

SABBATH ISSUE

# THE MEDICAL EVANGELIST

A PUBLICATION OF ADVENTIST MEDICAL EVANGELISM NETWORK

Healing Power of the Sabbath

Keeping the Sabbath in Medical School

Why Jesus' Sabbath Keeping Matters

*Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it  
He rested from all His work which God had created and made. - Genesis 2:3*





**AMEN Mission Statement:** To motivate, train, and equip Seventh-day Adventist physicians, dentists, and other healthcare professionals to team with pastors and members, uniting the church to restore Christ's ministry of healing to the world, hastening His return.

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# THE MEDICAL EVANGELIST

A PUBLICATION OF ADVENTIST MEDICAL EVANGELISM NETWORK

The Medical Evangelist is the official publication of Adventist Medical Evangelism Network. The purpose of the publication is to equip physicians and dentists to be effective medical evangelists.

## EDITORS:

Phil Mills, MD - EDITOR IN CHIEF

Rebecca Barnhurst, RD - ASSISTANT EDITOR

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Adventist Medical  
Evangelism Network

PO Box 398  
Weed, California 96094  
(530) 883-8061  
[www.amensda.org](http://www.amensda.org)

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# The ‘Rest’ of the Story



PHIL MILLS, MD

One of the great health benefits that God has given to man is the Sabbath. Of course, Seventh-day Adventists have known this for nearly two centuries – after all, the Sabbath is one of our founding principles. However, I firmly believe we need to have a renewed commitment to the Sabbath in these last days. Recently, even peer-reviewed, modern medical science supports its importance. Numerous published studies talk about the benefits of having a day “set apart.” Of course, this should be no surprise because God Himself instructed us to “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” thousands of years ago. There truly is healing and restoring power in the Sabbath. In this issue, you will read inspiring stories and see the healing power of the Sabbath and how sharing it can be instrumental in leading people to conversion and complete life transformation.

One of the great natural remedies is rest. In this hectic society our patients need rest. Our families need rest. We need rest. And God has provided us a day of rest. I have never forgotten my medical school neurophysiology professor, Bernell Baldwin. He shared studies which showed the beneficial effects of Sabbath keeping on students—not only on their grades but also on their mental outlook.

Years ago, in our medical clinic, my partners and I, along with Pastor, Don Mackintosh developed a biblically-based stress control program for our patients. During the program, which we named C.R.O.S.S. (Christian’s Resources for Surviving Stress), we met with our patients weekly for two months. In our study for these sessions, we found the Bible filled with stress-control principles that were amply supported in the scientific literature. Week by week we shared with our patients the Bible’s gimmick-free prescriptions for stress control.

In the course of the two months we found one of the most important principles of stress control is rest. When we can bring our patients to Jesus, He gives them rest; in fact, He gives them a whole day of rest (Matthew 11:28; Mark 2:27).

Those who take God’s gift of the Sabbath receive many benefits, including rest and peace. As Henry Vaughan’s haunting hymn lyrics say,

*“Rest, rest to the weary,  
Peace, peace to the soul;  
Tho’ life may be dreary,  
Earth is not thy goal,  
O lay down thy burden,  
O come unto Me,  
I will not forsake thee,  
I will not forsake thee,*

*I will not forsake thee, Tho’ all else should flee.”*

Our society is in turmoil. People are in fragments. They are tired. People who have never been frightened before are frightened today. They fear the trajectory they see for the future. There has never been a time when Sabbath rest with its peace was more needed. And here at the end of time we can discover for ourselves and assure our patients that rest and peace is still available; rest and peace is still possible. *“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.”* – Hebrews 4:9

This is our first themed AMEN Journal. The editorial staff pray that this special issue on the Sabbath impacts you as much as producing it has impacted us.

For me personally, the articles have deepened my own appreciation for Christ who gave mankind the Sabbath. It has brought me a renewed commitment to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Working on this publication has made me more determined to share the Sabbath truth with others. It has strengthened my resolve to never abandon the Sabbath. I hope it does the same for you.

*Phil Mills, MD*



*AMEN's philosophy on Sabbath rest and the importance of worship. This statement outlines AMEN's beliefs on how we, as health professionals, can reflect Christ through loving service and still prioritize the restorative power of Sabbath worship and rest.*

# Jesus' Sabbath Ministry: AMEN's Philosophy of Sabbath Clinics

The Adventist Medical Evangelism Network (AMEN) exists to model Christ's selfless ministry. Our desire is to reflect Christ's love in each patient interaction and in every community health outreach program. Jesus' Sabbath keeping practices are our example for Sabbath ministry. His practices gave the Sabbath rich spiritual meaning. For the Savior, the Sabbath was a day to emphasize wholeness to a broken world. It was a refuge – an oasis – a palace in time for all humanity to rest in His love, discover strength in His Word, experience healing in His presence, and participate in His mission.

The gospels reveal Christ worshipping in the synagogue, walking with His disciples in nature, healing the sick, eating with his friends, and visiting with His followers on the Sabbath. One of the most inspiring pictures of Jesus on the Sabbath is in Luke 4:16:

*"So He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up and as His custom was, He went in the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read."*

Jesus' custom, His regular practice, was to participate in Sabbath worship. On this Sabbath, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 and announced His Messianic mission.

On Sabbath, the living Christ speaks forgiveness to our hearts, anoints us with His Spirit, heals our brokenness, and sets us at liberty from the bondage of sin so we can proclaim the glory of His name. For Jesus, Sabbath worship was much more than a perfunctory act or legalistic requirement. It was the joy of entering the Shekinah glory of the Father's presence to praise, worship, and to receive strength for the journey ahead. The Sabbath was a day of spiritual renewal and the infilling of the Spirit's power.

## JESUS' SABBATH HEALING MINISTRY

Jesus performed more of His healing miracles on Sabbath than on any other day. There are at least three reasons for this:

First, Jesus wanted to reveal the true meaning of the Sabbath, which is a day of wholeness. It is a day that God longs to make us whole physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Second, Sabbath is a day of service. God has called us from the claustrophobic confines of our own self-inflated importance to the largeness of service. Jesus lived to bless, and His Sabbath miracles demonstrated that desire.

Third, Sabbath is a memorial of creation and God is the God of re-creation. On Sabbath, Jesus revealed the Father's love and power in creating health where there was once sickness.

There are seven miracles recorded in the gospels that Jesus performed on Sabbath. Each of these miracles is connected in some way with Sabbath worship. Some take place in the synagogue during worship; others take place when Jesus is on His way to worship and some occur immediately after worship. There are three important facts that surface here.

First, Jesus never planned to avoid worship to spend the entire day healing people.

Second, Christ's healings on Sabbath were performed when He was confronted with individuals that were apparently



hopeless, suffering in excruciating pain, or demonically possessed.

Third, these healings were always performed on individuals, not multiple people. We do not find Jesus performing mass healings on the Sabbath. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus waited until after the Sabbath to heal the masses. (Mark 1:43-45) Looking to Jesus as our example, AMEN has taken the following position regarding Sabbath clinics.

**1. With their intense schedules, healthcare professionals need the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing that the Sabbath brings.**

As healthcare professionals we need a day of worship to rest and reflect. The intensity of Sabbath clinics does not lend itself to this needed spiritual renewal. We are guided by Ellen White's wise counsel,

*"Often physicians are called upon on the Sabbath to minister to the sick, and it is impossible for them to take time for rest and devotion... The Saviour has shown us by His example that it is right to relieve suffering on this day; but physicians and nurses should do no unnecessary work. Ordinary treatment, and operations that can wait, should be deferred till the next day. Let the patients know that physicians must have one day for rest."* – Medical Ministry p. 214

The messenger of the Lord then points out that even in doing good on the Sabbath it is possible to lose the special blessing that Christ has for us.

*"Those who, from whatever cause, are obliged to work on the Sabbath, are always in peril; they feel the loss, and from doing works of necessity they fall into the habit of doing things on the Sabbath that are not necessary. The sense of its sacredness is lost, and the holy*

*commandment is of no effect."* – Medical Ministry p. 215

We believe that the good is not the enemy of the best and there are options other than Sabbath for our clinics.

## **2. Christ's example is clear.**

There are emergency situations that arise on Sabbath that are completely in harmony with Sabbath keeping. However, in most circumstances, AMEN does not see Sabbath clinics as emergencies that cannot be conducted on other days of the week.

Where suffering exists, where lives are threatened, and where treatment is needed immediately, we are ready to serve, to minister and to be Christ's ambassadors of healing. A good example of this principle is Jesus healing a man with dropsy in the privacy of His home. Dropsy is a serious disease where the body severely swelled due to excess fluids. Today we would term this condition "edema", often due to congestive heart failure. This man was extremely ill and needed lifesaving treatment. Commenting on those coming to Jesus in Capernaum, Ellen White observed,

*"They were in every condition of helplessness and approaching death. Some were burning with fevers, others were paralyzed, stricken with dropsy, blind, deaf, and lame."* – The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 2 p. 181

Jesus illustrated God's love in action by healing the man. The lesson is clear. Faced with indescribable human suffering, Jesus never turns away from human need. He unselfishly ministers to relieve suffering when He is confronted with it, even on the Sabbath. But His purpose is always larger than individual physical healing. The Savior longs to make people whole



Where suffering exists, where lives are threatened, and where treatment is needed immediately, we are ready to serve, and to minister, to be Christ's ambassadors of healing.

physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

**3. Our experience with scores of clinics has taught us that AMEN clinics can be just as successful when conducted on days other than Sabbath.**

We have found that committed Seventh-day Adventist healthcare professionals will make the necessary sacrifices and adjustments to their schedules to volunteer for weekday clinics. In addition, the community members will come for dental and medical services during the week.

**4. We believe that volunteers, AMEN staff, and local church members worshipping together on Sabbath can be a wonderful time of spiritual renewal and inspiration.**

AMEN exists to inspire healthcare professionals to team with pastors and members, uniting the church to restore Christ's ministry of healing to the world. The goal of AMEN Free Clinics is to model Christ's example and inspire local congregations hosting AMEN clinics to experience the joy of loving service as they come together to share His love with



the community. Sabbath offers a great opportunity to connect by worshipping together and to highlight the benefits of Sabbath rest and restoration to the community. AMEN encourages churches to offer Sabbath afternoon programs for those attending the clinics such as educational health seminars or a nature walk.

**5. AMEN is committed to enhancing the spiritual experience of each of our members, their families, and our clinic staff.**

We believe the Sabbath is best celebrated as a family unit and do not desire to pull busy healthcare professionals away from worship, fellowship and recreation with their families on Sabbath by conducting Sabbath clinics that require long hours of intense work.

## CONCLUSION

There are times when Seventh-day Adventist healthcare professionals are called to work on Sabbath. This Sabbath ministry of unselfish love and service is part of God's plan in revealing His grace to humanity. Nevertheless, Christ placed priority on worship and warns us against incessant labor and the neglect of restoring rest. Therefore, after careful consideration, wide counsel, and a great deal of prayer, we have chosen to conduct AMEN clinics on days other than the Sabbath.

The One who made us longs for fellowship with every healthcare worker. He longs to rebuild our own health and rejuvenate our spiritual life each Sabbath through meaningful worship, restorative rest, and life-giving service. May His example be ours.

# Healing Power of the Sabbath



**DR. NEIL NEDLEY** is a board-certified Internal Medicine specialist. He is founder and medical director of the Nedley Depression and Anxiety Recovery and Optimize Your Brain programs. Dr. Nedley also serves as President of Weimar Institute. He is well known worldwide as a public speaker and writer. Dr. Nedley has a passion for helping people from the depths of depression and anxiety to the pinnacle of success and fulfillment.

