

Misconceptions of the Sabbath as Rest: The Social Interpretation of Exodus 23:1-12 and Its Relevance

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ABSTRACT: This article is driven by the many problems related to Sunday activities and land problems in the Moluccas. According to J.H Elliott, the authors analyze the text of Exodus 23:1–12 using the social sciences critique method. Meanwhile, the theory used as an analytical tool is the Structural-Functional theory proposed by Emile Durkheim and Jean Jacques Rousseau's social contract theory. The results of the analysis are then discussed in relation to the church context in the Moluccas. The study's results found that originally, Sabbath meant to rest within the context of work. "Work," as understood by the concept of Sabbath, means working with God in promoting social care, economic sustainability, and environmental concern. Misunderstandings of the Sabbath as Rest cause certain elements in the structure of Moluccan society not to function as they should because the Sabbath is misconstrued to perpetuate laziness, ignore others, hinder economic growth, and ignore the environment. In actuality, the Sabbath provides balance, not only balancing work with rest but also balancing rest with work. The Sabbath needs to be interpreted as 'working' in the context of communion with God, social care, guaranteeing economic sustainability, and concern for the environment. Local wisdom and regional culture as a social contract are still necessary in caring for humanity and preserving the territory, so such local wisdom and particular aspects of regional culture must be preserved and strengthened.

Keywords: Sabbath, Rest, Work, Social, Care

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the social problems in the Moluccas that have caught the attention of the writers are land issues and community activities on Sundays. First, land issues include land boundary conflicts, overlapping land ownership, the buying and selling of land, and large areas of unused land. Land tenure on each island in the Moluccas has caused many conflicts regarding unclear land boundaries (Nugroho, 2018), and even problems related to land ownership rights by customary law residents continue to increase every year (Lewedalu et al., 2021). Several cases of land disputes in the Moluccas, for example, are documented in the village of Woirata, in the Southwest Moluccas Regency (Lewedalu et al., 2021). Land boundary

conflicts between Pelau, Ori Hamlet, and Kariu (Noya, 2022), as well as land issues in Wotay State, Teon Nila Serua District, Central Moluccas Regency (Uktolseja et al., 2021). The problem of overlapping land ownership has occurred between the Indigenous People of Honitetu Village, West Seram District, Moluccas, and the government. This is because there is an overlap between customary territory claims and state forest area claims (Tjoa et al., 2018). These cases show how many conflicts over land boundaries and overlapping land ownership and control can cause social conflict.

The problem is that buying and selling land for consumptive interests, such as for the purposes of various celebrations like baptisms, confirmations, graduations, and the like, requires significant