

Heintzman, Paul. *Leisure and Spirituality: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. 324 pages. ISBN 978-0801048722 (pbk).

Reviewed by S. Scott Mapes, D. Min. candidate in Science and Theology, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Lead Pastor, Paden City, WV, Church of the Nazarene.

When I was a student at an experimental school on the Clarion University (PA) campus, my survival strategy academically was to take the most enjoyable options available. In the area of 8th grade history, I settled upon Sports and Society and stayed with this class for as long as possible. My “evil” plan lasted for only a year and a half until I was forced to study political science.

As I started reviewing Paul Heintzman’s *magnum opus*, *Leisure and Spirituality*, my mind traveled back to those high school days of studying the impact of leisure activities on human society. Surely that was just fun, right? Like many of you, I was unaware that there was an academic discipline called leisure studies and that there were associate professors of leisure studies such as Heintzman (University of Ottawa). Could this be a respectable field of study? It does not take long in reading this book before one realizes that this discipline is a serious and valuable one for us Wesleyan-Holiness scholars.

In the “Introduction,” Heintzman argues that, while the leisure hours in Western society have increased since the 19th century Industrial Revolution, the amount of leisure time today is much less than it was during ancient Rome and the medieval period. Should this be a concern? According to J.I. Packer and leisure scholar Leland Ryken, it should be, because “All leisure . . . is a gift from God that, when used properly, ‘provides rest, relaxation, enjoyment, and physical and psychic health’” (p. xx). Hence Heintzman argues in this book for a spiritual understanding and valuing of leisure.

The author's case is made in six parts. In Part 1, "Leisure in Contemporary Society," seven concepts of leisure are introduced: state of being, activity, free time, symbol of social class, state of mind, meaningful experience, and a whole-life perspective (chapter one). With these in mind, seven contemporary leisure issues are then examined: patterns of time use, consumption, boredom, inequality of opportunities, quality of activity, the lack of a spiritual dimension, and the work-leisure relationship (chapter two). Helpful summaries of related studies are scattered throughout the text.

Part 2, "The History of the Leisure Concept," explores leisure's classical history in the Greek, Roman, early Christian, and medieval Christian eras—with an in-depth focus on Aristotle's understanding (chapter three)—and "The History of Leisure as Activity" (chapter four) during the Renaissance, Reformation, and the modern era. Special attention is given here to Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the Puritans. In essence, Heintzman discovered a greater emphasis on leisure during the classical and medieval periods and a greater emphasis on work during the "Reformational" and industrial periods (p. 78).

For the Christian reader in general, Part 3—"The Biblical Background to Leisure"—would be of special interest, as the author first studies in some depth the Sabbath from the perspectives of ancient Israel, the Mosaic law, the prophets, Jesus, and the New Testament (chapter five). From this foundation, Heintzman goes on to "The Biblical Concept of Rest" (chapter six), examining the theological meaning of rest in light of Deuteronomic history, the Chronicles, Psalm 95, Hebrews 3-4, and Matthew 11:28-30. This third part of the text concludes with a consideration of other biblical words and themes related to leisure, such as the words *εὐκταρεω* and "be still" and the themes of festivals, feasts, dance, hospitality, and friendships (chapter seven).

The issue of work in relation to leisure is the focus of Part 4. In light of our contemporary setting where the number of hours at work and the degree of life satisfaction are inversely proportional, Heintzman guides us on a historical journey through the ancient world, early Christianity, the Middle Ages, and the Reformation. Assessing the state of leisure in the years following the Reformation, there is a confusion of the meanings of job, work, and vocation; the “deification of work” (p. 143) through the influence of the Puritans and Pietists; and a secular hijacking of the Protestant work ethic (chapter eight). The solution for these problems requires, as Heintzman often reasons in his book, a forward look backwards to the biblical record. Therefore he examines carefully the concepts of work in both Testaments, settling upon the balanced view of work and leisure as modeled in Ecclesiastes (chapter nine).

In Part 5, “Christian Perspectives on Leisure,” Heintzman critiques the seven concepts of leisure (chapter one) from a Christian perspective. In demonstrating that Roman Catholics favor a classical understanding of leisure and that Protestants lean towards an activity/time approach to leisure, he argues that a balance should be achieved between qualitative and quantitative approaches to leisure (chapter ten). Furthermore, as Heintzman approaches work and leisure from a holistic perspective, he borrowed a rubric from Japanese researcher Kunio Odaka which considers five ways of living in regards to work and leisure: work-oriented-unilateral, leisure-oriented-unilateral, split approach, integrated approach, and identity approach. In considering these five approaches, however, the Christian must always keep in mind the Golden Rule as the controlling ethic (chapter eleven).

The concluding section—Part 6, “A Leisurely Spirituality”—begins with a plan for “Leisure and Spiritual Well-being” (chapter twelve), including the components of balance, time and space, openness, personal and/or human history, nature, trips away, solitude, and

connections with others. Heintzman reminds the reader to consider all of these elements in one's leisure-spiritual life, including those that may seem like opposites but may work well together. In the final chapter, the author discusses how "leisure-spiritual coping" (chapter thirteen) can take place during times of incredible stress in life. The coping approaches here are all previously mentioned in the text—with the exception of "sacralization and grounding" (pp. 238-39)—but they are placed by Heintzman in a framework for life application.

This book, on the whole, is very well researched and written. I found only one hermeneutical error related to a proof-texting use of Ezekiel 16:49. Otherwise, while at times the argument seemed repetitive, the technical work is exceptional. The bibliography is twenty-six pages long and includes many familiar names to the student of theology, but there are also a host of new scholars to those of us unfamiliar with the leisure studies field. *Leisure and Spirituality*, in short, would be an excellent primer on leisure studies.

Heintzman's approach to the subject is very Wesleyan—whether he himself professes to be one of us or not! First, his emphasis on life balance echoes the *via media* of Wesleyan-Holiness theology and ethics. Furthermore, he persistently warns against the narcissistic pursuit of pleasure and fulfillment in leisure apart from the considerations of life together with others. On this point, he even dares to critique Csikszentmihalyi's concept of "flow" as being insufficient by itself to judge the value of leisure activities.

Finally, as a student of science and theology, I would recommend this book to anyone studying in the areas of ethics, neuroscience, cognitive science, and Mindfulness Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. This indeed is worthy of a share in your personal library budget.