*Dr. Nedley and his wife Erica have four sons. Together they enjoy numerous outdoor activities and listening to sacred and classical music.*

**N**edley Health recently held a Depression and Anxiety Recovery Program on the campus of Weimar Institute.

## CYNDI'S STORY

One participant was an atheist who had struggled with alcoholism for years. Cyndi\* had tried numerous programs; three years prior, she attended AA but walked out, saying, "This is not working. If you would leave God and the Higher Power out, you'd be able to help a lot more people."

Cyndi is an intelligent and successful businesswoman. One of her clients recommended the residential Nedley Depression & Anxiety Recovery Program. This client actually made the first call from Cyndi's office, to Sarah, the program screener for Nedley Health. During the interview, Cyndi learned that the program is Christian-based. Frustrated with her years of problem drinking and having examined the statistics of the Depression & Anxiety Recovery Program, she thought, "Maybe there is something to this. If it requires Christian principles, then I need to be willing to do it."

Because alcoholism is hard to deal with, it usually requires months in a treatment center. As Cyndi researched other programs, she discovered that our residential program is by far the least expensive and most successful program for overcoming addictions, such as alcoholism. She found that many centers charge around \$45,000. Even then, the chance of long-term success is only about 50 percent. Cyndi realized that the Nedley program was likely to be more successful because it would actually address the issues behind alcoholism and why she was drinking. So she decided to come.

## IN THE PROGRAM

Once here, Cyndi went through medical and mental health evaluations. We found brain chemistry imbalances that could be corrected to improve her mental health. She learned how the ten cognitive distortions impact addictions. Toward the end of the program, she learned how the principles behind the Ten Commandments solve those ten different problems with distorted thinking. If we obey them, these principles can help us become healthier and live a more vibrant life.

During an evening session, I went over the





first four commandments. When we read the fourth commandment, “*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*” I asked participants to name the principle behind this commandment. They chose the words “holy,” “being set apart,” and so forth. We then examined which cognitive distortion this commandment solves, and we also dove into the scientific analysis of keeping a day holy.

#### **A STUDY ON THE SABBATH AND MENTAL HEALTH**

As a part of this presentation, we examined a recent study comparing Sabbath keepers with those who do not keep the seventh-day Sabbath. The study is based on the question, “Could the Sabbath keeping experience of Adventism actually help them be healthier, in addition to their diet and exercise?” In order to find out, Sabbath keeping was defined. This included not shopping, not reading secular material, not watching or listening to news or sports programs, not attending secular concerts or theatrical events, not working, and not engaging in commercial activities from Friday night to Sabbath night. In addition, what people **were** doing on Sabbath was considered, like going to church, spending time with family and friends, and enjoying nature – all undisturbed by the stresses of everyday life and work.

Statistical analysis showed a significant co-relation between Sabbath keeping and mental health. The conclusion was that “Greater Sabbath keeping was associated with more religious coping, more religious support, healthier diet, and more exercise, which in turn were associated with better mental health.”

During the study, the participants learned about the importance of diet and exercise for mental health. Interestingly, religious coping and religious support had significantly greater effect upon mental health than did diet or exercise. We know that diet and exercise are both crucial in regard to mental health, but in this study there was something even more important – and that was Sabbath keeping.

Of course, both Sabbath keepers and non-Sabbath keepers have bad things happen to them. Sabbath keepers can lose their jobs, be fired, face divorce, or a myriad of other challenges. The key is, Sabbath keepers seem to have more coping mechanisms and therefore are better equipped to live above the fray. Whether it’s because Sabbath keepers take time to develop a closer relationship with Christ, have a stronger support system of believers in the church, or simply have time to reflect and destress, it seems that bad things don’t get

them down as significantly or cause them to crash or to start thinking of the most terrible options imaginable in order to cope.

At the program we teach our recovering participants evidence-based, scientific interventions that can help their mental health. We also want to model everything that will help them emotionally, including Sabbath observance. On Friday we explained that the next day we will go to church, avoid non-Sabbath activities as demonstrated in the study, and be involved in spiritual activities. On Sabbath we took the group to church and participated in communal Sabbath activities afterward.

I didn’t mention the Bible or tradition during the evening meeting that Cyndi attended. There were Sunday worshippers (not to be confused with Sunday keepers), an atheist, and people from all different walks of life. Interestingly, after that message, Cyndi raised her hand in front of everybody and said, “I’m reading this commandment and it says the seventh day. Why is it that many Christians – most of them, in fact – worship on the first day? How did that start?”

I started out by mentioning that we love Christians of all types, no matter their beliefs or what day they worship. Then I explained a bit of the history with Rome and human tradition, in contrast to the Word of God. Then I emphasized that we want to embrace all the principles of abundant living that Christ has given us and I believe Sabbath keeping is one of those.

#### **SABBATH AS A HEALTH PRINCIPLE**

Let’s briefly go back to the scientific study. The study concludes that it’s not just Sabbath keeping that provides mental health benefits. It’s also the reason why

we keep the Sabbath that is important too; that is, the motives. If the motive is social pressure, duty, or shame avoidance, Sabbath keeping doesn't help. But when test subjects refrained from activities that the commandment forbids and actually performed activities that lead to a better understanding of God's principles, which draw us closer to God and other believers, it was a great determinant in regard to positive mental health.

Jesus Himself, when He was here on earth, said, "The Sabbath was made for man." We often miss the fact that the Sabbath is a health principle. It is something the Lord gave us to enhance our health. In addition, if we're keeping the Sabbath, we're actually more likely to incorporate other health principles into our lives too.

So when people know about the Sabbath but they don't keep it, what's the issue? It's actually a cognitive distortion called "disqualifying the positive." They may think, "If I do what I want to do on the Sabbath, I'm going to be happier. I don't want to follow this requirement that doesn't allow me to do things I want to do. I think God wants me to be happy, so I'm sure He doesn't mind if I just do what I want to do." But God is saying, "Trust Me! I made you. I designed you. I know what's best for you."

Those who experience keeping the Sabbath commandment live happier lives. They are mentally and emotionally more healthy.

### MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK

The next morning, Cyndi could not let it go. While on a hike, she kept saying things to the others like, "If we're going to follow the only portion of Scripture that God wrote Himself, why wouldn't we keep the seventh-day Sabbath?" Cyndi had been convicted and that very morning she



made a commitment that she was going to follow God in all aspects of her life. Here was a woman who started the program just days before as an atheist, and she was now making a commitment to go all the way with Jesus – to put all on the altar of sacrifice and let God into her life. That is the essence of medical missionary work!

In Cyndi's story we see a marvelous example of the importance of medical missionary work. Cyndi never would have gone to an evangelistic series or traditional church meeting. But because of a health need, the gospel was able to make a huge difference in her life. Her heart and mind were opened. That Sabbath afternoon, at the end of the program, she asked to be baptized! Of course we reinforced her decision while encouraging her to study further. Cyndi is determined to take the step of baptism once she fully understands what her commitment means.

Medical missionary work and the gospel combined are a powerful influence. I believe when combined, the gospel will encircle this globe quickly. If we just reach one soul every week, and that soul reaches another soul every week, over eight billion people will be reached within three and a

half years. Ellen White predicted, "*We shall see the medical missionary work broadening and deepening at every point of its progress because of the inflowing of hundreds and thousands of streams until the whole earth is covered as the waters cover the sea.*" – A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education p. 13

We're not to this point yet. This is why comprehensive health programs such as Depression & Anxiety Recovery exist. This is why Weimar Institute exists. This is why AMEN exists. The Three Angels' Messages are intimately connected with the health message. My prayer is that we, as health professionals, will fully embrace all three of Christ's ministry methods – teaching, healing, and presenting the gospel – and use His methods to bring about the loud cry that will circle the globe.

<sup>i</sup> Superville, D. J., Pargament, K. I., & Lee, J. W. 2013. *Sabbath keeping and its relationships to health and well-being: A mediational analysis. International Journal for the Psychology of Religion.*

\*Pseudonym



*A series of articles demonstrating how a growing  
body of science is supporting the statements of  
Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy.*

by Francisco “Eddie” Ramirez, MD

# Rhythms of Life:

## *The Sabbath and Our Internal Clocks*



**DR. EDDIE RAMIREZ**  
(@EddieRDMD) has a passion for researching and sharing the Adventist health message. He has published over 130 studies and lectured in 85 countries. He is a co-author of the 3rd edition of the textbook of *Lifestyle Medicine* of the American College of *Lifestyle Medicine* and of the book *‘Rethink Food’*.

*Dr. Ramirez is married to Susan, a massage therapist, and they have three daughters, Talitha, Rebekah and Elizabeth with whom they enjoy traveling and spending time together.*

I have always been fascinated by the cycles found in nature. When I was an undergraduate student I actually designed a computer simulation, based on Newtonian physics, of our solar system’s planetary orbital patterns.

It is not only planets that exhibit predictable cycles. So do we. From menstrual periods to our everyday circadian rhythms, our cycles are intentionally designed. This topic is so important that the 2017 Nobel Prize for Physiology and medicine went to Jeffrey C. Hall, Michael Rosbash and Michael W. Young for their discoveries of molecular mechanisms controlling the circadian rhythm.

### BODY CLOCKS

One of the most amazing discoveries in the field of chronobiology is that not only the human being, but every living creature, has an internal clock. Why do we need these internal clocks? Imagine working in an office while being challenged with multiple asynchronous tasks, some of which apparently conflict with each other. How would you be able to get anything done? The coordination required to create a smooth workflow would be exceedingly complex. But this is what happens within the human body: our internal clocks regulate complex functions that need to be synchronized. Every

organ in the body has a clock; every cell does too – and these clocks help keep the many and complicated systems working harmoniously within the human body. One primary clock in the human body synchronizes everything from its location in the hypothalamus, and the rest of the clocks in our body, trillions of them, need to be synchronized with this master clock. That is one of the reasons why it is difficult to think clearly following a bad night’s sleep.

Encouragingly, there are things we can do to help keep these clocks stay synchronized. Exercise, meals, and exposure to light—all of these activities, when done consistently at the proper time, can synchronize our body clocks.

We have documented (Ramirez et al. 2016) how people with irregularity in their eating and resting habits have more mental health issues than do those who are more consistent and regular in their patterns.<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes teaches us that there is a proper time to do things: *“To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven,”* – Ecclesiastes 3:1. It works the same with our bodies.

How do our body clocks impact us? Have you noticed times when you feel quite sharp? Or dull? When you feel especially energetic? Or lethargic? All of these feelings are related to

our internal clocks. If we learn to respect them, our bodies function much better.

Unfortunately, it is not hard to create problems with these clocks. A recently published paper documented that after just three days of desynchronization (e.g. changing work from the morning to the evening), the body rhythms became disordered. For one example, the pancreas had a harder time increasing its insulin levels.<sup>2</sup> Obesity, diabetes and cancer can also desynchronize our body clocks. Good health and well-synchronized clocks go hand in hand.

