogamy.* This principle is enhanced in the text by the couple Solomon and Shulamite. However, we know that the king Solomon no longer respected the principle of a monogamous matrimony. He later on married many women. The Bible says that

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites - from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites (1 Kgs 11:1-5).

The marriage of Solomon with Shulamite, the daughter of Pharaoh, occurred in the beginning of his reign, when his heart was tuned with God, before he had built his palace and the house of God (1 Kgs 3: 1; 7:8), clearly before his fall into idolatry, sexual immorality and polygamy (1 Kgs 11:1-5). She is the woman of his youth, his first wife (1 Kgs 3:1), whose wedding is the only Solomon's wedding clearly referred in the biblical narrative. She is mentioned five times in the biblical narrative (1 Kgs 3:1; 7:8; 9:16, 24; 11:1-2). Because she was not an Israelite may explain the reason why she is distinguished from "the daughters of Jerusalem" in the Song (1 :5; 2:7; 3:5, 11; 5:8, 16; 6:9; 8:4). The comparison that she makes of Solomon as the "filly among Pharaoh's chariots," is an indication of the Egyptian origin of the

Shulamite (1:9). The names Solomon and Shulamite are all based on the Hebrew root *šlm*, and they make the wordplay *šālôm* (peace).<sup>128</sup>

Other evidence of the monogamy of this marriage is that, beside that Shulamite was the first woman in the Solomon's life, he also was the first man in her life. The biblical text affirms that she was virgin, "a garden enclosed," "a spring shut up" and "a fountain sealed" (Song 4:12). And this monogamous marriage lasted a long time. According to the biblical narrative, they took married in their youth age, at the beginning of his reign, before Solomon build the house of the Lord, his house and her house (1 Kgs 3:1; 6:38; 7:1; 9:24). All this building projects took in total twenty years. And during this period no other woman is mentioned unless the daughter of Pharaoh. If Solomon would be a bigamous or a polygamous during this at least twenty years of marriage, it should be mentioned that he also made house or houses for his concubines.<sup>129</sup> And considering that his polygamy is linked to his spiritual fall, and it clearly happened only after his works of construction, we are sure to say that this king had a very happy and monogamous marriage with Shulamite which is portrayed by the book of Song of Songs.

***Parity between male and female without sexual hierarchy.*** The book of Song highlights the equality, mutuality and reciprocity in relationship of the two lovers, without any notion of control, dominion or hierarchic position. We can see this parity in the refrain "my beloved is mine, and I am his" (2:16), which is repeated two times (6:3; 7:10). Other indicative of the parity is of economical character: both have property and the woman is not dependant on the husband for her sustenance (1:6, 7; 6:11; 8:11, 12). Both expresses fondness for one another (4:1; 5:12, 15; 7:7; 5:14, 15;

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<sup>128</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 564-569.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

7:1, 2). The woman reveals herself active in sexual life. Such as the man, she takes initiatives such as to bring the husband to the chamber (3:4); she awakens him to the sexual act (8:5). As the man invites the woman to go to the fields, she also does the same (2:10-14; 7:11-13). In ancient societies as well as in contemporary, the sexism and gender stereotypes were and are prevalent, but it is absent in the Song of Songs. The hallmark of the husband and wife relationship in this book is the harmony, not the domination. No one is subordinated or minor. They are equal.<sup>130</sup>

Richards Davidson states

Several modern studies have pointed out that the Song of Songs constitutes a reversal of the divine judgment set forth in Gen 3:16, and a return to Eden before the fall (Gen 1-2) regarding the love relationship between male and female. Such a reversal seems implicit in the Song's echo of Eden's "desire" (*těšûqâ*) – a term found only in Gen 3:16 and Song 7:11 (ET 7:10) with reference to sexual desire between man and woman. In Song 7:11 (ET 7:10), the third of the woman's three explicit affirmations of mutuality with her lover (along with 2:16 and 6:3, already cited above), the Shulammitte says, "I am my beloved's, and his desire [*těšûqâ*] is for me." Whereas the judgment of God in Gen 3:16 stated that the woman's desire (*těšûqâ*) would be for her husband and he would "rule" (*māšal*) over her (in the sense of servant leadership), now the Song describes a reversal the man's desire (*těšûqâ*) is for his lover.<sup>131</sup>

***Sexuality involves the wholeness of the person.*** Song presents the sexuality as not being limited to the physical nature of human being. On the contrary, the parts in which the human being manifest himself (spirit, mind and body) are inseparable. What touches the physic, touches also the psyche and the spirit. All these integrated parts are involved in sexuality: the desire for the hug, the eagerness for the loved one presence, the need to hear his or her voice (Song 1:7; 2:6, 8; 3:1-5; 5:2-8; 8:3, 6, 7). All organs of the body, not only the sexual organs, and all senses are involved (5:10-16; 7:1-9; 2:5; 5:8). This biblical book demonstrates

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<sup>130</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 569-572.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 576-577.

that “every human pleasure combines physical, emotional, and spiritual powers, stimulating each of these equally.”<sup>132</sup> Going into the detail, Davidson explains that

When the woman says, “your name [*šēm*] is perfume poured out” (1:3), she refers to “the attractiveness of the whole personality of the lover.” Likewise the woman’s whole being - including her physical beauty and moral integrity causes her to be viewed in Solomon’s eyes “as one who brings peace” (8:10). She is seen to be both physically and morally “perfect” (*tam*) and “flawless” (*bārâ*) (6:9; 5:2). Her whole person (“altogether” [*kullāk*]) has “no flaw” ( *’ên mûm*) ( 4:7).

The wordplay made by the names Solomon and Shulamite and the Hebrew noun *šalom* (peace), which have a common Hebrew root *šlm*, highlights the wholeness of the sexuality in sense that the harmonious involvement of all parts of the individual being in combination with his or her spouse, results in *šalom* (peace). That is, “full-orbed and total peace and prosperity in body, mind, and soul.”<sup>133</sup>

***God’s plan for sexuality involves exclusiveness of the couple.*** As affirmed in Genesis 2:24 that the man and woman should leave their parents so that they may become one flesh, the Song of Songs reaffirms this principle in these forms: the book does not present a parental arrangement for their son or daughter marriage, nor is there a political motif for the marriage, even though both the spouses belong to the monarchy: Solomon is a prince and king of Israel and Shulamite is a princess daughter of Pharaoh. The biblical text makes clear that this political reality was not the motif of their marriage. It was purely love with no interference of the parents nor of the political interests (4:9-10, 12; 5:1-2; 5:16).<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994), 32.

<sup>133</sup> J. Harold Ellens, *Sex in the Bible: A New Consideration* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 158, quoted in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 587.

<sup>134</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 587.

Other indicative of this exclusiveness is seen in their mutual reference to each other as “the only one” (*'aḥat hî'*) (6:9) or “the only one among other men” (2:2, 3, 14, 16; 4:4; 6:3; 7:4, 10, 13; 8:10).<sup>135</sup>

Other indicative of the exclusiveness of the couple are the words of Shulamite in 8:6, expressed in the imperative mood, emphasizing the “dependent independence” and the exclusivity itself. “This emphasis upon the exclusivity of the relationship further underscores the monogamous nature of the marital union upheld in the Song.”<sup>136</sup> By saying “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm” (8:6), according to Garret and House,

She now sings of herself as stamped into the body and mind of her husband. This can only mean that she possesses him as her own and now demands his complete fidelity. The bond is of course a bond of love, but she is unashamedly possessive and exclusive about it.<sup>137</sup>

***The enjoying of the sexuality is related to the permanence of the marriage.*** As in genesis 2:24, after the bride and bridegroom left their parents and clang themselves together and then they became one flesh, so it happens in Song of Songs. The passage of 3:6-51 is the center of the book that describes the wedding ceremonial and the consummation of the marriage through sexual intercourse. Here, it is notable the presence of the attendants and witnesses, the guests of the both spouses (3:7, 11), and God who minister this marriage covenant and blesses the couple with these words: “Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, o beloved ones!” (5:1b). Before, this divine declaration, the passage presented the sexual intercourse of the couple (4:12-5:1a), which obviously was followed by the

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<sup>135</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 588.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Duane A. Garrett and Paul R. House, *Song of Songs, Lamentations*, Word Biblical Commentary 23B (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2004), 256, quoted in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 588.

blessing of God such as it happened in Eden Garden (Gen 2:23, 24, 25).<sup>138</sup> This matrimonial covenant is sealed by the couple themselves, especially by the bride, in the presence of Yahweh (8:6, 7). The seal indicates the permanence of this union.<sup>139</sup>

A seal is a highly valued, precious item from which the bearer would never want to part. The Shulammitte wishes to be permanently over his heart, the seat of his affections, and on his arm, the source of his strength. Just as death does not let go of those it has claimed, so the lovers possess each other forever. Just as Sheol is relentless in not giving up its dead, so ardent love, zealous - yes, jealous - love, will never give up the beloved. This verse may also contain an image of the seal actually impressed upon the heart/arm, denoting an indissolubility that not even the powers of death, Sheol, or the cosmic waters can overcome.<sup>140</sup>

***God intended sex as intimacy within marriage.*** In euphemistic manner, the groom in Song describes his bride as “a garden enclosed” (4:12). This expression denotes virginity. Thus, Solomon is announcing that he married a virgin woman. It is an eloquent statement and reaffirmation that sexual intercourse is exclusively reserved and preserved for husband and wife within their own marriage. Before it, during the courtship they are described as living apart, not in the same domicile (1:2-3:5), and after the nuptial night (4:1-5:1), then, they live together in the same place (5:2-7; 7:11-13).

Howard J. Clinebell and Charlotte H. Clinebell wrote the book entitled *The Intimate Marriage*, in which they present at least a dozen different forms or expressions of intimacy within marriage,<sup>141</sup> and Richards Davidson comparing this list with Song of Songs, discovered that all these kinds of intimacy were

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<sup>138</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 589-591.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 592.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Howard J. Clinebell and Charlotte H. Clinebell, *The Intimate Marriage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 23-40.

experience by the Solomon and Shulamite in their loving relationship as we can observe below:

Physical or sexual intimacy (1:2; 8:1; 1:8; 2:6; 8:3; 3:4; 4:9; 6:5; 2:17; 7:7-8; 8:5; 8:2; 4:16; 5:1; 7:12-13; 8:2), emotional intimacy (2:5; 5:8; 4:9; 6:5; 5:4, 6; 7:10), intellectual intimacy (5:1, 16; 1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:6; 6:4; 8:6-7), aesthetic intimacy (1:8, 15, 16; 2:10, 13; 4:1, 7, 10; 5:9; 6:1, 4, 10; 7:1, 6; 2:10-13; 6:11; 7:11-13), creative intimacy (3:9-10; 2:12), recreational intimacy (2:3-4; 1:16-17; 2:10-14; 7:11-13; 2:8, 17; 4:6; 8:14; 4:8; 8:5), work intimacy (1:7-8; 1:6; 8:11-12; 1:10), crisis intimacy (5:7-8; 8:6-7), conflict intimacy (3:1-4; 5:2-8; 2:15), commitment intimacy (2:16; 6:3; 7:10; 3:6-11), spiritual intimacy (8:6-7) and communication intimacy (the dialogue maintained by the couple throughout the book).<sup>142</sup>

Other highlight of the intimacy in the book are the expressions of fondness. Davidson listed ten hypocorisms (pet names) that the groom uses for the bride: ” (*ra'yātī*) “my love,” “my love or “darling” (1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4), (*kallā*) “bride” (4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 5:1), (*'ahōtī*) “my sister” (4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2); (*yônāṭī*) “my dove” (2:14; 5:2; 6:9), (*hayyāpā bannāšīm*) “fairest among women” (1:8; 5:9; 6:1). (*yā pātī*) “my beautiful one” (2:10, 13), (*haššūlammī*) “Shulamite” (6:13); (*tammātī*) “my perfect one” (5:2; 6:9), (*bat-nādīb*), “Prince’s daughter” (7:1), (*'ahābā*) “loved one” (7:6).<sup>143</sup>

And Shulamite, in turn, describes her husband Solomon, in four epithets of endearment: (*dōdī*) “my beloved” (1:13, 14, 16; 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17; 4:16; 5:2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 16; 6:2, 3; 7:9, 10, 11, 13; 8:14). (*še'ahābā napsī*) “whom my soul loves”

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<sup>142</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 601, 602.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 603.

