

# leisure and spirituality

biblical, historical, and contemporary perspectives

paul heintzman

  
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For my wife Monique  
and my daughter Jessie



In loving memory of my parents,  
Margaret and Garnet Heintzman



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# introduction

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“Leisure” is the most misunderstood word in our vocabulary.<sup>1</sup>

We are “free,” it seems, to have anything but a nurturing leisure. “I have so little time,” goes the frequently heard lament.<sup>2</sup>

As the church continues to be interested in the total person, that person’s total life experience, and helping each person toward meaningful, quality leisure experiences in life, an increasing concern for leisure education can be expected. . . . It should be kept in mind that the church has many thousands of years’ experience in helping people from all social strata find life and find it more abundantly.<sup>3</sup>

The first quotation, from Witold Rybczynski’s book *Waiting for the Weekend*, suggests that there is conceptual confusion in our society about what leisure is. The second quotation, from author Kathleen Norris, reflects that the practice of leisure in our society is less than ideal, in terms of both quality and quantity. The third quotation, from a textbook on leisure education, implies that the Christian church with its many years of experience has much to offer in regard to leisure. This book is an exploration of how Christians and the church can address the phenomenon of leisure in contemporary society. In this introduction, after outlining societal changes related to leisure, I present four reasons why Christians should explore this topic—possible problems with current leisure practice, potential benefits of leisure, leisure as a spiritual need, and the lack of theological reflection on leisure—and then provide the methodological approach that will be used to explore the topic, along with an overview of the book.

## Societal Changes Related to Leisure

While leisure is not a unique phenomenon of contemporary society, modern social scientists have observed that leisure presents Western society with a situation that is historically unique. As a result, the last few decades have witnessed a tremendous growth in the field of leisure studies and leisure research.

This growing interest in the subject of leisure has been generated by *structural* changes in industrial society that have influenced the number of hours devoted to work. While there is a debate, which we will explore in more detail in chapter 2, as to whether work hours have been increasing or decreasing over the past few decades, over the long term the number of hours devoted to work during a week, a year, and a lifetime has decreased substantially. In the United States, the number of hours of work per employed person decreased 46 percent from 1870 to 1992.<sup>4</sup> Based on approximately the same time period, it has been estimated that during the 120 years from 1870 to 1990, the “waking leisure” hours of U.S. citizens increased threefold.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, in the United Kingdom, a study of lifetime hours discovered that the amount of time devoted to work has decreased from approximately 50 percent to 20 percent in the past 150 years.<sup>6</sup> Turning to Canada, in 1850 most Canadians spent approximately sixty-four hours per week on the job, whereas over a hundred years later, in 1981, Canadians worked about 38.5 hours per week.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the amount of work in one’s lifetime reflected a growing trend toward nonwork due to later entry into the labor force, earlier retirement, greater unemployment, and longer paid holidays. These changing patterns of work in Canadian society were influenced by a number of factors, including labor-saving technology, the influence of the labor movement, and government intervention to protect workers from inadequate conditions. Thus residents of North America and Britain enjoy many more hours of time free from work than their nineteenth-century predecessors.

While we enjoy more hours of free time than those living in the mid-nineteenth century, it needs to be pointed out that the nineteenth century was somewhat of an aberration. Sebastian de Grazia observed that, compared to ancient Rome and medieval Europe, “free time today suffers by comparison, and leisure even more.”<sup>8</sup> In classical antiquity and the Middle Ages there were approximately 115 holidays, or “holy days,” a year. While some people worked long hours in those eras, this was usually only during certain seasons of the year. Winter months were not as busy and unfavorable weather often provided a break from work. The workday for most urban citizens was short. For example, in ancient Rome afternoons were usually devoted to social and recreational activities, and almost no one worked at night. Our assumption of how much more free time we have compared to earlier societies is distorted by the influence of the Industrial Revolution. As we will see in more detail in chapter 8, industrialization dramatically increased the length of the working day for most people. Undoubtedly we have much more free time than those who worked in nineteenth-century factories, but from the longer perspective, much of this increase in free time over the past one hundred years has only rectified the abnormal situation brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

The structural changes in society since the mid-nineteenth century have been accompanied by shifts in *values* and *attitudes*. A leading American leisure studies scholar, Geoffrey Godbey, wrote, “Leisure has become an increasingly

expected and important part of people's lives in modern nations."<sup>9</sup> Theologian J. I. Packer came to a similar conclusion: "As it appears, leisure and luxury are becoming the main interests of the Western world."<sup>10</sup>

In a chapter titled "The Increasingly Central Role of Free Time in Modern Nations," Godbey explained,

While the "work ethic" is supported almost everywhere and, in particular, held up as a way to get ahead economically, leisure and its use is increasingly replacing work as the center of social arrangements. Monetary spending for leisure increases, the use of federal land increasingly is for leisure purposes, resorts fill up, major professional sports events routinely sell out, participation in avocational organizations shows overall increases, gardening surges, sports bars are crowded, and the leisure use of libraries, museums, and botanical gardens increases.<sup>11</sup>

Chris Rojek, Susan Shaw, and Anthony James Veal have put forward a number of indicators that together coalesce to "magnify the centrality of leisure in contemporary Western lifestyle."<sup>12</sup> First are increased academic programs and students in leisure studies. Second, more governmental, market, vocational, and professional resources are devoted to leisure forms and practice. Third, there is greater appreciation of leisure's relationship to quality of life issues, such as the connections between popular eating and drinking leisure activities and illness and mortality, as well as the role of leisure activities in reducing stress and tension and the place of physical leisure activities in facilitating health. Fourth is the spreading of consumer culture. The fifth indicator showing that leisure is central to our lifestyle is changes in working patterns, including the casualization of work, the increase in flexible working hours, and fixed term and part-time work. Rojek, Shaw, and Veal concluded that "paid labour is now commonly viewed as the means to finance leisure choice and practice rather than" the central life interest.<sup>13</sup> However, they noted that leisure is not, nor will become, life's primary activity as work remains a very important source of value.<sup>14</sup> Writing within the Canadian context, Margo Hilbrecht suggested that it is inconclusive as to whether leisure has replaced work as people's central life interest.

What about leisure replacing work as a central life interest? Certainly, this is the case for some, particularly those who enjoy a serious leisure pursuit. . . . It may also be true for people who find themselves in monotonous, dead-end jobs and who have adopted the compensatory approach to leisure. Even though this may be the situation for some workers, there are others whose jobs remain satisfying and engaging and who may even become completely absorbed by their work.<sup>15</sup>

More recently, Hilbrecht wrote that "work continues to dominate most people's lives and remains a central life interest and necessity for much of the population" for a variety of reasons, including extrinsic monetary rewards, the opportunity

for self-esteem and identity development, and the character of the work itself.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, there is much evidence to suggest that the value and desirability of leisure has increased in recent decades.

After noting the increased significance of leisure in people's lives, Godbey argued that there needs to be a more organized effort to prepare people, and especially children and youth, for leisure. He sees this as the responsibility of families, educational institutions, and other social institutions. Of particular relevance for this study is his mention of religious organizations playing a role in leisure education. In addition to preparing people for leisure, he emphasized that there "needs to be a more general recognition of the importance of leisure as a powerful force for good or evil."<sup>17</sup> As we will see later in this introduction, leisure outcomes are not always beneficial; they can also be detrimental.

## Possible Problems of Leisure Practice

Christians who seek to be salt and light in contemporary culture cannot remain silent about the changing structural and attitudinal realities but must articulate an understanding of the meaning of leisure and its relationship to work in today's society. Packer wrote,

All around the world, as capitalist consumerism and the market economy grind on, . . . leisure and lifestyle are becoming areas of entrapment for Christian people. Failure to see this is a fact, to perceive it as a problem, to think about it in biblical antithesis to the ruling secular notions, and to plan to operate as God's counter-culture in these areas would indicate that we are already falling into the traps.<sup>18</sup>

Defining leisure as discretionary time, Packer went on to identify three problems in relation to contemporary leisure practice. First is the problem of idolatry or the worshiping of false gods. He suggested that some people worship their work, while others worship their leisure activities, whether they be gardening, reading, music, hobbies, sports, or vacations. Thus rather than serving God, people are serving and worshiping created things (Rom. 1:25). Second is the problem of hedonism, where pleasure is pursued as life's supreme value and goal. Packer suggested that many professing Christians do not question the assumption that leisure is wholly for increasing one's pleasure. Elsewhere he has written, "Today the love of luxury and the pull of pleasure are more intensely felt than at any time in Christendom. . . . The quest for pleasure—intellectual, sensual, aesthetic, gastronomic, alcoholic, narcissistic—is one aspect of . . . Western decadence."<sup>19</sup> Third is the problem of utilitarianism, where the value of an activity is determined by the degree to which the activity is productive and useful, rather than seeing the intrinsic value of the activity. From a utilitarian perspective, leisure is to "re-create" a person to work more productively. Packer explained that while leisure activities should have intrinsic value for Christians,

the Christian work ethic is sometimes presented as a form of workaholism that overlooks the biblical teaching that God “richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Tim. 6:17). Leisure time is necessary for this enjoyment.

This third problem of utilitarianism identified by Packer is supported by the findings of a PhD thesis by Margaret Hothem, who interviewed ten theologians at an evangelical Protestant seminary on the relationship between their Christian faith and leisure.<sup>20</sup> Leisure for these participants often had a utilitarian role, although not necessarily in regard to work. Rather, the functions of leisure were related to reward, exercise, family obligations, and change of activity. Leisure was not an end in itself or an ideal state of being, but rather it was primarily viewed for its utilitarian value.

