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Any good business and businessperson appreciates the importance of prioritizing. All demands are not equally important. Given the reality of a world of scarcity, choices must be made. Which things are not just nice, but necessary? Which things should take priority? Which things are first things? The first book of the Bible begins by presenting first things.

Genesis chapter one, verse one tells us there is a God and that he creates, that he engages in productive activity. Over the course of six biblical days, he brings the physical, social, and spiritual reality of the universe into existence. God taught the Hebrews at Mt. Sinai, the original recipients of his word, these important first things: there is one God, he is the Creator of everything, and the pinnacle of his creation is people, the only thing created in his image. They also learn that after six days of productive activity, God treats the seventh day differently. He declares it holy and he rests. Certainly, God does not require rest; so his doing this points to something else.

The first six days entail productive activity; the seventh involves rest. The first six days emphasize the creation; the seventh focuses on the Creator. The first six days God describes as good; the seventh he declares holy. The first thing God describes as holy is not himself or what he has made, but time. Clearly this seventh day is special. This sanctified day of rest is what people experience during their first full day after being created in God’s image.

According to Walton (2009), the Hebrews who first heard the creation narrative understood it as portraying the earth as the temple of their God, Yahweh. In the ancient Near East, temple dedications were often seven days long and, at the end, the deity would enter and take up his rest. This Yahweh did on the seventh day. The narrative thus explains that although God is an active and creative being, his ultimate identity is not in what he does, but in who he is. His name is “I Am” (Exodus 3:14). While God obviously takes pleasure in creating and ruling his creation, it is also sufficient for him to simply be. Likewise, the beings created in his image get their primary identity from who they are, not by what they do. They are human beings, not human doings. Thus central to who they are is a balance of being and doing, a recognition that life is about more than doing and that God is ultimately the one in control. The world will not fall apart if people cease from their work.

God blesses the seventh day and calls it holy (Genesis 2:3). According to Abraham Joshua Heschel (1951), the renowned twentieth century Jewish rabbi and philosopher, people experience the fullness of life in the seventh day, or Sabbath, because in the Sabbath dwells time and in time dwells holiness. Unlike other religions that relate the existence of their deities to “particular localities like mountains, forests, trees, or stones,” the God of the Bible exists in time and does not depend upon space (Heschel, 1951, p. 4). God is a spirit, not a thing.

THE SABBATH AND TIME

Heschel’s (1951) primary argument for the weight of time with respect to the Sabbath depends largely on the first use of the word *quadosh* (holy) in the book of Genesis. While at the start of creation God declared the other six days good or very good, “there was only one holiness in the world, holiness in time” (p. 9). By sanctifying the Sabbath, God set her apart from the other six days. The Sabbath is entirely independent of the spatial
world and beckons people to follow her lead. The Sabbath is a day of freedom from the other six days of the week and the things of space associated with them. For Israel, Sabbath offered liberation from incessant labor and pressure to be self-sufficient. Today Sabbath offers freedom from technological imperatives and consumerist pressures as well as the desire to be self-sufficient. Although first instituted for ancient people, it is utterly relevant for twenty-first century business people.

Some Christian writers suggest that the time of the seventh day continues to today (Alexander & Baker, 2002). An “evening followed by morning” refrain follows the description of the first six days of creation. But since this refrain does not follow the seventh day, it can be inferred that the seventh day continues, suggesting that we still live in holy time. While in one sense, we always live in this time, deliberately setting aside a day each week to consciously embrace this time enables us to remember God’s holiness.

Of course for Christians, Christ is the ultimate first thing. As Paul told the Corinthians: “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The death and resurrection of Christ ushers in a time when Sabbath rest and holiness are already, but not yet perfectly, available for the Christian. Further, the requirements of Old Testament law no longer hold sway.

But does this ready access to Sabbath rest and holiness mean that Christians take it for granted? Many Christians today suffer from workaholism. A recent university study reported in Christianity Today claims that one of the consequences of overwork among pastors is obesity (“Why Protestant Pastors,” 2015). The odds of a pastor who does not take a weekly Sabbath being obese are 50% for those who work 40 hours per week and 90% for those who work 70 hours per week. Similar information on the deleterious effects of overwork, including among businesspeople, are presented later in this special issue of the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business. Christian businesspeople are not immune. Perhaps this is a function of an increasingly secular culture where business occurs 24/7/365. Perhaps it is an unintended consequence of the recent emphasis on workplace ministry and business as mission (e.g., Stevens, 1999; Miller, 2007; Wong & Rae, 2011). Perhaps it is a function of losing sight of first things.

If the principle (not the legalistic obligation) of Sabbath is indeed a first thing, what does that imply for how Christians should conduct business today? Some initial attempts to answer that question appear in the articles that follow. As will be shown, Sabbath has important implications for businesspeople in the areas of leisure, sustainable development, how success is attained, and, perhaps most importantly, worship.

Ultimately, the Sabbath is a precious gift, but one that has been misunderstood and under-appreciated for millennia. Part of the reason Israel was exiled was for ignoring the Sabbath (2 Chronicles 36:21). And part of Jesus’ rebuke of the Pharisees was due to their perversion of the Sabbath. After being confronted by the Pharisees for harvesting grain on the Sabbath, Jesus proclaims: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). Immediately after that proclamation, Mark describes how Jesus heals a man’s withered hand on the Sabbath while the Pharisees looked on disapprovingly (Mark 3:1-6). The Pharisees were obsessing about work rules when a miracle was worked before their eyes. Are Christian businesspeople likewise obsessed by work when the miracle of Sabbath holiness and rest is available to them? By being consumed with work rules, the Pharisees overlooked the fact that the Messiah was in their midst.

Does our preoccupation with work blind us to the fact that the Messiah is in our midst? Through their fixation on work rules, the Pharisees missed that the holy time of the Sabbath brings healing, liberation, and the opportunity to worship God and commune with him face to face. Does Christian businesspeople’s (over)emphasis on work likewise blind us to the opportunity for healing, liberation, and intimate worship available in holy time? The ancient Israelites as well as the Pharisees neglected first things. Do Christian businesspeople do the same thing?

THE SABBATH AS A FIRST THING

In his prophetic role, Christ called people to return to first things. A first thing for Christian businesspeople should be Sabbath, not work. If most of us are honest (including the two of us writing these words as well as the authors of previous Journal of Biblical Integration in Business issues, at least as indicated by the topics of their articles), we have not made Sabbath a priority. Given the productive nature of business, this is understandable but not entirely excusable. The authors of the articles that follow begin to right this imbalance. We hope you will be as refreshed by their ideas as we have been and that they will assist you to enter what Heschel (1951) calls a “palace in time” (p. 13).

Heschel (1951) reminds people of their duty to “conquer space and sanctify time” (p. 101). While Christians’ redemption comes through Christ and not Sabbath, the
Sabbath continues to have daily value for us. In moments of silence and inwardness, people rediscover who they are as human beings. The world teaches Christian businesspeople to be like machines, fast and efficient, but the Sabbath teaches them that they are human beings, passionately loved by God. To deny the Sabbath and Sabbath principles is to deny people’s status as creatures created in God’s image. Indeed, the Sabbath is a divine gift from God for the sake of life and the divine relationship between God and humanity. It is time for Christian businesspeople to return to this vital first thing.

REFERENCES


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Implications for the Leisure of Business People from a Review of the Biblical Concepts of Sabbath and Rest

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Abstract: This paper focuses on two elements relevant to a biblical understanding of leisure: the principle of the Sabbath and the concept of rest. Sabbath and rest cannot be equated with leisure but provide material to develop a Christian understanding of leisure. They illustrate that a biblical understanding of leisure encompasses both a rhythm to life (a quantitative dimension of leisure) and the quality of life which God offers humans (a qualitative dimension of leisure).

Keywords: Sabbath, rest, leisure, work, biblical

Introduction

For the last decade I have taught a course titled Leisure Concepts and Values. I suspect that most business people have not completed a leisure studies course during their education. However, a number of students from the School of Management at my university have enrolled in the Leisure Concepts and Values course in order to fulfill their science elective, as this course is offered through the Faculty of Health Sciences and the students have thought that a leisure studies course would be an easier course than most other courses offered through the various science faculties. However a number of these students have commented that the course was much more difficult than they expected. Understanding leisure is not straightforward and easy. As one of my undergraduate professors used to say, “The study of nuclear physics is child’s play compared to the study of child’s play.” In this paper I will hopefully provide some insight into leisure from a Christian perspective.

Most Christian business people are probably more familiar with a theology of work than a theology of leisure as there have been far more books written on a Christian perspective of work than a Christian perspective of leisure. In his book, The Biblical Doctrine of Work, Alan Richardson wrote:

The Bible knows nothing of “a problem of leisure.” . . . The general standpoint of the Bible is that it is “folly” (i.e. sinful) to be idle between daybreak and sunset…. Hence we must not expect to derive from the Bible any explicit guidance upon the right use of leisure. (1952, p. 51)

I believe Alan Richardson is correct in stating that the Bible does not provide explicit guidance concerning leisure. However, I believe he is wrong in depicting the life of the person living in the biblical world as one preoccupied with work. The Hebraic lifestyle, which included Sabbath observance and the notion of a blessed life in the land, suggests that there was more to life than work. And, although there is not a fully developed theology of leisure in the Bible, there are numerous biblical elements which may guide us in our understanding of leisure.

This paper will focus on two biblical elements relevant to a biblical understanding of leisure: the principle of the Sabbath and the concept of rest. These biblical elements cannot be equated with leisure; however, they provide material to flesh out a Christian understanding of leisure. The elements of Sabbath and rest will be developed to illustrate that a biblical understanding of leisure encompasses both a rhythm to life (which includes a quantitative dimension of leisure) and the quality of life which God offers humans (a qualitative dimension of leisure).

The Sabbath

The principle of the Sabbath is more central to Israelite life than any of the other Old Testament instructions. Not only is the Sabbath commandment longer than any of the other commandments in the Decalogue, the
principle of the Sabbath is reformulated and discussed throughout Scripture. The following discussion of the Sabbath will start with the creation account and then trace through Scripture the teaching on this principle. From this material, an attempt will be made to extract some general principles which are applicable and relevant to leisure.

The Creation Account

In Genesis, the work of creation took six days; then God rested from His labor on the seventh day. There is a distinction between six days of labor and the seventh day of rest.

In the creation account the word “Sabbath” (sabbat) does not occur, but the root (sbt) from which Sabbath is derived is found at the end of the creation account in Genesis 2:2,3:

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (New International Version)

The creation account ends with a focus on God: God blessing the seventh day, God making the seventh day holy, and God resting from his work. What is the significance of God resting? Commentary on God’s resting in Gen. 2:2,3 is supplied by Exodus 31:17 which reads, “. . . for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.” The important point here is that God stopped and rested. God is a God whose very nature is one of rest. The creation account suggests that not only is God a God whose nature is one of rest, but rest is also an essential component of human nature. The creation account depicts the first complete day of humanity’s life as a day of rest, a day to rest with God and reflect upon God’s work of creation. Only after this first full day of rest do humans turn to their work. Claus Westermann (1974) writes: “The work which has been laid upon man is not his goal. His goal is the eternal rest which has been suggested by the rest of the seventh day” (p. 65). Not only does the divine rest on the seventh day indicate the goal of creation, but, as Karl Barth (1958) has suggested, it is the summons to humanity to enter upon history and to enter life participating in this rest.

The Mosaic Law and the Sabbath Commandment

The Sabbath commandment is found in all accounts of the Mosaic Law (Exodus 20:8–11, 23:12, 31:12–17, 34:21, 35:1–3, Leviticus 19:3, 23:1–3, 26:2, Deuteronomy 5:12–15). In the following examination of this material, two questions will be considered. First, what reasons are given for observing the Sabbath? Second, how is the Sabbath to be observed?

Why is the Sabbath to be observed? In his article on “Sabbath” in the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Hamilton (1980) identifies four motives which man, too, has been summoned to participate. It is the event of divine rest in the face of the cosmos completed with the creation of man — a rest which takes precedence over all of man’s eagerness and zeal to enter upon his task. Man is created to participate in this rest. (p. 98)

Thus from God’s resting on the seventh day there is not only a rhythm to life in which there is one day’s break in seven, but also a quality of life characterized by rest.

Exodus 16

There is no further mention of the word “Sabbath” in the Bible nor explicit reference made to Sabbath-keeping until Exodus 16 which outlines regulations for the Israelites to gather and prepare the manna while they were wandering in the wilderness. Each day, while the Israelites were in the wilderness, God provided a fresh supply of manna; each day it had to be collected afresh, for the manna from the previous day would rot and smell. But on the sixth day, God sent a double supply of manna. Obeying the instruction of the Lord, Moses instructed the people, “This is what the Lord commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning” (16:23). What was saved for the seventh day “did not stink or get maggots in it” (16:24).

Yet some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather their manna, but “they found none” (16:27). This comment, writes Hans Walter Wolff (1972), is “an almost humorous criticism of our restless, over-zealousness for work . . .” (p. 73). Work on the seventh day is ridiculed as foolish, for its results are nil; it fails to acknowledge that God supplies what is needed. Exodus 16, then, relativizes humanity’s work — one day in seven is to be set aside for rest. This is possible because it is God who provides what is needed to live.
given in the Mosaic Law for observing the Sabbath. Each one of these motivations will be examined in detail.

The analogy of God resting. Exodus 20:8–11 provides the first reason provided for observing the Sabbath day: the analogy of God resting at the end of the creation account.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.

On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

On the basis of his own rhythm of six days of activity and one of rest, God blesses and hallows the Sabbath day for Israel; the model is six days of work and a seventh day Sabbath (see v.9). What is the significance of this motivation for Sabbath observance? First, the appeal to the creation account in the Sabbath commandment demonstrates that the rhythm of God’s six days of activity and one of rest is to be the pattern for a rhythm of six days of work and one of rest in human life. Richardson (1952) writes, “Our human rhythm of work and rest is a refraction of that image of God, in which we were made” (pp. 53–54).

Second, the appeal to the creation account suggests that Sabbath observance is to be characterized by a certain attitude or posture before God. By recalling that God rested on the seventh day, the Israelite, in the act of Sabbath rest, “experienced his God as a God whose very nature was one of rest” (Johnston, 1983, p. 95). Furthermore, the Sabbath, as outlined here in Exodus 20:11, “is an invitation to rejoice in God’s creation, and recognize God’s sovereignty over time” (Hamilton, 1980, p. 903). Abram Heschel (1966) writes:

To observe the seventh day . . . is to celebrate the creation of the world and to create the seventh day all over again, the majesty of holiness in time, “a day of rest, a day of freedom,” a day which is like “a lord and king of all other days.” (pp. 19–20)

Thus the Sabbath was not primarily for restorative purposes but time to be seen simply as God’s time, a time to consider God and his purposes. The Sabbath was a time for the Israelites to recognize that life was a gift from God and not just the result of human work. As such the Sabbath qualified the Israelite’s workaday world by putting one’s six days of work into proper perspect-

tive. Exodus 20:11 suggests that the day of rest forcefully reminds humans, once every seven days, that they live in a world which contains not only all one needs but also many other things to enjoy. “So the Sabbath, which brings to an end the week, becomes for Israel an invitation to enter into, and rejoice in the blessings of creation” (Dumbrell, 1984, p. 35).

In summary, the appeal to creation theology in Exodus 20:11 suggests two dimensions to Sabbath observance. Qualitatively the Sabbath is to be a one-day break from the other six days of work. Quantitatively the Sabbath is an invitation to experience God as a God whose very nature is one of rest and also to rejoice and celebrate in God’s creation.

The remembrance of deliverance from Egypt. Although the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus 20 are almost the same as the account of them in Deuteronomy 5, the Sabbath commandment is a noticeable exception. A different motive for observance of the Sabbath is found in the Deuteronomic account of the Decalogue where the Sabbath command is linked with God’s deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt:

Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant and maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12–15)

In this account, the reason for keeping the Sabbath day is the affirmation that Yahweh had liberated and delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt. As such, the “Sabbath was a remembrance that Israel rested ultimately in God’s graciousness” (Johnston, 1983, p. 89). It is the Exodus redemption which makes possible the new life in the land, and thereby Edenic rest. Without the redemptive activity of God, the original notion of Sabbath rest is impossible. Yet the expectation of “rest” was not realized in Israel’s experience, and finally Israel was exiled from the land. The Epistle to the Hebrews (4:8–10) is a reminder that although Israel did not enter this rest, there still exists a Sabbath rest for believers which is a fulfillment of creation’s purpose.
In light of the fact that Israel did not enter the promised rest, it is interesting to note, as Johnston (1983) points out, that the later Deuteronomic account shifts “from a focus on God to a stronger emphasis on the human need for relief from the oppressive reality of much work” (p. 90). The Hebrew word *shamor* (“observe the Sabbath day”) has a definite ethical connotation as compared with the Hebrew word *zakhor* (“remembering the Sabbath”) which is found in Exodus 20:11. Furthermore, the Deuteronomic version of the fourth commandment includes the ethical justification “that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do” (5:14). Here is a humanitarian emphasis. The necessity to abstain from human toil on the Sabbath for human benefit is emphasized in the phrase “may rest, as you do.” As such the Sabbath is also for human rest, restoration, and recreation.

The Sabbath as a humanitarian ordinance. A third motivation for observing the Sabbath, a humanitarian one which has already been noted in Deuteronomy 5:14–15, is more clearly stated in Exodus 23:12: “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed.” In this verse the only purpose given for the day of rest is that the dependent laborers and domestic animals experience rest and recuperation. The word “refreshed,” which is used to describe the alien or the slave born into an Israelite household is the exact same word which is used to describe God’s rest on the seventh day in Exodus 31:17. According to Exodus 23:12, then, the Sabbath was especially for the benefit of those who were severely burdened with work and were under the orders of others.

The implication of this humanitarian motive for observance of the Sabbath is that all members of society should both work and rest. As Gerhard Hasel (1983) points out, the Sabbath is a reminder of “the social emphasis on equality of all human beings [free persons and servants] under God” (p. 194). Thus the biblical view does not lend support to a social structuring of society such as in the Greece of Aristotle’s day when slaves made it possible for a few to have a life of leisure, nor does it support a leisure class who live a life of conspicuous consumption. Hence the Sabbath was a matter of detailed regulation. All work is forbidden and what constitutes work is delineated with great precision. The Sabbath was to be kept by all on every seventh day. The references to the family, servants, and all other members of the Hebrew household, animals, and sojourners listed in Exodus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 5:14 guarantee that no one over whom the male Israelite had authority would have to work; therefore, everyone would be able to rest from work.

It is not only laborious work that is prohibited, as is the case on many of the holy days; on the Sabbath “you are not to do any work” (Leviticus 23:3 compare to “do no regular work” of Leviticus 23:7,8,21,23,35,36; Numbers 28:18,25,26; 29:1,12,35). The gathering of food, the lighting of fires and the collecting of firewood are all forbidden (Exodus 16:25–30; 35:1–3; Numbers 15:32–26). The phrase in Exodus 34:21, “even during ploughing season and harvest you must rest,” stresses that even at the busiest time of the year in an agricultural society the Sabbath was to be kept. Especially in such busy times humans need a day of rest.

How the Sabbath was to be observed is summarized in Exodus 34:21a: “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall cease work!” (New English Bible). The sabbatical legislation declared that life was best lived in a rhythm wherein all people both worked and then refrained from work. In this sense the Sabbath was

The Sabbath as a sign of the covenant. The fourth motivation for observance of the Sabbath is that it is a sign of the covenant:

The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested. (Exodus 31:16,17)

In this passage the Sabbath is not only a sign of the covenant but is itself called a covenant. Sabbath observance is also claimed to be the sign of Israel’s allegiance to God in Exodus 31:13. The Sabbath was to be observed not only within the context of a relationship with God, but it was a sign of the relationship.

What implications does this covenant motivation for Sabbath observance have for this study of leisure? While some benefits may accrue from observance of one day’s rest in seven, leisure like the Sabbath may find its true meaning and reach its fullest potential when one lives in relationship with God.

How is the Sabbath to be observed? In the Mosaic covenant, the Sabbath rest is a matter of detailed regulations. All work is forbidden and what constitutes work is delineated with great precision. The Sabbath was to be kept by all on every seventh day. The references to the family, servants, and all other members of the Hebrew household, animals, and sojourners listed in Exodus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 5:14 guarantee that no one over whom the male Israelite had authority would have to work; therefore, everyone would be able to rest from work.

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How the Sabbath was to be observed is summarized in Exodus 34:21a: “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall cease work!” (New English Bible). The sabbatical legislation declared that life was best lived in a rhythm wherein all people both worked and then refrained from work. In this sense the Sabbath was
a quantity of time in which no work was performed. Likewise, leisure may be understood quantitatively as a period of time in which no work is performed.

But was the Sabbath only a quantity of time in which no work was performed? The Sabbath is enumerated among the sacred festivals, “the appointed feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:1–3). The Sabbath and worship are linked together by the joint command given both in Leviticus 19:30 and in 26:2: “Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary.” The Sabbath was a day of worship as well as a day of rest from labor. However, rest was itself an expression of worship; no distinction was made between rest and worship — resting was worship. Thus the Old Testament taught that the Sabbath was to be observed not only by a cessation from work but also by a rest which was of the nature of worship.

The Prophets and the Sabbath

The prophets’ utterances concerning the Sabbath only apply what has already been revealed in the Pentateuch. Although the prophets spoke critically of the practices that occurred on the Sabbath, they did not condemn the Sabbath itself but rather a misuse of the Sabbath. The prophets also pointed to the blessings which follow from a correct observance of the Sabbath.

For example, Isaiah decried the ritualistic Sabbath observance of his day (Isaiah 1:12, 13) and in a classic passage outlines what will follow from a true observance of the Sabbath:

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD. (Isaiah 58:13,14)

Amos, who passionately contended against the many abuses in the sacrificial cult (4:4ff.; 5:21ff.), brought down judgment upon the grain dealers who could not wait for the Sabbath to be over so they could sell their wheat and deceive the people through “skimping the measure, boosting the price, and cheating with dishonest scales” (8:5). The misuse of the Sabbath was also condemned by other prophets who interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent exile of the Israelites to be partly the result of the desecration of the Sabbath (Jeremiah 17:27; Ezekiel 20:23–25).

In conclusion, the prophets’ words contradict humanity’s inclination to make life secure or add to life’s abundance by nonstop, uninterrupted work. Yet the Sabbath suggests that “human life has a higher significance than being merely a struggle for existence” (Wolff, 1972, p. 73). Work is only to occupy six days of the week. Work on the seventh day is not only unnecessary but prohibited. So there is a rhythm to life — six days of work and one of rest.

Jesus and the Sabbath

Jesus demonstrated a rhythm of work and rest and taught his disciples to take rest: “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31). Furthermore, Jesus’ teaching on the Sabbath upheld the authority and validity of the Old Testament law. But, on several occasions (Matthew 12:1–14; Mark 2:23–28, 3:1–5; Luke 6:1–11, 13:10–17, 14:1–6; John 5:9–18, 9:1–14), he reacted against the Pharisees who stifled the spirit of the sabbatical teaching with their restrictive oral and written tradition. On these occasions, Jesus put human need above formal external compliance with the Sabbath legislation. It was not wrong to pick and eat grain on the Sabbath nor was it unlawful to perform works of mercy or to heal on the Sabbath day. Yet Jesus never did or said anything to indicate that he intended to abolish the Sabbath along with the relaxation and other benefits such a day of rest offers. Jesus’ emphasis was on keeping the spirit of the law and not only on an external observance of the law (Matthew 5:17–48). Jesus explained the true meaning of the Sabbath by teaching that it “was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Jesus’ teaching on the Sabbath suggests that leisure is more than quantitative; it also has a qualitative dimension to it. The Sabbath’s one day of rest in seven is not just a day of inactivity. It is not just a time period, but a time set aside for humans, a time for bringing healing and wholeness. The same may be said about leisure. Leisure is not just a quantitative segment of life but a quality of life closely related to wholeness and fullness.

The New Testament Church and the Sabbath

The first Christians, as faithful Jews, worshipped each day in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 2:46; 5:42), went to the synagogue (Acts 9:20; 13:14; 14:1; 17:1,2,10; 18:4), and respected the law (21:20). Very likely the early Jewish Christians also kept the Sabbath. In the epistle to the Colossians (2:16ff.), the Sabbath is to be understood as “a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” Romans 14:5,6 seems to
imply that one day is no more sacred or special than any other. Thus Paul suggests that the Sabbath is not to be imposed on the Christian, rather the Christian is set free from the encumbrance of the law. The Spirit of Christ was understood as empowering one to fulfill God’s will independently of the outward stipulations of the law.