(1:7; 3:1, 2, 3, 4), (*hārō'eh baššôsannîm*) “he who grazes among the lilies/lotus flowers” (2:16; 6:3), (*rē'î*) “my friend” (5:16).<sup>144</sup>

***Procreation is not the only one and nor the obligatory function of the sexuality.*** It is notable absent in the Song, but not negated. This reality helps to refute the idea that sex exists only for propagation of children. The lovers in the book are not hostile to the procreative function of the sexuality, on contrary, they allude to their own conception and birth with beauty and enthusiasm (3:4; 8:2; 6:9; 8:5), but they enjoy their sexual intimacy without such procreative purpose nor they muse about the children they probably may have together.<sup>145</sup>

Again we have returned to the holy of holies of Eden's garden. As in the creation account of Gen 2, the sexual experience within marriage is not linked with the utilitarian intent to propagate children. Lovemaking for the sake of (married) love, not procreation, is the message of the Song.<sup>146</sup>

***The marital love described in the Song is a paradisiacal love.*** That is, such as the love and the sexuality in the Eden garden, including all other creation, were very good (*tôb mē'ōd*), the conjugal love portrayed in the Song of Songs is also “beautiful, good, and wholesome, to be celebrated and enjoyed without fear or embarrassment.”<sup>147</sup> In both accounts (Genesis and the book of Song), the couple are naked and without shame or fear. As in the paradise Adam referred to Eve as “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23) or in other words, “you are my second self;” similarly the couple in Song declare to belong to one another (2:16; 6:3; 7:10). In the light of this, even though we are sinful beings and live in a sinful world, it is

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<sup>144</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 604.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 604, 605.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 607.

possible to enjoy the paradisiacal sexuality, which according to Davidson, has the following characteristics, based in the Song of Songs:<sup>148</sup>

1. *Paradisiacal love is stunningly beautiful* (1:1, 15, 16).
2. *Paradisiacal love is wonderfully sensuous*: it is sweet (2:3; cf. 4:16; 5:1, 13), fragrant (2:13; 3:6; 4:11; 5:13; 6:2), delightful in touch (1:2; 2:3-6; 4:10, 11; cf. 5:1; 7:6-9; 8:1, 3), by a simple look, the heart is ravished (4:9; 6:13), the sound of the lover thrills it (5:2).
3. *Paradisiacal love is an exuberant celebration* – sensuous beauty is its backdrop, “a continuous celebration of passion and its pleasures”<sup>149</sup> (3:6-11; 4:6; 8:14; 2:3-5; 4:13, 16; 7:13; 5:1; 7:9; 8:2).
4. *Paradisiacal love is a thrilling adventure* (1:4; 2:8, 10, 14, 15; 7:1 1-13; 8:14).
5. *Paradisiacal love is an exquisite delight* (2:3-4).
6. *Paradisiacal love is highly erotic* (1:2, 13; 2:6, 16, 17; 4:5; 5:2-6; 6:2-3; 8:3; 3:4; 7:2; 7:7-13; 5:13; 8:5, 10-14).
7. *Paradisiacal love is unashamed and uninhibited*. “Both lovers uninhibitedly and openly describe - and explore - the body of the beloved.”<sup>150</sup>
8. *Paradisiacal love is restrained and in good taste*. “The eroticism of the Song is not genital-centered; rather it is diffused throughout the body and projected onto the world beyond.”<sup>151</sup>
9. *Paradisiacal love is light-hearted play*.
10. *Paradisiacal love is a romantic love affair*.
11. *Paradisiacal love is powerfully passionate*.
12. *Paradisiacal love is an awe-inspiring mystery* (6:4, 10). “The Song does not try to explain the awesomeness of love’s sexual attraction: it is a

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<sup>148</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 607-621.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 608.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 614.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 616.

mystery. The Song proclaims the mysterious character of love by employing many literary mystifications to portray it.”<sup>152</sup>

*Sexual love in the marriage is the flame of Yahweh.* Many commentators affirm that there is not any reference of God nor a direct word from Him in the book of Song. So, many consider it as a pure and simple celebration of the wholesome beauty of the human sexual love and pleasure. This assumption raises up the question: why such a book like this may figure in the biblical canon if it is simply human and not related to God?

In Hebrew perspective, God is present in this book, and its content is a manifestation of His love and concern for the pleasure, love and satisfaction of the humankind.<sup>153</sup> The apparent absence of God and the apparent silence of His voice is understandable in the context of the pagan cults of fertility, in which “the very air was charged with the divinization of sex.”<sup>154</sup> It is a form of safeguard against the practice of divinizing sex such as happened in fertility cults. However, He is there and not silent. Below, we will present and analyze some passages that refer God or His words:

“*By the gazelles or by the does of the field*” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). The Hebrew phrase for this oath, under which Shulamite submits the daughters of Jerusalem, is *bišbā’ôt ’ô b’aylôt haśśādeh*, which is a wordplay with the Hebrew names of God: *bē’lōhē šēbā’ôt* - “by Elohe Shabaoth, the God of hosts;” and *bē’ ēl šadday* - “by El Shaddai, the Mighty God.” “The inspired poet has substituted similar-sounding names of animals (symbolic of love) for the customary divine names used in oaths.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 621.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

George M. Schwab explains this use of circumlocutions for the name of God, sustaining that in the Bible there is not any case of swearing an oath by zoological specimens. The expression “by the gazelles of the field” or “by the does of the field” serves “as circumlocutions for God Almighty, Lord of Hosts,” and also “as symbols throughout the Song for sexual endowment, appeal, comeliness, and fervor.”<sup>156</sup> He concludes saying:

The words, then, exist with three referents: animals in a symbolic forest, the divine warrior God Almighty and his Hosts, and ardent affection. ... Thus the terms combine the concept of God with the concept of love and its power. The girl desires the daughters of Jerusalem to swear by sexuality and God - and these two concepts are fused into a single image. The Song should then be read as if love were conceived as a divine attribute of God. ... Love is not simply a matter of feelings, social contracts, or trysts in the wood.<sup>157</sup>

*The voice of God in the center of the book.* The scholars have indicated the passages of chapters 4:16-5:1 and 8:5-7 as the high points of the book. The first one is classified as the center. In it we see the consummation of the marriage throughout the sexual intercourse and we can hear the voice of God blessing the couple (5:1b), such as He blessed all creation after the marriage and sexual union of Adam and Eve with the words “very good” (*tôb mē’ōd*) (Gen 1:31). The evidence that Yahweh is the one who is speaking to the couple in 5:1b, is the fact that the terms *rē’îm* (friends) and *dôdîm* (beloved ones) are used or applied only to the couple throughout the book (1:13-14, 16; 2:3, 8-10, 16-17; 4:10, 16; 5:2, 4-6, 8-10, 16; 6:1-3; 7:9-13; 8:5, 14.)

Commenting it, Dillow says,

The poet seems to say this is the voice of God Himself. Only the Lord could pronounce such an affirmation. He, of course, was the most intimate observer of all. Their love came from Him (Song 8:7). Thus, the Lord pronounces His

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<sup>156</sup> George M. Schwab, *The Song of Songs' Cautionary Message Concerning Human Love*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 41 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 43, 47-48, quoted in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 623.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

full approval on everything that has taken place. He encourages them to drink deeply of the gift of sexual love.<sup>158</sup>

Also, Glickman—as quoted in Davidson—comments, “In the final analysis this must be the voice of the Creator, the greatest Poet, the most intimate wedding guest of all, the one, indeed, who prepared this lovely couple for the night of his design.”<sup>159</sup>

*The name of God is clearly cited at the conclusion of the book.* The passage of chapter 8:5-7, the second high point of the Songs, is part of the conclusion. In the verse 6, properly in the last line, the name Yahweh appears in abbreviated form, in an agglutinated word: *šalhebetyâh* (flame of Yah), in which *šalhebet* is a noun that means “flame,” and the suffix *Yâh*, that is an abbreviation of the name Yahweh.<sup>160</sup> “Whether it is separated or not, commentators are generally agreed that the - *yâ* (or *yâh*) connected with *šalhebet* is the Hebrew for ‘Yah,’ the shortened form of the Tetragrammaton, YHWH (Yahweh).”<sup>161</sup> However, some bibles, such as New King James Version, for instance, translate *šalhebetyâh* into “a most vehement flame,” but in footnote it observes that “literally *A flame of Yah* (a poetic form of *YHWH, the Lord*).” But other versions that agreed with this last one translation are the following:

New American Standard Bible: “The *very* flame of the LORD;”

English Standard Version: “the very flame of the LORD;”

Complete Jewish Bible: “[as fierce as the] flame of *Yah*;”

God’s Word Translation: “flames that come from the LORD;”

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<sup>158</sup> Joseph C. Dillow, *Solomon on Sex: The Biblical Guide to Married Love* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1977), 86, quoted in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 591.

<sup>159</sup> S. Craig Glickman, *A Song for Lovers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 25, quoted in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 591.

<sup>160</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 624.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

The Living Bible: “the very flame of Jehovah;”

American Standard Version: “A very flame of Jehovah;”

Young’s Literal Translation: “a flame of Jah!”

Those who refuse this translation, claim that the use of the suffix *yāh* has as the only purpose to express the superlative, that is why some Bibles translate it as “a most vehement flame” or “a mighty flame” (NIV), or “the brightest kind of flame” (NLT). But this translation doesn’t have sustainability. On the contrary, there is a good number of reasons that compel into, or justify, the translation as “the flame of Yahweh:”

First, the construction of the expression *šalhebetyāh* is a subjective genitive in which Yah functions as the cause or the source of the flame. This is supported by “the *šap’el* or causative verbal root of *šalhebet* (common in Aramaic/Syriac).”<sup>162</sup> Second, in the OT, occurs only one time a parallel terminology to *šalhebetyāh*. This is the expression *ma’pēlyāh* (darkness of Yah) in Jer 2:31, in which the suffix *yāh* does not indicate a superlative, but the causer of the darkness whose is the Lord. Third, the immediate context of the Song 8:6 requires a meaning of *šalhebetyāh* that goes beyond the simple linguistic superlative. The love that the text describe only can resist and triumph over the forces of the death, grave, floods and wealth, when this love comes from the Lord. Fourth, in the broader biblical context, fire or flame of fire is an indicative of the presence or theophany of God: He “is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29); when He withdrew out Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden after the fall, He sent a cherubim at the east of the garden, to guard it with a flaming sword (gen 3:24); fire and flame of fire from Yahweh are present in the sanctuary when it was inaugurated and consecrated (Exod 40:34-38; Num 9:15); in the most holy place of

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<sup>162</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 626.

the sanctuary, the Shekinah dwelt there, between the cherubim (Exod 25:22; 1 Sam 4:4; 6:2; Ps 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16); the prophet Isaiah reports an occurrence in the heavenly temple, in which the seraphim (literally, “burning ones”), surrounding the throne of God (Isa 6:2), sang in antiphonal form, saying “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,” and then the entire temple was filled with smoke (Isa 6:4), and a live coal taken by a seraphim from the altar touched the prophet’s lips, to remove his iniquity and purify him (6:5-7). In Daniel 7:9-10, God is described as the Ancient of Days seated in His throne of fiery fire, which wheels were of burning fire, and a stream of fiery fire came out from it. Like in Song 8:6, Daniel 7:9-10 mentions fire or flames of fire three times.<sup>163</sup>

Therefore, the human love, including the pleasure and blessings of the sexual intimacy within the marriage is originated from God, as a spark of the Eternal Flame, and it is a revealing trait of the loving character of the Lord.

