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Implications of Biblical Principles of Rhythm and Rest for Individual and Organizational Practices

By Margaret Diddams, Lisa Surdyk, Denise Daniels, and Jeff Van Duzer

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A recent article in *The New Yorker* entitled "The Productivity Mirage" suggested that Americans are exhausted and disappointed by the failure of recent productivity gains in technology to deliver more leisure.¹ The information technology economy with its endless 24/7 workdays has eroded the normative cycle of work and rest, and as a result, many Americans are experiencing a profound and increasing sense of time pressure.² According to bestselling author Wayne Muller, cancer has become our only culturally acceptable reason to take time off.³

Most for-profit organizations define employee wellness within a biological or behavioral framework and often seek to reduce employee stress through telecommuting,⁴ sabbaticals,⁵ wellness programs,⁶ or parent support groups.⁷ Unfortunately, these programs often prove ineffective. What scanty research exists suggests that in many cases these programs simply do not alleviate stress or improve productivity. For instance, a five-year longitudinal study of academic sabbatical recipients found that faculty research declined and faculty members were less likely to be recognized for excellence in teaching following their sabbaticals.⁸ Vacations also appear to offer little respite from stress and burnout. Management Professors Mina Westman and Dov Eden found that employees' pre-vacation levels of burnout returned within three weeks.⁹ Eden also found that the strain associated with pre-vacation critical job events did not dissipate during the vacation period.¹⁰ These findings are consistent with work and family life research that has

Many employee wellness programs are doomed to failure because they focus on treating the symptoms of dysfunctional organizational practices without addressing underlying causes. In particular, many fail to take seriously the necessity for a rhythm of work and rest in employees' lives. Margaret Diddams, Lisa Surdyk, Denise Daniels, and Jeff Van Duzer examine the principles of rest, reflection, and relationships found in biblical passages pertaining to the Sabbath and review research that demonstrates their contribution to building individual well-being. They also suggest ways that organizations can develop internal cultures that work in cooperation with, rather than in opposition to, a rhythmic balance of work and rest. Ms. Diddams is Associate Professor of Psychology, Ms. Surdyk is Associate Professor of Economics, Ms. Daniels is Associate Professor of Management, and Mr. Duzer is Dean and Associate Professor of Business Law and Ethics at Seattle Pacific University.

312 shown that physical changes of venue away from work do not necessarily reduce intra-psychic work-related stress.¹¹

We contend that merely providing add-on employee programs, periodic vacations, and sabbaticals will not materially improve employee well-being because this behavioral framework precludes consideration of the psychological and spiritual components of wellness. These approaches focus simply on mitigating the symptoms of exhaustion without working to address wellness by inculcating an overall culture of rhythm and rest into the workplace. However, the Bible provides numerous examples of God's rhythmic design of rest and work that are applicable to modern life, including places of employment. By integrating biblical passages relating to Sabbath observance with psychological and organizational empirical literature, this paper seeks to (1) describe the principles of rest, reflection, and relationships underlying biblical notions of rhythm, (2) identify their associated influence on psychological wellness, and (3) discuss how organizations can embrace a rhythmic, "Sabbath" culture.

Biblical Notions of Rhythm and Rest

Repeating patterns, or rhythms, are apparent in God's design of the world from the beginning. In his very first act of creation, God creates rhythm:

¹John Cassidy, "The Productivity Mirage. Do Computers Really Make Us More Efficient?" *The New Yorker* (2 November 2000): 106-121.

²Stewart D. Friedman and Jeffrey H. Greenhaus, *Work and Family: Allies or Enemies?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999).

⁴Christina Brune, "Employees Seek Work-Life Balance," *The Internal Auditor* 57 (April 2000): 13-14.

⁵Wendy Bounds, "Give Me a Break!" *Wall Street Journal* (5 May 2000): W1.

⁶Marianne K. McGee, Diane R. Khirallah, and Michelle Lodge, "Backlash," *Information Week* (25 September 2000): 50-64.

⁷Microsoft Diversity, *Employee Resource Groups*, 2002, <http://www.microsoft.com/Diversity/dac.asp> (1 February 2003).

⁸Michael T. Miller and Bai Kang, "A Case Study of Post Sabbatical Assessment Measures," *Journal of Staff, Programs and Organizational Development* 15 (1997): 11-16.

⁹Mina Westman and Dov Eden, "Effects of a Respite From Work on Burnout: Vacation Relief and Fade-Out," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 82 (1997): 516-527.

¹⁰Dov Eden, "Acute and Chronic Job Stress, Strain, and Vacation Relief," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 45 (1990): 175-193. This may be because many people simply take their work with them on vacation. A recent survey of 5,000 executives by the Cleveland-based Management Recruiters International indicated that 82 percent of these managers checked in with the office while on their vacations. See John Gallagher, "For Some, Vacations Are Kept at Arm's Length," *Chicago Tribune* (1 July 2001): A3.

¹¹Niall Bolger, Anita DeLongis, Ronald C. Kessler, and Elaine Wethington, "The Microstructure of Daily Role-Related Stress in Married Couples," in *Stress Between Work and Family*, eds. John Eckenrode and Susan Gore (New York: Plenum Press, 1990), 95-115; Shelley Zedeck, "Introduction: Exploring the Domain of Work and Family Concerns," in *Work, Families and Organizations*, ed. Shelley Zedeck (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 1-32.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning, the first day. (Genesis 1:3-5)¹²

Biblically, rhythm is evident on a variety of scales, including the 24-hour cycle of night and day, the weekly cycle of Sabbaths, the annual cycle of seasons, the seven-year cycles of rest for agricultural lands and debt relief, and the 50-year cycles of Jubilee. On one end of this scale, night and day appear to have been intended by God to mark off spheres of work and rest.

You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl. The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens. Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening. (Psalm 104:20-23)

On the other end of the rhythm scale is the Year of Jubilee.

Count off seven sabbaths of years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. (Leviticus 25:8-10)

While principles of rhythm and rest can be found throughout the biblical witness, more is written about the weekly practice of keeping a holy Sabbath than about any other biblical cycle. Therefore, we turn now to a specific consideration of the weekly Sabbath to develop a deeper understanding of God's rhythmic intentions for our lives.

Sabbath

The earliest meaning associated with Sabbath rest, the Hebrew verb *šabâ*, is "to cease, desist" or "put to an end."¹³ It is most frequently associated with the Sabbath day, where one takes a break from typical weekly activities. Theologian Donald Carson wrote that the intention of the Sabbath law of the Old Testament was "to relieve the people of Israel from their daily occupational work for one day in seven in which they could worship God and refresh their bodies."¹⁴ In effect, the command to keep the Sabbath acknowledges the importance of a God-directed rhythm in life.