Robert Banks (1983) summarizes the teaching of the New Testament on the Sabbath:

While Christians were no longer obliged to relax on a set day of the week (cf. Romans 14:5; Colossians 2:16–17), and believed that they had already begun to enter an eternal Sabbath (cf. Hebrews 4:3), the principle of taking proper physical and spiritual rest remained important. This was now taken, apparently, whenever the need or opportunity for it arose, rather than on a specified day (e.g. Mark 4:35ff., 6:30ff.). (p. 185)

Summary on the Sabbath

In concluding this discussion of the biblical Sabbath, three general principles that are applicable to leisure will be reviewed. First, the Sabbath is a reminder of the social equality of all human beings under God. All who work and labor, especially those burdened by work, are entitled to one day’s rest in seven (Exodus 20:10; 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:14–15). Thus a society in which a few members enjoy a life of leisure based upon the endless work of the many is inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. All are entitled to leisure at least in a quantitative or free-time sense. From a biblical point of view, the emphasis on social equality found in the Sabbath legislation would seem to negate any attempt to define leisure in terms of a leisure class.

Second, the Sabbath points to a rhythm in life — a rhythm of work and non-work (leisure in a quantitative sense). This was evidenced in the creation account, the Exodus manna story, the Mosaic law, and the words of the prophets. So the Sabbath inculcated the principle that Israel’s life possessed the element of time free from work. All are entitled to leisure at least in a quantitative or free-time sense. From a biblical point of view, the emphasis on social equality found in the Sabbath legislation would seem to negate any attempt to define leisure in terms of a leisure class.

Third, the Sabbath suggests that leisure may be defined in more than a quantitative sense, for the Sabbath is more than a time period, more than one day in seven. In the Old Testament, the Sabbath, as a day of abstaining from work, is not entirely for the purpose of restoring one’s lost strength and enhancing the efficiency of one’s future work. Rather than simply an interlude between periods of work, it is the climax of living. Heschel (1966) describes the Sabbath as “not a date but an atmosphere . . . a taste of eternity — the world to come” (pp. 21, 31–30). The Sabbath suggests the attitude for humanity’s basic posture in relation to God. From the creation account, it can be seen that rest is basic to the nature of humanity. In fact, the divine intention for humanity is not work but the eternal rest symbolized by the rest of the seventh day. Thus humanity’s chief end is not to labor but to enjoy God forever. The appeal to creation theology in the Exodus account of the Sabbath commandment suggests that the Sabbath is an invitation to the Israelites, in the act of Sabbath rest, to experience their God as a God whose very nature is one of rest and to rejoice in and celebrate in God’s gift of creation. The sabbatical legislation commanded a Sabbath rest which was of the nature of worship. The prophet Isaiah described the Sabbath as a delight. Jesus taught that the Sabbath was a time for bringing healing and wholeness. All this evidence conclusively suggests that the Sabbath, and likewise leisure, is more than a time of non-work; it has a qualitative dimension. In conclusion, the biblical Sabbath teaches that leisure need not be merely an external cessation from work in the rhythm of human life, but that it may also be an internal spiritual attitude; leisure reaches its fullest potential when a Christian’s life is lived in relationship with God.

The Biblical Concept of Rest

Leisure is frequently equated with the biblical concept of rest. Several writers (Dahl, 1972; Houston, 1981; Sherrow, 1984) draw parallels between leisure and Christ’s offer of rest in Matthew 11:28–30. Therefore, it should be fruitful to examine the biblical concept of rest and its implications for leisure.

Before proceeding to examine the biblical concept of rest, two introductory comments can be made. First, it is natural to move from an examination of the Sabbath to a discussion of the theology of rest. Although the developed Old Testament theology of rest utilizes different terminol-
ogy than that used in Gen. 2:1-4, Dumbrell (1984) points out that the close link “between such ‘rest’ and the Sabbath which epitomized the concept was always maintained (see Exodus 20:11 where the two concepts of ‘Sabbath’ and ‘rest’ are brought together)” (p. 35). The close link between rest and Sabbath culminates, as will be explained, in the Sabbath-rest of Hebrews 4:9.

Second, the belief is expressed throughout the Bible that God has given, or will give, rest to his people. Yet Gerhard von Rad (1966) notes, “Among the many benefits of redemption offered to man by Holy Scripture, that of ‘rest’ has been almost overlooked in biblical theology” (p. 94). Perhaps this overlooking of the biblical concept of rest partly explains the fact that Christians have a well-developed theology of work but not of leisure. Biblical theology has stressed Salvation History as something distinct from the earthly realm. It has ignored large portions of biblical revelation, including the wisdom literature and the nature psalms. Salvation has been narrowed to mere deliverance while the significant themes of blessing, land, and rest have been ignored.

The Theological Uses of “Rest”

Before tracing the development of the concept of rest through Scripture, the Hebrew root for rest along with its major theological uses will be examined. According to Leonard J. Coppes (1980), writing in the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the Hebrew root of rest (nuah) “signifies not only absence of movement but being settled in a particular place (whether concrete or abstract) with overtones of finality, or (when speaking abstractly) of victory, salvation, etc.” (p. 562). At least three important theological uses are associated with this root: a psychological-spiritual (personal peace), a martial (rest from enemies), and a soteriological (salvation rest) use. If leisure includes a qualitative dimension, a condition of being, then these uses of rest must have some relevance for understanding leisure.

The Deuteronomic Notion of Rest: Rest in the Land

The promise of rest is first seen in Deuteronomy: “You have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you” (Deuteronomy 12:9).

“When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall... “(Deuteronomy 25:19).

In Deuteronomy the concept of rest is grounded in and equivalent with possession of the land. Canaan as Israel’s inheritance was to be a place of rest. Von Rad (1966) stresses that this concept of rest which was a direct gift from the hand of God should not be spiritualized: “[It] is not peace of mind, but the altogether tangible peace granted to a nation plagued by enemies and weary of wandering” (p. 95).

The concept of rest to which Deuteronomy frequently refers is associated with the notion of a pleasant, secure, and blessed life in the land (15:4; 23:20; 28:8; 30:16). Dumbrell connects this pleasant life in the land with the creation account:

Israel will enjoy the gifts of creation in the way in which they had been meant to be used. In this theology of rest we are clearly returning to the purposes of creation set forth in Genesis 1:1–2:4a and typified by the Eden narrative, namely that mankind was created to rejoice before the deity and to enjoy the blessing of creation in the divine presence. The notion of rest in both Genesis 2:2 and the book of Deuteronomy implies this. (1984, pp. 121–122)

There is a sense in which the promise of rest was fulfilled in the Old Testament, in terms of rest in the land, and this fulfillment is first expressed in the book of Joshua: So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the LORD’s good promises to the house of Israel had failed; every one was fulfilled. (Joshua 21:43–35, see also 1:13,15; 22:4)

Later in 2 Samuel, the Lord gives rest in the land and will continue to do so during David’s reign as king: “The king [David] had given him rest from all his enemies around him” (7:1). Then the word of the Lord came to Nathan instructing him to tell David that, among other things, the Lord Almighty “will also give you rest from all your enemies” (7:11b).

The fulfillment of the promise of rest may, even more clearly, be identified with the time of Solomon. In Solomon’s blessing which followed his prayer of dedication for the temple he acknowledged the fulfillment of God’s promise to give his people rest: “Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses” (1 Kings 8:56).
Thus it can be said that the divinely given rest was experienced by the nation of Israel during the times of Joshua, David, and Solomon. Yet, as will be explained later in a discussion of Hebrews 3 and 4, there is a real sense in which the promise of rest was not fulfilled in the Old Testament.

**The Chronicler’s Notion of Rest: The LORD God Resting among His People**

The Chronicler’s notion of rest swings away from the deuteronomic conception of rest. “Rest from all your enemies” becomes a gift which God bestows periodically upon pious kings. Not only is Solomon a “man of peace,” (1 Chronicles 22:9), but God also grants rest during the reigns of King Asa (2 Chronicles 15:15) and King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:30). In this same book, Solomon is now considered as a “man of peace, in an entirely new way, the fundamental characteristic is not that Israel obtains rest, but that God comes to rest in the midst of his people” (von Rad, 1966, pp. 97–98). Solomon ends his long prayer of dedication for the temple with the following exalted messianic invocation:

> Now arise, O LORD God, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests. . . be clothed with salvation . . . O LORD God, do not reject your anointed one. Remember the kindnesses promised to David your servant. (2 Chronicles 6:41–42)

Now added to the promise that Israel as a nation would receive rest is the additional anticipation that God will finally come to rest among his people, Israel. At this point it is helpful to summarize the strands in the complex of ideas about rest in the Old Testament. One strand is seen in Deuteronomy where the land is called Israel’s resting place, for Israel was to obtain rest from all her enemies in the land she would inherit (12:9,10; 25:19; see also 3:20). A second strand of ideas concerning rest suggests that God has his resting place in the land and particularly in his sanctuary at Zion. This idea is especially evident in Psalm 132:7–8, 13–14 (compare to 2 Chronicles 6:41) and Isaiah 66:1. Elsewhere these two strands are joined so that the people’s resting place is simultaneously God’s resting place. An excellent example of this synthesis of the two motifs is recorded in 1 Chronicles 23:25, when David said, “The Lord, the God of Israel, has granted rest to his people and has come to dwell in Jerusalem forever.”

**Rest in Psalm 95**

Another development in the concept of rest is found in Psalm 95 where the resting place of the people is not only the resting place of God but is God’s rest itself.

> Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, “They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.” So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.” (Psalm 95:7–11)

“Today” presents a new hope of salvation in contrast to the one forfeited by those who participated in the desert wanderings. This saying depends upon the concept of rest articulated in Deuteronomy in that the nation is still the subject of the rest. However the place of rest is now different. The Lord God says, “They shall never enter my rest.” The resting place is God’s rest. This refers to a gift of rest which Israel will only reach by a totally personal entering into her God. It is in this form that the Old Testament concept of rest is taken up by the writer to the Hebrews.

**Rest in Hebrews 3 and 4**

In Hebrews 3 and 4 the word “rest” (katapausis), which is first introduced in the quotation from Psalm 95 in 3:11, is repeated in 3:18, and is found six more times in chapter 4. Hebrews 4:10,11 reads: “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.” Here the writer to the Hebrews refers to at least two distinct, but related, types of rest: (a) “a Sabbath-rest for the people of God,” and (b) God’s own rest on the seventh day of creation (see also Hebrews 4:4). The bringing together of these types of rest suggests that the Sabbath-rest, which remains for the people of God, is similar to God’s resting from all his works at the end of creation (Genesis 2:3). The rest for the people of God is now viewed as the realization of God’s intention in the creation to bestow such a rest on humanity. After the Fall, God’s initial purposes for humanity’s enjoyment of rest are made possible through his redemptive acts among his people. But the resting place in the promised land and in the temple at Jerusalem only aim towards the realization of God’s purposes in creation. Now in Hebrews the final consummation is depicted as a heavenly rest, the antitype of the rest in the promised land alluded to in Psalm 95:11. There is no doubt that the final consummation of this rest is future, but it would be incorrect to view this Sabbath-rest as being totally in the future.
The timeframe of the rest in Hebrews is summed up by C. K. Barrett (1956): “The rest, precisely because it is God’s, is both present and future” (p. 372).

What exactly is this Sabbath-rest? Biblical scholars describe it in a variety of ways. Jean Hering (1970) comments that this rest “must not invoke merely the notion of repose, but also those of peace, joy and concord” (p. 32). Donald Hagner (1983) writes:

The author has in mind the ideal qualities of the Sabbath-rest, namely peace, well-being and security—that is, a frame of mind that by virtue of its confidence and trust in God possesses these qualities in contradiction to the surrounding circumstances. In short, the author may well have in mind that peace and sense of ultimate security “which is far beyond human understanding” (Philippians 4:7). (p. 52)

Rest in Matthew 11:28–30

According to R. Hensel and C. Brown (1978), “The concept of rest finds its ultimate and deepest development in Matthew 11:28ff” (p. 256) when Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

How is the rest received? These verses, notes Edward Schweizer (1975), obviously imply that toil and labors do not lead to rest. Rather, it is through coming to Jesus that one will find rest. “The rest is identical with the yoke of discipleship” (Hill, 1972, p. 208). From their union with Jesus, his disciples will receive refreshment and renewal that will enable them to carry their load without finding it heavy or burdensome (see also 2 Corinthians 4:16). W. Robertson Nicoll (1900) points out that the literal translation is “I will rest you” which means more than “give you rest” (p. 155). The Christian finds rest for the soul through the assurance of the presence of the Risen Lord.

What is this rest? First, the rest is present. The future tense — “you will find rest” — indicates not a future hope nor a rest in heaven but a rest immediately available to all who follow Jesus. Second, the rest is not that of inactivity or idleness; it includes a yoke of discipleship. There is no discipleship without a task. Jesus does not promise freedom from work, toil, or burden but a rest or relief which will make all burdens light. R.V.G. Tasker (1961) summarizes:

Certainly Jesus does not promise His disciples a life of inactivity or repose, nor freedom from sorrow and struggle, but He does assure them that, if they keep close to Him, they will find relief from such crushing burdens as crippling anxiety, the sense of frustration and futility, and the misery of a sin-laden conscience. (p. 122)

Third, H.L. Ellison (1969) points out that “rest for your souls” refers not merely to the inner being but to the whole person.

Summary on Rest

At the end of this discussion of the biblical concept of rest, the question to be asked is what all this has to do with the concept of leisure. If the classical conception of leisure, which sees leisure as a condition of life and a state of being, is adopted, then for the Christian, the biblical concept of rest is very descriptive of what leisure may be. While an operational definition of leisure cannot be derived from this discussion of rest, the discussion supplies a wide variety of clues which are descriptive of leisure: a pleasant, secure, and blessed life in the land. For as Preece (1981) notes, “We don’t rest in a doctrine, we need a place to put our feet up, but a place in which God is personally present” (p. 79); an entering into God’s rest, a rest of completion, such as the Creator enjoyed when he had completed his works; a Sabbath rest of peace, joy, wellbeing, concord, and security; a relief and repose from labors and burdens; a peace and contentment of body, soul, and mind in God. While these elements of rest available through fellowship with God will be consummated in the heavenly rest, they are at least partially a present reality. These elements of rest are one way of describing the quality of life which may be seen as fleshing out the qualitative dimension of leisure.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE

A study of the biblical concepts of Sabbath and rest suggests that leisure may encompass two dimensions—a quantitative and a qualitative: one related to doing and the other to being. First, the Sabbath teaches a rhythm to life—six days of work and one of non-work. Second, the Sabbath inculcates a spiritual attitude for a person’s basic posture in relation to God—one of rest, joy, freedom, and celebration in God and the gift of his creation. This qualitative dimension to life, descriptive of leisure, can also be seen in the biblical concept of rest, which ranges from a pleasant, secure, and blessed life in the land to a peace and contentment of body, soul, and mind in God.
What are the implications for business people? The biblical material presented in this paper suggests a weekly Sabbath day of non-work where a business person sets aside their work to focus upon God and God’s good gifts of creation. Second, as suggested by the phrase in Exodus 34:21, “even during ploughing season and harvest you must rest,” which taught the Israelites that the Sabbath was to be kept even in the busiest time of year in an agricultural society. A weekly Sabbath is to be kept even during the busiest seasons of one’s business. Third, as suggested by the phrase in Exodus 34:21, which taught the Israelites that the Sabbath was to be kept even during the busiest seasons of one’s business. Third, as taught by the humanitarian motivation for observing the Sabbath in Deuteronomy 5:14-15 and Exodus 23:12, business people need to ensure that their employees have opportunity for a weekly Sabbath in order to rest from their work. Fourthly, Sabbath is much more than a time period as it involves a qualitative dimension as I have documented by the biblical material on Sabbath and rest. Thus it is important to continually cultivate a spiritual attitude of rest, joy, freedom, and celebration in God and the gift of his creation, which is the foundation for a weekly Sabbath.

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The Centrality of Worship to Life and the Sabbath: Implications for Business

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ABSTRACT: The primary mandate for humankind is worship, specified by God when he placed Adam in the garden. The Hebrew grammar and phrasing makes clear that Adam’s primary role is as a priest before God with the charge “to serve and to guard.” To emphasize the primacy of worship, God instituted the Sabbath as a day of “rest,” denoting a time for human beings to cease other activities and to focus exclusively on worshipping the Creator. In today’s world, business owners and managers in pursuit of bigger markets, increasing revenue streams, and greater profitability often ignore the mandate to observe a day exclusively dedicated to the worship of God. Yet, for Christian businesspeople — owners, managers, or workers — the act of honoring God through a dedicated day set aside for worship communicates a recognition of the supreme priority of obedience to that command.

INTRODUCTION

A discussion on a proper Sabbath observance begins with an understanding of God’s purposes in the creation event. In Genesis 2:1-3, God completed his creation work on the sixth day and sanctified the seventh day as holy, because on that day he ceased. As discussed later, God ceased because he had provided everything needed; he saw that it was “good” (Genesis 1:10,12,18,21,25) and when he finished, it was “very good” (Genesis 1:31).2

Genesis 2:4 introduces a more detailed account of the garden and humankind’s purpose in creation. Here in Genesis 2, the foundational element for understanding the function of the Sabbath first emerges. This foundational element, worship, reveals the purpose for which God created human beings and what God expected them to be doing in the garden prior to the Fall of Genesis 3. Whether for the nation of Israel in the Old Testament or for the church in the New Testament, the Sabbath command in terms of God’s intent for humankind holds sway.

The fact that God commanded worship as the primary mandate for human beings in the garden highlights the importance of viewing the Sabbath in terms of worship and not merely as a day off. The New American Standard Bible translation of Genesis 2:15 states that “the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.” The phrasing in the Hebrew text, as will be discussed below, indicates that God commands his human creation to engage in acts of worship. This primary mandate for humankind, specified by the Creator himself at the time of creation, explains not only God’s purpose for the original two individuals but — even after the Fall (Genesis 3) — also the purpose behind the principle of Sabbath observance for all of their progeny.

The objective of the paper is to provide a theological foundation and rationale for Christian business owners, executives, and managers to make the principle of Sabbath observance a priority for themselves and to make it possible for their employees to do so also in businesses where that is possible. These authors endeavor to highlight the importance of worship — not just respite from work — in Sabbath observance and to apply this principle to how Christian businesspeople make business decisions concerning the Sabbath, such as whether to be open seven days a week, whether to provide a rotating schedule among employees in order to accommodate a day of worship, and whether to refrain from scheduling work such that it interferes with Sabbath observance.

The Old Testament “Sabbath” was Saturday, the seventh day. As discussed later, most — not all — Christians observe the first day of the week (e.g., Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). For those who observe other days, our recommendations apply for those days. Therefore, this paper takes the position of the Sabbath as a principle —
the importance of setting aside a day for worship — not as pertaining to a particular day of the week.

The paper first covers a short definition of worship, God’s injunction to “subdue” the earth, and a discussion of the mandate to worship that God gave to human beings when Adam was placed in the garden. The primacy of worship for humankind is a necessary foundation for commenting on the role of Sabbath observance by Christian businesspeople today, because apart from the foundational principle that the primary purpose for humankind is to worship the Creator, any number of purposes and activities theoretically could be attributed to Sabbath observance.

This paper next examines how the Fall changed God’s administration of worship and differentiates work and worship. Next, the paper covers issues pertaining to Sabbath observance and the responsibility of believers who are part of the working world, in business and in professions, to practice Sabbath observance. We also include a section on why businesspeople need a respite from their daily labors and, where possible, how to initiate business practices that honor the spirit of the Sabbath command.

**THE ESSENCE OF WORSHIP**

The English word “worship” comes from a Saxon/Old English word that means “worthship” or “worthiness.” Worship represents “an action motivated by an attitude that reveres, honors, or describes the worth of another person or object” (Martin, 1988, p. 1117). Worship denotes “reverent devotion and service to God motivated by God’s saving acts in history” (p. 1118).

Scripture uses more than one word to denote worship, pointing to the multi-faceted nature of worship. One example is חוה (havah), rendered חשתְׁחוהֲָָּ, which means “to prostrate oneself” or to assume the posture of kissing the ground, as in doing homage before a higher person or in an attitude of prayer (Koehler & Baumgartner, 2001, p. 296). Similarly, קדָד (qadad) means to “bow or kneel down in homage” and is always linked with חוה, for which it serves as “preparatory action” (Koehler & Baumgartner, 2001, p. 1065). More frequently used, however, is עבד (abad), the same word as in Genesis 2:15, which often refers to service to God as worship, as in Deuteronomy 6:13, “ . . . and you shall worship him [the Lord]” and in Exodus 3:12, “ . . . you shall worship God at this mountain.” Thus, worshipful activity engages in reverential acts that acknowledge and show appreciation for God and obedience to his commands.

Worship involves activities and attitudes that focus exclusively on God. The Scriptures explicitly restrict proper worship to having only God as its object; anything else is idolatry (Exodus 20:3-6). Although serving others with meals, financial support, counseling, and a wealth of other activities can certainly minister in the name of Christ, worship entails activities directed only toward God as its object and in response to his instruction. Examples in Scripture can be seen in Psalms 95, 96, 100, and 103, among other places. The church has historically considered prayer, hymns, Scripture reading, the Eucharist, and Baptism as acts of worship.

The church also has historically affirmed that humankind was created to worship God. For example, Lactantius (1886), the great theologian of the early 4th century, says it well:

Wherefore, if any one should ask a man who is truly wise for what purpose he was born, he will answer without fear or hesitation, that he was born for the purpose of worshipping God, who brought us into being for his cause, that we may serve him. (Chapter 9)

And also:

For that is the duty of man, and in that one object the sum of all things and the whole course of a happy life consists, since we were fashioned and received the breath of life from Him on this account, not that we might behold the heaven and the sun, as Anaxagoras supposed, but that we might with pure and uncorrupted mind worship Him who made the sun and the heaven. (Lactantius, 1886, Chapter 9)

The first question in the Westminster Catechism of 1648 is: “What is the chief and highest end of man?” The response is, “Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever,” citing as support Psalm 73:24-28; 86:9, 12; and 1 Corinthians 10:31. Additionally, both “glorify” and “worship” are collocated in Psalm 86:9 and Revelation 15:4, showing that these activities are linked linguistically. Psalm 16:5-11 speaks of the joyous communion found in the presence of the Lord. In John 14:20-23, the Lord’s statements to his disciples reflect intimacy and communion in fellowship with God, even going so far as to liken the unity to that experienced by members of the Trinity. The eschatological expectation of eternal worship is shown in Revelations 21:3-4. From the beginning, when God placed Adam in the garden, man’s primary mandate for worship is made clear (Genesis 2:15).
When the Lord God placed Adam in the garden, he instructed Adam in the human being’s role in God’s creation. Adam was to ַָּֽלעבָּדה (individually, the word is variously rendered in the Old Testament as “to work,” “to serve,” “to cultivate”) and ְָֽשְָּּּֽׁׁ (individually meaning “to keep,” “to watch,” “to preserve,” “to guard”).

However, the phrase, “to cultivate and to keep it” (ַָּֽלעבָּדה וּלְשְָּּּּֽׁׁׁ) or as the ESV translates, “to work it and to keep it,” is a collocation. A collocation is a set of two or more words which, when used together in a particular pattern by an author, takes on a new, technical meaning, which cannot necessarily be discerned by focusing on its composite parts (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2004).

Collocations are present today. When “seat of power” is used in conversation, people automatically know that it is an office or the officeholder who is in view and not his chair or backside, because they understand how collocations work in English. Hebrew likewise has words that when used together in a particular pattern take on a specialized meaning. This is how ַָּֽלעבָּדה וּלְשְָּּּֽׁׁ function together in “...legal texts of observing religious commands and duties (Numbers 17:9; Leviticus 18:5) and particularly of the levitical responsibility for guarding the tabernacle from intruders (Numbers 1:53; 3:7-8)” (Wenham, 1987, p. 67). Thus, ַָּֽלעבָּדה וּלְשְָּּּֽׁׁ in Genesis 2:15 functions as a technical phrase that when used as a unit denotes activity related specifically to worship and service to God (Morrow, 2012; Ross, 1998; Wenham, 1986).

Thus it is that Wenham (1986; 1987), Morrow (2012), Collins (2014), Emmrich (2001), and others suggest that the Genesis garden is an archetypal sanctuary where God dwells and where man worships him. That is, according to Wenham, the words in Genesis 2:15, which translate as “to cultivate and to keep it,” suggest the process of and activities associated with worship — not “work” as “toil,” which is the distinctive descriptor of work in the post-fall world (Talley, 1998).

Wenham (1986) suggests that when these words are used together, as they are in Genesis 2:15, the original audience — and so should the contemporary audience — would have immediately known that labor ַָּֽלעבָּדה was not at issue. The ancient Hebrew audience would have automatically recognized the collocation as a reference to worship. Thus, the word “work” as it is used in this phrase cannot be equated with the idea of working for a living as known after the Fall or in contemporary life.

Ross (1998), in agreement with Wenham, says concerning the specialized meaning of the two verbs in Genesis 2:15, “These two verbs are used throughout the Pentateuch for spiritual service” (p. 124). He continues, “’Keep’... is used for keeping the commandments and taking heed to obey God’s Word; ‘serve’... describes the worship and service of the Lord, the highest privilege a person can have” (p. 124).