What about those who claim that they function better at night? Perhaps surprising to some, that is more myth than reality. In a recent study, scientists put a group of “night owls” on a camping trip that lasted one week, and when electronics and other artificial stimulation were removed, all these “night owls” suddenly became “morning birds.”<sup>3</sup>

### THE SEVEN-DAY CYCLE

Decades ago, researchers discovered that apart from the daily and monthly rhythms, a seven-day cycle also exists, not only for human beings but for every living thing. Campbell describes it as the following: “These circaseptan, or about weekly, rhythms are one of the major surprises turned up by modern chronobiology. Fifteen years ago, few scientists would have expected that seven-day biological cycles would prove to be so widespread and so long established in the living world.”<sup>4</sup>

Cycles are all around us. What happens every year? The Earth goes around the Sun. What happens every month? The moon goes around the Earth. But what happens astronomically every week? Nothing in nature itself or so it seems. But God did something special for the



weekly cycle. He blessed every seventh day: *“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”* – Genesis 2:3.

This Sabbath day *“was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God’s power and His love.”* – Desire of Ages, p. 248

This is the same power that Jesus displayed in His healing miracles. *“The power of love was in all Christ’s healing, and only by partaking of that love, through faith, can we be instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people.”* – Desire of Ages p. 825

Keeping the Sabbath, therefore, is an

expression of our desire to receive the healing power and the sanctification that comes from the Creator.

Evidence now shows that the blessing of the Creator has left its mark on every living creature. No wonder that even non-Jews in the time of Jesus were also resting on the Sabbath day. Flavius Josephus wrote: *“The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread.”*<sup>5</sup>

Further, the fourth commandment itself gives us insight into how the Sabbath is not only for humanity. *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor*



*your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.*” – Exodus 20:8-10.

Why are cattle listed in the commandment? Have you ever seen a “religious” cow attending church? Could it be that even the animal world can be benefitted by the Sabbath day as well? That is, by living in this heaven blessed rhythm of life?

There is now no question that there are physical as well as spiritual benefits to keeping the Sabbath. Around the world, even though there are many vegetarian groups, Seventh-day Adventists are one of the groups that have a further longevity edge. And this could be related to resting on the Sabbath day. According to Perry and Dawson: “At first glance, it might seem that weekly rhythms developed in response to the seven-day week imposed by human culture thousands of years ago. However, this theory doesn’t hold once you realize that plants, insects, and animals other than humans also have weekly cycles. . . . Biology, therefore, not culture, is probably at the source of our seven-day week.”<sup>6</sup> Reinberg agrees with the hypothesis: “We hypothesize the seven-day time structure of human beings is endogenous in origin – a hypothesis that is affirmed by a wide array of evidence.”<sup>7</sup>

John 5 gives us further insight about the Sabbath. Jesus used the Sabbath day for healing. *“The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”* – John 5:15-16.

When confronted by the religious leaders for His deeds, Jesus answered: *“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working”* – John 5:17

But didn’t God rest on the Sabbath after creation? Yes, but there was no sin then. Nevertheless, Christ was resting in His Father’s work, as the Father was working through Him to repair the damage done to humans and other animals by sin.

#### **THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TRIES TO CHANGE THE CALENDAR**

During the 18th century, in the feverish pitch of the French Revolution, the leaders (Jacobins) wanted to remove any vestige of spirituality from their culture. One of the cyclical reminders of faith was found in the weekly calendar. Because they knew the Bible defined a seven-day week, they wanted to challenge that divine institution. Therefore, Oct. 5, 1793, became year 1; the seven-day week became a 10-day week; and instead of four weeks per month, they had three per month – all in order to remove any traces of Christianity from their calendar.

Rather than resting every seven days, their rest came every 10 days. Instead of bringing prosperity and health, this change brought a decrease in productivity and an increase in sickness, even to the point that in just a few years the people wanted the calendar changed back to the seven-day cycle. On Jan. 1, 1806, Napoleon reinstated the Gregorian calendar and the seven-day week.

About 140 years later, the Soviet leaders tried to change the seven-day week in an attempt to improve productivity and to once again try to interrupt the cycle of weekly religious worship. However, it didn’t work for them any better than it did for the Jacobins, and by 1940, the seven-day cycle had been reinstated in the Soviet Union.

#### **PLEASURE AND STRESS**

Other elements can be involved with

## There is a strong weekly rhythm in day to day mood.

keeping the Sabbath. Dr. DJ Larsen from Purdue studied human stress levels. Using volunteers, he found that there is a definite pattern of stress and pleasure. He wrote: “It appears that ... there is a strong weekly rhythm in day-to-day mood. This pattern shows a peak around Friday night and Saturday and a trough around Monday or Tuesday.”<sup>8</sup> The Sabbath day was the most pleasurable day of the week, according to this study, in which the participants weren’t Jews or SDAs. Notably, this secular paper said that the pleasure actually starts on Friday night.

It is interesting in this context to note that the “honeymoon” of Adam and Eve was on Friday night, the most pleasurable evening of the week. We also can see the link between the Sabbath and pleasure in Isaiah 58:13-14: *“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. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”*

The results of a doctoral thesis showed that marital intimacy is greater among those who keep the Sabbath. This is especially true when a balance of intrinsic commitment to keep the Sabbath and an extrinsic desire to engage in ‘Sabbath activities’ (e.g. interaction with family and friends, enjoying the outdoors, religious services) together exists.<sup>9</sup>

How we keep the Sabbath can impact our



As part of God's creation, our bodies, our minds, and our souls need cycles of regularity and rest.

Our Body Clocks Reveal, (New York: Rawson Associates, 1988), pp. 20-21.

<sup>7</sup>Reinberg A, DeJardin L, Smolensky M, Touitou Y. 2016. Seven-day human biological rhythms: An expedition in search of their origin, synchronization, functional advantage, adaptive value and clinical relevance. *Chronobiology International*. 34. 1-30.

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<sup>11</sup>Jerry W. Lee, PhD, from the Department of Health Promotion & Education Loma Linda University School of Public Health. Sabbath and Health. Presented at the Mind and Spirit In Dialog meeting at Loma Linda University on January 24, 2009. <https://publichealth.llu.edu/sites/publichealth.llu.edu/files/docs/sph-sabbath-and-health.pdf>

mental health. "There was a significant correlation between Sabbath keeping and mental health".<sup>10</sup>

When the Sabbath is occupied with spiritual and communal activities, an improvement in mental health has been documented in an observational study. In contrast, when the Sabbath was kept out of duty or social pressure, or when secular activities were done on the Sabbath, even without pay, such as cutting grass, painting houses, these activities were all associated with an increase in mental health problems.<sup>11</sup>

From the cycles of the planets in our solar system, to the weekly cycle of the Sabbath, to the daily cycles in our body, creation functions in certain biorhythms. As part of God's creation, our bodies, our minds, and our souls need cycles of regularity and rest. By seeking to be regular in our daily habits (eating, sleeping, and exercising) and by keeping the weekly Sabbath, we can take advantage of these God-given rhythms of life and health.

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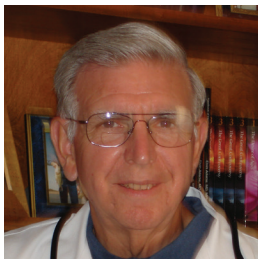
# “Can’t Your Priest Make It OK?”



**DR. ROBERT HUNSAKER**



**DR. RANDY BIVENS**



**DR. ELVIN ADAMS**

**T**he one thing that makes Seventh-day Adventists stand out from other religions and the world in general is keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. As anyone who has adhered to the Sabbath commandment knows, keeping it is not always easy. Many Adventists have faced, and continue to face, trouble for their obedience.

Here are three stories about three professionals, faithful Adventists all, who tangled with the world over keeping holy the day that God made special almost 6000 years ago (Genesis 2:3).

## **PRINCIPLE, NOT PREFERENCE**

*By Randy Bivens, MD*

I went through Loma Linda medical school on a Health Professional Scholarship Program with the Army. I had applied for a civilian Internal Medical residency, but the Army decided they wanted me at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Having never been outside an “Adventist bubble”, I was not sure what I would encounter. During the month between graduating and starting my internship, I learned that Grand Rounds would be

on Sabbath morning from 9:30 to noon; attendance was required.

Here it was—my first encounter with my convictions. Is it going to be a ‘preference’ or a ‘principle’? Since it is medical training, would it be okay to attend? What should I do?

After much prayer and study, I made an appointment with the chairman of the Internal Medicine Department (a full colonel). I explained that, as a practicing Seventh-day Adventist, I could not in good conscience attend the Grand Rounds on Sabbath morning. He stated that he had never excused anyone. He asked if I was prepared to be kicked out of the program and possibly receive a court martial over the Sabbath.

The decision that I was about to make could alter the entire course of my life. Had all of my work up to this time been in vain? I told the colonel that I was willing to suffer any consequences he would feel appropriate, but I would not violate the worship of my Sabbath.

When he realized that this was not a

preference but a final decision rooted in principle, he finally said, “Well, you are in luck.” The Army was planning on real-time transmitting via satellite the Grand Rounds to several regional Army hospitals and therefore would have videotapes. If I would view them during the week, he would excuse me for the duration of my training.

Three weeks into the training program, several other Loma Linda graduates heard that I had been excused, and they went to the same colonel and asked that they also be excused for the same reason. He asked them, “What have you been doing for the last three weeks?” They said, “Well, we have been going because we thought we had to go.” He said, “You do.” And they were never excused; for them, it was a preference.

What a blessing it was to be able to attend Sabbath School and church each week. I even had the support of the others in my barrack. If it was getting close to gam on Sabbath, they would tell me that I needed to go to Sabbath School (they even knew the correct term). I praise God for His Sabbath and for honoring me during this trial.

### AN INTENSE ENCOUNTER

*By Elvin Adams, MD*

Seventh-day Adventist-based training was my only experience as a physician, until I applied to Johns Hopkins University. I sought to obtain an MPH degree at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. After I was notified of my acceptance, I was reminded by a colleague that Ruth White, RN, had just received her MPH degree from Johns Hopkins. I had heard that she had experienced considerable difficulty regarding Sabbath classes.



A follow-up letter from me to the Admissions Committee about Sabbath issues brought the reassuring response that it was their “immediate opinion” that Sabbath observance would not be a problem. Acceptable arrangements could be made with the respective teachers.

The only two required courses were Biostatistics and Epidemiology, which were taught on a Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday schedule. The chairman of each department taught these fundamental courses. The chairman of Biostatistics was cordial when I informed her that I was unable to attend on Saturday. She assured me that I could skip all Sabbath classes, and that she would assist me if there were any gaps in my knowledge.

The chairman of Epidemiology was a formidable world-famous figure in public health. When I brought up Saturday classes with him, he instantly became hostile and vocal. It was an intense encounter. He ranted that Seventh-day Adventists should become familiar with class schedules

before they ever considered applying to Johns Hopkins, and that I should have applied to a different university.

At a pause in his tirade, I calmly produced the letter that I had received from the Admissions Committee and asked him to read it. He immediately calmed down, and then said that he would assign extra work for me to complete in order to cover the material that I would miss by not attending classes on Sabbath.

Since my episode, Seventh-day Adventists have never had a problem attending Johns Hopkins University. Seventh-day Adventists have served on the faculty of the School of Public Health and have also served as department heads.

My humble advice: When attending a secular university, don't compromise your faith. And it is best to negotiate Sabbath issues during the acceptance process before attending classes.





### **“CAN’T YOUR PRIEST MAKE IT OK?”**

*By Robert Hunsaker, MD*

I grew up as a typical Seventh-day Adventist young person: SDA education from first grade through college, camp meeting, youth camp, weeks of prayer twice a year, occasional evangelistic series at church, Pathfinders, and even family worship every morning. All that was great, but I didn’t know Jesus.