For the purpose of this paper, we are not primarily interested in activities asso-

¹²All biblical selections used in this article are from the New International Version.

¹³Julian Morgenstern, "Sabbath," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 135; Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath: A Tradition-Historical Investigation* (Missoula, MT: University of Montana, 1972).

¹⁴Donald A. Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 27.

314 ciated with keeping the Sabbath day.¹⁵ Rather, we are interested in locating in the Sabbath ordinances evidence of God's approach to rhythm and balance, an approach that can be beneficially applied more generally to all aspects of our lives. Specifically, we believe that a study of the institution of Sabbath in the Bible will point to the importance of three lifestyle principles: rest, reflection, and relationships. In this section, we explore these Sabbath principles in more detail and then turn to a discussion of the associated positive psychological and behavioral implications for individuals and organizations.

Sabbath Rest

The first Sabbath principle is rest, reflecting God's autonomous decision to cease from his labors. It is introduced in the creation account:

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 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. (Genesis 2:1-3)

Sabbath is not simply cessation from labor. If one believes in a God of unlimited power, God's rest on the seventh day of the creation story cannot be understood as a stay from exhaustion or as a needed breather to "recharge his batteries."¹⁶ Rather, God's choice to rest on the seventh day indicates that God was not enslaved to his creation but master over it. The principle of rest derived from the creation account therefore affirms not only the importance of cessation from labor but also the importance of having personal agency and sufficient authority to choose to do so.

This Sabbath value of choosing to cease from one's work is repeated again in the Deuteronomy version of the Sabbath commandment, in which the Sabbath observance serves as a reminder of God's deliverance of the Hebrew people from 400 years of slavery. In this declaration God reminds the nation of Israel that they were once slaves, and having been freed, they are commanded not enter into a slavery of their own making. In reflecting on this theme, religious historian Dorothy Bass wrote, "To keep the Sabbath is to exercise one's freedom, to declare oneself to be neither a tool to be employed . . . nor a beast to be burdened."¹⁷ On a similar note, Rabbi Abraham Heschel wrote, "The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man is not a beast of burden, and the Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficacy of his work."¹⁸ The value of Sabbath rest reminds Christians that being made in the

¹⁵For an in-depth look at the implications for keeping a Sabbath day, see Craig M. Gay, "On Learning to Live with the Market Economy," *Christian Scholar's Review* 24.2 (December 1994): 180-195.

¹⁶W. Lee Humphreys, *The Character of God in the Book of Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

¹⁷Dorothy Bass, *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 48.

¹⁸Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), 14.

image of God, we also are given the gift to stop work. We are to keep work from becoming our master, our source of identity, or our idol. We are called to cease from our work and have the capacity to choose rest.

Sabbath Reflection

The second Sabbath principle is reflection, which is emphasized in Deuteronomy's version of the Sabbath commandment:

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 5:15)

This passage suggests that Sabbath is not simply a time to rest but also a time to remember. It is not just a cessation from labor but an opportunity to reflect on God's power and his redeeming work in our lives, allowing time to recognize and reflect on God's transcendence and sovereignty.

There is a nascent recognition today that the pace of society has spun out of control. Having become bored with spending money, we are now spending ourselves and take pride in our busyness.¹⁹ While postmodern society seeks to establish identity through future planning, acquisitions, and accumulation,²⁰ the Sabbath value of reflection encourages the placement of future concerns in perspective with the present and the past. A reflective mindset allows one to ponder the difference between the urgent and important, between motion and action.²¹

Sabbath Relationships

The third Sabbath principle points to the value of relationships, which is a sign of the covenant relationship between God and his people.²² The observance of Sabbath helped to transform the Israelite self-identity from an enslaved tribe to a nation defined by a God who selected them as his chosen people. This relationship, as celebrated in the Sabbath, has helped to confirm the Jewish social identity throughout the ages. According to the old adage, "More than the Jews have kept the Sab-

¹⁹Sue Shellenbarger, "The American Family—Busy Every Minute and Proud of It, Too," *Wall Street Journal* (16 August 2000): B1; Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American* (New York: Basic Books 1992). See also Richard A. Swensen, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992) for further discussion on the individual and social cost of American busyness.

²⁰Michael Jessup, "Truth: The First Casualty of Post-modern Consumerism," *Christian Scholar's Review* 30.3 (Spring 2001): 289-304.

²¹Management gurus Steven Covey and Peter Drucker both write about the importance of managing time so that sheer activity is not mistaken for productivity. See Steven Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Peter Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principle and Practices* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990).

²²Exodus 31:16; Ezekiel 20:12.

316 bath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews."²³

Not only does the Sabbath point to the covenant between God and his people, but it also highlights the value of relationships among his people. In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was not to be celebrated alone, nor was it for a select few. Unlike the hierarchical society that existed in Egypt, the Sabbath commandment extended to every person and creature associated with the Israelites' households.

... 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. (Deuteronomy 5:14)

Commemorating and celebrating this new identity, God called for the Hebrew nation to come together regularly as a community. "There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly" (Leviticus 23:3). In addition, the blessings of Sabbath extended to all who kept it, as seen in this passage from Isaiah:

For this is what the LORD says: 'To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.' (Isaiah 56:4-7a)

In addition, the cycle of Jubilee land redistribution would assure the long-term survival of households and preservation of ancestral property and serve as a check on the long-term concentration of wealth in the hands of a rich few.²⁴ Conversely, as Professor Craig Gay points out, the "failure to observe the Sabbath seemed inevitably to lead to the oppression of the poor [and] the dehumanizing absurdity of idolatry."²⁵

The principle of relationships continues to hold for the Church.²⁶ Theologian Marva Dawn writes that a growing relationship with God will lead to deepening relationships with other believers, and she notes,

One of the special meanings of Sabbath keeping . . . has been the notion that the Christian community gathers on that day. If our Sabbath days become set aside for spiritual purposes and set apart from work and productivity, we can afford to spend more time together with our fellow believers so that we can be more thoroughly strengthened in the values of the

²³Michael Molloy, *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 299.

²⁴Richard H. Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000).

²⁵Gay, "Learning to Live," 193.

²⁶In the New Testament, the writer to the Hebrews reiterates the importance of community for the Christian: "Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25a).

Sabbath Principles and Related Psychological Benefits

Given that the same God that created us ordained the Sabbath, it should not be surprising to discover that Sabbath principles of rest, reflection, and relationships are closely aligned with positive psychological constructs.²⁸ Practicing rest bolsters psychological resiliency and personal agency. Pausing for reflection strengthens contentment, integrity, positive reappraisal, and hope. Building relationships increases social identity and social support. In turn, these constructs benefit well-being. Each of the constructs and benefits are discussed below.