In the past, of the three leisure-related problems identified by Packer, utilitarianism was probably the one most prevalent among Christians and Christianity. Protestant Christianity has traditionally identified itself with the work ethic. Packer noted that evangelical Christians have emphasized work over leisure, activity over rest, and life commitments over lifestyle choices, with little theological reflection on leisure.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Paul Stevens wrote, “Good Christians are active in the church, and are known for their sacrificial activity rather than their experience of rest.”<sup>22</sup>

Thus contemporary Christians have inherited a set of moral and religious values in which work is frequently conferred universal and unqualified value. Not only is work often considered the foundation of our economic system, but it is offered as a solution to personal and social problems. Activity, industry, individualism, thrift, ambition, and success have been regarded as important virtues, with work considered to be the criterion for measuring human worth. In this value system there is a diminishment of the leisure experience. This emphasis on work is consistent with my experience of teaching courses at Christian educational institutions or giving workshops at churches on a Christian view of leisure. Usually I begin these sessions by asking the students or participants why they are taking the course or participating in the workshop. In most cases the responses include concerns about working too much and being burned out and stressed but at the same time feeling guilty for taking time for rest and leisure activities. These responses personify the title of Tim Hansel’s very helpful book, *When I Relax I Feel Guilty*.<sup>23</sup>

In present society the possibility exists that for some Christians, as suggested by Gordon Dahl,<sup>24</sup> the pendulum might swing from an overvaluing of the work ethic to an overvaluing of a leisure ethic, where the concern is now with the first two problems identified by Packer—idolatry and hedonism. Although acknowledging that commitment to Christian service, achievement, and work is strong in most churches, Leland Ryken pointed out the opposite problem where some Christians are so preoccupied with pursuing leisure activities that they are not available to serve in the church, and sports and television have made the Sunday evening service obsolete.<sup>25</sup> A similar observation is made by Karl

Johnson in the concluding sentence of his PhD thesis, titled “From Sabbath to Weekend”: “On Sunday many Christians are watching football or, as Shulevitz puts it, charting the shortest distance between their megachurch’s ATM and the mall.”<sup>26</sup> The challenge to contemporary Christians is to establish a biblical understanding of work and leisure and their relationship that is appropriate for twenty-first-century society. Alternatives to both the traditional work ethic that has dominated Christian life and to the hedonism and narcissism characteristic of some contemporary approaches to leisure need to be considered. A Christian perspective that acknowledges the creational mandate of work and yet finds value in leisure needs to be articulated.

## The Potential Benefits of Leisure

After identifying the problems with contemporary leisure practice, Packer went on, quoting Ryken, to state that leisure is something that should be valued by Christians.

All leisure . . . is a gift from God that, when used wisely, “provides rest, relaxation, enjoyment, and physical and psychic health. It allows people to recover the distinctly human values, to build relationships, to strengthen family ties, and to put themselves in touch with the world and nature. Leisure can lead to wholeness, gratitude, self-expression, self-fulfillment, creativity, personal growth, and a sense of achievement.” So leisure should be valued and not despised.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the reasons given in the above quotation of why leisure is to be valued by Christians are consistent with the notion of leisure benefits. Within the leisure and recreation field, during the last two decades much effort has been devoted to identifying and documenting the benefits of leisure activities, programs, and services. A benefit may be defined as “a *change* that is viewed to be advantageous—an improvement in condition, or a gain to an individual, a group, a society, or to another entity.”<sup>28</sup> The substantial textbook *Benefits of Leisure*, published in 1991, sought to provide an exhaustive list of leisure benefits along with a thorough assessment of the research that documents these benefits.<sup>29</sup> The following year *The Benefits of Parks and Recreation* documented four types of leisure benefits—personal, social, economic, and environmental.<sup>30</sup> This book was updated in 1997 and again in 2009 in a digital format called the Benefits Databank. One of the criticisms of the leisure benefits approach is that it tends to emphasize only the positive outcomes of leisure. While this is the case, in a retrospective chapter included in the 1991 *Benefits of Leisure* textbook, Roger Mannell and Daniel Stynes noted,

A full understanding of the beneficial consequences of leisure also requires knowledge about the detrimental consequences. Leisure choices involve both benefits

and costs to individuals and society. What may be seen as a benefit to one individual or social group may be a cost to another. One level of exercise may be a benefit, too much a cost.<sup>31</sup>

Rather than the “benefits of leisure,” it is probably more appropriate to use the terminology “outcomes of leisure,” which includes both beneficial and detrimental outcomes. Such an approach was taken in the World Leisure Organization’s 2006 *Hangzhou Consensus* that summarized a number of the empirically documented outcomes of leisure.<sup>32</sup> Table 1.1 summarizes some of the outcomes enumerated in this report. As can be seen, both beneficial and detrimental outcomes are recognized. Nevertheless there are numerous empirically documented beneficial outcomes in the following areas: social functioning; physical, psychological, and spiritual health and well-being; youth development; aging; family and community; the economy; and the environment. These outcomes support Packer’s claim, noted earlier, that leisure should be something that Christians value. Of particular interest for readers of this book may be the spiritual outcomes of leisure, which we will consider now.

**Table 1.1**  
**Selected Outcomes of Leisure from the *Hangzhou Consensus***

**Social Benefits**

- Leisure provides opportunities for family development, relationship building, and community bonding.
- Leisure provides opportunities for shared experiences, intimacy, and emotional closeness.
- Leisure provides opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.
- Leisure can create meaningful contributions to community.
- Places for leisure can develop connections with community and culture.
- Leisure spaces can encourage cultural resistance and resistance to stereotypes and other forms of social control.

**Health and Well-Being**

- Leisure, viewed as discretionary behavior outside of work and other obligations, positively influences physical, psychological, and spiritual health and well-being through opportunities for making meaningful choices and through the benefits provided by specific activities.

- Leisure is not automatically good for health and well-being. Leisure choices and activities can have neutral or negative impacts, and displace behaviours that contribute to health and well-being.
- The benefits of physically active leisure for physical health are scientifically well documented, and the evidence for the psychological health and well-being benefits of other forms of leisure is still emerging, ranging from reasonably well established to highly speculative.
- Some evidence exists that leisure involvements contribute to individual health and well-being by structuring free time and replacing idleness with constructive behavioral alternatives.
- Research suggests that fun and pleasurable leisure experiences not only enhance the quality of the present moment but cumulatively contribute to long-term psychological well-being.
- Leisure contributes to identity formation and affirmation, and the evidence suggests that

*Continued*

under some circumstances it may contribute to personal psychological growth.

- Good evidence is emerging that leisure can promote coping and personal growth in response to the stress of daily hassles and negative life events that include disability and illness.
- Leisure involvements have been found to contribute to health and well-being by positively influencing other domains of life, such as work, family, and interpersonal relationships. However, some types of leisure can negatively affect the quality of experience in these domains.

### **Youth Development**

- For youth, leisure can be a powerful context for human development, but at the same time it can be a context for risky behaviour; these may not be mutually exclusive.

### **Ageing**

- Leisure is a context within which individuals can distance themselves and resist ageist stereotypes but is also a context within which these stereotypes can be perpetuated.
- Although the relationships between leisure and ageing well are complex, leisure can provide meaningful opportunities for continued engagement in life—for being, becoming, and belonging—and is essential for ageing well.

- A growing body of research demonstrates that leisure is positively and significantly related to the physical, cognitive, emotional, psychological, and social well-being of older adults and can play an important role in coping with the stresses associated with life changes and transitions experienced in later life.

### **Family and Community**

- Leisure is a prominent component of family life and a primary context for the development of individuals' leisure aspirations, experiences, and competencies.
- Community leisure opportunities may contribute positively or negatively by challenging or reinforcing divides and inequalities.

### **The Economy**

- Leisure is a significant component of developed economies, accounting for around a quarter of consumer expenditure and a significant quantity of public sector resources.

### **The Environment**

- Leisure, recreation, and tourism contribute to the development of pro-environmental attitudes, values, ethics, and behaviours.
- Leisure, recreation, and tourism is an important basis (as economic and political justification and social mobilization) for the protection of natural, historical, and cultural resources and landscapes.

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Source: Edgar L. Jackson, ed., *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development: Hangzhou Consensus* (Hangzhou, China: Zhejiang University Press, 2006), 5, 13, 14, 15.

## **Leisure as a Spiritual Need**

Contemporary leisure scholars have made connections between leisure and spirituality. In discussing the spiritual orientation of leisure, James Murphy wrote, "Leisure may be viewed as that part of life which comes closest to freeing us. . . . It enables [people] to pursue self-expression, enlightenment, and [their] inner soul."<sup>33</sup> Stanley Parker noted, "Separated from . . . [a] spiritual view, the idea of recreation has the aimless circularity of simply restoring us to a state in which we can best continue our work."<sup>34</sup> Godbey stated that "recreation and leisure behaviour is ultimately infinite, nonrational, and full of meaning which is, or can be, spiritual."<sup>35</sup> "Leisure worthy of the name," Thomas Goodale wrote, "must be filled with purpose, compelled by love, and wrapped in the cosmic and spiritual."<sup>36</sup>

Not only have leisure studies scholars recognized the connection between leisure and spirituality, but religious writers have also acknowledged the role of

leisure in spiritual development and wellness. For example, in his book *Religion and Leisure in America*, Robert Lee wrote, “Leisure is the growing time of the human spirit.”<sup>37</sup> Gwen Wright stated that “creative leisure is viewed as a necessary component of a spirituality which provides the basis for wholeness in humans.”<sup>38</sup>

In his book *Leisure: A Spiritual Need*, Leonard Doohan, who defined leisure as “a mental and spiritual attitude, a condition of mind and soul,” made a very thorough case that leisure needs to be integrated into all dimensions of spirituality, because the crucial components of Christian spirituality require leisure.<sup>39</sup> A healthy spiritual life needs the healing dimension of leisure. For physical, psychic, social, and intellectual development we need to spend time with God in order to experience God in our life and in creation. Doohan stated, “To fail to see the value of simply being with God and ‘doing nothing’ is to miss the heart of Christianity. We need leisure to be with God.”<sup>40</sup> Leisure provides opportunities for the reflection, meditation, and interiorization needed to have a true rather than a distorted image of God. Leisure is also necessary for contemplation and prayer because preparation for growth in prayer is through leisure. Leisure develops our sense of mystery, awe, wonder, and appreciation so that we are open to the creative and ever new action of God. In addition to personal reflection and meditation, leisure provides opportunities for sharing with others that enables the church to grow in creative ways. Furthermore, social action and social justice require a leisure component, as authentic prophetic engagement results from reflection and contemplation, not just activity.