I had sincere and spiritually minded teachers, and a mother who loved the Lord and her children unreservedly; she also communicated God’s love and her love clearly. On the “rare” occasion I experienced corporal punishment, she was crying harder than me!

With all of those realities in place, how could I not know Jesus? How could I be blind to His deep and changeless love and faithfulness to me? Had it all been without avail for me and ultimately without eternal value?

With this background, I began receiving acceptances to medical school from the three schools that mattered the most to me – Loma Linda, UCLA, and UCSD. The UC schools were close to home (my family lived in San Diego) and had solid

reputations and were affordable.

As I was processing this decision through my +12 diopter Laodicean glasses, UCLA and UCSD seemed like stellar options. So, I said to myself, let’s look at the course schedules.

UCSD was looking good. But there was class on Sabbath. It’s just “social medicine,” not really an important class like physiology or pathology. I’ll call the Dean’s office and see if I can take some other class, or just review notes and take tests at another time, or “CLEP” it, or have some other accommodation.

After a fairly lengthy and respectful conversation with the school of medicine staff person (“We really want you to come to UCSD”), it became clear that there were no options for “social medicine” on Sabbath except attendance and participation.

Finally, after explaining my “convictions” as a Seventh-day Adventist again, the school of medicine representative asked me, “Can’t you talk to your priest and have him make it OK?” I paused, and then said, “No, sorry, it doesn’t quite work that way.” I surprised myself a bit. Something from those 16 years of SDA education, and camp meetings, weeks of prayer, and

Pathfinders, had stuck, and even impacted me enough to make the right decision. I didn’t love the Sabbath then; I didn’t enjoy it, either. And I still didn’t know Jesus. However, even as a lukewarm, legalistic, liberal, poor excuse for an SDA, I somehow had learned enough to make this right decision.

Although I see it clearly now in the retrospectroscope, God was using all that SDA “stuff” I’d grown up with to gently nudge me toward a place, Loma Linda, where He could engage me in a more direct and personal manner.

This was important because, of the few dozen friends from college who were premed with me, I’m not aware of any who went to medical school outside Loma Linda University who are active SDA Christians today. Their history would likely have been mine if not for the blessing and privilege of an SDA medical education.

The Sabbath issue and the choice to stand firm helped set the course for so much that is “right” in my life. Thank you, Jesus, for the Sabbath. I now love it, and I now love you too.

Throughout history God’s people have faced challenges and had to take a stand for him. Often, it’s not easy and the stakes are high. Although the stakes for these three doctors were not quite ‘life or death’ they remind me of the three Hebrews thrown into the fiery furnace. The principle revealed in these stories is the same: standing for God’s truth, regardless of the consequences, is always the right thing to do and will have eternal significance.

May each one of us be willing to take a stand for Him and one day hear Christ say, “Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord.” – Matthew 25:23

# Keeping the Sabbath in Medical School



**DR. JOHN SHIN** graduated from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine in 2014 and completed his internal medicine residency in 2017 at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He is currently a third-year hematology/medical oncology fellow at Mayo and has a burden to share Christ with cancer patients. Because he believes the best way to restore health is to follow God's laws of healing, Dr. Shin's research focus is on immunotherapy and the effects of lifestyle interventions in patients who are actively undergoing cancer treatment. Upon finishing his fellowship at Mayo, he will be doing an additional year of advanced fellowship training at the National Institutes of Health in immunotherapy clinical trial development. His wife Elisa is a dentist by training (LLUSD '08), and they are blessed with three children: Sophia, Charis, and Kyle.

The true purpose of Sabbath keeping came into focus for me during medical school. One day as I was studying in the library, a classmate came up to me to make small talk. In the middle of our conversation, he announced that he had made the decision to study on the Sabbath because he was aiming for a competitive specialty, and everyone else aiming for the same specialty studied seven days a week. If he only studied six days a week, he would not be able to keep up with his peers, and he believed God would understand his decision. I did not know what to say. We soon wrapped up our discussion and returned to our studying. However, his words stayed with me long after our talk ended. Would God really understand if I decided I could not afford to take the Sabbath off and still remain academically competitive? After all, what good would I be to God's cause if for the sake of keeping the Sabbath, I dropped out of medical school or became a mediocre physician?

Since that conversation in the library, I have come to realize that the real struggle behind Sabbath keeping is not a matter of time management or behavior modification. The real struggle is about what has our heart. All too often, our questions regarding the Sabbath seem to deal with what we can or cannot do during Sabbath hours. However, this is a fruitless approach because after talking to my classmate, I secretly prided myself for always closing my books the moment the sun set each Friday. The problem was, I discovered that my books

could still lay claim to my heart long after they were closed. I also discovered that my Sabbath afternoon nature walks could turn into exercise sessions, and my Sabbath outreach activities could turn into line items to pad my CV. Like the Pharisees, I found myself frequently keeping the letter, but not the spirit, of the law.

After reflecting on this issue, I made a commitment to God that I would keep His Sabbath holy from my heart and not just through my actions. Unbeknownst to me, He taught me what this should look like in practice when I met my future wife. I started to court her halfway through my first year of medical school, and during this time I would study with intense motivation throughout the day so that when she got off work in the evening, I could spend time with her. When we were together, she had my undivided attention. I never found my mind drifting off to my coursework, and I was never tempted to secretly check my email or browse social media when I was with her. Instead of watching the clock to see when I could go back home to resume my studies, my love for her made the hours we spent together seem like minutes, and I would frequently lose track of time. The time I devoted to her was a joy, not a drudgery or a burden, and I was always sad to see it come to an end. I realized this was the experience that God wanted me to have with Him every day but especially during His Sabbaths. The Sabbath day is supposed to be a delight (Isaiah 58:13). It is our scheduled "date time" when we are to disconnect from the world to reconnect





with God and give Him our undivided attention. Viewed in this light, the essence of Sabbath keeping is not a matter of what we do, but rather, a matter of how much we love God. Because if we truly loved Him, we would never have to ask how to keep His Sabbath holy. It would come naturally to us.

Understanding that my attitude toward the Sabbath was simply a reflection of my love for God was transformative in how I approached my studies. Instead of viewing the Sabbath hours as a liability in my academic journey, they became an incredibly important time of refreshing for my spiritual, emotional, and physical health. I looked forward to these precious moments when I could take a break from the furious pace of my studies, guilt free. My Sabbath hours became filled with a richness and joy that I never knew was possible, and for the first time, I was able to honestly say that I would rather fail and

drop out of medical school than lose this joy I had with my Lord.

However, there was no denying that keeping the Sabbath did shorten my available study time, and in a strange way, this proved to be the greatest blessing for me in medical school because it constantly drove me to my knees in prayer and made me rely on God that much more. Being a slow and methodical learner, I knew that I did not have the ability to overcome a 24-hour weekly deficit in my study time. Therefore, I was acutely aware that every test I passed, every academic hurdle I overcame was through God's grace, and whenever I experienced success, it was only natural to give Him all the glory. Every time I did well on an exam, every time a flash of insight enabled me to answer a question correctly, it was a token of God's faithfulness and served to increase my faith in Him. In this way, going through medical school became the most faith-

building experience I ever had.

My classmate, on the other hand, kept true to his word and stopped attending church. He studied seven days a week, and as a result, he did very well in school. Eventually he matched into the competitive residency program he was hoping for. But I have to ask, at what cost? At the end of his medical school journey, he was not inclined to credit his academic success to anything other than his own hard work. For four years he had built for himself a foundation of self-sufficiency, and as far as I can tell, he continues to succeed based on his own terms and on his own strength.

The lesson I have learned through these experiences is that God cares more about who we become than about what we do. In this sense, the journey we take is more important than our destination because our journey shapes who we are. Unfortunately, the demanding journey of medical school transforms many Spirit-filled medical students into worldly physicians. I see now that God has a parallel curriculum in mind for every student as they go through medical school, and it is far more important to pass His tests than man's tests. One of the most important tests God set before me early on was whether I would keep His Sabbath holy. When I took a stand for my relationship with God, He opened up to me a world of joy and sweet communion with Him that I never knew was possible. And then, on the strength of this relationship of love and trust, God carried me through medical school and beyond.

Whether you are a student or years out of training, I wish for you this joy, but above all, I wish for you the experience of God's love made manifest in His Sabbath that will set your heart ablaze with love for Him.

# Sabbath Considerations in Healthcare



**DR. MARK SANDOVAL** is board certified in emergency medicine and lifestyle medicine. Currently, he serves as the president of Uchee Pines Institute, medical director of the Uchee Pines Institute's lifestyle center, director of the Gulf States Conference health ministries department, and founder and chairman of H.E.A.L.T.H. by the Book. He has a passion for God and seeks to serve Him in everything that he does. He particularly enjoys sharing about the gospel and its impact upon healing, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. He also enjoys home life with his wife and seven children.

*“We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work...” –*  
Counsels on Health, p. 425

We as Seventh-day Adventist healthcare professionals have answered this call to a significant degree. Beyond caring for the physical needs of our patients, this calling requires us to be living examples of the Three Angels' Messages that have been committed to us by God Himself.

We recognize that medical missionary work, or comprehensive health evangelism, is far broader than caring for the physical health of our patients.

*“Genuine medical missionary work is bound up inseparably with the keeping of God's commandments, of which the Sabbath is especially mentioned, since it is the great memorial of God's creative work. Its observance is bound up with the work of restoring the moral image of God in man. This is the ministry which God's people are to carry forward at this time.”*  
– Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 6, p. 266

These Three Angels' Messages are the focus of our existence and work as a people.

*“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import – the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them.”* –  
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9, p. 19

Of every phase of this earth's history, now is the time to hold high the banner of our allegiance to God and show clearly to the world whose side we are on.

*“The observance of the Sabbath is the sign between God and His people. Let us not be ashamed to bear the sign that distinguishes us from the world... In keeping the Sabbath, which God declares shall be kept holy, they give the sign of their order, showing plainly that they are on the Lord's side.”* – Counsels on Health, p. 235-236



And this admonition is not only true for the Adventist healthcare professional, but also for every Adventist institution.

*“The Sabbath is ever the sign that distinguishes the obedient from the disobedient...His work is to be carried forward in right lines. The people who bear His sign are to establish churches and institutions as memorials to Him. These memorials, however humble in appearance, will constantly bear witness ... in favor of the Sabbath instituted by the Lord in Eden.” – Counsels on Health, p. 235*

The Sabbath, as central to the Three Angels’ Messages and the commandments of God, is a topic of particular concern to God’s last-day people, and especially to those who have whole-heartedly responded to the call to comprehensive health evangelism. So, how should we as Seventh-day Adventist healthcare professionals relate to the Sabbath within the context of our healthcare careers? Let us look at God’s Word for Sabbath principles that we can apply to our careers.