Rest and Resiliency

Literature in the area of stress and stress management has highlighted the importance of balance in one's life as an effective coping mechanism. People with high levels of "self-complexity" who are committed to roles in several areas of their lives (family, work, social, intellectual, physical, etc.) have multiple resources to draw upon when faced with stress. Because they have multiple resources, individuals with greater self-complexity respond in a more positive way to stress than those who are only developed in a few areas of life.²⁹ The capacity to recover from a stressful situation or a downturn in life and return to a former state of relative well-being is known as resiliency.³⁰ Resting from work to focus on other areas of one's life can help develop a more balanced lifestyle, which in turn provides greater psychological resiliency.³¹

Rest and Personal Agency

Actively choosing to take time to rest also aides in the recognition that we have

²⁷Marva Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 117.

²⁸To identify these benefits is not to turn Sabbath into a utilitarian means to an end. It is simply to acknowledge that we are designed as people of rhythm and that living in the design is likely to be healthier than living against it.

²⁹Jeffrey Edwards and Nancy Rothbard, "Work and Family Stress and Well-Being: An Examination of Person-Environment Fit in the Work and Family Domains," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 77 (1999): 85-129; Suzanne C. Kobasa, "Stressful Life Events, Personality, and Health: An Inquiry into Hardiness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37 (1979): 1-11; Patricia W. Linville, "Self Complexity as a Cognitive Buffer Against Stress Related Illness and Depression," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52 (1987): 663-676; Patricia W. Linville, "Self Complexity and Affective Extreme: Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Cognitive Basket," *Social Cognition* 3 (1985): 94-120.

³⁰Charles S. Carver, "Resilience and Thriving: Issues, Models and Linkages," *Journal of Social Issues* 54 (1998): 245-266.

³¹David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron, *Developing Management Skills*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).

personal agency over whether or not we rest; we control our time rather than allowing time to control us and recognize the importance of balancing multiple life roles. Rest does not diminish the importance of one's life work, but it allows for balance and integration so that work and productivity do not control one's life.³²

Inherent in personal agency is a sense of self-determination, which, in turn, has been shown to be a significant factor in well-being.³³ Specifically, feelings of control over one's time have been shown to moderate the relationship between time crunch at work and employee strain.³⁴ In other words, it is not necessarily a stressful situation itself that creates feelings of burnout, but rather a stressful situation coupled with a lack of personal agency.³⁵ By actively and purposefully choosing to take time to rest from work, employees can diminish the harmful effects of stress on their lives.

The construct of personal agency is not limited to self-efficacy towards one's own actions. Personal agency can come from within oneself (often referred to as an "internal locus of control") or it can be through the proxy of others.³⁶ Psychologist Gary Welton and his colleagues found that many people hold "God-Control" beliefs that were unrelated to external locus of control measures, suggesting that a belief in God is not simply a delegation of personal control over life's outcomes but related to a sense of control via proxy.³⁷ Similarly, psychologist Kenneth Pargament and his colleagues found that religious belief was not always related to a delegating and passive coping style.³⁸ Instead, they found that people with more mature spiritual formation tended to see themselves in active collaboration with God to solve life's problems.³⁹ Christians who used this collaborative coping style had higher psychosocial competence⁴⁰ and were more likely to show resiliency when

³²Eugene Peterson, "The Good-For-Nothing Sabbath," *Christianity Today* (4 April 1994): 34-37. See Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of this World: Inquires into Calling, Career Choice and the Design of Human Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998); Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Work Matters to God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1987). These books address the inherent goodness of work, viewing vocation as more than one's occupation but as a whole-life endeavor.

³³Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1997), 17.

³⁴Steve M. Jex and Tina C. Elacqua, "Time Management as a Moderator of Relations Between Stressors and Employee Strain," *Work and Stress* 13 (1999): 182-191.

³⁵Michael P. Leiter and Christina Maslach, "Burnout and Quality in a Sped-Up World," *The Journal for Quality and Participation* (Summer 2001): 48-50.

³⁶Bandura, *Self-Efficacy*.

³⁷Gary L. Welton, A. Gelene Adkins, Sandra L. Ingle, and Wayne A. Dixon, "God Control: The Fourth Dimension," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 24 (1996): 13-25.

³⁸Kenneth Pargament and Crystal L. Park, "Merely a Defense? The Variety of Religious Means and Ends," *Journal of Social Issues* 51 (1995): 13-32.

³⁹See Kenneth Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), for a review of religious coping and well-being.

⁴⁰William L. Hathaway and Kenneth I. Pargament, "Intrinsic Religiousness, Religious Coping and Psychosocial Competence: A Covariance Structure Analysis," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29 (1990): 423-441.

Reflection and Contentment

Those who regularly take time for reflection are more likely to be content with their current material circumstances than are those who without conscious thought are continually barraged by the clarion call of consumerism. Reflection provides an opportunity to put the accumulation of wealth and other material goods in perspective. In his journals from the South Pole, where he enjoyed substantial times of reflection, Admiral Richard Byrd wrote, "I am learning that a man can live profoundly without masses of things."⁴²

The use of reflection is significant from the standpoint of managing stress, since increases in time pressures at work have concomitantly occurred with a rising level of U.S. wealth. In her bestselling book *The Overworked American*, social economist Juliet Schor noted that the productivity of American workers had doubled since 1948.⁴³ That is, Americans would have had to work two hours in 1948 for every hour worked in 1992 to produce the same level of goods and services. Turned on its head, this also means that were American workers now content to live at the standard of living prevailing at the end of World War II, they could take every other year off. Instead, Schor documents a steadily increasing number of hours worked each year. Between 1969 and 1987, she concluded that the average American had added a month of work hours every year, suggesting we are living in the midst of a society frantically trading leisure time for the accumulation of material goods.

Schor suggested that this is occurring as Americans are increasingly looking to consumption to give satisfaction and meaning to their lives. However, research has consistently shown that there is no link between wealth and happiness. For instance, in his review of national wealth and subjective well-being (SWB), psychologist David Myers showed that once basic physical needs are met, there is no relationship between wealth and SWB.⁴⁴ In addition, although average income has risen dramatically since WWII, SWB levels have remained stable.⁴⁵ Psychologist Ed Diener concluded that people's desires increase as their incomes rise, and they therefore adapt to higher levels of income with no net increase in SWB.⁴⁶ Myers likewise noted that given humans' great ability to adapt, today's luxuries easily become

⁴¹Kenneth Pargament, David S. Ensing, Kathryn Falgout, Hannah Olsen, Barbara Reilly, Kimberly Van Haitisma, and Richard Warren, "God Help Me: Religious Coping Efforts as Predictors of the Outcomes to Significant Negative Life Events," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 18 (1990): 793-824.

