

**Will the Information Highway Have a “Rest Area”?**  
**The Sabbath and Spirituality in the 21st Century**

**Caleb Rosado, Ph.D.**

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## **Will the Information Highway Have a “Rest Area”? The Sabbath and Spirituality in the 21st Century**

**By Caleb Rosado**

As we enter the 21st century, one of the greatest problems human beings will experience, arising out of the information highway, and the technological reconstruction of all aspect of everyday life, both in business and leisure, will be the technological cacophony and the online noise humans will be subjected to as a direct by-product of being technologically wired. Wherever people go they will be interconnected to others through computer technology. At some point people will desire to be alone, away from it all, with all systems turned off. Thus one of the greatest needs will be for “silence,” for “dead air,” for “quiet zones,” where people can separate themselves from the wired-life of technology and experience peace, sanity, and rest from “technoise.” Such a need raises a crucial question for the 21st century. Will the information highway have a “rest area”? The answer is “yes.” It is found in spirituality.

What is spirituality? *Spirituality is a state of interconnectedness with the Other—the Divine, the self, the human, the natural, or any combination thereof—resulting in a state of security with a sense of worthwhile purpose.* This is Holistic Spirituality, spirituality in four dimensions, where the human center—our social self—is interconnected with: a *vertical* to God, the world of the sacred; an *inward* to self, the world of personal well-being; a *horizontal* to humankind, the world of people; and a *downward* to nature, the world of all non-human life-forms.<sup>1</sup> These four dimensions need to be developed in a state of balance. Emphasis on one dimension at the expense of the others results in spiritual disconnectedness and disequilibrium.

In an unstable age of rapid socio-political change, people are desperately searching for anchors to the disequilibrium of the soul. Many are now seeking for it in spirituality. The demise of scientism, the belief that science can suffice all of human needs, has left people bankrupt in the face of the questions of ultimate meaning: where did we come from?, why are we here?, where are we going?, does life have purpose?, what can we hope for?, is death the end?, why do we suffer?, does justice exist? These are all spiritual questions, that lie beyond the realm of scientific materialism, which instead of being a savior to solve human, ecological problems, has

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been in large measure responsible for the destructive dualisms that are fragmenting the human spirit and destroying our own planetary home. Organized religion has failed in large measure to take up the spiritual slack due to its inward, self-serving focus. It should come as no surprise then that most thinking people on the cutting edge of global understanding don't even consider it to be a serious option in their lives any more. The same group, however, is most open to spirituality. Religion can therefore be just as bankrupt and alienating as science, if people place at the center of their life that which is not eternal and divine.

From the primal to the present, humankind has gone through three stages of alienation:<sup>2</sup> From God—primal period to 15th century; from humans—16th to 20th century; and from nature—mid 20th century to present. The cumulative result of these three forms of alienation has been spiritual disintegration. This is a disconnected, fragmented social self without a sense of meaning and purpose to life, destitute of a connection to God, to ourselves and other humans, as well as to nature. The increasing interest today in spirituality is an attempt by humans to come back full circle and reconnect with the divine, in full harmony with nature. In other words, there is a desire to return to Paradise, to the Garden. Can this be possible? And if so, how? I believe that the quest for spirituality finds its basic foundation in the Sabbath—the spiritual “rest area” of life's information highway in the 21st century.

The Sabbath—the Doctrine of Rest—is not only one of the oldest of biblical teachings, but is also perhaps one of the most relevant to the needs of the 21st century. First introduced by God at the end of the process of creation (Genesis 2:1-3), it was also integral to the customary practice of Jesus (Luke 4:16). Though not given its importance in Catholicism nor in Protestantism, nor any serious consideration in any of the other world religions, it has been the distinguishing trait of Judaism and Seventh-day Adventism. Yet for both the importance of the *seventhness* factor has overshadowed the deeper and broader implications of the teaching to a world desperately in need of *rest*, yet caught up in a self-centered lemming-like, endless rush toward destruction. The tyranny of time and technology, with their cohorts—the calendar, the clock, the computer, the corporation—have made it easier for human beings to become more oppressed and oppressive at the same time. The result is not only humankind's enslavement *of* the environment, but also humankind's enslavement *to* the environment. Such was not God's original intent.