#### **1. Break away from your weekly occupation on the Sabbath.**

*“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.” – Exodus 20:8-10*

#### **2. Avoid business transactions on the Sabbath.**

*“In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath*

*day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions. Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, ‘What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?’” – Nehemiah 13:15-17*

#### **3. Take time to fellowship with other believers on the Sabbath.**

*“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.” – Leviticus 23:3*

*“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” – Luke 4:16*

#### **4a. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.**

*“Then He said to them, ‘What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.’ Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.” – Matthew 12:11-13*

#### **4b. Don’t use your career as an excuse to do unnecessary work on the Sabbath.**

*“Those who, from whatever cause, are obliged to work on the Sabbath, are always in peril; they feel the loss, and from doing works of necessity, they fall into the habit of doing things on the Sabbath that are not necessary. The sense of its sacredness is lost, and the holy commandment is of no effect. A special effort should be made to bring about a reform in*

*Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation.*

*regard to Sabbath observance.” – Medical Ministry, p. 215*

*“A spirit of irreverence and carelessness in the observance of the Sabbath is liable to come into our sanitariums. Upon the men of responsibility in the medical missionary work rests the duty of giving instruction to physicians, nurses, and helpers in regard to the sanctity of God’s holy day. Especially should every physician endeavor to set a right example. The nature of his duties naturally leads him to feel justified in doing on the Sabbath many things that he should refrain from doing. So far as possible, he should so plan his work that he can lay aside his ordinary duties.” – Counsels on Health, p. 236*

*“Often physicians and nurses are called upon during the Sabbath to minister to the sick, and sometimes it is impossible for them to take time for rest and for attending devotional services. The needs of suffering humanity are never to be neglected. The Saviour by His example has shown us that it is right to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. But unnecessary work, such as ordinary treatments and operations that can be postponed, should be deferred. Let the patients understand that physicians and helpers should have one day for rest. Let them understand that the workers fear God and desire to keep holy the day that He has set apart for His followers to observe as a sign between Him and them.” – Counsels on Health, p. 236*

*“The Lord says, ‘Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations.’ (Exodus 31:13) Let no man, because he is a physician, feel at liberty to disregard this word of the Lord. He should plan his work so as to obey God’s requirements. He should not travel on the Sabbath except when there is real suffering to be alleviated. When this is the case, it is not a desecration of the Sabbath for physicians to travel upon that day; but ordinary cases should be deferred.” – Medical Ministry, p. 214*

We can see that the application of this principle will lead us to plan in such a way that we avoid all unnecessary work on the Sabbath. As the joy of the Sabbath is more and more of our experience, we will be more and more dedicated to guarding that special time with the Lord.

**5a. It is okay to take care of legitimate needs on the Sabbath.**

*“Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him, ‘Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath...?’ And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.’” – Mark 2:23-28*

*“The sick and suffering require care and attention upon the Sabbath, as well as upon the other six days of the week; and it may be necessary for their comfort to prepare warm food and drinks upon the Sabbath. In such instances, it is no violation of the fourth commandment to make them as comfortable as possible. The great Lawgiver is a God of compassion, as well as of justice.” – The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1, p. 226*



**5b. Prepare in advance for your needs so you don't have to prepare on the Sabbath.**

*“‘Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work.’ In this time all the duties necessary to prepare for the Sabbath are to be done.” – Medical Ministry, p. 50*

*“Those who neglect to prepare for the Sabbath on the sixth day, and who cook food upon the Sabbath, violate the fourth commandment, and are transgressors of God’s law. All who are really anxious to observe the Sabbath according to the commandment, will not cook any food upon the Sabbath.” – The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1, p. 22*

**6. The money earned for services performed on the Sabbath belongs to the Lord.**

*“It may be necessary to devote even the hours of the holy Sabbath to the relief of suffering humanity. But the fee for such labor should be put into the treasury of the Lord, to be used for the worthy poor, who need medical skill but cannot afford to pay for it.” – Medical Ministry, p. 216*

How many worthy poor could we help with their health challenges if we pooled our Sabbath incomes in a fund for their relief? I think we should find out!\*

As we consider these simple principles related to the Sabbath and apply them in our personal context, we will be set apart as a people who love and obey the Lord, who orient our lives toward God’s will, and who are preparing for the soon coming of our Lord and Savior. And as we live these principles in our lives, we will be living testimonies of the power of the grace of God to redeem men and women from sin to righteousness in Christ. I challenge each of you to consider how you will conform your life to these principles as you enjoy the liberty and joy of the Sabbath rest in your own lives.

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\*AMEN has set up a Sabbath Fee Relief Fund – If you wish to learn more and/or to donate, please go to [amensda.org/donate/designate-your-gift/](https://amensda.org/donate/designate-your-gift/)



# Why Jesus' Sabbath Keeping Matters



**PASTOR MARK FINLEY** has served as a Vice President for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Speaker-Director of *It Is Written Television*, medical evangelist and pastor. He is a renowned evangelist, having presented more than 150 evangelistic series around the world. Medical evangelism is near and dear to Finley's heart. He began integrating stress-control seminars, smoking cessation, health expos, cooking schools and mini health talks into his evangelistic meetings early in his ministry. He routinely brings physicians and dentists as part of his team.

*Pastor Finley and his wife Teenie, have three grown children and five grandchildren.*

**F**or a Jewish culture steeped in tradition, formalism and ritual, Jesus' Sabbath keeping practices were shocking. For those seeking heaven's richest blessings they were refreshing. Jesus reframed the Sabbath with a newness, a freshness, and a spiritual vitality. For the Savior, Sabbath was a day to find wholeness in a broken world. It was a refuge – an oasis – a place in time for all humanity to rest in His love, discover strength in His Word, experience His presence, and participate in His mission.

The gospels reveal Christ worshipping in the synagogue, walking with His disciples in nature, healing the sick, eating with his friends, and visiting with His followers on the Sabbath. One of the most inspiring pictures of Jesus on the Sabbath is in Luke 4:16, "So He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up and as His custom was, He went in the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read." Jesus' custom, His regular practice, was to participate in Sabbath worship. On this Sabbath, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 and announced His Messianic mission. It is significant that it was on Sabbath that Jesus read the words, "He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,

*to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Commenting on this passage Ellen White states, "Jesus stood before the people as a living expositor of the prophecies concerning Himself. Explaining the words He had read, He spoke of the Messiah as a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth. His impressive manner and the wonderful import of His words thrilled the hearers with a power they had never felt before. The tide of divine influence broke every barrier down; like Moses, they beheld the Invisible. As their hearts were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, they responded with fervent amens and praises to the Lord." – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 237

On Sabbath, the living Christ speaks forgiveness to our hearts, anoints us with His Spirit, heals our brokenness, and sets us at liberty from the bondage of sin so we can proclaim the glory of His Name. For Jesus, Sabbath worship was much more than a perfunctory act or legalistic requirement. It was the joy of entering the Shekinah glory of the Father's presence to praise and worship

to receive strength for the journey ahead. The Sabbath was a day of spiritual renewal and the infilling of the Spirit's power.

### JESUS' SABBATH HEALING MINISTRY

It is fascinating to note that Jesus performed more of His healing miracles on Sabbath than on any other day. There are at least three reasons for this:

1. Jesus wanted to reveal the true meaning of the Sabbath. Sabbath is a day of wholeness. It is a day that God longs to make us whole physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.
2. Sabbath is a day of service. God has called us from the claustrophobic confines of our own self-inflated importance to the largeness of service. Jesus lived to bless, and His Sabbath miracles demonstrated that desire.
3. Sabbath is a memorial of creation and God is the God of re-creation. Jesus on Sabbath revealed the Father's love and power in creating health where there was once sickness.

Let's get a clearer view of Christ's Sabbath keeping practices as we study these seven miracles more clearly. Keep in mind that when the gospel writers discuss Jesus' Sabbath keeping practices the vast majority of times it is in the context of the healing miracles.

### THE INVALID AT BETHESDA: JOHN 5:1-15

The Pool of Bethesda is in Jerusalem just inside the Sheep Gate on the way to the Temple. Bethesda means "house of mercy." Evidently Jesus was on His way to Sabbath worship when he saw a man who had been in a horrible condition for 38 years. In describing the healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda, Ellen White describes Jesus "walking alone in apparent meditation and prayer" when He saw "one case of supreme wretchedness." – Desire of Ages p. 201, 202

It was the Sabbath and Jesus knew that this act of healing would generate significant controversy among the Pharisees. The Jewish priests had 39 different regulations governing acceptable work on the Sabbath. These "meaningless requirements" and "senseless restrictions" were an "intolerable burden." (DA 204) We are told that Jesus "by His words and by His works of mercy ... was breaking the oppressive power of the old traditions and man-made commandments and presenting the love of God in its exhaustless fullness." – Desire of Ages p. 204.

Seeing His hopelessness, Jesus asked the poor sufferer, "Will you be made whole?" – John 5:8

It was impossible for the man to make himself whole. By faith He responded to the Savior's command, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." – John 8:8-9

New life flowed into every nerve and tissue of His body. Miraculously he was made whole. By faith he accepted Christ's word and acted upon it. This Sabbath miracle, as are each of the Sabbath healings, is intimately tied to a deeper spiritual truth. Accepting the Word of God by faith and acting upon it we are made whole.

The Pharisees were upset not necessarily because Jesus healed the man but because he carried his bed on the Sabbath (John 8:8-12). Jesus had violated a manmade tradition and totally set aside a human regulation that had no relationship to a divine command regarding Heaven's purpose for the Sabbath.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, walked through the Sheep Gate and brought wholeness or salvation to a hopeless man. The point of this Sabbath miracle is that Jesus is both our Creator and our Redeemer. The One

who made us can recreate us and make us whole again. He meets us where we are, sees and knows our need, redeems us by His grace and turns our despair into hope. In a masterful statement concluding her discussion on the healing at Bethesda, Ellen White describes God's true purpose for the Sabbath as providing opportunity for "healthful rest, worship and holy deeds." – Desire of Ages p. 207

God's ideal for the Sabbath includes all three. Any approach to understanding Christ's ministry on the Sabbath that neglects or overlooks this divine trilogy misunderstands the Sabbath's richness and divine purpose. We experience the fullness of the Sabbath blessing when we enter the joy of worship, experience healthful rest, and selfless service.

### THE DEMONIAK IN THE SYNAGOGUE: MARK 1:21-28

The very essence of the Sabbath is worship. John the Revelator declares, "You are worthy Lord to receive glory and honor and power because you created all things." – Revelation 4:11

Sabbath is a glorious day of praise and worship of the One who created us. Resting from our labors we completely trust in the works of Christ both for our standing before God (justification) and our growth in grace (sanctification).

Jesus our divine example entered the joy of worship each Sabbath. Sabbath worship was Jesus "custom" or "common practice." It is extremely fascinating that at least five of His Sabbath miracles are in connection with Sabbath worship. Mark chapter 1 describes Jesus as teaching with authority in the temple on Sabbath morning. His hearers are astonished. (Mark 1:21, 22) Suddenly the worship service is interrupted. A mad man rushes forward

## Sabbath is a glorious day of praise and worship of the One who created us.

shrieking in terror. The demon possessed man cries out, “*Let us alone.*” – Mark 1:24

The devil attempts to disrupt the service and prevent the worshippers from accepting Jesus’ divine claims. The demon is miraculously cast out during this worship service in the synagogue.

We are told that, “*The man who had been possessed stood before the wondering people happy in the freedom of self-expression. Even the demon had testified to the divine power of the Savior. The man praised God for his deliverance.*” – Desire of Ages p. 256

Jesus’ fame now spread through the land and this miraculous healing launched Jesus’ Galilean ministry (Mark 1:28). The purpose of this Sabbath deliverance is clear. It serves to reveal God’s love for this demon-possessed man and attest to the credibility of Jesus’ claims as the Messiah. But note this miracle is spontaneous, the healing is instant, and it takes place in the context of worship and serves a much larger purpose than the individual healing.