⁴²Richard Byrd, *Alone* (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1995/1939), 12.

⁴³Schor, "Overworked."

⁴⁴David G. Myers, "The Funds, Friends and Faith of Happy People," *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 56-67.

⁴⁵Ed Diener, "Subjective Well-Being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal for a National Index," *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 34-43.

⁴⁶Ibid.

320 tomorrow's necessities.⁴⁷

This ability to adapt to an ever-increasing standard of living comes at a price. Psychologist Robert Emmons found that negative affect and distress were associated with higher strivings for power, which reflect desires to control, impress, or compete with others.⁴⁸ Likewise, psychologists Tim Kasser and Richard Ryan showed that personal goals toward financial success were associated with less self-actualization, less vitality, more depression, and more anxiety. In addition, they found that individuals who favored financial success over other intrinsically oriented goals were more likely to be attuned to and influenced by factors external to themselves.⁴⁹

Those who practice reflection can realize that they are not the ultimate creator of the physical universe; they remove themselves as the "measure of all things."⁵⁰ As Gay writes,

The importance of the Sabbath is that it symbolizes, and seems institutionally to have been intended to reinforce, the sharp distinction between God's creative activity and our own. The people of Israel, for example, were urged by the prophets to keep from doing 'as they pleased' on the Sabbath (Isa. 58:13), to put aside their own goals and projects, and to rest instead in their knowledge of God's goals and projects for them.⁵¹

After his three-month corporate sabbatical from Rolm, Tony Siedel reflected on returning to his job: "I discovered how little things change, how everyday problems manage to take care of themselves and the world goes on without you. In that sense, I think I'll be a more effective person and that is in both my and the company's best interest."⁵²

Reflection and Integrity

Stress has been shown to result from a discontinuity between internal core values and external behavior.⁵³ For example, it can be emotionally exhausting to be called upon constantly by one's organization to "put a good face on" a bad set of

⁴⁷Myers, "The Funds."

⁴⁸Robert A. Emmons, "Personal Strivings, Daily Life Events, and Psychological and Physical Well-Being," *Journal of Personality* 59 (1991): 453-472.

⁴⁹Tim Kasser and Richard M. Ryan, "A Dark Side of the American Dream: Correlates of Financial Success as a Central Life Aspiration," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65 (1993): 410-422.

⁵⁰John H. Primus, "Sunday: The Lord's Day as a Sabbath—Protestant Perspectives on the Sabbath," in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, eds. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Daniel J. Harrington, and William H. Shea (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 98-127.

⁵¹Gay, "Learning to Live," 192-193.

⁵²Carey W. English, "Sabbaticals Spread From Campus to Business," *U.S. News and World Report* (28 January 1985): 79-80.

⁵³John R. P. French, Robert D. Caplan, and R. Van Harrison, *The Mechanisms of Job Stress and Strain*. (New York: Wiley, 1982); Susan Folkman, and Judith T. Moskowitz, "The Context Matters," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26 (2000): 150-151.

facts. Likewise, it is corrosive to one's spirit to be expected to act externally in a manner that seems wrong or inappropriate when measured against one's internal set of values. Psychologists Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter recognize a spiritual dimension to burnout when they write that "burnout is the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit and will; an erosion of the human soul."⁵⁴ Author Parker Palmer also exemplifies this mismatch as he contemplates his own burnout after serving as a community organizer:

After five years of conflict and competition, I burned out. I had been driven more by the 'oughts' of urban crisis than by a sense of true self. Lacking insight into my own limits and potentials, I had allowed ego and ethics to lead me into a situation that my soul could not abide.⁵⁵

The word "integrity" comes from the same Latin root from which we derive the word "integer." In each case, there is a sense of "wholeness" or "completeness" embedded in the word. While not perhaps sufficient, the notion of personal integrity requires at a minimum a sense of congruence between the internal and external person. This congruence, however, does not happen automatically. Under our culture's current accelerating pace of life, there is less and less time for thoughtful considerations of wholeness. Indeed, law professor Steven Carter recently linked culture's accelerated pace with the concomitant decrease in integrity:

The lack of time is an unfortunate characteristic of today's Americans, and volumes have been written about how it is hurting our children and our families, but it is hurting our morality just as much. For if we decide that we do not have time to stop and think about right and wrong, then we do not have time to figure out right from wrong, which means that we do not have time to live according to our model of right and wrong, which means, simply put, that we do not have time for lives of integrity.⁵⁶

A rhythm of work and leisure that allows for reflection can serve as an antidote to cultural expectations, enabling the integration of multiple selves into a sense of wholeness.⁵⁷

Reflection, Positive Reappraisal, and Hope

Reflection allows room for positive reappraisal. Psychologists Susan Folkman, Judith Moskowitz, and their colleagues have specifically focused on the role of positive reappraisal as a coping mechanism in the midst of chronic stress.⁵⁸ Posi-

⁵⁴Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter, *The Truth About Burnout* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 17.

⁵⁵Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening For the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 22.

⁵⁶Steven L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 29.

⁵⁷Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath*, 142.

⁵⁸Susan Folkman and Judith T. Moskowitz, "Positive Affect and the Other Side of Coping,"

tive reappraisal includes several cognitive processes, including discovering opportunities for personal growth, perceiving actual personal growth, and seeing how one's efforts can benefit other people. Through the process of positive reappraisal, the meaning of a situation is changed in a way that allows the person to experience positive emotion and psychological well-being in the midst of stressful situations. For example, positive reappraisal has consistently been shown to be related to positive emotion in the life of people caring for their partners with AIDS, both during the illness and after the death of one's partner.⁵⁹

While the role of reflection and positive reappraisal has been shown to have psychological benefits regardless of religious beliefs, Christians can use the biblical Sabbath accounts as a point of reference. In the creation story, God used the Sabbath to reflect on the goodness of his creation: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31a). Likewise, Sabbath reflection invites people to remember that the physical world, including humanity, is good and in the hands of God. Christians can affirm a type of hope, a "transcendent hope," even when they do not have control over the pathways out of difficulties or over their ability to enact solutions.⁶⁰ They can affirm that there is a power outside of the physical realm that can impact outcomes. This positive appraisal among Christians has been shown to result in higher well-being and less stress.⁶¹

While not a uniquely Christian idea, this notion of transcendent hope is reflected in several biblical passages. The psalmist wrote, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him" (Psalm 62:5). Similarly, the apostle Paul wrote, "Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently" (Romans 8:24-25).

Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu provided a modern-day example of such transcendent hope. In 1985, prior to the end of apartheid in South Africa, Archbishop Tutu made the astonishing statement that he could celebrate the defeat of apartheid because God would not be denied the victory over evil. Several years later, he reflected on this idea, saying that during the darkest time of apartheid,

When evil seemed to be on the rampage and about to overwhelm goodness, one held on to this article of faith by the skin of one's teeth. It was a kind of theological whistling in the dark

American Psychologist 6 (2000): 647-654; Susan Folkman and Judith T. Moskowitz, "Stress, Positive Emotion and Coping," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9 (2000): 115-117.

⁵⁹Judith T. Moskowitz, Susan Folkman, Linda Collette, and Eric Vittinghoff, "Coping and Mood During AIDS-Related Caregiving and Bereavement," *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* 18 (1996): 49-57.

⁶⁰Richard S. Lazarus, "Hope: An Emotion and a Vital Coping Resource Against Despair," *Social Research* 66 (1999): 653-678.

⁶¹Kenneth Pargament, Nalini Tarakeshwar, Christopher G. Ellison, and Keith M. Wulff, "Religious Coping among the Religious: The Relationships Between Religious Coping and Well-Being in a National Sample of Presbyterian Clergy, Elders and Members," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40 (2001): 497-513.

and one was frequently tempted to whisper in God's ear 'for goodness sake, why don't you make it obvious that You are in charge?'⁶²

In 1985 Archbishop Tutu did not know what the future held, but he experienced transcendent hope knowing who held the future.

Relationships, Social Identity, and Social Support

Social identity (ethnic identity, racial identity, collective self-esteem) has repeatedly been shown to be related to positive psychological adjustment.⁶³ Psychologist Peggy Thoits showed that social identities can provide purpose to one's life, giving meaning, direction, and guidance to one's sense of self.⁶⁴ Desmond Tutu noted that the African language of Sotho contains the word *ubuntu*, which translates loosely "a person is a person through other persons." Rather than the western philosophy "I think therefore I am," *ubuntu* states, "I am human because I belong."

Anger, resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness are corrosive of [ubuntu]. To forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest. What dehumanizes you inexorably dehumanizes me. [Ubuntu] gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them.⁶⁵

Building social support networks with others have also been shown to increase resiliency.⁶⁶ People who have a stronger desire to affiliate with others have greater well-being and less distress.⁶⁷ Indeed, burnout is reduced when a sense of community is present in the workplace.⁶⁸ More specifically, spiritual social support offers social benefits such as reinforcing the coping mechanisms of one's religious schema when faced with bereavement.⁶⁹ In other words, building social resiliency through

⁶²Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 4.

⁶³Ian Brissette, Sheldon Cohen, and Teresa E. Seeman, "Measuring Social Integration and Social Networks," in *Social Support Measurement and Intervention: A Guide for Health and Social Scientists*, eds. Sheldon Cohen, Lynn G. Underwood, and Benjamin H. Gottlieb (New York: Oxford University Press), 53-85.

⁶⁴Peggy A. Thoits, "Multiple Identities and Psychological Well-Being: A Reformulation of the Social Isolation Hypothesis," *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 174-187.

⁶⁵Tutu, *No Future*, 31.

⁶⁶Sheldon Cohen, "Social Supports and the Physical Health: Symptoms, Health Behaviors and Infectious Diseases," in *Life-Span Developmental Psychology: Perspectives On Stress and Coping*, eds. Anita L. Greene, E. Mark Cummings, and Katherine H. Karraker (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1991), 213-234; Kenneth L. Pargament, *The Psychology Of Religion And Coping: Theory, Research And Practice* (New York: Guildford Press, 1997).

⁶⁷Kasser, et al., "A Dark Side."

⁶⁸Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter, *Preventing Burnout and Building Engagement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

⁶⁹Daniel N. McIntosh, Roxane Silver, and Camille B. Wortman, "Religion's Role in Adjustment to a Negative Life Event: Coping with the Loss of a Child," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65 (1993): 812-821; T. Anne Richards and Susan Folkman, "Spiritual Aspects of Loss at the Time of a Partner's Death from Aids," *Death Studies* 21(1997): 527-552.

324 relationships with others mitigates the harmful influences of stressful life situations.

Incorporating Rhythm and Rest into Organizational Practices

By adopting a rhythm that allows for regular times of rest, reflection, and relationship-building, an employee can often create a partial buffer to the increased stressors found in the modern workplace. Nevertheless, individual wellness is not an inoculation against workplace stress since burnout is not primarily an individual phenomenon. Rather, it is the result of an interaction between individuals and the organizational context in which they work.⁷⁰

With the advent of new information and communication technologies and the penetration of these technologies into the modern workplace, business in America has lost any semblance of rhythm. Rather, the 24/7 culture has converted what God once intended to be a stroll with periodic resting spots into a lifelong sprint. The insidious side of telecommuting is that it breaks down all distinctions between home and work. Cell phones, laptops, beepers, pagers, and the like eliminate the distinctions between "being on the job" and being "off-line."⁷¹

Volumes have been written about this accelerating pace of business and its impact on the well-being of employees and their families.⁷² Increasingly, however, businesses are identifying the adverse impacts on their own bottom lines. Executives regularly lament high rates of turnover and the associated increases in hiring and training costs. They complain about decreasing levels of worker productivity and high rates of absenteeism and blame their employees or the educational systems that inadequately prepared their new hires for work. Often, however, these complaints miss the mark. As management professor Jeffrey Pfeffer noted, there are plenty of toxic organizations that burn through employees, believing that the high turnover rate is an indication of low employee loyalty rather than a sign of dysfunction within the corporate culture.⁷³

While a Christian employer might choose to organize the workplace around biblical principles of rhythm out of his or her love for God, obedience to the Bible, or concern for the well-being of others, cycles of rest, reflection, and relationships should also be attractive to managers of secular workplaces if for no other reason than that they are likely to enhance their companies' performance. As Pfeffer dem-

⁷⁰Maslach, et al., *Preventing Burnout*.

⁷¹Arlie R. Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997).

⁷²Dov Eden, "Job Stress and Respite Relief: Overcoming High-Tech Tethers," in *Research in Occupational Stress and Well Being*, eds. Pamela L. Perrewé and Daniel C. Ganster (Greenwich CN: JAI Press, 2001), 143- 194; Friedman, et al., "Work."