**The Sabbath and Spiral Dynamics:**

Yet from a Spiral Dynamics perspective, depending on the operational Value System, different persons or groups will have a different view of the Sabbath. The table below shows what aspects of the Sabbath are valued at the various memetic levels.

**A SPIRAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SABBATH**

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MEMES	COLOR	THEME	THINKING	VALUE SYSTEMS THE SABBATH REFLECTS
Level 8	TURQUOISE	WholeView	Holistic	Brings peace, harmony, and a wholistic existence [heaven in miniature]
Level 7	YELLOW	FlexFlow	Integrative	Rejuvenates the earth, reintegrates all life systems
Level 6	GREEN	HumanBond	Humanistic	Builds community, creates equality, stresses environmental stewardship
Level 5	ORANGE	StriveDrive	Strategic	Provides “quiet-zones” in life, a stress reliever, peace to the soul
Level 4	BLUE	TruthForce	Absolutistic	“One-right-way,” the 7 <sup>th</sup> day not the 1 <sup>st</sup> , the Holy Law of God
Level 3	RED	PowerGods	Egocentric	We alone have the truth, go out and tell others they are in error
Level 2	PURPLE	KinSpirits	Tribalistic	Traditions, family worship, gives church family its group identity
Level 1	BEIGE	SurvivalSense	Automatic	Staying alive, no understanding or appreciation of the Sabbath here

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Thus, Purple stresses the way the Sabbath gives a group (a spiritual tribe) its identity and uniqueness in the world, a value of utmost importance to ultra conservative Jews and as well as conservative Seventh-day Adventists. Red, on the other hand, is focused on being right and cluing others in on that knowledge, no matter how they are received. Blue, however, is concerned with being right based on the right authority, for them the Word of God. Orange, with its individualistic perspective is more concerned with how the Sabbath plays out in terms of their individual needs. For Green, the value of the Sabbath is its community-building aspects and its importance to healing the environment. At the second tier level, beginning with Yellow, the Sabbath takes on planetary importance of earthly renewal. And at Turquoise, with its holistic orientation, the Sabbath represents that which brings the values of heaven—peace, harmony, balance, wisdom, one global family—down to earth that integrates all dimensions with the well being of those who occupy the earth in mind. It is at this level where the Sabbath and spirituality find their highest expression and union in a oneness that defies comprehension.

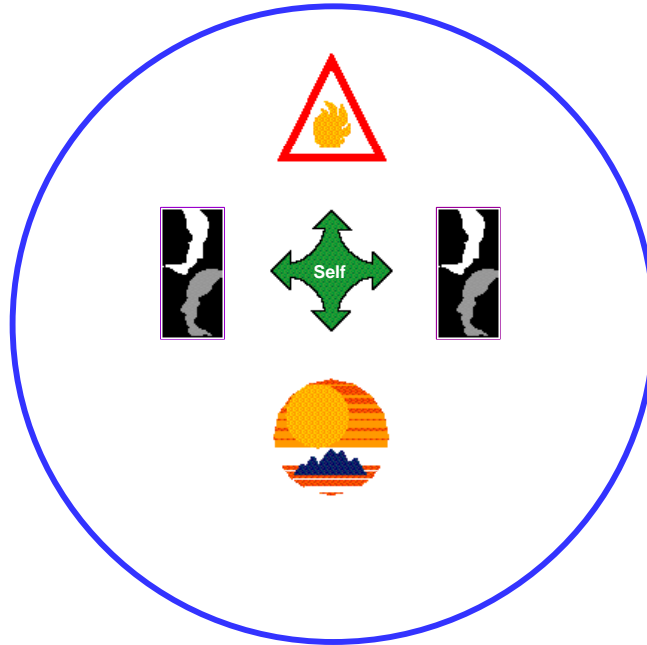
A proper understanding of the Sabbath will reveal two undergirding truths that lie at the basis of all human existence and coexistence with the surrounding world. The first is a *rest from enslavement*. God gave the Sabbath to *free* humankind from all that which would enslave, control and result in an arrested development of character. This was so that human character would develop in sync with divine character (Genesis 1:26). The second is a *sense of the interconnectedness of all life*, since God is the originator of life. These two fundamental life principles give rise to five crucial questions that are the heart of the Sabbath: (1) Where do we come from? (2) Who am I? (3) Who are you? (4) What is our relationship to our environmental world? (5) Where are we going? The first four of these questions are at the heart of Holistic Spirituality and focus on the divine, the self, the human other, and nature. Together with the last one, these five questions speak to the core of human expression, experience and existence on the eve of the 21st century. In order to see how the Sabbath relates to our basic human condition and hunger for spirituality, we need to go back to the beginning, to creation.

