Disabling Sabbath: Practical theological possibilities in calibrating Sabbath time to 'crip time'

By Vaughn Nelson
PhD Student in Practical Theology/Religious Education
Boston University School of Theology

Adventist Society for Religious Studies
November 20, 2020

Introduction

The question that animates this paper is, *Given critical insights from disability theology, how has Sabbath time become miscalibrated by its participation in ableist culture?* Toward a partial response, I introduce general themes from disability studies and disability theology, followed by an illustrative summary of a disability hermeneutic applied to a Gospel healing story. I then turn specifically to a scholar who engages "crip theory," proposing that her notion of "crip time" disrupts and recalibrates Sabbath practice in ways that deepen Sabbath's faithful witness and liberative promise.

My drawing on disability theory is a result of my Adventist(ly) habituated self's encounter with Sharon Betcher's *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement* (2007) during my first semester of doctoral coursework. I literally caught my breath while reading her critique of the way religious discourse around 'wholeness' can too easily slip into complicity with consumer capitalism's never-ending quest for self-improvement and fixing 'brokenness'.[1] (I repeated to many listeners that until that moment, I thought the only questions prompted by the mission statement of my neighborhood medical school—"To Make Man Whole"—were about gendered language.) My attention captured, I then started hearing echos of another Adventist pillar in the disability literature—but this time as a potential untapped partnership. I heard, and saw, Sabbath all over the place. Disability theorists and theologians, for example, make strong critiques of productivity as an explicit or implicit measure of worth; they might as well be referencing Walter Brueggemann's *Sabbath as Resistance* (2014) (and a few are)[2]. Or, even more provocatively, Alison Kafer explains that crip theory (to be defined

---

[1] Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*, 154.

[2] For example, Betcher, "Crip/tography," 315.

below) draws on "eccentric economic practices" that challenge "normative modalities" of "productivity, accomplishment, and efficiency."[3] Eccentric economic practices seem a tantalizing resource—or conversation partner, at least—for a *peculiar people's* Sabbath practices!

While there are occasional nods to Sabbath's potential *for* disability theology, my interest here is to reverse the interdisciplinary direction and explore what I think is the deep well of possibilities *in disability perspectives* to inform Sabbath theology and practice. This seems to me an advisable step prior to any (unsolicited) formulation of *Sabbath's* resources *for disability*. So, strange conversation partners as they seem to some readers, I here propose a 'cripped' calibration of Sabbath practice.

Theories and Theologies of Disability

Disability theology is a large umbrella term that points generally to theological reflection that begins with the experience of disability. Less theology *about* disability (as a theological problem[4]), it is rather theology that positions disability as a critical and creative source for theological knowledge.[5] Like the disability studies scholars on which they draw,

---

[3] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 39.

[4] Disability-as-theological-problem takes at least two forms: In one form, individual disabilities are identified by their divergence from (ableist) norms and as evidence of a created order broken by sin. Ignoring, shunning, or eradicating such individuals (often by the Church) is one tragic response to this framing, but a focus on faith healings and miracles (medical or otherwise) is another.

In another form, disability is employed as interesting test cases that trouble the edges of theological puzzles, perhaps stretching theological anthropology to be a bit more inclusive in defining 'human nature,' or pushing theodicy to account for otherwise 'unimaginable' circumstances. While this approach may help to trouble various doctrinal formulations that have not adequately taken disability into account, the problem is that disability is always already positioned at the margins by such theologizing. The fact that the intellectually disabled person, for example, is placed as the subject of a debate about who/what counts as human does little to decenter, much less dismantle, ableism. See Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, p. 97