Doohan explained that it is in leisure that a person is prepared for encounters with God.<sup>41</sup> Faith overtly expresses itself in the relaxed focus of leisure. Not only is leisure necessary for the affirmation of faith, but it is also needed to experience what we believe and to nourish our faith.<sup>42</sup> In leisure circumstances, Jesus calls people to himself.<sup>43</sup> Doohan wrote,

Hurriedly moving in no direction, many people are numb to spiritual values. A leisurely approach to life is a basic element in the first stages of spiritual growth. Conversion is not possible without pause, rest, openness, appreciation of who the Lord Jesus is, reflection on the cross, awe and wonder at the resurrection.<sup>44</sup>

Leisure can be a preparatory step toward conversion, which begins a journey into God’s rest.

Leisure, argued Doohan, is not an optional component of spirituality but rather an essential component that needs to be reintegrated into contemporary Christianity to facilitate human maturity and counterbalance the pressures of contemporary life.<sup>45</sup> Authentic leisure, claimed Doohan, inspires spiritual growth, re-creative self-enrichment, relaxation and rest. “No authentic spirituality exists without leisure.”<sup>46</sup> Drawing on the writings of Teresa of Avila, Doohan pointed out that the recognition of the importance of leisure for spiritual growth and development is an insight that is not new.<sup>47</sup>

Doohan suggested that a leisured approach to life, characterized by reflection, a sense of wonder, openness, appreciation of the works of God, and the acceptance of life as a gift, is essential to both the early and later stages of spiritual growth, and this is especially the case for those who are busy.<sup>48</sup> Twentieth-century Christianity has tended to stress pietistic practices, apostolic action, the work ethic, and human effort, while neglecting the more contemplative, leisurely, and passive dimensions of life. Christian spirituality has overemphasized work and action. However, leisure unmasks our exaggerated efforts at religious and personal growth and exposes our false spiritual attitudes that do not give sufficient emphasis to the activity of God within us. Given the character of God's grace, leisure is the main form of preparing for one's initial and continuing encounters with God.<sup>49</sup> In sum, "spirituality requires a leisured approach to life."<sup>50</sup>

In the twenty years since Doohan's book was published, there has been increasing empirical literature on leisure and spirituality. Although only a few studies in this body of literature are specifically on Christian spirituality, these few studies document the benefits of leisure for Christian spiritual growth. For example, in a qualitative study on the role of leisure in the spirituality of New Paradigm Christians (defined as those who go to New Paradigm churches—seeker churches that have a contemporary style of service geared especially to those who are not members of the church), Jennifer Livengood found the following: solitary and quiet leisure activities provided opportunities to pray and focus on God; social leisure activities with both Christians and non-Christians were considered spiritual experiences; interactions with Christian friends provided the opportunity to grow spiritually; and leisure in natural settings provided opportunities to encounter God and to experience God's creation.<sup>51</sup> My study on the spiritual impact of a wilderness canoe trip by a men's church group found that the main impact of the trip was spiritual friendships among the men, which were facilitated by conversations on the trip, an openness among the group members because it was a men's-only group, being in the wilderness that was viewed as God's creation, and the opportunity to get away from the distractions of everyday life to focus on spirituality.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, in a study of new Christians in Holland, leisure activities were seen as opportunities to focus on developing relationships with God and other Christians.<sup>53</sup> These relatively recent empirical studies seem to confirm Doohan's emphasis on the importance of leisure to spiritual growth and development.

## Need for Theological Reflection on Leisure

While Christians, particularly since the Reformation, have produced a large body of theological literature to provide ethical guidance with respect to work, there is a paucity of theological and ethical guidance on leisure. We are confronted with what Lee called a "theological lag," in that theological and ethical thinking

lags behind social and technological change.<sup>54</sup> The evangelical theologians interviewed in Hothem's PhD thesis on Christian faith and leisure acknowledged that the church and Christian educational institutions have generally been silent on topics related to the theology and ethics of leisure.<sup>55</sup> A number of the theologians in the study explained that they had not previously thought very much about leisure ethics and that churches have not provided much education on leisure. As recently as 2012, Ben Witherington III observed that there was hardly any ethical and theological discussion from a biblical perspective on topics such as rest and play and their importance in Christian life.<sup>56</sup>

Why is it important to consider a theology of leisure? Drawing on Edward Fitzgerald's comment that the little theological attention that has been given to leisure has led to an incomplete theology of the other dimensions of Christian living,<sup>57</sup> Doohan stated that theological reflection on leisure is vital for an adequate theological foundation for Christian living, including Christian spirituality, in today's contemporary society.<sup>58</sup> Without a theology of leisure, Christian understandings of leisure may merely reflect secular understandings of leisure. In a study of Australians, John Schulz and Chris Auld found that "agreement with the orthodox beliefs of Christianity did not affect the meanings individuals associated with leisure,"<sup>59</sup> and thus leisure meanings for Christians were not that much different from the rest of the population. (This lack of difference might also be explained by methodological reasons related to how the study was designed and implemented, as well as the use in the study of leisure meanings—for example, leisure as exercising choice or escaping pressure—rather than traditional leisure concepts—for example, leisure time, leisure activity.) James Houston pointed out that far too often the Christian conception of leisure, as a pause between work and more work, is a secular notion of leisure.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Dahl, who was a Lutheran campus minister, believed that the problem with most attempts to develop a Christian understanding of leisure is that they have generally begun with conventional notions of leisure, such as leisure as free time.<sup>61</sup> Christians have frequently understood leisure principally in terms of its juxtaposition to work—as rest or reward from work.

Dahl believed that since there is not a clear Christian understanding of leisure, the first step must be one of conceptual reconstruction.<sup>62</sup> In recent decades Christians have begun to develop a more thorough philosophy of leisure. Foundational work was done in the mid-twentieth century by Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher Josef Pieper in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, which described leisure as an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul that is rooted in divine worship.<sup>63</sup> The 1960s witnessed two books written by American Protestants. Lee, in *Religion and Leisure in America*,<sup>64</sup> illustrated how human time and God's eternity are connected in the Christian use of leisure, while Rudolf Norden's book *The Christian Encounters the New Leisure* argued that Christian vocation encompasses both God's call to leisure and to work.<sup>65</sup>

Christian reflections on leisure were more prevalent in the 1970s and the 1980s perhaps because of the prediction at that time of a leisure society that has not really materialized. Dahl, author of *Work, Play and Worship in a Leisure-Oriented Society*, conceived of leisure as a *qualitative* aspect of human life: a Christian experiences leisure when he or she comes into complete awareness of the freedom found in Christ.<sup>66</sup> David Spence, in *Towards a Theology of Leisure with Special Reference to Creativity*, suggested that “leisure is the opportunity and capacity to experience the eternal, to sense the grace and peace which lifts us beyond our daily schedules.”<sup>67</sup> Harold Lehman, a Mennonite scholar who wrote *In Praise of Leisure*, saw leisure as God’s gift that takes on many different dimensions.<sup>68</sup> Writing on the related topic of play in his book *The Christian at Play*, theologian of culture Robert Johnston stated that the style of life God intended for us includes both work and play in a crucial balance and creative rhythm.<sup>69</sup> John Oswalt, an Old Testament scholar, explored leisure through the themes of creation, grace, freedom, worship, and the Christian’s calling in his book *The Leisure Crisis: A Biblical Perspective on Guilt-Free Leisure*.<sup>70</sup> Jeanne Sherrow, a leisure studies scholar, in her book *It’s About Time: A Look at Leisure, Lifestyle, and Christianity*, maintained that leisure is time that God has given Christians to make a difference in themselves, in day-to-day living, in relationships, and in the world.<sup>71</sup> Ryken, in *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*, emphasized leisure primarily in terms of recreation or activity and within a rhythm to life that involves a balance of work and leisure.<sup>72</sup> Roman Catholic theologian Doohan, in *Leisure: A Spiritual Need*, argued that leisure is a spiritual attitude that must be integrated into every aspect of our lives in order to make us more fully human and more fully Christian.<sup>73</sup> Not only are most of these books out of print but much of the social scientific data on leisure trends and issues included in them are now dated.