### **God's Original Purpose:**

When God brought forth humankind, all that was necessary for human existence had already been created. God made humankind last in order to impress upon both man and woman the truth that they basically owned nothing. The point was for humankind to look to *God* for their existence and not to the created world around them, the “things” already provided. It has been the human experience that whatever humans desire to “own” and “possess”, eventually end up owning and possessing them.

The first full day Adam and Eve lived was the seventh day of creation week—the day God rested from work. Thus, their very first experience of human existence was an expression of worship as they entered into God's Sabbath rest. Why did humankind in a perfect state of existence need the Sabbath? God knew that even in their perfect state, Adam and Eve faced the danger of getting so caught up in the daily round of all their activities of caring for their garden home, that they could make God secondary in their lives. Thus the Sabbath was given to secure a “pause” in time, a “rest area”, a quiet zone for reflection, meditation and communication with the divine. This time for contemplation enabled them to reflect on five fundamental truths—four of

which are represented by the graphic below—that spoke of relationships and a linking interconnectedness between the divine, the human and creation.



### **Five Fundamental Relationships**

1. *The nature of God—our vertical relationship to our Designer.* The question of who is God is foundational to all expressions of religious experience. It is at the basis of the question: Where do I come from? And the answer is as varied as the diverse cultures out of which the different human depictions of God emerge: a force, an animal form, an element of nature, a figment of the imagination, a wrathful being, an entity with human characteristics, a Spirit, a sacred presence, a divine being in human form, a holy, transcendent other, society raised to the level of the sacred, a sacralized expression of the human self, an immaterial idea, the creator and sustainer of life. The depictions are myriad.

Nature reveals a power and force operative in the world, transcendent of human experience (Romans 1:19,20). Indigenous peoples globally have recognized divinity in the elements and forces around them. But only through the special revelation of the Word of God—the Bible—does this divine force take on the character of a personal, loving, self-sacrificing God

who identifies with humankind as Savior and Lord. The Sabbath makes clear that this God is none other than the *Creator*.

In an age when there is so much confusion as to the character and nature of God, the Sabbath clearly spells out who is God—the Creator, the Originator of life. God is not just some force that is with us, nor some entity, or some impersonal idea, or a divine expression of the human self. Rather God is the divine Source and Sustainer of life. The Sabbath makes clear the nature and character of God—the Divine Designer of life, the loving Creator-God. Religions that focus on the creation instead of the Creator, as is the tendency of the various expressions of New Age, have lost sight of *who* God is.

Thus, the Sabbath makes clear where we come from? We are not the result of some big bang theory, or evolutionary process as a result of eons of transformation. We are the result of the handwork of God, through the creative process of procreation. The Sabbath undermines the basic premise of vertical evolutionary theory—the progressive developmental stage-process of human origin, from humble slime to Homo Sapiens. Humans did not evolve; they were created! The Sabbath brings about the first link, interconnectedness to the divine.