[5] In general, disability theology in this form follows other theologies of liberation in taking a praxis-oriented approach to theological method. Nancy Eiesland, whose *The Disabled God* (1994) pioneered an explicitly "liberatory theology of disability," draws in her method on Rebecca Chopp's "critical praxis correlation." Such a practical theological orientation works at the "interplay" of lived experience and prior theological knowledge. For Eiesland, this includes a "deliberate recognition" of disability experience; critical analysis of social theory, Church institutional practice, and Christian theology; and "the proclamation of emancipatory transformation." (Eiesland, 22) As a practical-theologian-in-training, I seek to do theological reflection at the intersection of theory and practice, and in this paper I aim to correlate critical

disability theologians push back against a "medical model" of disability, which locates disability in the individual's physical difference, and which then posits a physiological cure as the preferred (and obvious) solution. Instead—or perhaps, in addition—they adopt something closer to a "social model" of disability, which locates disability in the ableist social norms and structures that narrowly define what is 'normal'. In this view the problem is less with paralysis in itself and more with the lack of ramps.[6] Disability theorists have had productive partnerships with critical theories of the social construction of identity and the body.[7] From Foucault's *biopower* to Judith Butler's *performativity*, theories that uncover how socio-political systems shape the materiality of the body and how identities like gender are constituted in repeated performance of social norms (rather than arising from some prior biological human 'essence') are powerful allies in disability theory's attempts to show how disability is more about social definitions of *normal* and *abnormal* than about physical and mental differences.

But not only has disability theory gained from social constructionism, it also pushes back in generative ways. Disability scholars contribute to a broader critique that strong constructionism, with its incisive focus on discourse, risks losing sight of materiality and bodily agency. As Tom Siebers puts it, "The disabled body seems difficult for the theory of social construction to absorb: disability is at once its best example and a significant counterexample."[8] The experience of physical pain that accompanies many forms of disability—and, in cases of chronic pain or illness, may itself be the disabling impairment—provides the clearest trouble for an un-nuanced social

---

questions raised by disability theories and theologies with my Adventists commitments to Sabbath theology and pastoral practice. Eiesland, *The Disabled God*. See also Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 9

[6] A note on terminology: Though language and terminology are always in renegotiation, it is common in disability literature to distinguish between an impairment, a disability, and a handicap. An *impairment* generally refers to a physical or mental difference itself that contributes to a disability, and *disability* is the limiting functional consequence of that impairment, which "interferes with a person's ability to walk, think, hear, learn, or see." (Covey, *Social Perceptions of People with Disabilities in History*, p. 3) According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disability is "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment." ("Introduction to the ADA.") If used at all, *handicap* refers to "the social disadvantage that results from an impairment or disability." (Covey, *Social Perceptions of People with Disabilities in History*, p. 3)

[7] Siebers, "Disability in Theory," 739.

[8] Ibid., 740.

model.[9] To be sure, psychic pain is often the result of ableist constructs; but some bodies carry a surplus of pain that exceeds discursive boundaries and "hovers over innumerable daily actions."[10] This nuancing of social constructivist conceptions of identity is one place where I find disability theory particularly promising as theory. Disability theorists keep bodies always in view, while still attending to the social and power discourses that create unlivable[11]/disabled realities.[12]

While Nancy Eiesland's 1994 book *The Disabled God* is an important starting point for disability theology, Tom Reynolds's book *A Vulnerable Communion* is a somewhat more recent example. Reynolds helpfully sets the stage by framing disability as a "physiologically rooted social performance."[13] As noted above, disability theory wants to hold together social construction and real physiological differences. In that mode, Reynolds offers the following definition:

> [D]isability is a term naming that interstice where (1) restrictions due to an involuntary bodily impairment, (2) social role expectations, and (3) external physical/social obstructions come together in a way that (4) preempts an intended participation in communal life.[14]

Reynolds draws on themes from disability studies to focus attention on the "cult of normalcy" at work in society and often by extension the church. These norms set the rules of the game in which bodies gain recognition and value ("body capital") in the "economies of exchange" that make up our social interactions and expectations.[15] Because the norms in our society are so aligned (pressured in no small part by market capitalism) with values of productivity, individual achievement, beauty, and efficiency, they not only reinforce the marginalization of persons constituted as disabled, but they deeply impoverish us all.[16]

---

[9] Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 27.

[10] Siebers, "Disability in Theory," 744.

[11] My reference to "unlivable life" recalls Butler, *Undoing Gender*, p. 14.