Since 1990 fewer books have been written on Christian perspectives of leisure, although there have been a few excellent essays on the topic, such as those by Packer<sup>74</sup> and Douglas Joblin.<sup>75</sup> Ryken’s 1987 book was revised and republished in 1995.<sup>76</sup> A collection of academic essays on a range of leisure topics, presented at the annual conference of what is now called the Christian Society for Kinesiology and Leisure Studies, was published in 1994 and republished in 2006.<sup>77</sup> In 2004 British churchman Graham Neville published *Free Time: Towards a Theology of Leisure*, composed of eight essays that offer a theological reassessment of leisure based on the expansion of free time in contemporary society.<sup>78</sup> Most recently, in 2012 New Testament scholar Witherington wrote *The Rest of Life: Rest, Play, Eating, Studying, Sex from a Kingdom Perspective*. As suggested by the title, Witherington’s book includes chapters on rest and play but does not directly address the topic of leisure.<sup>79</sup>

This book builds on these previous books and in particular unites Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions of leisure through a holistic approach that also brings a Christian perspective to the leisure studies literature and research. For example, this book interacts with the most recent ideas and issues in the leisure

studies field, such as the psychological state-of-mind view of leisure, feminist perspectives on leisure, serious leisure, casual leisure, and project-based leisure. Furthermore, the book makes connections between leisure and spirituality that are not a significant focus of previous books, other than Doohan's.<sup>80</sup>

At least seven understandings of leisure have been identified by contemporary scholars in the field of leisure studies: (1) the classical view of leisure as a state of being; (2) leisure as non-work activity; (3) leisure as free time; (4) leisure as a symbol of social class; (5) leisure as a psychological experience or state of mind; (6) feminist understandings of leisure as enjoyment; and (7) the holistic view of leisure. This book, in an attempt to continue to clarify and to develop a fuller understanding of the concept of leisure from a Christian perspective for our time, will take the position that none of these seven concepts is essentially or exclusively a Christian concept. Rather, more than one of these concepts may be descriptive of a Christian understanding of leisure. In particular, based on Christianity's biblical and theological heritage, a holistic concept of leisure will be argued for: one that combines the classical state-of-being concept of Augustine, Aquinas, medieval monasticism, and more recent Roman Catholic scholars, with the Protestant understanding of leisure as non-work activity.

## Methodology and Overview of Book

Methodologically this book will proceed from the premise that the theological task "consists of an ongoing dialogue between biblical, traditional and contemporary sources."<sup>81</sup> While this process will be submitted to the authority of Scripture, it is necessary to interact with the realities and ideas of contemporary culture, and also to learn from the twenty centuries of Christian history and tradition. Thus this book will begin with an examination of the contemporary leisure situation and moves on to a survey of the concept of leisure throughout history before discussing possible biblical background to the leisure concept.

The book consists of six parts and an epilogue. Part 1 examines leisure within the contemporary cultural context of Western industrial society in general and North American society in particular. First, the major concepts currently used to define leisure will be outlined. The seven concepts of leisure, identified above, will be presented as a useful guide for our thinking. These concepts will then provide a framework in which we can both analyze the approaches to leisure throughout history and discuss the biblical backgrounds to the concept of leisure. Second, current issues and trends in leisure practice will be summarized.

Part 2 focuses on the historical background to the concept of leisure. The contemporary meanings of leisure can be better understood when placed in historical perspective. Within the scope of this book, it will be impossible to review comprehensively the history of the leisure concept, and thus only a brief historical survey of leisure will be given with particular focus on two historical

conceptions of leisure that have been predominant throughout Christian history: (1) the state-of-being view of leisure as developed in Greek culture and adapted in the contemplative life of medieval monasticism; and (2) the Protestant view of leisure as non-work time and activity that was often conceived as reward for past work or recreation that refreshes for future work.

In order to interact Christianly with both contemporary and historical concepts of leisure, and to develop an adequate Christian perspective on the philosophy of leisure, it is necessary to enter into “the systematic hermeneutical task of appropriating the meaning of the biblical message for today’s world.”<sup>82</sup> Thus part 3 consists of a review of the biblical record in the hope of uncovering insights into a biblical understanding of leisure. Although there is not a fully developed theology of leisure in the Bible, various writers have identified a number of biblical elements that may guide us in our understanding of leisure today. This part of the book will primarily focus on two of these elements that are essential to the development of a Christian understanding of leisure: (1) the principle of Sabbath rest reflective of the Old Testament idea of rhythm to life; and (2) the concept of rest that is characteristic of the quality of life available in Jesus Christ. However, other biblical words and themes related to leisure will also be explored.

A Christian philosophy of leisure cannot be arrived at in isolation but must include a treatment of the biblical doctrine of work. Therefore part 4 looks at the concept of work with particular reference to the concept of leisure. The place of work in contemporary society will be discussed, the history of work reviewed, and the biblical doctrine of work examined.

Part 5 is a Christian perspective on the philosophy of leisure, arising from the synthesis of biblical, historical, and contemporary sources in parts 1–4, and will be developed through a four-stage process. First, beginning with the biblical material, it will be argued that the biblical idea of rhythm in life supports the Protestant view of leisure as non-work time or activity that refreshes and restores, while the concept of rest reflective of the quality of life offered in Jesus Christ provides support for what has historically been called the classical state-of-being view of leisure. Second, it will be argued that the classical and Protestant views of leisure are not mutually exclusive but together provide a comprehensive, holistic view of leisure. Third, an identity approach to the relationship between work and leisure, consistent with the holistic view of leisure, will be argued for. Fourth, the ethics of leisure will be examined.

Given that the classical understanding of leisure as a state of being and a spiritual attitude is central to the concept of leisure developed in part 5, part 6 explores the relationship between leisure and spirituality, in particular the leisure-spiritual processes that link leisure with spiritual well-being and a model that explores leisure-spiritual coping (that is, spiritual coping that exists within the context of one’s leisure). I will illustrate the leisure-spiritual coping model using a case study that describes my own experience of cancer. Finally, the epilogue provides a brief summary of the theology of leisure presented in the book.

part 1

# leisure in contemporary society



Paul Heintzman, *Leisure and Spirituality*  
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# concepts of leisure

To develop a Christian understanding of leisure for today it is necessary to understand the philosophical ideas about leisure and leisure-related practices in contemporary culture. This chapter will first briefly discuss current issues in the philosophy of leisure, and then explain the major concepts currently used to define leisure. The next chapter will review current trends and issues related to leisure.

## Issues in the Philosophy of Leisure

In present society to some degree, and especially among certain subcultures, there has been a swing of the pendulum from the work ethic to a leisure ethic. Dahl identified the possible danger “that the generation which has shattered the idols of work will be tempted to bow down before the gods of play—sacrificing their new freedom and dignity upon the altars of pleasure in liturgies of distraction and frivolous pursuits.”<sup>1</sup> More recently Neville wrote that “leisure is in danger of being taken over by what has been called a ‘fun morality.’”<sup>2</sup> Although work may still be the central life interest of most people, the work ethic is being replaced to some extent, or at least augmented or altered, by a new leisure ethic: people who do not receive satisfaction from their work search for a deeper meaning in other activities.

Within this context it is important to consider how we go about understanding leisure. Francis Bregha, in a thought-provoking article titled “Philosophy of Leisure: Unanswered Questions,” wrote,

More and more people are occupying their leisure with a bewildering variety of acts and deeds that leave their trace on their neighbours and communities. . . . As our society is undergoing multiple transformations, the very pace of change

creating tension and confusion, the ethics of leisure acquires also a developmental importance. Where are we heading? In a deliberately jaundiced view, one can offer a disturbing diagnosis: Resources are vanishing. Education fails to educate. Religions are being replaced by narcissistic cults. Bureaucracies keep cloning themselves. Culture and pornography grow indistinguishable. Wealth coagulates in ever fewer hands. Creativity and productivity are declining. Contraception undercuts the will to perpetuate. . . . No need to go on. Even if half of such statements were true, there would be enough reason to be concerned. Leisure, caught in a web of these mutually reinforcing trends, risks then to become an exercise in collective hedonism. Much of it can be swept with the growing current of general corruption.<sup>3</sup>

Thus alternatives to the hedonism and narcissism characteristic of many contemporary approaches to leisure need to be considered. Again we turn to Bregha, who wrote, “It is therefore quite evident that leisure, in addition to its individual and collective morality, is inviting us to a philosophical discussion of its destination. What is its meaning within the complexity of the historical changes surrounding us? What is it that leisure should protect and improve? What should leisure resist and avoid?”<sup>4</sup>

The crucial question is: Where do we start in our philosophical discussion of leisure? Bregha again: “Once more we are facing the initial philosophical difficulty. Mankind can possibly be understood biologically, physically, even chemically. When the task is to explain it philosophically, we must call in an outside principle, such as God, Reason, historical determinism or nature.”<sup>5</sup> What is to be our starting point or principle? Bregha viewed this as “the basic difficulty in the formulation of leisure’s philosophy.”<sup>6</sup> In the past, leisure was seen within the context of the divine. In another essay Bregha wrote,

Leisure’s link to religion has been gradually weakened as religious festivities, rites and feasts occupy less and less of a place in our lives. Instead, modern technology has multiplied the means available for the pursuit of secular leisure while saying very little about their value or moral direction. It should be clear that we are possibly the first generation that faces a peculiar problem in regard to our leisure. As long as leisure found its origin in God and its expression in partaking in worship, its morality was beyond reproach. Now that a divorce has taken place and leisure is linked to freedom rather than God, a vast question mark as to its ultimate purpose is before us. Who is to guide us through the maze of good and evil now that God is absent and freedom is perceived in many ways?<sup>7</sup>

Bregha concluded his essay,

Leisure itself still depends as much on the knowledge and wisdom entering into our options, on our ability to choose goals that will bring us happiness, on our inner strength and independence that affirm our unique character, and finally on an environment that is conducive to leisure because it offers peace, per chance beauty and quiet enjoyment.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4 ——— leisure in contemporary society

Paul Heintzman, *Leisure and Spirituality*

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This approach to discussing leisure is thoroughly humanistic in that it places humans at the center: leisure depends on human “knowledge and wisdom,” a human’s “ability to choose goals,” and a human’s “inner strength and independence.” However, for a Christian, as Doohan pointed out, “a humanistic approach to life is not enough to ensure the fruits of leisure.”<sup>9</sup> Rather, any philosophical discussion of leisure must naturally be carried out within the context of the divine. While society has divorced leisure from God, the Christian asserts that the ultimate purpose of leisure can be found only when it is again linked to God, for God is Creator and Lord of our lives. If God is not therefore acknowledged as the Lord of leisure, then we cannot develop an adequate and meaningful philosophy of leisure.