2. *The nature of humankind—our inward relationship to self.* Who humans are is another long contested question. It is at the root of the question: Who am I? With a clear understanding of the nature of God and where we come from, the Sabbath secondly gives me a clear sense of who I am—I am the object of God's love. I am a created life-form, shaped and molded in the similitude of my Divine Parent (Genesis 1:26, 27). I am a replica of God, endowed with creative power, like that of my Creator, to perpetuate my existence and preserve the quality of life in my planet home (Genesis 1:28).

The Sabbath in its pristine purity and purpose, liberates humankind from an *identity crisis*, who am I? If God is the Creator, then humankind is God's creation. We thus take on importance, significance and worth. We are not zeros, we are not worms, we are not cogs in the machinery, we are not digits in some cosmic computer—we are the crown of God's creation. Somebody knows my name; God who created me. Thus, I am somebody! I am of value, worth and significance to God.

One of the perennial quests of humankind is the search for meaning. In times of spiritual upheaval and social change people need anchors to the soul, navigational bearings to chart the

life-course. This is where meaning comes in. Without meaning, life has no purpose. “Meaning in life is the spiritual fuel that drives the human machine. Without it we are indifferent and bored; there is no ambition to work, we are inspired by no concern or sense of significance, and our powers are unstirred and so lie idle. Without ‘meaning’ we are undirected and a vulnerable prey to all manner of despair and anxiety, unable to stand firm against any new winds of adversity.”<sup>3</sup> What is meaning? *It is the why behind the what.* Science is able to explain the “what” or *causal questions* behind events and life’s incidents, what caused them, what brought them about and what may develop as a result. But it is not able to answer the “why” or *meaning questions* behind these events. Why did it happen? Why me? Why now? This is the realm of religion and the reason for its existence, the one area where science is bankrupt. When we search for meaning in life, we are searching for that which gives us a sense of worthwhile purpose in what we do and the life we lead. At the heart of meaning lies spirituality—the interconnectedness of myself to divine purpose.

Thus, the Sabbath, as the doctrine for the 21st century, gives human beings in this age of insignificance, a sense of meaning, worthwhile purpose, and self identity. It anchors the soul, not to some transitory, evolutionary experience of change, but to the Creator-God and the Designer of Life. We therefore have value, worth, and significance, because once we accept the Designer, it is easy to accept the design—ourselves.

3. *The nature of the human family—our horizontal relationship to each other.* If I know who I am, then it also follows that I know who you are—God’s purposeful design, my sister/brother in Christ. The Sabbath thus speaks loudly to interhuman relations and the valuing of human diversity. None of us is the same; yet we are all similar but different. “Nature” never repeats or standardizes. We do it in order to control. The lack of a proper relationship to God, defined in Proverbs as “the fear of God” (1:7), gives rise to a craving for power which seeks to mold others to our own image. If we are not able to control the Other, we will seek in one way or another to dehumanize it. The Sabbath, through its inherent element of rest, lays a striking blow at the roots of all the “isms”: racism, sexism, classism, ageism, adultism, and other forms of human oppression.

It is here where a most important principle comes in, one given 2,000 years ago by Jesus Christ in Mark 2:27 (NRSV), when he declared: “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not



humankind for the Sabbath." This is the Sabbath Principle, which states that: *The institution exists for the purpose of meeting the needs of individuals and not individuals the needs of the institution.* Seldom has this principle been followed by institutions, especially by religious institutions, who more often than not have taken a self-serving approach to ministry. It is in institutions where the sharpest conflicts, such as racism, sexism and the abuse of power are to be found, for it is in institutions where power is perpetuated, propagated, and practiced in society. Thus, any attempts to rid society of these social, moral diseases must begin here. And it is the Sabbath doctrine which points the direction to go.