[12] Such a return to material bodies aligns with the new materialism in theologian Mayra Rivera's *Poetics of the Flesh* (2015).

[13] Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 28.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 56.

[16] Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*.

Reynold then turns to center disability's themes of vulnerability and interdependence as the norm of his theological anthropology—the norm that is revealed in the "weakness" of God in Christ. In doing so, he also repositions self-sufficiency, independence, efficiency, productivity, and achievement as potential distortions of which to be wary rather than as norms to which to aspire. Already, I suspect the resonance with Sabbatarian values are evident—and these sorts of recurring themes are what drew me to disability theology in the first place. To push further, though, I turn to an author who works in a space that is a cousin of disability theory called "crip theory."

Crip Interventions in Sabbath Space and Time

In contrast to a version of disability rights activism that primarily aims at inclusion and access of persons with disability within social norms and institutions, crip theory aims more at deeply questioning, troubling, and disrupting those norms altogether, rather than gaining inclusion in them. The use of "crip" represents a reappropriation of the pejorative term "cripple." I begin with a summary of a "cript-ic" reading of the story of the man at the pool in John 5. Louise Lawrence's use of a "crip hermeneutic" provides a helpful entry into some critical themes of disability studies generally and crip theory specifically, and her reading of this particular Sabbath healing hints at some potential connections to Sabbath that I will further explore below.

A "Cript-ic" Sabbath Healing

In both the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, Sabbath is often "a day for healing,"[17] but healing narratives are, for many disability readers and scholars, uncomfortable sites where sin and disability are too easily conflated—in the history of interpretation, but also likely in the imaginary of the biblical world itself.[18] John 5:1-18 narrates the story of the man by the pool near Jerusalem's Sheep Gate who had been "ill" for thirty-eight years.[19] He has no one to help him get to the water, and someone else always gets there first. When Jesus encounters the man on the Sabbath, he tells him to "rise up," take up his mat and walk.

---

[17] Brunt, *A Day for Healing*.

[18] See Grant, "Reinterpreting the Healing Narratives"; Wilder, "On Christ and Healing."

[19] ἀσθενείᾳαὐτοῦ is weak, sick, ill; perhaps one of the blind, lame, or paralyzed, or something else

As Lawrence notes, the history of interpretation is replete with casual (and extra-textual) diagnoses of the man's moral failings. A compilation of cherished scholars makes for a disappointing, if not disturbing, caricature of this disabled person: With the man's "crotchety grumbling" (Brown), he makes a "feeble excuse" to Jesus (Dodd) and blames others (Culpepper) for his situation that is really (according to Westcott) the result of his apathy.[20] No doubt, a disability hermeneutic is in order. Proceeding with her crip-tic reading, which she admits may be somewhat "against the grain" of the text,[21] Lawrence questions whether a "cure" of the man's illness is required by the text. She notes that Jesus's imperative to get up (ἔγειρε) appears elsewhere as 'raise up', 'stir up', 'bring into being' or even 'rise up in arms'. Resisting what might be ableist assumptions, Lawrence suggests this imperative could be read as a "provocative invitation to display his disability rather than a demand for curing it."[22]

Lawrence also zeros in on the slow pace of the man's movement, a reminder that a body's moving through space is connected to time. Others are always faster, he confesses, and this has persisted for thirty-eight long years. To great effect, Lawrence pulls in a story of the performance artist Noëmi Lakmaier's 2012 day-long public crawl from London's East End to the downtown Gherkin building, and imagines the possibility in the text that the healed man continues to move slowly away from the pool, perhaps limping, carrying his mat. Explicit mentions of walking and leaping are, indeed, absent from this pericope.