Mathews (1996) also recognizes the link between these verbs and the service of worship. He notes that ַָּֽלעבָּדה frequently describes priestly duties in the tabernacle (and later in the temple) (e.g., Numbers 8:11, 15, 19, 22; 18:6, 21, 23) as well as in the completed construction of the tabernacle in Exodus 39:32, 42. With respect to ְָֽשְָּּֽׁ, it expresses “the faithful carrying out of God’s instructions (e.g., Leviticus 8:35) and the caretaking of the tabernacle (e.g., Numbers 1:53; 18:5)” (Mathews, 1996, p. 210). Mathews (1996) notes, “Both terms occur together to describe the charge of the Levites for the tabernacle (Numbers 3:7-8; 18:7), thus again suggesting a relationship between Eden and tabernacle” (p. 210).

Wenham (1986) explains, “On the basis of Exodus 3:12 and Numbers 28:2, [this phrase] equates man’s work in the garden with the offering of sacrifice” (p. 19), alluding to priestly responsibility in Israel’s worship of God. However, blood sacrifice was unnecessary before the Fall and the introduction of sin into God’s perfect creation. Since sacrifice was not instituted until after the Fall (Genesis 3), it is more likely that the words refer not to the act of sacrifice in the garden specifically, but generally to the processes attached to worship carried out in the garden and then later by the priests in Exodus and Numbers according to the sacrificial system prescribed for Israel.

Cassuto (1961), accordingly, translates the key Genesis 2:15 phrase as “to serve and to guard” (p. 121). One must note the lack of a direct object in Cassuto’s translation. Importantly, “it” is missing from Cassuto’s translation and, therefore, the direct object, the only putative reference to the garden in this verse, is eliminated.

Here’s why: The ancient Hebrew texts were consonantal texts only; that is, they did not include any vowels or other indicators for how the text should be read. Consequently, as could happen if an English text had no vowels, some texts were ambiguous. Should “th ct s n th mt” be read as “the cat is on the mat” or “the cot is on the mat” or “the coat is on the mat”? In the 1st millennium CE, several centuries (by anyone’s reckoning) after Genesis was composed, the Jewish scribes and rabbis added “points” around the text to assist in the
pronunciation and disambiugation of the text. (The currently used system of vowel notation found in the widely used text Bibliia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, the Hebrew Old Testament, was only written down between CE 600-1000 (Brotzman, 1994)).

The potential presence of the direct object “it” in this verse is dependent on a single dot, “·”, a mappiq, that was placed by the scribes into the middle of the final letter in each of these infinitive verbs, “to serve” and “to guard.” Cassuto contends that the rabbis erred in placing the mappiq in those verbs, which, effectively, adds a singular, feminine direct object to the verb.

Cassuto has two primary reasons for his objection.
1) No reasonable antecedent to the feminine “it” is present. If a direct object is present in the “it,” then one must determine what the “it” is. Most commonly in modern translations, the “it” is specified as the garden. But there are serious grammatical problems with doing so.

“Garden” in the Hebrew Bible has two different spellings, one that is masculine and one that is feminine. The occurrence in Genesis 2:15 and the other four occurrences of “garden” in Genesis 2 as well as the eight occurrences in Genesis 3 are of the masculine “garden.” Thus, this would be the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the “garden” would be feminine, and yet the surrounding context clearly uses the masculine form.

The standard lexicon for biblical Hebrew, HALOT (Koehler & Baumgartner, 2001, p.198), even shows its befuddlement by listing Genesis 2:15 under the masculine spelling for “garden” but adding “(fem.)” to indicate that it is not wholly persuaded that this occurrence is genuinely feminine. (It is noteworthy that the feminine form for “garden” is listed on the very next page in HALOT.) Accordingly, Cassuto (1961) believes that it is misplaced special pleading to argue that this form of “garden” has mysteriously changed genders in this verse alone.
2) Cassuto’s second objection is that “tilling the earth” was not imposed on man until after the Fall, in Genesis 3:17-19, and is intentionally juxtaposed by the author of Genesis against man’s previous, innocent state, when he did not have to work for food (p. 122). With no direct object associated with these verbs, “work” and “serve,” the implication that man’s purpose in the garden was to worship and not to till the ground would have been crystal clear to the original audience. Consequently, Cassuto, Wenham, and others agree that Adam’s primary purpose is to worship God.

Cassuto (1961) notes an additional facet. He believes that Adam’s service in worship included preserving or guarding the sanctuary from malignant intruders, such as the serpent. Thus, the Hebrew text, as read by Cassuto, is even more emphatic that the God-ordained function of man in paradise was to serve the Lord in worship and to preserve the sanctity of the place of worship. HALOT (Koehler & Baumgartner, 2001) supports Cassuto, as it lists the specific meaning of צָרָע (Genesis 2:15) as “watching over locations, objects” (p. 1582).

Sailhamer (1992) also agrees with Cassuto on this point and goes yet another step further (p. 100). The verb in 2:15, which is translated “put,” (i.e. “…and he put him in the garden of Eden…”) is the causative stem of the verb “to rest.” It can be translated “to put” or “to set,” but Sailhamer notes that in passages in which the land prepared for God’s people is in view (e.g., Deuteronomy 3:20, 12:10), the implications of “rest” come to the forefront. He further notes that in 2:8, God put the man into the garden; it does not push the narrative forward to say this again. However, in 2:15, according to Sailhamer (1992), God is going to detail his purpose in placing the man in the garden in 2:8. That purpose is to provide safety in rest so that the man may fellowship with God (p. 100). Thus, 2:15 should be understood as: “YHWH God took the man and he caused him to rest in the garden of Eden for the purpose of worship.” That God’s purpose for the man entailed rest negates any proposition that God placed the man in the garden for the purpose of work. The inevitable consequence, again, is that man’s original function in the garden was as a priest, worshiping in the “temple” which God created.

Even assuming that the ending on those Hebrew verbs is a feminine direct object, which is debatable (see above), the most natural reading is that man was placed in the garden to worship God and to keep holy the place of their meetings. In other words, Adam was created to be a priest. Since the garden was perfect, whatever service God assigned to Adam and Eve would have been service associated with worshipful activity. Once the Fall occurred, maintaining the same degree of intimacy with God became impossible. God removed the man and the woman from the garden, but the mandate to worship remained and was carried forward to Israel in the principle of Sabbath observance (Exodus 20:9-11; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:13-15). That is, the Sabbath was set apart, sanctified Genesis 2:1-3), and made holy by God as a time to remember his gracious provision (Deuteronomy 5:15), to rest in that provision (Deuteronomy 5:13-14), look forward to the final rest (Hebrews 4:1-11), and to worship him for his redeem-
ing acts on behalf of human beings (Deuteronomy 5:15; 1 Chronicles 17:21; Luke 1:68).

**EXCERPTUS ON GENESIS 1:28**

A brief excursus on Genesis 1:28 is in order at this point as some may object that, in this verse, God instructed the man and woman to “fill the earth and subdue it,” which sounds as though labor might be involved. Genesis 1:28 begins with the words “God blessed them. God said to them, ‘Be fruitful…”’ (ESV). One may be tempted to see “blessed” and “said” as two different actions, but they are not. The blessing is what is said: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Sailhamer, 1992, p. 96). Although these are phrased as imperatives, they should not be considered obligations that must be carried out for man to fulfill his purpose in the universe. Williams (2013) analogizes to a recent parallel, Spock’s well-known phrase from Star Trek: “Live long and prosper!” Spock is not commanding others to go out and ensure that they live a long life and are prosperous. He is pronouncing a blessing on them; the same applies here. To read into this text commands that man must obey is to misunderstand the nature of the blessing.

With the foregoing in mind, we briefly consider the two verbs “subdue” and “have dominion” and whether human labor is indicated by their use. This Hebrew verb for “subdue,” kabash (כַּבַּשׁ), occurs in the Qal stem in only six other places in the Hebrew Bible. In three of those places (Nehemiah 5:5, 2 Chronicles 28:10, Jeremiah 34:16), the word clearly refers to enslaving a group of people. In one instance (Esther 7:8), it refers to rape. The final two occurrences, Micah 7.19 and Zechariah 9.15, refer to “trampling” or “treading” on something as if to destroy it. None of these uses of kabash fit with the motif of Genesis 1 where God makes everything “good” for the man and woman. They would have no reason to “trample” the earth as they would not be waging war against it, destroying it or enslaving it, prior to the Fall.

Neumann-Gorsolke (2009) expresses misgivings noted by other scholars (e.g., Jamir, 2011; McGee, 1981) that “... the idea of subduing the earth does not go well with the situation of a just-created world without any enemies and with the idea of a rich world of trees and green that gives food to men and animals” (p. 75). Furthermore, the seven verses noted above in which kabash is used is an extremely small sample from which to deduce all of its possible meanings. However, the usages in Micah and Zechariah do point to a possible underlying meaning to kabash, which is confirmed in the Akkadian cognate, kabāšu. The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (Civil, Gelb, Oppenheim, & Reiner, 1971, p. 10) lists a number of meanings for kabāšu, which does include “to trample,” “to defeat an enemy,” and “to make people do work,” all of which comport with the Hebrew uses. However, CAD also lists such glosses as “to step into something... accidentally,” “to stride,” “to pace off,” and “to walk upon.” It would seem that kabāšu originally had this more mundane meaning of “to walk upon” and that it later developed the others, including those found in the Hebrew Bible. McGee (1981) concurs, noting, “Thus, when used in connection with land, [kabash] also has a figurative sense: the land itself is not literally trampled, but rather ‘set foot on,’ i.e. entered and occupied” (p. 36).

Given the picture that Moses paints in Genesis 1, it seems more likely that Moses intends to use kabash in conjunction with the verb “fill (the earth)” as an encouragement to the man and woman and their offspring to fill the earth so that they are walking all over it. Thus, they are not to enslave the earth or crush it like an enemy and certainly not to rape it. Within the blessing of Genesis 1.28, they are merely to go forth and, as they multiply, fill up the earth by walking, or pacing it off, to the earth’s ends.

It would be remiss not to point out that Moses is likely using the verb kabash here as an intentional double entendre. Moses composed Genesis while the people of Israel were preparing to enter the land of Canaan, and the people likely would have understood the story of the creation of the land and the mandate to fill and walk on it through the lens of what they must accomplish in Canaan. A central part of their entry into the land is the Lord’s command that the people are required to remove the Canaanites from the land. Thus, they must “subdue” the Canaanites and part of that subduing entails filling the land. Interestingly, one of the first things that the Lord says to Joshua is that “[e]very place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses” (Josh 1:3 ESV). Accordingly, the command in Genesis 1:28 to kabash the land by walking upon it would have immediately resonated with the Israelites as something that they themselves are about to do. However, the Israelites would not have had only to walk on the land as Adam and Eve were instructed; they would have been required to “trample” (i.e., conquer) the inhabitants of Canaan. The possibility for this double
meaning, “walking on” and “conquering,” could explain why Moses used the rarer *kabash* in Genesis 1:28 rather than the more common *darak* (דָּרָק), which was used in the Joshua passage. Within the literary context of Genesis 1:28, *kabash* meant only “to walk upon” and does not imply labor, while the original recipients would have mentally leaped to their immediate obligation to *kabash* in the more active, conquering fashion.

The verb translated “have dominion,” *radah* (רָדָה), is a similarly difficult verb to understand. It often connotes “to rule oppressively,” but it, too, can also have less onerous meanings. In Psalm 68:28, *radah* likely means “to lead” (Cf. ESV, NIV, NKJV, NLT) rather than “rule” (contra NASB, NET). In I Kings 5:4, 30 and 9:23 *radah* refers to the supervisory work that Solomon’s overseers do in the construction of the temple. These few texts, in conjunction with Ezekiel 34:1-10, give a clue to the underlying meaning of *radah* in this text.

Ezekiel 34:1-10 is a prophecy against the kings and political leaders of Israel; however, the picture given by the prophet is of a shepherd who mistreats his flock and abandons the proper role of shepherd. In verse 4, Ezekiel states that the shepherds have “ruled” (*radah*) the sheep with “force and harshness” (ESV). The problem is not that the shepherds have ruled but that they have ruled badly. Zenger (1983) notes that the meaning of *radah* is grounded in the role of the good shepherd (p. 91). This grounding picks up on both the Psalm 68:28 and the I Kings usages of *radah* but moves further. Shepherds lead the flock and supervise the flock, but they also do much more. Shepherds protect the flock, defend it from predators, and protect the weak from the strong (Zenger, 1983, p. 91). While there would be no predators contemplated in the perfect creation of Genesis 1, human dominion would still relate to nurturing the animals so that the animals would live their lives to the fullest. As Brueggemann (1982) states “[*radah*] has to do with securing the well-being of every other creature and bringing the promise of each to full fruition” (p. 32). Part of God’s blessing then suggests that humankind will enable the animals to live their lives to their fullest capacity.

In sum, *kabash* and *radah* are not commands but rather part of a blessing formula in which God exhorts humankind to be fertile and to fill up the earth and to live life to the fullest along with the animals, under God’s rule and protection.

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**GENESIS 3: HOW THE FALL CHANGED EVERYTHING**

In Genesis 3:8, the Lord God was walking in the garden, the place where God met with his highest creation to commune with them and fellowship in loving relationship, and he called out to Adam. The same word as is used in Genesis 3:8, which means “to walk to and fro,” is also used to describe “the divine presence in the later tent sanctuaries in Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 23:14; and 2 Samuel 7: 6-7” (Wenham, 1986, p. 20). Thus, this phrase also indicates the Lord’s presence in the place of worship where he seeks to maintain relationship with humankind. Unfortunately, this will be the last time that the Lord and his human creation will meet face-to-face in this sanctuary.

Several consequences result from the Fall. The one most important to this thesis is that human beings no longer have the leisure to worship as they did in Eden. Now, they are forced to toil over the ground before it will produce for them (Genesis 3:17-18). They will have to combat thorns and thistles; they will earn their bread in laborious work and by the sweat of their bodies. Work will not always be successful; business failures involve re-work, wasted resources, late projects and/or diminished benefits, and loss of revenue, to cite but a few negative effects. The original opportunity prior to the Fall to spend unlimited time walking with God has been forfeited; human beings must now devote a large portion of their time to working so that they can live.

As Cassuto (1961) states, prior to the Fall, Adam had no need to till the ground; he was not a gardener, because that was a stipulation attached to the consequences of the Fall. Adam’s mandate in the garden was to engage in acts of worship and service to his God. The curse in Genesis 3 reconfigured Adam’s priorities in terms of what he spends his time doing. He is no longer able to enjoy God without a care about earning sustenance. Now he must work long hours just to stay alive, fighting the earth for produce rather than receiving from it freely.

**WORSHIP AND WORK DIFFERENTIATED**

Genesis 2:19-20 recounts the Lord God bringing the animals to Adam to be named, indicating that divinely sanctioned work was performed in the garden. However, it becomes clear in Genesis 3:17-19 that work done after the Fall and work done in the garden before the Fall must be
differentiated. After the Fall, work done for the purpose of worship and to facilitate worship among God’s people is different than work done to earn a living. The former may be worship, should be worship, although it may not be; the latter may be ministry and serve a redemptive function for humanity (e.g., Diddams & Daniels, 2008), but it is not worship as the Bible defines worship. Additionally, solitary worship edifies the Christian, but it cannot replace corporate worship (Hebrews 10:23-25), which requires a designated time and place to assemble and focus on God as the church, members of Christ’s body.

The “theology of work” movement is of fairly recent vintage, the term having first appeared in the 1950s (Chenu, 1966), and it has offered spiritual encouragement to those whom God calls to ministry in the marketplace. We agree with Silvoso (2002), that “millions of men and women are . . . called to full-time ministry in business, education and government — the marketplace” (p. 18). From this movement, numerous helpful insights into the Christian perspective on work have issued. For example, Volf (2001) argues for a view of work as “cooperation with God” (p. 88). His understanding of work is that “the various activities human beings do in order to satisfy their own needs and the needs of their fellow creatures should be viewed from the perspective of the operation of God’s Spirit” (pp. 88-89). He rightly maintains that the world of the material world cannot be excluded from the “sphere of the present salvific activity of the Spirit” (p. 104) from either an exegetical or a theological perspective. This subsuming of work under the power and authority of Christian service resulting from a Christian’s redemption and empowerment by the Spirit is certainly biblical and helps reduce the artificial compartmentalization of the “sacred” and the “profane.”

But Volf (2001) does not make the mistake of explicitly equating work and worship. He explains:

As much as [Christians] need to do God’s will, so also they need to enjoy God’s presence. In order to be truly who they are, they need periodic moments of time in which God’s commands and their tasks will disappear from the forefront of their consciousness and in which God will be there for them and they will be there for God — to adore the God of loving holiness and to thank and pray to the God of holy love. (p. 137)

Witherington (2011), likewise makes a strong case for work as ministry (p. 144). Nevertheless, he too warns, “We need a holy day to focus on worshiping the Lord.” He adds, “My humble suggestion would be that Christians need to take their weekends back from where they have been exiled to — the soccer fields, the malls, and of course, the workplace” (2011, p. 145). Work, in the sense that it is toilsome and often requires unhealthy compromises in time usage, is a result of the Fall. As Christians, we are commanded to work (e.g., 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 12). Work is necessary to provide sustenance for families (1 Timothy 5:8). Work can be godly service in which Christians play a uniquely redemptive role in God’s creation to alleviate poverty and encourage education and healthful living as well as to foster reconciliation of others with God. But work is not the same thing as worship.

Accordingly, it is one thing to recognize the importance of taking “every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5b) and another thing entirely to equate all work activity as worship. One is a reasonable application of the principle of recognizing God’s sovereignty over all of life; the other violates evidence for the differentiation of work and worship in the Scripture.

Compelling evidence for treating worship and work differently is found in the clear distinction between work and worship in the Decalogue. Note that those in positions of authority over others are responsible for the compliance of persons under them, including not only other members of the immediate household but also workers and guests.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)

Notice that all persons under the “management” of the head-of-household were under obligation to observe the Sabbath, a command that extended to servants, guests, and even livestock associated with the household. It is not a stretch to believe that provision should equally be made in today’s workplace for Sabbath observance by executives, managers, and employees alike.

Regardless of how important the process of work was for the people of Israel, here God has established a clear demarcation between work and worship. That the Jews grossly distorted the Sabbath and made it into a burden rather than a day of blessing for the people is irrelevant with respect to God’s intent for the Sabbath.
THE PRINCIPLE OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE CONDUCIVE TO WORSHIP

In Genesis 2, God honored the seventh day because it was on that day that his work was complete and that he ceased creating (Genesis 2:2). He ceased from his labors because everything was provided; there was no longer any good thing left undone that he could have designed for his creation. This includes, of course, provision for Adam and Eve in the garden — both material sustenance and spiritual well-being.

When God finished his work of creation, the Scriptures say that he “rested” or “ceased.” Since God does not become tired, we understand that he ceased one activity and began another. With his work complete, including his “temple” or holy place where he would meet with his creation, his “rest” began.

“Rest” is associated with God’s being in a place of worship. According to Ross (1998), the verb “to rest” actually means “to cease” (pp. 113-114). “It is not a word that refers to remedying exhaustion after a tiring week of work; rather, it describes the enjoyment of accomplishment, the celebration of completion.”

For example, Psalm 132:7-8 states, “Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool! Arise, O LORD, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.” (For more on “footstool,” see Isaiah 66:1 and Matthew 5:35). The parallelism of Hebrew poetry shows that God’s dwelling place is also the place in the earth where he is worshipped, and that place is known as his “resting place.” Additionally, there is a reference here to the place of the “ark,” which was in the Holy of Holies, first in the Tabernacle and subsequently in the Temple. It should be remembered that God instructed Moses that when he would meet with Moses, God would speak from between the two cherubs on the ark. Thus, by using “temple language,” the psalmist conveys that God is enthroned in a place set aside for worship, which is also his resting place (Barcellos, 2013). (See also Psalm 132:13-14 for similar imagery.) Justifiably, then, the reader may conclude that a place set aside for worship and specifically designated for fellowship with God is in keeping with his design for worship. For the Christian, biblical “rest” is found in meeting with God.

As Barcellos (2013) points out, “A day consecrated by God for man did not begin at Sinai. The Sabbath predates both Sinai and Israel as God’s Old Covenant nation. It is not unique to Israel; it is for man from the beginning” (p. 141). The principle of Sabbath observance is encom-
Near East, the “men of Tyre,” were importing fish and other goods to be sold on the Sabbath.

Nehemiah reprimanded the nobles of Judah for allowing these conditions to continue. He reminded them of the discipline brought on Judah by “profaning” the Sabbath. That is, the Judahites had been carried off into the Babylonian captivity in part as a result of failing to honor the Sabbath as a day dedicated exclusively to worshipping God and ceasing from work. Jeremiah had delivered a strong rebuke from God on this very issue before God judged Judah by bringing the Babylonians against them (Jeremiah 17:19-27). To ensure that no marketplace activity would take place on the Sabbath and remembering the warnings from Jeremiah, Nehemiah closed the gates of the city right before the Sabbath and only re-opened the city for business after the Sabbath had passed. Nehemiah and the people had made a commitment to Sabbath observance (Nehemiah 10:31).

Additionally, in Nehemiah 13:22, Nehemiah commanded the Levites to purify themselves because they were about to begin an act of worship before God. Nehemiah then installed the Levites as gatekeepers to “sanctify the Sabbath.” Nehemiah’s action here is reminiscent of the fact that one of Adam’s responsibilities as priest was to “guard” the garden, that is, “keep” the place of worship and preserve the sanctity of God’s holy place. Here we see the Levites as God’s priestly representatives in Judah also charged with “keeping” or “guarding” the gates of the city as part of the priestly function to preserve the Sabbath for worship.

It is noteworthy that the Lord had set apart all the sons of Levi to himself (Numbers 3:5-13) to “minister” (v. 7) and to “guard” (v. 8) (same collocation as used in Genesis 2:15) because they had dedicated themselves to the Lord after the incident of the golden calf (Exodus 32:25-29). Thus, the Levites became the theocratic representatives ministering in the tabernacle and later the temple, just as Adam was intended to minister in the garden. Now, in the time of Nehemiah, the Levites are explicitly told to guard the gates to protect the sanctity of the Sabbath, similar to Adam being told to guard the garden to preserve the sanctity of the place where God met with Adam and Eve.

The point for Christians today is that the sanctity of a time distinctly set apart for worship will be challenged in every generation. Those who have been appointed as priests, which in our day is all believers (1 Peter 2:9), also have an obligation to preserve the sanctity of Sabbath worship. As was shown in Nehemiah’s day — and also in Jesus’ day when he had to drive the moneychangers out of the temple (Matthew 21:12-13) — those who engage in commerce have a propensity to intrude and appropriate for themselves that which has been sanctified and set apart to God.

Christians today need to be aware of this pattern and to guard against it. Christians are priests who have been charged with preserving the sanctity of worship and the time dedicated to serving God. Wherever Christians have influence in the business world, they also have a sacred responsibility to be God’s representatives in preserving that which is holy. Business today, as it has always done, threatens to dominate the culture. Throughout the world, business is arguably the institution with the most influence on society and culture, especially as global economic interests continue to increase rapidly. Thus, a growing Christian countercultural initiative is also needed.

**WHY BUSINESS PEOPLE NEED SABBATH WORSHIP**

Many business executives, managers, and owners today behave as if their employees should be available if needed on a 24/7 basis. For example, Maume and Purcell (2007) discuss the significant increases in the pace of work between 1977 and 1997, largely attributable to job complexity and the length of work schedules. Heavy demands from the workplace also occur among professionals, who report ever-increasing job demands and higher stress to accompany those demands (Moen, Lam, Ammons, & Kelly, 2013). One article characterizes the American workforce as “overworked” and “time poor” (Gornick, 2005) and documents that Americans report more dissatisfaction in balancing work life and family life than do Europeans.

Both academic and business-press literature report a multitude of negative effects associated with work overload. The resulting burnout is associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of having low personal accomplishment (Jackson, Turner & Brief, 1987). Heavy workload even has a negative impact on physiological markers, such as blood pressure, reported affective distress (Ilies, Dimotakis, & De Pater, 2010), and emotional exhaustion (Elloy, Terpening, & Kohls, 2001).

The effects of overwork show up for businesses in several ways, including absenteeism (Bekker, Croon, & Bressers, 2005), increasing the chances of losing a company’s best employees (Messmer, 2004), and reduced pro-
ductivity (Brecher, 2011; Hagel, 2013). These symptoms have been found to influence job performance among nurses (Bekker et al., 2005), to lower the quality of care from physicians (Shirom, Nirel, & Vinokur, 2006), and to incite even more frequent leave among academics (Anonymous, 2007). Parental overwork also translates to stress in the home and problem behavior among adolescents (Galambos, Sears, Almeida, & Kolaric, 1995).