This is the message of Isaiah 58, the Sabbath chapter. In this chapter the prophet contrasts proper Sabbath observance with the unacceptable kind. The latter is one where people come to church, put on their Sabbath faces, practice religious rituals, and even do fasting to reach higher levels of spirituality, but do not see how their social behavior throughout the week, contradicts this religious demeanor. Such practice is an expression of a false spirituality, one *disconnected* from others, focused on a one-dimension of spirituality, the vertical, devoid of the other three dimensions. The true fast God desires is not one of personal piety resulting in physical deprivation, but one of *social* spiritual practice of justice and compassion resulting in two types of God-like behavior. The first is *social service ministry*, dealing with the *effects* of injustice—individual needs—the needs of the deprived, the oppressed, the poor (vs. 7), a behavior consistent with Matthew 25:31-46 and Jesus’ ministry in Galilee (Matthew 4:23-25). The second is *social action ministry*, dealing with the *causes* or sources of injustice—*institutional practices*—tackling unjust systems that “bind,” that “oppress,” that choke as a “yoke” (vs. 6), a behavior consistent with Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem (Matthew 21:12-16). This is the true fast, the type of worship God desires—the spiritual, social practice of the worshipful heart, daily in tune with God and not just on Sabbath mornings. It is a practice that is not put on like a garment for worship, but emerges, often unperceived [“Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food?” (Matthew 25:37)], from a heart that radiates love and grace back to God and toward those around.

The “pleasure” and “own interests” that God tells us to stop doing on the Sabbath are the same “own interests” which God in vs. 3 says we must stop doing—the oppressing of those who work for us, i.e., come within our sphere of influence (vs. 3). This is the personal “business” and

“interests” or “pleasures” which God will not tolerate on the Sabbath nor on any other day of the week—oppressive action masked by self-righteous piety. The entire chapter is one unified piece, meaning that the last two verses (vss. 13 & 14) cannot be separated and interpreted independently of the rest of the chapter. To come to church on the Sabbath and practice piety, while on Monday we practice political expediency, is to trample and desecrate the Sabbath.

True Sabbath worship is both an act and an attitude. It is an act of celebrative praise toward God arising out of an attitude of heartfelt, soul-stirring thanksgiving for God’s matchless saving action. True Sabbath worship also reflects an intolerance for sin in its two dimensions: the *individual* dimension of neglect for the needs of the downtrodden (vs. 7), and the *institutional* dimension—the perspectives, policies, purposes, programs, personnel and practices that perpetuate injustice and violate the principles of love, justice and compassion of God’s Kingdom (vs. 6).

This understanding of the Sabbath is consistent with the way Jesus observed the Sabbath, as a day to do good (Matthew 12:1-13, Luke 13:10-17)—the real “business” and “interests” of the Kingdom of God. Yet the practice of such an understanding of the Sabbath will bring on the wrathful response of others. We must remember that for His ministry in Galilee—ministry to the individual—the people wanted to make Jesus king; but for His ministry in Jerusalem—ministry to institutions—they crucified Him . . . three days later. The same will occur to all who capture in both belief and behavior the essence of Sabbath—*REST!* Rest from oppression, rest from injustice, rest from discrimination, rest from dehumanization, rest from environmental destruction, rest from exclusiveness, rest from the absence of peace and quietness in the soul, rest from the lack of assurance of salvation, rest from all that which mars the image of God in humanity and destroys our interconnectedness with God and with humankind.