When the man is confronted by the religion leaders, their complaint is about his carrying the mat on Sabbath—an offense, Lawrence points out, only if the bed is empty; carrying the mat would be fine if the lame man were in it.[23] Is the implied offense, then, a limping man who is moving on his own beyond the bounds of the pool, Lawrence wonders. He has transgressed spacial boundaries, and in doing so has also transgressed predefined categories of aesthetic (Sabbath) possibility. A lame man could be carried on a mat, or he could be begging by the pool, or he could be walking and leaping and cured, but he cannot be *limping away healed*. "In this hypothesised crip-tic enactment," Lawrence writes, "the man at the pool defiantly leaves his marginal space, and purposefully displays his disability to move slowly but

---

[20] Lawrence, "Vital (Johannine) Signs," 261; Carter, "The Blind, Lame and Paralyzed (John 5:3)," 131.

[21] Lawrence, "Vital (Johannine) Signs," 258.

[22] Ibid., 266–67.

[23] Ibid., 268.

subversively to the temple to stake his place within it."[24] This "embodiment of slow time" is "a protest against . . . cur[ative] normalisation."[25]

Lawrence's crip-tic reading exemplifies the resistance in disability theory and theology to an "ideology of cure"[26] or a "curative imaginary"[27] or even the "politics of rescue"[28]—*the refusal, or inability, to imagine anything other than full restoration of 'normal' body function as constituting healing*.[29] That this subversively slow and public bodily movement happens on Sabbath is something Lawrence leaves unexplored, but points to precisely the Sabbath potential I want to develop. First, though, I turn to crip theory to further nuance and develop a critique of a curative imaginary, its relation to time, and an alternative in "crip time."

Curative Time and Crip Time

Alison Kafer works creatively at the intersection of feminism, queer theory, and crip theory. Though admittedly not the most likely source to which many readers will turn for a Sabbath theology, I find her analysis of "curative time" and "crip time" brimming with possibilities for a *peculiar* Adventist imagination. Bringing disability to bear on matters of time, Kafer notes how extensively biomedicine utilizes time-oriented terminology in classifying disease, illness, and disability: chronic, intermittent, acquired, congenital, developmental, and delayed; frequency, incidence, occurrence, relapse, remission, prognosis, and diagnosis. In a sense, then, *disability* is marked by a deviation from what *should* happen *when* according to "normal" time.

As a response, Kafer deploys the notion "crip time" to trouble these normative conceptions of time. Disability, in practical ways, demands reimagining what *can* and *should* happen in time, calling for a reorientation to time. Kafer proposes, "Rather than bend disabled bodies and minds to meet

---

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 271.

[26] Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*.

[27] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*.

[28] Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*, 81.

[29] Importantly, Lawrence's reading also resists merely metaphoricalizing healing; instead, she insists that the subversive (and proud) "rising up" of the man to display his limping body is an embodied socio-political healing, resisting the either/or choice usually presented. For a more explicit critique of metaphoricalizing in this same passage, see Carter, "The Blind, Lame and Paralyzed (John 5:3)."

the clock, *crip time* bends the *clock* to meet disabled bodies and minds."[30] One simple example of such reorientation is what she calls "anticipatory scheduling," a time-oriented practice of people who live with chronic pain or fatigue. She explains:

> For those who live with chronic fatigue or pain . . . the present moment must often be measured against the moment to come: if I go to this talk now, I will be too tired for that class later; if I want to make that show tomorrow night, I need to stay home today.[31]

This is more than mere time management; in these cases, the costs of ignoring bodily limits are extraordinary. Another example of heightened negotiation of scheduling is practiced by those who depend on the schedules and availability of personal attendants. Kafer writes, intriguingly: "This idea of conserving energy, of anticipating . . . bucks American ideals of productivity at all costs, of sacrificing one's body for work." She insists that we understand "these practices of self-care not as preserving one's body for productive work but as refusing such regimes in order to make room for pleasure."[32]

There is much here already that resonates with Sabbath's resistance to the idols of productivity, but Kafer pushes crip time further. She describes a liminality, a disorienting suspension between past and future that disabled people are thrust into when it is assumed that a) they must long for a(n ideal) past body that they may or may not have ever had—she calls this "compulsory nostalgia"; or b) when it is inconceivable to others that disabled people might not wish for a future fix or cure—she calls this a "curative imaginary." Being caught between pasts and futures discursively constructed for them, disabled persons are offered presents that are unlivable, as she laments:

> [W]e lost what we had in the past, we exist in a present consumed by nostalgia for that loss, and we face futures far unlike the ones we had previously imagined. . . . The only culturally acceptable—culturally recognizable—future in this context is a curative one, one that positions a medicalized cure as just around the corner, as arriving any minute now. But this kind of cure-driven future positions people with disabilities in a temporality that cannot exist fully in the present, one

---

[30] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 27.