If the blaze of love, ardent love, such as between a man and woman, is indeed the flame of Yahweh, then this human love is explicitly described as originating in God, a spark off of the Holy Flame. It is therefore, in a word, holy love. Such a conclusion has profound implications for the whole reading of the Song of Songs - and for the quality and motivation of human sexual love. When the woman adjures her companions not to awaken Love until it is ready, implicit in this statement (and already hinted by the play on words with names of God in the oath formula) is the reality that Love is not ready capriciously or randomly but according to the will of him from whom this holy love originated. The love between man and woman is not just animal passion, or evolved natural attraction, but a holy love ignited by Yahweh himself! The love relationship is not only beautiful, wholesome, and good but holy. Lovers, then, will treat each other with godly self-giving because they are animated by a holy self-giving Love. It is perhaps no accident that the LXX translators translated the Hebrew word for “love” throughout the Song - *'ahăbâ* - with the Greek *agapē*, the same word chosen by the NT writers to describe God’s principled, selfless love.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 628, 629.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 630.

## **The Sexuality in the New Testament**

The extrabiblical context of the OT in the matter of sex is characterized by the pagan fertility cults, the reason why frequently the idolatry and the adultery went together, hand in hand.<sup>165</sup> This situation continues in the NT times parallel with the asceticism, a new raising up current related to the sex. It resulted into a conflict because of these two conflicting extremes. On the one hand, there are the cults of fertility, that led to immorality or licentiousness (1 Cor 6:13-20; 2 Pet 2:2, 14-16; Jude 4); in the other hand, there is the Greek philosophy that advocates the dichotomy of the human being into soul (good) and the body (evil) that evolved into the Gnosticism, which led to the asceticism (Col 2:20-23; 1 Tim 4:3).<sup>166</sup>

Independently of the context around it, the New Testament emphasizes the same principles emanated from the OT concerning the marriage, love and sexuality, founded in Genesis 1 and 2 (Matt 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Cor 6:16; 11:8-9; Eph 5:31; 1 Tim 2:13). These principles are the heterosexual marriage, the monogamy, the equality between man and woman and the wholeness of the human being. This last one principle affirms that the human being is a soul and does not have a soul, opposing to the Greek conception of duality of the soul versus body, in which the soul is good and superior, but it is imprisoned in the body. Thus the body should die so that the soul may be released. However, the biblical anthropology is the same from OT to NT: the human being is a wholistic entity without dichotomy or division. Therefore, the sexuality is good and recommended (1 Cor 7:3-5; Heb 13:4).

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<sup>165</sup> Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, 11.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

Other principle emanated from the OT and emphasized in NT is the exclusivity of the marital intimacy. The NT also condemns the adultery and other forms of sexual immorality (Matt 5:27-30; Acts 15:20; Rom 7:1-3; Gal 5:16-26; Col 3:5; Heb 13:4), and emphasizes that “every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body” (1 Cor 6:18). The love, beauty, purity, loyalty and faithfulness of the marriage is also used as the symbol of the relationship of Christ and His church (Eph 5:22-33; 2 Cor 11:2). And, on contrary, the adultery and harlotry are metaphors of the breaking off or apostasy from the God’s covenant by His people (Rev 17:1, 5, 15, 16; 19:2).

The NT reaffirms the principle of the permanence of the marriage against the divorce (Rom 7:1-3; Matt 5:31-32; 19:3, 8-9), the principle of the procreation (1 Tim 2:15; 5:10, 14) and the principle of sexual intercourse for pleasure, joy and loving satisfaction of the spouses independently from the procreation or childbirth (1 Cor 7:3-5; Heb 13:4).<sup>167</sup>

***The sacredness of the sex according to Hebrews 13:4:*** “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” This verse appeal for the respect that should be given to the matrimony and the undefiled bed. Everybody has the duty to keep the honor of the marriage and, concomitantly, the purity of the bed.

The Greek expression translated in English into “bed undefiled” is *koite amiantos*. The word *koite* appears at least four times in the New Testament (Luke 11:7; Rom 9:10; 13:13; Heb 13:4), and means bed, conjugal bed, sexual intercourse, concubitus, lewdness, whoredom, chambering and conception.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 624.

<sup>168</sup> Wesley J. Perschbacher, ed., *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 243.

According to the James Strong, *koite* means also “to cohabit, to implant the masculine sperm.”<sup>169</sup> The English word “coitus” also derives from the Latin word *coition*, which comes from the Greek *koite*.

Therefore, the translation of *koite amiantos* (Heb 13:4), would be “undefiled coitus”, or “undefiled sexual intercourse” such as some Bible translations do: “sex within marriage is pure” - Complete Jewish Bible (CJB), “guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband” - THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary. And Tim and Beverly Lahaye affirm:

Based on this meaning of the word, Hebrews 13:4 could be translated, “Coitus in marriage should be honored by all and kept pure.” Partners in coitus avail themselves of the possibility of the God-given privilege of creating a new life, another human being, as a result of the expression of their love.<sup>170</sup>

***The privilege or right and the duty or obligation of the sexual satisfaction according to 1 Corinthians 7:3-5:*** “Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

One of the themes of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians is to refute two extremes about the sexuality. In one point was the extreme of the immorality or free sex outside marriage, and in other, was the extreme of a stoic asceticism which consisted in an absolute abstinence of the sexual intercourse even within the marriage.

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<sup>169</sup> James Strong, “Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament” in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of Words in the Greek Testament* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1890), 42, quoted in Tim Lahaye and Beverly Lahaye, *O Ato Conjugal* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Editora Betânia, 1989), 17.

<sup>170</sup> Tim Lahaye and Beverly Lahaye, *O Ato Conjugal* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Editora Betânia, 1989), 17.

So, the apostle condemns the immorality in chapter 6:12-21, and defends the sexual intimacy within the marriage, condemning the asceticism or sexual abstinence in chapter 7:1-6.<sup>171</sup>

In the light of this passage, we got the following principles regarding the conjugal act in the marriage:

*Sexual satisfaction is, in the same time, a duty and a right of one another.*

In the verse 3, Paul says that all person (man or woman) who is married, had contracted a debt (*ópheilē*) from her or his spouse. This debt is not financial but sexual; that is, every husband or wife must pay or refund sexual pleasure and satisfaction to her or his spouse. The word *ópheilē* also has the figurative and broad sense of “obligation,” “duty,” or “one’s due.” This idea is reinforced by the verb connected to it, “render,” a translation of the Greek word *ápodidótō*, a verbal form of *ápodidōmi* in imperative present active of the third person singular, which also has the broad sense of “to give away,” “to give (up) or (out),” “to pay (out),” “to fulfill,” “to give or to pay back,” “to return,” “to render,” and “to recompense.”

Therefore, what is an obligation or a duty of one spouse is a right to another who receives it. That’s why we say that within the marriage, sexual satisfaction is, in the same time, a duty and a right of one another. It is prohibited to deprive the spouse from this pleasant blessing (v. 5). The denial of this pleasure to the spouse has the sense of steal, rob or defraud. This is the meaning of the word *ápostereíte*, a form of the verb *áposteréō* in the imperative present active of the second person plural.

*There is equality between husband and wife, especially in the sexual life.* In verse 4, the apostle reaffirms the equality of the sexes and between the spouses, especially in the matter of sex, when he affirms that the one’s body belongs to

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<sup>171</sup> Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 62.

another and vice-versa. That is, “the wife does not have authority (*éxousiázei*) over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority (*éxousiázei*) over his own body, but the wife does.” The word *éxousiázei* is the indicative present active of the third person singular of the verb *éxousiázō* which means “to have power over someone” (such as it appears in Luke 22:25), “to be mastered” and “to be under the power of” (1 Cor 6:12).

*The deprivation from sexual intercourse should be a mutual consent.* No one has the right or the authority to impose it to another. Beside the mutual agreement, the better reason for such consent of deprivation should be the “free participation in the special religious practices, even though it does not suggest asceticism in conjugal life. One should not conclude from this advice that abstaining from the privileges of marriage is necessary in order to engage in daily and regular prayer activities.”<sup>172</sup> The abstinence from sexual pleasure for prayer or fasting is not a commandment or obligation as if this pleasure was opposite to the prayer, but it is a free will of the couple. But, even this free will for abstinence is not total, it depends on the consent of the spouse. Otherwise, the ones who is involved in prayer will do it while fulfils his or her duty of satisfying the spouse. And the agreed deprivation should be of short time.

### **The Sabbath and the Sexual Intimacy**

After this journey, the question prevails: can an Adventist couple enjoy sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day? Can a pastor or elder who performed sexual intercourse on Sabbath preside the Holy Communion in that very day, or, in the case of the pastor, preside the ordination ceremony? And can the member who also did the

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<sup>172</sup> “Priveis” [1 Cor 7:5], *CBASD*, 6:779.

conjugal act participate in the Holy Super, or be ordained in that very Sabbath? And what about the preacher? Can he stand on the pulpit and preach after sexual intimacy with his spouse in the day of worship? Are the Sabbath and the sex opposite to one another?

Concerning the sexual intercourse on Sabbath day, the Bible does not prohibit or condemn it. There is not any passage for such prohibition or condemnation. And, in the light of this research, there is no one contradiction between Sabbath and sex. On the contrary, the two institutions - the Sabbath and the marriage - are closer, walk and work together to full the human being with blessings, such as we can see below.

### **Sabbath and Marriage (Sex) Connected in Their Origin**

Both were created by God almost in the same time (at the end of week creation), and were given by Himself to the humanity as especial gift. After the creation of all things which are conditions for welfare of the humanity, the Creator presented Adam with a wife or marriage and the Sabbath. The first gift fulfills the need of fellowship between man and woman, and the second fulfills the fellowship between God and the humanity.<sup>173</sup> It should be noted that the gift of marriage has as its essence or core the sexuality (Gen 1:28; 2:23-25).

The book of Genesis has two accounts of the origins: the first one is 1:1-2:3 and has the Sabbath at its climax; and the second one is the chapter 2:4-25 which climax is the marriage and, specifically, the sexual intercourse. Thus, according to their placement in the structures of their respective texts, the two gifts (Sabbath and sex) are parallels, and have the same value before their Originator. Richards Davidson explains that the pairing of the Sabbath and the marriage in the book of Genesis was

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<sup>173</sup> Razafiarivony, "A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy," 125-130.

not an accident. The holiness of the Sabbath was actualized by the presence of God (2:3) and this same presence solemnized the marriage covenant (2:22-23).<sup>174</sup>

The narrator of the Genesis linked the two institutions to “implicitly indicates that the marriage relationship is holy like the Sabbath.” And this linking reveals the sacredness and importance of the covenant bond between husband and wife in likeness of the “sacred covenant relationship between God and humanity represented by the Sabbath.”<sup>175</sup>

Therefore,

Sexuality is sacred not in the sense of the “sacralization/divinization of sex” practiced in the pagan fertility cults but in that it is hallowed by the divine approbation and presence. Human sexuality is thus a divinely created holy mystery. It is apparent already at the beginning of the biblical canon that the marriage relationship illustrates the divine-human relationship epitomized by the Sabbath and, by the same token, the divine-human intimacy intended for the Sabbath illuminates the intimacy God intended for marriage.<sup>176</sup>

### **The Sexual Love Is the Flame of Yahweh**

As we saw above in the analyze of the book of Songs of Solomon, the sexual love within the marriage is *šalhebetyâh* (the flame of Yahweh), meaning that the love that unites husband and wife, reaching up its high level in the physical intimacy, and resists and triumphs over the separating forces such as the death, the grave, the floods and the wealth, is a spark of the Eternal Flame, and a revelator of the Lord’s loving trait and character.