However, Bregha saw the attempt to develop a philosophy of leisure in association with something else (in our case, God) as having two specific dangers. First, it “leads to the paradox of subordinating leisure, once isolated as a state or an activity, to other, presumably higher ends—i.e., God, happiness.”<sup>10</sup> Then leisure becomes simply an instrument or a technique. The second danger in formulating a philosophy of leisure by connecting it to some other solitary value or phenomenon lies in “forgetting that if there is to be a philosophy of leisure, it must of necessity be part of a general philosophy of life and coherent with it.”<sup>11</sup>

These two dangers outlined by Bregha, if they really are dangers at all, can be resolved only when leisure is brought under the sovereignty of God, for if leisure is not brought under the sovereignty of God, it will then be brought under the sovereignty of humans and become subservient to human purposes. When leisure is linked to God, then the second danger will also be overcome, for God is sovereign over all life, and when leisure is linked to God, it will then be seen within the whole totality of life under the sovereignty of God.

Therefore it is essential for Christians to begin any consideration of the philosophy of leisure with the recognition that leisure must be God-centered and God-directed. How do we proceed from this starting point? If leisure is to be God-centered, then our philosophy of leisure must be informed by God’s revelation to humanity through his Word; thus Scripture is our final authority in developing a Christian philosophy of leisure. However, as we saw in the introduction, since the theological task “consists of an ongoing dialogue between biblical, traditional and contemporary sources,”<sup>12</sup> it is necessary to interact with the realities and ideas of contemporary culture and also learn from twenty centuries of Christian history and tradition. Thus the remainder of this chapter will be a review of the main leisure concepts.

## Concepts of Leisure

Imagine . . . the bewilderment a naïve researcher suffers when discovering leisure may be free time, freedom, an activity, a state of mind, or a license of some sort.

Grasping the meaning of leisure is sufficiently frustrating that our innocent colleague might prudently move onto a seemingly simpler concept. . . . [L]eisure studies is plagued by conceptual confusion.<sup>13</sup>

Much time is spent in leisure sciences and leisure studies trying to define leisure. Theorists puzzle over the meaning of leisure, but no single conceptualization emerges for it or for the related terms “recreation” and “play.” Definitions of leisure abound. In this chapter I will not eliminate all the confusion, but hopefully by the end of the chapter you will be able to understand the major ways that leisure has been defined in the Western world. Since North American society is increasingly multicultural, I will very briefly introduce “non-Western” examples of the leisure concepts discussed, keeping in mind that we need to be cautious when equating non-Western views and words with Western views. My approach in this chapter will be historical in that I will start with earlier understandings of leisure, then illustrate how the concept of leisure has evolved over time. A historical perspective helps us to understand how past ideas and events have shaped current ideas about leisure.

In the third edition of his textbook *Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*, Richard Kraus identified five concepts of leisure: the classical view of leisure, leisure as non-work activity, leisure as free time, leisure as a symbol of social class, and the holistic view of leisure.<sup>14</sup> In *Concepts of Leisure: Philosophical Implications*, James Murphy thoroughly elaborated on these five concepts of leisure along with one other, the anti-utilitarian concept of leisure.<sup>15</sup> A more recent chapter, titled “Defining Leisure,” does not include the anti-utilitarian concept but includes two recent leisure concepts: leisure as a state-of-mind or psychological experience and feminist leisure as meaningful experience.<sup>16</sup> This section will briefly review these seven concepts of leisure, which are summarized as follows:

Concept	Key Idea(s)
Classical Leisure	A state of being; an attitude
Leisure as Activity	Non-work activity
Leisure as Free Time	Time after work and existence tasks
Leisure as a Symbol of Social Class	Conspicuous consumption
Leisure as a State of Mind	An optimal psychological experience
Feminist Leisure	Meaningful experience; enjoyment
Holistic Leisure	Leisure in all of life

### *The Classical View of Leisure: Leisure as a State of Being*

The classical view emphasizes “contemplation, enjoyment of self in search of knowledge, debate, politics, and cultural enlightenment.”<sup>17</sup> According to Kraus,

it is “a spiritual and mental attitude, a state of inward calm, contemplation, serenity, and openness.”<sup>18</sup> David Gray summarized the classical view of leisure as “pursuit of truth and self-understanding. It is an act of aesthetic, psychological, religious and philosophical contemplation.”<sup>19</sup> As such, leisure is engaged in for its own sake and not for another purpose. Understood in this sense, leisure involves a certain state of being, blessedness, or attitude. In contrast to contemporary Western society that often relates leisure to mechanical or clock time, leisure is a qualitative state of being; it is, like love, a condition of being, unrelated to time.

“Classical” refers to ancient civilizations, and in the Western world it refers to the view of leisure in ancient societies, such as Greece and Rome. The classical view of leisure associated with the “cultivation of self” notion arose in ancient Greece where leisure was regarded as the highest value of life and work was disdained. The ancient Greek word *scholē*, which means “leisure,” was a state of being that implied freedom or the absence of the necessity of being occupied. In ancient Greece there were clear distinctions between work, recreation, and leisure: work was a means to provide for life’s needs; recreation was rest from work; and leisure was the noblest pursuit in life. The ideal lifestyle consisted of leisure, but this lifestyle depended on a society where slaves, who made up 80 percent of the population, did most of the work. Since the upper classes in Greek society were not required to work, they were free to engage in such pursuits as art, politics, the business of government, law, debate, philosophical discussion, contemplation, and the enjoyment of self in search of knowledge—in general, the opportunity for spiritual, intellectual, and cultural learning and enlightenment. Thus in the ancient Greek view leisure was the basis of culture. Much of this understanding of leisure is based on the writings of Aristotle, which we will look at in more detail in chapter 3. Although Aristotle’s view of leisure has received much attention, his view reflected that of aristocratic philosophers; a variety of other perspectives on leisure probably existed in ancient Greek society.<sup>20</sup>

While a criticism of the Greek ideal of leisure was that it was based on a society supported by slavery, the classical view, as it developed and evolved over time, did not necessarily continue to be associated with slavery. In Roman society *otium*, the Latin word for “leisure,” was linked to contemplation and freedom. The Greek ideal was modified in early Christianity, where leisure became associated with the contemplative or spiritual life. As we will see in chapter 3, this Christianized understanding of the classical view is evident in medieval monasticism, as well as in the writings of Augustine (354–440), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), and more recently of Pieper, a twentieth-century Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher who defined leisure as “a mental and spiritual attitude . . . a condition of the soul . . . a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude” in his book *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*.<sup>21</sup>

Like Pieper, de Grazia, in his book *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, brought attention to the classical view in the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> Both viewed leisure as

“a condition or state of being, a condition of the soul, which is divorced from time.”<sup>23</sup> De Grazia also emphasized that leisure should not necessarily be equated with free time, since anyone may have free time, but not everyone has leisure. For de Grazia leisure was an ideal: “Leisure refers to a state of being, a condition of man, which few desire and fewer achieve.”<sup>24</sup>

Today, the classical view of leisure is advocated by many in the Roman Catholic tradition—which is not surprising since the classical view is consistent with Roman Catholic teaching<sup>25</sup>—such as Doohan,<sup>26</sup> Dennis Billy,<sup>27</sup> Thomas DuBay,<sup>28</sup> James O’Rourke,<sup>29</sup> Joseph Teaff,<sup>30</sup> and by some (such as Douglas Steere<sup>31</sup>) in other Christian traditions who, like Pieper, see leisure as a spiritual attitude. The classical view is also espoused by leisure scholars who see value in Aristotelian philosophy. For example, Charles Sylvester emphasized that classical leisure, unlike some more recent concepts of leisure, involves the virtue of moral judgment; it is important to use leisure rightly.<sup>32</sup> John Hemingway highlighted that Aristotle viewed leisure as the arena through which an individual developed character and participated in the affairs of the community.<sup>33</sup>

The classical Western view of leisure has some similarities with the classical Hindu view of leisure.<sup>34</sup> In Hinduism a distinction is made between *Pravritti*, the active life, and *Nivritti*, the contemplative life, which is associated with leisure. *Nishkam-karma-yoga*, or inner leisure, is characterized by a relaxing peace and a mind free from turmoil.

