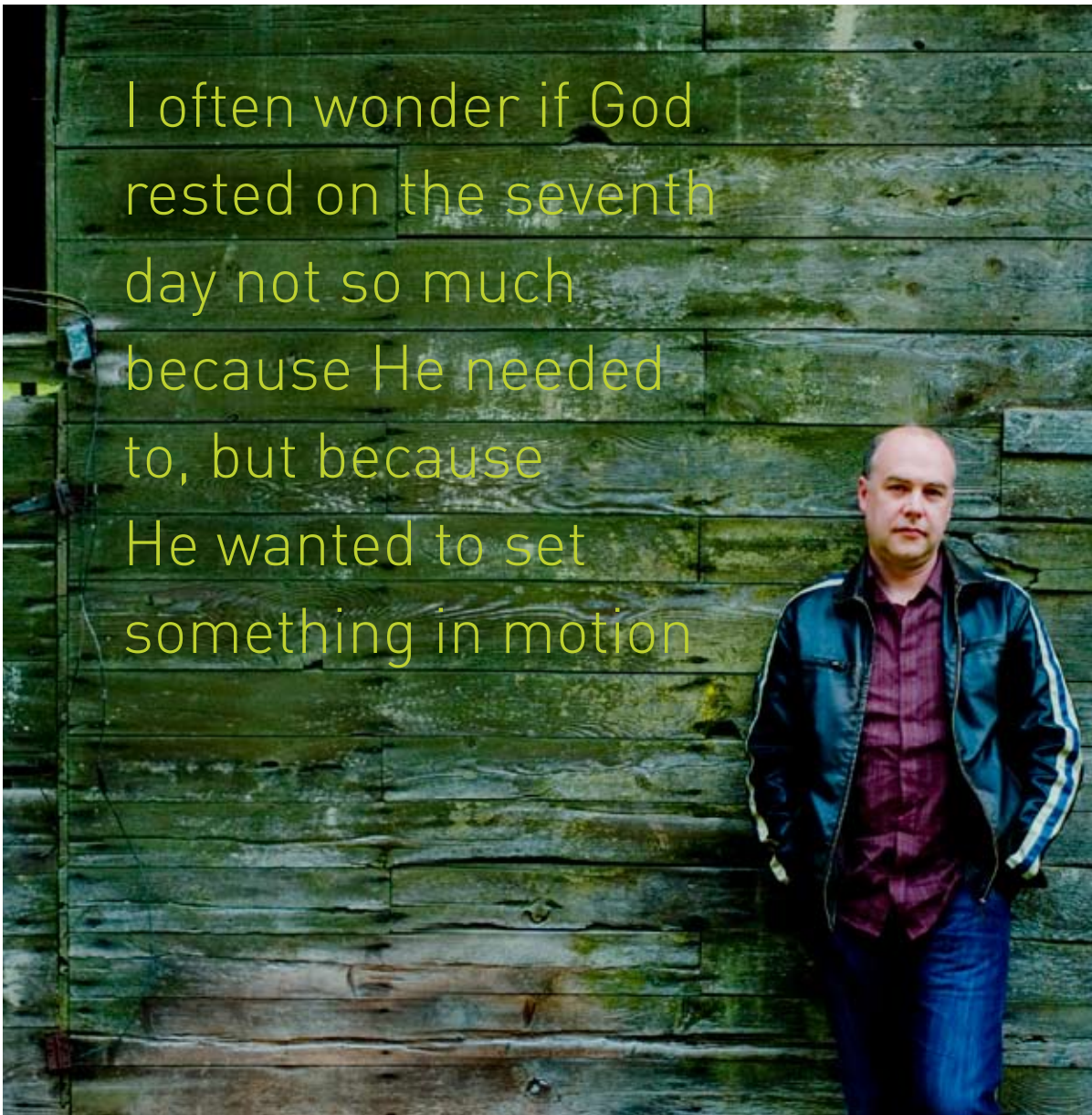

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For Worship Leaders Only: On Rest

BRIAN DOERKSEN

Rest is one thing human beings cannot survive without! (Just try not sleeping for a few days!) I often wonder if God rested on the seventh day not so much because He needed to, but because He wanted to set something in motion; not just our nightly need for rest, but the weekly rhythm of Sabbath rest.

When we think of our desire for quietness and rest (which I believe is a godly desire), I realize how important it is for us as worship leaders to be in tune with that desire! It is interesting that most worship gatherings happen weekly, and in that sense our worship music should contribute greatly to our sense of Sabbath rest.

I have a simple mission statement as a worship leader: "To create a safe place for people to worship God intimately." When I think of a "safe place", I think of a place where I am not adding my own burdens to the people, but inviting them into that place where they can lay their burdens down at the foot of the cross and find true rest for their souls.

Practically, this is one of the reasons why I often start worship times with a gentle invitation into worship. I long for all of us to experience the deep peace of knowing God, and I want our worship music to be centered on that goal. There is no musical formula to make that happen, because we all respond in slightly unique ways. There is something to be said for music, however, as its very melodic and chordal structure can speak of rest and peace.

Let's keep our hearts open to the cry of the people who have gathered, many of whom feel 'harassed' by the frenzy of life, and remember that sometimes they don't need another "exciting, loud and up-tempo" worship set. Maybe they all need to drink at the deep well of peace that Jesus offers to all of us.

Maybe some of the pastors who usually say to their worship leaders, "We need some more up-tempo songs!" can also remember that the sheep need something more than excitement – they need rest. Real rest.

BRIAN DOERKSEN is a seasoned worship leader whose roots are in the Vineyard movement. His music and leadership have always resonated with both a deep love for God, and for the people of God. This call to rest was shared with the Canadian Vineyard worship community, and is a call to remember the ways of fruitfulness in long-term ministry.