[31] Ibid., 39.

[32] Ibid.

> where one's life is always on hold, in limbo, waiting for the cure to arrive.[33]

I want to press and carry forward this image of people with disabilities being caught up in a disorienting tug-of-war between past and future, memory and hope—between the compulsory nostalgia for "whole" bodies remembered and the curative imperative of "fixed" bodies wished for. Such limbo creates an "elsewhere and otherwise"[34] that can in effect deny disabled persons the pleasure of appreciating their bodies' present. Kafer is careful, however, not to invalidate the longings of those who would genuinely prefer a cure. Importantly, she directs her critique at the "curative imaginary" as distinct from "cure," so as not to preclude disabled people from navigating and forming their own unique relationships with medical intervention. The problem, she insists, is "an understanding of disability that not only *expects* and *assumes* intervention but also *cannot imagine or comprehend anything other than intervention* [emphasis mine].[35] An imaginary, we might say, in which a healing story cannot possibly end happily with a limping man.

This critical insight from crip theory sensitizes us to the ways in which a Sabbath imaginary may sometimes be framed precisely as oscillating between past and future, between a Paradise remembered and a Paradise regained.[36] And while I do not want to let go of the powerful impulses for justice embedded in an eschatological hope ("on Earth as it is in Heaven"), I do think that "crip time" and disability perspectives provide a useful opportunity to examine where our Sabbath ideals are truly proleptic Good News in-breaking from God's future, and where these ideals might reflect more our ableist projections onto God's future. We might ask, prompted by Kafer, whether the ideal pasts and ideal futures with which we construct our Sabbaths (inadvertently?) impose unlivable presents on some—for instance, those who do not easily perform the body capital that gains them recognition in the cult of normalcy. In fact, along with several disability theologians, we might be

---

[33] Ibid., 44.

[34] Capon, *Bed and Board*, 152.

[35] Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 27.

[36] I am confident that I am indebted for this language to Sigve Tonstad's memorable phrase "oscillates between memory and hope" (59) in *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (2009)—though I do not necessarily intend to reference that work here. In my reading of this chapter of Tonstad, he helpfully wishes to resist at least a nostalgic return to a paradise "before conflict" between God's "very good" and the serpent's "not good" (58). That said, it could be interesting for Kafer's analysis to push for language that allows for a more restful (Sabbath) present than "oscillation" evokes.

particularly wary when the stories we tell in theological terms move so directly and so linearly from brokenness to wholeness, from illness to healing, even from death to resurrection that they start to sound suspiciously similar to global capitalism's ideology of constant, eternal progress.[37]

Again, I am not proposing that we abandon central and hope-filled elements of our Gospel story that celebrate both memory and hope. Rather, in the same way that Kafer moves with care so as not to foreclose on a disabled person's unique relationship with cure,[38] I want to push back on a *curative Sabbath imaginary*—that is, to disrupt a way of practicing Sabbath and sabbatarian theology in which only certain narratives of healing, progress, and resolution are imaginable, in which bodies and their faith stories must bend to certain "normal" conceptions of what *should* happen *when* (and where)—whether in the construction and arrangement of our church buildings or the construction and arrangement of our theologies.