### *Leisure as Activity*

The leisure as activity view may be defined as “non-work activity in which people engage during their free time—apart from their obligations of work, family and society.”<sup>35</sup> Historically, the activity view of leisure was usually a utilitarian view; that is, the activity was engaged in to achieve a benefit, such as physical health. An example that illustrates this view’s utilitarian nature is this definition of leisure from the International Study Group on Leisure and Social Sciences: “Leisure consists of a number of occupations in which the individual may indulge of his own free will—either to rest, to amuse himself, to add to his knowledge and improve his skills disinterestedly and to increase his voluntary participation in the life of the community after discharging his professional, family and social duties.”<sup>36</sup> As indicated by the last phrase of this definition, leisure has often been considered subservient to work and associated with a rhythm to life of work and recreation that is often based around the organization of work. The opportunity to engage in leisure activities is scheduled around the dominant and primary element in the rhythm—that is, work. Kenneth Roberts wrote, “Enjoying leisure in modern society is conditional upon having a job because, without work, a person’s normal rhythm of life and his approach to the daily routine is undermined, and participation in normal forms of recreation and social relationships becomes impossible.”<sup>37</sup> More recently the leisure as activity

concept has not necessarily been a utilitarian view, as we will see shortly when we discuss the more recent concept of casual leisure.

Historically, a change began to take place in Western society with the shift from Greece to Rome. In Roman society *otium* (leisure) began to be seen as for *negotium*'s (work's) sake. Cicero (106–43 BCE) viewed leisure as “virtuous activities” by which a person “grows morally, intellectually, and spiritually.”<sup>38</sup> Typical of Roman writers, he suggested a person is occupied in the work of the military, politics, or business and then re-creates.<sup>39</sup> The classical view of leisure was gradually forgotten, work became the noblest activity, and leisure took the form of activity, or recreation, to re-create oneself to go back to work. As we will see in chapter 4, this view was reinforced during the Renaissance (fourteenth through sixteenth centuries) and the Reformation (sixteenth century).

A modern proponent of the activity view of leisure was the French sociologist Joffre Dumazedier, who wrote, “Leisure is activity—apart from the obligations of work, family and society—to which the individual turns at will, for relaxation, diversion, or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity.”<sup>40</sup> Thus for Dumazedier leisure has three functions: relaxation, entertainment, and personal development. Relaxation “provides recovery from fatigue,” entertainment “spells deliverance from boredom,” and personal development “serves to liberate the individual from the daily automatism of thought and action.”<sup>41</sup> This view of leisure is reflected in the Province of Quebec, and other French societies, where it is typical to have municipal departments of *loisirs* (leisure), which are equivalent to parks and recreation departments throughout the rest of North America. Dumazedier also wrote of semi-leisure as “a mixed activity in which leisure mingles with an institutional obligation.”<sup>42</sup> Within a Christian context Packer categorizes weekly worship as semi-leisure.<sup>43</sup>

**Serious Leisure.** Recently Robert Stebbins developed the concepts of serious leisure, casual leisure, and project-based leisure based on an activity understanding of leisure. He defined “serious leisure” as “the systematic pursuit of . . . an activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that . . . they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience.”<sup>44</sup> He identified three types of serious leisure: amateurs (e.g., amateur artists), hobbyists (e.g., collectors), and volunteers (e.g., social-welfare volunteers). The distinctive qualities of serious leisure are

- needing to persevere in the activity;
- finding a career of achievement or involvement in the activity;
- making a significant personal effort in the activity;
- obtaining long-lasting tangible or intangible benefits or rewards through the activity;

- having a strong identification with the chosen activity; and
- participating in a unique ethos or social world with others who engage in the activity.<sup>45</sup>

While Stebbins, in his definition of serious leisure, described it as an activity, and therefore I discuss it under the activity concept of leisure, he also noted that serious leisure can be a form of leisure experience as well as a type of leisure activity.<sup>46</sup> Recently, Karen Gallant, Susan Arai, and Bryan Smale suggested shifting the focus of serious leisure from an activity that has individual outcomes to an experience within community and social processes.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to serious leisure, Stebbins defined “casual leisure” as “an immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it.”<sup>48</sup> Casual leisure may involve play, relaxation, passive or active entertainment, conversation, sensory stimulation, or casual volunteering. The central characteristic of casual leisure is pleasure.

*Casual Leisure.* Casual leisure overlaps with what was previously known as the anti-utilitarian concept of leisure, which is best expressed by the phrase “doing your own thing.”<sup>49</sup> Gray wrote that this concept dismisses the view that all human life must produce a useful outcome: “It rejects the work ethic as the only source of value and permits the investment of self in pursuits that promise no more than the expression of self.”<sup>50</sup> The anti-utilitarian concept of leisure is a reaction to the philosophy of utility, which prevents people from experiencing joy and participating in activities that have no purposeful end. The anti-utilitarian concept implies that leisure is a valuable end in itself. Humans need to cultivate the dimension of pleasure in their life. This concept of leisure is associated with what Charles Reich described as a “personal liberation and the primacy of pleasurable, natural, humanistic, and sensory experiences.”<sup>51</sup> Walter Kerr articulated an understanding of leisure that embraces Reich’s basic ideas: “It accents joy, encourages self-expression, and rejects the work-ethic and utilitarianism as the only sources of value in our society.”<sup>52</sup>

*Project-Based Leisure.* “Project-based leisure” is “a short-term, moderately complicated, . . . though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time”<sup>53</sup> that involves considerable effort and planning, and sometimes knowledge and skill. These may be one-shot projects, such as investigating one’s genealogy, or occasional projects, such as decorating one’s home for Christmas every year. Using the concepts of serious, casual, and project-based leisure, Stebbins defined “optimal leisure style” as “the deeply rewarding and interesting pursuit during free time of one or more substantial, absorbing forms of serious leisure, complemented by judicious amounts of casual leisure or project-based leisure if not both.”<sup>54</sup> Optimal leisure lifestyles (OLLs) are realized by participation in leisure activities that individually and in combination help a person enhance one’s human potential, self-fulfillment, well-being, and quality of life.

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Defined as activity, leisure may have political or social purposes. Leisure may be seen as a form of political practice where everyday leisure activities can challenge or weaken dominant belief systems, thereby serving as a form of resistance.<sup>55</sup> Heather Mair used the term “civil leisure” to describe people who use their non-work time for social activism concerning important societal issues.<sup>56</sup>

The activity view of leisure has relevance in Islam.<sup>57</sup> The prophet Mohammed (570–633 CE) wrote: “Recreate your hearts hour after hour, for the tired hearts go blind,” and “Teach your children swimming, shooting, and horseback riding.”<sup>58</sup> In Islam, leisure activities fulfill three desires: (a) amusement, relaxation, and laughter; (b) rhythmic tunes and the experience of objects through the senses; and (c) the desire to wonder, learn, and gain knowledge.

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### What Is Recreation?

Before we move on to the next concept of leisure let us consider the concept of recreation, which is very similar to the leisure as activity concept. There is generally more consensus about the meaning of recreation than the meaning of leisure. The English word “recreation” is derived from the Latin word *recreatio*, which means restoration or recovery. The notion implies the re-creation of energy or the restoration of the ability to perform a specific function and therefore presupposes that some other activity has depleted one’s energy or has negatively affected the ability to function.

Sebastian de Grazia defined recreation as “activity that rests men from work, often by giving them a change (distraction, diversion), and restores (re-creates) them for work.”<sup>59</sup> Recreation may also be used to restore a person for volunteer, family, education, or health purposes. Unlike some understandings of leisure, such as the classical view where leisure is an end in itself, recreation is not engaged in “for its own sake,” but represents a means to an end. For example, John Kelly defined recreation as “voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion.”<sup>60</sup>

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### *Leisure as Free Time*

A prevalent conceptualization of leisure in our society is the discretionary or nonobligated-time view that reflects a quantitative perspective: “that portion of time which remains when time for work and the basic requirements for subsistence have been satisfied.”<sup>61</sup> Leisure as discretionary or nonobligatory time parallels the economic concept of discretionary money. From this perspective, time may be divided into three categories: existence (time devoted to the meeting of biological requirements and essential life-maintenance activities, such as

sleeping, eating, and personal care); subsistence (time spent in work or work-related responsibilities, such as travel, study, or social involvements based on work); and leisure (time remaining after one's existence and subsistence needs have been met). These categories are not completely watertight. For example, time devoted to eating may be for pleasure and/or existence. Nevertheless, leisure is seen as discretionary time. Its most important characteristic is that it lacks a sense of obligation or compulsion and is available for use according to one's desires.

In preindustrial societies, time was viewed cyclically; that is, time was rooted in the rhythms of the natural world. People's lives revolved around sunrise and sunset, the change of seasons, and the planting and harvesting of crops. They were unlikely to separate work and leisure within their daily life, and the demands of work were often lightened by songs and storytelling. Traditional gatherings, like a barn-raising or a quilting bee, possessed both leisure and work-like components. As a result, notions of work and leisure blended together.

The Industrial Revolution (1760–1830), however, changed everything. Unlike previous eras, the work of the industrial age was focused not on the farm but in the factory. People began to move to the cities to tend to the machines. Work was situated *in space* at the factory and structured *in time* as the worker had to be at the work place at a certain time to perform work duties. Facilitated by the development of clocks, work could be assigned to specific times, and work time could be measured precisely. Time began to be viewed mechanically, and this linear notion of time began to influence and change people's understanding of leisure. Time away from work was free of the often unpleasant demands of the workspace, so it was called "free time." This free time became synonymous with leisure.

Not only is this concept common among the general population, but this approach to conceptualizing leisure is also prevalent among economists and sociologists who are especially interested in economic and sociological trends. Hence the *Dictionary of Sociology* supplies the following definition of leisure: "Free time after the practical necessities of life have been attended to; . . . Conceptions of leisure vary from the arithmetical one of time devoted to work, sleep, and other necessities, subtracted from 24 hours—which gives the surplus time—to the general notion of leisure as the time which one uses as he pleases."<sup>62</sup> When leisure is viewed as free time, the amount of leisure a person has depends on factors such as how long a person lives; when a person retires; the length of a person's work week; whether a person has a full-time job, a part-time job, or a second job; and the length of holidays and other paid time off. Furthermore, the size and timing of the units of free time are as important as the total amount of free time. For example, free time is different for a person who works eight hours a day for five days a week from a person who works ten hours a day for four days a week.