*The Sabbath not only means spiritual rest, but also rest from that which destroys the human spirit.* We need to find out what is destroying the human spirit in our communities, and correct it! We need to expose what is destroying the human spirit in our institutions, and correct it! We need discover what is destroying the human spirit in our families, and correct it! Two thousand years ago Jesus gave a most important principle, the Sabbath Principle, when He declared: “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NRSV). Here is the principle: *The institution exists to meet the needs of individuals and not*

*individuals the needs of the institution.* In other words, the needs of people come before the needs of human structures. This is what the Sabbath principle is all about—helping institutions, including the institution of the Sabbath, recover its original purpose of meeting the needs of the individual. This is proper Sabbath “business” very much in tune with the needs of the global village of the 21st century. It is a message the spiritual thirsty and hungry in society desperately need to hear, and a worship that urgently needs to be seen! When the Sabbath is proclaimed and practiced in this manner, the secular-minded, the agnostics, the New Agers, and who may be seeking for spirituality in broken cisterns, will respond, for it is a message relevant to the times, one that speaks to human needs in a world in flux.

This is also why in the Old Testament, the freeing of slaves, the return of property, giving rest to the land, justice in human relations and the Year of Jubilee are all connected to the Sabbath—signifying *rest from all forms of oppression* (Leviticus 25). In other words, any attitude and action that refuses to accept the other as an equal, as manifested in beliefs and behaviors toward that Other, goes contrary to the very foundation of the Sabbath. This is what “sabbaticals” are all about—rest from the mundane, the ordinary, the daily, the usual grind. They are a call for spiritual, mental, social, and physical renewal and rejuvenation.

In this area of interhuman relations the Sabbath enables me to avoid two very common but polar errors prevalent today—*human worship* on one hand and human exploitation on the other. Ever since Greek culture, humans have been worshipping the human form. With the help of the multiple forms of media today, such worship has reached a sick obsession in the overriding emphasis on sex and the body. This emphasis leads to the second error—*exploitation*. On a global scale women are the primary recipients of such exploitation, both in terms of labor and sexual abuse. So also have children, as well as people who differ by social class, skin color or ethnicity. The Sabbath militates against such action that goes against the commonality of our human origin (Acts 17:26). God’s self-disclosure in nature to the American Indians reveals a crucial life principle very important to all of humankind—*we are all related*. A grasp of this basic life principle would undermine the very foundations of human exploitation. The Sabbath is at the center of this life principle of interconnectedness—creation makes us one. We are all part of the “web of life.”<sup>4</sup>

4. *The nature of our earthly home—our downward relationship to the environment.* This fourth relationship answers in part the question, “why are we here?” The Sabbath as the commemoration of creation, is the one doctrine (along with the Doctrine of Creation) that directly deals with the environment. The basic point of the Sabbath is that on the seventh day God *rested* from God’s work of creation.

The Sabbath teaches us two important imperatives about our relationship to the environment about us. First, we are not to *worship it*, since we are above creation and already have an object of worship—the Creator God. The Sabbath truth guards against worshipping nature, the created world around us, a practice very prevalent in New Age forms of religion, as well as in some simpler societies. This includes more than not just worshipping trees, mountains, the sun, and the elements. It also includes a very prevalent practice, even among Christians, who consciously or unconsciously are idolaters—the act of worshipping or making central in our lives the material products of human labor, our possessions. The Sabbath attacks at the foundations of idolatry, whether the object of worship is nature or a product of human construction.

The second imperative with regard to the environment the Sabbath teaches us is not to *exploit it*. We are placed here on this earth not as owners, but as *stewards* to whom God has given the responsibility of “dominion” (Genesis 1:28). Dominion means to *manage* as one who has the responsibility for the well-being of that which one does not own, but is entrusted with the care thereof. This sense is brought out in Genesis 2:15 where God asked human beings to “till” and to “keep” the garden. In the Hebrew the two words respectively mean “to serve” (*adad*) and “to guard” (*samar*). Both of these terms indicate a sense of “caring for” rather than the usual sense of “exploiting” and “raping” the earth, as many think the word dominion implies.