Even the business-related press is taking note of the serious costs incurred by the dysfunctional business environments in which people today have to work. For example, Tom Gardner, co-founder of The Motley Fool, writes that “. . . within 10 years, [new hires will] be overweight, pre-diabetic, worn down by repetitive tasks, with burned-out adrenals. They’ll function at declining rates, finding it troublingly difficult to break the habits they’ve formed in your office” (Gardner, 2014). Thus, the exhausting pace that has become the norm for modern business incurs such huge costs that they can justifiably be termed “life-threatening.” Not only is the quality of daily life impaired, but the devastation to people’s spiritual life looms large.

Although multiple causes exist for the conditions that are diminishing the quality of life for today’s businesspeople and professionals, certainly an imbalance in their spiritual life and lack of opportunity to experience physical and spiritual rest must be viewed as contributing factors in many cases. When businesspeople de-emphasize God’s primary mandate to humankind to worship and instead focus on finding identity and satisfaction in work, modern society creates an ever widening gap between God’s plan for humanity and humankind’s idolatrous substitute. Rest and relaxation do serve an important function for human beings, but perhaps not so well recognized is the need for spending time appreciating God in worship and experiencing the spiritual refreshment that comes from adoring God and fellowshipping with our creator. Thus, it is the worship and spiritual refreshing dimension of the Sabbath that is emphasized herein.

**IMPLEMENTING SABBATH WORSHIP**

Karl Barth (1958) wrote, “The goal of creation and at the same time the beginning of all that follows, is the event of God’s Sabbath freedom, Sabbath rest, and Sabbath joy, in which man, too, has been summoned to participate” (p. 98). The creation mandate is for worship, in which all mankind has been called to participate. Thus, the mandate requires that Christian businesspeople acknowledge and accommodate, even encourage to the extent they are able, regular communion with God in a place that is set aside for that purpose. To do so requires recognition of and acquiescence to several key beliefs: God exists, he has spoken, he has revealed his desire for regular worship and communion with his human creatures, and obedience is crucial.

It is unrealistic to expect the secular business community to take note of God’s commands since the Bible is no longer considered by most members of society as the final authority for ethical practice and spiritual service either in the world of commerce or elsewhere. Christian businesspeople, however, are directly responsible for making personal and, in some cases, company policy for Sabbath observance. Not everyone is in the same situation, so very specific recommendations for faithful Sabbath practice would not apply to all Christians. Yet all believers are responsible for personal Sabbath-keeping, and parents are responsible to teach these values to their children.

Some examples do exist of companies that have initiated policies specifically to support a day of worship for employees. Hobby Lobby and Chick-fil-A are but two examples that have a large public presence. Many smaller businesses run by Christians are also examples of making policies that support Sabbath worship by remaining closed on the day that most Christians (not all) worship.

In general for Christians, honoring God’s Sabbath in the business community means that employers and employees alike place a priority on this usage of time. On the one hand, employers should refrain from imposing so much work on employees that they are under constant pressure to “overwork.” Businesspeople should place less emphasis on “more, more, more” material success and place more emphasis on being with God, with family, with those who are in need. On the other hand, Christian employers should not only refrain from rewarding people who avoid spending time in worship to complete a project but they should create disincentives for employees who engage in such misuse of time. For example, management expectations that an employee would work weekends on a regular basis to finish projects should be avoided. Employees who repeatedly use weekends as catch-up time for work that could have been accomplished during the week should not be rewarded for their “great work ethic.”

Obedience to God’s Word has, throughout the centuries, frequently resulted in negative consequences for God’s people. To initiate a policy of Sabbath observance without counting the cost may result in disillusionment when the business loses some of its competitive advantage.
Compared with other companies that are open 24/7, the decision to restore a proper perspective on worship where it currently is absent or neglected does not mean that Christian businesspeople should walk into this situation blindly but with commitment, faith, and courage.

At least three models of Sabbath keeping have been suggested: life segmentation, prescribed meaning, and integrated Sabbath (Diddams, Surdyk, & Daniels, 2004). Christians may be found using any of the three. However, it is the thesis of this paper that regardless of the model of Sabbath observance chosen, time dedicated strictly to worship—not just to physical rest and relaxation—must be integral to any model of Sabbath keeping that legitimately adheres to the mandate to worship.

God has set in place the potential for human commerce to be greatly redemptive in the world; however, its success does not depend on our working non-stop 24/7. Its success in alleviating many of the outgrowths of sin, such as poverty and sickness, depends on our being in right relationship with God. He is a hands-on creator, who demands our top priority and allegiance. As he made clear to Israel (Deuteronomy 28:30), blessing depends on obedience, and obeying the principle of Sabbath observance is as critical to the continued well-being of our commercial efforts as it is for any human endeavor.

CONCLUSION

The Sabbath represents a time set aside for people to reflect on God’s work and gracious provision for his creation, just as God himself reflected on his work. The Sabbath is the time reserved for people to carry out the primary mandate of creation: to worship God and rest in his provision. Having enough time in one’s life to set aside a period of time for worship and communion with the Lord is essential for spiritual renewal and societal flourishing.

The principle of Sabbath observance says to business, “You can’t have it all. You don’t own people.” Such a message is particularly important in our present age of 24/7 demands on employees. People were not made to work without ceasing; they were made to worship their God and to commune with him on a regular basis. Christian business owners, executives, and managers should recognize God’s design and, consequently, make available substantial time for worship for themselves and their employees. Christian workers should intentionally dedicate a day for worshipping God.

ENDNOTES

1 The authors express warm appreciation to the Special Issue Editor and to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable contributions toward improving the quality of this paper.

2 All Scripture quotations are from the NASB unless otherwise specified.

3 Further explanation of בעבדה ושרם is provided here for those who may be interested in Hebrew constructions. First, Hebrew is read from right to left, so we begin with the ́ (mappiq) in the first word (בעבדה). The ́ is the preposition “to” added as a prefix to the Qal infinitive construct form of the verb רשב. The dots and dashes underneath are the vowel points added by the Masoretes during the second half of the first millennium A.D., as discussed later in the paper. The final ה could indicate one of two usages. As written in the Masoretic text, the dot (mappiq) in the center of the final ה, makes the final ה into a feminine pronominal suffix, that is, the direct object of the verb. It is the mappiq in this and the following Hebrew word to which Cassuto objects, as discussed later in the paper. The second usage of the ה is simply a final letter to preserve the final long vowel which precedes it. This type of the archaic form of the infinitive construct verb occurs a handful of times in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Exodus 29:29; 30:18). As such, this archaic form has no direct object, since the final ה is simply the final letter of the verb and not a pronominal suffix. With Cassuto, we take this construction in Genesis 2:15 as actually representing the second usage of the ה.

The ́ (which) at the beginning of the second word (שרם) is used here as the conjunction “and.” As in the previous word, the ́ signals the preposition “to” before the Qal infinitive construct form of the verb שלח. The explanation above of the final ה applies this verb as well, such that neither infinitive verb has a direct object.

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Sabbath: The Theological Roots of Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT: It is the thesis of this paper that, in general, the points of emphasis by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development are in close, but not perfect, alignment with the concept of Sabbath-shalom in Scripture. Some differences also exist. Sabbath begins at Creation and is the substance and symbol of God’s care for this earth. In Sabbath, we rest in God’s sustaining power. Sabbath also is integral to covenant relationships. This means that Sabbath is not merely about care for the environment but also about care for all relationships envisioned by the concept of shalom. Both the creation roots and covenant roots link Sabbath to redemption and recreation. Together, these roots give us the direction that humans will journey when caring for each other and for this earth. The fatal flaw in the UN sustainable development movement is presented.

Key words: Business, community, covenant, creation, dominion, environment, imitating God, Jesus Christ, jubilee, justice, lordship, moral relativism, redemption, Sabbath, sabbatical, shalom, sign, sustainable development, Ten Commandments, UN Commission on Sustainable Development, wholeness, work, worship

INTRODUCTION

Over the decades, in trade journals and books, Protestants (Buchanan, 2006; Colwell, 2008; Taylor, 2010; Brueggemann, 2014) and Roman Catholics (John Paul II, 1998) have called for a renewed interest in the Sabbath. The collection of essays on Sabbath from different theological perspectives also illustrates the recent interest in the topic among more than one Christian denomination (O’Flaherty et al., 2010).

At the same time, Christians and non-Christians have called for a stronger emphasis on sustainable development (e.g., Epstein & Hanson, 2006). During the last 30 years, hundreds of journal articles and books have been published touching in one way or another on this topic. For more than twenty years the journal Sustainable Development has offered a forum for discussing the issues. For more than thirty years, leaders from many nations and organizations have been collaborating in this global conversation.

Scholars, interested in the spiritual foundations of business or who discuss business ethics, have introduced a connection between Sabbath and business (Chewning, Eby, & Roels, 1990; Stackhouse, 1995; Rempel, 2003; Wong & Rae, 2011). These scholars do not explore specific ways in which Sabbath touches business.

Christian social justice activists have tied Sabbath to an emphasis on sustainable development including the fair distribution of resources. Called “Sabbath Economics,” the movement encourages socially responsible investing, giving to the poor, community investing of wealth so that more than just a few enjoy its benefits, and investing in organizations that are working directly with the poor (Gardner, 2005; Shimron, 2006; Colwell, 2008).

Once the deeper significance of Sabbath is understood, the Christian will find interest in this since Sabbath-keeping, in all of its dimensions, is a response to a gracious God who created and redeemed us. A believer who wishes to fully emulate the Creator-Redeemer (Ephesians 5:1) will want to develop a more complete understanding of what Sabbath means for every aspect of life, including business.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the theological foundations of Sabbath and compare these to contemporary points of emphasis on sustainable development as recently voiced by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

To advance its purpose, the paper will consider two streams of thought in turn, Sabbath and sustainable development. Regarding Sabbath, the dual roots of creation and covenant will demonstrate the close relationship between Sabbath and the biblical concept of shalom. Following this, the linkages between Sabbath and sustainable development will be illustrated in the recent work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and its
predecessor commission beginning in 1984. A weakness of the UN Commission’s work will be highlighted.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The term Sabbath comes from the Bible. It refers to multiple layers of a faith community’s relationship with God. At the observable, outward layer, Sabbath refers to consecrated time, the seventh day of the week, to be kept holy. This day when no work is done is set apart for worship to God. Sabbath also refers to the day of worship that also provides rest, which renews for future service. This rest applies as much to the earth as it does for humans. At a much deeper level, Sabbath refers to our entire relationship with God where persons in community rest from human efforts to achieve reconciliation with God. Sabbath is commitment to the set of principles designed to foster flourishing life. Thus, Sabbath is a miniature representation of all the principles of a flourishing relationship with God, namely, his Law.

Imbedded in the term sustainable development are two ideas. Sustainable refers to caring for the earth in such a way that both present and future generations can benefit from earth’s bounty while justice is preserved. Development refers to the wise use of resources for the purpose of fostering flourishing life for all, including the most vulnerable. This includes economic development and technological development.

SABBATH ROOTS: CREATION AND COVENANT

The succinct description of Sabbath’s purpose first appeared in the Torah and has been preserved for millennia as a central part of the Judeo-Christian subcultures. In the words of the covenant, Sabbath is explicitly linked with creation:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)

Sabbath in Creation

Human history begins with gifts of God’s love not an arbitrary command of God (Miller, 2009, p. 123). The earth itself is one gift, and the Sabbath is another, a gift designed to foster a deepening relationship between God and humankind, a gift which represents the reality of a joyful life of peace (shalom) envisioned for all God’s creatures.

The Creation narrative in the Bible describes God as committed to all creation. He continually sustains it by his power (Psalm 104:30). Therefore creation must have inherent value. Scripture calls humans to worship the Creator (Psalm 102:25-27; 104; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3, 10-12). Defacing, abusing, or destroying creation is an attack on God. The land, and by logical extension our whole environment, is not just a natural resource for human exploitation. It is holy and must be cared for as loyal stewards would care for their own (Leviticus x25:1-7). The environment in which God placed humans is social.

Wholeness, not dualism. The ancient Hebrew concept of life is quite different from the Greek ideas that would emerge later and which would come to dominate Christian thinking after the New Testament was written. In the creation and covenant, we see no artificial separation of body from soul. Wholeness in the biblical way of thinking includes not only holistic persons but also persons in community: Wholeness is not complete unless persons are in community. In Sabbath, keeping the soul is not more important than preserving the body (Berry, 2000). It is the whole person in community who responds to God through worship, rest and, work. Sabbath worship is not merely about bringing the soul into closer relationship with God. Rather, worship on the Sabbath is to be correlated with worship during the workweek so that the whole person and whole community journey together toward shalom.

This provides a deeper perspective on redemption and faith, also. Redemption is not only for the spirit or soul of a person. Redemption involves restoration of the whole person, the community, and the whole earth. In terms of redemption, a Sabbath view of redemption is consistent with the New Testament passages (Romans 8:21; 2 Peter 3:13). Likewise, faith is not just an ethereal, spiritual experience of the soul. Biblical faith means faithfulness to God by the whole person in all dimensions of community life.

Coworkers with God. It is in Sabbath worship that the relationship between God’s work and our work comes into focus. In both Testaments of the Bible,
we find expressions that it is God who sustains life on earth (Psalm 36:9; 54:4; 104:27-28; 145:15-16; Luke 12:6-7, 24; Matthew 6:26-32; 7:9; Acts 17:28; Romans 8:32; Colossians 1:17; 1 John 4:9). Humans, made in his image, are to be coworkers with God, as responsible servants, to sustain flourishing life. The passage about the first hallowed seventh day lies between the commission to subdue and have dominion over (develop) the earth (Genesis 1:26-28) and the command to serve the earth by caring for (sustaining) it (Genesis 2:15). Thus, awareness of our role in sustaining the earth is integral to Sabbath worship.

**Lordship of Christ.** Sabbath is a symbol that God is Lord of our life (Andreasen, 1978). Sabbath is a return to an Eden-like existence where work was free from its toil. The Creation Sabbath anticipates the covenant and God’s grace. If this is true, it also must anticipate the Incarnation where God comes to earth to live among us (Philippians 2:1-11); the Cross, whereby all things are reconciled to God in Christ (Colossians 1:19-20); and the Resurrection, in which by faith we can participate in newness of life (Romans 5:10).

**Purpose of creation, shalom.** Whatever conclusions are drawn about Sabbath’s broader principles, the core purpose of Sabbath, as a day of rest and worship, cannot be forgotten. In this, the implicit purpose of Sabbath is the overall well-being (shalom) of the community in all dimensions: covenant relationship with God, social harmony, international peace, physical health, and economic prosperity. But Sabbath is also a direct experience of shalom in the community weekly and every seven years.

While the New Testament writers do not explicitly make the connection between Jesus the Creator, Sabbath, and care of the earth, implicitly they accept the Old Testament thinking. In their view, Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophetic hopes and dreams for renewed well-being. Jesus is the Creator of all things (John 1:1-3). In him is abundant life (John 10:10). He is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28). In him, we still live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). The Redeemer-Messiah embraces not merely the sinful souls of human beings but rather the entire cosmos. He holds all things together by his sustaining power (Colossians 1:15-20). He recreates the earth at the consummation of the great plan of redemption (Revelation 21:1-22:5).

Jesus demonstrated the fulfillment of the prophetic dimension of shalom by healing on Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:10-18). One Sabbath day after healing a person, Jesus claimed that his ministry is a fulfillment of a shalom prophecy from Isaiah 61:1. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18).

**Linkage between work and worship.** Sabbath is rest from work even as it anticipates work after worship and worship in work. Unlike the reason for human need of rest from work, Divine rest was a “rest of his satisfaction and his stamp of approval” of what he created for humankind (Hafeman, 2001, p. 45). Another dimension of Divine rest is that the creative work was not complete until God had rested on the seventh day (Dederen, 1982). This makes Sabbath a part of Creation and not merely an afterthought to Divine creative activity. It suggests that Sabbath, though not considered work per se, was part of Divine action.

The Sabbath as a worship experience is inseparable from and interdependent with work. Work is intimately related to our worship (service) to the Creator who gave the gift of work. One might even say that Sabbath would lose some of its meaning if on the other six days no work was done, if work was done in a way that disrupted human well-being, or if work did not honor the Sabbath-Giver. The original Sabbath concept embraced humans working in a material world. Yet, the aim of such work was not accumulation of material possessions but rather to enter into rest with God while serving the needs of others including that of the earth.

The Hebrew narratives tell that humans disrupted the hidden potential of Sabbath by attempting to live autonomously from the Creator. This marred the human experience with work, with the earth, and with Sabbath. Work became burdensome toil. Workers needed rest from the weariness of toil. More than this, humans needed a constant reminder that confidence in human work should never replace trust in God. It was not the breaking of the Sabbath as a day of worship that resulted in burdensome toil but rather the breaking of the fundamental covenant relationship with God which placed the first couple at odds with God and with their environment. Accordingly, the promises of recovered peace begin with God’s promise of restoration (Genesis 3:15-18). This promise became the seed for hope that shalom once experienced by humans in Eden will one day be restored (Amos 9:13). We rest in the hope that one day the peace of Eden will be restored at the consummation of God’s great plan of redemption.
Sabbath in Covenant.

Attention now must be focused on the relationship between Sabbath and the covenant relationship that God established with humankind. This paper argues that a pillar of the Scripture message regarding God and his intentions toward us is embodied in the Sabbath, intentions envisioned implicitly in covenant promises and eventually made explicit in the Ten Commandments.

The Sabbath Command in Exodus frames it in terms of creation while the same commandment restated in Deuteronomy 5 reminds us of the covenant. Here, Sabbath becomes a parable of redemption in which God’s creative deliverance results in a rest of peace (Dyrness, 1977, p. 172). As such, Sabbath is a “type” of redemption from oppression of sin.

Covenant identity of Israel. Though it is not the first command given by God to the people when he gave the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath command became the cornerstone and capstone of Israel’s day-to-day life. It is the first command given to Israel after leaving Egypt and on the occasion of the giving of manna (Exodus 16:22-30). When stated in Exodus 20:8-11, it becomes a sign that God first “created” Israel by liberating them from slavery. He then asked them to commit to a relationship designed to foster well-being. Thus, Sabbath provides an important anchor point for Israel’s covenant-based identity. On this point Dumbrell (1984) writes: “Israel is to reflect upon the question of ultimate purposes for herself as a nation, and for the world over which she is set. For in pointing back to creation, the Sabbath points also to what is yet to be, to the final destiny to which all creation is moving” (p. 35). This parallel between the Creation account and the covenantal creation of Israel as a nation has been observed by more than one scholar (Lowrey, 2000; Hafemann, 2001).

Sign of the Covenant. Sabbath is a sign of the covenant and is even spoken of as a covenant itself: “You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you…. Celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant...” (Exodus 31:13-17 See also Ezekiel 20:12).

Sabbath would cease to be a sign of the covenant if the principles of covenant were accepted only one day of the week for worship but ignored or rejected the other days of the week during work. Accordingly, Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to God. At the giving of manna, God tested their loyalty on Sabbath (Exodus 16). The Sabbath became “the chief symbol of testing” (Geller, 2005, p. 11). Geller concludes that “…the Sabbath stands for loyalty to covenant and its violation for apostasy” (p. 11). Thus, the whole covenant relationship with God is envisioned by Sabbath, not just a day of worship and rest.

Purpose of covenant, shalom. The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to foster flourishing life of shalom (Psalm 119:165; Cafferky, 2014). Since it is embedded in both the Creation narrative and the Ten Commandments (the covenant), the command to keep the Sabbath is a test of loyalty to the relationship with God. Sabbath tests human willingness to lay aside wealth-producing behaviors. In our response to God’s grace, by limiting the economic dimension of shalom, God makes room to enjoy the other dimensions of shalom.

The Ten Commandments describe the terms on which God intended to give blessings promised in the covenant relationship. The Law, and especially the Sabbath command in the Law, reveals God’s secret to flourishing life (Goldingay, 2006, pp. 187-190; Miller, 2009, pp. 122-123; Rayburn, 1984, p. 75). But it is more than instrumental; it is also inherently valuable. In particular, the Sabbath command lays at the center of the ten obedience to its precepts as much a response to grace as it is to duty born of loyalty. Accordingly, the Sabbath is intended to be not a burden but a privilege, something that other nations did not have and might well be jealous of once they learned of it (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). When it is a burden, this is an indication that the deeper relationship with God has been lost (Isaiah 58).

The day of rest points to the senselessness of uninterrupted work that “tends to rob man of being creatively involved with the world, until he is taken hostage by considerations of yield and profit” (Andreasen, 1985, p. 41; See also Eichrodt, 1957). Accordingly, Sabbath is:

• A time for being and not necessarily doing
• A day that relieves us of the heavy burdens of survival (Exodus 34:21)
• A day that has the potential to protect us from totalitarianism (Andreasen, 1985, p. 99)
• A day of rest from constant drive fueled by ambition and greed
• A day of liberation from secular pressures and duties (Guy, 1985, p. 32)
• A warning against becoming full of our own power (Dederen, 1982, p. 301)
• A constant reminder that through faith in God we can be content in God’s providing care

Sabbatical, Jubilee, and Shalom. Taking a day off from work each week limits wealth acquisition. This
means giving up 14.29% of productive time. As a set of broader principles, it means keeping in focus the larger purpose of work and, when necessary, placing limits around work so that a flourishing life can be enjoyed in the larger community both now and in the future. But Sabbath is not just giving up something; it means gaining something inherently valuable.

Sabbath under the covenant thinking is extended to managing the land. The land was to be given a rest every seven years (sabbatical). This rest for the land was not merely for the utilitarian value of improving the productivity of fields. It also reflected the right of the land to be sustained. Sabbatical taught that God is the ultimate owner of land and other wealth-building assets. These resources cannot endlessly be exploited. Humans are expected to have dominion over the land, but also to serve it and not hold the land in bondage.

Every sabbatical year slaves were to be freed and debt was to be released. The Sabbath would be a reminder of the faith community’s own experience in slavery (Exodus 21:2; Andreasen, 1978). Shalom could never be experienced across the community unless it reached into every level of society including those in debt. Additionally, shalom could not be experienced if members of the community continually preyed upon the generosity of others to bail them out. Borrowing was discouraged (Deuteronomy 29:12-13; Proverbs 17:18; 22:7, 26-27); however, it was recognized that there are occasions when borrowing is necessary (Exodus 22:25). Only by fulfilling responsibility to repay debts (2 Kings 4:1-8; Psalm 37:21) as well as generosity and release from debts (Deuteronomy 15:1, 7-11; Proverbs 19:17) could shalom be ensured.

The concepts of sabbatical (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:4-5; 26:34-35; 2 Chronicles 36:21) and the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:10-54; 27:17-24) illustrate that Sabbath is more than mere cessation of work one day in seven for worship. Sabbath is an expression of physical justice toward the land as well as social justice toward the poor. These same ideas are carried into discussions about the experience of shalom (Psalm 72:2-6; Jeremiah 5:23-25) showing how Sabbath is prophetic of the wonderful flourishing life when justice of God is spread throughout the earth. Working together with God, humans have a responsibility to make right the injustices which have oppressed the whole created order of all living things.

Social justice. In the days of the ancient prophet Amos, the deeper meaning of the Sabbath had been replaced by a shallow form. During the Sabbath hours, traders became impatient for the Sabbath to pass so that commercial activity could resume which involved taking advantage of customers. Though the hours of Sabbath might be set aside and no commercial work performed, Sabbath is not a valid sign of covenant for the person who is itching for the hours to pass so that he can go back to the market to perpetrate injustice (Amos 8:4-7).

Imitating God. Covenant principles are enunciated in both the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18; Amos 5:14) and the New Testament (Matthew 7:12; Mark 12:31-33; Romans 13:8-9; Galatians 5:14). God loves creation. He continually sustains it by his power. Therefore creation must have inherent divine value. We are called to worship the Creator (Psalm 102:25-27; 104; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3, 10-12; Revelation 14:7). And, humans are called to imitate God in how we relate to each other and to the earth. Sabbath observance emphasizes the integration of humans with the total environment. In resting on that day, humans in community reinforce the relationship with the Creator and his creation. In serving during the week, we also honor creation.

Community. The Sabbath presents the biblical idea of a community that exists around commitment to principles of flourishing life. These are the spiritual and civil principles (laws) of social responsibilities. In Judaism, covenantal communal needs take precedence over but are not destructive of individual needs. Pava (1998) states that “God’s religious and ethical commandments are directed first to the community and only after to individual members of the community” (p. 606). Sabbath is, by nature, communitarian. It is designed for a whole community to experience together.