If one accepts this view of leisure, then leisure for the contemporary person is fragmented, as Gray described:

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Currently our daily leisure is broken up into rather small segments—perhaps a little before work and a little at lunch time, but most is available in the late afternoon or early evening, after work and before bed. The total number of leisure hours per day—usually four—is broken up into small increments. This limits its uses. Our weekly leisure is weekend leisure . . . the longer period of time and more flexible schedule which mark the weekend permit activities which would be impossible during the remainder of the week.<sup>63</sup>

The Jewish concept of Sabbath has some similarities to the notion of leisure as free time. As we will see in chapter 5, the Jewish Scriptures command the Jewish people not to work on the Sabbath. For example, Exodus 20:8–10a reads, “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.” The Sabbath is a time of no work but, as Heschel explained, also a time of celebration: “not a date but an atmosphere.”<sup>64</sup> Thus it does not completely fit within a quantitative free-time understanding of leisure but also includes a qualitative dimension, as we will see in more detail in chapter 5. Sabbath was not only the foundation of Jewish life but it also provided a more democratic form of leisure than what was seen in Greek society. Aristotle’s leisure was based on the ancient Greek institution of slavery, whereas the Jewish Torah declared that everyone, including male and female servants, had an inalienable right to Sabbath.<sup>65</sup> The Jewish Sabbath was adopted and modified in the Christian Sunday and Islamic Friday. As we will see in more detail in chapter 5, while it is often suggested that the roots of the Western concept of leisure are in ancient Greek society, some argue that it is equally rooted in the ancient Jewish tradition of the Sabbath with its organization of life into seven days and a valuing of leisure.<sup>66</sup>

### *Leisure as a Symbol of Social Class: Conspicuous Consumption*

The concept of leisure as a symbol of social class understands “leisure as a way of life for the rich elite.”<sup>67</sup> In 1899, the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen wrote a classic book, titled *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, in which he questioned the intrinsic character of leisure activities and suggested that leisure behavior was influenced by the desire to impress others and distinguish oneself from other people. He defined leisure as “non-productive consumption of time. Time is consumed non-productively (1) from a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and (2) as an evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness.”<sup>68</sup> He used the terms “conspicuous leisure” and “conspicuous consumption” to suggest that the visible display of leisure and consuming was more important than engaging in the leisure activity for its own sake or for personal development motivations. Thus leisure had a symbolic nature. Veblen illustrated how people in the wealthy ruling classes, throughout history, have been identified by their possession and use of leisure, while people in the lower classes emulate or

imitate those in the wealthy classes so that society becomes increasingly consumptive. In previous, less-industrialized societies, more leisure opportunities were available to the privileged aristocratic members of the ruling classes who were free from labor. Veblen showed that in the feudal, Renaissance, and industrial periods of Europe's history, the possession and visible use of leisure (along with the abstention from labor) was the characteristic feature of those in the wealthy upper classes. Veblen was critical of the "idle rich" who exploited and lived on the toil of others while totally engaging themselves in a life of "conspicuous consumption." He described the way of life of the privileged class as follows:

The . . . gentleman of leisure . . . consumes freely and of the best, in food, drink, narcotics, shelter, services, ornaments, apparel, weapons and accoutrements. . . . He must also cultivate his tastes. . . . He becomes a connoisseur . . . and the demands made upon the gentleman in this direction therefore tend to change his life of leisure into a more or less arduous application to the business of . . . conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption.<sup>69</sup>

Veblen's description of the lifestyle of the "idle rich" profoundly affected social scientists and led to the conceptualization of a leisure class. This concept views leisure as a way of life for the wealthy elite.

Veblen's analysis may be less applicable to contemporary Western life as it was in the previous eras, since working-class people today tend to have more opportunities for leisure due to a variety of factors: the diffusion of culture, increased affluence along with the spread of wealth, the increased influence of the mass media, increases in mobility, and increases in free time. These factors have led to greater opportunities for the ordinary citizen to obtain material possessions, to participate in various forms of recreation and entertainment, and hence to diminish the socioeconomic dimension of leisure. In other words, there has been a democratization of the leisure class.

While Veblen's analysis may be outdated, Kraus pointed out that it is still applicable to a small group of "jet setters."<sup>70</sup> Although the wealthy and privileged members of today's society may not have a great amount of free time, they still continue to participate in a wide range of expensive and prestigious leisure activities. They tend to travel extensively, to entertain, to patronize the arts, and to participate in exclusive and high-status activities. This class, whether called "jet-setters" or "leisure-class," defines itself through its use of leisure. As an example, a 2003 article in the *Financial Post*, titled "Ridiculously, Deliciously Conspicuous Consumption," reflects Veblen's theory.<sup>71</sup> The subtitle of the article illustrates the emulation principle: "Imagine that money's no object, that you're one of the elite making ultra-luxury goods the hot trend of the season. Now go ahead and drool." The items included an \$85,000 designer piano and jewelled underwear worth \$11 million.

Although Veblen's analysis may be less relevant today, social scientific research has attempted to classify leisure behaviors and lifestyles according to social

class, race, occupation, and other determinants. Murphy concluded: “Studies indicate that social class may no longer be so significant to leisure interests and behaviors, and that certain social indicators, including race, economics, education, and environment, may be more important factors in determining leisure orientation and preference.”<sup>72</sup>

Current examples of leisure as a symbol of social class can be seen elsewhere in the world. In an ethnographic study titled *The Native Leisure Class: Consumption and Cultural Creativity in the Andes*, Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld documented how the sale of textiles gave rise to an indigenous leisure class in Otavalo, a market town in northern Ecuador.<sup>73</sup> The merchant elite has become a leisure class characterized by the consumption of products, both local (e.g., fajas [sashes]) and global (e.g., televisions, cars). Wealthy Otavaleña women show off their wealth by wearing a new faja for every social occasion, thereby creating an overt symbolic division. Consumption has become culturally important and a primary way to obtain stature in that the wealthy display their identity through their conspicuous consumption rather than through their work.

### ***Leisure as a State of Mind: A Psychological Experience***

The state-of-mind view of leisure, also known as subjective leisure, or leisure as psychological experience, became prominent in the 1980s. As stated by Beverly Driver and S. Ross Tocher, it may be defined as “an experience that results from recreation engagements”<sup>74</sup>; however, it often focuses on the optimal leisure experience. This psychological approach to leisure experiences can include properties such as

- emotions and moods that vary along a positive-negative dimension;
- feelings of relaxation, arousal, or activation that vary in intensity;
- cognitive components, such as thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and images;
- time duration—perceptions of how quickly time is passing during an experience or activity;
- levels of absorption, attention, and concentration in an activity;
- self-consciousness, self-awareness, and ego loss;
- feelings of competence in regard to knowledge or skill;
- a sense of freedom; and
- a sense of interpersonal relatedness.<sup>75</sup>

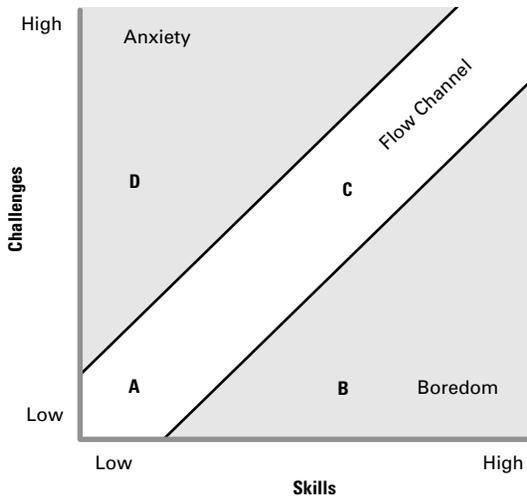
The state-of-mind view of leisure sees leisure as an overriding experience that is not defined in contrast to work, but rather one for which certain conditions are necessary to experience it.

The state-of-mind view is founded on psychology. The psychologist William James introduced the term “stream of consciousness” in 1890 to refer to mental

experiences or conscious states perceived as ever-changing and continuous. Another psychologist, Abraham Maslow, suggested that self-actualizers experienced peak experiences, which he defined as “moments of highest happiness and fulfillment.”<sup>76</sup> Building on the work of psychologists, an early leisure scholar, John Neulinger, defined pure leisure as “a state of mind brought about by an activity freely engaged in and done for its own sake.”<sup>77</sup> The two criteria for this experience are perceived freedom (the perception that a person is engaging in the activity because he or she has the choice to do so and desires to do it) and intrinsic motivation (the individual gains satisfaction from the activity itself and not from an external reward).

Another psychological concept frequently associated with the state-of-mind view of leisure is the theory of “flow.” The social psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi proposed that flow experiences were intensely absorbing experiences where the challenge of an activity matched the skill level of the individual so that the person lost track of both time and awareness of self (A and C on fig. 1.1).<sup>78</sup> If a person’s skills were much higher than the challenges of the activity, the person would experience boredom (B), while if the challenges were much higher than the skills, the person would experience anxiety (D).

**Figure 1.1**  
**Csikszentmihalyi’s Diagram of the Flow State**



Source: Adapted from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (Toronto: Harper & Row, 1990), 74.