Sabbath Time Recalibrated: Patience and the Present-In-Between

As a modest gesture in that direction, I offer one possible way in which Sabbath practice and theology might be responsive (calibrated) to crip times and bodies. In terms of practice, I have been deeply shaped by the yearly "Silent Sabbath" service at La Sierra University Church. Each year since 2011 the congregation has participated in a four-day remembrance of the Passion, from Thursday to Sunday. And not surprisingly, given the liturgical habits of an Adventist congregation, the most-attended moment in the weekend is not Resurrection Sunday, but rather Silent Sabbath. Now, one could worry, pastorally or theologically, that such a habit reenforces forgetfulness about of the end of the story—the cross is not the last word, after all, resurrection is. But this La Sierra congregation, led from the practice's beginning by lead pastor Christi Oberg and associate Dewald Kritzinger, has instead opened itself to the tension and asked what such a sabbatarian peculiarity might offer.

In the more recent years that I was a member of that pastoral team and experienced that practice myself, what I found compelling is the gift that arrives from this strange reversal of Easter emphasis. Rather than simply shifting resurrection celebrations to Sabbath service (as is common in Adventist churches), Silent Sabbath pauses and leans into the very darkness, and indeed trauma, of that day in between cross and resurrection. The

---

[37] See Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*; Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*; and Eiesland, *The Disabled God*.

[38] See also disability activist Eli Clare's profound reflections on learning nuance his critiques of and relationship to cure in Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*.

Sabbath service is neither quite Friday nor Sunday, but rather a slow remaining with tragedy intertwined with joy, loss interlaced with hope. This is an experience that resonates, I think, with a cripped intervention into simple, "normal" time.

In terms of theology, this practice converses generatively with Shelly Rambo's work at the intersection of trauma studies and theology. In her book *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*, and subsequent work, Rambo seeks a theology that attends adequately to experiences of trauma, in which the repeated reliving of past pain haunts the present, rendering experiences of time as disrupted and disorganized. For Rambo, experiences of trauma—like crip interventions—challenge the adequacy of straight, linear conceptions of death-to-life redemption stories.[39] In a creative resourcing of the Farewell Discourse in John's Gospel and von Balthazar's theology of Holy Saturday, she proposes a theology, and indeed redemption, read "from the middle"[40]—a theology done while *remaining* and *abiding* in the in-betweenness and uncertainty of Holy Saturday.[41] In doing so, not only does she provide a way forward between the excesses of narrow atonement theologies *or* triumphalist resurrection accounts, she also opens up the sort of theological space attuned to cripped presents—a theological space that resists compulsory pasts and futures.

While I want to be careful not to equate trauma and disability—there are significant non-overlapping areas of each—I do think both discourses point in a common direction in terms of Sabbath's liberative potential. They suggest that we engage Sabbath's in-betweenness—not as an impatient and disorienting oscillation between paradise past and paradise future, but rather as a slow embodied engagement with the present as *itself in some sense complete and good and holy*. Sabbath as a sacred palace in present time is

---

[39] In a section entitled "Redemption from the Middle," she writes: "Trauma studies challenge us to think about recovery differently and, in so doing, return us to its theological correlate—redemption. The temporality of trauma and the reality of its return make it difficult to conceive of recovery in linear terms, as something to get over or get beyond. . . . Dominant interpretations of salvation and redemption, filled with images of God's rescue and restoration, can easily join the chorus of voices that tell [Hurricane Katrina survivor] Deacon Lee and others to get over it. 'All things work together for good.' 'This is part of God's will.' These familiar assertions emerge from dominant redemptive narratives and may be complicit in covering over and eliding the suffering that remains." Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 156.

[40] Ibid., 156.

[41] Ibid., 161.

obviously not new,[42] but crip and trauma informed scholars add critical attention to the ways in which normative frames that inscribe some bodies and some stories with a fundamental lack may indeed deprive those persons of the very present rest which Sabbath proclaims as a gift for all. *Bending bodies to meet normative frames—of time or space—risks, then, being profoundly anti-sabbatarian*.