Tensions. Several interrelated tensions are embedded in Sabbath that must be managed by the community. Indeed, these tensions require goal-directed community effort. These tensions are summarized as follows:

• Work vs. rest
• Short-term vs. long-term
• Using and enjoying the earth vs. preserving and caring for the earth
• Building productivity that results in prosperity vs. sharing prosperity
• Encourage responsibility for repaying debts vs. release from responsibility to repay debts
• Enhancing life for the present generation vs. fostering flourishing life for future generations

Summary. A Sabbath basis for sustainable development must be built on the connection between creation and covenant. Covenant principles encompass the relationship between all persons in the faith community as
well as the relationship between persons and the whole creation (Miller, 1979). Sustainable development is as much a communal affair as an individual matter. When the covenantal relationships are broken, a corresponding disorder is experienced in creation as a consequence. When injustice is allowed in the community, this can be disruptive to the sustainability and productivity of the physical environment. And when covenantal relationships are redeemed, when reconciliation occurs, this has a corresponding positive impact on flourishing life (shalom) for all of creation.

The findings from Covenant and Creation theology are summarized in Table 1, which illustrates the dual emphases in the Sabbath concept directly from Scripture. In the creation account (Genesis), the commission to subdue the earth (development) is coupled with the purpose of serving the earth (sustainability). Also, the giving of the covenant (Exodus – Deuteronomy) includes directions for economic and technological development (work, pruning, harvest) that are constrained by keeping the weekly Sabbath and the sabbatical. At the center of this is Sabbath.

Now that the biblical roots of Sabbath have been traced, we must now consider the concept of sustainable development.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Sustainable development has been defined in various ways depending on the particular perspective that is in view. One broad definition comes from the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development, discussed below. This definition emphasizes the meeting of human needs:

In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subdue the earth.</td>
<td>Serve the earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)</td>
<td>Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Six days you shall labor and do all your work.” (Exodus 20:9)</td>
<td>“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy...in it you shall not do any work...” (Exodus 20:8-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop. (Leviticus 25:3)</td>
<td>During the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. (Leviticus 25:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger... (Lev 19:10)</td>
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</table>

Table 1: Sabbath is the Center of Sustainable Development in Scripture
are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.” (Brundtland, 1987, 2.I.15.)

A variety of perspectives exist on the elements of sustainable development objectives (Hermans & Knippenberg, 2006). Imbedded in the phrase, sustainable development are two kernels of truth. First, the term sustainable refers to providing care for the entire earth such that the present generation and future generations can enjoy the rich bountiful earth at the same time as conserving resources while contributing to a flourishing ecology. Second, the term development refers to the need to make wise use of the earth for ongoing and flourishing life. Accordingly, sustainable development has been defined as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Blowfield & Murray, 2008, p. 235).

These two kernels of truth are consistent with the three dimensions of organized international efforts that have taken over the last thirty to forty years: environmental needs, economic development, and social justice. These three dimensions are interrelated and interdependent. Each dimension requires the other two. If one dimension is emphasized to the detriment of the others, all dimensions suffer over the long run.

Secular writers on the topic of sustainable development make no explicit reference to Sabbath, though some have seen the connection between religion and sustainable development (Bhagwat, Ormsby & Rutte, 2011). Sustainable development scholars have identified some ethical values that may be the assumptions behind discussions on the topic. For example, Hermans and Knippenberg (2006) discuss the variety of perspectives on the elements of sustainable development objectives. Justice, ecosystem resilience, economic progress, durability, and efficiency are commonly mentioned as values. When considering the various points of view, the common denominators seem to be the ideas of justice, ecosystem resilience, and efficiency. Most proponents of sustainable development include not only the current generation but also future generations.

The World Commission on Environment and Development

The Brundtland Report (Brundtland, 1987) of the World Commission on Environment and Development was not the first to raise awareness of the problems of environment and development; however, its timing was important. Coming at a time when the arms race also had peaked, the commission first met in October 1984. The race for natural resources had been going on for decades but was picking up momentum. The commission, independent of but collaborating with the United Nations, focused its attention on “population, food security, the loss of species and genetic resources, energy, industry, and human settlements — realizing that all of these are connected and cannot be treated in isolation one from another” (Brundtland, 1987, Chapter 1, para. 40).

For over two years, commission members worked to create a report on the key issues. Their report included the following findings:

- Environmental crisis is inseparable from economic crisis.
- Accelerating population growth, especially in urban areas is occurring.
- Most of the growth of industrial production has occurred since 1950.
- The resources gap is widening between the “have” nations and the “have not” nations.
- The influence of industry in policy making is heavy; yet, the industrial sector has used much of the planet’s ecological capital. For decades, industries have taken more out of the earth than they have put back.
- The needs of small farms have been largely ignored in developing countries.
- Natural resources in some countries such as Latin America were being used to pay down national debts instead of for development.
- Poverty and unemployment increased.
- Institutions that are interested in finding solutions to specific problems tend to work independently of other institutions trying to solve other problems that are related.
- Economies of countries are linked worldwide. It is not just the economy of a few particular nations that need further development, but the entire world economy needs to be developed in a way that is sustainable rather than unsustainable.
- Some population groups are more vulnerable than other groups. The vulnerable need to be protected.
- Political stability, peace, and security also must be established; otherwise the other problems cannot be managed.
- Shared leadership is needed to change the policies of nations and international organizations that all nations can agree upon. New policies must emerge from international cooperation and within international legal frameworks.
Economic development needed to be sustained, but the environment also needed to be sustained and cared for and the poor also needed care. Clearly, these somewhat competing interests needed to be managed together rather than separately. Needed was coordination among government organizations, non-government organizations, cultural organizations, scientific researchers, and commerce (just to name a few of the key players).

Other initiatives related to the work of the World Commission have produced guidelines for businesses, especially multinational enterprises. For example the UN Global Compact and the CAUX Principles offer guidelines for business in terms of sustainable development. Barkemeyer, Holt, Preuss, and Tsang (2014) wonder if the original vision of the World Commission has been lost.

UN Commission on Sustainable Development and Sabbath

Following the work of the World Commission, in 1992 the United Nations established the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. In 2009 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to convene a Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

During the intervening years in over a dozen sessions convened by the Commission, the ideas of sustainable development have also become one of the most popular themes across economic sectors and around the world. Goals have been established to guide the efforts of the world community of nations and institutions (United Nations, 2014).

These goals of sustainable development, and the dialogue that has arisen among members of the UN Commission-related entities, are essentially attempts to reconcile, or find ways to manage, the sometimes competing goals of economics, social justice for current and future generations, and responsible care for the earth over the long term.

Creation and covenant, the two dominant roots of Sabbath, provide from a biblical perspective the ethical principles upon which sustainable development can succeed. Providing for the poor and caring for the earth are factors that place constraints on economic development. These constraints become a structural factor which, over time, can gradually limit unbridled egoism. Similarly, Sabbath, a miniature representation of the entire covenant in terms of the purpose of these principles, is designed as a structural constraint on selfishness. By keeping, Sabbath we limit our economic development, give the earth rest while caring for the poor. Sabbath is the short-run experience of a long-term vision of well-being.

Accordingly, the point of this review is that the goals that have come from these international collaborative efforts, though mainly secular, find a close, but not perfect, parallel with Sabbath-shalom principles rooted in creation and covenant. Additionally, these goals are examples of the deeper principles at work in Sabbath-keeping with one exception, which will be presented below.

Caring for the poor must include eliminating poverty and hunger. If poverty and hunger are not eliminated or drastically reduced, these evils will diminish the ability of the earth and communities to provide for all. Poverty and hunger cause social unrest and migration of people. As a result, physical and political safety of food and communities could be threatened. Nations that have plenty would receive pressure to care for the destitute. The burden of poverty worldwide could become an excessive constraint on economic development. Economic development assumes that most people are contributing to their own needs as well as the needs of others. By caring for the earth in a sustainable way, we increase the carrying capacity of the earth to the benefit of all. Economic development also must encompass rich and poor. To accomplish this, eliminating poverty and hunger requires sharing wisdom. But wisdom is not a one-way communication process. It, too, is a communal dialogue that involves access to education.

These deeper principles are further illustrated and expanded upon in Table 2, which compares the UN Commission goals for 2030 with the deeper implications of both creation and covenant based on the theological foundation laid out above.

The goals of the UN Commission are challenging and difficult. They reflect deeply intractable problems highly resistant to even organized intervention. Progress thus far in each major region has been limited. One reason, of course, is the complex nature of heretofore intractable problems. Another is the structural limitation of the coordinating efforts. For example, in Europe with twenty-four nations participating, Steurer and Hametner (2013) believe that while some positive advances have been accomplished, only a small fraction of the total potential has been reached from international coordinated efforts across public and private sectors. The structural limitations point to yet another tension at work in this process—namely, the need for coordination at the international policy level that is co-present with the need for systemic changes at the local level. National leaders may be able to promise that their country will support policies and
<table>
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<tr>
<th>UN Commission Goals 2030</th>
<th>Theological Roots of Sabbath-Shalom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Eradicate poverty in all forms everywhere</td>
<td>Creation envisions bountiful prosperity for all. Covenant relationships comprehend the caring for the poor and structuring relationships so that poverty is mitigated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. End hunger; achieve food security and improved nutrition; promote sustainable agriculture</td>
<td>Creation provides the variety of food-bearing plants through a sustainable system of reproduction by way of seed propagation. Humans care for the land to increase its carrying capacity. Covenant relationships provide a means by which the whole community can experience the value that comes with food.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Promote physical well-being of all ages.</td>
<td>Creation describes the foundation of respect for physical health, life and well-being. Covenant relationships are structured so that flourishing life is fostered leading to shalom. But, shalom is not complete until both seniors and children (and their children) experience flourishing life.</td>
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<td>4. Achieve inclusive and equitable access to education and life-long learning opportunities.</td>
<td>Creation occurred by the wisdom and power of God. Covenant relationships are fostered as we learn and share with each other the wisdom of ways in which the benefits of shalom can be experienced in different ways in different places.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Achieve greater gender equality for women and girls.</td>
<td>Creation establishes the interdependence between men and women. Creation also raises the value of females beyond the bare minimum set by the UN. Both sexes must work together in order for the true potential of flourishing life can be realized. Covenant relationships are founded on the principle that it is the relationship that must be nurtured. Any relationship must include extended relationships among all in the community.</td>
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<td>6. Ensure availability of water &amp; sanitation.</td>
<td>Creation comprehends the vital importance of water for the sustenance of life. Water is the life-giving fluid necessary for day-to-day existence of humans and animals. The water cycle recognized by King Solomon (humidity from oceans and lakes rises to the sky, rain feeds the earth, rain water drains into streams and rivers and back to the ocean and lakes) carries the gift of sustaining life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy.</td>
<td>In order for humans to fulfill the commission to have dominion over and care for the earth and all living things, energy must be expended. Forms of energy can be found to mitigate the impact of toilsome labor on life. Covenant relationships must be considered when new forms of energy are developed such that the impact of energy sources does not create toilsome labor, injustice or harm to creation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Foster sustained economic growth that is inclusive including employment and decent work for all.</td>
<td>Creation and covenant both envision humans working in community. Persons in community share in the contributions to the greater good of community goal of a flourishing life. Work itself contributes to the sustenance of social flourishing as well as physical well-being.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Build a resilient infrastructure for industrial development and innovation.</td>
<td>Shalom, if it is to be a community experience shared widely, must be achieved by concerted effort. This requires entrepreneurial and moral leadership. It also requires organizing human effort in groups in ways that foster covenant relationships. Organizing results in the creation of interconnected human groups which work together forms the community infrastructure to foster shalom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Commission Goals 2030</td>
<td>Theological Roots of Sabbath-Shalom</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.</td>
<td>Creation provided the basis of the entire earth and its systems to support life. This is a whole planet. As the carrying capacity of the earth has increased, so has the technical sophistication with which humans interact with each other. Covenant relationships must not be seen as limited by national borders or geographic boundaries. Thus, relationships necessary for sustaining life must be viewed as global rather than local.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Make cities and human settlements resilient, safe and sustainable.</td>
<td>Creation provides the larger context in which humans organize their efforts for flourishing life. As humans gather together in close proximity to each other to gain the benefits of production efficiencies, these arrangements themselves must be sustainable. Covenant relationships must not ignore the structured living arrangements of the persons in community who are working together to foster shalom. The creation theme begun in Genesis becomes transformed into re-creation allowing for the presence of city in Revelation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Foster sustainable consumption and production patterns.</td>
<td>In both creation and covenant we find the foundations for production and consumption. Production will require organized effort. Production must also be limited by Sabbath. Consumption requires placing limits on what otherwise would be unfettered desires.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Combat climate change.</td>
<td>Creation narrative tells of the need to serve and care for the earth. Covenant relationships extend not only across the current community but also across the generations. The current generation cannot say it is prosperous until the grandchildren are prosperous.</td>
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<td>14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans and other marine resources.</td>
<td>Creation shows the separation of the land from the water. This specialization provides for efficient production of life in both. Covenant relationships, modeled by God, encompass humans and all living things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of the earth.</td>
<td>Air, water and land continue to be the key resources for life regardless of whether people live in urban areas or rural areas. The land is still one of the basic resources upon which human food sources depend. Land is the primary home of humans and this home must be included in covenantal relationships. It is holy, set apart for special service, to God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Promote peaceful inclusive societies that maintain access to justice.</td>
<td>Creation and covenant both envision the communities where justice is spread throughout. Justice is like a life-giving stream that flows down like a river to nourish all in the community. Covenant relationships must be structured in such a manner so that justice is the foundation of how we make decisions regarding the use of this earth and its resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Strengthen the means and partnerships needed for sustainable development.</td>
<td>Creation and covenant offer the root thinking fundamental to seeing relationship as a partnership where all parties involved understand the good that can be given to others in all that is done. Covenantal thinking is all about the relationship and making the relationship outlive any one transaction or exchange. Thus, shalom must involve work to nourish these partnerships that are necessary for implementing shalom-producing policies.</td>
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procedures that foster sustainable development, but local leaders interested in benefiting in the short term may be hesitant to support with actions the promises that have been made.

As much as the Commission goals align with principles of shalom that one would think could be widely shared values, regional and local values are also competing for attention. What is shalom for some stakeholders may be perceived as contrary to shalom by other stakeholders.

Christians, as they come to more fully understand the importance of Sabbath, will increasingly take leadership roles in the global conversation about sustainable development. Such a conversation will involve sharing leadership with others on multiple points of emphasis.

Christians training to become business leaders will see their role as much larger than becoming successful in business, as important as this might be for bringing glory to God. Success in business is indeed important as it contributes to the development dimension of sustainable development. But when business success dominates the goals and agenda of Christians in business without regard for the poor or the earth, then it begins to undermine the other dimensions of sustainable development. It may be true that business has done more to eliminate poverty and hunger than any other single sector of society; however, generally business, as an institution in society, has not had as its goal the principles of flourishing life. The larger purpose of business when seen through the lens of Sabbath becomes fostering flourishing life, both now and in the future, serving the people closest to us while keeping in mind how those the farthest away from us (geographically and culturally) are impacted.

A parallel exists between the UN Commission goals and biblical ideas. An important difference also exists: Faith relationship with God is characterized by loyalty to absolute, objective moral standards which lie outside the human community. While the efforts of the UN Commission appear to be efforts toward shalom, nothing in the UN Commission’s goals expresses the importance of spirituality and agreement upon fundamental, absolute moral principles. The conversation regarding generally accepted moral principles — GAMP (Cafferky, 2014) — has been running concurrently with, but not in close coordination with, the global conversation regarding sustainable development.

Another difference is over the issue of ownership. The UN Commission’s assumption appears to be that humans are merely co-owners of the earth. In contrast, Scripture states that the earth belongs to God (Genesis 1:31; Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 24:1). As God’s agents or stewards, humans have the responsibility to care for what God owns. This is not an unimportant distinction. As stewards, we answer to an authority structure higher than any that humans might create. Our motivation combines an interest in sustaining flourishing life with bringing honor to God by imitating his character of sustaining life.

The global sustainable development conversation seems to be an attempt to mix two things that cannot mix: Moral relativism and principles of Sabbath-shalom. Moral relativism is based on the belief that if two cultural groups have opposing views of morality, both can be right. In contrast, Sabbath-shalom principles are based on the belief that God is the source of absolute, objective moral principles. These two views are in contradiction.

Herein lies what may be the weakness of the sustainable development goals represented above. Without an absolute, objective moral standard, outside and above any given society or cultural group to which the bulk of cultures and nations agree, the complicated efforts focused on sustainable development on a global scale may not progress much farther in the future.

One could argue that the goals, and the principles underlying these goals, are an attempt to articulate commonly agreed moral values so necessary to further success. This may be the case; however, given the differences that exist, unless the UN goals are integral to spirituality, success worldwide may be limited.

The opposite extreme is dangerous and has the potential for destroying the efforts of the UN Commission and related entities. For example, if someday someone gets the bright idea that everyone on earth should be required to worship the same God in exactly the same way, that loyalty to God must be expressed in the same ways the world over, that everyone must be forbidden to do business on a particular day of the week, religious faith would become oppressive as it has been in the past. Accordingly, one additional tension exists in the sustainable development dialogue as well as in the conversation about Sabbath — namely, the importance of preserving freedom to choose within boundaries.

**SUMMARY**

It is the thesis of this paper that, in general, the points of emphasis by the UN Commission are in close, but not perfect, alignment with the biblical concept of Sabbath-shalom. Sabbath begins at creation and is the substance
and symbol of God’s care for this earth. In Sabbath, we rest in God’s sustaining power. Sabbath also is integral to covenant relationships. This means that Sabbath is not merely about care for the environment but also about care for all relationships envisioned by the concept of shalom. Both the creation roots and covenant roots link Sabbath to redemption and recreation. Together, these roots give us the direction that humans will journey when caring for each other and for this earth.

In the recent 30 years work of the commissions referenced above, we see elements of both creation thinking and covenantal thinking present. While not explicitly a religious work, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development is in close alignment with the implications that come from deeper principles of Sabbath-keeping. However, the fatal flaw in the sustainable development movement may be that it appears to be based on cultural relativism, which is inherently opposed to Sabbath-shalom. A set of commonly agreed moral boundaries frames the next frontier of dialogue among promoters of sustainable development if we expect further progress in such a complicated set of issues.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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Success In Spite of Ourselves: Violation of Sabbath-Rest in Contemporary Culture

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ABSTRACT: In today’s culture, many people believe success is linked to good behavior. Likewise, the Pharisees viewed righteousness as the path to success, and they regarded rule-keeping, including rules of the Sabbath, as the outward manifestation of righteousness. We postulate their strict adherence to rules may have, in fact, precluded them from experiencing the true blessings God associated with keeping the Sabbath holy. We explore the intended meaning of Sabbath-keeping and its benefits while discussing opposing views of Sabbath violation in contemporary culture. We highlight the consequences of failing to uphold the Sabbath and suggest that any success encountered in doing so is likely temporary and in spite of our behavior rather than due to it.

Key words: Sabbath, business, success, rest, recovery

INTRODUCTION

The Superstition: Rewards Come From Good Behavior

In his popular best-selling book, What Got You Here Won’t Get You There, Marshall Goldsmith (2007) provides success-striving business people with an overview of detrimental pitfalls that hinder success. One of these behaviors, he suggests, is being successful in spite of yourself. He explains that due to our psychological understanding of positive reinforcement, in which good behaviors or acts are rewarded, we begin to believe in a reality where all rewards are linked to good behavior. As young children, we are taught to eat our vegetables to receive a dessert. We learn similar lessons in adolescence, such as studying hard will produce good grades. In the workplace, we have experiences that continue to reinforce these beliefs — exceeding sales goals lead to vacation rewards or bonuses, and working hard is followed by promotions and luxurious lifestyles.

While this may often be true, it is not always reality. Goldsmith (2007) writes, “One of the greatest mistakes of successful people is the assumption, ‘I behave this way, and I achieve results. Therefore, I must be achieving results because I behave this way’” (p. 26). He suggests we become superstitious in our beliefs, as we begin to expect unnatural linkages between events and behaviors. He writes of a brilliant business man who repeatedly achieved great results, despite not listening to those around him. This man concluded he was successful because he did not consider others’ input. In reality, his success more likely resulted from good fortune, and it occurred in spite of his insistence on not listening to others rather than because of it. Gary Keller (2012) corroborates this idea while reflecting on his personal success in real estate. He writes, “…we usually succeed in spite of most of what we do, not because of it” (Keller & Papasan, 2012, p. 100).

In comparing this notion to the Pharisees, we suggest a common “superstition” of belief that one’s behavior yields success. One example of Pharisaical rule-keeping is their strict adherence to the Sabbath. The fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments states:

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD...
blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11; NIV)

As a commandment set by God, we are to honor the Sabbath by refraining from work one day each week in obedience to his command. The religious leaders found comfort in following the Sabbath in order to please God and be seen as righteous. Not only did they refrain from work on the Sabbath, there are even records describing activities deemed permissible and not permissible for completion on the Sabbath beyond God’s commandment (e.g., Damascus Document; Hicks, 1984). Ironically, the Pharisees established a detailed set of rules to instruct people on how to do nothing properly. Although the prohibitions were first implemented to help people think deeply about Sabbath observance, over time they became a set of rules that transformed a day of grace into a day of law, a day given as a gift from God designed for rest, recreation, renewal and worship into a day of oppressive and taxing rules which were required to be followed rigidly in order to please God.

We suggest the Pharisees allowed the rules of the Sabbath to become an object that bogged them down and hindered them from experiencing the blessings God intended. Yet, because they attributed their success to strictly following the rules for achieving righteousness, it became almost impossible for them to get past the rules to know the heart of God’s intention. In this paper, we explore God’s intended blessing of the Sabbath, examine the place of Sabbath-keeping in the contemporary workplace, and discuss whether violating the Sabbath debunks superstitious beliefs that a day of rest results in the success to which we, in our contemporary U.S. culture, have grown accustomed, or whether this success has come in spite of our blatant disregard of the Sabbath and its intended meaning.

While success can be defined in various ways, for our purposes we define success in terms of economic success, organizational growth, and individual advancement. For example, at an organizational level, Nordstrom rewards employees for violating Sabbath in order to better serve its customers. In addition to being accessible to customers seven days a week, Nordstrom employees are encouraged to come in early, stay late, and offer services arguably at the expense of profit in order to maintain the values of its brand (Spector & McCarthy, 1995). As a result of this commitment, Nordstrom consistently finds itself at the top of “Best Of” consumer lists such as “the most popular luxury retail chain” and “the best department store” (Luxury Institute, 2013; Orange County Register, 2014). Does this success come from or in spite of Nordstrom’s violation of the Sabbath?

This question becomes even more interesting when consulting Scripture, as there are occasions when Jesus himself violated Sabbath rules. One such example is an account of the disciples picking heads of grain with Jesus on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-27). When the Pharisees questioned this and accused the disciples of breaking Sabbath rules, Jesus responded with another example of broken rules and declared his authority over the Sabbath. He replied,

Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread — which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven’t you read in the Law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice,” you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:3-8; NIV)

Likewise, he violated established rules by healing on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11). Jesus entered the synagogue, and when encountering a man with a shriveled hand, he healed him. When he was questioned, Jesus responded as accounted in Mark 3:4 (NIV), “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?”

In regard to the Sabbath, Jesus often found himself in direct confrontation with the Pharisees. However, the dispute was not over whether one should keep Sabbath but on whether their legalistic Sabbath practices were robbing the Sabbath of its grace-filled purpose. The Pharisees bought into the superstition of rigid rule-keeping as a pathway to success and advancement. Jesus, however, viewed them as allowing rules to distract from God’s mission to bless the world. In examining the instance of the disciples plucking and eating grain, neither action was a violation according to the Torah; rather they violated oral rabbinic tradition and understanding (Hicks, 1984). Hicks (1984) further suggests that the Pharisees’ accusation was based on misunderstanding the true intention of the Law. Specifically, God’s true desire was mercy not sacrifice, as seen in Matthew 12:7-8 (originally quoted from Hosea 6:6). In fact, Jesus, as the one “greater than the temple,” is the Lord over the Sabbath and the one who interprets its purpose (Hicks, 1984). Jesus reminds the Pharisees that mercy and compassion are the tangible expression of faith in obedience and love for God. Thus,
in healing on the Sabbath, Jesus blessed the sick man, thus offering God’s grace, which in essence upheld the spirit, if not the rule, of the Sabbath.

In today’s world, full of opportunity for good, can we break Sabbath to achieve success? Or have we achieved success in spite of our disregard for God’s command? We seek to introduce these questions to the literature and consider possible answers through exploration of the historical context of the Sabbath as well as more contemporary explanations of the meaning and benefit of Sabbath. We suggest this may help us better understand the consequences of Sabbath-breaking in our contemporary culture.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SABBATH-KEEPING**

Scripture first introduces us to the principle of Sabbath in the opening chapters of Genesis where Sabbath is central to the creation narrative. Here we are told that Yahweh, a God of great power, spoke the world into existence in six days. The creation narrative establishes order out of chaos and reveals a God who systematically creates: light and dark, sky and sea, ground and vegetation and then places creatures in each to rule over them. Then after putting in six days of creative, good work, the author tells us about Yahweh’s actions on the seventh day of creation in Genesis 2:2-3 (NIV):

> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (NIV)

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. By day seven, God had completed his work, and he rested. The day on which God did nothing except rest and reflect upon his creation carries the added weight of being declared “holy” by God. Only at Sinai through Moses did Yahweh begin to explicitly command that his people follow by keeping Sabbath (previously stated in Exodus 20:8-11). The people understood that Yahweh had created order through creation, and that he then set apart Sabbath as a key aspect of maintaining order within creation. Sabbath-keeping was tied to the nature of God, and it was established that the holiest day of the week in Israel would be the day Israel did nothing except reflect upon what God had done for them and worship him.