### **PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW: MARK 1:29-31**

Leaving the Sabbath worship, Jesus quietly makes His way to Peter’s home in Capernaum on the shores of the Sea of Galilee for a few hours of “healthful rest”. There He discovers Peter’s mother-in-law is extremely ill. It is Sabbath and Jesus has entered the home of a friend to share a simple Galilean meal and rest on Sabbath afternoon from His exhausting labors.



Sensing an urgent need, He ministers to this sickly woman and she is miraculously healed. Disease flees before Him. It is interesting to note that Mark’s gospel then says that “*immediately the fever left her, and she served them.*” – Mark 1:31

In other words she fixed them Sabbath lunch. Jesus met the need of a friend’s mother-in-law who then ministered to the entire group. She both received and gave a blessing. This miracle was a spontaneous event, ministering to an individual need in a private home on Sabbath afternoon after worship. Notice once again we have three elements in this story. It occurs immediately after Sabbath worship, Jesus has come to Peter’s home for restorative rest, and He finds joy in service.

As word spread throughout the region of both the miraculous deliverance in the synagogue and the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law, scores of people traveled to Capernaum to be healed. Mark’s gospel is very specific that Jesus waited until after sunset to heal the crowds who came. “*Now at evening when the sun had set, they brought to Him all that were sick and those who were demon possessed.*” – Mark 1:32

Could Mark’s narrative possibly be a model for the church today? “*From homes, the shops, the market places the inhabitants*

*of the city pressed toward the humble dwelling that sheltered Jesus...hour after hour they came and went...*” – Desire of Ages p. 259

It might be argued that the reason they waited until after the Sabbath was fear of the condemnation of the Pharisees. This may be partly true. But in my view, there is a deeper reason. The gospel narrative is teaching us that the exhausting labor of healing the masses is best done after the Sabbath unless it is an absolute necessity. Individual acts of meeting human need are well within the context of the Sabbath experience but in Mark 1 Jesus worshipped, rested, fellowshiped with friends, and served.

Jesus placed a priority on Sabbath worship but when He confronted human need He unselfishly ministered to individuals. But He waited until after Sabbath to enter the tireless toil of healing the masses hour after hour.

### **THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND: MARK 3:1-6**

As Jesus entered the synagogue on Sabbath, He immediately saw a man with a withered hand. Jesus desired in church this Sabbath to powerfully illustrate that human beings are of supreme value in the sight of God and that meeting a need on Sabbath is in harmony with the Creator’s





## All true medical missionary work seeks to evoke a response of faith in the living Christ.

purpose for Sabbath. Commenting on this experience, Ellen White says, *“Every false religion teaches its adherents to be careless of human needs, sufferings, and rights. The gospel places a high value upon humanity as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and it teaches a tender regard for the wants and woes of man. The Lord says, ‘I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.’ Isaiah 13:12.”* Desire of Ages p. 286

Notice that this miraculous Sabbath healing follows the pattern outlined throughout the gospels. It is an unplanned, miraculous, instantaneous healing meeting a human need in the context of worship to illustrate a deeper spiritual truth. In this instance the deeper spiritual truth is that human beings are of more value than an ox that has fallen into a ditch. They are of inestimable worth in God’s sight.

### THE MAN BORN BLIND: JOHN 9:1-41

The miraculous Sabbath healing of the man born blind begins with these words, *“Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man that was blind from birth.”* – John 9:1

Our compassionate Christ would not pass by a man born blind. He did not allow the Pharisaical human restrictions prevent Him from healing an individual on the Sabbath. Scripture makes plain the significance of this miracle. Jesus reveals

that the miracle was performed that the *“works of God should be revealed”* in this poor blind man. – John 9:3

It is fascinating to observe that while Jesus was still in the vicinity of the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, He placed moistened clay on the blind man’s eyes and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. There is great significance in this simple approach. Inspiration puts it this way, *“The cure could be wrought only by the power of the great healer, yet Christ made use of the simple agencies of nature.”* – Desire of Ages p. 824

Commenting still further on the relationship between Heaven’s natural remedies, miraculous healing, and trust in God, Ellen White provides this instruction for God’s church today. *“And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise and pray for the manifestation of His power. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Savior would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength.”* – Desire of Ages p. 824-825

There is another significant lesson Jesus longed to teach in this miracle. The Pool

of Siloam is the very pool from which the ceremonial waters representing life and healing were carried to the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. The main themes of the Feast of Tabernacles were water and light. Here Jesus, as the Light of the World, heals a blind man and tells the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The healing happened at least two-thirds of a mile from where Jesus was located. This clearly indicates that His Word is as good as His presence. When Jesus speaks the Word of healing, it is so.

Here is the significance of this Sabbath miracle. Jesus is the light of the world. Seeing Him our darkness flees away, and we see clearly divine realities. Jesus is also the healing water which cleanses our hearts and transforms our lives. This spontaneous miracle illustrated that Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath is the One who enables us to truly see eternal truths and who genuinely heals the blindness of our hearts. His use of natural remedies encourages us to teach people the simple principles of health.

Most of all, this story urges us to do “follow up” like Jesus to provide more, much more than the initial treatment of an ailment. In John 9:35, Jesus seeks out the healed man, reveals He is the Messiah, and evokes a response of faith as the man joyfully testifies, *“Lord, I believe!”* and worships Christ. All true medical missionary work seeks to evoke a response of faith in the living Christ.

### THE CRIPPLED WOMAN: LUKE 13:10-17

As Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on Sabbath, He noticed a *“woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.”* – Luke 13:10-11

Christ’s concern and loving care would not allow Him to overlook the suffering of a poor woman right in front of Him during the Sabbath worship experience when He had the power to do something about her disease. When He *“laid His hands on her,”* she was *“made straight and glorified God.”* – Luke 10:13

Although there are minor variations, the pattern of Jesus’ Sabbath healings is very similar in the gospel narrative.

1. They are spontaneous acts meeting a human need.
2. Most often they are linked to a Sabbath worship experience.
3. Regularly they are connected with a direct appeal to salvation.
4. They do not require a great deal of labor or hours of toil.

They are generally instantaneous, divine acts of miraculous grace and power.

### THE MAN WITH DROPSY: LUKE 14:1-4

The last two of these seven Sabbath miracles of healing are recorded by Luke, a physician. Luke has already communicated the priority Jesus placed on Sabbath worship (Luke 4:16). Jesus regularly participated in Sabbath worship services (Luke 4:31, 6:6, 13:10).

In this story, Jesus accepted an invitation to dine with the Pharisees in a private home. Obviously, this must have been a Sabbath lunch since it would have been unconscionable for the Pharisees not to have attended worship on Sabbath. Although not mentioned in the text, it is highly likely that Jesus worshipped with

them and then accompanied them home for a meal.

In the privacy of the home, Jesus observed this man with dropsy. Dropsy is a serious disease where the body severely swelled due to excess fluids. Today we would term this condition “edema” often due to congestive heart failure. This man was extremely ill and needed lifesaving treatment. Commenting on those coming to Jesus in Capernaum, Ellen White observed, *“They were in every condition of helplessness and approaching death. Some were burning with fevers, others were paralyzed, stricken with dropsy, blind, deaf, and lame.”* – Spirit of Prophecy, Vol 2, p. 181

While the Pharisees seemed to care more for an ox that fell into a ditch than a suffering, dying man with a dread disease, Jesus illustrated God’s love in action by healing the man. The lesson is clear. Faced with indescribable human suffering, Jesus never turns away from human need. He unselfishly ministers to relieve suffering when He is confronted with it even on the Sabbath. But His purpose is always larger than individual healing. The Savior longs to make people whole physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

### CONCLUSION

The seven healing miracles of Jesus reveal a Christ who was genuinely concerned about relieving physical suffering. There are times when Seventh-day Adventist medical personnel are called to work in healthcare institutions on Sabbath. This Sabbath ministry of unselfish love and service is part of God’s plan in revealing His grace to humanity. Nevertheless, Christ placed priority on worship and warns us against incessant labor and the neglect of restoring rest.

Jesus’ Sabbath keeping matters because in His life He reveals Heaven’s model to receive God’s abundant Sabbath blessings. He is our example in all things, especially in Sabbath keeping. When Christ gave humanity the Sabbath in Eden, He stated that it would serve three specific purposes: blessing, sanctification, and rest (Genesis 2:1-4).

To bless something is to give it intrinsic value that it does not have otherwise. It means to place something in the object that is special. Jesus placed within the Sabbath the special blessing of His presence for all who observe it. We meet Him again each Sabbath and experience His love and truth in fresh, new ways.

To sanctify is to set apart for some holy use. When we observe the day that He has set apart as holy, He recreates us in His image, so we become holy vessels for His use.

Jesus rested on the Sabbath at creation not because He was tired but in perfect peace of a completed creation. His work of creation was done. Each Sabbath we rest in the assurance that we are one with Him. The Sabbath becomes our peaceful haven of refuge in a crazy, stressed-out world. In Christ, the Sabbath is an anchor for our soul.

The One who made us longs to fellowship with us, rebuild our health and rejuvenate our spiritual life each Sabbath through meaningful worship, restorative rest, and life-giving service. May His example be ours is my prayer.

# Trust and Obey: My Sabbath Experiences



**DR. JOHN CHUNG** is a dermatologist, who practices in North Georgia and around Chattanooga, Tennessee. While he practices dermatology, his passion and mission are to lead people to Christ.

I attended Independence High School, a public school in San Jose, California. One of my teachers, Mr. Rice, who taught humanities, was a staunch atheist who constantly denigrated Christians. One day, out of exasperation, I decided to speak out in class. Prayerfully and earnestly, I tried to convince him and my classmates of the existence and reality of God. Many of my classmates ridiculed me as Mr. Rice dismissively responded “That’s all you’ve got?” Although awkward, I was pleased by the interaction. I felt God helping me and thought I made many good points.

Fast forward 23 years. I received an unexpected call from the superintendent of the San Jose School District. He said, “We want to induct you into our Thomas P. Ryan Hall of Fame. You will be inducted with Jerry Yang, a co-founder of Yahoo. It’s going to be on a Saturday.” He gave me the date and the time.

“I can’t make it on that day,” I said.

“What?” came the reply. “This is such an honor. You are going to be inducted into the Hall of Fame!”

“Yes, but Saturday is my Sabbath, from

sundown Friday evening until sundown Saturday evening,” I said.

He replied, “But we only do this every few years, and it is always on Saturday.”

I replied, “I would rather keep my Sabbath and forgo the induction.”

There was silence as I hung up the phone. However, a couple days later I received another telephone call from the superintendent.

He said, “We will have a special ceremony just for you on Friday afternoon. It will be over before sundown.”

When I arrived on that particular Friday, I did not recognize anyone – except for one: Mr. Rice. To my surprise he came to support me. When I returned home, I had an email from Mr. Rice. He wrote, “Are you worried about my soul? You don’t need to. I have accepted Christ.”

I was shocked. I thought he would never accept Christ.

God has His own timing! We have a job to do. Our job is to share Christ with other



people. We do our part; God does His part.

After finishing three years of dermatology residency, I applied for a Mohs Micrographic Skin Cancer Surgery Fellowship. I consulted with my Dermatology Program Director, Dr. Flowers, and he said I should apply to Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation, in La Jolla, California. He thought that was the best Fellowship program in the world. They had around 600 applicants from all over the world, including Australia, England, Israel, Canada, and the United States. They interview 50 candidates for one fellowship position. I applied, and after hearing nothing for weeks, I decided to telephone them. "Hello, this is John Chung."

"Who?"

"John Chung."

"Okay...? Why are you calling?"

"I sent my application and want to know if I may have an interview."