Instead, if Sabbath is to constitute a blessed moment in present time, we will need to include in its aims what Sharon Betcher envisions as a "restful openness" to the present, an ability to "forgiv[e] life . . . for not being ideal."[43] Far from abandoning the prophetic call to be restless with the *status quo*, such Sabbatarian slowness aims at reorienting our very beings, our affective and aesthetic responses, which—if Betcher is right—are at the root of our ableist aversion to the monstrosities of disability and other Others.[44]

Conclusion

I suspect that my pre-commitments about Sabbath are evident: that Sabbath practice and theology can be profoundly liberative gifts to a church and world marked by struggles for peace, justice, hospitality and holy living. I am proposing that Sabbath time, when calibrated to crip time's resistance to compulsory pasts and futures, carries within itself rich potential to hold space in time for such a habituating practice that contributes to "bodily as well as cognitive"—and, I would add, affective—"shaping,"[45] cultivating capaciousness to the world. My argument is that engaging a spiritual practice of Sabbath time aligns with a cripped imaginary's expansive view of human interdependence and individuality—if Sabbath time is calibrated to crip time.

Looking forward, such calibration will include employing a "crip/tographical"[46] analysis to uncover where habits of hiding pain or disability might be present, whether in metaphoricalizing disability when reading Scripture and preaching or in the configuration of worship gathering space that marginalize or exclude. We will also need to attend to the ways in which our communication or our architecture habituates body-minds toward ableist conceptions of efficiency, productivity, and convenience and privileges bodies that can move more quickly than others—and imagine ways of

---

[42] Heschel, *The Sabbath*.

[43] Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh*, 133.

[44] Ibid., 18.

[45] Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 49.

[46] Betcher, "Crip/Tography"; Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh*.

reconfiguring in order to rehabituate us in slow cripped Sabbath time. We can ask how Sabbath might, as an *impractical* "palace in time,"[47] instill a certain patience in the way we move and the ways we arrange our bodies. My contention, my hope, then, is that the countercultural practices and perspectives of disability studies and the disability community help calibrate and bend Sabbath to realize more fully its witness to the God who seeks "a vulnerable communion"[48] with us all.

[47] Heschel, *The Sabbath*.

[48] Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*.

Bibliography

Betcher, Sharon V. "Crip/tography: Of Karma and Cosmopolis." In *Planetary Loves*, edited by Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera. Fordham University Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.5422/fso/9780823233250.001.0001

———. *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh: A Secular Theology for the Global City*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.

———. *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Brunt, John. *A Day for Healing: The Meaning of Jesus' Sabbath Miracles*, 2016.

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York; London: Routledge, 2004.

Capon, Robert Farrar. *Bed and Board: Plain Talk About Marriage*. New York: Pocket Books, 1970.

Carter, Warren. "'The Blind, Lame and Paralyzed' (John 5:3): John's Gospel, Disability Studies, and Postcolonial Perspectives." In *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*, edited by Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper, 129–50. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Clare, Eli. *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Covey, Herbert C. *Social Perceptions of People with Disabilities in History*. Springfield, Ill: Charles C. Thomas, 1998.

Creamer, Deborah Beth. *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities*. Academy Series. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Eiesland, Nancy L. *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Fulkerson, Mary McClintock. *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Grant, Colleen C. "Reinterpreting the Healing Narratives." In *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*, edited by Nancy L. Eiesland and Don E. Saliers, 72–87. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A theology of liberation: history, politics, and salvation*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1988.

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951.

"Introduction to the ADA." https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm, n.d.

Kafer, Alison. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Lawrence, Louise J. "Vital (Johannine) Signs: 'Crip-tic' Enactments of a Man at the Pool (John 5:1-18)." *Biblical Interpretation* 27, no. 2 (May 2019): 251–73. https://doi.org/10.1163/15685152-00272P05

Rambo, Shelly L. *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

Reynolds, Thomas E. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008.

Rivera, Mayra. *Poetics of the Flesh*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Siebers, T. "Disability in Theory: From Social Constructionism to the New Realism of the Body." *American Literary History* 13, no. 4 (April 2001): 737–54. https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/13.4.737

Tonstad, Sigve. *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*. Berrien Springs, Mich: Andrews University Press, 2009.

Wilder, Courtney. "On Christ and Healing: Eiesland, Tillich, and Disability Theology." *Dialog* 51, no. 3 (September 2012): 202–11. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6385.2012.00686.x