Later in his message, Moses expanded Israel’s understanding of Sabbath by giving additional reasoning behind God’s fourth commandment. Deuteronomy 5:13-15 (NIV) states:

> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Moses expands Israel’s understanding of Sabbath to see it as a gift from God that leaves time and space for rest. Here Sabbath is seen as a moment for “re-creation” to occur just as it did for Israel in God’s deliverance from Egypt in the Exodus. Even more, Moses stipulates that this time and space for rest and recreation should be made available to those who may not know God (e.g., animals and servants) as well as those who do.

Sabbath occurred every seven days regardless of lunar cycles, establishing Yahweh as Lord over time and nature. A gracious God carved into the week a day of rest, recreation, worship, and contemplation of the mighty workings of God on each person’s behalf. This understanding of Sabbath became so important to Israel that the Rabbis were famous to say, “More than Israel has guarded the Sabbath, the Sabbath has guarded Israel” (Plaut, 1981, p. 549).

Other scholars have expanded on the purpose of Sabbath. Bass (2005) suggests, “Christian practices bear the embodied wisdom of God’s people living in ways that reflect and respond to God’s love for the whole world” (p. 27). She suggests the commandment in Exodus to “remember” the Sabbath is to remind us of the creation story. She posits the commandment of “observing” the Sabbath in Deuteronomy 5:12-15 is for those recently freed from slavery. As slaves, they were unable to take a day off, but once liberated, their freedom allowed for Sabbath observance. Therefore, Sabbath was about remembering creation and allowing God’s people to rest in freedom from captivity (Bass, 2005). Rest is not the only purpose of the Sabbath, but it is central to Sabbath observance.

Recall when Jesus’ disciples plucked grain to eat, and Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath (Mat. 12:1-4). The focus of resting on the Sabbath allows us to see the placement of this story, immediately following Jesus’ invitation to join him in restfulness, is purposeful. This invitation to
rest should be included in our understanding of Sabbath. In Matthew 11:28-29 (NIV), Jesus says,

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Bass states, “What time-stressed contemporary people most need is not more time but time of different quality, time that is beyond price, time that has shape and substance, time that need not be wrestled with each day as if it were an enemy, time that is the habitation of blessing” (p. 35). We believe Jesus’ invitation to rest in him is linked to his clarification of the true intention of Sabbath-keeping.

Beyond Jesus’ references to rest found in the Gospel, the Hebrew writer specifically addresses the importance of Sabbath-rest and its promise for God’s people (Hebrews 4:1-11). Chapter four of Hebrews begins, “Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it” (verse 1). In this passage, the author references that the generation in Exodus was offered the promise of rest in Moses’ day but did not receive it due to their unbelief as they turned away from the promised land. He goes on to write:

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:9-11; NIV).

Sabbath-rest, found in verse 8, is described as the rest where God’s presence dwells, the place where God is at rest (Kaiser, 1973). Bruce (1990) suggests that in this place people receive “blissful rest in unbroken fellowship with God,” in which the ultimate goal is to achieve “final perfection which has been prepared for them by their heavenly high Priest” (p.110). The engagement in Sabbath-rest represents the promise of eternal rest in the place God is preparing for us.

There are other connections between the need for rest and the restfulness provided by God’s intended Sabbath. At the time of Exodus when God spoke the commandment of Sabbath, he also reminded the people he had brought them out of slavery and first commanded that they have “no other gods” before him (Exodus 20:3; NIV). Brueggeman (2014) suggests this context and first commandment (which was followed by the fourth commandment of Sabbath-keeping) is important when interpreting the meaning of Sabbath. When taken within the context of the Exodus story, we can see “the God who rests is the God who emancipates from slavery and consequently from the work system of Egypt and from the gods of Egypt who require and legitimate that work system” (Brueggeman, 2014, p. 2, emphasis in original). Pharaoh constantly demanded more production to acquire more supply. His appetite for more was insatiable, creating restlessness in him and among his people. God in his infinite wisdom knows rest is necessary, and as we have seen, he modeled rest in his creation story. Likewise, he commanded his people a day of restfulness as opposed to the restlessness to which they had grown accustomed. Therefore, God’s true intention and blessing of Sabbath was the gift of the freedom from the insatiable restlessness of the world.

THE SABBATH AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORKPLACE

Contemporary Incentives for Violating the Sabbath

The similarities between the overwhelming demands and pressure God’s people were experiencing in Egypt and overwhelming demands and pressure felt in contemporary society are remarkable. The burden to produce and provide is endless, and the rewards are equally enticing. As seen in the previous Nordstrom example, as well as in the everyday realities of living in a wealth- and consumer-driven culture, the incentives for violating the Sabbath are pervasive and powerful. They occur at both micro (individual) and macro (business and societal) levels, and ostensibly provide benefits that reinforce the behavior. Alternately, there may be negative economic or psychological consequences (i.e., punishment) for those individuals or businesses that insist on maintaining the Sabbath as holy time rather than additional opportunity for conducting business.

A company that chooses to remain closed one day per week to honor the Sabbath is sacrificing 14% (i.e., one seventh) of its potential operational and sales hours. By closing on Sunday, a day when most consumers have a day off, the effects may be magnified. For instance, within some industries (e.g., retail), experts have estimated that 20% to 30% of all sales occur on Sunday (Gunther, 2001). Contemporary consumers are accustomed to being able to purchase goods and services at times convenient to them. When faced with a “closed” sign, rather than
waiting until Monday, consumers likely go to a nearby competitor or order online. Thus, Sabbath-keeping business owners may be disadvantaged relative to competitors who remain open.

At an even broader level, seven-days-a-week retail sales have been shown to benefit the national economy and its workforce. France has strict prohibitions on Sunday trading driven by both secular (e.g., unions support a 35-hour work week) and religious (e.g., highly Catholic population) forces. Such restrictions are often pursued in the name of employee welfare, but economically such regulations have been criticized for depressing employment growth, harming prospective workers who have non-traditional schedules, and increasing market inefficiencies which ultimately harm consumers (Reddy, 2012; Wenzel, 2010). In 2007, after analyzing data from the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands, where prohibitions on Sunday commerce have been loosened, France’s Council of Economic Analysis advocated loosening the country’s strict Sunday prohibitions because, in the three countries analyzed, Sunday commerce had created 3% to 10% more jobs in retail (Huet, 2013).

For employees, the forces that encourage dishonoring the Sabbath are just as powerful. American workers already work more hours per week than do their counterparts in other industrialized nations, and the greatest proportion of these additional hours can be attributed to a lack of federally mandated vacation time, fewer paid holidays, and a 40-hour work-week compared to a standard of 35-hour weeks (Ray, Sanes & Schmitt, 2013). However, for employees there are also economic and psychological incentives for putting in long hours at the office and being willing to break the Sabbath by working seven days a week. Employees who work extra hours may gain a reputation among colleagues as being ambitious and productive or may earn bonuses, receive raises or promotions, acquire extra skills, or even secure a higher position with another firm (Bell & Freeman, 2001; Kuhn & Lozano, 2005; Wallace, 1997). In many cases, the opportunity costs of forgoing work in exchange for leisure activities or rest are too great (Brett & Stroh, 2003).

Beyond economic benefits, research has identified psychological incentives for Sabbath violation. These include intrinsic motivation from doing meaningful work in which one sees social value as well as social contagion effects based upon prevailing organizational norms or competitiveness among employees (Wallace, 1997; Brett & Stroh, 2003). In terms of doing work that contributes social value, many Christians may even feel compelled to do so based on the words of Christ. In explaining why he healed on the Sabbath, Jesus said, “[I]t is lawful to do good on the Sabbath,” (Matthew 12:12, NIV). Thus, many Christians who understand the necessity of Sabbath-keeping, may convince themselves that their work precludes honoring the Lord’s day. Any reinforcement received for doing so, whether recognition from superiors or a deep sense of accomplishment, contributes to continuing such behavior in the future.

Social contagion effects are just as strong but assert their influence in different ways. Technology has created a culture of perpetual “on call” for employees where work bleeds into non-work hours and work roles become omnipresent aspects of their lives (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006). Within organizations in which being accessible at all times is the prevailing norm, social contagion effects are magnified such that employees who wish to succeed are forced to emulate the behaviors of colleagues or risk being seen as less committed. Thus, sacred time with God is often eschewed in order to adhere to organizational norms; those who conform are more likely to progress in their careers while those who resist may find their careers stymied. While organizational and personal success may come from violating the Sabbath, do these rewards come in spite of violation of the Sabbath or due to violation of the Sabbath? Furthermore, are the rewards worth the consequences that undoubtedly follow them?

Contemporary Consequences of Violating the Sabbath

A popular view of the person-work interface known as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model holds that the responsibilities of jobs consist of various personal demands (e.g., physical, cognitive, and emotional) that employees must be capable of fulfilling to perform their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Moreover, the process of fulfilling these demands is associated with psychological and physiological costs that result in stress and strain. Undoubtedly, as workers are expected to work more days and longer hours, their available resources will be continually drained, and workers will begin to experience work-related stress. This may impact not only their work, but potentially their family and non-work lives. As the process of resource depletion continues, employees experience symptoms, such as fatigue related directly to their jobs, or holistically, they may begin to display low positive affect across many facets of their lives (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Sonnentag, 2003). These consequences also have financial implications as U.S. companies spend
approximately $300 billion annually on workplace stress-related outcomes (Thomas & Lankau, 2009). Of the activities causing stress, approximately two-thirds of experienced stress is the result of activities which could be ameliorated by the implementation of a day for rest or Sabbath-keeping: juggling work/personal issues (20%) and workload (46%) (American Institute of Stress, 2014). Ironically, these consequences are not restricted to secular industries. Church staff, as well as employees of other faith-based organizations, feel pressure to violate the Sabbath to advance the mission of Christ central to their professions. Studies show that pastors often find difficulty taking respite from ministry and are at high risk for burnout (Grosch & Olsen, 2000).

Recent research on work attitudes and performance reveals that rest and recovery are vital components of employees’ time away from work and are necessary to replenish the personal resources necessary for maintaining productive, engaged employees who display positive affect toward their jobs and toward others in the organization (e.g., Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003; Sonnentag, Kuttler & Fritz, 2010). In these studies, recovery refers to processes that operate opposite to strain processes and occur during times when no job-related demands are placed on employees. During these times of relaxation and psychological detachment from work, feelings of vigor, control, and positive affect are increased, while stress reactions are reduced (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Furthermore, the effort-recovery hypothesis suggests if individuals do not receive an opportunity for recovery, greater levels of stress, strain, and conflict are likely to be experienced, even if the demands placed on the individual remain constant (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Thus, even if workload and stressors remain constant, strain and burnout will increase unless regular recovery is experienced.

Although the recovery studies were secular in nature, we feel comfortable extrapolating the implications of those studies into the domain of Sabbath-keeping. At its essence, Sabbath is less about a specific day of the week and more about sacred time spent with God (Heschel, 1951; Tsevat, 1972), intentionally set apart to “restore equilibrium to the mind, spirit, and body” through communing with God (Diddams, Surdyk & Daniels, 2004, p. 4). Additionally, “Sabbath becomes a decisive, concrete, visible way of opting for and aligning with the God of rest” (Brueggeman, 2014, p. 10). By maintaining restfulness as a central component of one’s life, Sabbath-keeping parallels the resource recovery process that has been identified as vital to maintaining healthy and productive employees.

**Cognitive Dissonance: A Psychological Toll of Violating the Sabbath**

An additional consequence for the psychological well-being of workers involves recognizing that workers, whose religious beliefs encourage them toward Sabbath-keeping, may experience a particular form of cognitive and psychological strain when forced to work schedules that prohibit them from setting aside sacred time with God. In particular, it is likely these employees will experience an uncomfortable level of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) brought about as a result of their behaviors which are in direct conflict with their attitudes and beliefs about the sacred nature of keeping the Sabbath holy (e.g., not being able to reserve sacred Sabbath time due to work schedules).

Festinger (1957) holds that individuals who experience high levels of dissonance address the accompanying discomfort through one of two avenues: changing their behaviors to match their beliefs (which could include removing oneself from a situation that is causing aberrant behaviors) or changing their attitudes to match their behaviors. For employees who are required to work on a day their religion identifies as holy, neither of these options is especially viable. Facing a lack of alternate job possibilities, and knowing that forgoing their Sabbath in order to work is a requirement of keeping their current job, the option of changing behaviors is unrealistic. Alternately, though, while attitudes toward certain objects may be malleable, strongly held beliefs and values are more resistant to change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Kolman, 1938). It is unlikely, then, that deeply spiritual individuals will amend their view of the reverence and importance of Sabbath-keeping to conform to work-related behaviors that prevent them from honoring a sacred time with God. In short, remedies for dissonance experienced through failure to observe the Sabbath are limited.

Extended exposure to even low levels of dissonance can result in psychological discomfort and may lead to the same forms of stress and strain associated with lack of recovery previously described. These ideas have been empirically tested beginning with a study of Sunday shoppers. Dunford and Kunz (1973) found that self-categorized religious individuals used a variety of neutralization techniques to reduce their experience of dissonance. These techniques ranged from denial (of responsibility) to rationalization (i.e., other religious people, even church leaders, do it) to justification (i.e., shopping for the good of my family, etc.). Subsequently, Yousaf and Goubet (2013) used a cognitive dissonance framework
to investigate attitudinal and emotional consequences of religious hypocrisy in relation to individuals voicing support for various religious practices (e.g., praying, Scripture reading, attending worship, obeying commandments to include Sabbath-keeping, etc.), yet failing to uphold them. Their results indicated that these individuals experienced various levels of psychological strain ranging from general discomfort to guilt and shame. While neither of these studies directly addressed the issue of employees who were not afforded Sabbath time, the general conclusions across the studies were very similar and as such, we believe are likely to yield similar results if tested in the context of Sabbath-keeping. While faith-based dissonance at various levels can be neutralized, such neutralization techniques require the use, and subsequent depletion, of limited psychological and cognitive resources. Thus, there are still resource-related costs that impact the psychological and physical well-being of the employee.

**RECONCILING COMPETING PERSPECTIVES**

What then do we take away from these conflicting perspectives? It appears that ample reinforcing factors exist that encourage business owners and individuals to forego honoring the Sabbath. At the same time, while career and monetary rewards may accrue for pursuing the path of commerce over the path of respecting sacred time with God, we have also noted that there are numerous detrimental effects that impact the long-term health and well-being of those who fail to observe a time of Sabbath. One other question we should consider along these lines is whether failure to keep the Sabbath for the short-term has different consequences from long-term violation of the Sabbath.

**Is Success Time Dependent? Short- versus Long-term Perspectives**

In recent years, a debate in business contexts has emerged whether what is best for the short-term is the same as what is best in the long-term for an organization. While this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley have been implemented in part to help ensure decisions made for short-term success, most often financial, are not at the expense of the long-term sustainability of the business (e.g., Coates, 2007).

Likewise, we raise the question as to whether short-term gains from violating the Sabbath eventually result in a burden unlikely to overcome. It is clear from the Sabbath literature that keeping Sabbath is more than the simple appearance of resting; we suggest it is impossible to honor Sabbath without physically and mentally breaking from seemingly unending demands of work. This incompatibility of roles is consistent with the teachings of Jesus: “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24, NIV). Jesus’ teaching here parallels the first “serve no other gods” commandment previously discussed and is illustrated in a contemporary incompatibility. Brueggemann (2014) suggests that when taking time off while continuing to mentally plan for work, one’s heart is divided and the mental strategy of self-promotion is taking precedence over the restfulness gained through true Sabbath.

At a physical level, individuals may succeed in the short-term in spite of themselves as they work long hours or forgo vacation in order to achieve long-term outcomes of workplace success (e.g., promotion) or better care for their family (e.g., pay off debt or provide better education for their children). However, these good things may be at the risk of long-term physiological harm (e.g., burnout) and are likely at the expense of spiritual blessing. A physiological example is the man who does not “have the time” to exercise regularly because he feels he is needed at work, but then is forced to miss work for months because he suffers a heart attack or stroke.

At a spiritual level, individuals may be sacrificing time with the Lord necessary to renew themselves and their commitment to his principles. Without taking time for renewal, individuals are at risk for depleting resources needed to overcome the obstacles that present themselves at work or home. From a secular perspective, the literature is clear that a lack of rest can be detrimental. For example, cognitive depletion results in slower thinking and inability to solve problems that are generally easily solved (e.g., Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berlinger, & Shapira, 2006). Knowing the spiritual intention and benefits of Sabbath-keeping, how much more detrimental is missing time set aside as sacred with our Creator? “Sabbath is not simply the pause that refreshes. It is the pause that transforms” (Brueggemann, 2014, p. 45).

We recognize the purpose of Sabbath is a constant re-centering and re-aligning oneself with the restfulness of God. While it is possible that the consequences of violating Sabbath can be time-dependent, the purpose of Sabbath is knowing more fully the God who creates and the God who loves so that others can be loved more
fully. Time without Sabbath, great or small, is depriving oneself of the depth of restfulness that comes solely from the freedom of endless pursuit of production, from the knowledge that one has done enough and can take a break to reflect in God’s completion of work. “Keeping Sabbath, Christian practitioners come to know in their bones that creation is God’s gift, that God does not intend that anyone should work without respite, and that God has conquered death in the resurrection of Christ” (Bass, 2005, p. 36).

From our perspective, it is apparent that for people of faith in God the Creator, the benefits of honoring the Sabbath far exceed the success that may come in spite of disregarding time set aside for holy Sabbath. Whether or not this worldly success is dependent upon a day of rest, or in spite of a disregard of Sabbath-keeping in our culture, we suggest faith-based managers should consider the importance of Sabbath for their employees and themselves.

**PRACTICAL & MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Now, more than ever, Sabbath time is a necessity for healthy workers and for abundant living. To accept this conclusion, one must understand that the benefits we have discussed, those rewards that, in essence, allow us to succeed in spite of ourselves, are primarily beneficial to individuals in a short-term timeframe, while the detrimental effects of working at a frenetic pace and never disconnecting from work are long-term in nature. Moreover, one of the more ironic aspects that connects Sabbath-keeping to the current stream of recovery literature is that employees who take time to rest and recover are typically more productive, make fewer errors, are absent less often, and are better representatives of their companies than their colleagues who are not deliberate about creating separate time for recovery (Meijman & Mulder, 1998; Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). By extension, those who succeed while not finding time for renewal and recovery, are succeeding in spite of their behavior, rather than because of it.

One could argue, then, that business owners stand to benefit from ensuring that their employees’ work schedules allow them autonomy to carve out Sabbath time. Writing from a spiritual perspective, we consider these times of respite and work detachment to correspond to opportunities for honoring the Sabbath, but allowing that detachment from work is just as important from a secular perspective, with the primary difference being the focus of that time, whether it is devoted to sacred or leisure activities.

In terms of the competitive business environment, the question of how honoring the Sabbath impacts financial success is less clear. Sabbath-keeping has been recognized as an emerging issue among human resources practitioners even in secular publications (Lucas & Deery, 2004), especially for workers within fields such as hospitality and tourism where 24-hour, 7-days-a-week service is an essential practice (Huntley & Barnes-Reid, 2003). Yet, the application of Sabbath-friendly policies is a daunting task. When facing competitors whose businesses remain open seven days a week and whose employees are required to work on Sunday, business owners are faced with a struggle as to how to proceed. The downsides of closing shop on a day when one’s competitors are doing business seem overwhelming. How then do we encourage business owners to adopt business practices that would adhere to the idea of Sabbath-keeping? As believers, we are given numerous admonitions about honoring the Sabbath, and we are also promised bountiful living for keeping this commandment. Take for instance this passage from Isaiah 58: 13 – 14a (NIV):

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

If one is looking for reassurance related to this passage, there is mounting evidence of its veracity. In New York City, it is well known that many retail and jewelry stores are closed on Saturday because their owners are honoring the Jewish Sabbath (Celashi, 2012). Saturday is one of the biggest shopping days of the week, and yet these business owners insist on Sabbath-keeping, and in the process have established very successful businesses.

Going even further, when integrated as part of a business strategy, honoring the Sabbath and allowing one’s workers that same freedom can be financially beneficial. One needs look no further than the experience of David Green, founder and CEO of Hobby Lobby, which was open for business on Sundays during its first 26 years of operation. The decision to close on Sundays was likely tough for Green and his board as until then, Sunday had been the company’s highest sales-per-hour day (Dawson, 2012). However, Hobby Lobby has remained profitable, has continued to expand, and has gained a reputation as a
socially responsible firm that adheres to a moral code not dictated by profit alone. Chick-fil-A is another faith-based business that remains closed on Sunday, a profitable day for restaurants. The Cathy family (its founders) has never shied from professing that the Sunday policy is deeply grounded in faith, and this has won a very loyal and devoted clientele (Chick-fil-A, n.d.).

Similarly, Utah-based R. C. Willey, founded by a devout Mormon, has also made part of its corporate identity to remain closed on Sundays. The decision to remain closed on Sunday was a faith-based decision; however, company president Jeff Child recently stated that the policy has been beneficial in finding high-quality employees (Celashi, 2012). The Sunday closing policy was challenged by Warren Buffett, when his holding company Berkshire Hathaway was in negotiations to acquire and expand the chain. Buffett was opposed to the idea of being closed on Sunday and cited data indicating that 23% of home furnishing sales are transacted on Sunday. After much debate, the Sunday policy was retained and new stores have been successful, even in areas where Sunday shopping is prevalent (Benson, 2012). While these are businesses which have benefited from a Sabbath closure, we suggest the motivation for decisions of believers should be one of faith and obedience not financial gain, even at the expense of profit.

Other companies, such as car dealerships, have a tradition of being closed on Sundays for reasons other than Sabbath-keeping and have remained profitable. We agree with Willimon (2010) who suggested that Sabbath-keeping is not prescribed for everyone but is what Christians and Jews are compelled to do because of a love for God who first loved us. Business owners who make a business decision to close their doors for reasons other than Sabbath-keeping are making a secular business decision. Analyzing business decisions and their consequences outside of the Sabbath context is beyond the scope of this paper; however, we suggest providing employees with time off regardless of the reason can provide benefits as described in the stress-related literature previously reviewed (e.g., JD-R, Effort-Recovery hypothesis).

Furthermore, the commandment to honor the Sabbath has particular importance for Christian and Jewish business owners. It is one thing to purposely adhere to a schedule allowing oneself to keep the Sabbath, but what about one’s faith-oriented employees? The commandment to honor the Sabbath carries with it an expectation that business or property owners would allow those under their control to have a time of rest “so that [they] may rest as you do” (Deuteronomy 5:14, NIV). In the same way, it is not enough for present-day Christian business owners to set aside personal time for Sabbath. They should also be mindful of their employees and foster opportunities for them to celebrate their own Sabbath time with God. Consider the implications of Christian business owners who set aside time for their own Sabbath retreat with God, but do not do the same for their employees. Such a policy sends a message that employees’ Sabbath time was less important than the owners’. Going further, it implies that although the owners want to uphold God’s law in their own lives, they are willing to place those under their control in a position of breaking God’s commandment in order to serve as an employee of the company. In doing so, the manager violates the intention of freedom found in Sabbath.

**CONCLUSION**

“Our practice of the faith is something that God does for us, often despite us” (Willimon, 2010, p. 25). While some individuals are likely to subscribe to the notion that success is due to a particular practice, such as Sabbath-keeping, we explored an alternative position that success experienced in contemporary culture is found in spite of our disregard of keeping Sabbath the way God intended as an experience of restfulness, freedom, realignment with God, worship, and transformation. We discussed consequences of violating Sabbath in a contemporary context in addition to benefits to honoring Sabbath-keeping. In the end, we conclude the true experience of Sabbath yields a different result than that expected — one of true rest and freedom from the restless pursuit of the insatiable things of this world.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

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Made for Man:
One Professional’s Journey from Pharisaism to Freedom through Observing the Sabbath

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ABSTRACT: Is Sabbath still a relevant concept in the post-modern professional world? The author reflects on how his relationship with Sabbath observance evolved from Pharisaic avoidance to celebratory freedom over his professional career. Historical research, application, exploration, and family intervention all played a role in the journey. Not proselytizing for his views, the author simply holds himself out as one recipient of God’s blessing through keeping the Sabbath.