Thus the Sabbath lies at the heart of global environmental concerns. Out of it emerges an *ecological worldview*, one focused on the interconnectedness of all of life-forms, both human and environmental. This holistic view of life—which is very biblical (Genesis 1&2; Romans 8) and is at the core of three of biblical doctrines (the Doctrine of Humankind, the Sabbath, and Creation)—has a profound spiritual undergirding. Unfortunately, the deeper implications of these doctrines to a global community concerned with the impending threat of human/environmental destruction have seldom been explored. Yet rightly taught and practiced

the Sabbath would give people a deep regard and respect for our planetary home, as well as a concern to truly be stewards of the earth, not just of our time, talent, temple, and treasure? Let us remember that this earth is also our “temple”—our home—which we should “treasure” until which time God grants us ample entrance into our new home in the earth made new. We must also not forget that it was because they “morally polluted” their environment that God cast our first parents—Adam and Eve—out of their Edenic home!

Just because the ultimate environmental cleanup will be done by God at the end of time (Revelation 11:18), does not mean we cannot give a consistent testimony through our actions to make life here on this planet more livable and less toxic. Such an attitude lived out in action will give a powerful testimony to those who tend to see conservative Christians as more concerned with personal moral pollution (swearing, immorality, lying) than with social pollution (dehumanization, exploitation, economic and political injustice) and environmental pollution (ecological destruction). In this regard Jesus’ rebuke of the Pharisees would apply to the church: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others” (Matthew 23:23).

All this has much to do with spirituality—our oneness of spirit with God, our self, our fellow humans and our planet home. The Sabbath, if fully understood in its relevancy to human existence, would give us a “global spirituality,” a new perspective and practice with regard to our world, which integrates faiths with the fostering of a movement to create a caring society.<sup>5</sup> This new practice or paradigm toward the world is greatly needed, since it appears that our planet is becoming more and more uninhabitable. I believe the apostle Paul had concerns of environmental decay and disaster in mind when he talked about the creation “groaning in labor pains” (Romans 8:19-23).

5. *The nature of our heavenly home—our outward relationship to the future.* This fifth relationship addresses the most pertinent question of our times—“where are we going?” As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century more and more will we see the media (books and films) addressing questions of the future and immortality.

It is a preoccupation with this question which gives rise to religion in the first place. The essence of religion, and that which accounts for its existence, and which only religion can

exclusively supply is, *eternal life*. Thus religion is belief in the supernatural or spiritual in pursuit of eternal life. If humans could achieve immortality without God, religion would not be needed. But no matter how hard science tries to break through this last threshold, the outward domain, it has reached an impenetrable impasse, for this is the realm of religion not science.

So what lies on the other side? Again, the Sabbath points the way—a *domain of eternal rest*. Heaven will be one continuous Sabbath, not in terms of inactivity and do-nothingness, but in terms of peace, calm, and rest. Heaven as Sabbath means REST—rest from weariness, the labor of pain, sorrow, death, loss, anxiety, fear, violence and destruction. None of these things which we fear on earth bring rest. In fact, the quest for immortality is essentially a quest for escape from these forces. For no one wants to achieve immortality, only to find that these forces as earthly baggage have come with them into eternity. That would not be heaven; it would be hell!

The Sabbath suggests that since we come from God, out of an Edenic home, in the end, we shall return to God and to Paradise. This has been the perennial quest of all religions, a desire to return to the Garden. And each has come up with its own understanding of how to get back home. The Sabbath, as a weekly period of 24-hours of eternity, reminding us of heaven, embraces two worlds—one lost and one to be restored. The essence of the world to come is *rest*—rest in the presence of a loving, Creator God. Such state of rest may be called Nirvana, Paradise, Eden, Zion, Shangri-La, Utopia, the World of Spirits or Heaven. But irrespective of the name used, the same experience comes to mind—eternal rest and peace in a state of perfection. This is where we are headed—*toward Sabbath*.

### **The Meaning of Spiritual Rest:**

The Sabbath means *spiritual rest*. It means that I no longer have to struggle to work for my salvation, but I can “rest” in the completed work of God in Christ. This is the rest the writer of Hebrews urges believers to enter into (Hebrews 4). There is nothing more than I can add or do to what Christ has already done, in order to be saved. When Christ on the cross said, “It is finished,” it *was* finished! There is now nothing more that can be done by any human being to gain salvation but to rest and enjoy God’s work of redemption on his/her behalf.