As the Flame of Yahweh, and considering that God “is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29), the sexual intimacy is an indicative of His theophany. Such as the fire and the Shekinah represented the presence of God in the sanctuary (Exod 40:34-38; Num

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<sup>174</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 52, 53.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

9:15; Exod 25:22; 1 Sam 4:4; 6:2; Ps 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16), the private place or room where a couple enjoys the blessings of the flame of Yahweh in a sexual love, becomes also holy and a sanctuary. This great mystery is so deeper and complex that God uses to represents His union with His church (Eph 5:22-33). This reminds us of His love for us. In the light of this there is no contradiction between sex and Sabbath.

### **Sabbath and Marriage Are Similar in Their Characteristics**

The Bible reveals deep similarities between marriage (including sex) and Sabbath as it was described by Pastor João Ribeiro Rodrigues, Professor emeritus of the Seminário Adventista do Huambo. He explained that the Sabbath is rest and the marriage is also rest (Gen 2:2; Ruth 1:9; 3:1); the Sabbath is blessing and the marriage is also blessing (Gen 2:2; 1:28); and the Sabbath is holy and sanctify, and the marriage is also holy and sanctify (Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12; 1 Cor 7:14; 1 Thess 3:3, 4).<sup>177</sup>

Therefore, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew word used in Ruth 1:9 and 3:1, is *nôah*, which means rest, tranquility and calm. The root of the word is the verb *nûah* and “has the sense not only of absence of movement, but also of to be installed in a determined place (either concrete or abstract) with nuances of definitive character or (when one speaks abstractly) of victory, salvation, and so on.”<sup>178</sup>

In the Bible the verb *nûah* is theologically used in four situations: funeral (Job 3:13, 17; Prov 21:16; Dan 12:13), spiritual (Job 3:26; Prov 29:17; Isa 14:3, 7; Prov

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<sup>177</sup> João Ribeiro Rodrigues, class notes for Family Counseling, Seminário Adeventista do Huambo, Angola, December 2003.

<sup>178</sup> Coppes, “1323 (*nuah*) descansar, estabelecer-se,” *DITAT*, 936.

29:9; Isa 28:12; Ps 116:7), military (Deut 12:10; Josh 21:44; Ps 125:3) and soteriological.<sup>179</sup>

The soteriological use elapses from theology of Sabbath. In Genesis 2:2-3 the *shabat* (cessation of the work) describes the God's rest, but in Exodus 20:11 is used the word *nûah*. Thus, the man must not only abstain from his worldly efforts (Exod 31:12-17; Isa 58:13, 14), but enter also in a rest state in the victory/salvation (Josh 1:13; Deut 25:19). Only the presence and the favor of God make possible this rest (including military rest; Exod 33:14; Isa 14:3, 7).<sup>180</sup>

Ergo, if the marriage whose essence is the sexual union, what makes man and woman "one flesh" (Gen 2:24-25; 1 Cor 6:16), is a rest like the God's rest at the end of work of creation (Exod 20:11; Gen 2:1-3), the couple who has sexual intercourse in the day of rest (Sabbath) enjoys a twofold rest. They rest in Jesus and in each other with love. This results into blessing and sanctity.

### **The Honeymoon of Adam and Eve**

On the first Friday, at the end of creation God Himself officiated the first wedding ceremony, the wedding of Adam and Eve, and after that, the biblical account says that they became "one flesh" and "were both naked" without shame (Gen 2:24-25), describing the sexual intercourse that followed the wedding. Making the parallelism with the first account which high point is the Sabbath, here in the second account, the biblical narrator is saying that on that first Friday night, shortly after they received the Sabbath, Adam and Eve had their honeymoon on Sabbath day.

However, this narrative is not a mere accident. It fulfills the purpose to reveal to us that the two institutions of time (Sabbath) and place (home) which are closer and walk and work together to full the human being with blessings. In that day, the rest,

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<sup>179</sup> Coppes, "1323 (*nuah*) descansar, establecer-se," *DITAT*, 937.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

the blessing and the holiness of the Sabbath, in one hand, and the rest, the blessing and the holiness of the intimacy of marital love, in other hand, were united as one.

### **The Jews' Experience**

When we talked about the Sabbath in this study, we observed that the Jews, especially, after the captivity of Babylonia, they became extremely rigorous with the observance of the Sabbath and loaded it with so many traditions. However, what is amazing is the fact that the rabbis and the Pharisees, the major and more orthodox religious party of the Jews, defended, as we saw at the beginning of this study, the consummation of the joys of the sexual intercourse. For a good married Jew, sexual intercourse may lack on other days of the week less on the Sabbath, it is a part of the celebration. “The orthodox Jews, whose respect for the Sabbath we can hardly question, considers Friday night as a perfect opportunity for engaging in intercourse.”<sup>181</sup>

### **Question on Isaiah 58:13, 14**

One of the biblical passages that many people have used to contradict the physical intimacy on Sabbath is Isaiah 58:13, 14, which says: “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words. Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.”

However, when we analyze very well two of the words of this same passage, we shall understand the opposite of what people say. The first word is the

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<sup>181</sup> Wittschiebe, *God Invented Sex*, 91.

word *pleasure* that translates the Hebrew word *hepes* whose meaning, beyond “pleasure” or “joy,” is also “costly jewels” (Isa 54:12), “treasure,” and “jewel” (Prov 3:15; 8:11), “business,” “affair,” “matter” (Eccl 3:1, 17; 5:7).<sup>182</sup> The same word is used in Proverbs 31:13, associated to the handwork; and in same chapter of Isaiah (58:3), it is linked to the exploitation of the workers. In this context, Isaiah 58:13 is not condemning the pleasure in the broad sense, but the business or work on Sabbath.

The other word is the word “delight” that translates the Hebrew word *‘oneg* which also means “delicacy” and “exquisite delight.” This word is also used in Isaiah 13:22 to describe the pleasure of the Babylonian palace. This is affirming that the Sabbath is a day of joy and exquisite delight that may include a good meal, fellowship with family, spiritual brothers and God, even physical intimacy between the couple in marriage. “Sabbath should be the most exquisite, luxuriously delightful day of the week. Isaiah 58:13 calls for selfless joyous pleasure on Sabbath.”<sup>183</sup>

### **Question on Exodus 19:15**

Other passage is Exodus 19:15, that says: “And he said to the people, ‘Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives.’”

The context of this order was not the day of Sabbath but the manifestation of the God’s presence, which subsequently had its continuity in the sanctuary by means of the Shekinah glory. The ritual of sanctuary obviously was incompatible with ritual defilement such as physical, including sexual (Lev 15:18).

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<sup>182</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 125-130.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 133.

Nevertheless, “the Bible does not seem to consider physical intimacy on the Sabbath ritually defiling. Anyway, ritual law has been abolished on the cross (Col 2:14).”<sup>184</sup>

### **Question on 1 Samuel 21:4-6**

Another passage used to condemn the sexual intimacy on the Sabbath day is 1 Samuel 21:4-6, which says: “And the priest answered David and said, ‘There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.’ Then David answered the priest, and said to him, ‘Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day.’ So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away.”

Based on this passage, some people allege that the couples are obligated to abstain themselves from their physical intimacy because of the religious incompatibility that exists between the sexual intercourse and the ceremonies and things that are sacred.

According to this passage, David was fleeing from King Saul, who was determined to kill him. He was hungry and rush, thus he went to priest Ahimelech, at Nob, to request some supply of food, that is “five *loaves of bread*” or whatever the priest could give. The priest’s answer was that there was not any common (*hol*) bread, but only holy (*qōdeš*) bread (Exod 25:30; Lev 24:5-9) that have been removed from the holy place of the sanctuary and replaced by the new bread. Who could eat these loaves of bread were only the priests (Matt 12:3,4). However, face to the situation of the David and his young boys, and the need to save the life, the

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<sup>184</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 133.

priest Ahimelech decided to give them these loaves of bread on condition that they “have kept themselves from women.”

As answer for the conditions presented by the priest, David said that there are three days since they came for this mission and, therefore, they are kept from women during this time. Moreover, this holiness or purity they maintain even in common journey. Thus, the priest gave him the holy bread.

The Hebrew word translated into vessels (v. 5) *kālê* is a noun masculine plural of *kēlî* whose Greek synonym is *skeuē*. These words are a biblical euphemism to say person or people, wife, body and sexual organ (Hos 8:8; Isa 22:24; Jer 22:28; Acts 9:15; 1 Thess 4:4; 1 Pet 3:7). According to the Deuteronomy 23:9-14, in case of war, the Israelite fighters were obligated to be clean or holy. This cleanness or holiness involved also the sexual abstinence (Leviticus 15:16-18).

The condition of purity that the priest required from David and his men is also a form of God’s protection to His people. Even the priests could ministry, touch and eat the things of the sanctuary in state of moral and ritual purity (Exod 30:17-21; Lev 10:8-10; 16:4, 24, 28; 22:4-7). Therefore, if this condition was required from priests for protection of their own lives, then it should not be different for David and his young boys (Leviticus 15:16-18), so that their lives may also be protected.

The sexual purity required here is the same required in Exodus 19:15, which is spoken in detail in Leviticus 15:16-18; and 22:4-7. And it is related with the ritual of the sanctuary, not with the correct observance of the Sabbath day. Commenting these passages, the *Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Commentary* says:

About Leviticus 15:

This chapter treats of various types of impurity, as well in man as in woman. This does not imply moral transgression, even they could

contaminate people near or those they may contact with. Some of these discharges occur as part of natural course of the life, as a woman in period of menstruation (v. 25) or with blood flow (v. 19), and the seminal flow of a man during the sleep (16). It is concluded that these impurities don't result from sin, but from normal functions of the body or from abnormal conditions.<sup>185</sup>

And about Leviticus 22:4-7:

All that was used in tabernacle should be rigorously cleaned, ceremonially and in other forms. If some priest became impure, must carefully avoid to touch or even to draw nearer of the sacred things. This included all that belonged to the service of the sanctuary, such as the altars with its utensils and also the offerings that people brought to the priests. If he did it, he would be excluded from service of the tabernacle.

[...] The major part of the contamination that could reach the priest were only of temporary nature, and the exclusion from sanctuary would last until evening.

[...] God ordered that all those who should serve in the sanctuary must be absolutely clean. If they should touch a reptile or other person who was impure, the priest must wash himself and could not ministry until the following day.

[...] The day ended at sunset. In that hour, the doors of the sanctuary were closed and the services of the day were winded up. Therefore, if the priest was contaminated till the evening, he could officiate only in the following day.<sup>186</sup>

The abstinence of sexual intimacy as condition of purity for the ceremonies and things of the sanctuary, is a requirement of the ritual purity, and not of the moral purity. According to this rule, the sexual intimacy within marriage, was not a sin, but caused a certain type of impurity that lasted only until the evening, and was removed by a bath. These laws of ritual purity were nailed in the cross, and the Christian believers are no longer binding to them (Col 2:14).

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<sup>185</sup> "Fluxo Seminal" [Lev 1:2], *CBASD*, 1:833.

<sup>186</sup> "Que se abstenham," "Leproso," "Qualquer que tocar algum réptil," "Posto o sol" [Lev 22:2, 4, 5, 7], *CBASD*, 1:865.

### Question on Corinthians 7:5

The last one passage used with the purpose to oppose the intimacy in the sacred day, the Sabbath day, is 1 Corinthians 7:5 that reads: “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

Here Paul is commanding the couples to don't deprive one another of the sexual satisfaction and pleasure. The Greek verbal form *ápostereíte* is in the imperative present active of the second person plural. It means that there is no place for the practice of stoic asceticism within the marriage. The deprivation is only allowed in base of mutual agreement between wife and husband for reason of prayer. But this abstinence must not be so longer in sense to avoid the sexual temptation.