Key words: Sabbath, rest, work, Christian professional

INTRODUCTION

The Sabbath can seem like an outdated proposition in our post-modern working world. Businesses can now operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (Gupta & Seshasai, 2004). The Internet and globalization allow many businesses to be open to customers continuously (Timmers, 1998). Businesses and the people who work in them no longer seem to operate on a weekly rhythm. Yet Sabbath remains in the Word of God, like an anachronistic treasure, waiting to be uncovered by each generation. Is Sabbath still a valuable concept for the post-millennial workforce? My own experience with Sabbath has confirmed its worth. Through divine preparation and the intervention of my family, I was able to rediscover Sabbath observance and experience its impact on my life.

MY CONFLICTED HISTORY OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE

When I started my professional career, I had the same attitude towards Sabbath that I observed in many of my Christian colleagues. I was conflicted. I was like the Pharisees of Luke 6:7, struggling to keep rules that were more burden than blessing to me. Sabbath, for me at that time, meant Sunday, and after church on Sunday morning, I wanted to get started on the next week’s work. I hated the idea of showing up at the office on Monday already behind and loved the idea of getting ahead of my colleagues. At the same time, I felt guilty for working on the Sabbath. I was familiar with Exodus 20:8 (“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”) from childhood and I did not want to violate the Lord’s commandment. Sabbath work became a guilty pleasure. I did it when I felt insecure and avoided it when I was more confident.

My superiors understood my condition. Working at a Dallas law firm many of them shared my experience. The office was usually quiet on Sundays but lawyers would come in Monday morning with brief cases full of marked up documents. The firm approved. Like most employers of professionals, they had figured out a long time ago that we were an internally driven workforce. They shrewdly supported our initiative by rewarding us for working long hours (Luke 16:8). The prize was often more work, especially of the kind we most wanted. They were not malevolent people. They were just perpetuating a system designed to maximize the firm’s profitability, like any good businessman would.

That same dynamic endured when I went in house as a corporate attorney for a major financial services firm in Boston. As an in-house lawyer, I had more control of my schedule, but the internal demons that chased me at the law firm still pursued. My problem was not that my faith and work were divided, as described by Brown & Weise (2013). It was that they were out of priority. Work was driving my life rather than life imbuing my work.

My wife, Lisa, was increasingly troubled by this. At one point, she went so far as to invite our pastor over to counsel me on the issue. I stonewalled him, as I had her
over the years. The conflict I faced was not going to be resolved by repeating the same arguments in my ear that I was already replaying internally.

DIVINE PREPARATION

In a revealing twist on the story, twelve years ago I left my law practice to become senior pastor of our church in Norton, Massachusetts. That pastor who had counseled me left to work in a para-church ministry, and the congregation called me to accept his role. The Lord echoed that call in me. I knew it was my next mission. It was strange to leave my law practice after all those years, but I was excited to be working full time in the pastorate and to see what the Lord had for me, my family, and our church.

Pastoral work brought a new element to my Sabbath dilemma. Am I not supposed to work on Sunday now? After all, Christ said in Matthew 12:5 that “the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless.” This point is subject to broader application because pastors are not the only ones who have a role in church on Sundays. Many members of the Christian Business Faculty Association serve as teachers or administrators or in other positions of service within their church. We all have the opportunity to “work” on the Sabbath as priests.

Pastoral work eased my internal conflict but another problem soon emerged. My body and family began to show the strain of my 7-day workweek. Surdyk and Diddams (2006) did a fine job in the first issue of the Christian Business Academy Review, cataloguing some of the ill effects of overwork, and I was experiencing them. Adding to my fatigue, although I did not know it at the time (I would not be diagnosed until ten years later), I was suffering from intestinal cancer.

THE MOMENT OF INTERVENTION

It was then that my wife decided to intervene. She went back to the Old Testament in terms of timing and forward to modern Judaism for procedure. (It was an odd combination for her because I am the one with Jewish roots, not her.) One Friday, she spent all day cleaning our house, cooking a Sabbath dinner and preparing to take the following day off. She pressed my daughters into service to help. She taught my son the Hebrew blessings for bread, wine, and hand washing. She looked up the exact time for sundown online and set her schedule to meet it.

Then, when the sun went down on Friday, she called us all in to dinner. She lit candles and prayed, blessing the day of rest that the Lord had ordained for us. We sipped grape juice (we were a Baptist ministry family after all), washed our hands, and broke bread. My son dutifully prayed the Hebrew prayers for each element. There were Christian themes tied in throughout the ritual, the candles expressing Christ’s light to the world (John 8:12), the bread and juice representing his body and blood (Matthew 26:26-28), the washing signifying our sanctification in him (1 Corinthians 6:11). The details of the ritual are not as important as the motivation. Abraham Heschel (1954) affirms that, even for Jews, “piety is an answer to God, expressed in the language of mitzvot rather than in the language of ceremonies and symbols” (p. 114, italics in original).

Then we ate, big. Marva Dawn (1989) states that Sabbath is about feasting, not deprivation. She would have been proud. There was more food than we could have eaten in three meals, and that was the idea. The leftovers were available all the next day with no need to cook. We lingered at the table for hours, catching up on what everyone was doing and feeling. In the words of Dawn (1989), we were “cherishing time rather than space” (p. 122). As the candles burned down, my heart rate came down with them. God had designed me to work, but he also designed me to need rest (Surdyk, 2002). Out of respect for their investment and an incipient appreciation for the benefits of Sabbath, I agreed with my family’s request that from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown I would not do any of my regular “work.”

ADJUSTING TO THE SABBATH

While my commitment to my family was uncomplicated, determining exactly what to do and not do on my Sabbath was a bigger problem. Heather McKay (2001) points out that there are no prescribed activities in the Pentateuch for the Sabbath except for the priests and other “cultic officials” (p. 41). The Mishnah generally portrays meeting, studying, and reading the law as appropriate behaviors for Sabbath (McKay, 2001, p. 208), although Peder Borgen (1996) argues that observation of the Sabbath was already controversial among Jews in Christ’s time. In 321, Emperor Constantine enacted a law that everyone (except farmers) was to rest on Sundays (Bradshaw & Johnson, 2011, p. 25). Centuries later, Queen Elizabeth I’s Act of Uniformity proclaimed worship as mandatory on
Sundays, although it was legal to work after church services during harvest (Solberg, 1977, p. 31). The Puritans clashed with James I over his promotion of sporting events on Sundays (LaTourette, 2000, p. 817).

None of these prescriptions were particularly helpful. Eventually I determined to regulate my Sabbath activity by distinguishing between the moral law of Exodus 20 and the covenant and ceremonial law found elsewhere in the Pentateuch (Kaiser, 2003, p. 145). I also experimented with different strategies. Not scheduling meetings or pouring over budgets on Saturday was an easy boundary to establish, but while the root of the Hebrew Shabbat means “to cease,” I found that a Sabbath exclusively defined by what you do not do is an impoverished Sabbath.

Abraham Heschel was a major contributor to my approach. His daughter, Susannah, in her introduction to his book, The Sabbath, described how he reserved certain books for Sabbath reading, went on walks with his wife, took naps, and entertained guests (Heschel, 1979). I began to schedule things on my Sabbath, things like reading large blocks of Scripture or a spiritually formative book that I reserved for those days. I scheduled early morning coffee dates with my wife or lunch with one of my adult children. Sometimes I even scheduled naps.

Occasionally emergencies intervened, and I adjusted. When a distressed husband showed up at my house on a Saturday afternoon, thinking his wife was having an affair, I accepted that as God’s appointment for the day and shared his grief. If a call came to meet someone in the hospital, I never refused. Even my Jewish ancestors would have agreed it was permitted to tend to the sick on the Sabbath (Neusner, 1998, p. 216). Jesus, of course, showed us in Matthew 12:12 that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

The appropriate day on which to observe the Sabbath is an issue for some. New Testament texts like Colossians 2:16 and Romans 14:5 indicate that first-century Christians’ trust in Christ as their source of salvation rendered the timing and ceremonial aspects of observing the Sabbath unimportant. Kenneth LaTourette (1953) holds that by the second century Christians worshipped on Sunday rather than Saturday (p. 198). The whole argument, for me, is rendered somewhat suspect by the fact that the Romans did not really observe a 7-day week until the 3rd century (Miller, 2008). Early Christians referred to Sunday as “the Lord’s Day” in recognition of the date of his resurrection, and worship on that day symbolized their faith in him. At the same time, however, LaTourette (1953) acknowledges that many gentle Christians in the early church observed the Sabbath, meaning they refrained from work on Saturday. The Council of Laodicea attempted to resolve the issue by declaring that Christians should worship on Sunday and that resting was inappropriate for Saturday (Miller, 2008). Willy Rordorf (1968) suggests the Council’s goal was to distinguish Christianity from Judaism. It was not until the late 16th or early 17th century that Christians began to refer to Sunday as the Sabbath (Miller, 2008).

My own practice has been informed more by pragmatism and New Testament theology than by history. I employ the same schedule now, as a professor, as I did when I was a pastor. I rarely preach on Sundays, but I still hold to a sundown Friday to sundown Saturday Sabbath. On Sundays I begin the day with worship and then get to work preparing for Monday. My Christian neighbors may not understand this but, should they ask, I can remind them of Romans 14:5, “One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.”

SABBATH IMPACT

Have I paid a price in terms of my career? I cannot say for sure, but I certainly do not feel I have suffered. I have practiced law on four continents, taught for three different universities, published, preached, and led organizations. The counterfactual is always unknowable, but I believe part of the faithfulness of observing the Sabbath is not knowing, sacrificing any potential productivity gains as an act of obedience. I might be more productive overall if I worked on the Sabbath, but I believe I would also be less obedient and that disobedience would jeopardize not just my working effectiveness but also my relationship with God. If I believe that I can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13) but can do nothing of eternal good without him (Ecclesiastes 1), then whatever conditions he requires must be acceptable to me.

Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. (Psalm 127:1-2)
The costs are unascertainable, but the benefits of keeping the Sabbath have been obvious. It keeps me in right relationship to myself by reaffirming my intrinsic value. Heschel (1979) states, “What we are depends on what the Sabbath is to us” (p.xv, italics in original). The Sabbath reminds me that my value is not tied to my productivity. This was a paradigm level shift for me. I had always judged myself by what I produced, and my superiors affirmed that judgment. God, however, values us on the basis of being his creation (Genesis 1:31). I had unwittingly adopted the worldview of the Pharaoh of the Exodus who valued the Israelites only for the work they produced:

But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.” And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!” (Exodus 5:4-5)

Lisa Surdyk (2002) puts it very well: “Sabbath is meant to humanize us in a world where so many forces are dehumanizing” (p. 82).

I am physically healthier than I have been in my adult life. I can run farther, lift more weight, and work harder than ever. My cancer has been removed. I have no idea that working seven days a week caused me to have cancer, but I know that keeping the Sabbath aided my recovery. In addition to the simple, physically restorative effects of not working one day a week, Sabbath taught me to value rest as a spiritual good, rather than reject it as a failure of productivity. I saw rest as an integral part of the process (or “work”) of recovery and devoted myself to it in order to regain my strength after multiple rounds of surgery and chemotherapy.

Observing the Sabbath also keeps me in right relationship with others. I keep my Sabbath schedule loose to be open for whatever the Lord brings. I am available to take walks with my wife or go swimming with my children. Over the years, it has also kept me from abusing those who worked for me. The Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:10 extends to all those for whom we are responsible — sons, daughters, servants, animals, and even the “foreigner residing in your towns.” Sabbath can be particularly important for the disenchanted, and it is incumbent on all of us to provide it (Havens, 2013). Eager as I am to run an efficient operation, I have never been willing to compel coworkers to labor while I rested.

Most importantly, I have found Sabbath observance keeps me in right relationship with God. When I cease from my labors, I acknowledge his sovereignty by my obedience (Exodus 31:13). I acknowledge his provision and my dependence (Exodus 16:29). I acknowledge his wisdom by submitting to his plan. I also share in his joy. My keeping of the Sabbath is an emulation of his rest on the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:2). Just as he reflected on his work with satisfaction, enjoying its “goodness,” I reflect on my activity of the week. Sometimes it is good, sometimes not. Either way, this act of rest and reflection actually provides added meaning for the work itself. A painter may enjoy painting or a chef cooking, but the act of painting or cooking becomes more meaningful when the worker knows that they, and others, will engage their work and appreciate it.

There have been struggles when I tried, and sometimes still try, to pick up work on the Sabbath. Mercifully, my children are there to remind me what I am giving up to gain the slight advantage of another hour’s work. Just as in the rest of our Christian walk, we do not observe Sabbath alone. From Exodus 20 it was designed to be a communal exercise. I rely on my family and friends to encourage and correct me in Sabbath observance, just as I rely on them to encourage and correct me in prayer and holiness. Richard Foster (1998) argues that spiritual disciplines, which is what Sabbath has become for me, “are best exercised in the midst of our relationships with our husband or wife, our brothers and sisters, our friends and neighbors” (p.1).

I cannot say what my life would be like today if my wife had not helped me incorporate Sabbath into it. Would I be farther “ahead” in my career? Would I still be alive? Would I still be married? Frankly, I don’t want to know. Sabbath has taught me how to rest and I am resting in God’s providential hand in my life. “The LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (Psalm 118:23). Ultimately, I have learned that work is good and rest is good, and that each enhances the goodness of the other (Cafferky, 2013), but neither is the supreme good. They are both good in that they point us to God, who alone is the ultimate good (Mark 10:18).

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Living Integration Reflection
“Misbehaving” on Sabbath

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ABSTRACT: In this living integration, the author reflects on how a series of trials became a journey to Sabbath and how that journey was transformative in her life. A personal perspective is shared, consisting of life events that led the author to consider Sabbath as a lifestyle that remembers God, looks to Jesus, and is intentionally non-conformist, or “misbehaves” according to the world’s standards. For this author, the journey to consider Sabbath transformed a professional crisis into a place of healing, restoration, and a deeper relationship with Christ.

Key words: Sabbath, journey, remember/remembering [God], rest, living [lifestyle], stop/stopping,[relinquishing] control [to God], transform [transformation, transformative], grace

INTRODUCTION

God called me to care about Sabbath when I felt I could least afford to spend the time thinking about it or living it, which was precisely the time I needed to incorporate Sabbath into my life. In this living integration reflection I will share how Sabbath became real to me during significant professional trials and how a personalized license plate “2MZBHAV” reflects what I have come to believe about Sabbath. The license plate is not only my nickname (Ms. B. Haven), but as a play on words, it represents my views about mindset and the meaning of Sabbath. “Misbehaving” on Sabbath reflects my point of view that Sabbath is practiced in the midst of my weakness and God’s grace. “Misbehaving” represents non-conformity to the world’s expectations of over-work, busyness, and putting self-care last. “Misbehaving” (Ms. B. Haven) on Sabbath (this reflection) reveals my personal journey into understanding and living God’s command to remember Sabbath.

MY JOURNEY TO SABBATH

My journey to Sabbath is about a series of trials: a car accident, a stressful transition back to teaching, and the biggest professional trauma of my life. God used each of these to teach me about Sabbath. The professional trauma was my experience of being fired when I was at the top of my professional game. The stressful transition back to teaching included being overwhelmed with multiple new course preps. And the car accident was just “icing on the cake” on my birthday. But God does have perfect timing, and he used these challenges to reveal himself to me and help me grow deeper in my relationship with him. He also demanded that I begin living in Sabbath.

The car accident, third in the series, is mentioned only for the sassy license plate (2MZBHAV) that resulted on the new (used) sports car because it symbolizes my attitude about the professional wreck and reminds me of my theology about Sabbath. God helped me emerge from the professional ordeal fully dependent on him and non-conformant to the world’s standards or expectations. The world expected me to fight when God told me to rest in him. The world told me to hold on to resentment while God instructed me to forgive and let go. The world’s way was to prove myself through finding a bigger, better job, but God told me to wait and trust. The sassy license plate reminds me “to misbehave” (2MZBHAV) and refuse to comply with the world’s expectations.

The professional collision involves a longer journey to a place of higher spiritual growth and understanding through experiencing significant trials. I had been a professor for 23 years, ten of those years as an academic dean accustomed to positive affirmation, accomplishment, and advancement, when at the height of success, things began to fall apart. My work environment became negative and hostile. I felt the professional boundaries slipping into a place where my principles were violated. I was unaccustomed to professional conflict and struggled to find coping strategies and ways to understand what was happening, to the point of seeking release from God to leave my
position. But God clearly told me “no” through Psalm 16: “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage” (Psalm 16:5-6, NRSV).

To me this scripture meant that I was to trust God with my future and that he promised to take care of me in the midst of a difficult workplace. I continued in my role as academic dean, but conflicting approaches to leadership and resource management increasingly became a source of tension. I was fired from my administrative position and asked to return to full-time teaching which I loved, but the change was a demotion and felt like failure.

Throughout this time of tribulation, God gave me a Scripture from Romans 5 as an encouragement and a promise:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:1-5, NRSV)

This Scripture prepared my heart for what was to become for me a key part of the meaning of Sabbath: to relinquish everything to God in trust. The transition back to full-time teaching took several months. During this time, I was uncertain about my future, and I experienced the most intense pain and rejection of my professional life. But at the same time, I also received a huge outpouring of support from those who had formerly reported to me as dean and from numerous colleagues and professional peers. I did not walk through the dark days alone. God walked with me and sent Jesus “with skin on” in a hundred ways. Many of these moments with colleagues became moments of Sabbath. God took my struggles and replaced them with moments of grace.

THE MEANING OF SABBATH

Living A Sabbath Lifestyle

What I have come to believe about keeping Sabbath is that I am called to live a Sabbath lifestyle. How I practice Sabbath is evolving over time, and if I continue listening to God, I’m confident that “Sabbath living” will become more all-encompassing and take over more and more of my life. Right now it means that I am called to stop, take a breath, listen to God, and think about God on a daily basis. I believe God wants me to stop several times throughout my day and recognize his presence. I am sure that God wants me to “pray without ceasing” and to live in constant acknowledgement of him. The Sabbath part comes into play as I intentionally take “breaks” throughout my day to remember that God is with me, stop and clear my mind, take a breath, and listen to God, even for a few moments. I am less concerned about the exact amount of time or how many breaks I take throughout the day, and I’m more interested in living out the spirit of Sabbath. That’s why I think practices are so important. If we can make some of our moments of “stopping out” habitual, then I think it reminds us to honor Sabbath. The caution as we add some habits and routine to our lives is to make sure they do not become legalistic but that they remain intentional, thoughtful, and meaningful.

My journey to find and practice Sabbath has been imperfect. But as 2 Corinthians 12:9 reminds us, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (NRSV). Even my Sabbath practices in their imperfection are bathed in the grace of God.

Remembering God

During the most painful time of transition, God asked me to trust him, relinquish everything, give him control, and remember that he is God. When my time was stretched thin and I had no time to give, that is precisely when God asked me to take time for him. This became to me the meaning of Sabbath. God asked me to stop and remember that he is with me.

Exodus 20:8 reads, “Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy” (NRSV). Keeping the Sabbath holy involves more than rest or not working. In an article reviewing the Jewish history of Sabbath keeping, Sharon Ayala (2012) says, “True ‘rest’ is about truly giving up control” (p. 19). In the Jewish tradition this meant one day each week, and Jewish law about Shabbat (Sabbath) specifies hundreds of rules (Ayala, 2012, p. 18). Christians reinterpreted the legalistic view of Sabbath based on observing Jesus healing the sick and performing his ministry on the Sabbath day. Some Christian faith traditions believe that Jesus’ actions abolished the Sabbath, while others believe that Christians should not work or buy things on Sabbath, which is Sunday in most faith traditions (Ayala, 2012, pp. 20-21). But over time, as American culture has become more consumer-driven and the pressure to work 24-7 has
increased, some Christians are realizing that we have lost not only the belief about what we should and should not do on Sabbath, but we have lost even the spirit of the law to keep Sabbath. What I have discovered is that in my journey to obey God’s call to think about Sabbath, my revelations about Sabbath-keeping align with the spirit of both a Jewish interpretation and Jesus’ ministry. I have come to understand that when we stop to remember Sabbath, we stop to remember that God is God.

Busyness is the way the world affirms my importance, but by feeding my ego and pride, it puts me at the center of my life instead of God and removes my need for God. The belief that I am in charge leads me to subconsciously take over the role of God. If I am in full control of everything in my life, then there is no place for God. Sabbath helps me stop and focus my attention on God and remember who God is and that he is in control.

The posture God calls me to take in Sabbath is represented by God’s voice to me while on a daily walk to listen and pray at the lowest point in my professional life (Cosio, 2007, pp. 43-44). I clearly heard God tell me to “kneel at the cross.” At a point when the world would tell me to resist, God said “kneel down. Turn to me; give everything to me; let me take control of everything; trust me with it.” God helped me realize that in a conflict, it doesn’t matter to God who is right or wrong; God’s purpose is always healing for both parties and to bring freedom out of brokenness (Young, 2007, p. 191). God’s promise is to heal, forgive, cleanse, and redeem — resulting in peace and restoration. When we honor Sabbath, we honor God as God.

Looking To Jesus

One of the most helpful Sabbath practices I have experienced is to keep fixing my eyes on Jesus to see how he does it, or look to Jesus for the “how to” on Sabbath. In Matthew 11:28-29, Jesus says, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (NRSV). For this same passage The Message says:

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly. (Matthew 11:28-29, MSG)

In these verses, Jesus “offers himself as our resting place” (Kun, 1991). Sabbath leads us to a relationship with Christ, and all roads to Sabbath direct me to kneel at the cross and give God complete control. This verse reminds me that Jesus is the way to find Sabbath rest and that we will learn to live freely and lightly if we give up our ego and control and submit to God’s ways as opposed to our own. Jesus will carry our burdens when we follow him and live in relationship with him.

We know that Jesus came to reveal God and that God defined Sabbath after his work of creation. On the first Sabbath day, God rested and celebrated his work (Welch, 2013). In the creation narrative, God observed that his work in creation was good (Genesis 1), and after God created humankind, Genesis 1:31 tells us, “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good” (NRSV). It was after the “good work” of God’s creation that God rested and blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:2-3, NRSV)

The first thing God sanctified after his creation was time. God’s observance of the first Sabbath signified wholeness, fruitfulness, and fullness of life as he celebrated the creation. God created Sabbath for the people of God to remember that they entered a covenant relationship with him. “Sabbath tells us something significant about God” (Welch, 2013).

Exodus 16:29 tells us that “the Sabbath is the Lord’s gift to you” (NLT). Consecrating our time to God in Sabbath changes us and transforms our approach to work. When balanced with rest and given to God, our work becomes purposeful and worshipful. Sabbath is not merely the absence of work, but it is about stopping to reflect and celebrate our work, and it helps us find greater meaning in the time we spend working.

Wayne Muller (1999) describes it this way:

Sabbath is more than the absence of work; … it is the presence of something that arises when we consecrate a period of time to listen to what is most deeply beautiful, nourishing, or true…. Sabbath time is not spiritually superior to our work. The practice is rather to find that balance point at which, having rested, we do our work with greater ease and joy, and bring healing and delight to our endeavors. (p. 8)
As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), Jesus’ work was a loving and caring, healing ministry. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NRSV). When I realize that God made Sabbath for me — to nourish body and soul — I realize that Sabbath can have a transforming power over my outlook on life, not only my rest, but my work as well. God’s creation and Jesus’ example show us that remembering Sabbath transforms our whole life, both our work and rest, which helps us do both of them more purposefully in worship to God. Looking to Jesus helps me realize that both my work and rest are blessed and holy, and they are both acts of worship.

Psalm 91:1 says, “Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty” (NLT). Isaiah 40:31 tells us that “those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint” (NLT). God himself becomes our dwelling place as we rest in him. Similarly, Jesus describes himself as the vine, and in John 15:4, Jesus says, “Abide in me as I abide in you” (NRSV), or from the Jerusalem Bible, “Make your home in me” (John 15:4). Just as God becomes our dwelling place, Jesus becomes our home as we rest in him (Kun, 1991). Sabbath is a time to experience this refuge and refreshment and rest. Wayne Muller (1999) says, “The practice of Sabbath is like the practice of taking refuge” (p. 9). Living in Sabbath enables us to live victoriously in peace and freedom as we commit, trust, delight, and rest in God (Psalm 37; Lee & Lee, 1971). “If you call the Sabbath a delight … then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth” (Isaiah 58:13-14, NRSV).

“Misbehaving”: Saying No To The World

It is a badge of honor to be busy, to be in demand, and to have people who need me constantly. But ego leading to perfectionism and the need for control is one of the surest ways to burnout, and it does not honor Sabbath nor does it recognize God as the ultimate authority. Honoring Sabbath is “misbehaving” in the sense that it says no to the world’s expectations of over-work, over-consumption, and over-busyness.