⁷³Pfeffer defined a toxic company as one that says, "We're going to put you in a situation where you have to work in a style and on a pace that is not sustainable. We want you to come in here and burn yourself out—and then you can leave." See Alan M. Webber, "Danger: Toxic Company," *Fast Company* (November 1998): 152-154.

onstrated, companies who show concern for employee well-being also have better profit margins than their competitors.⁷⁴ In the long run, we contend that healthier organizations will be those that effectively inculcate regular patterns of rhythm, incorporating rest, reflection, and relationships into the structure of their work.⁷⁵ With this in mind, we offer the following suggestions to incorporate rest, reflection, and relationships in order to build a workplace of rhythm and rest, recognizing that this list is not exhaustive nor is it likely that all of these suggestions could be fully implemented in every organization.⁷⁶

Rest in Organizations

Provide adequate staffing levels. In the most recent round of corporate layoffs, the victims have included not only those who have been laid off but also those who have remained employed and are now expected to do their work and the work formerly done by the laid-off employees. While it is often difficult to resist the market imperative, nothing jeopardizes a Sabbath-like work culture more than deliberately shorting the workforce for the sake of enhanced profits.

When the remaining employees are burdened with greater work and longer hours, they are also susceptible to decreased physical wellness. Excessive overtime has been linked to greater fatigue, accident rates, and increased illness.⁷⁷ Additionally, the psychological consequences for layoff survivors include increased depression, more stress related to feelings of job insecurity, and lower self-esteem.⁷⁸

Eliminate busywork. Organizations should emphasize activities that add value and discourage time spent on "busy work." Poor work structure can contribute to the need to work excessive hours. In response to this problem, Bank of America has begun tapping employees' desire for a better balance in life as a means of developing strategies to eliminate unproductive busywork. Employees at two of their re-

⁷⁴Jeffrey Pfeffer, *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1998).

⁷⁵In coming to this conclusion, we are mindful of the work of Ian Mitroff and Elizabeth A. Denton, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), who noted that if spirituality is practiced in the workplace as a means to other ends, such as profitability, it is largely ineffective. However, where companies sincerely practiced spirituality for its own sake, increased profits resulted.

⁷⁶While we have found companies who incorporated *some* of the proposed organizational solutions, we are unaware of any organizations that systemically promote these principles as a macro-process for the way work gets done. Consequently, our organizational examples are more normative than descriptive. Future research regarding the application of these principles remains to be conducted as part of an organizational transformation program.

⁷⁷Bob Eckhardt, "Calculating the Cost of Overtime," *Concrete Products* (January 2002): 40-44.

⁷⁸Leon Grunberg, Sarah Y. Moore, and Edward Greenberg, "Differences in Psychological and Physical Health among Layoff Survivors: The Effect of Layoff Contact," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 6 (2001): 15-25; Bafia M. Wiesenfeld, Joel Brockner, and Valerie Thibault, "Procedural Fairness, Managers' Self-Esteem, and Managerial Behaviors Following a Layoff," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 83 (2000): 1-32.

gional offices were asked, "What is it about work that's really frustrating to you and gets in the way of balancing work and family?" Over 60 percent of employees contributed work-redesign suggestions, leading to increased training, reduced reporting and administrative tasks, and automated feedback loops that allowed employees to learn from and avoid repeating their own errors. The work structure improvements led to increased customer satisfaction as well as to more time for employees to spend with their families.⁷⁹ Similarly, S. C. Johnson sought to reduce time employees spent in meetings by introducing "No-Meeting Fridays." During the meeting-free pilot, nearly two-thirds of the participants reported that their productivity rose on the test Fridays, and 16 percent reported that their overtime hours decreased.⁸⁰ Other potential candidates for review include excessive use of Web and software "enhancements." Technology such as PowerPoint® has often shifted employees' time from substantive ideas to presentation style and gimmicks.

Cut the 24/7 tether from work. A *Business Week* survey regarding work/life balance found that high-tech workers frequently operated in a mode of continual crisis because their work culture rewarded a willingness to respond at all hours to emergencies and to engage in high-visibility problem-solving as opposed to less visible problem-prevention behaviors.⁸¹ Organizations can recognize the value of time away from work by developing off-hour contact contingency plans so that employees know that they will have a true break from work.

Moreover, organizations should rethink their growing willingness to supply laptops, cell phones, beepers, PDAs that read e-mail remotely, and home office equipment to their employees. While often perceived by management as a benefit being extended to the workforce, each item of equipment comes with the implicit message that the employee should be always available. Making such equipment available to "check out" for periodic business trips may satisfy most legitimate business needs without sending such rhythm-depressing messages.

Manage the immediacy of the virtual workplace. Organizations need to articulate expectations regarding employee communication response time in the virtual world of work. Without clearly articulated standards, employees will tend to mimic the practices of other employees, and a corporate culture of immediate responsiveness may unintentionally emerge.⁸² Often the most compulsive responders are publicly praised for their near around-the-clock availability and intentionally or unintentionally held up as role models. While in its infancy e-mail was touted as an asynchronous communication vehicle where simultaneous response was not necessary,

⁷⁹Sue Shellenbarger, "Are Saner Workloads the Unexpected Key to More Productivity?," *Wall Street Journal* (10 March 1999): B1.

⁸⁰Joann S. Lubin, "Memo to Staff: Stop Working—Companies Push Employees to Unplug from Office; Taking a 'Thinking Day,'" *Wall Street Journal* (6 July 2000): B1.

⁸¹Bob Bellinger, "Blending Work and Family," *Electronic Engineering Times* (21 October 1996): 125-126.

⁸²Chis Argyris and Donald A. Schön, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974).

it is now common for some people to expect their e-mail messages to be treated in a simultaneous manner comparable to a phone call. The instant notification of bells and beeps only reinforces the demand for immediate action. To avoid the establishment of inappropriate response times by default, organizations should clearly articulate communication expectations. In setting these standards, managers must balance the need for rapid responses with their employees' need to work in self-directed ways and at a measured pace. Standards of responsiveness that are too rigorous will have employees constantly checking e-mail and voice mail, never able to untether their telecommunication lifelines completely.

Encourage employees to take vacations that allow them to disengage from work. Organizations interested in the well-being of their employees must not only allow for reasonable vacations, but they must also enact policies that strongly encourage the full use of these opportunities. While the general research on vacations is not promising, it appears that vacations are most likely to reduce job-related stress when employees can disengage from work by not checking in with voice messages or e-mail.⁸³ In addition, employees should be encouraged to take vacation time each year. While most corporate vacation policies allow for the accrual of vacation time, substantial accruals from year to year should be avoided since long-term deferrals of time off are counter-productive to establishing a needed rhythm of work and rest.