Does it mean that Paul was imposing the rule of ritual impurity upon Christian believers? However, in that time, in Judaism and in other ancient religions, there was a tension between the sex and the sacred, that required the temporal or permanent sexual abstinence, the answer for this question is a clear not for the following reasons:

First, Paul is silent about the notion of purity in conjugal relations. Second, if it was a rule to be enjoined, then there would be no need at all for Paul to instruct them to withdraw by mutual consent. Third, Paul's position on ritual observances as revealed in his epistles cannot be overlooked.<sup>187</sup>

Sexual abstinence for the reason of prayer is the only one justification Paul found to allow the couples to deprive themselves from enjoying the pleasure of the intimacy. But, as he said in verse 6, this deprivation for prayer is “as a concession,

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<sup>187</sup> Razafiarivony, “A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy,” 134, 135.

not as a commandment.” Why it is not a commandment, but a simple concession? Because, before it, he taught that sex within marriage is: First, an obligation or duty (*ópheilē*) of one spouse to the other, no one should be deprived from sexual satisfaction; the mate has the duty of attending or pay back (*ápodídōmi*) his or her sexual need, no matter the time. Second, in matter of sex, the one’s body belongs to another (*éxousiázei*), that’s why there is no place for deprivation (*áposterēō*). Third, the occurrence of deprivation depends on mutual consent no matter the reason for that, even though it is the prayer. Fourth, the prayer is the unique acceptable motive for such abstinence. Fifth, if the couple agreed to abstain for this reason, it should be for short time. Sixth, after the short time of abstinence for prayer, they should join together again. Seventh, sexual intercourse within marriage is the rule and helps to win the Satan’s temptation, and abstinence is the exception.

As we will see below the Paul’s position regarding ritual observance is that they are no longer obligatory for Christian believers. In other hand Paul never considered sexual intimacy within marriage as a source of defilement. Therefore, he would be incongruous if he was imposing sexual abstinence as a form of ritual purity. And the exception of deprivation of sexual intercourse because of the prayer does not have any connection with the Sabbath day.

### **The Physical Intimacy and the Communion, Ordination and Preaching Services**

Other questions that come out from this issue of Sabbath versus sex, is related to the ceremonies of the Lord’s Supper and of the ordination, and the preaching service: Can a pastor or elder who did sexual intercourse on Sabbath preside the Holy Communion in that very day? Or can he officiate the ordination ceremony? And can the member who also did the conjugal act participate in the Holy

Super, or be ordained in that very Sabbath? And can the preacher stand on the pulpit and preach after sexual intimacy with his spouse in the day of worship?

These questions are impacted with the notion of purity highlighted in the OT, especially in the context of the sanctuary rituals (Lev 5:2; 11:24-40; 12; 13:1-46; 15; 18:6-23; 20:2-5, 19; Num 5:2, 3; 19:11, 13, 20; Deut 24:1-4; Isa 30:22; Jer 3:1-10; Ezek 7:19-21). These impurities are divided into two types: 1) the ritual impurity - the permitted impurities that focus on the person, are natural and necessary which rectification was through ablutions, sacrifices, time elements and disposal (Lev 10:4-5; 13:52-57; Num 5:2, 3; 19:1-6, 11-22; 31:13-24); and 2) the moral impurity – the moral impurities that affected the sanctuary and the land, were controllable and not necessary, and many times they resulted in punishment, exile or destruction (Lev 5:2; Num 19:13, 20; Lev 18:6-23; 20: 2-5, 19; Ezek 18:6, 11; Deut 24:1-4 Jer 3:1-10; Isa 30:22; Ezek 7:19-21; Num 35:33-34; Num 19:13, 20; 35:12, 16-21, 31; Exod 21:12-21; Ezra 9:10-15; Isa 64:4-11).<sup>188</sup>

Some sources of ritual impurity are the death (corpse and carcass – Num. 19:11; Lev 11:24-40), sex (seminal emission, menstruation, lochial discharge after birth, and abnormal sexual discharge – Lev. 15:2-24; 12), and disease (leprosy – Lev. 13:1-46; Num. 5:2-3).<sup>189</sup>

Still according to Razafiarivony, sexual intercourse within marriage, in context of the ceremonies of the sanctuary, is a ritual impurity and not moral impurity. These are different. Moral impurity is a result from sin, while ritual

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<sup>188</sup> Davidson Razafiarivony, “The Concept of Purity/Impurity in the Church,” in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Eriks Galenieks, and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi, Kenya: Theological Seminary of Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 175.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

impurity comes from the functions of the body or from the contact with a source of impurity.<sup>190</sup>

Ritual impurity is a bodily impurity which can be removed by ritual ablution. Moral impurity is caused by inadvertent violation of prohibited commandments (Lev. 4:2), and there is no ritual which can purify it. Moral impurities are sins. Physical impurities leave the person ritually defiled and in need of ritual purification. Spiritual impurities (or sins) defile both the person and the sanctuary. In such a state, the person is in need of forgiveness, not ritual purification. The sanctuary is equally in need of expiation.<sup>191</sup>

In the New Testament the rules of ritual impurity lose their force slowly, and after the crucifixion, they stay completely without sense. In His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), Jesus approached deep and broadly the implications of many aspects of the moral law, but nothing about ritual purity. However, His attitude about it was a clear indication that it was no more worthy. For example, He was touched by a hemorrhaging woman, and He did not complain about the possibility of ritual impurity; He touched the dead daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21-43); He touched the leper (Matt 8:1-4); He did not take as important the Pharisaic tradition of hand washing before eating (Matt 1:1-20); He deliberately mixed himself with the sinner, publicans and Samaritans. (Matt 9:11; 11:19; John 4).<sup>192</sup>

The ritual impurity was linked to the temple and its service. Therefore, the death of Jesus put an end to all ceremonies of the earth temple. Even the insistence of the Jews in performing the ended ritual of the temple was also finished when this temple itself was destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans, as Jesus had predicted. Thus, the ritual impurity is no longer.

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<sup>190</sup> Razafiarivony, "The Concept of Purity/Impurity," 173.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 185-188.

Led by the Holy Spirit, Peter was the first apostle to break the ritual barrier between Jews and Gentiles, when he entered into Cornelius' house (Act 10). The recommendations that the Council of Jerusalem made for Gentiles did not include any precepts of ritual purity (Acts 15:20, 28, 29). Paul also in his letters reaffirms the end of the ceremonies of ritual purity or impurity. The Christian is now the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1), and the things that may defile the body are no more ritual, but moral. Finally, he wrote against these ritual rules (Gal 4:10; Col 2:20-23; Rom 14:14; 1 Tim 4:3).<sup>193</sup>

In concluding this approach, Razafiarivony says that

Even though some Christians in the first centuries continued to observe ritual purities/impurities, there is no clear evidence that enjoins Christians to observe them. There is no evidence that lepers, menstruous women, women who have recently given birth, men with seminal emission, married people who had sexual intercourse, people who touched a corpse, etc. were not allowed to come to church before purifying themselves. Even gentiles who, by their nature, were considered unclean by the Jewish people were not required to submit themselves to these rules (Acts 10). In the NT church, the notion and practice of ritual purities were set aside, and at times denigrated (Acts 10:28; Rom 14:14; Gal 2:11-21; Col 2:20-23; 1 Tim 4:3). Cessation from ritual observances may have been gradual. But Jesus' death on the cross made it effective that ritual observances were done away (Col 2:14).<sup>194</sup>

In the light of all that was said about sexuality in the Bible, the sex and the Sabbath and ritual purity and impurity, the answer for the questions on the Lord's Supper, ordination ceremony and preaching service versus sexual intercourse, is that there is no contradiction or fault, no one impurity comes from it and it is not a sin.

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<sup>193</sup> Razafiarivony, "The Concept of Purity/Impurity," 188-193.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 196, 197.

CHAPTER 4  
PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION  
AND EVALUATION

**Design of the Program**

The survey that we conducted in the two churches - the Kikuxi Central Church and the Mundial Judeia Church - and the opinions given by the pastors requested and encouraged a deeper and clarifying study of this issue with the churches, and it moved us to design a study project with these churches in order to help them to find out an answer with a strong biblical foundation.

In that survey we observed that the view and practice of the pastors regarding sexual intimacy in the Sabbath is highly positive, in the order of 87,6% of positivity versus 7% of doubt and only 5,2% of negativity. Nevertheless, it is not the same that happens with those two churches. In the Kikuxi Central SDA Church the positivity ranking is around 47,7% of the men and 39,1% of the women; 17,3% of the men and 19,4% of the women expressed doubt, while 34,5% of the men and 44,3% of the women are negative. The Judeia-Mundial SDA Church, in turn, proved to be more positive with 64% of the men and 44,1% of the women. The uncertainty or doubt was of 30% of the men and 46,5% of the women. And the negativity was of 10% of the men and 11,5% of the women.

Combined with this result, the experiences that they reported and the feelings resulting from these experiences as presented in the pages (27-51), we elaborated two lectures to share with the couples of these two churches. The theme of lectures were the Sexuality in the Bible, and the Sabbath and the Sexual Intimacy. These

approaches are a summary of the second and the third subthemes of the chapter 3 of this study project. They took one hour of unilateral presentation followed by two hours of debate, and a half of hour of inquiry.

In order to get the feedback of the people about the lectures that were presented, we conducted a survey by inquiry to the participants. It has six core questions which we may see below as we analyze their possible answers:

*After this study, what is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?*

Such as in the previous inquiry, this question has six possible answers. Two of them are positive, three negative and one that is not positive or negative, it expresses doubt. The positive answers are these: 1 - “It is a blessing” – this conveys a highly positive view of the sexual intimacy on Sabbath, meaning that it is right, good and a special and joyful gift bestowed by God to His sons and daughters; 2 - “It is something right” – conveying a simply positive view, meaning that it can be done and there is no sin or condemnation.

The negative answers are these: 1 – “It is impure” – this conveys the view that sex on Sabbath is not sin or wrong and does not have condemnation, but makes impure the couple who engages in it, inadequate for spiritual things which occurs on Sabbath and also for the encounter with God; 2 – “It is wrong” – meaning that, instead of being sin, the sexual intimacy on Sabbath is a deviation from the rule or norm that may become sin such as some conduct or behavior which has a certain appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22; 1 Cor 6:12); 3 – “It is a sin” – it is an absolute declaration that whosoever has sexual intercourse on Sabbath is committing sin, and unless he or she repents, will be condemned.

If the inquired person cannot give a positive or negative answer, he or she may signalize the answer “I am still in doubt.”

*What is your opinion about this content?*

Through this question the inquired people have the possibility to evaluate the content of the lecture with one of these rating: very relevant, relevant, little relevant and irrelevant.

*Do you think that what was studied here will affect positively your conjugal life?*

With the answer to this question the inquired one will allow us to know if the study may cause positive changes in his or her conjugal life. The possible answers are simple, only “Yes” or “Not.”

*Have your doubts on this subject been resolved?*

The answer to this question helps to know if the problem was solved in the individuals and in the church. The possible answers are only: “Yes” or “Not.”

*Do you recommend that this issue may also be shared in other Adventist congregations?*

“Yes” or “Not” are the possible answer to this question. But it also helps to assess the degree of satisfaction for the study.

*Do you have any observation or comments? (please, write below)*

If the inquired person desires or thinks necessary, emits through writing his observation or comments about the study.

## **Implementation**

### **In the Kikuxi Central Church**

In this church, the implementation of the program was made on the afternoon of the Sabbath, February 26, 2024. The meeting was only with married people. They

were 15 women and 18 men, 33 in total. After the lecture and the debate, followed the inquiry which they answered in the following way:

*After this study, what is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?*

The answers presented in the Table 35 shows the positive change that the study made on them.