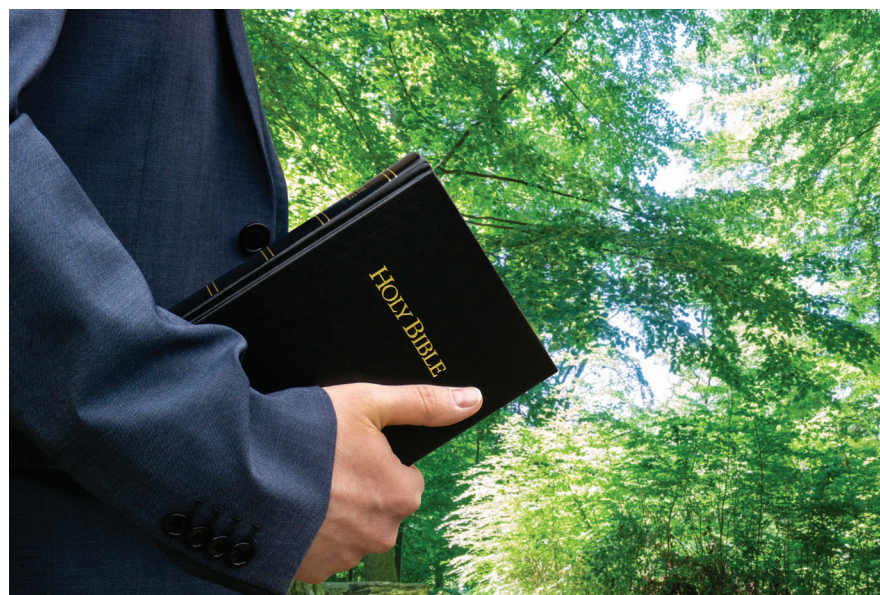
"Well, we will look into it, but please don't call us back."

After the conversation I thought, "That's the last time I will hear from them!"

Two days later they called me with an invitation for an interview.

It turned out to be a working interview. As soon as I walked in, the Program Director, Dr. Greenway, asked me to join him in the operating room. I worked with him for the entire day.

Dr. Greenway had already reviewed my medical school grades, board scores, and recommendation letters. At the end of



the day he said, "I have to do one more interview. But I want to tell you right now that you have the position."

I was ecstatic, but there was a major problem. You see, they have many conferences on weekends throughout the year that are held from Friday to Sunday. And as a fellow, I would be expected to prepare and lead out in these conferences. I said, "Dr. Greenway, you need to know something about me. I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. The Sabbath starts on Friday night and ends on Saturday night. I cannot be involved in the conferences during the Sabbath hours."

I thought he was going to retract his offer of acceptance. But, after just a few seconds he said, "That's okay, I will still accept you." I never had any problem with the Sabbath during the entire fellowship.

After my fellowship, I asked God for His guidance on my future. I had multiple offers, but the most surprising offer came from Dr. Greenway, who had been promoted to CEO of all the Scripps Clinics. He said, "John, I want you to take over my position."

La Jolla is a beautiful place. The clinic overlooks the famous Torrey Pines golf course and the Pacific Ocean. This was an

unbelievable opportunity. "You're going to become the Head of Dermatology, the Mohs Surgery Fellowship, and all the surgery departments." And he kept enticing me with money.

But I had the Sabbath conflict. I told Dr. Greenway, "This is such an honor that you asked me, but I must decline." He was astonished by my answer and said, "I want you to think about it. I'm going to give you two days. Talk to your wife." But I did not need two days.

We often make decisions based on feelings or personal gain. We don't always ask, "What is God's will?" God was not calling me to work in La Jolla and be required to coordinate conferences on Sabbath. The next day I told Dr. Greenway, "I am sorry but I cannot take this position."

God called me to a different place, where He could use me to become a witness for Him. So He sent us to Dalton, a small town in North Georgia.

Several years later, a pharmaceutical sales rep came to my office and said, "According to the number of prescriptions that you write, you have the busiest private practice in the United States." I thought he was kidding. He said, "No, it's true!" He showed me all the numbers. I was getting



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*through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him his coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice."*

– Desire of Ages p. 753

patients from seven different states. It is only by the grace of God that people come, and we are only as prosperous as we are faithful.

It was Wednesday afternoon many years ago. I was performing surgery on a patient under intravenous sedation, and he stopped breathing in the middle of the procedure. Even with intubation and 100 percent oxygen, he continued to decline. I thought he was going to die. As I prayed in earnest, he revived.

Three days later, I was sitting in church at the 11 o'clock service when his wife called and said, "Something is wrong with my husband." I immediately went to their house to check on him, but everything was fine.

"I wish you had called me at noon and not 11 a.m.," I said.

"What are you talking about?" she replied.

"I was in church and I wanted to hear the sermon!"

"But this is Saturday!"

"Well, I go to church on the Sabbath, which is Saturday."

For the next two hours, I witnessed to them about my faith. They said, "Will you please come and share with our Thursday night Bible study group?"

I envisioned a small group, but when I arrived on that particular night, there were at least 50 people, from many denominations. I knew most of them – they were almost all my patients! The couple had distributed a flyer stating that I was giving my testimony.

I shared the cross of Christ. I believe, our SDA Church is the true church because we have the clearest understanding of the Cross. So, I shared the beautiful message of the Gospel.

"How would you feel if you experienced the guilt of everyone's sin, from Adam until the last person ever to live?" I asked. "That's what Christ encountered. Isaiah 53:6 says, 'the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.' ALL. And Hebrews 2:9 states that Jesus tasted death for every man. That's why Jesus said, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' as the sins of all humanity fell upon Him. At this point Jesus experienced the ultimate agony – complete separation from the Father."

*"Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Savior could not see*

I said, "You know, many of the things that I'm telling you came from an inspired book called Desire of Ages. Who would like to have a copy?"

Every person raised their hand.

I needed at least 100 books. When I called the ABC, the manager said it would take a few weeks to get that many hard-bound copies. In the meantime, they all wanted me to come back for more Bible studies. So I kept returning to the Bible study every week.

When the books finally arrived, each person began reading the Desire of Ages. One lady said, "I take this book everywhere with me. I take it to the bank; I take it to the store. I even read it when I'm stopped at a red light. I have a husband and two sons; would you please get copies for them?"

For the last 25 years, we've been having weekly Bible studies at our home, and many have been baptized as a result.

Years ago, a Baptist man was attending our Wednesday evening Bible study. He would sit to my left, listening but saying little. After covering gospel basics in previous weeks, I decided to cover the Sabbath.

I had prepared a presentation drawing from the Bible and history and thought I had made a compelling argument for the Sabbath being Saturday. The normally taciturn Baptist man came out of his shell with a bang, cursing me out using four-letter words. I was stunned. He said repeatedly, "You are a deceiver!"

I said, "I've just been teaching straight from the Bible! Did I say anything contrary to the Bible?"

"I know what you are trying to do!" he said.

"What am I trying to do?"

He said, "Look everybody! Look! You know what he is trying to do? He's trying to make all of us Seventh-day Adventists! His whole objective from the beginning was to make us Seventh-day Adventists!" In actuality, what he said was true.

I froze, inwardly praying, "God, what do you want me to do?" I tried to counter any implication of legalism, saying, "We are not saved by keeping the Sabbath. We are saved only by grace and through faith. But Sabbath is a result of our salvation, not in order to be saved. There will be a lot of Baptists in Heaven who never knew to keep the Sabbath." I don't remember what else I said, but everyone soon left.

It was a depressing week. "God, maybe these people are not ready. Do you want me to stop the Bible studies? I'll do whatever you want."

I thought the following week's attendance would be sparse. But to my surprise everyone came back. I decided not to talk about the Sabbath that night and let things calm down. After our study, the man who had cursed me said, "Dr. Chung, I would like to apologize for what I said last week."

I said, "It's okay. You were being honest, and expressed your opinion. In this country there is freedom of choice and religion. You don't have to apologize. It's okay!"

He said, "No, I need to apologize in front of all these people. Dr. Chung, I must tell you something. I went home and found some studies online." He handed me a large stack of papers that he had printed from a website. He said, "I've been studying this whole week because I was shocked by what you said. I didn't know anything about this. But when I studied all this, I realized that everything you said was true."

I said, "Praise the Lord!" Then I looked at the top page of the stack that he was clutching, and there was printed the familiar name, "Amazing Facts." In my heart I said, "Lord, this guy could have downloaded from any source, but he downloaded from Amazing Facts!"

"There's a guy named Doug Bachelor," he said, "He comes on TV Sundays at 11 a.m. on Channel 12."

"I don't watch much TV," I replied.

He said, "You can come over to my house and watch him. He's my favorite preacher. And preaches on Sundays. Every Sunday." I didn't say a thing. That night, as I was driving home, I was laughing so hard that if anybody saw me, driving all alone and laughing uncontrollably, they would have thought that I was crazy. I guess that's holy laughter. The week before was depressing. But this particular day turned out to be one of the best days of my life.

Sometimes we who grew up with the Sabbath are embarrassed or reluctant to share the Sabbath truth. But through each of these experiences, I have been reminded

of the importance of sharing the Sabbath with others.

My prayer for us is that we will be so blessed by the Sabbath that we would be willing to give up everything this world offers – prestigious jobs, fame, fortune, and anything else that lures us away from precious time with our Savior.

May you and I have a burning desire to share Christ, the blessings of keeping the Sabbath, and most importantly, His saving grace with those around us.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 says, "*Cast thy bread upon the waters for thou shalt find it after many days.*" This is full of meaning. Water symbolizes the people. The Bread represents Jesus and His Word. If we cast Jesus and His Word upon people, we shall "find it after many days."

We might not learn the result of our efforts until the life to come. In Heaven, someone may tap you on the shoulder and say, "Remember that time you shared Christ with me? You talked about Jesus, and I went home and began digging and searching. I found Christ."

And they will be grateful for all eternity! Every time they see another beautiful planet, eat from the Tree of Life, talk to Moses, and experience the awe and wonder of God's universe, they will be praising God for your witness!

Ellen White says that each day in Heaven will be happier than the previous day! After a trillion years you will say, "I'm so happy!" But the next day you are even happier! Your joy will be infinite. I want to share this infinite gift with others. Will you join me?



# Meeting Jane

Six and a half years ago, Jane\* was going through a crisis. Her husband of many years was unfaithful, and she was facing divorce. Her daughter had gotten married and moved out; Jane felt so alone.

In this time of confusion, Jane sought advice and direction from the pastor of the Baptist church that she had attended all her life, but her church and pastor showed no interest, and she felt abandoned.

However, she found that this hard experience was actually a blessing because she turned to God and discovered that she wasn't alone. The Lord sustained her. She began praying and reading her Bible, but she had many questions.

Four years passed. Her daughter married and moved to Los Angeles. So, two-and-a-half years ago, Jane flew to Los Angeles to see her daughter, son-in-law, and young granddaughter. All too soon, the visit was over and she was headed home. Jane was flying on Southwest and had paid extra to sit at the front of the plane. Boarding, she chose a front seat and put her bag up in the baggage holder above her and sat down. She had listened to Doug Batchelor on television and began to pray that the Lord would send her someone that could help her understand the Bible.

After this prayer she had a strong impression: You need to move to the back of the plane. But Jane didn't want to; she had paid extra to get this front seat, yet

the impression grew stronger. Finally, not knowing why, she got up, took her bag from the baggage bay above the seat and moved back to the back of the plane, selected an aisle seat, put her bag up on the baggage bay and sat down again.