Design appropriate sabbatical programs. As noted at the outset of this paper, a stand-alone sabbatical program is unlikely to address issues of stress in the workplace successfully. On the other hand, a well-conceived sabbatical program that functions as one part of a holistic, rhythmic culture can profoundly contribute to an employee's sense of rest and well-being.⁸⁴ While nearly half of Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" provide sabbaticals or similar leave programs,⁸⁵ simply announcing that such programs are available may not suffice.⁸⁶ Employees are often concerned that if they take sabbaticals, they will be viewed as being expendable. These programs are destined to fail unless managers model leave-taking behavior themselves. With a limited budget for sabbaticals, however, organizations

⁸³Westman, et al., "Effects of a Respite."

⁸⁴The sabbatical program that we are advocating differs from the typical sabbatical program offered by universities in America. Sabbaticals in the American academy are not breaks from production. They are only changes in type of production; typically teaching duties are traded for the duty to engage in more scholarly research and writing. True Sabbath-like sabbaticals would free the academician from any obligation to be productive or to account for an efficient use of time. These are truly in the nature of extended vacations and more akin to the sabbaticals offered in British institutes of higher learning. See George H. Douglas, "Sabbaticals in the Age of Productivity," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (13 October 1995): B3.

⁸⁵Wendy Bounds, "Give Me a Break!" *Wall Street Journal* (5 May 2000): W1.

⁸⁶Another problem arises when announced sabbaticals are inadequately funded. For example, Wells Fargo Bank offers a sabbatical program, but most sabbatical proposals are rejected, often because of budget constraints. See Elizabeth Sheley, "Why Give Employee Sabbaticals? To Reward, Relax and Recharge," *HR Magazine* (March 1996), available at <http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/default.asp?page=396sabb.htm>.

may be less willing to offer such leave to their managers. This failure has the effect of communicating that sabbaticals are not important or, worse yet, that important people do not take sabbaticals. By contrast, positive examples encourage a healthy use of sabbaticals. Apple Computer offers a six-week paid sabbatical every five years to all of its employees, regardless of responsibility level. Over 90 percent of the employees in Apple Computer take advantage of this program, which has the described purpose of giving employees "a chance to relax and recharge." Similarly, when Charles Schwab co-CEO David Pottruck took a sabbatical during the summer of 2000, not only did he gain a sense of improved resiliency, but his actions also represented to other employees that sabbaticals were an important part of employee development for the company.⁸⁷

Reflection in Organizations

Encourage organizational planning and debriefing. "Fire, ready, aim" is an old maxim in information technology groups. Often this occurs because businesses spend money on technology without understanding what the expenditures are for, what the benefits to be received are, or how that technology will make the business more money.⁸⁸ Subsequently, information technology groups often border on chaos where little project time is allowed for planning and urgency is confused with importance.⁸⁹ As a result, projects run over time and budget or are cancelled prior to completion. Notwithstanding the rhetoric surrounding the increased need for flexibility and ability to make rapid changes in direction, planning remains an important part of a reflective organization.

Likewise, debriefing time is essential. Regular opportunities to review project outcomes and processes should be built into project timetables. With the growing "outcomes assessment" movement in education and social service agencies, these debriefing times are becoming more common.⁹⁰ Still, far too often, negative aspects of project implementation are skirted as people are frequently uncomfortable publicly critiquing others.⁹¹ Moreover, even when review time is provided for, the scope of review can be too narrow. To maximize their effectiveness, debriefing times should focus not only on narrow questions related to specific process steps, but should

⁸⁷Melissa Solomon, "Getting Serious About Sabbaticals," *Computerworld* (11 December 2000): 62-70.

⁸⁸Roman H. Kepczyk, "Budgeting to Evaluate Your Information Technology ROI," *Infotech Update* 8 (1999): 6-7; Fred Williams, "Spending On Technology Rises, But Aims Fuzzy," *Pensions and Investments* (27 November 2000): 59-60.

⁸⁹Covey, *Seven Habits*.

⁹⁰Kate Lorig, Anita Stewart, Philip Ritter, Virginia Gonzalez, Diana Laurent, and John Lynch, *Outcome Measures for Health Education and Other Health Care Interventions* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1996); Serbrenia J. Sims, *Student Outcomes Assessment: A Historical Review and Guide to Program Development* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992).

⁹¹Yogi Schulz, "The Delicate Matter of Peer Project Reviews," *Computing Canada* (5 October, 2001): 13.

also include a consideration of whether the project outcomes actually furthered the organization's stated mission, goals, and objectives.

Incorporate developmental feedback into the performance review system. Too often the main goal of annual performance reviews is to accentuate differences in past performance among employees in order to differentiate pay increases and promotional opportunities.⁹² These reviews, in turn, often lead to competition and conflict among employees.⁹³ This is not the only option, however. Some organizations encourage managers to hold annual meetings with employees that focus solely on future-oriented personal development.⁹⁴ Employees are encouraged to reflect on their future work goals, training needs, and career development goals prior to meeting with their manager. In these reviews, employee participation is strongly encouraged with managers acting more in the role of coach to discuss the ways in which the organization can (or can not) help the individual meet his or her expectations.⁹⁵ In addition, many organizations incorporate "360-feedback" into developmental reviews, so that employees can develop a richer sense of how they are perceived not only by their manager and themselves, but also by their peers, subordinates, and customers.⁹⁶

Rethink purpose of off-site retreats. Many organizations host regularly scheduled retreats, which if done correctly, can provide an ideal opportunity to step outside of the day-to-day demands and to reflect on overall direction and strategy. Unfortunately, many retreats are structured to minimize rather than maximize the opportunities for reflective thinking. Far too often participants are numbed into exhaustion as they passively listen to presentations, reports, and short-term project planning or they are encouraged to participate in recreational activities promoted as team building exercises whose effects rarely transfer to the workplace.⁹⁷ Neither the perceived need for uninterrupted content times nor a desire for periodic "blow-outs" should justify wasting the reflective opportunities inherent in times of retreats.

Relationships in Organizations

Design workspaces to encourage teamwork. The average employee spends about

⁹²Jeanette N. Cleveland, Kevin R. Murphy, and Richard E. Williams, "Multiple Uses of Performance Appraisal: Prevalence and Correlates," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 74 (1989): 130-135.

⁹³Gary E. Roberts, "Developmental Performance Appraisal in Municipal Government: An Antidote for a Deadly Disease," *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 15 (1995): 17-34.

⁹⁴Many organizations hold developmental meetings 6 months after the regular performance review so employees have a regular performance "check-in" with managers at least semi-annually.

⁹⁵Roberts, "Developmental Performance."