*Table 35. Opinion about Sex on Sabbath after the Study*

Possible Answers		Men	%	Women	%
Positive answers	1 - "It is a blessing"	16	88,88%	14	93,33%
	2 - "It is something right"	0	-----	1	6,66%
Negative answers	1 - "It is impure"	0	-----	0	-----
	2 - "It is wrong"	1	5,55%	0	-----
	3 - "It is a sin"	0	-----	0	-----
Doubting answer	"I am still in doubt."	1	5,55%	0	-----

*What is your opinion about this content?*

The Table 36 presents the answers to this question, and signs how relevant it was for them.

*Table 36. Evaluation of the Content of the Presentation*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
"Very relevant"	17	94,44%	14	93,33%
"Relevant"	1	5,55%	1	6,66%
"Little relevant"	0	-----	0	-----
"Irrelevant"	0	-----	0	-----

*Do you think that what was studied here will affect positively your conjugal life?*

All women (they are 15) said “yes,” the study will change their life positively. 17 men said the same, except one who said “not.”

*Have your doubts on this subject been resolved?*

All the women and all men said “yes.” Their doubts were resolved.

*Do you recommend that this issue may also be shared in other Adventist congregations?*

All the women and all men recommend to share the study with other Adventist congregations.

*Do you have any observation or comments? (please, write below)*

Some comments that the women made were the following:

1 – “Some homes have a lot of problems because of the sex on Sabbath, if she may or not attend the husband. Pastor, do not stop here. Help in giving life to the homes that are spiritually and sexually dead.”

2 – “I would like that you to also talk about the ways in which a man can satisfy a woman, so that she may have the desire to repeat the sexual intercourse many times.”

3 – “I would like to ask the pastor to come again and talk more about sex because there is a taboo for many women.”

4 – “I am thankful because I learned things that I didn’t know before.”

The men’s comments are these:

1 – “The study we had today was very good. I advise the leadership of the church to continue with these initiatives of clarifying the issues that divide the church so that we may have consensus in certain subjects. It was very profitable. I am very

satisfied and thankful for the pastors and all members that organized the program.

May God bless your ministry.”

2 – “We need more this genre of lecture in our churches.”

3 – “We just thank God for this study, and want that lectures of this genre may be done more times. This clarification was very good and may be done in other Adventist churches. Thank you Pastor Florindo, and may God bless your ministry.”

4 – “Studies like this deserve to be done in all weekend so that the church may educate all the families.”

5 – “I am happy and thankful because I partake in the program with my wife.”

### **In the Mundial-Judeia Church**

In this church, the implementation of the program also was made in the afternoon of the Sabbath, March 2, 2024. The meeting was only with married people. They were 45 women and 57 men, 102 in total. After the lecture and the debate, followed the inquiry which they answered in the following manner:

*After this study, what is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)?*

The answers presented in the Table 37 shows the positive change that the study made on them.

*Table 37. Opinion about Sex on Sabbath after the Study*

Possible Answers		Men	%	Women	%
Positive answers	1 - “It is a blessing”	49	85,96%	39	86,66%
	2 - “It is something right”	4	7,01%	2	4,44%
Negative answers	1 – “It is impure”	0	-----	0	-----
	2 – “It is wrong”	0	-----	0	-----
	3 – “It is a sin”	2	3,5%	3	6,66%
Doubting answer	“I am still in doubt.”	2	3,5%	1	2,22%

*What is your opinion about this content?*

The answers to this question are presented in the Table 38, which also signs the relevance of the study for them.

*Table 38. Evaluation of the Content of the Presentation*

Possible Answers	Men	%	Women	%
“Very relevant”	46	80,7%	39	86,66%
“Relevant”	6	10,52%	3	6,66%
“Little relevant”	3	5,26%	3	6,66%
“Irrelevant”	2	3,5%	0	-----

*Do you think that what was studied here will affect positively your conjugal life?*

41 women said “yes,” the study will change their life positively, and 4 said “not.” 54 men also said “yes” and 3 of them said “not.”

*Have your doubts on this subject been resolved?*

Almost all the women (44) said “yes,” their doubts were resolved, except one who said “not.” And 54 men also said “yes” and 3 of them said “not.”

*Do you recommend that this issue may also be shared in other Adventist congregations?*

All the women said “yes.” They recommend this study to be shared to other Adventist churches. And all men also said “yes.”

*Do you have any observation or comments? (please, write below)*

Some women commented the following:

1 – “The presentation of the theme was very explicit, meaning that the pastor took time enough for preparing the study and then to teach. I am very thankful. May you keep on so, and may God crown you with wisdom.”

2 – “Learning about this theme was very good. There were so many doubts regarding this issue, but now are solved. Praise the Lord. Thank you very much. May this study also be shared with other churches.”

3 – “Today’s study was very useful. I learned a lot about sex.”

4 – “We thank so much for the lecture. We learned a lot of things that we never heard before. Check back often. May God bless you more.”

5 – “God be praised for the coming of the pastor. Now I understood very well. In the name of Jesus, I am happy. Check back often, pastor. And may God bless you and your family.”

6 – “I just have to thank God and the pastor for this wonderful day. We are very happy. Thank you for all. May God bless you.”

7 – “If sex on Sabbath was a sin, God would not orient the first couple to multiply on Friday sunset, which is the opening of the Sabbath.”

8 – “I am thankful for the theme and the knowledge that I got by the God’s grace. For me the marriage is sacred and the sex also is sacred.”

9 – “I loved so much this program. It helped me so much. Many doubts were clarified, thank God. I am very happy because my husband also participated in this program with me. I thank the pastor, and I wish him to continue in this way. May God bless you.”

10 – “Sex on Sabbath is very good as we learned today. I think that the wrong is to speak swear words and obscenities. Other problem is when the woman does not get the orgasm.”

11 – “I am grateful for the program, because in truth I’ve always been very afraid of having sex on Sabbath, and I really thought it was a sin. But now I realize it is not. May God be praised. Amen.”

And the men comments are these:

1 – “I have felt bad after sex on Sabbath day. On these occasions, when I was in the church what I spoke had no weight, sense and spiritual impact. That’s why I prefer not to have sex on Sabbath lest I feel failure in my words. Because all that weighs the conscience I cannot do.”

2 – “Pastor, we also need to think about the negative points of this situation under penalty of rushing into applying this negative in our home. The Sabbath is holy and separated only for God. We must have clear conscience while we interact with the Creator of the universe.”

3 – “I just have to say that it was worth it. It brought light that dissipated that darkness which the radical brethren used to bring with their personal doctrines.”

4 – “I really enjoyed the study, and I hope you do it more often.”

5 – “For me this study made all clear, because I thought that it was wrong to have sexual intercourse in the Lord ’s Day. I misinterpreted Isaiah 58:13, 14. But now, the only thing that I can say is that may God bless you Pastor, greatly.”

6 – “In fact, having sex on Sabbath is not a sin at all, but it is something pleasurable and of great joy. The evil is to have illicit sex on this day. As long as it is a moral sex, it is considered pleasing in the eyes of God.”

7 – “I was good to learn about this issue that cleared my doubts. It was very relevant. We need to hear more about it.”

8 – “I don’t see anything contrary, when I have sex on Sabbath I feel more motivated for the church activities, even the greeting to the brothers in the church is more cheerful. When I am denied sex that day I feel unmotivated. Thank you for this study. It was a blessing for me.”

9 – “My comment is that all that was a taboo for me was now broken. Today I understand very well the issue. I used to refuse to have sex on Sabbath because I thought that it was a sin, and my wife used to be very upset because of my refusal. But thank God, today I learned a lot.”

## **Evaluation**

### **Kikuxi Central Church**

In this church, our study was with 33 people, being 15 women and 18 men. After the study, the totality of the women manifested a positive view regarding the sexual act on Sabbath (14 of them said “it is a blessing,” and 1 said “it is something right”). As for men, the degree of positivity is 88,88% (16 men said also “it is a blessing,”) while the negativity is 5,55 % (one said “it is wrong”) and the doubt is also 5,55%. In summary, both groups of women and men as only one group of 33 people manifested a positivity of 93,93%, a negativity of 3% and equal percent of doubt.

100% of both groups (women and men) considered the study as being relevant. More than 93% said that it is very relevant and the rest said it was just relevant. All women and almost all men (17) said that the study will affect positively their conjugal life, except one man who said “not.” And all of them (women and men)

said that their doubt were resolved, and recommend to share the study with other Adventist congregations.

### **Mundial-Judeia Church**

In this church we worked with 45 women and 57 men, 102 people in total. 91,11% of the women manifested a positive view about the issue (39 said “it is a blessing,” and 2 said “it is something right”). The negativity was 6,66% (3 said “it is a sin”) and 1 woman is still in doubt, making up 2,22%. As for men, the degree of positivity is 92,98% (49 said that “it is a blessing,” and 4 said that “it is something right”), while the negativity is 3,5% (2 affirmed that “it is a sin”) and the doubt is also 3,5% of doubt (this comprises 2 people). In summary, both groups as only one manifested a positivity of 92,15%, a negativity of 4,9%, and 2,94% of the people still remain in doubt.

92,15% of both groups of women (42 people or 93,32%) and men (52 people or 91,22%) approved the relevance of the lecture. In other words, being that 86,66% (39 women) assessed it as “very relevant” and 6,66% (3 women) assessed it as “relevant.” And 46 men (80,7%) assessed it as being “very relevant” and 6 men (10,52%) assessed as being “relevant.” While 3 women (6,66%) and 3 men (5,26%) assessed that it is “little relevant,” making up 5,88% of all participants. And 2 men (3,5% of this genre and 1,96% of all participants) assessed it as “irrelevant.”

95 people (93,13%), being 41 women (91,11% of this genre) and 54 men (94,73% of this genre) said that the content that was presented will change their life positively. And 7 people (6,86%), being 4 women (8,88% of this genre) and 3 men (5,26% of this genre) said “not.”

Almost all the women (44, corresponding 97,77%), except one (2,22%), and 54 men (corresponding 94,73%), except 3 (5,26%), affirmed that this study has solved

their doubts. From the general total it makes up 96% of those whose doubts were solved, and only 3,92% of those whose doubts were not solved. All of them (women and men) recommend the sharing of this study to other Adventist churches.

### **Comparative Analysis with the Former Inquiry**

Making a comparison of the data got from the first and the second inquiries we may see that the lecture had a positive impact on the participants of both churches. In the church of Kikuxi-Central, we registered a reduced number of participants in the second inquiry of 26 people, making up 44%, maybe due the poor communication of the program. Nevertheless, the degree of positivity has increased to a large extent, and the negativity and the doubt were reduced to almost insignificant figures, as the Table 39 below shows.

*Table 39. The Impact of the Study Project on the Members of the Kikuxi-Central Kikuxi-Central SDA Church*

Inquiry Before the Lecture		Inquiry After the Lecture	
Number of people	59	Number of people	33
Percent of positive view	40,67%	Percent of positive view	93,93%
Percent of negative view	40,67%	Percent of negative view	3%
Percent of people in doubt	18,64%	Percent of people in doubt	3%

And in the Judeia-Mundial, the number of participants had recorded an increase of 9 people, making up 9,67%. And the lecture contributed greatly in the increase of the positive view of the issue in more about 40% than the result of the first inquiry, the negative view suffered a reduction of more than a half, and the doubt fell down into insignificant 2,94%. The Table 40 shows it.

*Table 40. The Impact of the Study Project on the Members of the Judeia-Mundial*

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Judeia-Mundial SDA Church

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Inquiry Before the Lecture		Inquiry After the Lecture	
Number of people	93	Number of people	102
Percent of positive view	51,61%	Percent of positive view	92,15%
Percent of negative view	10,75%	Percent of negative view	4,9%
Percent of people in doubt	37,63%	Percent of people in doubt	2,94%

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## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

Through this study the researcher discovered that the ancient Jews are divided by two opposite ideas: one in favor and other against the sexual intimacy within marriage on Sabbath day. The majority of these Jewish traditions (the rabbinic writings) are very favorable and encouraging even though the existence of an extreme group who oppose it and are very radical against the body pleasures (The Book of Jubilees and the Dead Sea Scrolls), an example of this group is the Qumran community.