A passage from Wayne Muller’s book (1999), Sabbath, convicted me:

In the relentless busyness of modern life, we have lost the rhythm between work and rest.... Our culture invariably supposes that action and accomplishment are better than rest.... Because we do not rest, we lose our way.... We miss the quiet that would give us wisdom.... To be unavailable to our friends and family, to be unable to find time for the sunset ... to whiz through our obligations without time for a single, mindful breath, this has become the model of a successful life. (pp. 1-2)

Ecclesiastes 4:6 says, “Better is one hand full of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.” In American consumer culture today, we strive after material things and we “make war on” our financial health as we incur debt to acquire things; we “make war on” our time as we spend it shopping, storing, organizing, cleaning, and dealing with clutter. This material clutter clutters our minds as well as our physical spaces as it adds chaos to our lives and crowds our calm and quietness. The barrage of stuff robs us of time for quiet, rest and reflection. How can we hear God’s voice if we have no time to be quiet and listen?

Sabbath allows us to challenge this war on ourselves. Gaining more simplicity in our environments and taking time to think and rest allows us to be more productive when we do work, but more importantly, it can meet our fundamental human need for renewal and meaning. Wayne Muller (1999) says:

Sabbath can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation, and the endless multiplication of desires, responsibilities, and accomplishments.... We must have a period in which we lie fallow and restore our souls. Within this sanctuary, we become available to the insights and blessings of deep mindfulness that arise only in stillness and time. If we do not surrender into some kind of Sabbath, how can we find our way, how can we hear the voices that tell us the right thing to do? (pp. 6-7)

The world tells us to be guilty for “doing nothing.” But Sabbath reminds us that we need time to care for the needs of our body and soul, and in so doing, it allows us to find meaning and our way toward God. Sabbath clears away the clutter enough so we can hear God speak.

A LIFE TRANSFORMED BY SABBATH

Practicing Sabbath has changed me. What started with a professional crisis, a sassy license plate, and a call to honor Sabbath when I needed it most, has become a continuing journey toward stopping and listening to
God, recognizing God at work in every aspect of my life, particularly in the most difficult circumstances, and giving God complete control over everything in my life. This is a journey in “misbehaving” that pushes against the world’s expectations and is bathed in God’s grace. My journey resonates with Wayne Muller (1999) in his book, Sabbath, when he says, “The greatest lesson I have learned is about surrender…. I am willing to be stopped. I owe my life to the simple act of rest” (p. 20).

While this journey will always be ongoing and my attempt to “do” Sabbath will always be evolving. For me, it has changed a professional crisis into a deeper call to follow Christ. It has helped me recognize that God’s ultimate desire for all — those who wound and those who receive wounding — is to be healed and forgiven. The journey to Sabbath has helped me give up the pain of the past and accept God’s complete healing and restoration.

In Jesus Calling, Sarah Young (2004) says:

If you learn to trust Me — really trust Me — with your whole being, then nothing can separate you from My Peace. Everything you endure can be put to good use by allowing it to train you in trusting Me. This is how you foil the works of evil, growing in grace through the very adversity that was meant to harm you. Joseph was a prime example of this divine reversal, declaring to his brothers: “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.” (p. 134; Genesis 50:20)

God takes the failures, the stress, and the weaknesses of our lives and uses them to turn us toward him. He has done that for me in my journey toward remembering Sabbath. That journey has taken me closer to God.

REFERENCES


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Rebecca A. Havens (Becky) is currently associate dean for undergraduate business education and professor of economics for the Fermanian School of Business at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California. She teaches courses in economics and quantitative methods at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Her research interests include the economics of poverty, inequality, and gender. Her recent research considers women’s economic realities and gendered leadership and the impact of globalization on women. Dr. Havens holds a PhD in economics from the University of California, San Diego. She served the Christian Business Faculty Association (CBFA) for two terms on the board and as its board chair from 2002-2003. Dr. Havens received the Richard C. Chewning Award in 2010.
Brief Recommendation
Brueggemann has written a solid book of biblical and theological reflections on the purpose and intent of keeping Sabbath in a globalized, 24/7 economy. The book is short, easy to read, and accessible to the average college student, making it a good supplementary book for upper-division courses or a class devotional for lower-division courses. Professors of business will find the content a balanced grounding of biblical practices for business.

Full Review
With each passing year, Sabbath-keeping becomes a more significant act of countercultural resistance. In our 4G-connected, 24/7, globalized economy, the world of business both responds to and helps nurture a notion that consumers demand and must have access to instant purchasing of all goods and services they so desire. When commercial banks and even the U.S. Post Office are open for business seven days a week, our society takes note of a fast-food chain like Chick-Fil-A choosing to be closed on Sundays and forgoing millions of dollars of potential revenue.

Walter Brueggemann offers a timely and convicting biblical and theological reflection on why Christians must resist the culture of wanting things now. Brueggemann outlines his case by appealing to several Scripture passages, primarily focused on the Ten Commandments of Exodus but including both old and New Testament references. Brueggemann uses the first commandment (no other gods) and tenth commandment (no coveting) to book-end the importance God places on the fourth commandment of keeping Sabbath.

The author considers how secular society — as far back as what the Israelites confronted in Egypt — seeks to direct our efforts, in the name of progress and growth, towards anxiety, coercion, exclusivism, and multitasking, by ignoring God’s directive to rest. Followers of God’s covenant are called first towards love and worship of God (first three commandments) and then towards a concern for others (last six commandments deal with living in community). The pivotal fourth commandment calls God’s people to rest and honor God and connects this worship on one day towards a reorientation of how life must be lived out in neighborly relations the other six days of the week. Christians today need Sabbath practices to counteract the constant siren call of business “principles” repeatedly demanding we operate in a hyper-individualistic and profit-maximizing way.

A primary shortcoming of the book is that Brueggemann gives scant attention or discussion to the several passages in the Gospels where Jesus’ actions and words specifically address Sabbath-keeping. In a related vein, there is no mention of how service/ministry should be handled on the Sabbath. Too often, Christian leaders can be as ministry-obsessed and self-focused as those working in the business world, and our churches can be as consumer-driven in their ways of doing ministry as stores are in vying for our business. Nevertheless, there is great value in this book for the Christian business community wanting to serve God in a way that honors God’s commands.
Leisure and Spirituality: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives

By Paul Heintzman

Reviewed by Peggy Hothem
Gordon College

In this special issue on Sabbath, it is appropriate to include a review of Leisure and Spirituality by Dr. Heintzman, a leading scholar of leisure and spirituality. This Engaging Culture series book is designed to help Christians respond with theological discernment to contemporary culture. The book is not just for leisure scholars and students but is a “must read” for anyone interested in work, business, theology, and ethics as well as for church leaders and laity.

Little theological literature exists to guide ethical decisions related to leisure; yet leisure plays a major role in our lives and can affect one’s work. Heintzman admits the leisure concept is very complex because of the societal changes in regard to leisure, work, and lifestyle values. When leisure is experienced, one knows it, but it has pluralistic meanings and nuances. Similarly, spirituality has various interpretations. Recently there has been an outpouring of literature on what contributes to Christian spiritual formation. One may not think of leisure as a spiritual discipline, but Heintzman skillfully reviews leisure concepts and history to inform the reader that many biblical principles inform leisure. The book’s structure is a systematic critique of biblical, historical, and contemporary concepts of leisure. With a full command of the subject of leisure and spirituality, Heintzman integrates philosophy, theology, history, sociology, and psychology using classic theories and contemporary research. For the reader who is thinking about leisure for the first time, or for the mature scholar, Heintzman’s comprehensive scholarship is presented in a readable, fascinating form.

The book is well organized and thorough in weaving disciplines that impact the integration of leisure and spirituality. Heintzman carefully guides the reader to connect the disciplines with clear articulation as to why it is important to consider leisure for the purpose of spiritual formation. He critiques and illuminates the positive and negative features of seven concepts of leisure (classical, time, activity, symbol of the leisure class, state of mind, feminist, and holistic) that leisure theorists use. Through an extensive exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, Heintzman challenges readers to consider that the “state-of-being” concept is the best foundation for understanding leisure. He also draws upon his personal experiences to connect theory with practice and show how the spiritual dimension of leisure can give wholeness to life. He concludes that receiving the gift of the Sabbath and embracing God’s rest is the deep root of a Christian theology of leisure that flows into personal healing and an ethical lifestyle.

Heintzman has delivered a true classic that I would recommend to anyone concerned about our over-worked, over-stressed, and spiritually deprived society. It is an important scholarly work with practical applications because “….leisure is part of God’s lifestyle for us; for rest; for renewal; and for learning about, appreciating, and enjoying God and God’s gift of creation.”
The Sabbath

By Abraham Joshua Heschel

Reviewed by Dov Fischer
Brooklyn College

Abraham Joshua Heschel was born into a Polish-Jewish family with a long history of leadership in the Hasidic world. As a young man, Heschel went off to Germany, which was then the center of modern Jewish scholarship (Wissenschaft das Judenthum) to earn a Ph.D. at the University of Berlin. During that phase of his life, he viewed secular German science as intellectually superior to the spiritual inheritance of his own Hasidic-Jewish tradition.

Heschel had cast away the Orthodox Jewish prayers and rituals that ordered every moment of his life back in Poland. One evening, as he strolled along the stately boulevards of pre-World War II Berlin, he was overcome by an urge to recite the familiar evening prayer of his youth. For the first time in years, he recited from memory the first benediction preceding the recital of Shema (“Hear O Israel”, Deuteronomy 6:4):

Blessed are Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who by His word brings on the evenings, by his wisdom opens gates, by his perception shifts time, changes the hours, orders the stars in the firmament according to his will; creates day and night…1

At this moment, Heschel’s values paradigm shifted away from Berlin and back to his roots. His admiration for the scientifically advanced, yet essentially pagan, culture of pre-war Germany gave way to a renewed appreciation of his spiritual and religious heritage. At this defining moment on the streets of Berlin, Heschel perceived the importance of time over space, and this is the central theme of The Sabbath.

Heschel wrote The Sabbath in the U.S. two decades after his transformative stroll in Berlin. The Sabbath is still regarded as a classic, yet relatively accessible, modern text on Jewish spirituality. The book’s relevance extends beyond Judaism, and its lessons apply to all those who seek a spiritual Sabbath experience.

The central idea of The Sabbath is that a material-technological culture and pagan civilizations are largely concerned about space, while Judaism and other monotheistic religions are focused on time:

Unlike the space-minded man to whom time is unvaried, iterative, homogeneous, to whom all hours are alike, quality-less, empty shells, the Bible senses the diversified character of time. There are no two hours alike. Every hour is unique and the only one given at the moment, exclusive, and endlessly precious.

There is a mystical Jewish notion that all human qualities, even those which are corrupt and ugly, can be transformed to good. Rather than completely suppressing the instinct of greed, we should transform the instinct into a “positive greed.” Human nature covets the things of space: “his neighbor’s house, wife, manservant, maid-servant, ox, ass, and everything belonging to his neighbor” (cf.p.83; tenth commandment). The Sabbath challenges us to instead covet the things of time. During the six days of work, we sacrifice time to improve space. On the Sabbath, we cease to sacrifice time; we jealously guard each moment of the Sabbath. We value Sabbath time not in order to profitably transform it into space (i.e., time is money) but for its own sake.

According to Heschel, the Ten Commandments consist of analogs. The Sabbath commandment is the analog of “Thou shalt not covet (material things)”; on the Sabbath “Thou shalt covet (spiritual time).” This prescriptive commandment to covet the time of Sabbath is the antithesis commandment of “Thou Shalt Not Covet (the things of space).” The Sabbath commandment, which is the fifth commandment on the first tablet, is the counterpoint of “thou shalt not covet,” the tenth and final commandment on the second tablet.

The primacy of time over place has implications for the professional who seeks to integrate biblical teachings into business practice and education. Heschel’s insight about the primacy of time over space has practical implications not just for the Sabbath but also for the workweek.
The Bible teaches that our primary focus should be on how to spend our limited time while our secondary focus should be on achieving specific objectives. This suggests that a professional’s most important decision is how to allocate his or her limited time to reach both spiritual and temporal goals. All other decisions, even those of great ethical and strategic importance, are secondary to the decision of how to allocate time.

ENDNOTE

The Rest of Life: Rest, Play, Eating, Studying, Sex from a Kingdom Perspective

By Ben Witherington III

Reviewed by Paul Heintzman
University of Ottawa

This book contains five essays on common weekly activities: rest, play, eating, scripture study, and sex. In “Is there a Sabbatical plan for Christians?” Witherington interacts with Tonstad’s (2009) The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day. Tonstad, a Seventh-Day Adventist, argues that Christians need to recover Sabbath observance. In contrast, Witherington concludes, that “the rest one has in Christ alleviates the need to maintain Mosaic ritual practices such as Sabbath observance … we still need rest and restoration, but this does not require keeping Sabbath” (pp. 29, 37). Tonstad and Witherington lie at the extremes of the spectrum on Sabbath observance. A more helpful and biblical approach is in between.

In “Play on” Witherington distinguishes play from rest, noting that it is “a celebration of life lived to its fullest” (p. 42) that “generates its own joy” (p. 63). He draws upon Johnston’s (1982) The Christian at Play, noting that there has not been much development on this topic since then. However, Berryman’s (1991) Godly Play and the associated Godly Play movement in many churches, along with essays by Hoffman, Visker and Byl (1994/2006) are all significant. Unlike other chapters, few biblical references are provided to support Witherington’s theology of play. Unfortunately, while there is some discussion of plays, music, and dancing, the vast majority of examples are from sports, especially professional sports, which give a skewed understanding of play.

An excellent chapter, “Food for Thought,” reviews biblical material on feasting and fasting, and also recounts the Frugal Gourmet and the Galloping Gourmet. Witherington fails to mention that the Galloping Gourmet became a Christian and changed his food preparation to minimize fat and cholesterol. He is justifiably critical of contemporary Christian eating and drinking practices: “Overdrinking and overeating, which is to say gluttony, once described as one of the seven deadly sins, is now seen as the guilty pleasure of choice…. Christians’ views on food and drink very seldom have any basis in what the Bible has to say…” (p. 73).

Witherington provides detailed exposition of 2 Timothy 2:15; Psalms 19, 119; and Hebrews 5:11-6:3 in “Eat this book — Studying the Scriptures,” to emphasize lifelong learning through diligent study and memorization of God’s word. As studying is associated with work and education, this chapter does not seem to fit as well with rest as the other chapters.

The first half of “Sex and the City of God,” reads as a review of Bell’s (2007) Sex God, with Witherington both agreeing and disagreeing with Bell’s views. The second half discusses whether Paul is a prude (1 Corinthians 7) and sexual relationships from a Kingdom perspective (1 Timothy 3). These discussions, in the longest chapter, seem tangential.

As three chapters primarily interact with one author, they do not survey the breadth of scholarship on each topic. Nevertheless the book provides an introduction to those not familiar with a Christian perspective on these topics. The book would be helpful supplemental reading in any course that touches upon one or more of the five topics covered in this book.
The Jubilee Gospel: The Jubilee, Spirit and the Church

By Kim Tan

Reviewed by Kristen Cooper

Gordon College

The Jubilee Gospel, by Kim Tan, is recommended as an addition to a devotional library or collection of resources about social holiness or biblical community living. Tan’s central claim is that the Gospel message is truly a proclamation of Jesus’ “Jubilee mission” of redemption, and Christians ought to take seriously the “social holiness and justice” (p. 2) aspects of Jubilee practices. The book may be best described as a personal reflection on years of scriptural study; Tan writes from personal conviction and his experience living in an intentional Christian community for eight years.

The book does not approach the topic of Jubilee from an academic discipline, but it is likely to be useful for those interested in Biblical integration in business or the social sciences. It is moderately useful for a focused study of the Sabbath, although the practice of Sabbath is not developed as fully distinct from Jubilee. However, Tan’s integration of these topics is helpful. For example, true Sabbath is not merely resting oneself but also allowing rest for servants, land, and animals. The book’s usefulness as a scholarly resource is likely to be more limited, partly due to its habit of using “Jubilee” as an adjective without further definition. Terms such as “Jubilee actions and attitudes” (p. 93), “Jubilee communities” (p. 107), and “Jubilee distribution of wealth” (p. 138) are introduced but undeveloped. The scarcity of footnotes is also evidence that the book is not intended to be a fully cited piece of research or theological exposition.

The book’s best use is likely to be as a resource for group discussion, and it is well suited for a discussion-based, upper-level undergraduate course. For example, Tan’s observation in Chapter 7 that the church has returned to a focus on tithing, and thereby returned to the letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law, could be a lively topic for debate. Chapter 9’s discussion of how modern church and business practices could be more aligned with Jubilee principles is particularly useful, although limited to ten pages. The book could be more useful for personal application if it focused more on how Christians in today’s economy can apply the biblical economic issues discussed. The author is clear on some issues, such as private property being appropriate for Christians if the property is used to benefit others as needed. However, it is not clear how the features of “God’s Kingdom,” including a kinship-based welfare system and a decentralized government with no income tax (pp. 47-49), relate to modern Christians, and Jesus’ disapproval of private loans with interest (p. 83) is not explained. The suggestions of Chapter 9 and the encouraging claim that Jesus’ victorious death is “effective over the power of consumerism” (p. 94) could especially be more developed.

Weaving a dense biblical narrative, Tan successfully challenges his readers to see that repentance is a social action, not just an inward spirit.
Will life for our college graduates slow down once they graduate and develop regular routines? Not likely. For this reason, business faculty might want to consider reading and possibly assigning Muller’s (1999) text, Sabbath.

Muller’s (1999) book starts with a convincing introduction that makes a case for the importance of scheduling a personal Sabbath. Whether it is a full day or merely parts of day, Muller (1999) reinforces his thesis with examples of why Sabbath adherence serves as a natural part of the rhythm of all living things and a critical element of true God-given wholeness. He breaks down each section into chapters which provide ideas as to how issues, such as time, happiness, wisdom, etc., might help or hinder one’s Sabbath. Additionally, in the section titled “Rest,” Muller (1999) includes a chapter on the “Fear of Rest.”

If we worry we are not good or whole inside, we will be reluctant to stop and rest, afraid we will find a lurking emptiness, a terrible, aching void with nothing to fill it, as if it will corrode and destroy us like some horrible insatiable monster. (p. 50)

The author suggests enriching our Sabbath times with “intentional periods of silence.” He suggests long walks alone or with someone you love. As you walk in silence, the author writes, be mindful of your impulses to speak, judge, and thoughts that push you to break your silence. Seek to understand why silence is so challenging. Most chapters include a number of practice exercises, which range from lighting candles to taking silent walks to calling friends not spoken with in a very long time.

I have always considered the traditional idea of taking a full Sabbath day as difficult; however, I found Mueller’s (1999) insights freeing and inspiring. His writing style is easy to follow and personal. As I read the text, I could easily picture the author and reader simply sitting outside on a covered porch overlooking the mountains enjoying their morning coffee while talking about the various obstacles and benefits of taking a Sabbath. Though Muller has a story-telling writing style, he frequently sprinkles provocative ideas throughout his writings that challenge the reader to wrestle with reasons why so many do not make observing a Sabbath a priority.

One such idea he shared early in the text was personally jarring: “A successful life has become a violent enterprise” (Muller, 1999, p. 2). His ability to unpack these statements and to show why pondering such “hard things” will ultimately create a more fertile ground for God to mature the reader serves as a reason why faculty might want to consider reading and possibly assigning this text in a senior-level business course. As seniors graduate, find jobs, get married, have children, buy houses, etc., the need to regularly reflect upon spiritual things becomes critical to their finishing the race well.
Journal of Biblical Integration in Business
Guidelines for Authors

PURPOSE OF THE JOURNAL

The mission of the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB) is to publish theoretical and empirical papers that integrate biblical principles and truths into the business disciplines. The journal is a broad-based, double-blind peer review forum that aims to publish manuscripts that add to the body of knowledge. Such manuscripts will be:

- Scholarly in design, tone, and depth, reflecting accurately the literature in the business discipline concerned.
- Directly related to biblical presuppositions, passages, and perspectives throughout the paper.

Domain of the JBIB

The JBIB is open to many topics and approaches. The field of biblical integration in business is relatively young and much creative work remains, both in theory development and theory testing. Electronic copies of past issues can be accessed at www.cbfa.org.

The aim of the editorial team is to support scholarship and professional growth among Christian business academics and any others who see the Bible as important. We see ourselves as being in partnership with the authors and take joy in working with them to develop manuscripts of the highest quality. The spiritual and professional calling of faith-business integration is enhanced to the degree that we are inventive creators and effective carriers of ideas.

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

Content and Length of Articles

Focus. Articles in the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB) focus on the integration of biblical perspectives and passages with the academic disciplines of business and economics. Biblical citations and discussion is a prominent part of each article. The editorial process includes a close examination of biblical passages used, with proper regard for exegetical and hermeneutic principles.

The editorial process also examines whether the manuscript is appropriately grounded in the existing literature in the business disciple. An author must correctly understand previous academic work in the area under discussion and how his or her idea links to that literature. Appropriate citations and bibliography are important.

Links to previous JBIB discussions. In the article, please state how your paper advances the ongoing debates in the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business or whether it begins a new discussion. What will the reader learn from this article that he or she did not, or could not, have known before? Please also state this in the cover letter.

Audience. The primary audience of the JBIB is Christian professors who teach business at colleges and universities. However the JBIB is increasingly being read by those outside the academic arena. Therefore, the author should maintain a writing style accessible to a variety of disciplines. This means that technical terms should be explained and that business-oriented examples should be developed. The intent is to avoid jargon and “academic-speak” and communicate clearly across boundaries of disciplines and vocations.

Content. The JBIB publishes both empirical and theoretical articles.

Length. Feature articles should no more than 7,000 words, excluding references, figures and tables. The abstract should be 75 words or less. List key words after the abstract.
Past Issues. Those considering submitting to the JBIB can review past issues to determine content, length, and other standards implicit in articles accepted for publication. Electronic copies of past issues can be accessed at www.cbfa.org.

Style Instructions:
When submitting articles, please use the following guidelines:

1. Articles in the JBIB should follow American Psychological Association (APA) style. For example, articles should be written using textual citations rather than footnotes. Authors can refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for any questions regarding this style.

2. Manuscripts should include a cover page with the title, authors, their affiliations, and contact information. An author’s name should not appear in the body of the paper or in the headings or footers. The first page of the paper should include the paper title, followed by an abstract of not more than 75 words, and then followed by the first section.

3. Headings
   APA Style uses a unique headings system to separate and classify paper sections. Use the headings in order, beginning with level 1. The format of each level is illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CENTERED, BOLDFACE, UPPERCASE</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with a period. Begin body text after the period.</td>
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4. Tables and figures should be numbered, starting with 1. Note in the body of the paper approximately where tables or figures should be placed using double lines with “insert Table 1 here” between the double lines. Place any tables, figures, and appendices after the reference section. Tables and figures should be in portrait orientation with 1 inch margins on all sides.

5. Use endnotes, not footnotes, and avoid excessive use of endnotes. The endnotes section should appear at the end of the paper but before the references section.

CONTENT EXAMPLE: QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE REVIEWERS

Introduction
- Is there a clear statement of the paper’s thesis with a solid motivation behind it?
- Is the thesis clearly integrated? Are biblical perspectives a major part of the paper?
- Is the thesis interesting to the JBIB community?
- Does the thesis extend the discussions in the JBIB? How?
- What will a reader learn from this article that he or she could not have known before?
- After reading the introduction, did you find yourself motivated to read further?

Theory
- Does the paper do a good job of developing the theory behind the thesis?
- Are the core concepts in the paper clearly defined?
- Is the theoretical framework based appropriately in the discipline-specific literature, both in breadth and depth? Are critical references missing? The need for more saturation in the literature is possibly the most frequently noted weakness of JBIB submissions.
- Do the hypotheses or propositions flow logically from the theory?

Integration
- Does the author base the integration directly in the Bible not only in “faith language”?
- Is the biblical integration “denominationally neutral” in the sense that particular denominational viewpoints are not insisted upon?
- Does the author base integration on “the whole council of God” rather than proof texts?
- Is the context of the biblical passages the author uses handled appropriately?
Methodology (for empirical papers)

- Are the variables and sample appropriate for the hypotheses?
- Does the study have internal and external validity?
- Are the analytical techniques appropriate for the theory and research questions? Were they applied appropriately?
- Are the results reported in an understandable way?
- Are there alternative explanations for the results, and if so, are these adequately discussed?

Contribution

- Does the manuscript make a value-added contribution to the integration literature?
- Does the author provide at least one testable hypothesis or principle?
- Does the manuscript avoid both stridency and simplicity in its treatment of the theme?
- Does the submission stimulate thought or debate?
- Does the author discuss the implications for the CBFA community?

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If a paper has been presented at a conference, it is expected that the author(s) will document the changes made in the manuscript in a letter accompanying the manuscript. The JBIB is a double blind, peer-reviewed academic journal, meaning that authors and reviewers are unknown to each other. Authors who submit manuscripts developed from conference presentations should recognize that they forfeit some of the “blindness” in the blind peer review process.

ENDNOTE

1 From Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue (owl.english.purdue.edu).
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A Comprehensive Introduction
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