*Jing Jie*, the highest goal in life and the highest pursuit of Chinese Taoist leisure, has been suggested to be similar to flow.<sup>79</sup> In Taoism, *Jing Jie*, an essence characterized by happiness and joyfulness that underlies all organic life, cannot

be pursued but is a benefit of participation in activities such as martial arts, creative arts, or meditation. The Chinese experience of *rùmí*, a fascinating, enchanting, and absorbing experience, has also been shown to be similar to leisure as a psychological experience.<sup>80</sup> The word *rùmí* is composed of two characters: *rù*, which means “to enter,” and *mí*, which means “to be lost.” Together they mean “entering into something and becoming lost in it.”

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### What Is Play?

Although play is not the topic of this book, leisure as a state of mind shares many traits with play: intrinsic motivation, free choice, suspension of reality, and positive affect. Johan Huizinga, in his classic book *Homo Ludens*, defined play as “a free activity standing quite consciously outside ‘ordinary life’ as being not ‘serious’ but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly.”<sup>81</sup>

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### *Feminist Leisure: Meaningful Experience*

The contemporary women’s movement emerged in the 1960s, but it was not until the late 1980s that much attention was devoted to women’s leisure.<sup>82</sup> While there are a variety of feminist perspectives, all views stress that women are exploited and oppressed, and that women have a universal right to leisure. Feminists are concerned with the distortion and invisibility of female experience; the right of every woman to dignity, equity, and freedom of choice; and the removal of all forms of oppression and inequality within society.<sup>83</sup> Feminist theory is critical of the traditional views of leisure (i.e., free time, activity) because they are built on premises that in many cases do not apply to women. For example, the free-time view of leisure is based on a duality of paid work and leisure that is not always applicable to many women, as much of their work is at home (and unpaid), even for those who work outside the home.<sup>84</sup> Also, some women feel they are not entitled to or have time for leisure. Feminist theory also critiques the activity concept of leisure because women often have obligations intertwined with “recreational activities” (e.g., caring for children while swimming). Thus work and leisure may occur simultaneously, while leisure activities are frequently fragmented by the carrying out of responsibilities. Furthermore, there are unique constraints on women’s participation in leisure activities.<sup>85</sup> Intrapersonal constraints include an ethic of care where women feel responsibility to care for others—children, parents, spouse—sometimes to the point of feeling they have no right to leisure, ultimately limiting their leisure access. Interpersonal constraints, such as social control by others, and structural constraints, such as lack of provided opportunities to participate, also place

limits on women's activity participation. Meanwhile, leisure as psychological experience is criticized as being focused too much on the individual with not enough recognition of situational and social factors.<sup>86</sup>

The result of much feminist research on leisure has led to an enhanced understanding of leisure as meaningful experience characterized by enjoyment.<sup>87</sup> These meaningful experiences may be found in many aspects of life. Often meaningful experience is associated with time for self to relax and do nothing, affiliative leisure that involves relationships with other people (such as friends and family), and agentic leisure characterized by autonomy where one can express oneself through self-determined (as opposed to determined by other people) activities or experiences. Because the emphasis is on meaningful experience, the activity, social setting, or physical location is seen as a leisure container in which the experience of leisure may take place. Feminists also speak of leisure enablers, the opposite of leisure constraints, that allow and facilitate leisure experiences. An example of a leisure enabler is a sense of entitlement to leisure. Leisure may also provide women with the opportunity to engage in acts of resistance that challenge the dominant values of society and thereby lead to women's empowerment.

Feminist observations about intrapersonal (e.g., ethic of care) and interpersonal (e.g., social control by others) constraints on women's leisure also exist in non-Western cultures. For example, Chiang-Tzu Lucetta Tsai used the feminist perspective to examine the leisure practices of Taiwanese women.<sup>88</sup> Confucian teachings, prevalent in Taiwan, support a patriarchal society where a women's leisure is constrained by perceptions of women as passive and submissive, responsible for child rearing and domestic labor, and inherently and biologically inferior to men. Detailed regulations exist for women's leisure (e.g., women are discouraged from going out alone during leisure time), and leisure revolves around children and family. Thus gender inequality in contemporary Taiwanese leisure settings is primarily due more to premodern patriarchy and gender relations than lack of opportunity or individual obstacles. Despite the influence of Western feminism, Taiwanese women experience social pressure to conform to traditional roles in regard to leisure participation.

### *The Holistic Concept of Leisure*

The articulation of the holistic concept of leisure emerged in the mid-twentieth century in connection with an emphasis on understanding phenomena from a holistic perspective, although in practice it has existed throughout human history. Holism, according to Murphy, "recognizes interrelationships among all things and implies that no part is meaningful outside of the whole, that no part can be identified or understood except in relation to the whole."<sup>89</sup>

This concept of leisure suggests a lifestyle that is holistic, in that one's life is not seriously fragmented into a number of spheres, such as work, free time,

religion, and family activities. Rather, all involvements are viewed as part of a whole. According to Max Kaplan, when leisure is viewed from a holistic perspective, it is a total way of life.<sup>90</sup> Almost any element may be viewed as leisure, since leisure may be experienced within the context of work, family, religion, and education. Thus, as suggested by Anthony W. Bacon, leisure is a multidimensional concept consisting of a variety of elements that interact to generate specific lifestyles.<sup>91</sup> Therefore the holistic approach would create the possibility of experiencing leisure in a variety of situations. Kaplan wrote,

Leisure, then, can be said to consist of relatively self-determined activities and experiences that are seen as leisure by participants, that are psychologically pleasant in anticipation and recollection, that potentially cover the whole range of commitment and intensity, that contain characteristic norms and constraints, and provide opportunities for recreation, personal growth and service to others.<sup>92</sup>

Work and leisure are inextricably related in this holistic concept of leisure. Thus the holistic concept eliminates the dichotomy between work and leisure that has been a serious obstacle for many people's experiencing of leisure. Leisure is no longer viewed as discretionary time and work as the supreme activity in life. This perspective calls for a value reorientation, to confer value on leisure as value has been conferred on work. Kaplan wrote, "As we seek to establish the post-industrial—hopefully, the 'Cultivated' society, a major direction has apparently become discernible—a general return to the fusions of work and nonwork which characterized the first part of the social model."<sup>93</sup> The aim is not only to maximize leisure but also to fuse it with satisfying work. In addition, work time would be distributed according to the rhythm of one's life. Leisure is seen as continuous time, not chopped up time, as in work life.

According to Kaplan, the holistic concept of leisure tends to fuse the two traditions of leisure as an end (the classical view of leisure) and leisure as a means of restoration and revitalization (leisure as a form of non-work activity). This conception combines leisure as a manifestation of one's essence with one's motivation to create tools and symbols to master oneself and one's environment.<sup>94</sup>

The basis of holistic leisure has existed for centuries, but it was conceptualized during the 1960s and 1970s in response to a variety of social influences that Murphy documented,<sup>95</sup> such as the counterculture (e.g., the hippie movement); an increasing emphasis on holistic understandings, where the whole is seen as more than the sum of the parts; a crisis of identity and meaning, where people were trying to find meaning in their work and in society; feelings of despair resulting from the Vietnam war; the fragmentation of life; and rapid change as documented in Alvin Toffler's book *Future Shock*.<sup>96</sup> Historically societies tended to be holistic, but in the feudal and preindustrial period social roles and elements of culture began to become distinguished, and then in the industrial era, work and leisure were clearly delineated. In many ways, holistic leisure returns

to the preindustrial period in which work and leisure were simply different facets of everyday life.

A number of factors in the past few decades (most relating to the changing nature of work) have led to the possible development of a holistic integration of work and leisure. These factors include

- a search for authentic experiences at work and elsewhere;
- the humanization of work;
- a shift from the manufacturing to the service sector;
- a rise in professionalism;
- a broadening of the labor force with more women and more part-time workers; and
- removing work from the workplace through technology, such as computers, which reverses the trend of the industrial revolution when work was moved from the home to the factory.<sup>97</sup>

All these factors make it more likely to experience elements of leisure in work and to integrate work and leisure into a holistic lifestyle. Thus recently Joy Beatty and William Torbert have used the Yin-Yang symbol to describe the intertwining fusion of work and leisure.<sup>98</sup>

Holistic expressions of leisure may be seen in preindustrial societies, such as ancient Israel (as we will see in more detail in chapter 5), when leisure involved components of time (Sabbath), activity (festivals), place (the Promised Land), attitude (faith), and state of being (physical and spiritual rest);<sup>99</sup> in the monastic life where there is unity of work and leisure as monks integrate both manual and intellectual work with the contemplative life of leisure (*otium*);<sup>100</sup> and in the lives of many women, especially those working at home for whom work and leisure coexist.<sup>101</sup> Another example is Native Americans and First Nations (a Canadian term for North American tribal groups) who developed a culture based on a close association with the land and a cyclical, holistic worldview. For these peoples leisure is not a separate segment of life but is linked to all life situations, such as birth and death,<sup>102</sup> and is reflected in cultural ceremonies, celebrations, and festivals.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the fundamental difficulty in the formulation of leisure's philosophy and determined that for the Christian, the philosophy of leisure must begin with the sovereignty of God. Next we reviewed the major concepts of leisure found in contemporary leisure literature: the classical state-of-being view of leisure; leisure as activity; leisure as free time;

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leisure as a symbol of social class; the psychological understanding of leisure as a subjective experience or state of mind; feminist perspectives on leisure as meaningful enjoyment; and the holistic view of leisure. We will return to these concepts in chapter 10 when I critique them from a Christian perspective based on historical material that is reviewed in chapters 3 and 4 and biblical material that is presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7. But first, to complete the first part of the theological task or dialogue, we will learn about current leisure trends and issues in the next chapter.