Meanwhile...

Two and a half years ago, I was at Weimar Institute for a board meeting. I was flying Southwest Airlines and was scheduled to leave Sacramento early Sunday morning.

On Southwest Airlines, if you want a good spot near the front of the plane, you check in exactly 24 hours in advance. Because I left early Sunday morning, that would mean I would be checking in on Sabbath morning, and I didn't feel comfortable doing that. So I didn't check-in online until an hour or two after sundown, which meant that I would be in the back of the plane.

But God had a plan. As He would have it, my 'backseat' was right next to – yes, Jane. After I was seated, she opened her computer and on the screen wallpaper was a beautiful baby – her granddaughter.

Of course that started a conversation, which led to the kind of world the baby would grow up in. This brought us to Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Daniel 2. For the five-hour trip we studied the Bible together, and Jane started getting her questions answered.

Because Jane loved Jesus, I talked to her about a wonderful book, *The Desire of Ages*. Jane told me she didn't really like to read a lot. When I mentioned there was an audio version of the book, she got very interested. We exchanged e-mails so I could send it to her.

As we neared Atlanta, she turned to me and said, "I don't think it was happenstance that we sat together." I knew nothing about her impression to move to the back, but I realized then that God had selected my seat. I then told Him that I always want Him to choose everything in my life, even where I sit on a plane!

A year later she came up to spend the weekend with my wife and I. We had the opportunity to answer more Bible questions. Would you believe that Doug Batchelor's wife happened to visit our church that week? Jane had her picture taken with Karen Batchelor. Would you believe Pastor Mark Finley was also visiting our church that Sabbath, and he agreed to teach my Sabbath School class? Jane loved it and Pastor Finley signed her up for an Internet series on Revelation that he gives. Where it will lead, I don't know. But I wonder . . . had I not waited until after Sabbath to get my seat, would I have met Jane?

The lesson, I think, speaks for itself!

\*pseudonym

by Brian Schwartz, MD

# A Sanctuary in Time



**DR. BRIAN SCHWARTZ** is an Interventional and Structural Heart Cardiologist and serves as Medical Director of the Heart and Vascular Service Line at Kettering Health Network in Dayton, Ohio.

*Having been personally touched by the power of the gospel, Dr. Schwartz longed to make his medical work a healing ministry. His association with AMEN has helped him integrate prayer and Christian spirituality into his practice in a more intentional and natural way.*

*Dr. Schwartz currently serves as AMEN president.*

*He and his wife, Lyndi, also a physician, are a powerful ministry team.*

“**A**nd on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”  
– Genesis 2:2-3

The day following the creation of man, the Sabbath, was the greatest of all days. It was given to man by invitation of God Himself, and mankind has dimly understood its significance. It is an invitation to intimate understanding, fellowship and relationship with Him. It is a priceless gift, a sanctuary in time for mental, physical, and spiritual renewal and connection with our Creator and Redeemer. As physicians and dentists, the Sabbath is a respite from the intense demands of ministry. There is a real sense in which the Sabbath keeps us and protects us from being consumed by our work.

More than that, the Sabbath safeguards our relationship with God. We are frail, distracted, prone to wonder, and forgetful. Especially in these last days, we need the Sabbath to “come away and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31) and to be reminded that, “the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.”  
– Psalms 100:3

From a very early age I observed within my own family what happens when someone in the medical profession is too busy to rest, even on Sabbath.

## FAMILY HISTORY

I greatly admired my grandfather. He graduated

from the College of Medical Evangelists (now LLU) in 1939. He was drafted and served as a field surgeon in the South Pacific during WWII. Subsequently, he set up practice in Michigan as a general practitioner. In 55 years of working as a Seventh-day Adventist physician, my grandfather never once went to church because he had to make rounds at the hospital since there was no one else to cover call.

I looked up to him. He was principled and remained faithful to what he knew. Over the course of his career, one or two of his patients and a couple of nurses became Seventh-day Adventists because of his witness. His whole life was consumed by medicine. With no other physicians to share the load, he kept his office open seven days a week. Today, we would say he ran the local urgent care center single handedly.

In 55 years of practice, he only missed two days of work, and he didn't slow down until his retirement at age 85. With a work ethic like that, commendable as it was in many ways, the sad reality was that by the time he retired he was a spiritual dwarf. He had not grown in his understanding of Scripture, of which he had only a rudimentary understanding from his college years. His view of prophecy was totally misguided. I remember listening to him after he had retired, speculating about who the 144,000 Jewish men of Revelation might be.

There were other downsides to his long hours of practice. He was tired all the time and he was easily irritated with his family. If there had been a revival in his day he would have missed it. While his personal sacrifice in serving his patients was admirable, ultimately, I believe



his ministry suffered from his overwork. Certainly his family suffered and still bears the scars to this day. Hear this from Ellen White:

*“Those who, from whatever cause, are obliged to work on the Sabbath, are always in peril; they feel the loss, and from doing works of necessity they fall into the habit of doing things on the Sabbath that are not necessary. The sense of its sacredness is lost, and the holy commandment is of no effect. A special effort should be made to bring about a reform in regard to Sabbath observance.”* - Counsels on Health p. 422

#### MEMORIAL OF CREATION

After God created the world in six days, He rested on the seventh day Sabbath. His work was complete, perfect in every way. His work was finished. Adam and Eve’s first full day was Sabbath, spent in communion with their Maker. For them, rest preceded work. Thus, in pre-fall Eden, the Sabbath concluded Christ’s work of creation.

#### MEMORIAL OF REDEMPTION

After the Exodus the Sabbath became a memorial not only of creation, but also of redemption. Israel was delivered not by their works but by the blood of the Passover lamb which pointed forward to Christ’s atoning sacrifice. From the provision of a

pillar of fire by night to the opening the Red Sea, Israel witnessed God’s amazing miracles and saving power on their behalf.

#### LOST IN TIME

In Jesus’ day the Sabbath had been turned into a legalistic formal ceremony that had largely lost its significance. The religious class (Pharisees) added so many obligations and rules that it had become a burden to the average Jew. The passage of 4,000 years left the human race in Jesus’ day with little reserve or ability to overcome either sin or disease. Lacking any formal healthcare system, the physical needs were great and the spiritual needs even more so.

Furthermore, the Jewish leaders believed that illness was the result of sin and that it brought with it the curse of God. Hence, the afflicted were often outcasts. Anciently, the priests served as ministers as well as healers, the latter of which drew but little interest. Seeing the suffering multitudes, Jesus was moved with compassion, not just to relieve suffering but also to show that He was not a Saviour afar off, but One near at hand. He longed not only to relieve their pain but to point them to their sin-pardoning Redeemer.

By performing acts of healing on that day, Jesus sought to draw attention to the true meaning of Sabbath as a day of spiritual

healing and restoration. He was “God with us,” the Healer of all our diseases. Jesus’ miracles performed upon that day were not lost on the religious leaders. To them, Jesus’ healings were an insult. (See *The Desire of Ages* p. 287).

Yet Christ had even more to reveal on the Sabbath to that sin-hardened generation.

#### SABBATH AND THE CROSS

Hanging upon the cross on the Preparation Day, He finished His work of redemption and kept the Sabbath. When He cried out, “It is finished!” He declared His work of redemption complete, bowed His head and rested in the tomb on the Sabbath from His work which He completed for all humanity. From thenceforth, the Sabbath would serve as a reminder of Christ our Redeemer, who saved us at infinite personal cost.

#### THE SABBATH SEAL

The Sabbath then, is actually the sign or seal of righteousness by faith. It points to our inability to save ourselves and directs our attention to Christ, the only One who can save. In the last days before Christ returns, the Sabbath will be kept by those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12). In contrast, Sunday keeping is seen to be a sign of righteousness by works, reinforcing the idea that God’s law cannot be kept. The Scripture is clear that in the Earth made new, the Sabbath will still be a sanctuary in time, set apart, as a day of rest and worship God (Isaiah 66:23). Hence, it will ever be a reminder that it is He that has saved us, and not we ourselves.

Those who make up the final generation will live by faith and observe God’s Sabbath day as a memorial of His sustaining power to deliver from sin and as a memorial of creation. It is not a legalistic relic of the old



covenant but rather the eternal sign of the everlasting covenant. The Sabbath is the sign of righteousness by faith, whereas Sunday is the sign of righteousness by works.

Remembering the Sabbath in the last days In His mercy God has given His last day church special counsel about the Sabbath through the inspired writings of Sister White. In closing we will examine these messages in the context of our calling as medical missionaries.



*“The work of the true medical missionary is largely a spiritual work. It includes prayer and the laying on of hands; he therefore should be as sacredly set apart for his work as is the minister of the gospel... No selfish motives should be allowed to draw the worker from his post of duty. We are living in a time of solemn responsibilities; a time when consecrated work is to be done. Let us seek the Lord diligently and understandingly. If we will let the Lord work upon human hearts, we shall see a great and grand work accomplished. . . .”* – Manuscript Releases, Vol. 1, p. 73

*“Common, every day treatment should not be given on the Sabbath. Let the patients know that physicians must have one day on which to rest. Often it is impossible for physicians to take time on the Sabbath for rest and devotion. They may be called upon to relieve suffering. Our Saviour has shown us by His example that it is right to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. But physicians and nurses should do no unnecessary work on this day. Ordinary treatment and operations which can wait should be deferred till the next day.”* – The Kress Collection p. 43 (D.E.R. Aug. 23, 1900)

*“A spirit of irreverence and carelessness in the observance of the Sabbath is liable to come into our sanitariums. Upon the men of responsibility in the medical missionary*

*work rests the duty of giving instruction to physicians, nurses, and helpers in regard to the sanctity of God’s holy day. Especially should every physician endeavor to set a right example. The nature of his duties naturally leads him to feel justified in doing on the Sabbath many things that he should refrain from doing. So far as possible he should so plan his work that he can lay aside his ordinary duties.”* – Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 7, p. 106

Without neglecting corporate worship, it seems appropriate on the Sabbath to engage in health education, prayer for the sick, and when necessary, the immediate relieving of human suffering.

*“The health reform is closely connected with the work of the third message, yet it is not the message. Our preachers should teach the health reform, yet they should not make this the leading theme in the place of the message.”* – Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 7, p. 559

Ellen White saw trained laity, pastors as well as physicians, engaged in medical missionary work. Is it this kind of work she encouraged on Sabbath?

*“To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible, this is gospel ministry. It may be necessary for ministers to*

*go into the homes of the sick and say, “I am ready to help you, and I will do the best I can. I am not a physician, but I am a minister, and I like to minister to the sick and afflicted.” Those who are sick in body are nearly always sick in soul, and when the soul is sick, the body is made sick.”* – Medical Ministry, p. 238

We should not conduct medical ministry on the Sabbath day in a way that becomes institutional, business-like, or routine care. However, if it embraces and encompasses an evangelistic work and is compelled by the suffering around us then it should not be neglected on the Sabbath or any other day. Ellen White’s counsel makes it clear that in our day we should avoid unnecessary work or procedures on Sabbath. I think this is important counsel.

By ceasing our labors on the Sabbath and heeding God’s instruction to ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy’, we will set an example for all to see as we lift up Jesus, the Savior of the world and Healer of the soul. In this way the Sabbath will also preserve and keep us in service for the Master.



# amen

Adventist Medical  
Evangelism Network

PO Box 398  
Weed, California 96094  
(530) 883-8061  
[www.amensda.org](http://www.amensda.org)

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