The rest God took at the end of creation was a period of reflection, meditation, assessment, evaluation, contemplation on what was accomplished. This is why Adam and Eve needed the Sabbath in their perfect Edenic home, to reflect back and contemplate on what God had done for them. If Adam and Eve needed such a “quiet zone” in their life, how much more do we in our hurried lives and hurried environment?

New Agers seek such quietness through different forms of transcendental mediation and quiet reflection. But it is usually one focused inward, seeking to find God inside the human self. It thus often becomes an empty, quiet, yet elusive quest for tranquility, by repeating a word—a mantra—over and over again. The real source of this tranquility and quietness of the soul, however, is to be found, not inwardly by repeating and meditating on a meaningless mantra. It is found in a quiet outward *reflection* on the person of Jesus Christ and meditating on “the breadth and length and height and depth, [of] the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge” (Ephesians 3:18,19), as a result of *practicing* a life of service and compassion toward creating a caring society. Action/reflection, such spiritual praxis, the essence of Sabbath rest, brings genuine peace and tranquility to the soul as we become acquainted with “the Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28).

**Conclusion:**

The world desperately needs to hear this message of spiritual rest. So also does creation as it “waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, . . . in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:19-21). This redemption will come in part as humans “work,” through a new paradigm of the Sabbath, to become not only Sabbath observers, but human and environmental liberators. This means setting all of creation free from its bondage of decay, the sinful and exploitative behavior of human beings bent on destroying not only themselves, but their planetary home as well. In a techno-planet rushing through life at the beginning of this 21st century, that knows nothing about physical rest, much less spiritual rest in Christ, a new understanding of the Sabbath in connection with spirituality is needed. For the combination of the two operating in tandem will bring about the ultimate union—state of connectedness—with God.

All four forms of alienation—from God, from ourselves, from humans, and from nature—are in their essence and at heart *a spiritual estrangement—a separation of the human spirit from the Great Spirit and from nature*. As a result of such separation it is easy to see how human thinking has evolved—from God as the creator of life, to humans as the creator of God, to all life-forms being God, to self as God. A rediscovery of the Sabbath within the context of Holistic Spirituality as an integrating life-force, will fuse all four worlds or dimensions with meaning, purpose and unity in diversity in a worshipping community that recognizes the worth-ship of all life-forms.

This is a message of "spiritual rest" in Christ's completed work of salvation for all who respond to His call. Those who travel down the information highway, alienated by cacophony of technoise, will be desperately looking for a "rest area," where they can obtain a sense of meaning and worthwhile purpose. Will they find it in the Sabbath, God's Rest Stop? They can, if the message that comes forth is one that declares: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

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Caleb Rosado, Ph.D., is Professor of Urban Studies at Eastern University, in Philadelphia, PA. This article has been evolving through the years. First published in 1971 in the journal *These Times*, it was updated in 1999, and again in 2006.

<sup>1</sup>For an early statement on spirituality, see Caleb Rosado, "The Quest for Spirituality: The Recovery of the Divine in Human Experience." *Ministry*, January 1996. The updated version of this article is: "What is Spirituality: Memetics, Quantum Mechanics, and the Spiral of Spirituality." 2003. [http://www.rosado.net/pdf/What\\_Is\\_Spirituality\\_.pdf](http://www.rosado.net/pdf/What_Is_Spirituality_.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Albert Bergesen, "Eco-Alienation," *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, Vol. 21:1, 1995, pp. 111-126.

<sup>3</sup>Langdon Gilkey, *Shantung Compound*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1966), p. 193-194.

<sup>4</sup> See Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems* (Anchor Books, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> For a deeply spiritual expression of the Sabbath as sacred rest that rejuvenates the soul, see the excellent work by Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999).