⁹⁶Walter W. Tornow, "Perceptions or Reality? Is Multi-Perspective Measurement a Means or an End?" *Human Resource Management* 32 (1993): 11-29.

⁹⁷John Bank, "Outdoor Development: A New Perspective in Management Education," *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* 4 (1983): 3-44.

330 25 percent of his or her time working with others.⁹⁸ While much of that time is now spent in conference calls and in e-mail exchanges, there is still the need for people to gather together to create synergy in problem-solving. Organizations can facilitate a sense of community in the workplace through the physical design and layout of office space. While most provide common break rooms or cafeterias, other companies have recognized that teamwork is best facilitated by providing team space. In order to boost employee creativity, Steelcase designed a research and development facility that included "caves" for private, undistracted contemplation, "neighborhoods" where teams can gather for impromptu meetings to flesh out ideas, and a central atrium known as the "Town Square" where all employees pass through to enter or leave the building. Even the coffee-break stations have marker boards where people can sketch ideas.⁹⁹

Encourage employee community projects. Group-oriented activities likewise can foster building relationships. While a range of such activities can be used effectively to bring employees together, one approach that is being used with increasing success is the development of work teams organized around the employees' desires to give back to their own community. For example, the Bank of America Team Program provides incentives for employees to self-organize into project teams that span hierarchical and departmental boundaries. Members choose a community focus area and establish strategic objectives that can both benefit Bank of America and contribute to the health of the community.¹⁰⁰ Along the way, relationships and a sense of community are developed.

Changing Culture to Reflect Rhythms of Rest, Reflection, and Relationships

Implementation of these suggestions should help bring Sabbath-like benefits into the workplace. To be most effective, however, principles of rhythm and rest need to be infused throughout an organization and not simply found in one or more employee assistance programs. They must be embedded within the organizational culture and reflected in the employees' hour-by-hour activities.¹⁰¹ To make the systemic changes necessary to introduce rhythm into organizational culture, an organization must examine key policies regarding hiring, performance appraisal, and compensation systems. In addition, the actions of those in leadership positions must be carefully aligned with the rhythmic principles. Each of these is briefly discussed below.

Hiring Policies. The nature of the inducements that an organization offers pro-

⁹⁸Mike Brill, Ellen Keable, and Judy Fabiniak, "The Myth of Open-Plan," *Facilities Design and Management* 19 (2000): 36-39.

⁹⁹Gregory Witcher, "Steelcase Hopes Innovation Flourishes Under Pyramid," *Wall Street Journal* (26 May 1989): B1, B8.

¹⁰⁰Bradley Googins, "How To Give Business a Soul," *New Statesman* (6 November 2000): 14-18.

¹⁰¹John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review* 73 (1995): 59-67.

spective employees reflects the ethos of the organization. Organizations that wish to foster Sabbath-like principles should question the use of compensation as a primary strategy to attract new employees. According to a survey by the Human Resources consulting firm Towers-Perrin, base pay played a lesser role in recruiting employees to high-performing companies than it did for employees working elsewhere. Sought-after prospective employees who have flexibility in choosing their future organization were more likely to select one with higher corporate social performance.¹⁰²

Performance Appraisal and Compensation Systems. Wherever possible, organizations should not tie performance appraisals to the sheer number of hours worked. Under these conditions, employees are not encouraged to use their time wisely, but only to use it. This, in turn, promotes a climate that discourages the taking of breaks and penalizes those who seek to cultivate a sense of rhythm into their lives. To develop the reflective side of Sabbath principles, organizations need to reward employees who can differentiate action from motion.¹⁰³ Performance appraisals should be tied to achieving results that reflect organizational mission. Among other things, this means that pay structures should reward those who take time to reflect on their work and build workplace relationships.

In addition to paying for mission results rather than hours worked, a component of pay should be based on team performance where appropriate. Recognition of team performance through the compensation system reinforces the value the organization places on relationships and encourages enhanced efforts by individuals to ensure group success.¹⁰⁴ Organizations need to rethink using compensation as a consolation prize to make up for chaotic management, long hours, unreasonable project budgets, and other parameters and timelines that constantly undercut the values of rhythm and rest.¹⁰⁵

Actions of Those in Leadership Positions. At the top, CEOs should regularly (and repeatedly) espouse the values of rest, reflection, and relationships as key organizational values. Moreover, CEOs must ensure that these values are incorporated into regular business practices. True and lasting organizational change requires that corporate rhetoric be matched with corporate action. Employees learn about actual

¹⁰²Heather Schmidt Albinger and Sarah J. Freeman, "Corporate Social Performance and Attractiveness as an Employer to Different Job Seeking Populations," *Journal of Business Ethics* 28 (2000): 243-253.

¹⁰³Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit*.

¹⁰⁴George Milkovich and Jerry Newman, *Compensation* (Chicago, IL: IRWIN, 1996).

¹⁰⁵This may be particularly true in the high-tech sector where turnover ran as high as 25 percent during the dot-com boom. See John S. McClenahan, "High-Tech Turnover Cuts Earnings, Prices," *Industry Week* (4 September 2000): 71. As the 50 percent freefall of the NASDAQ during 2000 illustrated, wealth in the short run may give people a sense of invincibility; however, when that wave crashes, it can leave a wake of people feeling very vulnerable. See Jessica Gynn, "Paper Paupers: Stock Slumps Have Made Options Worthless," *Seattle Times*, 1 October 2000, available at <http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=stockoptions01&date=20001001&query=paper+paupers>.

organizational expectations from the behaviors of their local management, and they are also able to differentiate between the espoused values of senior management and those of their own managers, who, in turn, allocate annual salary increases.¹⁰⁶ It is cruel to have a CEO publicly communicate to employees and other stakeholders the importance of protecting family time in his or her life when mid-level managers are untroubled by paging their own employees any time of day or night. Managers can also send incorrect signals to the balance of the workforce at the expense of rhythmic work habits when they publicly acclaim employees who successfully advance some of the organization's mission goals, such as short-term productivity or new customer accounts, yet who are notoriously non-reflective and compulsive workers. Consequently, a key task for a CEO is to ensure that other managers within the corporate hierarchy likewise embrace the "rhythmic" values.

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, a limited focus on employee-oriented work-life programs is unlikely to address underlying workplace issues of stress and burnout adequately. Instead, we have argued that organizations should adopt a more holistic approach to workplace stress based on an understanding of the biblical principles of rhythm and rest. When rest, reflection, and relationship-building are valued as key components of an organization's character, organizations should expect to see a less harried and more productive workforce, an increase in long-term profitability, and a greater alignment between organizational behavior and kingdom values.

¹⁰⁶Argyris, et al., *Theory in Practice*.