The church fathers were divided into two schools of thinking: Antioch and Alexandria. The first one maintained the inheritance of Jewish literalist method of interpretation of the Scriptures, and then had a positive view of the sexuality; and the second ones followed the allegorical method of interpretation of the Scriptures, influenced by Gnosticism and the platonic ideas, and then were opposed to the bodily pleasures.

The Seventh-day Adventists, nevertheless their strong concern on Sabbath as a day of rest, blessing and sacred, and their emphasis on well-being and happiness of the family and marriage, do not have any official statement, guideline or other teaching document about the sexual intimacy on Sabbath. There is even a discouragement of the wedding ceremony on Sabbath, but nothing about sex on this

day. Even though Kenneth A. Strand<sup>1</sup> refers to the prohibition of sex on Sabbath contained in The book of Jubilees, He does not explain if such prohibition is correct on the light of the Bible, neither clarify if it is still in force today.

Apart from official statements, we found four or five authors who with minor or large extent approached the issue. These are Gina Spivey Brown and Loretta Parker Spivey,<sup>2</sup> Davidson Razafiarivony,<sup>3</sup> (his article is not only the most recent, but also the broader and deeper historical, biblical and theological study on the issue, which covers eighteen pages), Michael W. Campbell,<sup>4</sup> (the scholar who did a first deep and theological study on the issue), Richard Davidson, who did indirect references in his books *A Love Song for the Sabbath* and *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, and Charles E. Wittschiebe in his book *God Invented Sex*, who also refers to the issue even though he does not go deeper in a biblical and theological perspective.

The project study was conducted in South Luanda Mission at the Northeast Angolan Union Mission, and there we took two churches as the samples: the Central-Kikuxi SDA Church and the Judeia-Mundial SDA Church. But, before we took their opinion about the issue, we worked with the pastors to get their opinion first. This was made on May 4, 2023, and were inquired 57 pastors (81% of the 70 pastors of the mission. In the Central-Kikuxi SDA Church we conducted the inquiry on Sabbath 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, to 23 married men and 36 married women, representing 39 couples.

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<sup>1</sup> Strand, "The Sabbath."

<sup>2</sup> Brown and Spivey, "Sex on Sabbath?" 19.

<sup>3</sup> Razafiarivony, "A Biblical View of Physical Intimacy," 125-130.

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, "Sex on the Sabbath," 14-15.

And in the Judeia-Munidal SDA Church, we met on Sabbath 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, with 50 men and 43 women, representing 62 couples.

### **Findings**

The inquiry revealed that the pastors have a highly positive opinion about the practice of sex on the Sabbath day in the order of 87,6% (73,6% affirm that it is a blessing, and 14% affirm that it is right). 5,2% are of negative opinion, and 7% are in doubt. For 77% of them, there is no problem in having sex in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church service, when they are in charge of the preaching to preside over the Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony. Their practice also confirmed their opinion: 82,4% (corresponding 47 pastors) affirmed that they ever have had sex on Sabbath, and only 7% (corresponding 4 pastors) affirmed that they haven't had sexual intercourse on Sabbath.

In the Central-Kikuxi SDA Church, from the 59 inquired people (36 women and 23 men), the positive view is of 40,67%; the negativity is also of 40,67%; and the doubt corresponds to 18,64%. While in the Judeia-Mundial SDA Church, from the 93 inquired people (43 women and 50 men), 51,61% have a positive opinion; 10,75% are negative; and the doubt is 37,63%.

In chapter 3, we engaged ourselves in a deep biblical, exegetical and theological searching in order to find out a consistent answer to the questions before raised: What does the Bible say on sexual intimacy within marriage on Sabbath? Is it allowed or not? if "yes, it is allowed", can a pastor or elder who did sexual intercourse on Sabbath preside the Holy Communion in that very day, or, in the case of the pastor, preside the ordination ceremony? And can the member who also did the conjugal act participate in the Holy Super, or be ordained in that very Sabbath? And

what about the preacher? Can he stand on the pulpit and preach after sexual intimacy with his spouse in the day of worship?

Thereunto, it starts to analyze the meaning of the Hebrew words for Sabbath, its establishment in the week of creation, its three essential brands – rest, blessing and sanctification -, refutes the idea, according to which, the days of creation are not a literal 24 hours period, but an era of thousands of years, and the idea that the Sabbath was made only for the Jew people. Then, it analyses the Sabbath history and doctrine in the OT and NT, signaling the period before the Sinaitic covenant, the role of the law and the Sabbath in the covenant, the Sinaitic and the New Covenants, the life after the Sinaitic covenant, the messages of the prophets about the Sabbath, the Jew traditions that surrounded the observance of this day, the Jesus' teachings and practices on the Sabbath, the teaching and practices of the apostles and the theme of the Sabbath in the book of Revelation.

After the biblical exegetical and historical study of the Sabbath, our attention turned over the theological implications of the Sabbath, such as on the doctrines of God, of humanity, of salvation, of the Church and of the last things. And the study finalizes this subtheme presenting the ways of observance this day.

The second part of this chapter approaches the human sexuality, starting to present the biblical terms for sex and sexuality, which consists in a richness of euphemism due, according to Richard Davidson, to the absence of the modern and scientific anatomical terms in the ancient Hebrew language, and also due to the biblical wholistic view of the humanity. Then, it presents the origin of sexuality, the quality of its essential nature and the meaning of the image of God in the man, the purpose of sexuality, the exclusiveness, permanence and intimacy of the sex as highlighted in Genesis 2:24, 25. Next, it discourse on the matter of sex after the

fall, throughout all the OT, highlighting that the biblical view about it is very positive, and ends with a broad and deeper analysis of the book of Song of Songs, a specially book entirely dedicated to the marital love and sex. The same study is made throughout the NT and revealed the same divine principles on the issue.

After the deeper biblical, exegetical and theological study on the matters of the Sabbath and of the sexuality, we then entered into the core question of this study project as presented above. We could observe that there is not any biblical prohibition, condemnation or opposition against to the sexual intimacy on Sabbath day. On the contrary, the two institutions - the Sabbath and the marriage - are bind together, and work and walk united to full the human being with blessings. This unity comes from their origin at the creation week. The Scripture parallels them in the two account of creation (Gen 1; 2). And the first couple enjoyed them in the first time in the same time, in their first day of existence. The Bible calls the loving and marital sex as the “flame of Yahweh” (*šalhebetyâh*) (Song 8:6), and uses it as a symbol of the union of God with His church (Eph 5:22-33).

Another evidences are the deep similarities between marriage (including sex) and Sabbath as pointed out by Pastor João Ribeiro Rodrigues, that both, the Sabbath and the marriage, are rest (Gen 2:2; Ruth 1:9; 3:1), blessing (Gen 2:2; 1:28) and holy (Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12; 1 Cor 7:14; 1 Thess 3:3, 4).<sup>5</sup> These affirmations are also reinforced with the traditional experience and teachings of the Jews, who obviously are very rigorous with the observance of the Sabbath, but paradoxally defend that the sexual intercourse is an important part of the celebration of the Sabbath by a devotee couple; that is, sexual intercourse may lack on other days of the week less on the Sabbath.

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<sup>5</sup> Rodrigues, class notes for Family Counseling.

Therefore, it is not sin nor impure to have sexual intercourse within marriage on the Sabbath day. It depends exclusively on the will and conditions of the couple. The absence of sex on this day should not be also imposed on the spouse as if its practice would be a transgression of the law. The texts such as Isaiah 58:13, 14; Exodus 19:15; 1 Samuel 21:4-6 and 1 Corinthians 7:5 do not condemn or say anything contrary to the sexual intercourse on Sabbath.

A deeper study of Isaiah 58:13, 14, far of prohibiting the sexual pleasure on the Sabbath, encourages it. Exodus 19:15 and 1 Samuel 21:4-6 are dealing with ritual purity not with the observance of the Sabbath. Even though, the sexual discharge, like the menstruation, makes a person to become impure, this impurity lasts only until the sunset, and is removed with a bath. And the law of purity or impurity ritual was nailed on the cross (Col 2:14). In 1 Corinthians 7:5, the sexual deprivation for prayer is an exception from the rule that commands each spouse to attend the sexual needs of one another, and this deprivation should come from mutual agreement. If the spouse does not agree with such deprivation for prayer, this cannot have place, even on the Sabbath.

In the light of this explanation and of the study of the biblical concept of purity and impurity made throughout this study, the conclusion is that there is not any contradiction or fault between the Lord's Super, ordination ceremony and preaching service versus sexual intercourse.

The presentation of this study in the two churches (Central-Kikuxi and Judeia-Mundial) where we conducted the field research was made in two panels: one on the Sexuality in the Bible and other on the Sabbath and the Sexual Intimacy. The result of this implementation as showed by the inquiry is a great progression to the positive view on the matter of sex on Sabbath. In the first

church this view grew from 40,67% to 93,93%, the negative view decreased from 40,67% to 3%, and the doubt was reduced from 18,64% to 3%. And in the second church the positive view grew from 51,61% to 92,15%, the negative view decreased from 10,75% to 4,9%, and the doubt was reduced from 37,63% to the inexpressive 2,94%. Most interesting are the comments given before and after the lectures. They really show what was expressed through the numbers.

After this study about the sexual intimacy within marriage on Sabbath, the conclusion is summarized as follows:

1 – Biblically there is no condemnation or prohibition of the sexual intercourse on the sacred day. On the contrary, there are biblical foundations that encourage or recommend it.

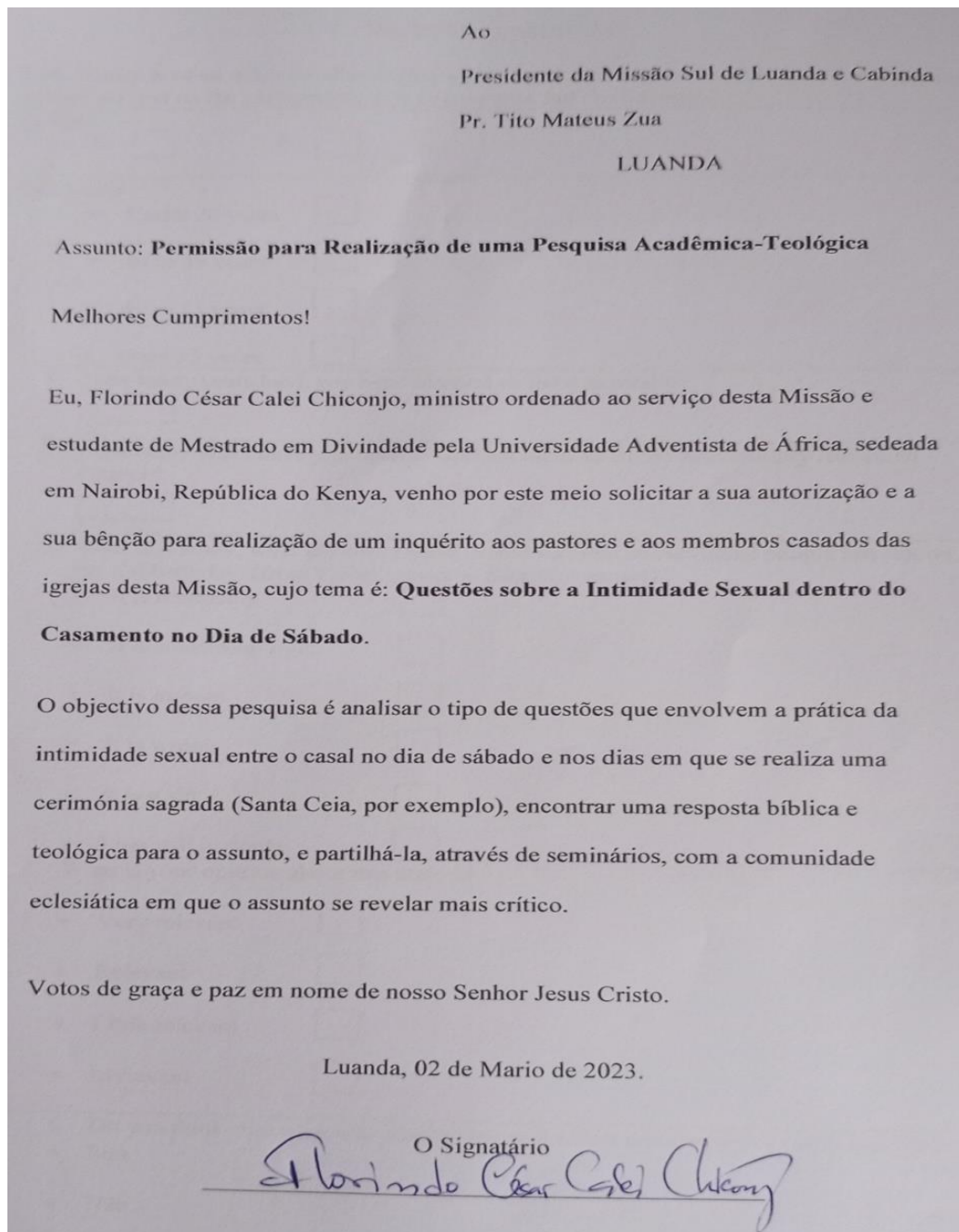
2 – Have or not have sexual intercourse on Sabbath is an exclusive and mutual decision of the couple. But no one spouse is allowed to deprive sexual satisfaction to his or her spouse for the mere reason of the observance of the Sabbath. The refusal for this reason, instead of sanctifying the person, leads the spouse to the violation of the biblical commandment in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, and that is a sin and doesn't glorify Christ.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS

**The Letter of Authorization Request for the Field Research**



## The Translation of the Letter

To the  
President of the Southern Luanda and Cabinda Mission  
Ps. Tito Mateus Zua  
Luanda  
Subject: **Permission to Carry Out an Academic-Theological Research**

Best Regards!

I, Florindo César Calei Chiconjo, ordained minister in the service of this Mission and Master's degree student in Divinity at the Adventist University of Africa, headquartered in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya, hereby request your authorization and your blessing to carry out an inquiry to the pastors and to the married church members of this Mission, which theme is: **Issues on Sexual Intimacy within Marriage on Sabbath day.**

The objective of this research is to analyze the kind of questions that involve the practice of sexual intimacy of the couple on Sabbath day and on days when a sacred ceremony takes place (Holy Supper, for example), to find out a biblical and theological answer for the issue, and share it through seminaries with the ecclesiastical community in which the subject proves to be most critical.

Whishes of grace and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luanda, May 2, 2023.

The Signatory

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## APPENDIX B

### THE ANSWER OF APPROVAL OF THE MISSION

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19/09/24, 16:21

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division Correio - PESQUISA ACADÉMICA E TEOLÓGICA – PR. FLORINDO CHICONJO



Florindo César Calei Chiconjo <fchiconjo@msc.adventist.org>

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#### PESQUISA ACADÉMICA E TEOLÓGICA – PR. FLORINDO CHICONJO

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Yorka Marisa Cardoso Sebastião <yorkasebastiao@msc.adventist.org>

11 de setembro de 2024 às 14:03

Para: Florindo César Calei Chiconjo <fchiconjo@msc.adventist.org>

Cc: Dinis Manuel Nhangamona <nhangamona@msc.adventist.org>

Saudações Pr. Chiconjo,

Segue abaixo o voto da aprovação da pesquisa acadêmica, conforme solicitado:

#### 2023 – 189 PESQUISA ACADÉMICA E TEOLÓGICA – PR. FLORINDO CHICONJO

**VOTADO** aprovado a realização da Pesquisa Acadêmica – teológica a favor do Pr. Florindo Chiconjo, Diretor dos Ministérios da Família da MSC, dentro da sua formação de Mestrado em Divindade pela Universidade Adventista de África. Documento anexo.

## APPENDIX C

### THE TRANSLATION OF THE ANSWER OF APPROVAL OF THE MISSION

Greetings Ps. Chiconjo

Below is the vote of approval for academic research, as requested.

**2023 – 189 ACADEMIC AND THEOLOGICAL – PS. FLORINDO CHICONJO**

**Voted** to approve the carrying out of academic theological research in favor of Ps.

Florindo Chiconjo, director of Family Ministry of this Mission, as part of his study of master's degree in Divinity at the Adventist University of Africa. Attached document.

## APPENDIX D

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### INQUIRY TO THE PASTORS

This inquiry is of an academic-theological nature, and will contribute to solving the respective problem under analysis. It is anonymous and confidential.

Gender M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	Ordained Pastor <input type="checkbox"/> Non Ordained Pastor <input type="checkbox"/>
Age group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 20 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• 20 to 39 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• 40 to 55 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Over 55 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	
1. Are you married? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. If yes, How many years have you been married? <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	
3. How many years have you been a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	
4. Were you born or raised in an Adventist home? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. How many years have you been a Pastor? <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	
6. What is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a blessing <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is something right <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is impure <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is wrong <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is a sin <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I am in doubt <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	
7. In your opinion, can a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or to preside over Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony have sexual relations in the evening or in the hours that precede the Church program?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, He/she can <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul> <input style="width: 50px; margin-left: 100px;" type="text"/>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, He/she can't</li> <li>• I'm not sure <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>8. Have you ever had sex with your spouse on Sabbath?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>9. If yes, how often?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whenever it is necessary or it chances (happens) <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Rarely <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>10. The times we didn't have, it was because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It just did not happen <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• We avoided it with a lot of effort <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• We avoided it very easily <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Rarely we think it on Sabbath <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• On Sabbath I don't have sexual desire <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>11. The times we had, it was because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We desired <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I wanted it, and my spouse gave in <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• My spouse wanted it, and I gave in <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I demanded, and my spouse surrendered <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• My spouse demanded, and I only obeyed <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>12. Every time I did it, I felt myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In peace <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Guilty <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Ashamed <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• In doubt <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>13. Due to the rush of the current days and of the city of Luanda, in particular, many couples have little or no time for sexual intimacy, remaining only the weekends for this purpose. Is this also your case?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/>



## INQUIRY – 1<sup>st</sup> PHASE

This inquiry is of an academic-theological nature, and will contribute to solving the respective problem under analysis. It is anonymous and confidential.

<p>Gender</p> <p style="text-align: center;">M <input type="checkbox"/>                  F <input type="checkbox"/></p>						
<p>Age group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 20 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• 20 to 39 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• 40 to 55 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Over 55 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>						
<p>1. How many years have you been married or lived maritally?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p>						
<p>2. How many years have you been a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p>						
<p>3. Were you born or raised in an Adventist home?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    Not <input type="checkbox"/></p>						
<p>4. If not, how many years have you been a Seventh-day Adventist?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1 year <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 50%;">4 years <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 years <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>5 years <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 years <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>6 or more years <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	1 year <input type="checkbox"/>	4 years <input type="checkbox"/>	2 years <input type="checkbox"/>	5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	3 years <input type="checkbox"/>	6 or more years <input type="checkbox"/>
1 year <input type="checkbox"/>	4 years <input type="checkbox"/>					
2 years <input type="checkbox"/>	5 years <input type="checkbox"/>					
3 years <input type="checkbox"/>	6 or more years <input type="checkbox"/>					
<p>5. Is your spouse a Seventh-day Adventist?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    Not <input type="checkbox"/></p>						
<p>6. Is your spouse an Adventist, but away from the Church?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    Not <input type="checkbox"/></p>						
<p>7. What is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a blessing <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is something right <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is impure <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is wrong <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is a sin <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>						

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am in doubt <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>8. In your opinion, can a person who is going to preach on Sabbath or preside over Holy Communion or another sacred ceremony have sexual relations in the evening or hours that precede the Church program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, He/she can <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• No, He/she can't <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I'm not sure <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>9. Have you ever had sex with your spouse on Sabbath? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>10. If yes, how often?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whenever it is necessary or it chances (happens) <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Rarely <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>11. The times we didn't have, it was because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It just did not happen <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• We avoided it with a lot of effort <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• We avoided it very easily <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Rarely we think it on Sabbath <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• On Sabbath I don't have sexual desire <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>12. The times we had, it was because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We desired <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I wanted it, and my spouse gave in <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• My spouse wanted it, and I gave in <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I demanded, and my spouse surrendered <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• My spouse demanded, and I only obeyed <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>13. Every time I did it, I felt myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In peace <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Guilty <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Ashamed <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>



## APPENDIX E

### OUTLINE OF THE STUDY SHARED WITH THE CHURCH

#### I – The Bible and the Sexuality

##### 1. The Concepts of Sexuality

- a. The inexistence of the anatomic terms for sexual organs such as today
- b. The richness of euphemistic terms/vocabulary of the epoch for

sexuality

- i. *Bāšār* – flesh: penis, vagina (Gen 17:11; Lev 15:19)
- ii. *Yarēk* – thigh, loins: penis, pelvic region (Gn 24:2, 9; 46:26; 47:29; Exod 1:5; Judg 8:30); uterus, feminine genitalia (Num 5:21, 22)
- iii. *Šopkâ* – masculine genitalia (Deut 23:2)
- iv. *Mēbûšîm* – masculine genitalia (Deut 25:11)
- v. *Yād* – hand: penis (Isa 57:8, 10)
- vi. *Kēlî* - vessel: genitalia (1 Sam 21:6)
- vii. *Zera'* – seed: semen (Lev 15:16; 22:4)
- viii. *Motnayim* - loins: penis (1 Kgs 12:10; 2 Chr 10:14)
- ix. *'ešek* – testicles (Lev 21:20)
- x. *'orlâ* – foreskin (Gen 17:14)
- xi. *Reglayim* – feet, legs, knees: feminine genitalia (Judg 16:19) or masculine genitalia (Ezek 7:17; 21:12)

2. Origin of Sexuality – Gen 1:27, 28, 31, 5:2; 2:24
3. The Importance of the Sex for the marriage – Prov 5:15-19; Eccl 9:9
4. The Caresses and the Sexual Pleasure in the Patriarchal and Israelite Life –  
Gen 26:8; Deut 24:5
5. The Sexual Duty of the Spouses – 1 Cor 7:3-5, 9; Heb 13:4

## II – The Sabbath and the Sex

1. The Textual Structure of the Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis
  - a. Sabbath – the culminant point of the first account (Gen 1:1-2:3)
  - b. Marriage and Sex – the culminant point of the second account (Gen 2:4-25)
2. Similarities between Sabbath and Sex
  - a. Rest (Gen 2:2; Ruth 1:9; 3:1)
  - b. Blessing (Gen 2:2; 1:28)
  - c. Holiness (Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12; 1 Cor 7:14; 1 Thess 3:3, 4)
3. Sex: The Holy Flame of Yahweh (Song 8:6)
4. The Jew Traditions about Sex on Sabbath
5. The Explanation of the Controversial Texts
  - a. Isa 58:13, 14
  - b. Exod 19:15

## INQUIRY – 2nd PHASE

This inquiry is of an academic-theological nature, and serves to assess the effect that the study carried out had on the participants. It is anonymous and confidential.

<p>Gender</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">M <input type="checkbox"/>                  F <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Age group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 20 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• 20 to 39 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• 40 to 55 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Over 55 years <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>1. How many years have you been married or lived maritally?</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>
<p>2. How many years have you been a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p>
<p>3. After this study, what is your opinion on the fact that an Adventist couple has sex on the Sabbath day (from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a blessing <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is something right <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is impure <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is wrong <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• It is a sin <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• I am still in doubt <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>4. What is your opinion about this content?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very relevant <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Relevant <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Little relevant <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Irrelevant <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<p>5. Do you think that what was studied her will affect positively your conjugal life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sim <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Não <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>



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