

Leisure:**A Reflection of the Meaning and Value of the Church as a Whole (Abstract)****Partick K.K. CHAN****Chaplain and****Lecturer of Practical Theology and Spirituality****Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong**

The modern trend of the church has been to emphasize the quantitative rather than the qualitative side of life. Whether in one's lifestyle or in one's thinking, productive work has been given the highest priority. Doing, as it were, seems more important than being. The hectic schedule and high demands on performance result in the enslavement of the church under the name of work. Life under such pressures invariably leads to exhaustion, and eventually, burn out. This has become all too frequent a scenario in the church leadership. In the pursuit of efficiency and achievement, the church has been unwittingly lured into the value system of the secular society. Worse still, the church's baptism in the name of "The Pursuit of Success" strips her of her power to judge the world. This results in the loss of the church's identity and function.

In this article, the author recommends the practice of meaningful and reflective leisure as being re-integrated into church life. This can improve the existing working style and morale of church service. At the same time, this can furthermore liberate the church from the grasp of the secular world, giving the church new freedom. Henrie Nouwen said, "Solitude (Leisure) is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude (leisure) we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self." The author proposes that leisure is not an option in a healthy church. That is the theme of the author's argument, and also the challenge offered to church leaders.